



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)  
LEGAL AID BOARD

## **Nigeria - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Friday 12 & Monday 15 July 2013**

### **Information on anti Boko Haram vigilantes groups in Maiduguri**

A publication in June 2013 by the *Associated Press* points out that:

“Young men armed with machetes and sticks have entered the streets of Nigeria's biggest city in the northeast to target suspected Islamic extremists, even as soldiers continued an offensive against the radical fighters. The vigilante group, known as "Civilian JTF," a play off the acronym used to describe the joint military and police taskforce in the region, started taking up arms after President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency May 14 in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states a territory of around 155,000 square kilometers (60,000 square miles) of the Sahel bordering Cameroon, Chad and Niger” (Associated Press (12 June 2013) *Vigilantes target extremists in northeast Nigeria*).

This document also states:

“The members of Civilian JTF have now come under attack from extremists for pointing out suspects to soldiers. An AP reporter met a group of the young men belonging to the vigilantes recently in the streets of Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state and the spiritual home of the extremist network Boko Haram. The men ranged in age from 17 to 25 and carried machetes, iron bars and batons to protect themselves. The men said they formed their own patrols after becoming tired of soldiers routinely rounding up any young man found in a neighborhood after an extremist attack in the city. Soldiers in Nigeria's military, drawn from across the more than 250 ethnicities in the nation, can have difficulties speaking local languages and understanding customs in regions far from their home. The young men said their local knowledge helps the soldiers do their job better” (Ibid).

In June 2013 *IRIN News* notes:

“Youths in northern Nigeria's Borno State, where many members of the radical Islamist group Boko Haram (BH) have been arrested in recent weeks, are increasingly joining vigilante gangs to pass on the identity of BH members to the military-police Joint Task Force (JTF) following a string of deadly attacks on schools, according to vigilante groups and residents of Borno State capital, Maiduguri” (IRIN News (27 June 2013) *Nigeria school attacks spur vigilante groups*).

A report issued in June 2013 by *This Day* states:

“Youths in Borno State have formed a vigilante group to hunt suspected Islamic militants, majority of who have been forced to flee their enclave in the wake of the ongoing military onslaught that followed the declaration of state of emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States” (This Day (12 June 2013) *Borno Youths Form Vigilante Group to Hunt Boko Haram Members*).

This document also points out that:

“Called "Civilian JTF", the youths go from street to street and house to house arresting identified Boko Haram members and handing them over to the operatives of the Joint Task Force (JTF). Some of the "Civilian JTF" members seen on the streets of Maiduguri, were carrying cutlasses, iron bars and wooden batons. Members of the group who are mostly between the age of 17 and 25 years, told journalists that they decided to hunt down Boko Haram members because they had brought untold hardship on residents and jeopardised their future” (ibid).

A report published in July 2013 by *Deutsche Welle* notes that:

“Nigeria's security forces are enlisting untrained young men armed with machetes and sticks for their fight against Islamists. These vigilantes could be hard to control and give the spiral of violence another twist. Police in Maiduguri, capital of Borno State in northern Nigeria, say they have teamed up with a vigilante group Civilian JTF in order to rid the city of terrorism” (Deutsche Welle (9 July 2013) *Govt Deploys Vigilantes Against Boko Haram*).

This document also states:

“The vigilante group and the regular security forces want to stop suspected members of the Islamist militant sect Boko Haram from returning to the capital from where they were expelled in an army offensive in May. The security forces handed over check points to the vigilante group in June. Civilian JTF comprises of some 500 youths selected equally from all 15 wards in Maiduguri, who act as informers for the police and army. A ward is a subdivision of one of Nigeria's local government areas (LGAs). Supporters of the vigilantes say they have local knowledge denied to soldiers from other parts of Nigeria” (ibid).

In July 2013 *This Day* notes:

“Members of the Civilian JTF, a vigilante group in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, and those of the outlawed Boko Haram sect, Wednesday clashed, resulting in the death of unspecified number of people. Members of the vigilante group, comprising youths which was formed in the wake of the military expedition occasioned by the declaration of state of emergency in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States, have in recent times launched a manhunt for the insurgents, forcing many to flee the troubled town. However, worried by the activities of the group, which have led to the exposure of the many suspected terrorists, Boko Haram had warned them to stop exposing its members or risk death” (This Day (4 July 2013) *Civilian JTF Boko Haram Engage in Gun Duel*).

A report issued in July 2013 by *Agence France Presse* points out that:

“A vigilante group claiming to help authorities battle insurgents in Nigeria's northeast has set fire to a top politician's home after accusing him of links to Islamist extremist group Boko Haram, residents said Tuesday. Nigeria's military has welcomed and encouraged the vigilante group in its fight against Boko Haram, but Monday's incident in the city of Maiduguri illustrated the risks in allowing it to operate” (Agence France Presse (2 July 2013) *Vigilantes burn Nigerian politician's home in restive city*).

*Voice of America* in June 2013 states:

“Witnesses in Nigeria say at least 21 people have been killed in the northeastern city of Maiduguri in the past two days, as government forces press their offensive against Boko Haram militants. The government says at least eight militants were killed in the embattled city on Thursday. The Friday killings were described as an apparent retaliation against local pro-government vigilantes who had helped government troops identify militants” (Voice of America (8 June 2013) *Witnesses: At Least 21 Dead in Northern Nigeria Violence*).

In June 2013 *Reuters* notes:

“Suspected Islamist insurgents who hid weapons inside a coffin have shot dead 13 people in an attack targeting informants in the northeastern city of Maiduguri, two witnesses said on Sunday. Friday’s attack came as Nigeria’s military makes its most concerted effort yet to end a four-year insurgency by Boko Haram, a sect that has killed thousands in a campaign to create a state governed by Islamic law in Nigeria’s northeast” (Reuters (9 June 2013) *Nigeria Islamists hide guns in coffin, kill 13: witnesses*).

This article also points out that:

“The military claim to have driven Boko Haram fighters out of Maiduguri and from their camps near borders with Chad and Niger. But around ten men pretending to be driving to a burial came to an area of Maiduguri late on Friday, pulled the guns from the coffin and opened fire on some houses where vigilantes who aid the military live, witnesses said. “The Boko Haram killed 13 residents during their sporadic gunshots,” said an eyewitness, Saleh Ibrahim. He said soldiers later shot dead six insurgents whose bodies were left by the road. A spokesman for the military joint task force (JTF), Sagir Musa, declined to comment on the attack but said vigilante groups in the area of Maiduguri targeted by the gunmen had helped identify Boko Haram suspects” (ibid).

A news report issued in June 2013 by *BBC News* states:

“Suspected Islamist militants in north-east Nigeria have killed at least nine school children, the second targeted attack on students in recent days. Gunmen believed to be from the Boko Haram group opened fire on the pupils, who were in school uniform, at a school on the outskirts of Maiduguri. Boko Haram said the attack was to punish youngsters for helping the army. Some survivors said it was a response to the emergence of vigilante groups in the town” (BBC News (19 June 2013) *Nigeria militants kill school children in Maiduguri*).

This document also states that:

“...vigilante groups have been springing up in Maiduguri with young men wielding metal pipes, clubs and machetes handing suspected militants over to the army” (ibid).

Research issued in June 2013 by *Federal Office for Migration and Asylum of Germany* notes:

“On 17 June 2013 around 3pm members of the Islamist Boko Haram stormed „Ansarudeen Private School“ in Jajeri, a suburb of Maiduguri (capital of the north Eastern state of Borno). They shot nine students and seriously wounded several others. On the same day Boko Haram members attacked fishermen on Alau river in

the outskirts of Maiduguri. They ordered the fishermen who came from the boroughs of Gwange and Hausari to stand together. The 13 persons standing in this group were shot after having been told that their children were responsible for the fishermen's fate, an eyewitness reported. Because the children would pick up Boko Haram members and hand them over to the soldiers who then killed them. Only one day earlier at around 9pm Boko Haram members had attacked the dormitories of the „Government Secondary School Damaturu“ in Damaturu (capital of the neighbouring state of Yobe) and a nearby military road check point and assassinated seven students and two teachers. Two of the attackers were killed, three were arrested. Obviously these murders of students and fishermen were made in retaliation for the formation of vigilante groups by over 500 young people in Maiduguri - mostly from the boroughs of Gwange I and II, Blabirin, Mafoni, and Hausari, but also by some youths from Yobe state. These groups identify Boko Haram members, seize them and hand them over to the security forces. In an email to journalists Boko Haram spokesman Abu Zinnira stated on 18 June 2013 that now the young people in Borno and Yobe states would also be targets of attacks, because they actively supported the security forces in their fight against Boko Haram. President Jonathan called the young people "new national heroes" “ (Federal Office for Migration and Asylum of Germany (24 June 2013) *Information Centre Asylum and Migration Briefing Notes (24 June 2013)*, p.5).

## References

Agence France Presse (2 July 2013) *Vigilantes burn Nigerian politician's home in restive city*

[http://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/legal/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21\\_T17789308926&format=GNBFULL&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=21&resultsUrlKey=29\\_T17789308933&cisb=22\\_T17789308932&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=10903&docNo=24](http://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/legal/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21_T17789308926&format=GNBFULL&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=21&resultsUrlKey=29_T17789308933&cisb=22_T17789308932&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=10903&docNo=24) This is a subscription database

Accessed Monday 15 July 2013

Associated Press (12 June 2013) *Vigilantes target extremists in northeast Nigeria*

[http://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/legal/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21\\_T17789308926&format=GNBFULL&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=61&resultsUrlKey=29\\_T17789308933&cisb=22\\_T17789308932&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=304478&docNo=63](http://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/legal/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21_T17789308926&format=GNBFULL&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=61&resultsUrlKey=29_T17789308933&cisb=22_T17789308932&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=304478&docNo=63) This is a subscription database

Accessed Monday 15 July 2013

BBC News (19 June 2013) *Nigeria militants kill school children in Maiduguri*

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-22963515>

Accessed Friday 12 July 2013

Deutsche Welle (9 July 2013) *Govt Deploys Vigilantes Against Boko Haram*

[http://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/legal/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21\\_T17789308926&format=GNBFULL&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29\\_T17789308933&cisb=22\\_T17789308932&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=8320&docNo=2](http://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/legal/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21_T17789308926&format=GNBFULL&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T17789308933&cisb=22_T17789308932&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=8320&docNo=2) This is a subscription database

Accessed Monday 15 July 2013

Federal Office for Migration and Asylum of Germany (24 June 2013) *Information Centre Asylum and Migration Briefing Notes (24 June 2013)*

[http://www.refworld.org/publisher,DEU\\_FOMA,,NGA,51d3d8939,0.html](http://www.refworld.org/publisher,DEU_FOMA,,NGA,51d3d8939,0.html)

Accessed Friday 12 July 2013

IRIN News (27 June 2013) *Nigeria school attacks spur vigilante groups*  
<http://www.ein.org.uk/print/members/country-report/nigeria-school-attacks-spur-vigilante-groups>

This is a subscription database

Accessed Friday 12 July 2013

Reuters (9 June 2013) *Nigeria Islamists hide guns in coffin, kill 13: witnesses*  
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/09/us-nigeria-bokoharam-idUSBRE9580F520130609>

Accessed Friday 12 July 2013

This Day (4 July 2013) *Civilian JTF Boko Haram Engage in Gun Duel*  
[http://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/legal/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21\\_T17789308926&format=GNBFULL&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=11&resultsURLKey=29\\_T17789308933&cisb=22\\_T17789308932&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=8320&docNo=16](http://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/legal/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21_T17789308926&format=GNBFULL&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=11&resultsURLKey=29_T17789308933&cisb=22_T17789308932&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=8320&docNo=16) This is a subscription database

Accessed Monday 15 July 2013

This Day (12 June 2013) *Borno Youths Form Vigilante Group to Hunt Boko Haram Members*  
[http://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/legal/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21\\_T17789308926&format=GNBFULL&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=61&resultsURLKey=29\\_T17789308933&cisb=22\\_T17789308932&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=8320&docNo=62](http://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/legal/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21_T17789308926&format=GNBFULL&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=61&resultsURLKey=29_T17789308933&cisb=22_T17789308932&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=8320&docNo=62) This is a subscription database

Accessed Monday 15 July 2013

Voice of America (8 June 2013) *Witnesses: At Least 21 Dead in Northern Nigeria Violence*  
<http://www.voanews.com/content/witnesses--at-least-21-dead-in-northern-nigeria-violence/1678065.html>

Accessed Friday 12 July 2013

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.

#### Sources Consulted

Amnesty International  
BBC News  
Electronic Immigration Network  
European Country of Origin Information Network  
Freedom House  
Google  
Human Rights Watch  
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre  
International Crisis Group  
IRIN News  
Lexis Nexis  
Minority Rights Group International  
Online Newspapers  
Refugee Documentation Centre E-Library  
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database  
Reliefweb  
Reuters  
United Kingdom Home Office  
United States Department of State  
UNHCR Refworld