



Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Nigeria – January to June 2025

30 June 2025

13 January 2025

Northeast: dozens of Islamists killed by the military

According to media reports, 34 Islamists and six members of the army were killed in a clash that erupted between Nigerian armed forces and Islamists in Borno State on 04.01.25. According to other reports, the clash erupted on 05.01.25. The military were allegedly supported by vigilante groups during the clash. According to some media, the Islamists are Boko Haram members, while other sources claim that they belong to the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) group.¹

Plateau state: deadly attack on civilians

According to media reports, unknown assailants killed 15 people in an attack carried out on a village in Riyom Local Government Area (LGA) of Plateau State on 22.12.24. The incident reportedly occurred shortly after a security meeting to safeguard a peaceful Christmas festive period was held. The attack casts doubt on the effectiveness of efforts to prevent further violence in the region. Plateau State has been the scene of several similar acts of violence in recent times. Attacks carried out on villages at Christmas time in 2023, in which many people were killed and injured, caused particular outrage (cf. BN of 08.01.24).²

20 January 2025

Northwest: more deadly airstrikes on civilians

On 11.01.25, the Nigerian Air Force bombed the remote village of Tungar Kara in the northwestern state of Zamfara, killing at least 15 people, including members of local vigilante groups. According to media reports citing military sources, the airstrike was intended to target criminal gangs active in the region. The military denied having deliberately bombed civilians. The incident is being investigated. On 25.12.24, at least 10 civilians were killed in an airstrike carried out in the neighbouring state of Sokoto. According to official sources, these were also mistakenly attacked. The two most recent incidents are the latest in a series of similar incidents causing the death of civilians of late. In January 2024, the Nigerian Air Force took responsibility for the first time for an accidental airstrike that claimed civilian casualties (cf. BN of 26.02.24). According to media reports, the confidence of the population in the region in the capabilities and good intentions of the military is being sapped as a result of these events. In 2024, violence caused by criminal gangs in northwest Nigeria was widely reported in the media. Government agencies respond to the difficult security situation in the region by sometimes using massive force, including attacks carried out by the air force.³

27 January 2025

North West: gang leader targeted

The military attacked camps of armed groups under the command of Bello Turji in the northwestern states of Zamfara and Sokoto, killing his son and high-ranking commanders, among others. According to media reports based on official military sources, the gang leader's son was killed on 17.01.25. Bello Turji's second-in-command, Aminu Kanawa, and more than half a dozen other commanders were killed in military operations carried out on 20.01.25 and 21.01.25.

They say it remains a high priority for the armed forces to kill or capture Bello Turji himself. The armed gangs under his command, who are labelled as terrorists by the state, are responsible for many kidnappings and other acts of violence in the region. In 2024, violence caused by various criminal groups in northwest Nigeria continued to be widely reported in the media. The military responds to the difficult security situation in the region by sometimes using massive force (cf. BN of 20.01.25). In 2024, Buharin Yadi (alias Buhari Alhaji Halidu) and Halilu Sububu (alias Kachalla Halilu Sububu Seno), the leaders of criminal gangs that had been active in the region for a long time, were killed in military strikes. One feature that is said to have distinguished Halilu Sububu from other gang leaders is his connection to jihadists in the Sahel region.⁴

South West: security network agency recruits 1,000 new personnel

The security network agency known as Amotekun is recruiting 1,000 new personnel in each of the southwestern states of Ogun and Osun. This was announced in media reports published on 21.01.25 and 22.01.25, which also cite information provided on Amotekun's websites. The application deadline for the Amotekun Corps in Ogun State has already expired, whereas applications remain open for Osun State. They are reportedly looking for people who are at least 18 years of age and can read and write. Applicants must also be of suitable character and have knowledge of the region. There are a wide range of vacancies available. The purpose of the recruitment is to boost the security situation in southwest Nigeria. The Amotekun organisation, which was founded in 2020 to combat crime, is active in six southwestern states and reported several success stories in 2024 (cf. BN of 25.03.24, 03.06.24, 24.06.24 and 29.07.24). It is difficult to categorise the security network agency. Amotekun is neither part of the police nor part of the military, but supports and works with security authorities.⁵

03 February 2025

Lakurawa declared a terrorist organisation

At the instigation of the Nigerian government, on 23.01.25, a court declared the Lakurawa armed group (cf. BN of 18.11.24), which operates in the northwest of the country, a terrorist organisation - a classification that allows the military to use massive force against it.

According to media reports, the activities of the individuals categorised as Lakurawa pose an increasing threat to security in the northwestern states. The categorisation as a terrorist organisation is accompanied by a nationwide ban and the prohibition of participation in any activities of the group, which is found above all in the states of Kebbi and Sokoto. Observers fear that the Lakurawa group could permanently extend its territorial influence to larger parts of the region and further destabilise the already fragile security situation in the northwest of the country.⁶

10 February 2025

Death penalty for murder of woman accused of witchcraft

A court in the northern Nigerian state of Kano sentenced five men to death by hanging on 03.02.25. According to media reports, the court found that the perpetrators murdered a woman on 15.11.23, whom they accused of witchcraft. The immediate trigger for the crime was a dream experienced by the sick wife of one of the convicts who then travelled to the victim's home with four friends to confront her. During the encounter, the men beat and eventually stabbed the woman, who was 67 years old at the time, to death. After her family contacted the authorities, the perpetrators were quickly identified and arrested.

According to media reports, the case attracted a great deal of attention across the country. The offence shed light on the phenomenon of stalking for alleged witchcraft, a phenomenon that persists in rural areas of Nigeria. It is the first case of its kind in which five people have been convicted of murder.

According to reports released in 2024, more than 3,400 people are on death row in Nigeria. The last execution took place in 2016 - according to other sources, in 2012 (cf. BN of 16.12.24).⁷

17 February 2025

Slight improvement in the corruption perceptions index

Nigeria has moved up a further 5 spots in the Corruption Perceptions Index released by Transparency International. According to the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2024 published by the NGO on 11.02.25, Nigeria now ranks 140th out of 180 countries in the global ranking, a position it shares with Iraq, Cameroon, Madagascar, Mexico and Uganda. Nigeria was ranked 145th in the 2023 ranking and 150th in the 2022 ranking (cf. BN of 12.02.24). The CPI measures how corrupt a country's public sector is perceived to be and is considered to be the gold standard of corruption rankings in the world.⁸

24 February 2025

Security situation in the northeast: numerous deaths due to Islamist violence

Violence perpetrated by Islamist groups in the northeastern state of Borno, as well as military actions against individuals attributed to Islamist groups, claimed a death toll that reached three-digit figures in the first seven weeks of 2025. The following examples are not an exhaustive list of violent incidents:

According to media reports, on 04.01.25, six members of the military and 34 people officially designated as terrorists by the authorities died in a clash that erupted between Islamists and security forces not far from the village of Sabon Gari in the Local Government Area (LGA) of Damboa. On 09.01.25, two people were killed in a bomb attack on a police station. On 12.01.25, suspected Islamists killed 40 civilians in an attack on the village of Dumba near Lake Chad. According to media reports, a military spokesperson announced on 16.01.25 that security forces had recently killed 76 militant Islamists. Numerous weapons were reportedly also seized, including machine guns, grenades, bazookas and explosive devices. According to media reports, at least 20 civilians were killed in an attack carried out by suspected Islamists on the village of Gadan Gari on 22.01.25, and at least 20 soldiers were killed in an attack on a remote army base on 24.01.25.

Fighting is also raging between members of the Islamist groups Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). For example, media reports indicate that deadly clashes erupted between the two groups in Abadam LGA on 14.02.25. The clashes are likely to spread to the neighbouring Kukawa LGA. The activities of these two groups are the cause of the precarious humanitarian situation that has existed for years in northeastern Nigeria and in parts of the neighbouring countries of Cameroon, Niger and Chad. Over 35,000 people have been killed and millions displaced. Security forces have not yet succeeded in putting an end to the regional threat situation. The acts of violence committed there by Islamists and the deadly reactions of the military continued to make headlines in 2024 (cf. BN of 19.08.24, 09.09.24 and 28.10.24).⁹

03 March 2025

Kano State: arrests over planned protests

On 26.02.25, police forces arrested 17 suspects in the northern Nigerian state of Kano who were allegedly planning a violent protest rally. According to media reports, a police spokesperson confirmed this action on the same day. He said the police had acted proactively to prevent a possible breakdown of law and order and to ensure public safety. The police spokesperson warned all individuals and groups against engaging in any form of unlawful gathering, procession, or violence.¹⁰

Violent events in the southeast

A number of violent incidents attracted particular media attention in mid-February 2025 in Nigeria's southeastern states. For example, unidentified armed men reportedly kidnapped several people in Anambra State on 13.02.25, including a Catholic priest. On 16.02.25, the police announced that security operatives had killed five suspected members of the Eastern Security Network (ESN), an organisation associated with separatist efforts, during operations carried out in Imo State a few days earlier. On 17.02.25 and 19.02.25, a total of four people were killed in a boundary dispute between two communities in the state of Ebonyi. In the southeast of Nigeria, other armed groups are active alongside those in favour of the region's secession (cf. BN of 11.11.24).¹¹

10 March 2025

Economic growth

Nigeria's economy recorded its strongest growth in three years in the fourth quarter of 2024. According to media reports based on the National Bureau of Statistics, this is due, in particular, to positive trends in the services sector. Nigeria's gross domestic product reportedly rose by 3.84 percent year-on-year, and thus more strongly than in the third quarter (3.46 percent), the second quarter (3.19 percent) and the first quarter (2.98 percent). The services sector reportedly grew by 5.37 percent in the fourth quarter of 2024 compared to the previous year. Economic growth for the entire calendar year is reported to have increased from 2.74 percent in 2023 to 3.40 percent in 2024.¹²

17 March 2025

Priest abducted and murdered

A Catholic priest kidnapped by unidentified individuals in the northern Nigerian state of Kaduna on 04.03.25 was found dead the following day. According to media reports, the act of violence took place around 200 kilometres from the state capital in the Kaura Local Government Area. His body showed signs of violence. The motive for the offence has not yet been determined. Kaduna State is one of the states experiencing relatively frequent attacks by armed groups against schools, travellers and smaller towns, among others. According to the bishop responsible, a pastoral worker has been killed by unknown assailants in the region every year since 2021.

According to media reports issued on 10.03.25, state security forces in cooperation with a local vigilante group managed to free two Catholic priests kidnapped on 22.02.25 in the northeastern Nigerian state of Adamawa. A suspected kidnapper was arrested and an assault rifle confiscated.

In the southern Nigerian state of Edo, on 13.03.25, police forces managed to free a Catholic priest who had been kidnapped together with a seminarian in the early hours of 03.03.25. According to media reports, the seminarian did not survive his captivity. In Nigeria, acts of violence against Christian clergy, including and especially kidnappings for ransom (cf. BN of 18.07.22, 01.08.22 and 29.08.22, 02.01.23 and 01.07.24), have been fairly regular occurrences in the past.¹³

24 March 2025

Deadly military airstrikes in the north

In mid-March 2025, the Nigerian Air Force killed a large number of officially designated terrorists in airstrikes carried out in the northwestern state of Katsina and the northeastern state of Borno. According to media reports, the number of people killed in Katsina State in a single airstrike targeting violent gang camps is said to be over 20. It is claimed that many people were killed in the operations carried out in Borno State. The airstrikes are said to have delivered a crushing blow to the structures of violent groups in both regions, which are officially described as terrorist networks. Important leaders of these groups were also among those killed. In 2024, events associated with violent actors in both regions, including kidnappings, attacks and government countermeasures, were widely reported in the media (cf. BN of 29.07.24, 19.08.24, 09.09.24, 18.11.24 and 16.12.24).¹⁴

Abia State: police free kidnap victims

Police forces in Osisioma Ngwa Local Government Area in the southeastern state of Abia managed to free four men kidnapped on 09.03.25 from the clutches of their kidnappers. This has been reported in the media based on official statements issued by the police. Six kidnappers were killed during the rescue operation, but the kidnap victims were unharmed. The police confiscated two assault rifles and ammunition. The report does not contain any information about the identity of the kidnappers or the victims. In southeast Nigeria, acts of violence hit the headlines fairly regularly (cf. BN of 23.12.24 and 03.03.25). In addition to groups that are in favour of the secession of large parts of southeastern Nigeria from the state as a whole, other violent actors have also emerged in the region (cf. BN of 11.11.24).¹⁵

Rivers State: state of emergency declared

On 18.03.25, President Bola Tinubu declared a state of emergency in the oil-rich southern Nigerian Rivers State and suspended the governor, his deputy and all members of the state parliament for six months. According to media reports, Nigeria's parliament approved the measure on 20.03.25. This move can be attributed to reports detailing incidents of vandalism of pipelines by some militants. According to media reports, Tinubu accuses politicians in Rivers State of taking little action to curtail such incidents. Observers are concerned about the prospect of an escalating political crisis in the wake of these developments.¹⁶

31 March 2025

Northeast: Islamists attack military base

On the night of 25.03.25, members of the Islamist group Boko Haram attacked a military base not far from the town of Wajiroko in the northeastern state of Borno, killing at least three soldiers and injuring numerous others. According to media reports, the base houses troops from Operations Hadin Kai and Desert Sanity IV. The task of these military operations is to combat Islamist groups active in the region. According to media reports, at least 20 soldiers were killed in a similar attack carried out on a remote army base in the same state on 25.01.25. Members of the Islamist group Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) are believed to have been responsible for this attack. Violence emanating from Boko Haram and ISWAP and government countermeasures continue to hit the headlines on a fairly regular basis (cf. BN of 09.09.24, 28.10.24 and 13.01.25, 24.03.25).¹⁷

07 April 2025

Violence escalates at demonstration in Abuja

On 28.03.25, several people lost their lives at a demonstration by the Shiite organisation Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN), which has been banned since 2019. According to media reports, shots were exchanged between demonstrators and security forces during a demonstration in the Wuse 2 district in the capital Abuja. At least 19 demonstrators are said to have been killed and many more injured. Three members of the security forces are said to have been seriously injured. Other sources have it that five IMN members and a member of the security forces were killed. According to the police, armed demonstrators are responsible for the escalation of the violence, whilst others claim that the security forces were at fault. The purpose of the demonstration is also said to have been to show solidarity with Palestine. The organisation IMN aims to establish an Islamic state. Previous years had also seen deadly clashes between security forces and IMN members (cf. BN of 02.03.20 and 02.08.21). Muslims make up roughly half the population of Nigeria, and most of them are Sunnites.¹⁸

14 April 2025

Northwest: deadly clashes

Tens of people died in clashes between armed factions in Nigeria's northwestern Kebbi State at the beginning of April 2025. According to media reports, the deadly violence was triggered by attacks carried out by the violent group Lakurawa on small villages in the region. Defensive action and counterattacks on the part of local vigilante groups are said in turn to have caused fatalities among Lakurawa fighters. The governor of Kebbi State estimated that there

was a link between the inadequately-secured borders with Nigeria's neighbouring countries and the security situation in the region. On 23.01.25, Lakurawa was declared a terrorist organisation at the instigation of Nigeria's government (cf. BN v. 03.02.25). According to reports, the particularity of Lakurawa is that the group is perceived as foreign, and as propagating religious laws regarded as excessively strict. Observers fear that Lakurawa might permanently expand its territorial influence to larger parts of the region and further destabilise the already fragile security situation in the northwest of the country (cf. BN v. 18.11.24).

Another violent group active in northwestern Nigeria lost its leader Gwaska Dankarami and more than 100 members on 11.04.25 in a military operation in Katsina State. Media reports regard the military strike as a reaction to the group's recent attack on Maigora village in the same state, where dozens of people were kidnapped and four others killed. The military has recently reported several killings of prominent gang leaders, including Halilu Sububu (cf. BN v. 27.01.25).¹⁹

28 April 2025

Middle Belt: More than 100 dead in attacks on civilians

A total of at least 144 people were killed in attacks against civilians in the states of Plateau and Benue in the period from 03.04. to 17.04.25 and many others injured. Media reports refer to the presumption frequently made in such cases (cf. BN of 05.02, 06.05 and 27.05.24) that the incidents are connected with conflicts between migrant herders and settled farmers. Marauding herdsmen are responsible for the latest crimes, according to a prevalent assessment. The identity of those committing the attacks, which take place in the region with a certain regularity (cf. BN of 13.01.25), is unknown. The number of individuals killed in recent years runs into the thousands, according to reports.²⁰

05 May 2025

Oyo State: dozens of human trafficking victims rescued

Police in the southwestern Oyo State have rescued 83 human trafficking victims in Ibadan, the state capital. This emerges from media reports, referring to official police information of 26.04.25. The rescued individuals were both male and female, and there was at least one infant among them. The human trafficking victims had been held for an undisclosed period in a residential building in the city, which is home to millions. They may have been nationals of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Further police investigation was ongoing.

Reports of successes achieved in the fight against human trafficking are released with a certain regularity in Nigeria. In particular the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) informs the public of the number of human trafficking victims rescued, and of the number of persons convicted of human trafficking (cf. BN of 04.10.21, 25.04. and 25.07.22, 07.08. and 09.10.23, as well as 15.07. and 18.11.24).²¹

12 May 2025

Ten-place drop in Press Freedom Ranking in 2025

Nigeria ranks 122nd out of 180 in the annually-updated RSF World Press Freedom Index, and has thus dropped ten places in comparison to 2024 (cf. BN of 13.05.24). This emerges from the ranking for 2025 released by RSF on 02.05.25. Nigeria ranked 123rd in 2023 and 129th in 2022 (cf. BN of 05.06.23).

According to critical voices, the level of governmental influence exerted on media professionals in Nigeria is significant. This is also said to apply to the appointment of media officials. Press freedoms were guaranteed in the Nigerian constitution, but anti-terrorism laws for instance existed making it possible to prosecute journalists. Five media professionals were currently in detention. The economic pressures on media outlets were also concerning. The growing influence of artificial intelligence should furthermore be pointed out. The number of print media had fallen recently. Nigeria nonetheless still had a relatively diverse media landscape. According to RSF, the global situation with regard to press freedom is at a historic low in 2025.²²

19 May 2025

Progress and challenges in the health sector

In April 2025, reports on both positive aspects and challenges in the Nigerian health sector caused a stir. The selection below makes no claim to be exhaustive.

Media outlets have reported that the number of persons living with HIV in Nigeria exceeds 2 million. It was also said to be a cause for concern that the country has the highest number of unvaccinated children globally. On the other hand, some 61.5 million Nigerians, mostly children, had been vaccinated against malaria, yellow fever, HPV and other diseases since October 2023. The health sector was currently being strengthened by the fact that the government was rehabilitating 18 medical schools across the country for 110 billion NGN (roughly 610,000 EUR, as per: 19.05.25). Furthermore, a total of 901 primary healthcare centres (PHCs) had been revitalised in 2024, and it was planned to upgrade 2,700 more by the end of 2025.

Although media reports from and about Nigeria report with a certain regularity on progress and positive developments in the healthcare system, for instance with regard to successful vaccination campaigns, efforts in prevention and therapies available (cf. BN of 18.12.23, 24.06., 22.07. and 09.12.24), the public healthcare system is regarded as underfunded and in some cases characterised by highly-limited infrastructure. There is also a shortfall in performance between urban and rural areas when it comes to medical care (cf. BN of 13.11.23).²³

26 May 2025

Northeast: Many dead as a result of Islamist violence

According to media reports, members of the Islamist groups Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) carried out at least 12 attacks on civilians and members of the military in northeastern Borno state in the period from 28.04. to 15.05.25. This had resulted in the killing of dozens of people. An attack carried out on Malam Karanti village in Kukawa local government area (LGA) on 15.05.25 in which 23 people were killed and 18 abducted caused a particular stir.

Activities of Boko Haram and ISWAP have caused the for years precarious humanitarian situation in northeastern Nigeria and in parts of neighbouring Cameroon, Niger and Chad. Many thousands have been killed and millions displaced. Security forces have so far been unable to put an end to the regional threats. The acts of violence perpetrated by Islamists there, and the deadly reactions of the military, have also regularly been in the headlines in 2025 (cf. BN of 13.01. and 24.02.25).²⁴

02 June 2025

Middle Belt: deadly attacks on civilians

Unknown attackers killed at least 42 people in the period from 23.05. to 25.05.25 in attacks on several communities in Gwer West local government area (LGA) in central Nigeria's Benue state. This emerges from unanimous reports, also based on information from a government official.

Media reports refer to the presumption which is frequently made in such cases (cf. BN of 05.02., 06.05. and 27.05.24 as well as 28.04.25) that the violent acts are connected with conflicts between migrant herders and settled farmers in the region. Marauding herdsmen are also responsible for the deadly incidents which took place from 23.05. to 25.05.25, according to a prevalent assessment.

Benue state is located in the eastern half of the so-called middle belt, a strip several hundred kilometres wide stretching through the whole country from the border to neighbouring Benin in the west of Nigeria, as far as the border to Cameroon. The reasons for the insecure situation in the middle belt are regarded as being even more intricate and complex than is the case in other regions of the multi-ethnic state. Violent acts committed in the middle belt are partly rooted in so-called intercommunity conflicts (also: "farmer-herder conflict") between settled Christian farmers and migrant herders, who often predominantly make a living from livestock farming, are ethnic Fulani, and are Muslims by faith. The background to intercommunity violence can be conflicts over land, grazing and water rights, but also or additionally reprisals for prior, personally-experienced violence. The main motive in

some cases is also simply profit seeking, expressed in abductions for ransom or looting. Ethnic and religious tensions have their part to play in the complexity of the situation in the region (cf. BN of 29.01. and 25.11.24).²⁵

16 June 2025

Northeast: Islamic violence claims dozens of lives

Violence in northeastern Borno state continued to cause a major stir in late May and early June 2025. According to media reports, the military on 30.05.25 killed at least 60 alleged members of the Boko Haram Islamist group in Gwoza local government area (LGA). According to official sources, members of the military also killed a senior commander of the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) faction in Kukawa LGA by the name of Abu Fatima alias Amir Abu Fatima. He had been regarded as one of Nigeria's most wanted terrorists. A bomb blast killed at least nine persons in Guzamala LGA on 01.06.25.

The activities of Boko Haram and ISWAP in northeastern Nigeria are responsible for the precarious humanitarian situation which has pertained for years. Many thousands of people have been killed and millions displaced. Security forces have so far been unable to halt the threats in the region. Both the violence attributed to Islamist factions there, and the military's deadly reactions to it, have also continued to make regular headlines in 2025 (cf. BN of 13.01., 24.02. and 26.05.25).²⁶

Benue state: around 100 people killed in violence

Gunmen are said to have killed around 100 individuals and injured dozens more on 13.06.25 in an attack on Yelewata village in Guma LGA in Benue state. Several people are still missing, according to media reports. It was unknown who was responsible for the attack. According to information from Amnesty International (AI), the attackers had locked up dozens of individuals in their homes and set them on fire. Some 40 persons had been killed in several attacks in Gwer West LGA in Benue state back in May 2025. Benue state lies in the Middle Belt, a region between the Muslim-majority north of Nigeria and the predominantly Christian south. The region has previously seen violent clashes between settled farmers and migrant herders, who often predominantly make a living from livestock farming. The background can be conflicts over land, grazing and water rights, but also reprisals for prior, personally-experienced violence or – sometimes simultaneously – smouldering ethnic rivalries. The motive in some cases may also be profit seeking, expressed in abductions for ransom or looting.²⁷

23 June 2025

Victims of human trafficking rescued

The Nigerian National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) and the Nigerian Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) have arrested three individuals believed to be members of a human trafficking syndicate in raids carried out in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, as well as in Osun and Nasarawa states. According to media reports, citing a NAPTIP press statement of 13.06.25, it was also possible to rescue 20 victims of human trafficking from Equatorial Guinea and Togo. They had been trafficked to Nigeria and placed in forced labour. NAPTIP had also rescued a Nigerian woman affected by human trafficking who had been deceived into travelling to Senegal and forced into prostitution there. Her rescue had been the result of the good cooperation between Senegal and Nigeria. NAPTIP success reports note with a certain regularity the number of victims of human trafficking released in rescues and the number of people convicted of human trafficking (cf. BN of 25.07.22, 07.08. and 09.10.23, 15.07. and 18.11.24).²⁸

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