

FACTSHEET

www.ecowascounterterrorism.org

ECOWAS Counter Terrorism Strategy Tracker

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In response to the challenges of terrorism West Africa is facing, ECOWAS developed the Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Implementation Plan as a means of countering terrorist activities in West Africa as well as putting in place large-scale measures against terrorism.

In order to keep track of acts of insurgency as they relate to ECOWAS countries, CDD has created the ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Strategy Tracker (ECTS-Tracker), which 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 the West Africa sub-region. The ECTS-tracker also serves as a tool for monitoring the efforts of states in implementing the ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CTS).



Centre for Democracy & Development

Centre pour la démocratie et le développement

2.0. OVERVIEW OF THE MONTH

Several assault and abductions perpetrated by insurgent sects across the West Africa Lake Chad region and the mostly desert Sahel region show that insurgents still have the capacity to stage major attacks on security posts and communities within the region. The Nigerian Government, have implemented in Nigeria for the first time (second time in Africa) an open trial for suspected captured insurgent members. Results: 205 convicted members, with charges related to their involvement in the sect activities, and 475 being discharged for proper rehabilitation for lack of evidence in prosecuting them.

During this period, the European Union has revealed plan for doubling and raising funds for troubled West African, Sahel region countries. These are aimed at funding joint military task forces spear-headed by the French Military and United Nation counterpart from Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

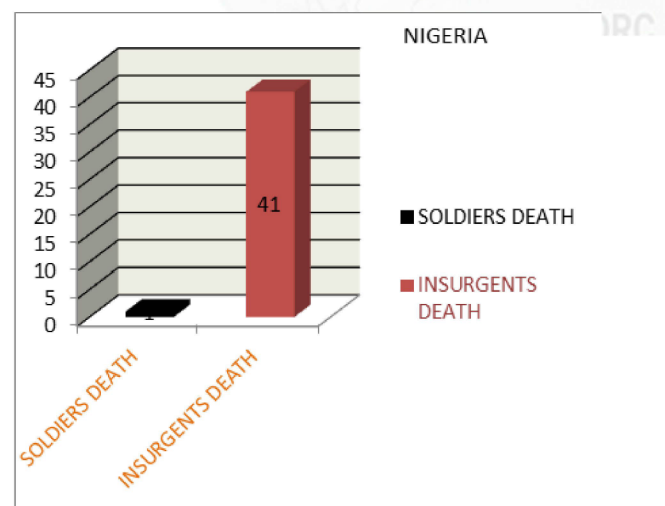
A. NIGERIA

In February, Nigeria became the first country within the region to commence the implementation of domestic Policy Framework and National Action Plan, which was launched during the United Nation 72 General Assembly in New York, 2017. This policy framework and national Action Plan is based on four thematic areas: strengthening people, strengthening the rule of law and human right, strengthening communities and strengthening programs against violent extremism.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/nigeria-convicts-two-hundred-boko-haram-suspects-mass-trials/4261427.html>

<https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria-frees-475-boko-haram-suspects-for-lack-of-evidence/>

In February, the Nigerian Army claimed to have completely defeated insurgent sect Boko Haram as troops activating operation Deep Punch II, a subcomponent of Operation Lafia Doly currently occupied the dislodged insurgents' tactical ground 'Camp Zairo'. The Nigerian Military and its Cameroon counterpart have intensified its clearance operation Deep Punch II, a subcomponent of Operation Lafiya Dole, aimed at pursuing remnants of Boko Haram insurgents rampaging across the North Eastern region of the country. CDD estimate that of the various operations carried out by the military on various insurgents' enclaves in the region, there have been an estimated death of 41 insurgents, and many have escaped with varying degrees of injuries. Also in the course of these operations, 1176 hostages were rescued from various enclaves, 26 insurgents surrendered to the military, one Boko Haram commander arrested, as recorded by CDD, while the International Committee of Red Cross alongside security Operatives, successfully facilitated negotiations for the release of 13 personnel held captive since last year. The personnel include three Professors from the University of Maiduguri and ten policewomen.



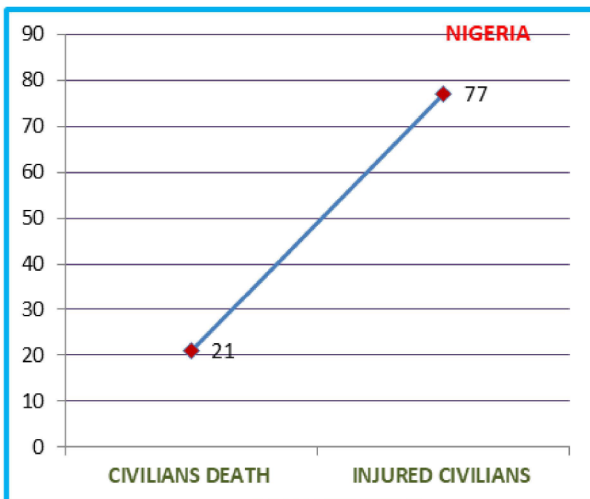


Fig. 2 Deaths and injuries for civilians in Nigeria

B. MALI

This month witnessed jihadist sects mounting deadly attacks on domestic and foreign peace-keeping forces present in Mali. Local reports claim at least 4 dead in the area of T a l - ataye.

These developments have mad Malian government authorities place an embargo on motorbikes and pick-up trucks in some vulnerable strategic locations. Coordinated operations spearheaded by French military forces and its air force component alongside Malian soldiers led to the death of 15 insurgents at various locations in the country.

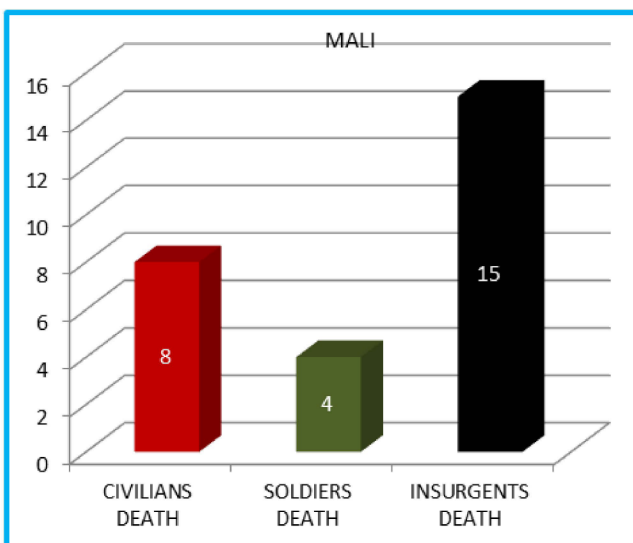


Fig. 3 Deaths in Mali

C. BURKINA-FASO

This period, United State Department described Ansarul Islam group based in Burkina Faso as a global terrorist group. The sect was declared a terrorist group due to links and involvement in various attacks launched in the country since 2016; which were believed to be perpetrated by the sect. Burkina Faso police officers avoided an ambush and killed an unknown armed individual, whose aim was to assault the police convoy in the Deou District Police Station (Oudalan Province, Sahel region).

D. CAMEROON

Cameroon, in its ongoing counter-insurgency campaign operation to curtail a series of assaults from Boko Haram insurgents mostly along its country border with Nigeria, have effectively collaborated with Nigeria – Cameroon Military Joint Mission in Maiduguri, Deep Punch II subcomponent of Operation Lafia Dole. The aim is to track down remnants of the insurgent sects operating between the Nigerian and Cameroonian border and successfully wipe out those insurgents. United Nations Assistant-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Ms Ursula Mueller disclosed while speaking on the humanitarian situation of the Lake Chad Basin region, that Boko Haram insurgent sects are responsible for 60 suicide attacks in far Northern Cameroon.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/ansarul-islam-designated-as-terrorist-organization-by-united-states/4262847.html>

<https://www.today.ng/news/africa/72371/police-kill-gunman-north-ern-burkina-faso-ambush>

<http://www.pulse.ng/news/local/cameroonian-troops-join-in-boko-haram-war-id7941335.html>

<http://thenationonlineng.net/boko-haram-carried-out-60-suicide-attacks-in-cameroon-in-2017/>

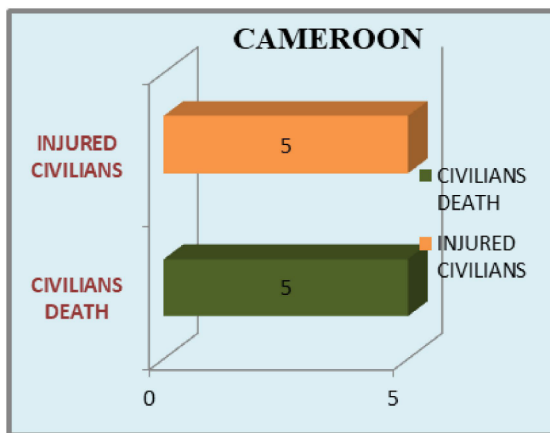


Fig. 4 Civilian death and injuries in Cameroon

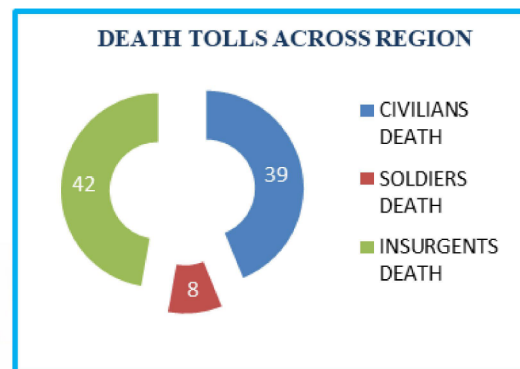


Fig. 5 Deaths across the region

E. Chad

Chad a notable force in the ongoing joint military coalition spearheaded by Nigeria, aimed at eradicating Boko Haram Insurgents operating across the Lake Chad Basin region. The country has experienced relative peace from insurgent group assaults since May 2017. This period Chad witnessed ambushed on it military force by insurgent sects at the Assigashia border town with Nigeria.

4.0 PATTERNS OF ATTACK

Islamic Jihadist insurgents, rampaging in the Lake Chad and Sahel mostly desert region perpetrated 13 assaults on various communities across the region. These assaults were mostly landmine “soft attack” on civilians and military personnel. These led to the death of 34 civilians and left 76 with various degrees of injuries within the region. Further to this, 20 soldiers from Nigeria, Mali and Chad were killed in the course of engaging with the insurgents, eight soldiers were peacekeepers on a UN peacekeeping mission in Mali. While five French soldiers, peacekeeping in The UN’s mission in Mali, (MUNISMA) sustained severe injuries.

6.0 MEANS OF ATTACKS

Insurgent sects across the Lake Chad and Sahel mostly desert region, leveraged on “Soft Attacks” tactics in perpetrating assault on security operatives and civilians. These sects mostly made use of Vehicle-borne Improvised Explosive Devices in ambushing Military forces and civilians.

Another is the used of Improvised Explosive Devices strapped to the bodies of suicide bombers, targeting strategic public space before detonation. Four suicide cases were recorded during this period, 3 of the suicide bombers were female and 1 male. The insurgents also attacked and ambushing Vehicles across various locations in the region.

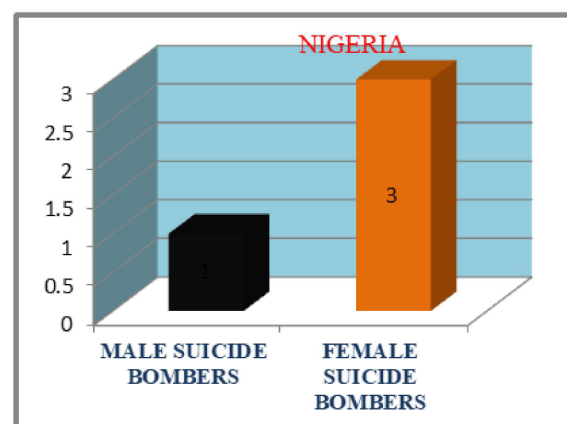


Fig. 6 Number of male/female suicide bombers in Nigeria

5.0 ABDUCTION

In this period Boko Haram insurgents carried out the abduction of 230 people from various communities within Nigeria. Prominent among the abductions, was the abduction of 110 girls from Government Girls Science and Technical Secondary School in Dapchi a town in Bursari local government area of Yobe state. The insurgents also ambushed a convoy of about 20 vehicles, and abducted 120 civilians at Kuwa Kauwa village, not far from Bulaburin in Damboa Local Government Area of Borno State .

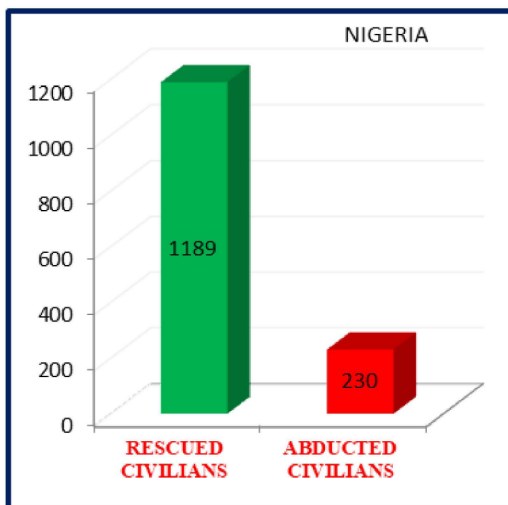
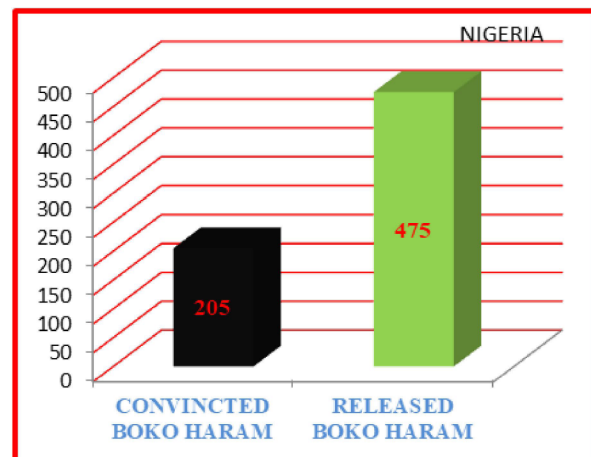


Fig. 7 Rescued and abducted civilians in Nigeria

6.0 COURT CASES

Nigeria's court system is in the second phase of a massive trial of a hundred suspected insurgents held at different detention centres within the country. This is considered as the first time Nigeria has granted insurgents the opportunity for open trial, and the second time within the region after Niger Court System considered an open trial for insurgents in January 2018.

205 insurgents got convicted on different count charges, related to the Islamist group Boko Haram. In the same vein 475 suspected insurgent members, were discharged due to lack of evidence, for proper rehabilitation. In another trial, unrepentant 22 year-old Mr Abba Umar, an insurgent suicide bomber was jailed for 60 years, after he vowed to return back to Sambisa Forest and join forces with insurgent members if freed.



7.0 COMMUNICATION

Long lasting Boko Haram Insurgent faction leader, Imam Abubakar Shekau, released new video footage disputing the military claim of their complete defeated. He threatened to unleash more violence within the region and ordered his men in Sambisa to regroup.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/nigeria-mass-trial-boko-haram-suspects/4250585.html>

8.0 HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES

A recent United Nation report on the human rights situation in northern and central Mali reveals that despite the peace agreement signed in 2015, the Human right situation in Mali is still deteriorating. Over 600 cases of human rights violations and abuses were committed between January 2016 and June 2017 . A London based non-governmental, humanitarian organisation Amnesty International, accused the Nigerian Government of human right abuses. These include unlawful killings, torture and detention. Amnesty International pointed out recent clashes between herdsmen and farming communities, which resulted in the death of 549 people and a 1000 displaced in 12 states. In the same vein “Boko Haram carried out at least 65 attacks, causing 411 civilian deaths, and abducted at least 73 people.

9.0 INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS/ REFUGES

The Nigerian Minister for Budget and National Planning, Mrs Zainab Ahmad, disclosed that 300,000 Nigerians displaced by the Boko Haram insurgency are taking refuge in Cameroon, Chad and Niger. 8.5 million Individuals were displaced by the insurgency in the northeast, 80% of them were from Borno 30% were taking refuge at Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps, while 70% resided in host communities.

Nigeria commenced skill acquisition training, for 11,300 internally displaced personnel across North-east region. The program was designed and aimed at fast-tracking rehabilitation, resettlement and stabilisation process of Northeast Nigeria.

10.0 LOGISTICS

Insurgents utilised Pick-up trucks mounted with high calibre weapon, (Hilux), cars, armed personnel carrier and motorcycles in perpetrating attacks across the Lake Chad and Sahel regions in the period under review.

11.0 CONCLUSION

Persistent abductions by insurgent sects (Boko Haram) in February, shows insurgents still have the capacity to stage major attacks. They continue to abduct innocent people to use as tools for negotiating the exchange of their members held by the government, and receive ransoms, which enable them economically and allow them to continue recruiting.

<https://www.today.ng/multimedia/video/73481/boko-haram-chief-abubakar-shekau-appears-video>

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201802020447.html>

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201802230110.html>

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201802060064.html>

<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/north-east/258537-boko-haram-nigerian-govt-begins-skill-acquisition-training-11300-idps.html>