

FACTSHEET



July 1st – 7th July ECOWAS Counter Terrorism Tracker

1.0 Introduction

The ECOWAS Counter Terrorism Strategy Tracker (ECTS – Tracker) is an Open Data Platform that provides practical analysis of operational policy framework for ECOWAS counter-terrorism actions, supporting and serving as a knowledge base that promotes a common regional approach for counter terrorism by both state and non-state actors through the documentation and analyses of cases, activities and incidences of extremist violence across the West African region. This is done specifically by looking at the location, trends and patterns of incidences of violence extremism within the region. The tracker also serves as a tool in monitoring the efforts of States in implementing the ECOWAS Counter Terrorism Strategy (CTS).

2.0. Overview of the Week

The week in focus witnessed a series of attacks across the Lake Chad Basin, West Africa and the Sahel region. Cameroon and Nigeria suffer attacks

from the deadly Boko Haram sect that have been rampaging the region which range from suicide attacks, mostly perpetrated by female suicide bombers, nine attacks carried out in Cameroon¹ and IEDs² still remain a challenge in Nigeria. Reoccurrence use of child soldiers both by the Military. Most especially, CJTF and Boko Haram remain a challenge to the ongoing fight against terrorism across the region. Long serving Boko Haram sect leader, Abubakar Shekau, during the week claimed responsibility for the abduction of police women, while Nusrat al-Islam WalMuslimeen a group linked to Al-Qaida released proof of life for foreign hostages that have been held for years in Mali, as French President Emmanuel Macron meets CG5 countries to deliberate on the act of terrorism that is increasing in the region.

3.0. Trends and Patterns of Extremist Violence and Counter Terrorism

¹ <https://www.voanews.com/a/suicide-bombings-climb-in-northern-nigeria/3929337.html>

² <https://www.naij.com/1112771-nigerian-troops-neutralises-bombs-planted-by-boko-haram.html>

a. **The Use of Children as Child Soldiers**

The use of Children as soldiers has remained a challenge in terrorism and the counter terrorism efforts across the region. for instance, the 2017 United States Trafficking in Persons Report, classified Nigeria among countries that are likely to be sanctioned for going against Child Soldier Prohibition Act, CSPA 2008. The report stated that the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), a non-governmental self-defence militia that works with the Nigerian military have continued to recruit and make use of underage soldiers in their fight against Boko Haram³. In the week under review, Abubakar Shekau's faction of Boko Haram released a video showing how they celebrated the 2016 Salah festival. The video featured a child soldier threatening the Nigerian government on behalf of the terrorist group.⁴

b. **The Continuous use of female suicide bombers**

³<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/271344.pdf>

⁴<https://www.naij.com/1112807-boko-haram-terrorists-celebrate-sallah-sambisa-forest.html>

During the Holy month of Ramada, communities in Cameroon experienced multiple suicide attacks from Boko Haram insurgent. Suicide attack within this period were perpetuated mainly by female suicide bombers. The Fomeka, Mora and Feraea communities in Cameroon near the Nigerian border experienced these attacks, killing at least 20 people, including eight female suicide bombers⁵

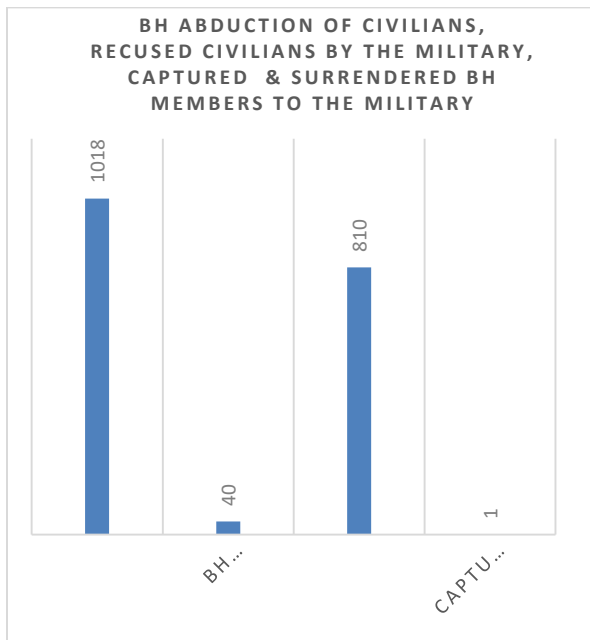
c. **Abduction and Hostages:**

Boko Haram in Nigeria abducted female police officers, while long serving Boko Haram leader, Abubakar Shekau, claimed responsibility for the abduction. The officers were ambushed by the insurgent group along Maiduguri-Damboia road on June 20th. whereas in Mali, anal-Qaida group linked to Nusrat al-Islam WalMuslimeen, released a proof of life video showing foreigners they abducted and have held for years, including citizens of South Africa, Australia, Romania, Switzerland, Colombia and France⁶.

⁵<https://www.voanews.com/a/suicide-bombings-climb-in-northern-nigeria/3929337.html>

⁶<https://www.voanews.com/a/al-qaida-linked-mali-extremists-release-hostage-video/3924899.html>

In Niger, Boko Haram killed nine (9) and abducted forty (40) individuals in south-east Nigerien village called Diffa close to Kablewaⁱ



4.0 Responses from State and Non - State Actors

Following a meeting with the newly elected French President, political leaders from the Sahel Regional group known as the G5, which comprises of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, discussed counter terrorism strategies that can be deployed in the region. French President Emmanuel Macron promised support for a five thousand (5000) strong multinational

joint taskforce to fight al-Qaeda-linked groups and others in the⁷.

The period under review, shows that 700 insurgents surrendered to the Nigeria military. This was because of the special military offensive operations in Sambisa forest with the code named 'Deep Punch'. The repentant and surrendered Boko Haram members are currently being profiled by the Nigerian military, meanwhile, the Nigerian military within the period under review lost some soldiers, recovered weapons, and neutralised planned attack by the Mamman Nur faction of the Boko Haram terrorist group at Gulumba Gana in Bama local government area of Borno Bama⁸.

The Nigerian Air Force carried out surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) mission on Sambisa forest which led to aerial bombardment of the vicinity⁹.

Two Chibok girls, Joy Bishara and Lydi Pogu, who escaped from Boko Haram, were offered Scholarships to complete their education in the United States by a

⁷<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/07/macron-mali-talks-leaders-africa-sahel-170702100325671.html>

⁸<https://www.naij.com/1113292-troops-neutralise-invading-mercenaries-hired-by-boko-haram.html>

⁹<https://www.naij.com/1113429-naf-frustrates-boko-haram-attempt-regrouping.html>

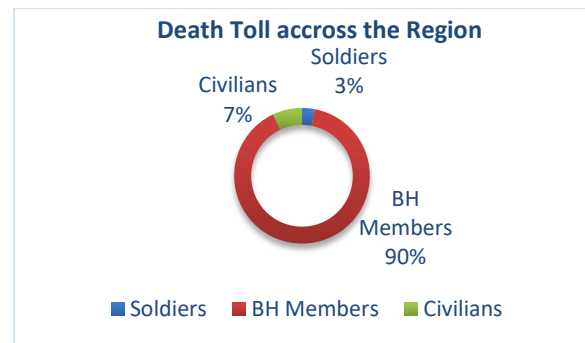
Christian non-governmental organisation. They were privileged to visit the White House and share their story of overcoming tremendous adversity with the American First Lady, Ivanka Trump, who expressed how proud she was of the girls¹⁰.

The Federal High Court sitting in Abuja dismissed the four-court charge of terrorism offences, (including sponsoring and having and hoarding information on terrorism related offences) brought against Senator Mohammed Ali Ndume on the basics that no *prima facie* case was established against¹¹.

The Borno State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) in the past six months recorded 3,000 births among Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) registered at various camps located in the State Capital between January and June. These invariably shows the increase in the number of child birth, children and couple's resident at the IDP Camps in Borno¹².

The Chadian military suffered a huge setback as heavy winds destroyed their

aircrafts used in combating insurgents¹³ within this period.



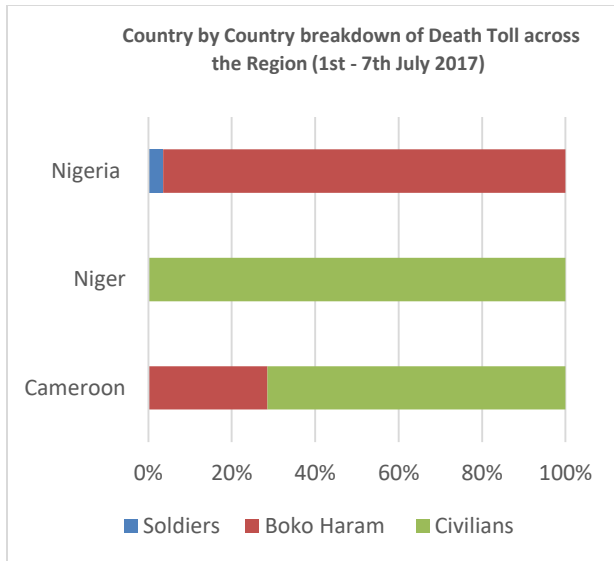
According to the Theatre Commander of the force fighting the insurgents in Nigeria, Attahiru Ibrahim, disclosed that as part of their counter terrorism efforts, the Nigerian military rescued 1,018 civilians. In the same effort, 404 Boko Haram fighters were killed, 810 Boko Haram members also surrendered to the military and 67 suspected Boko Haram members were arrested.

¹⁰<https://www.naij.com/1113084-i-proud-donald-trumps-daughter-writes-2-chibok-girls.html>

¹¹<https://www.naij.com/1113245-breaking-abuja-high-court-dismisses-terrorism-charges-senate-leader-ndume.html>

¹²<http://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/north-east/235675-boko-haram-borno-records-3000-births-idps-camps-six-months.html>

¹³<https://www.naij.com/1113172-chadian-armys-fight-boko-haram-suffers-setback.html>



100 and 98 percent of the deaths among soldiers and Boko Haram members across the region happened in Nigeria¹⁴, 2% of the Boko Haram members died in Cameroon while 65% and 35% of civilian deaths occurred in Cameroon and Niger respectively.

Further updates from the Nigerian military showed that Boko Haram carried out 97 suicide and vehicle bomb attacks between March and June 2017, while they lost 11 soldiers within this period.

Logistics

Within the period under review, we observed that Insurgents across the Lake Chad region now employ the use of motorbikes, bicycles and camels as decoy

to ambush troops in perpetuating their violent activities, this is evidenced in the recovery of 27 bicycles from the insurgents in an ambush¹⁵, and also in Niger where insurgents sent forth camels as decoys before ambush by foot soldiers.¹⁶

¹⁴<http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/236056-11-nigerian-soldiers-404-boko-haram-fighters-killed-four-months-official.html>

¹⁵<https://www.naij.com/1112780-nigerian-troops-ambush-kill-5-boko-haram-terrorists.html>

¹⁶<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/07/boko-haram-suspected-deadly-niger-attack-170703141614373.html>
