

FACTSHEET

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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

CTS TRACKER FOR JANUARY 2018

2.0. OVERVIEW OF THE MONTH

In January 2018 there were several terrorist attacks and counterinsurgency operations launched across West Africa. In the Period under review, Nigeria advanced its clearance operation of the enclaves of the Boko Haram insurgents. The Operation (Deep Punch II) advanced into the insurgents' stronghold Camp Zero in Sambisa forest to dislodge remnants of the Sect.

The Niger Government, in a first of its kind since the beginning of the insurgency in 2009, conducted an open trial of Eighty-one suspected Boko Haram members. The accused persons are accused of fighting with the Boko Haram insurgents. In the period under review, a jihadist movement affiliated to the Islamic State (IS) armed groups in the Sahel "Adnan Abu Walid Sahraoui", claimed responsibility for the attacks that resulted in the death of the French troops in January and the October 2017 ambush on US troops, that resulted in the deaths of four US Marines.

The jihadist group also claimed responsibility for the numerous attacks on Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger.

3.0 TRENDS AND PATTERNS OF COUNTER TERRORISM

The patterns of the attacks all point to being originated in Nigeria, and due to multi-national coalitions, the attacks have spilled over into neighbouring countries like Niger, Cameroon and Mali.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS.

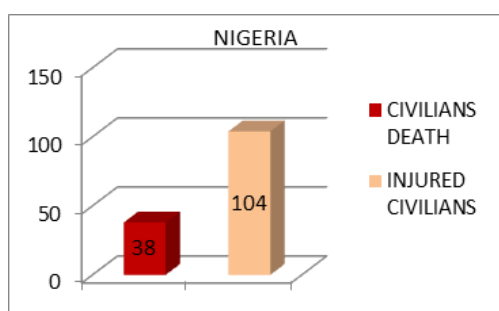
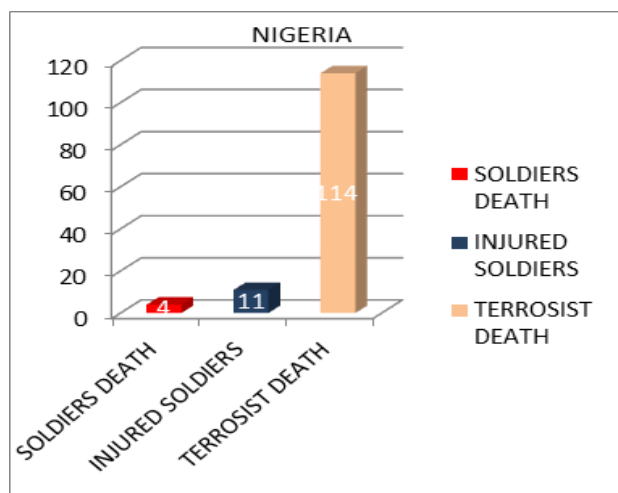
A. NIGERIA

The Nigerian Policy Framework and National Action Plan was formally launched during the United Nations 72 General Assembly in New York, 2017. The implementation of the strategy is expected to commence immediately. The Nigerian plan is based on four pillars: Strengthening people, strengthening the rule of law and human right, strengthening communities and strengthening programs against violent extremism. The Plan adopts a people-centred "all for society" approach.

In line with the pillar of the ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Strategy on "Pursuing terrorists"; in January 2018, the Nigerian military recorded tremendous progress in pursuing terrorist in the Northeastern part of the country, where Boko Haram Insurgents have been on a rampage in the communities, particularly in the insurgent's hideout of the Sambisa Forest.

The Nigerian Army with support and back up from the Nigerian Air Force, successfully advanced (Operation Deep Punch II) into the stronghold of Boko Haram logistics and tactical hideout "Camp Zero" in Sambisa Forest. At the end of the month, by CDD tally of the various operations carried out in Sambisa Forest, villages and other enclaves around the Lake Chad Basin, an estimated death of 114 insurgents, with many escaping with various degrees of injuries were recorded.

CDD estimate also shows a total of 1186 Boko Haram members surrendered to the authorities. The period also recorded estimated 38 civilians deaths over the course of the insurgent attacks, while 104 sustained various degrees of injuries. CDD also counted 84 civilians were rescued, and one of the missing Chibok girls was found. Prior this, a total of 106 girls had been rescued from the original 219 abducted girls.



B. MALI

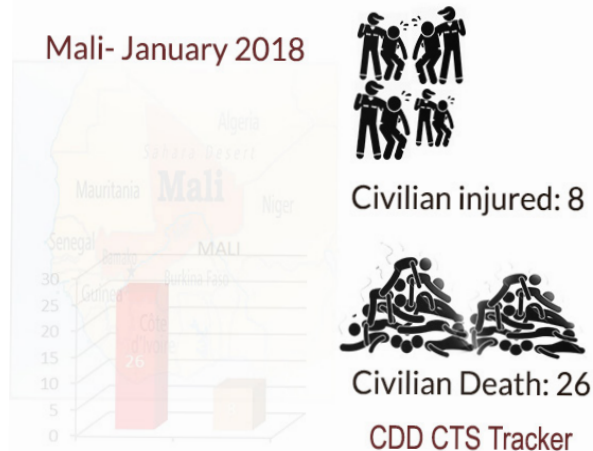
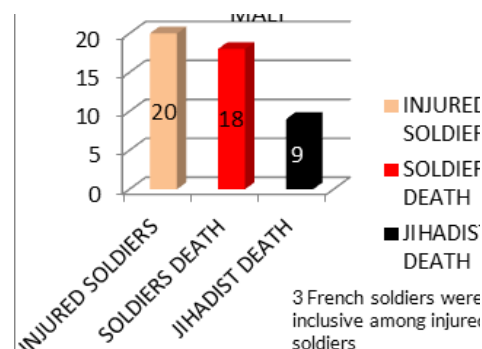
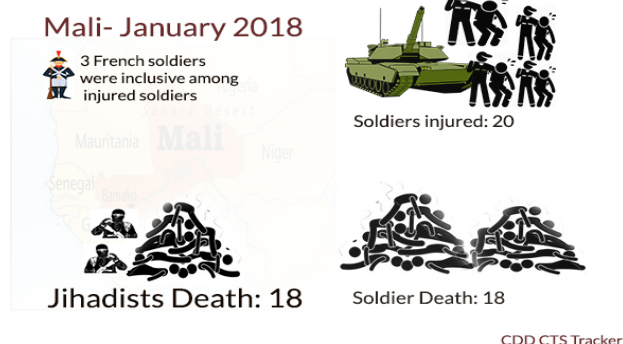
Mali in the last 6 years has witnessed heightened insecurity with several insurgent groups operating in the country. However, despite being a victim of insurgent attacks, the country is yet to have in place a National Framework and Action Plan in line with the ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

According to RFI, the news channel, the Islamic State (IS) affiliated, terrorist sect Adnan Abu Walid Sahraoui, operating across the Sahel desert region of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger claimed responsibility for the deadly assault on French troops and many others across the region.

The jihadist group in January 2018 also claimed responsibility for the 2017 October attack that killed four US and three Niger soldiers. Specifically, the radical Islamic jihadist linked to the Islamic State, attacked the Soumpi military camp, killing 14 soldiers and injuring 17. However, the military killed around 9 of the jihadists.

In the same period, a mine explosion killed 26 civilians and injured many others in Boni village of Mali, a closed tensed border with neighbouring Burkina Faso.

Mali



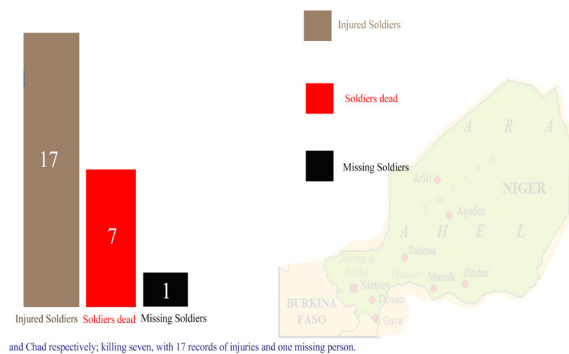
C. NIGER

Niger is witnessing heightened terrorist attacks from the Boko Haram insurgents, and other Al Qaida and Islamic State-affiliated groups in the Sahel. However, despite these challenges, Niger is yet to have in place a National Framework and Action Plan in line with the ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Strategy.



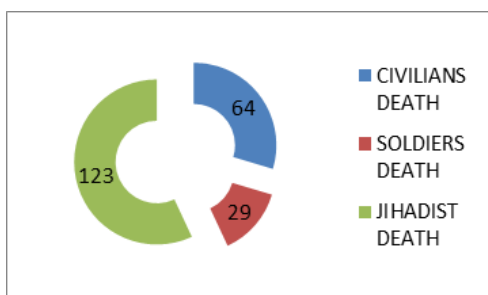
The Niger court system, for the first time, conducted a public court hearing for suspected Boko Haram jihadist fighters. A total of 81 terrorists from Niger, Nigeria and Chad were tried.

During the same period, the Boko Haram insurgents inflicted assaults on Toummour community in the Diffa region, bordering Nigeria, and Chad respectively; killing seven, with 17 records of injuries and one missing person.



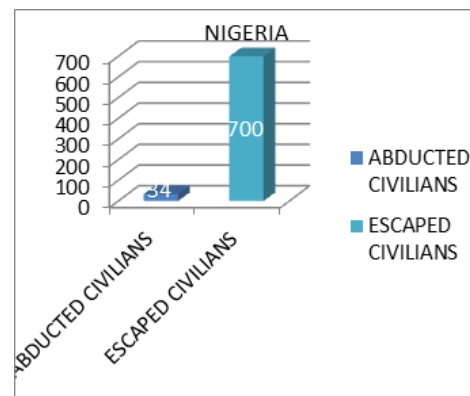
4.0 PATTERNS OF ATTACK

In this period, there were 11 attacks in total. Jihadist extremists were rampaging in the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel desert region, mostly utilising “soft attack” tactics. The Boko Haram insurgents executed five attacks in various communities in Nigeria, three in Mali and one in Niger. These attacks led to the death of over 64 civilians, and 112 civilians sustained various degrees of injuries. Added to this, 29 soldiers from Mali, Nigeria and Niger were killed, out the 45 soldiers injured, 3 were French, and one Nigerien soldier is recorded missing. The French soldiers on peacekeeping mission also sustained various degrees of injuries within the region.



5.0 Abduction/ Escaped Civilians

In this period, all abductions were carried out by Boko Haram. Boko Haram Islamic extremists abducted 31 loggers from the Gamboru town of Borno bordering Cameroon. The terrorist sect also abducted 3 individual during a raid on Madagali village in Adamawa state Nigeria. From the recent Nigerian Army operation with support from the Nigerian Airforce, 700 civilians’ captives of Boko Haram escaped from various hideouts in Sambisa. The operation is clearing the remnant of Boko Haram insurgents and destroying their infrastructure and logistics (Deep Punch II).



RELEASED TERRORIST

In Nigeria, during this period, 244 individuals, (including 118 male; 56 female; 19 teens and 51 children) suspected of having ties with Boko Haram insurgents were released by the Nigerian authorities.

6.0 MEANS OF ATTACKS

Improvised explosive device (IED) continues to be a challenge to the Armed Forces in advancing into insurgent suspected hideouts across Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel region. IEDs are also sometimes strapped to the bodies of female suicide bombers, who have been used for soft attacks. This period recorded nine female bombers across various locations within Nigeria.

7.0 COMMUNICATION

Boko Haram leader, Abubakar Shekau, released a 36-minute video in the period under review. In the video footage, more than a dozen girls were shown with several holding babies. Shekau in the video claimed that the 107 Chibok girls released last year, refused to convert to Islam or get married to the sect members. He also claimed to have the ten police-women abducted along Damboa-Maiduguri Road in his custody. In the video Shekau called out the parents of the girls, saying that the parents of the girls and his soldiers – whom the girls were married to, are now in-laws.

LOGISTICS

The terrorists utilised Pick-up trucks (Hilux), cars, armed personnel carrier and motorcycles in perpetrating attacks across the Lake Chad and Sahel regions in the period under review.

CONCLUSION

Moving forward, in light of the attacks in January, it is imperative, and of absolute importance for countries like Niger and Mali to create and implement a Policy Framework and National Action Plan in line with the ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Strategy.