



Horizon West Africa – Mali 150 Metres Route de Koulikoro Sotuba ACI Route 3EME Pont, Bamako
Horizon West Africa - Nigeria No. 101 Midel Centre, Oladipo Diya Way, Gudu District, Abuja, FCT

Email operations@horizonwestafrica.com • **Website** www.horizonwestafrica.com

DATE: 31 December 2020
MONTHLY SITUATION REPORT

HIGHLIGHTS

36

Boko Haram Activity

○ **Highlight of week 1 & 2**

- The number of incidents recorded during the first two weeks was 114 and the most recorded incidents were kidnappings and protests.

67

Banditry Activity

- The reporting weeks were riddled with crime, robberies, kidnappings and protests.
- COVID-19 numbers surged in the reporting week with 89 deaths.
- A slight surge in protests by individuals seeking better work conditions and payment of salary arrears.

27

Civil Unrest

- Kidnappings were recorded in five states in the North west region.
- Five military operations conducted against insurgents in the North East region.
- An IED incident recorded in the North East region.
- The NAF conducted airstrikes against Bandit hideouts in the North West region.

384

Kidnapping Activity

○ **Highlight of the week 3 & 4**

- The number of incidents in the last weeks of the month reduced to 95 despite an intensity in kidnappings and insurgent activities.

432

Killings

- Bandits in the North West region joined forces with Boko Haram insurgents affiliated with Abubakar Shekau to kidnap school children.
- Land borders reopened by the government after closure for over a year.

07

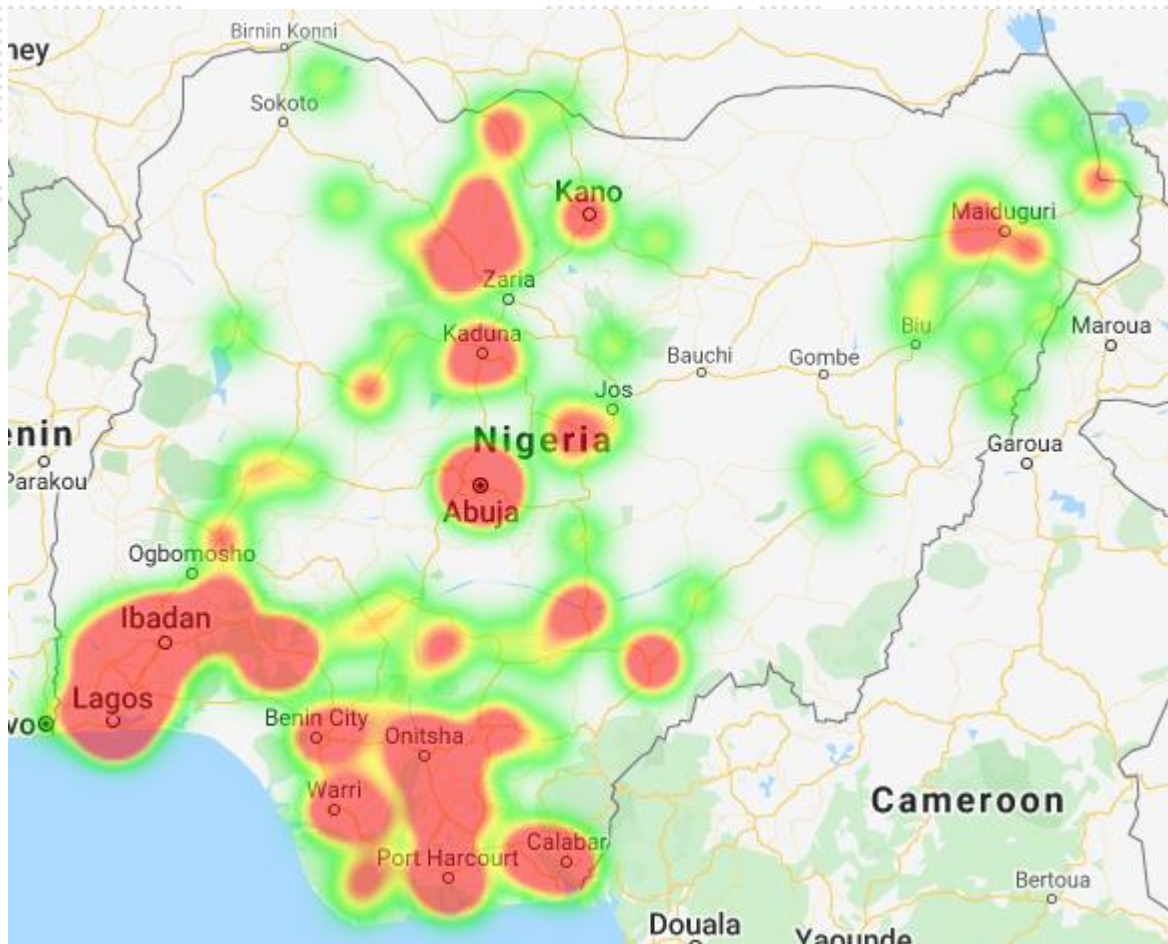
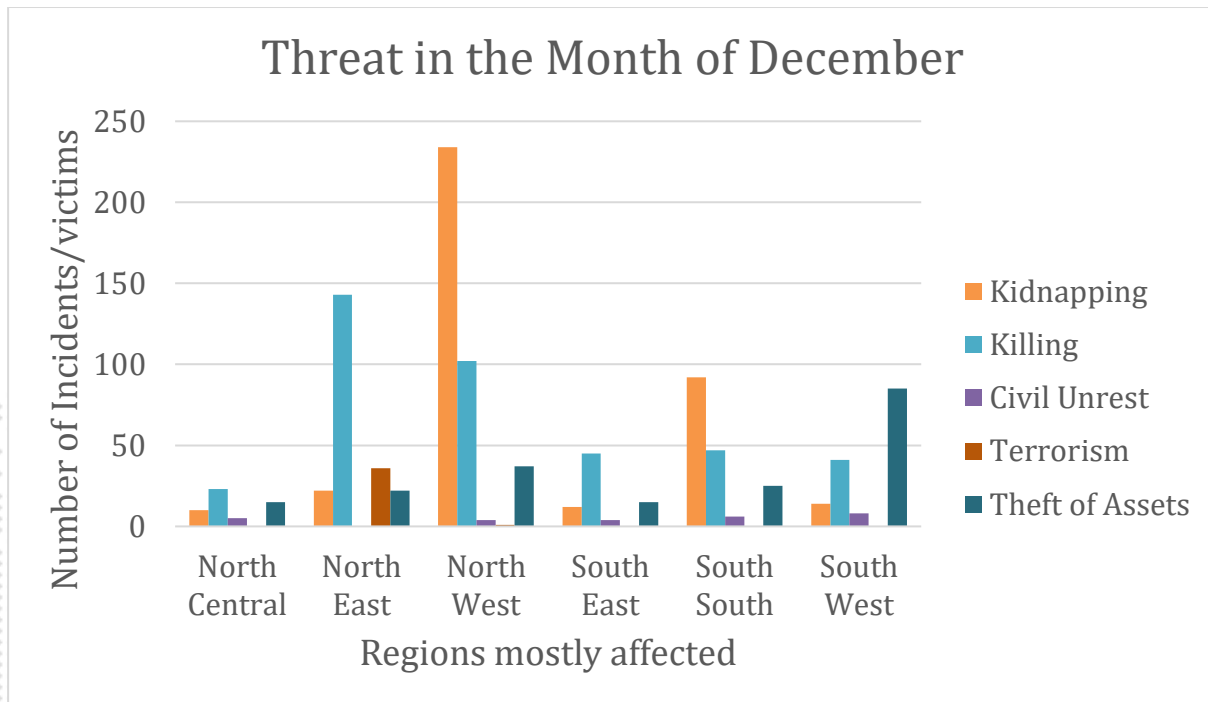
Military Operation

- Boko Haram insurgents orchestrated multiple attacks crossing into Adamawa and Yobe States.
- Another round of military operations recorded against insurgents in the North East.
- Two IED incidents recorded in the North East region.
- An upsurge in robberies recorded in the Southern region.

199

Theft of Asset

MAPS AND CHARTS



Heat Map showing incidents for December 2020

Analysis



The month in review is assessed as high due to the upsurge in kidnappings across the country and insurgent activities in the North East region. The relative calm that was witnessed after the unrest of October coupled with the absence of security forces in November was short-lived as there was a surge in crime nationwide which can be attributed to the preparations of the festive season.

The reporting month saw a glimpse of government's response following the civil unrest triggered by a demand for an end to police brutality, which degenerated into violence after a poorly coordinated security response in the last two months. The government targeted specific individuals using state apparatus such as the Central Bank to block bank accounts belonging to persons who were perceived as coordinators of the organised protests in most states of the federation. Also, other individuals were arrested and detained while passports were seized, preventing some others from leaving the country. This highhandedness by the government did not however stop the ongoing judicial panels in the south west and south east regions seeking reparation for the persons who had been victims of police brutality. It was however a surprise when information emerged on 3 December that the police filed a suit at a Federal High Court in Abuja FCT seeking an order to stop the judicial panels of inquiry set up by state governors to probe allegations of police brutality and human rights abuses against the force. It was seeking a decision that the panels were unconstitutional, illegal, null and void and of no effect and a perpetual injunction restraining the 3rd to 38th defendants (the attorneys-general of the 36 states) from making or conducting any investigations, sittings and inquiries or from making or conducting any further investigations, sittings and inquiries in respect of matters affecting the Nigeria Police Force, and or further setting up any panel of inquiry in any state whatsoever in the country. This immediately caused an uproar on social media as people expressed their dissatisfaction at the actions of the police attempting to stop investigations which is expected to punish offenders and eventually put an end to police brutality. The Inspector General of Police later responded stating that he was unaware of the case which further fuelled some pockets of protests recorded in some parts of the country specifically Lagos State. The case was rescheduled for 18 December as the Court in which the case was filed did not seat.

Apart from the aforementioned case filed in Abuja FCT, the North Central recorded cases of kidnappings, herdsmen attacks and protests. An estimated 30 individuals including local officials were kidnapped from various locations in Kogi, Niger and Plateau states. There most likely is a movement of bandits from the Northwest region into the North Central through major highways and bush paths which has resulted in the increase of kidnappings in the region. Although there were no reports of kidnappings in Abuja FCT in the reporting month, it could likely be a case of underreporting. Benue state recorded cases of Fulani herdsmen



attacks in some local governments and generally, farmers have reported an upsurge in attacks on their farmland by herdsmen who not only destroy crops but also kill farm hands and kidnap residents. More of such incidents are expected to occur in the next reporting month as the dry season commences.

The North West region remained the epicentre of kidnappings and killings orchestrated by armed groups called bandits. Over 600 individuals were kidnapped including school boys who were reportedly taken from their hostels in Government Science Secondary School in Katsina State. The incident was the highlight of the month as different reports emerged on how over 400 boys were moved from their school to Boko Haram territory in Borno State. Although some of the boys were eventually released, it remains a point of reference on the expansion of insurgency in the country. There was a pendulum of criminal activities as Kaduna, Katsina, Kano, Jigawa Zamfara states all recorded incidents simultaneously every week. It was in the month also that reports emerged that in Zamfara State bandits kidnap female members of families owing taxes and sexually assault them till the taxes are paid. The governor of the state, Bello Matawalle seems not to be taking a hard-line against the bandits which could be one of the reasons insecurities has escalated in the state despite military operations recorded during the month. The governor has been a major participant in securing the release of several individuals kidnapped by bandits specifically in the Northwest region and his role has been criticised by the populace. Also, election violence between the two major political parties which led to the death of two individuals before the bye-elections of 5 December led the governor to impose a 24-hour curfew. The election was eventually held but the result was inconclusive with INEC recording it as “close”. Major parts of the aforementioned states have become red zones and it is highly advised that all travel to the area should be done with armed escort.

After Boko Haram insurgents issued threat warnings to increase attacks on major routes into Maiduguri and in about eight local government areas in Borno State, the reporting month saw an upsurge in kidnappings, use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) including a Person Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (PBIED) in three separate attacks in Konduga, Maiduguri and Ngala LGAs between 9 and 28 December, mounting of illegal checkpoints which were used by insurgents to rob commuters and killing of persons who identify as Christians. Noteworthy, these incidents mostly occurred during daylight further reinforcing reports of unfettered access by insurgents in the state. All these incidents occurred despite airstrikes conducted by the Air Task Force of Operation Lafiya Dole which reportedly killed Amir Gomina Maina who is the governor of Lake Chad in Kukawa LGA just six months after his appointment. It was later reported that another governor by the name Aliyu Chakkar was chosen and announced by ISWAP on 13 December but the choice was rejected and it resulted into infighting amongst the insurgents. This did not however deter the continuous onslaught by the group.



On the other hand, the kidnap of over 400 students by bandits was linked to Boko Haram after a video was released by Abubakar Shekau, leader of the Boko Haram Sect claiming the attack days after the abduction, confirming the fears that the group was not only positioned in the North East but also carrying out attacks in the North West. The abduction was orchestrated by bandits on behalf of the Boko Haram faction and they were transported to Borno State and held till negotiations were concluded for their release. Some of the boys were eventually released and the government claimed that there was no payment made to the sect. No insurgent was however captured neither was there any military operation to find the culprits. Therefore, it is believed that the ease with which the negotiations were completed could possibly galvanise other criminal groups to take advantage of the lax in the security strategy of the government and continue to collaborate with Boko Haram in planning other attacks. To confirm this, a day after the boys were release, on 19 December, another 80 students were kidnapped whilst travelling between villages in Dandume LGA, Katsina State. There is a high possibility that more kidnappings of this magnitude might reoccur in the North West region.

Although kidnappings have been known to occur in the North west and North east regions, there were notable incidents in the South East and the South South regions in the reporting month. Incidents were recorded in Benin where commuters and high-profile individuals were targeted, in Cross River where medical doctors remained prime targets, in Delta, Enugu and Imo, where business men were abducted on major routes.

An estimated 102 fatalities were recorded in road traffic accidents occurring in the North Central, South East, South West and North West regions showing a slight uptick in accidents compared to the last reporting month. The South West and the South East regions recorded the most incidents in the month.

Civil unrest gathered momentum in the reporting month as over 27 protests were organised by various groups all across the country demanding for better work conditions, justice and payment of salary arrears.

Fire incidents remained the major hazard in the reporting month with most incidents recorded in the South West region specifically Lagos State. Most of the incidents were caused by fuel laden tankers which led to fatalities. Also, there was a surge in fire incidents at IDP camps in Borno State and cause of the fire remains unclear.

The unexpected surge in COVID-19 cases in the first week of the reporting month has escalated with an increase in number of confirmed cases and fatalities with warnings of a possible mutation as announced by the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). It was

therefore the reason the Federal Government put in place measures to curb the spread of virus by ordering the closure of schools till 18th January 2021 while government workers below Grade 12 are to stay home for 5 weeks. All night clubs and recreational venues were closed while churches were ordered to be at 50 percent capacity till further notice alongside other measures which were initially in effect during the lockdown in March. Significantly, between 1st to 31st December a total of 19,726 new cases and 113 deaths have been recorded.

In other news, the land borders which were closed to importation of goods since August 2019 were reopened following an announcement by President Muhammadu Buhari on 16 December. The announcement which was made by the Presidency’s twitter account was a welcome development as businesses have complained on the difficulties of not only importing goods but exportation as well.

Threat Chart for December

Threats for the Month					
Region	Kidnapping	Terrorism	Theft of Assets	Civil Unrest	Killing
North Central	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Medium
North East	High	High	High	Low	High
North West	High	Medium	High	Low	High
South East	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
South West	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Medium
South South	High	Low	High	Low	Medium

- ◆ **Low (1)** - Incident did not occur in the reporting period. Nevertheless, will to conduct attacks and opportunity to target project assets and/or personnel remains a threat.
- ◆ **Medium (2)** – Incident occurred but minimal. Nevertheless, will to conduct attacks and opportunity to target project assets and/or personnel remains a threat.
- ◆ **High (3)** – Incident occurred at increased proportion and active with demonstrated will to conduct attacks that would target project assets and/or personnel.



To enquire about our reports or any of our security, risk management and training services, please email operations@horizonweatafrica.com

www.horizonwestafrica.com

This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the system manager. This message contains confidential information and is intended only for the individual named. If you are not the named addressee you should not disseminate, distribute or copy this e-mail. Please notify the sender immediately by e-mail if you have received this e-mail by mistake and delete this e-mail from your system. If you are not the intended recipient you are notified that disclosing, copying, distributing or taking any action in reliance on the contents of this information is strictly prohibited.