



**Nigeria – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 23 December 2014**

**Any Up-to- date information on the activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria.  
Any UNHCR report on Boko Haram and Muslim/Christian conflict in Nigeria**

A report from the Norwegian Refugee Council/Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre states:

“Attacks by Islamist Boko Haram militants increased dramatically from mid-2014, causing an unprecedented protection crisis in northeastern Nigeria. The insurgency has reportedly forced 1.5 million people to flee to other parts of the country and at least another 150,000 have taken refuge in neighbouring Chad, Niger and Cameroon. Government counter-insurgency operations have also contributed to insecurity and displacement, both in the north-east and in neighbouring countries.” (Norwegian Refugee Council/Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (NRC/IDMC) (9 December 2014) *Nigeria: Multiple displacement crises overshadowed by Boko Haram*)

A Human Rights Watch report states:

“Since 2009, Nigeria’s homegrown Islamist insurgent movement, Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati wal-Jihad, popularly known as Boko Haram, which means 'Western Education is Forbidden,' has waged a violent campaign against the Nigerian government in its bid to impose Islamic law. The attacks have increasingly targeted civilians, mainly in the northeastern states of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa.<sup>2</sup> Borno State, the birthplace of Boko Haram, has suffered the highest number of attacks. A range of issues, including widespread poverty, corruption, security force abuse, and longstanding impunity for a range of crimes have created fertile ground in Nigeria for militant armed groups like Boko Haram. In an October 2012 report, Human Rights Watch estimated that some 1,500 civilians had died as a result of the violence; by November 2013, estimates showed that this figure had risen to 5,000 deaths.<sup>3</sup> In the first half of 2014, Human Rights Watch documented the death of at least 2,053 civilians from Boko Haram attacks. The total estimates from 2009 through July 2014, revealed that more than 7,000 civilians have died during the Boko Haram related unrest and violence in northeast Nigeria.” (Human Rights Watch (29 October 2014) *“Those Terrible Weeks in their Camp”*: *Boko Haram Violence against Women and Girls in Northeast Nigeria*, p.13)

In a section headed “Groups Targeted by Boko Haram” this report states:

“Human Rights Watch research suggests that Boko Haram has targeted Christians, students, traditional leaders, Moslems who oppose its activities, and civil servants and their family members. Boko Haram has burned

numerous churches, some with worshippers trapped inside; killed men who refused to convert to Islam; and abducted Christian women.” (ibid, p.16)

A report published by the Jamestown Foundation, in a section headed “Northeast vs. Northwest Nigeria”, states:

“Boko Haram's main area of operations is in northeast Nigeria, particularly Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States, where it controls approximately 20 towns. The largest towns that fell under Boko Haram's control in 2014 are Bama with 200,000 people and Mubi of 150,000 people (the latter has since been retaken by anti-Boko Haram vigilantes). When Boko Haram captured Mubi, it first occupied key government and religious buildings, appointed a new amir and renamed the city as Madinat al-Islam (City of Islam in Arabic). This is consistent with Boko Haram's long-stated objective to kill pre-existing amirs in areas under its control and install its own amirs to ensure - in the words of Boko Haram leader Abubakr Shekau, ‘they will never be part of Nigeria again’. Boko Haram also renamed Gwoza as Dar al-Hikma and installed its own amir in this and other towns. Several days before capturing Malam Fatori on Nigeria's border with Niger, a Chadian faction of the group issued a video saying they captured anti-Boko Haram vigilantes after they crossed into the ‘Islamic State’ and then showed the beheading of three vigilantes. In areas under Boko Haram's control, the militants are imposing Shari'a punishments such as stoning, whipping, hand-cutting and beheadings and are recruiting hundreds, if not thousands, of teenage boys and girls, while threatening those who do not join ‘jihad’ with death. The more than 250 schoolgirls Boko Haram kidnapped in Chibok are likely being used as modern day ‘comfort women,’ whose children will grow up steeped in Boko Haram's ideology about the caliphate that it has declared and their offspring will become the next generation of radical militants. Boko Haram is also cutting off road and bridge access and placing landmines around Borno's perimeter to turn it into an ‘island’ that will be the base of its new Islamic State.” (Jamestown Foundation (19 December 2014) *Boko Haram, Islamic State and the Archipelago Strategy*)

An IRIN News report states:

“More than 400,000 people in northeastern Nigeria, who have been forced to flee their homes due to ongoing violence by militant Islamist group Boko Haram, are in ‘urgent need’ of assistance, humanitarian agencies say. This number is likely to increase as attacks against civilians escalate. ‘There's a major crisis going on in the northeast, and it's not being recognized for the crisis it is,’ said Sarah Ndikumana, country director for the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Nigeria. ‘Since late August, the insurgency movement has been aggressively and progressively taking Adamawa State over and establishing their presence, and what this means is that hundreds of thousands have fled.’” (IRIN News (28 November 2014) *Northeast Nigeria: “Hundreds of thousands have fled”*)

A report from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) states:

“Since July 2009, the northeastern part of Nigeria has been affected by unrest and violence with clashes between insurgents and government security forces. More than 3,000 people are reported to have been killed in the affected states since 2009, with violence said to have spiraled out of control.

President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in three northeastern states (Adamawa, Borno and Yobe) in May 2013 and sent additional troops to fight what he has described as 'an open rebellion'. Reports indicate that violence in these three states continues to escalate and that humanitarian access has been considerably hampered. UNHCR is not present in the parts of the northeast that remain under a state of emergency. Due to the prevailing insecurity, the office has also not been able to visit that part of the country. Civilians are heavily affected by security operations implemented by government forces and many have been killed or wounded, including in direct clashes, bombings and indiscriminate shootings. According to news reports, insurgents have been targeting government institutions, in particular schools, allegedly because the insurgents consider education that is not based on the Koran as un-Islamic. Hundreds of civilians, including many students and teachers, are reported to have been killed or wounded in such attacks. Tens of thousands of students are reportedly unable to go to school. Hundreds of persons accused of having links with the insurgents have reportedly been arbitrarily detained in northern Nigeria by government forces. Many are allegedly detained incommunicado for lengthy periods without charge or trial and without access to lawyers and families.” (UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (29 October 2013) *International Protection Considerations with regard to people fleeing northeastern Nigeria (the states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa)*, p.1)

See also UN High Commissioner for Refugees report which, in the Introduction (paragraph 1), states:

“Since the publication of UNHCR’s International Protection Considerations with regard to people fleeing the states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa in northeastern Nigeria in October 2013, an upsurge of violence has affected civilians in the region. Since the start of 2014, the conflict is reported to have led to more than 4,000 deaths. The insurgents have used suicide attacks, bombings and raids, almost exclusively targeting the civilian population. The insurgents have reportedly killed, kidnapped, used forced conscription and abducted women and girls. As the security situation in the northeastern part of Nigeria remains uncertain and volatile, internal and external displacement continues to escalate. Following attacks by the insurgents in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa in late August 2014, more than 10,000 Nigerians fled to Cameroon, Chad and Niger. In May 2014 the National Assembly renewed the state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states for a further six-month period.” (UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (October 2014) *International Protection Considerations with regard to people fleeing northeastern Nigeria (the states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa) and surrounding region – Update I*, p.1)

Paragraph 2 of this report states:

“There are increasing reports of insurgent attacks targeting villages, markets, hospitals and schools in the northeastern states, forcing large numbers of people to flee. The attacks are also reported to have caused substantial damage to civilian structures, with bridges, homes and entire villages reportedly having been destroyed. The insurgents have reportedly seized towns and villages in northeastern Nigeria, including Gwoza, Bama, and Banki in Borno State, Bara in Yobe State, and Michika, Madagali and Gulak in Adamawa State.” (ibid, pp.1-2)

Numerous reports were found referring to attacks attributed to Boko Haram, of which the following is a selection.

A Voice of America News report states:

“At least 48 people have been killed in a suicide bombing at a school in northeastern Nigeria, many of them students. The blast occurred Monday in the town of Potiskum, in the state of Yobe, as students gathered for a morning assembly at a government-run secondary school focused on science. Medical workers said at least 79 people were injured in the blast, many of them seriously. Witnesses said the bomber was dressed like a student. Potiskum is located in Yobe, one of three states placed under a state of emergency by the government last year due to the Boko Haram insurgency. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack, but suspicion fell on Boko Haram.” (Voice of America News (10 November 2014) *Nigeria School Bombing Kills Nearly 50, Injures Dozens*)

See also Voice of America News report which states:

“At least 81 people have died in a series of explosions followed by gunfire outside the central mosque in Kano, Nigeria, just after Friday prayers began. The mosque was crowded with worshippers. Witnesses say they have seen scores of people injured and feared dead after two bombs exploded in a courtyard outside Kano's Grand Mosque and a third detonated nearby.” (Voice of America News (28 November 2014) *Bombs, Gunmen Kill Scores in Kano, Nigeria*)

A Christian Solidarity Worldwide report states:

“The Kano State capital remains tense following a gun and suicide bomb attack on the Central Mosque by the Islamist terror group Boko Haram on 28 November that claimed the lives of over 100 people, including children. According to local reports, the attack began with a car bomb which exploded as Juma'at prayers (Friday prayers) began and was followed by two explosions inside the mosque. Worshippers who attempted to flee were gunned down by sect members stationed outside the building, two of whom were eventually overpowered and lynched when they ran out of ammunition. Kano Central Mosque is attached to the palace of the Emir of Kano, who made a speech there last week urging northerners to take up arms against Boko Haram expressing doubts at the ability of Nigeria's armed forces to protect civilians and end the insurgency. CSW has also received unconfirmed reports that a female would-be suicide bomber dressed in a hijab was apprehended at Murtala Specialist Hospital in Kano at around noon on 30 November. Her bomb was deactivated and she was lynched.” (Christian Solidarity Worldwide (2 December 2014) *Nigeria: Kano mosque bombing claims over 100 lives*)

A BBC News report states:

“Suspected Boko Haram militants have struck in two state capitals in north-east Nigeria, with suicide attacks by female bombers in Maiduguri and a raid on a police base in Damaturu. At least five people were killed in the twin blasts at a crowded market in Maiduguri, police said. In Damaturu, explosions

and gunfire were heard as militants rampaged through the city, residents said. Boko Haram has vowed to create an Islamic state in areas it controls. The blasts at Monday market in Maiduguri, the state capital of Borno, were caused by 'two girls', witness Mallam Muhammadu told Associated Press (AP) news agency." (BBC News (1 December 2014) *Nigeria's 'Boko Haram attacks Maiduguri and Damaturu'*)

An Agence France Presse report states:

"Boko Haram is using female suicide bombers to sow wider panic and fear across Nigeria as well as gain greater publicity for its cause, experts said, after two fresh attacks in a week. The attacks, in Azare in the northeastern state of Bauchi and the Niger state town of Kontagora in the northwest, came after four attacks in a week in the northern city of Kano in July. In June, another woman was said to have blown herself up in a twin bombing in the southwestern city of Lagos, although her involvement was never confirmed by the authorities. Earlier that month, Nigeria's first female suicide bombing saw a middle-aged woman detonate her explosives at a military barracks in the northern state of Gombe." (Agence France Presse (18 November 2014) *Nigeria: Boko Haram sows fear through female suicide bombers*)

A UNHCR report states:

"The UN refugee agency reported on Friday that a Boko Haram attack this week on the northern Nigerian town of Damassak left 50 people dead and forced at least 3,000 to flee to the Diffa region in neighbouring Niger. 'Dammasak, which lies just a few kilometres from the Niger border, was reportedly captured by Boko Haram on November 24,' said a UNHCR spokesman, adding: 'Our teams in Diffa say that people are still arriving in Niger from Nigeria as a result of the attack.'" (UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) ( 28 November 2014) *Deadly Boko Haram attack forces more than 3,000 to flee to Niger*)

An Agence France Presse report states:

"Suspected Boko Haram gunmen on Thursday stormed two towns in northeast Nigeria, raiding banks and burning government buildings as well as political party offices, residents told AFP. Scores of gunmen dressed in military uniform arrived in Bajoga, 60 kilometres (37 miles) from Gombe city in a convoy of 20 vehicles at about 7 am (0600 GMT). Troops managed to push out the attackers and they then drove towards the town of Ashaka five kilometres away near the border with Yobe state to the northeast. Both raids came after an attack on the Yobe state capital, Damaturu, on Monday, which left more than 150 people dead, including 38 police and six soldiers. Militant fighters in that raid are thought to have come from the Buni Yadi area in the southern part of Yobe, which Boko Haram has controlled for some time." (Agence France Presse (4 December 2014) *Nigeria: Boko Haram raid two northeast Nigeria towns?: residents*)

A Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty report states:

"Nigerian officials and witnesses say suspected Boko Haram militants have killed more than 30 people and kidnapped at least 185 from a village in northeastern Nigeria. Officials say those abducted from the village of Gumsuri

included women, children, and young boys, who were carted away on trucks toward the Sambisa Forest, a notorious rebel stronghold. The mass abduction occurred December 14, but news only emerged December 18, after survivors reached the city of Maiduguri.” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (18 December 2014) *Boko Haram Kidnaps At Least 185 In Nigeria*)

See also CNN report which states:

“The militant group has bombed schools, churches and mosques; kidnapped women and children; and assassinated politicians and religious leaders alike. This week, the group kidnapped at least 185 women and children and killed 32 in a raid on the village of Gumsuri in northeastern Nigeria. Militants shot down men and threw petrol bombs before herding women and children together and taking them away in trucks, a local government official said. One survivor reported militants had ‘destroyed almost half the village.’” (CNN (18 December 2014) *Boko Haram: A bloody insurgency, a growing challenge*)

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.

#### **References:**

Agence France Presse (4 December 2014) *Nigeria: Boko Haram raid two northeast Nigeria towns?: residents*

<http://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/boko-haram-raid-two-northeast-nigeria-towns-residents>

(Accessed 23 December 2014)

Agence France Presse (18 November 2014) *Nigeria: Boko Haram sows fear through female suicide bombers*

<http://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/boko-haram-sows-fear-through-female-suicide-bombers>

(Accessed 23 December 2014)

BBC News (1 December 2014) *Nigeria's 'Boko Haram attacks Maiduguri and Damaturu'*

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-30280888#>

(Accessed 23 December 2014)

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (2 December 2014) *Nigeria: Kano mosque bombing claims over 100 lives*

<http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/article.asp?t=press&id=1810>

(Accessed 23 December 2014)

CNN (18 December 2014) *Boko Haram: A bloody insurgency, a growing challenge*

<http://edition.cnn.com/2014/04/17/world/africa/boko-haram-explainer/>

(Accessed 23 December 2014)

Human Rights Watch (29 October 2014) *“Those Terrible Weeks in their Camp”*: Boko Haram Violence against Women and Girls in Northeast Nigeria  
<http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/nigeria1014web.pdf>  
(Accessed 23 December 2014)

IRIN News (28 November 2014) *Northeast Nigeria: “Hundreds of thousands have fled”*  
<http://www.irinnews.org/report/100890/northeast-nigeria-hundreds-of-thousands-have-fled>  
(Accessed 23 December 2014)

Jamestown Foundation (19 December 2014) *Boko Haram, Islamic State and the Archipelago Strategy*  
<http://www.refworld.org/docid/5497fb904.html>

Norwegian Refugee Council/Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (NRC/IDMC) (9 December 2014) *Nigeria: Multiple displacement crises overshadowed by Boko Haram*  
<http://www.refworld.org/docid/548e9eb44.html>  
(Accessed 23 December 2014)

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (18 December 2014) *Boko Haram Kidnaps At Least 185 In Nigeria*  
<http://www.rferl.org/content/boko-haram-kidnapping-nigeria/26750903.html>  
(Accessed 23 December 2014)

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) ( 28 November 2014) *Deadly Boko Haram attack forces more than 3,000 to flee to Niger*  
<http://www.unhcr.org/5478554a6.html>  
(Accessed 23 December 2014)

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (October 2014) *International Protection Considerations with regard to people fleeing northeastern Nigeria (the states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa) and surrounding region – Update I*  
<http://www.refworld.org/docid/5448e0ad4.html>  
(Accessed 23 December 2014)

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (29 October 2013) *International Protection Considerations with regard to people fleeing northeastern Nigeria (the states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa)*  
<http://www.refworld.org/docid/526fcea47.html>  
(Accessed 23 December 2014)

Voice of America News (28 November 2014) *Bombs, Gunmen Kill Scores in Kano, Nigeria*  
<http://www.voanews.com/content/bomb-explodes-crowded-nigeria-mosque/2538081.html>  
(Accessed 23 December 2014)

Voice of America News (10 November 2014) *Nigeria School Bombing Kills Nearly 50, Injures Dozens*

<http://www.voanews.com/content/dozens-killed-school-bombing-nigeria/2514352.html>

(Accessed 23 December 2014)

**Sources Consulted:**

BBC News

Electronic Immigration Network

European Country of Origin Information Network

Human Rights Watch

IRIN News

Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database

UNHCR Refworld

Voice of America