



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Nigeria - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Monday 13 & Tuesday 14 July 2015

Information on whether Nigeria is a country where there is a serious and individual threat to a civilians life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international/internal armed conflict

In 2015 the *Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research* points out in a report that:

“The war between the Islamist group Boko Haram and the Nigerian government continued, reaching unprecedented levels of violence...The group captured and held significant territory in the states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe and announced the establishment of an Islamic caliphate. Trans-border attacks by Boko Haram also increased, prompting a strengthened international response of the Multinational Joint Task Force, consisting of troops from Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. Furthermore, the conflict over arable land in Nigeria's Middle Belt between the predominantly Christian farmers of Berom and Tiv tribes, on the one hand, and the mainly Muslim Fulani nomads, on the other, continued at war level...The conflict between northerners and southerners also remained violent as supporters of the ruling PDP and supporters of the opposition party APC repeatedly clashed in the context of upcoming elections in 2015. The parties notably mobilized along the old geographic cleavage between north and south...” (Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (2015) *Conflict Barometer 2014*, p.50).

In January 2015 a document released by *Human Rights Watch* reviewing events of the preceding year states:

“Intensified violence and atrocities by Boko Haram, Nigeria’s home-grown militant insurgent group, dominated the country’s human rights landscape in 2014. The group indiscriminately killed civilians, abducted women and girls, forcefully conscripted young men and boys, and destroyed villages, towns, and schools” (Human Rights Watch (29 January 2015) *World Report 2015: Nigeria*).

A report issued in June 2015 by the *United States Department of State* commenting on events of 2014 notes:

“The most serious human rights abuses during the year included those committed by Boko Haram, which conducted numerous attacks on government and civilian targets throughout the country, resulting in thousands of deaths and injuries, widespread destruction, forced internal displacement, and the flight of more than 100,000 refugees to neighboring countries. In its response to Boko Haram, and at times to crime in general, security services perpetrated extrajudicial killings and engaged in torture, rape, arbitrary detention, mistreatment of detainees, and destruction of property. The country also suffered from widespread societal violence, including ethnic, regional, and religious violence (United States Department of State (25 June 2015) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014, Nigeria*, p.1).

This document also notes that:

“Throughout much of the country, Boko Haram perpetrated numerous attacks, often directly targeting civilians” (ibid, p.2).

This report also points out that:

“Observers asserted that the climate of impunity for serious crimes led to the victimization of the civilian population by both Boko Haram and government forces” (ibid, pp.16-17).

A report issued by *Human Rights Watch* in March 2015 notes that:

“Attacks by the Islamist armed group Boko Haram killed more than 1,000 civilians in 2015, based on witness accounts and an analysis of media reports. Boko Haram fighters have deliberately attacked villages and committed mass killings” (Human Rights Watch (26 March 2015) *Nigeria: At Least 1,000 Civilians Dead Since January*).

In April 2015 a document published by *Amnesty International* notes:

“Since at least May 2013, the situation in north-east Nigeria has constituted a noninternational armed conflict. In this context, Boko Haram is bound by international humanitarian law (IHL). Amnesty International has concluded that Boko Haram has committed serious violations of IHL amounting to war crimes. These include murder, attacks on civilians and civilian objects, and indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks” (Amnesty International (13 April 2015) *Nigeria: 'Our job is to shoot, slaughter and kill': Boko Haram's reign of terror in north east Nigeria*, p.6).

This report also states that:

“In cases where Boko Haram has attacked military bases, they have killed many civilians in indiscriminate attacks that failed to distinguish between civilians and military targets” (ibid, p.26).

It is also pointed out in this report that:

“Boko Haram has deliberately killed thousands of civilians across north-east Nigeria, in other cities around the country and even across the border in Cameroon and Niger. Based on interviews with eyewitnesses and monitoring of the media, Amnesty International has evidence that Boko Haram killed at least 4,000 civilians in 2014 in deliberate and indiscriminate attacks; the actual number is likely to be much higher. In the first three months of 2015, Boko Haram fighters killed at least 1,500 civilians. Some were gunned down or had their throats slit during attacks on towns and villages, others were blown up in bomb blasts. Some were deliberately targeted because of their status as civil or religious authorities, because their town had set up a Civilian JTF, because they were thought to have collaborated with Nigerian security forces, or because they attended or worked in schools and hospitals. Some were killed during shoot-outs with the security services in what may have been disproportionate or indiscriminate attacks” (ibid, p.32).

In June 2015 *Amnesty International* states in a report that:

“Boko Haram has used bombs to launch attacks against government or “western” targets, to intimidate opponents and to kill civilians. Its fighters have slaughtered civilians during attacks on towns and villages...” (Amnesty International (2 June

2015) *Nigeria: Stars on their shoulders: Blood on their hands: War crimes committed by the Nigerian military*, p.5).).

A report released in June 2015 by the *European Commission Humanitarian Aid department* notes that:

“The violent conflict in North-East Nigeria, with indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population...” (European Commission Humanitarian Aid department (18 June 2015) *EU boosts humanitarian aid to those displaced by Boko Haram violence*).

In July 2015 a report issued by the *New York Times* states:

“There have been deadly attacks in Nigeria almost daily over the past week, including several that struck villages in the north. Each attack has generally involved a bombing and indiscriminate shooting into crowds of unarmed civilians. A suicide bomber killed six people at a church in the northeast on Sunday, and suicide bombers killed many civilians on Friday in Maiduguri, the main city of the northeast” (New York Times (7 July 2015) *Attacks pose trouble for new leader of Nigeria; As he steps up pressure on Boko Haram, group targets unarmed civilians*).

In July 2015 an article released by the *Agence France Presse* notes that:

“In the weeks since President Muhammadu Buhari came to power on May 29, the Islamist militants have stepped up their attacks on civilians, hitting crowded markets, mosques and churches. More than 550 people have been killed, increasing pressure on Buhari to bring an end to the violence” (Agence France Presse (10 July 2015) *Boko Haram gunmen kill eight in Nigeria's remote northeast: residents*).

Commenting on recent attacks, an article published by the *Agence France Presse* in July 2015 states that:

“The attacks come as Nigeria and its neighbours gear up to deploy a strengthened regional force against Boko Haram, which has increased the frequency and intensity of its attacks on civilians” (Agence France Presse (13 July 2015) *Suicide attack at checkpoint in Nigeria's Maiduguri kills four*).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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