



# Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Nigeria – July to December 2024

31 December 2024

**01 July 2024**

## **North-west: Deadly attack on rural community**

According to media reports, unknown persons attacked the village of Maidabino in the Danmusa Local Government Area (LGA) in the north-western state of Katsina on the night of 23.06.24, killing at least seven people and kidnapping around 100. The attackers arrived at the scene on motorbikes. Recently, several similar attacks have occurred in Katsina State (cf. BN of 26.02.24 and 17.06.24).<sup>1</sup>

## **Several priests kidnapped**

Three Catholic priests have been kidnapped in different federal states within a few days. On 24.06.24 the media reported the release of the kidnap victim who was abducted on 09.06.24 in the northern state of Kaduna already on the following day. A priest kidnapped on 16.06.24 in the south-eastern state of Anambra is still in the hands of his kidnappers. The same is true for a priest abducted on 22.06.24 in the north-western state of Zamfara, the report said. Furthermore, at least two other priests were kidnapped in Nigeria in May 2024, however, they were released after a few days. Media reports indicated on 28.06.24 that a ransom is demanded for the release of the priest kidnapped on 22.06.24. Catholic priests have also been kidnapped in the past (cf. BN of 02.01.23). Whenever the victims are released, it may possibly remain unknown whether a ransom was paid.<sup>2</sup>

## **Human trafficking: Nigerian girls freed in Senegal**

Members of the Senegalese NGO La Lumière, in cooperation with the Nigerian embassy in Dakar, freed around 25 trafficked Nigerian girls in Senegal on 23.06.24 and returned them to Nigeria. According to media reports, the girls and young women aged between 11 and 24 were trafficked to Senegal via the city of Cotonou in Benin and across the Malian-Senegalese border, they were then forced into prostitution in the regions of Tamaccounda and Kedougou. According to a media report, the girls are from the Nigerian states of Edo, Delta, Abia and Plateau. The rescue of the girls is a result of increased cooperation between Senegal and Nigeria to combat human trafficking. The Trafficking in Persons Report published by the U.S. Department of State in June 2024 shows that Nigeria does not fully meet minimum standards to combat human trafficking but continues to make considerable efforts to achieve them. Success stories from the Nigerian National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) regularly mention the number of victims of human trafficking freed during rescue operations and the number of people convicted of human trafficking (cf. BN of 04.10.21, 25.04. and 25.07.22, 07.08. and 09.10.23).<sup>3</sup>

**08 July 2024**

**Northeast: Dozens killed in suicide attacks**

On 29.06.24, several female suicide bombers used explosives to kill over 30 people and injure dozens more in the town of Gwoza near the border with Cameroon. According to media reports, the suicide attacks took place at a wedding party, a funeral and a hospital. Authorities and the media assume that one of the two Islamist groups active in the region, Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), commissioned the attacks, the reports said. Already in the past Boko Haram had used women and girls to carry out suicide attacks in northeastern Nigeria.<sup>4</sup>

**Benue State: Thousands dead within a year**

In the period from January 2023 to February 2024, around 2,600 people, mostly women and children, were killed in at least 135 attacks on 50 villages in the state of Benue. This is according to media reports from 26.06.24, which refer to figures researched by Amnesty International. Of the 23 local government areas (LGAs) in the state, which is located in the eastern part of the Middle Belt, 18 are regularly threatened by armed assailants. The identity of the perpetrators usually remains unknown (cf. BN of 05.02.24).<sup>5</sup>

**Kogi State: Passenger bus hijacked**

On 03.07.24, unknown criminals hijacked a coach travelling from Benin City to Abuja in Kogi State. According to media reports, it was a bus with 13 seat and the driver was also kidnapped. A representative of the bus company stated that the exact number of people kidnapped is not yet known. Should the relatives receive ransom demands they should contact the bus company, he said. The company cooperates with the police. Kidnappings to extort ransom money are quite regular in various regions of Nigeria (cf. BN of 13.05., 17.06. and 01.07.24).<sup>6</sup>

**15 July 2024**

**Lagos: Prisoner released without charge after 15 years**

On 01.07.24, the Lagos State High Court ordered the release of a man who had been detained for 15 years without trial. According to media reports, the man had been held at the Kirikiri Medium Correctional Centre in Lagos without any criminal trial ever being initiated. To justify the unconditional release that has now been ordered, a judge of the Lagos State High Court stated that the continued detention was illegal and violated fundamental human rights. The reason for the considerable delay in the indictment was irrelevant, the judge said.

According to the Nigerian Correctional Service's official figures Nigerian prisons housed a total of 82,895 people as of 08.07.24, of these 80,984 men and 1,911 women. Around 69 % of the inmates are not convicted criminals but pre-trial detainees. This rate is slightly higher than in 2022 and 2023 (cf. BN of 31.10.22 and 08.01.24). According to the UN, one of the reasons for the overcrowding of detention centres in Nigeria is the frequent imposition of pre-trial detention, which can last several years. To ease the pressure of the overcrowding in detention centres, 4,068 detainees, held for non-payment of relatively minor fines, were released nationwide on 18.11.23 (cf. BN of 20.11.23).<sup>7</sup>

**Human trafficking: Nigerian women freed**

Five young women trafficked from the central Nigerian state of Benue to Côte d'Ivoire on 15.06.24 have been rescued from the clutches of a human trafficking syndicate. According to media reports of 03.07.24, the women, aged between 18 and 21, were taken into the care of the Nigerian embassy in Côte d'Ivoire. They stated that they had been abducted by a syndicate directed by a woman from the Nigerian Local Government Area (LGA) of Kwande for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The liberation of another Nigerian woman, still a minor, who was abducted together with the five freed women, is still pending. All six are related to each other. A representative of the Nigerian National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) reported on 02.07.24 that the woman considered to be the head of the human trafficking syndicate had been arrested in the meantime. NAPTIP success reports regularly mention the number of victims of human trafficking freed during rescue operations and the number of people convicted of human trafficking (cf. BN of 04.10.21, 25.04. and 25.07.22 as well as 07.08. and 09.10.23). On 23.06.24, 25 Nigerian female victims of human trafficking were freed in Senegal (cf. BN of 01.07.24).<sup>8</sup>

**22 July 2024**

**South-west: Fulani herdsmen should leave the region**

According to media reports, Sunday Adeyemo, a Nigerian activist known as Sunday Igboho, who advocates self-determination for the Yoruba, once again urged cattle herders of the Fulani ethnic group to leave the forest regions in south-west Nigeria on 15.07.24. He said that if they failed to do so voluntarily, they would be expelled. The reports say that the prominent activist had expressed concern that non-sedentary Fulani were making it difficult for people in this region to farm by grazing their cattle on their fields and destroying crops. Food security can only be achieved if a peaceful environment for agricultural production is guaranteed, he said and called the efforts of the governors and traditional rulers in the region commendable. According to media reports, Fulani are suspected of being involved in murders and kidnappings in the south-western state of Oyo.

Conflicts between nomads and sedentary people occur in several federal states in Nigeria. These acts of violence, also known as inter-communal violence, can be caused by conflicts over land, grazing and water rights, but also by a desire for retribution for earlier acts of violence – or at the same time – by smouldering ethnic rivalries (cf. BN of 06.05. and 27.05.24). Sunday Igboho enjoys great popularity in south-western Nigeria. On 07.03.22 he was released after months of imprisonment in neighbouring Benin. Some believe that this detention was masterminded by Nigeria (cf. BN of 14.03.22 and 11.12.23). The Yoruba are one of Nigeria's three largest ethnic groups and also make up part of the population of Benin and Togo.<sup>9</sup>

**Delta State: Positive developments in the healthcare system**

The number of people insured under the Delta State Contributory Health Insurance Scheme has risen to 2.4 million, according to media reports from 18.07.24. This corresponds to 35 % of the population of the state, which is located in southern Nigeria. The services provided by the health insurance scheme include maternal and neonatal healthcare, surgery, eye and dental treatment and emergency services. For example, over 300 caesarean sections are performed every month, the reports say. The annual contribution for health insurance amounts to NGN 7,000 (approx. EUR 4; as at 22.07.24).

In general, Nigeria's public healthcare system is considered to be underfunded and sometimes characterised by very limited infrastructure. There is also a clear gap between the medical care provided in urban and in rural areas (cf. BN of 13.11.23). However, the situation is not and does not remain difficult everywhere in every respect. Quite regularly there are reports on positive developments in the healthcare system, e.g. with regard to successful vaccination campaigns (cf. BN of 18.12.23 and 24.06.24).<sup>10</sup>

**29 July 2024**

**Dozens of Boko Haram supporters sentenced**

A special court in the Nigerian state of Niger convicted a total of 125 defendants of terrorist offences in a mass trial. According to media reports from 27.07.24, most of them are members of the Islamist group Boko Haram. Nigeria's Attorney General and Minister of Justice Lateef Fagbemi announced on 26.07.24 that 85 people had been convicted of financing terrorism and 22 others for offences under the statutes of the International Criminal Court (ICC) – including crimes against humanity or war crimes such as killing, torture or rape. The other defendants were sentenced for other terrorism offences. The mass trial took place in a military barracks and was the first of its kind since 2018.

In 2009, Boko Haram began a violent campaign in north-eastern Nigeria with the aim of establishing an Islamic theocracy. The group has since lost influence, but the Nigerian military has not yet succeeded in eliminating the threat. The violence emanating from Boko Haram in the region and military actions against Boko Haram continue to make headlines up to the present (cf. BN of 08.01., 15.01., 11.03., 29.04. and 17.06.24).<sup>11</sup>

**Mass kidnapping in the north-west**

Unknown gunmen killed four people and kidnapped 150 others in an attack on a village in the north-western state of Zamfara on 14.07.24. Citing eyewitness accounts, the media reported, that the attack was led by a gang leader named Alhaji Shehu Bagiwa and that the kidnapping victims included newborn babies. Only one week earlier, 46 people kidnapped in the region were reportedly released after an alleged ransom payment of NGN 21 million

(approx. EUR 12,000; as at 29.07.24). States in the north-west are relatively often affected by kidnapping offences. According to media reports, violent groups active in the region also extort money from the local population in other ways, for example by forcing village communities to pay them money until a specified deadline to gain access to their farmland.<sup>12</sup>

#### **South-west: Successes in the fight against crime**

The Ondo State Security Network Agency, known as Amotekun, has arrested 24 persons suspected of various criminal offences and freed a kidnap victim in a short period of time in the south-western state of Ondo. This follows from media reports based on information provided by an Amotekun commander on 17.07.24. These successful operations were carried out in cooperation with other security agencies. The charges against the 24 detainees include kidnapping, armed robbery, possession of weapons, theft and damage to property.

The Amotekun organisation, which was founded in 2020 to combat crime, is active in six south-western states and has recently reported several successes (cf. BN of 03.06. and 24.06.24).<sup>13</sup>

#### **Hundreds of Nigerian Boko Haram members surrender**

Between 10.07. and 17.07.24, 263 Boko Haram members and their families surrendered to the troops of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in the border region of Nigeria and Cameroon. According to media reports based on official military sources, this success is linked to the ongoing Operation Lake Sanity II. As it had emerged that the people in question were Nigerians, troops from Operation Hadin Kai took over the processing, the reports said. The surrender of Boko Haram members has been reported already in the past - including more recently (cf. BN of 15.01. and 04.03.24).<sup>14</sup>

### **05 August 2024**

#### **Deaths at protests**

At least seven protesters have died during protest rallies in the states of Kaduna and Kano since 01.08.24. According to media reports, Nigerian security forces have since arrested over 700 people who gathered in many places in Nigeria to protest against the high cost of living and poor governance. Civil society groups, among others, are said to have called for ten days of protests under the slogan #EndBadGovernance. The police have used tear gas in several cities and reserve the right to call in the military for support. In the northern city of Kano, in the state of the same name, a government office was attacked and looted. Nigeria is experiencing an economic crisis with high inflation. Many blame the sharp rise in the cost of living on the economic reforms initiated by President Bola Tinubu in 2023. The doubling of fuel prices, rising food and transport costs and a significant increase in the price of imported goods are seen as the consequences of these reforms (cf. BN of 10.06.24). In a speech on 12.06.24, Tinubu made it clear that the economic reforms will be continued despite the difficulties they cause for large parts of the population (cf. BN of 24.06.24). Curfews are in <sup>force</sup> in several federal states.<sup>15</sup>

#### **New minimum wage law signed**

According to media reports, President Bola Tinubu signed a law on 29.07.24 that provides for a monthly minimum wage of NGN 70,000 (approx. EUR 39; as of 02.08.24) nationwide. On 04.06.24, Nigeria's most important trade unions suspended a nationwide strike that had begun the day before to negotiate an increase in the state-imposed minimum wage (cf. BN of 10.06.24).<sup>16</sup>

### **19 August 2024**

#### **North-east: Numerous deaths due to Islamist violence**

Islamist violence claimed over 100 lives in the state of Borno between 31.07. and 14.08.24. This is according to recent media reports on deadly incidents in the north-eastern state. According to the reports, at least 16 people were killed in a bomb attack attributed to Boko Haram on 31.07.24. It was the latest attack in a series of similar incidents.

At the beginning of August 2024, around 100 people were killed in clashes between rival Islamist groups in the Lake Chad region. These events continue an entire series of similar violent clashes in the same area in recent times that have turned deadly.

Furthermore, the armed forces killed a total of 14 Boko Haram members in several hideouts on 09.08.24. During these military operations an explosive device, firearms and drugs were seized.

Two people were killed and seven kidnapped on 10.08.24 in attacks allegedly carried out by Boko Haram along an important trunk road. Boko Haram uses kidnappings for the purpose of ransom extortion as a source of funding (cf. BN of 17.06.24). According to media reports based on official military sources, members of the armed forces killed five people during an anti-terrorist operation on 12.08.24. In a statement on 14.08.24, the military also announced that 44 Boko Haram members and their families had surrendered. Similar incidents were also reported in July 2024 (cf. BN of 29.07.24).

According to media reports, the activities of the Islamist groups Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in north-eastern Nigeria and in parts of the neighbouring states of Cameroon, Niger and Chad are the cause of a humanitarian disaster. Over 35,000 people have been killed and millions displaced.

Hardly a day goes by without acts of violence being attributed to Islamist groups. This is particularly true in the north-east, with the state of Borno being affected worst. Often incidents also go unreported.<sup>17</sup>

## 26 August 2024

### **Benue State: Students kidnapped**

Armed actors attacked and abducted at least 20 students of the Universities of Maiduguri and Jos in Otukpo Local Government Area (LGA) in the northern state of Benue on 15.08.24. According to media reports, the students were travelling in two buses on a road between Makurdi and Enugu on their way to the south-eastern state of Enugu. Members of the Nigerian police reportedly freed the students on 23.08.24. A ransom of USD 31,400 (approx. EUR 28,190) was demanded for their release but was not paid.<sup>18</sup>

### **Enugu State: Military strike against suspected IPOB members**

According to media reports, forces from several security agencies have **killed** around 30 members of the **Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)** group, which advocates the secession of south-east Nigeria, in various towns in Enugu State since 08.08.24. Nigerian government agencies and other authorities regularly blame the IPOB group and its armed wing, the Eastern Security Network (ESN), for acts of violence in the country's south-east. However, IPOB also regularly denies such accusations.<sup>19</sup>

### **Niger State: Deadly attack**

Armed actors attacked the village of Anguwan Mai-Giro in Shiroro and Rafi LGAs in Niger State on 21.08.24, killing at least 13 people. According to media reports, those killed were sedentary farmers. Attacks on farmers in the northern region of Nigeria are said to have exacerbated food insecurity in the country. Niger State, Nigeria's largest federal state in terms of territory, is located in the west of the Middle Belt zone and borders the north-east of neighbouring Benin. Attacks on villages and kidnappings are a major security problem in the region (cf. BN of 28.03.22, 21.08.23, 29.04.24 and 17.06.24). The violence can be triggered by conflicts over land, grazing and water rights, but also the desire for retribution for earlier acts of violence or - or at the same time - smouldering ethnic rivalries.<sup>20</sup>

## 02 September 2024

### **Acute food insecurity**

Citing a study by several international organisations, the Nigerian government announced on 27.08.24 that more than 31.8 million Nigerians are currently affected by acute food insecurity due to security challenges, the removal of fuel subsidies and the rise in food prices. According to media reports, women and children are particularly affected. The results of the Cadre Harmonisé 2024 report by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) indicate a sharp rise in the number of people affected. According to the WFP, around 18.6

million Nigerians were still at risk of acute food insecurity between October and December 2023. Attacks by members of armed groups and other difficulties had forced sedentary farmers to abandon their fields, which had contributed to higher food prices and rising inflation. Nigeria is facing the worst cost of living crisis in a generation.<sup>21</sup>

### **Deadly military operations**

The Defence Headquarters (DHQ) informed on 29.08.24 that members of the Nigerian military killed around 1,170 members of armed groups designated as terrorists across the country and arrested around 1,100 suspects since the beginning of August 2024. According to media reports, they also freed around 720 kidnapped people and seized a large amount of arms and ammunition. The dead included leaders of the armed groups. In the north-east, members of the Hadin Kai military operation are said to have killed around 300 members of violent groups in August 2024, arrested around 260 and freed over 200 abductees. More than 30 members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) group, which champions the secession of south-eastern Nigeria, and its armed wing, the Eastern Security Network (ESN), were also killed. In addition, a total of around 2,700 members of the Islamist groups Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) had surrendered. Troops from Operation Safe Haven, Operation Whirl Stroke, Operation Hadarin Daji, Operation UDO KA and Operation Whirl Punch were deployed throughout the country. The people killed are labelled as terrorists in official DHQ announcements. The DHQ spreads success stories of this kind fairly regularly (cf. BN of 08.04., 03.06. and 17.06.24).<sup>22</sup>

## **09 September 2024**

### **Yobe State: Dozens killed in Boko Haram attack**

Around 150 suspected members of the Islamist group Boko Haram attacked the village of Mafa in the north-eastern state of Yobe on motorbikes on 01.09.24, killing at least 80 people and setting fire to several houses. According to media reports, the attack was in retaliation for the killing of two Boko Haram members by local vigilantes. A large number of people are still missing. The activities of the Islamist groups Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) are the cause of a humanitarian disaster in north-eastern Nigeria and in parts of the neighbouring states of Cameroon, Niger and Chad. Over 35,000 people have been killed and millions displaced. Boko Haram began a violent campaign in north-eastern Nigeria in 2009 with the aim of establishing an Islamic theocracy. The group has since lost influence, but the Nigerian military has not yet succeeded in ending the threat in the region. Lately, the violence emanating from Boko Haram there and military actions against Boko Haram continues to make headlines (cf. BN of 11.03., 29.04., 17.06. and 29.07.24).<sup>23</sup>

### **Protesters charged with high treason**

On 02.09.24, the public prosecutor's office of the Federal High Court in Abuja charged ten people who had protested against the high cost of living and poor governance during the nationwide protests in early August 2024 with high treason and incitement to insurrection and other offences and provisionally detained them. According to media reports, the other offences they are charged with include setting fire to government buildings, criminal conspiracy and disturbing the public peace. The protesters had acted with the intention of destabilising Nigeria, it is said. The #EndBadGovernance protests were accompanied by some violent clashes between protesters and security forces in several places in Nigeria in the week from 01.08.24, in which at least seven people died, according to media reports. The security forces arrested more than 700 people (cf. BN of 05.08.24). The Nigerian population is currently suffering from an economic crisis.<sup>24</sup>

## **16 September 2024**

### **Borno State: Flood disaster enables prison break**

In Maiduguri, the capital of the north-eastern state of Borno, 281 inmates escaped from a prison. According to media reports from 15.09.24, the prisoners were able to flee after a prison wall collapsed due to heavy flooding. A representative of the authorities confirmed the incident. An agency reported that the escapees included members of the Islamist group Boko Haram. The violence emanating from Boko Haram in north-eastern Nigeria continues to make headlines (cf. BN of 17.06., 29.07. and 09.09.24). According to media reports, over 500,000 people lost their homes due to the flooding in the region.<sup>25</sup>

### **Successful military operations against kidnapping offences**

According to media reports, the Nigerian army arrested Hussein Usman, leader of a notorious kidnapping gang, in the central Nigerian state of Plateau on 11.09.24 and freed several kidnapping victims. Weapons and equipment were also confiscated during this operation.

According to media reports from 13.09. and 14.09.24, military operations against the still virulent kidnapping crime also took place in other regions of Nigeria (cf. BN of 13.05., 17.06. and 29.07.24). For example, Nigerian troops rescued 13 hostages who had been kidnapped in the north-western state of Kaduna as part of a military operation triggered by a tip-off. Weapons, ammunition, mini solar modules and cash were confiscated from the kidnappers during the operation. Kidnappings to extort ransom money are a regular occurrence, particularly in northern Nigeria. Relatives of kidnapped persons are then often forced to sell land, livestock and other property in order to raise the required ransom.<sup>26</sup>

## **23 September 2024**

### **Zamfara State: Military kills notorious gang leader**

Armed forces killed Halilu Sububu alias Kachalla Halilu Sububu Seno, leader of a criminal group linked to numerous offences in the region, in the north-western state of Zamfara on 12.09.24. According to media reports, the military cooperated with vigilante operatives in the operation.

The armed group led by Halilu Sububu is said to be responsible for numerous attacks on villages, cattle thefts and kidnappings for extorting ransom money. He is also said to be active in arms smuggling (cf. BN of 31.10.22). According to media reports, one feature that distinguishes Halilu Sububu from other gang leaders in the region is his connection to jihadists in the Sahel region.

Kidnapping crime is a persistent security problem in large parts of Nigeria, e.g. in the north and in central Nigerian states (cf. BN of 29.07., 19.08., 26.08. and 02.09.24). The media regularly report on military operations directed against kidnapping offences in the affected regions (cf. BN of 17.06. and 16.09.24). In October 2022, for example, the military flew air strikes against the group led by Halilu Sububu claiming the lives of dozens of gang members (cf. BN of 31.10.22). The Nigerian government has regarded and labelled such groups as terrorists since the beginning of 2022.<sup>27</sup>

## **30 September 2024**

### **South-east: Violent incidents and government countermeasures**

In September 2024, unknown gunmen continued to commit acts of violence in the south-eastern states of Imo and Anambra. It is reported that these were often directed against public buildings and security forces. In some cases, the attackers used explosives and incendiary devices. The burning of office buildings and the killing of several people on 03.09.24, including members of the state security outfit Ebubeagu, an attack on a police station on the same day, the abduction of four people on 09.09.24 and an attack on another police station on 15.09.24, during which three attackers are said to have been killed, attracted media attention. The media reported that two police officers were killed in an attack on another police station just one day later. On 22.09.24, the police managed to arrest a man in Anambra state with a large quantity of bomb-making materials, reports said.

Members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) group, which is in favour of the secession of south-eastern Nigeria, and its armed wing, the Eastern Security Network (ESN), are often held responsible for acts of violence in the region. Both organisations regularly deny such accusations. Other armed groups are also active in the region, including herdsmen belonging to the Fulani ethnic group, according to media reports. According to official information provided by the military on 26.09.2014, Nigerian armed forces killed almost 2,000 violent actors across the country in the third quarter of 2024. Military offensives are seen as an attempt at systematic countermeasures against the threat to the security situation in several parts of the country. The violence in the south-east is one facet of this.<sup>28</sup>

## **07 October 2024**

### **Tear gas deployed against demonstrators**

According to reports in the media, police deployed tear gas on 01.10.24 against hundreds of people who were participating in the so-called #FearlessInOctober demonstration in the capital, Abuja. The protests on Nigeria's Independence Day, which had been announced and organised primarily via social media over several weeks, form part of a nationwide movement which is calling, among other things, for an end to the high costs of living and better governance. The demonstrations of 01.10.24 are linked to the demonstrations held over several days in August 2024 under the banner #EndBadGovernance, at which a number of people were killed (cf. BN of 05.08.24). Some of the people arrested at these protests are still in custody. Nigeria is going through an economic crisis with high inflation. Many people blame the growing poverty resulting from a substantial increase in the cost of living on the economic reforms implemented by president Bola Tinubu in 2023. Rising fuel and food prices and a marked rise in the prices of imported goods are seen as consequences of these reforms (cf. BN of 10.06.24).<sup>29</sup>

## **14 October 2024**

### **North-east: Flood disaster and cholera**

According to reports in the media at the beginning of October 2024, the north-eastern state of Borno is suffering particularly severely from the consequences of flooding in the region (cf. BN of 16.09.24). Almost two million Nigerians are reportedly homeless as a result of the flood disaster. In addition, a cholera outbreak has occurred. Cholera cases are said to be no rare occurrence in Borno State, the epicentre of Islamist terrorism which has been ongoing for 15 years now (cf. BN of 17.06., 29.07. and 09.09.24). The state is reported to have received 300,000 doses of cholera vaccine from the Nigerian health ministry to combat the latest cholera outbreak. These vaccines are said to have been distributed in refugee camps and communities affected by the flooding. Further vaccine doses are expected. According to official figures released by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) at the beginning of October 2024, 359 people have died of cholera nationwide in the first nine months of 2024. The number of suspected cases of cholera over the same period is put at approx. 11,000. Most of those affected by the disease are reported to be children under five years of age.<sup>30</sup>

### **Military reports successes**

In the space of one week, the Nigerian military has killed 165 members of armed groups designated as terrorists and arrested 238 suspects. This emerges from media reports of 10.10.24 citing official information released on the same day by the Nigerian Defence Headquarters (DHQ). In addition, 188 kidnap victims were reportedly freed and numerous weapons, vehicles and other items of equipment were confiscated from violent groups which are classified as terrorist. 65 illegal oil refineries were apparently also shut down. The DHQ's declared aim is to destroy terrorist networks in various parts of the country. The DHQ issues such announcements of successful operations with a certain regularity (cf. BN of 02.09.24).<sup>31</sup>

## **21 October 2024**

### **Kaduna State: Investigation into air strike on civilians**

The Nigerian air forces stands accused of inadvertently bombing civilians in Kaduna State, northern Nigeria. This emerges from media reports citing people who live in the region concerned. At least 24 people reportedly died in the inadvertent bombing of a village in Giwa Local Government Area (LGA) in the north of Kaduna State on 27.09.24. The incident is said to have occurred after an operation by the air force targeting active armed gangs and their hideouts in the region. There are reports that the air strike resulted from confusion as to the whereabouts of the actual targets. The military is investigating the incident.

A case of inadvertent bombing would not be the first lethal air strike by the military to kill civilians in recent times. According to reports in the media, it was in January 2024 that the Nigerian air force admitted responsibility for the first time for an inadvertent air strike which claimed civilian lives (cf. BN of 26.02.24).<sup>32</sup>



**28 October 2024**

**Economic reforms yielding success**

The World Bank has established that the reforms introduced by president Tinubu in 2023 to stabilise the Nigerian economy have yielded positive results. In a press statement released on 17.10.24, the organisation observes that the reforms have led to robust growth in the service sector, stability in the oil sector and improvements on the foreign exchange market. It observes that budget consolidation is in progress and the budgetary deficit is shrinking. The World Bank expects Nigeria's economy to grow by 3.3 % in 2024 and by an annual average of 3.7 % between 2025 and 2027. Downsides of the reform include high inflation. The undertaken reform measures specifically include drastic cuts in subsidies for fuel and electricity, higher interest rates and devaluation of the Nigeria naira in relation to the US dollar. In an address on 12.06.24, Tinubu reiterated that the reforms would be continued, despite the consequential hardships for broad sections of the population (cf. BN of 24.06.24).<sup>33</sup>

**Military reports successes**

According to information released by the Defence Headquarters (DHQ) on 24.10.24, in various operations conducted in the previous week against members of criminal gangs and members of the Islamist groups Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), the Nigerian military killed some 140 violent actors referred to as terrorists and arrested around 135 suspects nationwide. In addition, it has been reported in the media that around 76 kidnap victims were arrested and a large number of weapons and ammunition were confiscated. The DHQ issues such announcements of successful operations with a certain regularity (cf. BN of 02.09. and 14.10.24).<sup>34</sup>

**04 November 2024**

**Human trafficking: Nigerian women liberated in Ghana**

According to information released by the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM) on 27.10.24, members of the Ghanaian police unit for combating human trafficking working in cooperation with the Nigerian embassy in Accra have freed around 17 Nigerian women who were victims of human trafficking in the Ghanaian city of Tema and taken them back to Nigeria. According to reports in the media, the young women aged between 18 and 29 were lured with false promises of work, instead of which they ended up in exploitative situations. The rescued women from various Nigerian states, including Anambra, Abia, Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Imo, Edo and Ebonyi, were reportedly handed over to the Nigerian National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP). Five suspected human traffickers are said to have been arrested in the rescue operation. The Trafficking in Persons Report published in June 2024 by the U.S. Department of State reveals that Nigeria fails to meet minimum standards for combating human trafficking in full, but is continuing to make substantial efforts to do so. Announcements of successes by NAPTIP regularly state the number of victims of human trafficking freed in rescue operations and the number of people convicted of human trafficking (cf. BN of 25.07.22, 07.08. and 09.10.23, 01.07.24). Around 130 girls and women who were victims of human trafficking have reportedly been taken back from Ghana to Nigeria since July 2024.<sup>35</sup>

**11 November 2024**

**Violent incidents in the south-east**

Unknown gunmen have continued to perpetrate acts of violence in Nigeria's south-eastern states in the period from the middle of October to the beginning of November 2024, reportedly using explosive devices in some instances. A major stir was caused by two attacks on civilians in Anambra State in which at least 22 people in all died on 20.10. and 25.10.24, according to reports in the media. An inmate reportedly died in an attempt to free prisoners in Abia State on 28.10.24. On the same day in the same state, unknown gunmen shot dead three civilians in what is presumed to have been an attempted kidnapping. On 05.11.24, two people are said to have been killed and many injured in a bomb explosion on a market in Imo State. Acts of violence in the region are commonly blamed on members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), a group seeking the secession of south-east Nigeria, and its armed wing, Eastern Security Network (ESN). The group and its armed wing deny such allegations (cf. BN of

30.09.24). Other armed groups are also active in the region, including violent so-called cultists, according to media reports.<sup>36</sup>

#### **North-east: No evidence of mass abortions programme**

The Nigeria Human Rights Commission appointed by the government has found no evidence to support the accusation raised in 2022 that the Nigerian military had operated a clandestine abortion programme over a period of some ten years in the north-east of the country, in order to terminate pregnancies of former prisoners of Boko Haram (cf. BN of 19.12.22). According to a news agency announcement on 08.11.24, in the course of its investigation the Nigeria Human Rights Commission interviewed a total of 199 witnesses over an 18-month period, including members of the military, former members of Boko Haram, women freed from captivity and members of local and foreign aid organisations.<sup>37</sup>

### **18 November 2024**

#### **Minor protesters released**

119 people, including more than 30 minors, were released on 05.11.24 after around 90 days in custody. They were arrested during the anti-government protests in August 2024 (cf. BN of 05.08.24) and charged with various offences, including treason. According to reports in the media, president Bola Tinubu ordered the release of the minors on 04.11.24. The public indictment of the minors before a court in the capital, Abuja, on 01.11.24 sparked considerable outrage.<sup>38</sup>

#### **North-west: Acts of violence by allegedly new terrorist group**

Armed attackers on motorcycles raided the village of Mera in Kebbi state on 08.11.24 to steal cattle. In the attack they killed at least 15 people and injured many more. Citing military information, it was initially reported in the media that the attackers were members of a previously unknown new jihadist / terrorist group which operated under the name of Lakurawa and had links to Islamists in neighbouring Sahelian countries. Shortly afterwards, this information was qualified in consistent media reports: Lakurawa is actually an armed group which entered Nigeria from neighbouring Niger and became active in the country in 2018 at the latest. Originating from areas in Mali and Niger, the group's members initially supported Nigerians in fighting gangs operating in the region. Relations with the local population increasingly deteriorated when Lakurawa members began stealing cattle and attempted to enforce strict religious laws. Lakurawa subsequently withdrew to border regions in north-western Nigeria. The group's presence in Nigeria has grown again since the military coup in neighbouring Niger in July 2023. This re-emergence was made easier by the scaling down of military cooperation between Nigeria and Niger. Lakurawa is reportedly equipped with modern weapons and drones, and its ideas about co-existence differ to those of the native population, which continues to perceive the group as foreign. The group is said to have taken over the roles of traditional leaders in some communities. Observers fear that Lakurawa could extend its territorial influence to larger parts of the region on a permanent basis, thereby further destabilising the already fragile security situation in north-west Nigeria (cf. BN of 29.04., 13.05., 17.06., 01.07. and 29.07.24). According to reports in the media on 14.11.24, Nigerian troops have managed to drive Lakurawa out of the area of the village of Mera which was attacked on 08.11.24 and to return some of the stolen cattle to the local population.<sup>39</sup>

#### **Successes in the fight against human trafficking**

Two reports of success from the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) at the beginning of November 2024 have attracted particular attention. Firstly, it has been reported in the media that NAPTIP personnel have managed to free an eight year-old boy who was abducted over a year ago in Akwa state in southern Nigeria. Secondly, NAPTIP is reported to have trained a total of 500 teachers in workshops on the subject of human trafficking. The workshops are said to have been organised in cooperation with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) at teacher training colleges in Benue, Delta and Enugu states. According to NAPTIP, these teachers will now be even better qualified to explain to children the risk of falling victim to human trafficking. Reports of success from NAPTIP are no rare occurrence. The agency releases reports with a degree of regularity detailing the number of human trafficking victims freed or the number of people convicted of human trafficking (cf. BN of 04.10.21, 25.04. and 25.07.22, 07.08. and 09.10.23 and 15.07.24).<sup>40</sup>

**25 November 2024**

**Violent incidents in central Nigeria**

It has been reported in the media that a series of acts of violence occurred in the period from 05.11. to 16.11.24 in the east of Nigeria's so-called Middle Belt, i.e. the zone of several hundred kilometres in width between the regions which are allocated to Nigeria's north and south respectively. On 05.11.24, for example, a number of people were killed in a gun fight between vigilantes and a gang of kidnappers in Nasarawa state. 14 kidnap victims were reportedly rescued, however. On 13.11.24 the army successfully repelled a retaliatory attack by suspected bandits on a community in Taraba state. In the same state, unknown armed persons killed one person and abducted at least six people on 16.11.24. Back on 04.11.24, members of the Benue Motorcycle Association (BEMA) reportedly blocked a heavily used trunk road in Benue state, demanding more security personnel on the road in view of the fact that 37 of their colleagues had been murdered in the space of eight weeks.

The reasons for the insecurity (cf. BN of 05.02., 04.03., 27.05. and 26.08.24) in Nigeria's Middle Belt are even more complex and intricate than in other regions of the multi-ethnic country. In some instances, acts of violence perpetrated in the Middle Belt are rooted in so-called intercommunal conflicts (also referred to as the "farmer-herder conflict") between settled farmers and vagrants, who often live from livestock farming. Intercommunal violence can stem from conflicts over land, grazing and water rights, from the desire to revenge violence previously suffered by the perpetrators and/or simmering ethnic rivalries. Equally, acts of violence may simply be perpetrated for monetary gain, in the form of kidnapping to extort ransom money or looting.<sup>41</sup>

**02 December 2024**

**Niger State: Violent incidents claim more than 50 lives**

A number of violent incidents have claimed the lives of at least 57 people within a short period in Niger State, central Nigeria. It has been reported in the media that 200 armed actors attacked a convoy carrying 80 security personnel who were tasked with protecting the electricity supply grid in Shiroro Local Government Area (LGA) on 19.11.24. 50 of the attackers were allegedly killed and at least seven of the security personnel are said to be missing. According to information from the authorities, the attackers were men belonging to the Boko Haram Islamist group, which is active above all in the north-east of Nigeria (cf. BN of 08.01.24 and 16.09.24). In the course of 2024, LGA Shiroro has witnessed various violent attacks by actors whose identity has remained unknown (cf. BN of 29.04. and 26.08.24).

According to reports in the media, unknown armed actors killed seven farmers in LGA Mariga in the same state on 21.11.24, including a member of a local vigilante group. The police claim that all seven victims were vigilantes and that the lethal incident actually occurred on 16.11.24. It has also been reported in the media that a herder attacked a number of farmers with a machete following a dispute in LGA Wushishi on 23.11.24. The man is said to have been arrested. Niger State is the largest state in Nigeria in terms of surface area. It is situated in the west of the so-called Middle Belt zone which runs between the states allocated to Northern and Southern Nigeria respectively.<sup>42</sup>

**09 December 2024**

**Lagos State: Stepping up the fight against gender-based violence**

The Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA) of Lagos State has mandated 16 traditional rulers to step up the fight against gender-based violence. In the longer term, the agency aims to involve further rulers in the region. According to reports in the media, this measure forms part of a 16-day international campaign to eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls which was launched on 25.11.24. Traditional rulers play a major role in shaping social norms and continue to wield considerable influence in large parts of the country (cf. BN of 05.02., 22.07. and 18.11.24).<sup>43</sup>

**Lagos State: Progress in the treatment of people infected with HIV**

According to reports in the media citing information provided by the Lagos State Aids Control Agency (LSACA) to mark World AIDS Day on 01.12.24, 120,000 people infected with HIV are receiving antiretroviral therapy in Lagos

State. More than 1,200 children aged between one and nine are said to be among those infected. Over one million people are reported to have been reached by measures to establish an awareness of means of preventing infection and tests. The progress in treating HIV reflects the LSACA's efforts to achieve the targets defined in the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS): 95 % of all infected people are to be aware of their status, 95 % of these are to be in treatment and 95 % of these are to be undergoing antiretroviral therapy to suppress their HI viral load. Although the corresponding reporting suggests positive developments are being achieved in the health system with a degree of regularity, e.g. successful vaccination campaigns (cf. BN of 18.12.23, 24.06. and 22.07.24), the public health service is considered to be underfunded and subject to a highly restricted infrastructure in some areas. There is also a disparity between urban and rural areas with regard to the available levels of healthcare (cf. BN of 13.11.23).<sup>44</sup>

## **16 December 2024**

### **Zamfara State: Dozens abducted**

A gang of unknown armed actors raided the village of Kakin Dawa in the north-western state of Zamfara on 08.12.24 and abducted over 50 women and children. This emerges from media reports citing police information. Additional security forces were reportedly dispatched to the area in the aftermath of the incident.

Raids on villages and kidnapping for ransom money occur with a degree of regularity in the north-west of Nigeria. In Zamfara State alone, unknown actors killed a total of at least 20 people and kidnapped 110 on 14.01., 11.02. and 13.02.24. Similar attacks in which a total of at least 24 people were killed and over 250 abducted took place in the same state on 09.05., 10.05.24 and 14.07.24. According to reports in the media, gangs are also extorting money from local residents by other means, for example by demanding money from village communities for allowing access to their farmland (cf. BN of 13.05. and 29.07.24). A common feature of such acts of violence is that the perpetrators, whom the government describes as bandits or terrorists, largely remain unidentified.<sup>45</sup>

## **23 December 2024**

### **South-west: Man on death row pardoned**

On 17.12.24 the governor in the south-western state of Osun pardoned a 31-year-old man who had spent ten years on death row at the Kirikiri high security prison in Lagos. According to reports in the media, he was sentenced to death by hanging in 2014 for various offences, including robbery, which were committed four years previously. He is now expected to be released at the beginning of 2025. His family and human rights groups had reportedly been championing his cause for a long time. His parents recently pleaded for their only child to be pardoned in a podcast interview which attracted much attention. While no executions have been carried out in Nigeria since 2012, over 3,400 people are reportedly on death row at present. According to other reports, the last execution took place in 2016 (cf. BN of 08.01.24).<sup>46</sup>

### **North-east: Large numbers of Boko Haram members surrender**

According to a report from a news agency citing official military information on 12.12.24, a total of 30,426 Boko Haram members and 99,039 of their dependants, including 36,774 women and 62,265 children, surrendered between 10.07. and 09.12.24. The high number of people laying down their arms is apparently the result of a combination of military operations, dialogue and rehabilitation measures. The precise number of Boko Haram members is not known. The military reports with a degree of regularity on the capitulation of Boko Haram members and their families (cf. BN of 15.01., 04.03. and 29.07.24).<sup>47</sup>

### **South-east: Armed attackers kill university lecturer**

Unknown armed attackers shot dead a university lecturer in Awka, capital of the south-eastern state of Anambra, on 16.12.24. According to reports in the media, the attackers took possession of their victim's vehicle. The police have reportedly initiated murder investigations and asked the public for help in solving the crime.

Acts of violence in the region are commonly blamed on members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), a group seeking the secession of south-east Nigeria, and its armed wing, Eastern Security Network (ESN). The group

and its armed wing deny such allegations (cf. BN of 30.09.24). Other armed groups are also active in the region, including so-called cultists.<sup>48</sup>

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