



## **Nigeria – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 5 March 2015**

### **Assessments of Nigeria in terms of threats to civilians' lives and situation(s) of armed conflict**

An Amnesty International guide, in answer to the question “How bad is the human rights situation in Nigeria?”, responds:

“Pretty shocking. Boko Haram’s bloody onslaught in north-east Nigeria and the military’s heavy-handed response has killed thousands of civilians and forced hundreds of thousands to flee. Women, men and children live in constant fear of murder and abduction by Boko Haram and of arbitrary arrest, unlawful detention, torture and even execution at the hands of the military. But it is not just the violence in the north-east of the country that is extremely worrying. The problems within Nigeria’s justice system, for example, are deeply entrenched. 68% of the 55,000 people held in Nigeria’s overcrowded prisons have been convicted but have been waiting, many for years, for their cases to conclude. Those who have been convicted often faced grossly unfair trials – with many having suffered torture and lacking access to a lawyer. More than a thousand people are currently languishing on death row, awaiting the day when the State decides to kill them. Ironically, those who commit human rights violations rarely face prosecution.” (Amnesty International (16 February 2015) *Violence, death and injustice: A beginner’s guide to human rights in Nigeria*)

See also Amnesty International report which states:

“A failure to protect hundreds of thousands of civilians could lead to a disastrous humanitarian crisis said Amnesty International with reports of two large scale attacks in Nigeria on the major north-eastern city of Maiduguri as well as the nearby town of Monguno. “These ongoing attacks by Boko Haram are significant and grim news. We believe hundreds of thousands of civilians are now at grave risk,” said Netsanet Belay, Amnesty International’s Africa Director.” (Amnesty International (29 January 2015) *Boko Haram attack on Maiduguri: hundreds of thousands of civilians at grave risk*)

A report from the Jamestown Foundation states:

“Boko Haram’s rampage across northern Nigeria and into neighbouring countries has showed few signs of abating in recent weeks, with its attacks escalating further and spreading into previously untouched areas. On January 8-9, it was reported that the group had carried out a massive series of attacks in previous days on a range of Nigerian towns in the vicinity of Lake Chad, destroying more than 10 villages, displacing hundreds of local people and leaving up to 2,000 people unaccounted for. Other attacks had taken place on January 8 in Yobe State, with Boko Haram militants attacking the village of Katarko, killing 25 and abducting women and children. Days earlier, the group

had won a notable victory in its heartland of Borno State, seizing the town of Baga on January 3-4 from a local international military joint taskforce composing troops from Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger.” (Jamestown Foundation (9 January 2015) *Boko Haram's Violence Accelerates Ahead of Nigerian Elections*)

An Amnesty International report on the alleged failure of the Nigerian state to protect civilians states:

“New evidence shows that the Nigerian military were repeatedly warned of impending Boko Haram attacks on Baga and Monguno which claimed hundreds of lives, and failed to take adequate action to protect civilians, said Amnesty International. According to a senior military source and other evidence gathered by Amnesty International, commanders at the military base in Baga regularly informed military headquarters in November and December 2014 of the threat of a Boko Haram attack and repeatedly requested reinforcements. Other military sources and witnesses have told Amnesty International that the military in Monguno had an advanced warning of the Boko Haram attack on 25 January. ‘It is clear from this evidence that Nigeria’s military leadership woefully and repeatedly failed in their duty to protect civilians of Baga and Monguno despite repeated warnings about an impending threat posed by Boko Haram,’ said Netsanet Belay, Amnesty International’s Africa director.” (Amnesty International (28 January 2015) *Nigeria: Nigerian authorities were warned of Boko Haram attacks on Baga and Monguno*)

An IRIN News report states:

“The terrible news keeps on coming from Nigeria’s embattled northeast. Two suspected child suicide bombers reportedly blew themselves up in a crowded market on Sunday – the second such attack in two days linked to Boko Haram in which young girls were strapped with explosives. Meanwhile, the Islamic extremist group has maintained the momentum of its more conventional attacks, capturing the town of Baga last week on the border with Chad and deliberately executing civilians (earlier reports of up to 2,000 dead by Amnesty International have been disputed by the military. But the true figure remains unknown).” (IRIN News (13 January 2015) *Boko Haram and Nigeria's future - five key questions answered*)

An Agence France Presse report states:

“Two blasts rocked bus stations in embattled northern Nigeria on Tuesday, killing at least 27 people, as violence continues to rage less than five weeks ahead of general elections. The first bombing, which killed 17, ripped through a station on the outskirts of Potiskum, in northeast Yobe state, which has been targeted repeatedly by Boko Haram Islamists. Roughly four hours later, two men blew themselves up after getting off a bus at a busy terminus in Kano, the north’s largest city and another frequent Boko Haram target. Ten people were killed.” (Agence France Presse (24 February 2015) *Blasts hit two Nigeria bus stations, at least 27 dead*)

A BBC News report on this incident states:

“Suicide bombings at bus stations in two major commercial centres in northern Nigeria have killed at least 27 people, police and hospital sources say. A bomber first struck in Potiskum, and hours later a second attack took place in Kano, the main northern city. Hospital sources said 17 people were killed in Potiskum while police put the number of dead in Kano at 10. Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan blamed militant Islamist group Boko Haram for the bombings.” (BBC News (24 February 2015) *Nigeria suicide bombers target Potiskum and Kano buses*)

An Agence France Presse report states:

“Hundreds of Boko Haram militants stormed the town of Askira Uba in northeast Nigeria, burning homes and public buildings, as attacks continued despite a regional campaign against the Islamist rebels, witnesses said Tuesday. Residents able to flee the town in Borno state left in droves, with only the sick and elderly remaining behind through the insurgents' rampage.” (Agence France Presse (17 February 2015) *Boko Haram destroys northeast Nigeria town: witnesses*)

An Agence France Presse report on pre-election violence states:

“Political violence in the run-up to Nigeria's election has killed 58 people, with rising ‘hate speech’ between rival camps threatening to spark further unrest, the country's human rights commission (NHRC) said Friday. ‘If urgent steps are not taken to arrest further escalation, Nigeria's 2015 general elections would confront a high risk of significant violence,’ the commission said in a new report. Such violence ‘could pose a clear and present danger to the stability of the country and its neighbours’. The Nigerian election, initially scheduled for Saturday, was postponed by six weeks because of struggles in distributing voter identity cards and the Boko Haram Islamist conflict in the northeast, which has killed 13,000 people in six years. The NHRC, which began tracking political violence in December, noted Nigeria's long history of bloodshed following elections, especially in the religiously divided central states.” (Agence France Presse (13 February 2015) *Nigeria: Pre-election violence kills 58 in Nigeria: study*)

See also Agence France Report which states:

“Explosion and gunfire rocked an election rally in southern Nigeria's Rivers state on Tuesday, killing one police officer and injuring four others while a reporter covering the event was stabbed. The violence erupted at the opposition All Progressives Congress (APC) meeting of governorship candidate Dakuku Peterside in Okrika, the hometown of President Goodluck Jonathan's wife Patience. ‘Five police officers were shot. One of them is dead and four are lying in critical condition at this hospital,’ Peterside said. Peterside and a source at the private Channels television network said its reporter at the scene, Charles Erukaa, had been stabbed and was being taken to a hospital. Political tensions have raged in Rivers state since outgoing governor Rotimi Amaechi defected to the APC from the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in 2013.” (Agence France Presse (17 February 2015) *Nigeria: Explosion, gunfire rock election rally in Nigeria oil region: witnesses, TV*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit 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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