



Horizon West Africa – Mali 150 Metres Route de Koulikoro Sotuba ACI Route 3EME Pont, Bamako
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DATE: 31 May 2021
MONTHLY SITUATION REPORT

HIGHLIGHTS

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Boko Haram Activity

○ **Highlight of week 1 & 2**

- The number of incidents recorded during the first two weeks was 130 and the most recorded incidents were armed attacks, and terrorist activity.
- COVID-19 cases significantly decreased in the first two weeks with 551 new cases and three deaths.
- Attacks on police officers and police stations remained a threat in the SE and spread to the SS region.
- Protests were minimal in the first two weeks of the month.
- Kidnappings were recorded in all the six-geopolitical zones but there was a general decline in reports of kidnapping incidents.
- Southern Governors decided to issue a ban on grazing which was expected to affect mostly Fulani herdsmen.

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Civil Unrest

○ **Highlight of the week 3 & 4**

35

Kidnapping Activity

- The number of incidents increased in the last weeks of the month with 108 incidents.
- COVID-19 numbers in the last two weeks slightly increased to 613 new cases and four deaths.
- Many students kidnapped in North Central as herdsmen attacks also intensified in some states.

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Killings

- Attacks in the South East region against police officers intensified and a political figure was killed.
- Upsurge in kidnappings in the North Central region.
- The leader of Boko Haram was reportedly killed after pressure from ISWAP terrorists.
- Heightened tension in the country as multiple reports of violence erupting in the South Eastern region

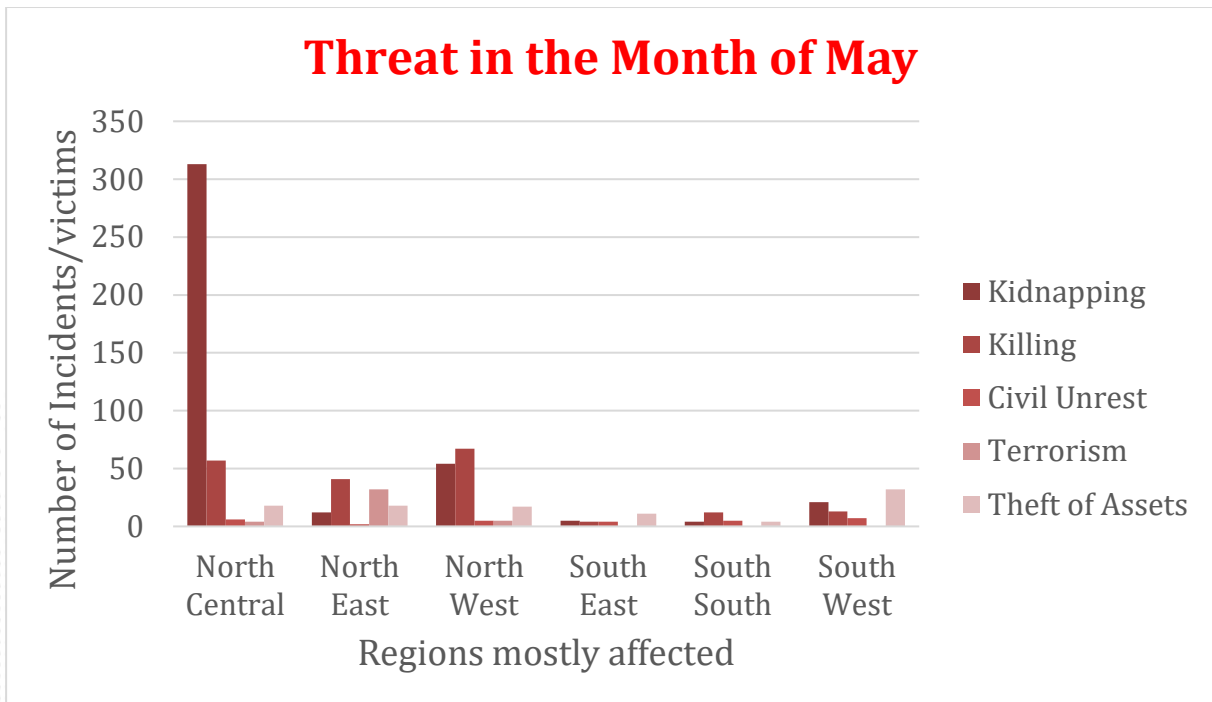
04

Military Operation

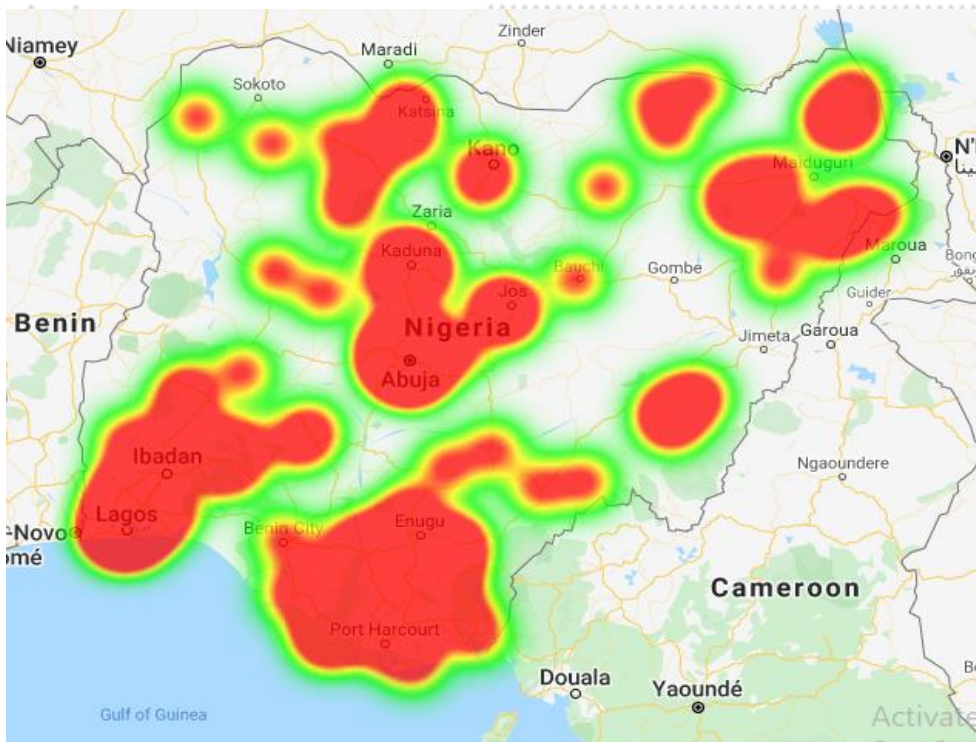
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Theft of Asset

MAPS AND CHARTS



Heat Map for Nigeria - May 2021



General threat assessment for the month of May remains at High as armed groups remain the biggest menace in the country. The ethnic tensions remained one of the highlights of the month as declaration over criminalising open grazing mostly run by Fulani herdsmen in the southern region elicited several unprofessional commentaries from government officials which further incited the divide.

States in the North Central region recorded an upsurge in killings that resulted in the displacement of several persons from their residents. Benue and Plateau states were mostly affected by armed Fulani herdsmen who have for decades been attacking indigenes of other tribes, identified as Christians, and whose major source of livelihood is farming. This has been ongoing despite intervention of security forces which has been minimal in most cases as more attacks have reportedly been recorded at the states' capitals further creating an atmosphere of insecurity nationwide. During the month, attacks in Benue State occurred frequently and at all times of the day with communities in Makurdi, Gwer Gwest, Guma and Gboko recording incidents every week with an estimated 200 persons killed and thousands of others displaced. Further reports claimed that most of these villages are currently occupied by cattle as all the residents have fled their homes to avoid being victims. Thus, it can be concluded that the tactics of continuous attacks which impacts the people forcing them moving away from an insecure area has worked for the herdsmen who later take over these communities with their families thereby changing the demographics to register as Fulani territory. The solutions to these issues have been difficult to implement while at the National Level, the Federal Government has initiated a program called Rural Grazing Area (RUGA) to create a vast land space in most states in the country to enable herders live and grow their flocks thereby reducing their mode of operation of roaming with their cattle. This has been majorly rejected by most states including Benue as it has been criticised as a land grabbing strategy by the government to acquire land for their kinfolk. At the state level, Governor Samuel Ortom announced plans to commence recruitment of Community Volunteer Guards on 6 May during a meeting. These guards will be armed in accordance with the law.

Apart from Benue, Niger State also continues to record heightened number of armed groups activities as reports emerged that most of these criminals have been hiding out on a military territory in Kotangora LGA which is used as collection and transportation point for kidnapped victims. Another 200 students were kidnapped from Islamiyya School at Teginia in Rafi LGA. Rafi which is also a red zone for kidnappings apart from Shiroro LGA had recorded a decline in bandit activities, but this incident shows that the armed groups remain at large in the area.

The North West region recorded a decline in bandit activities during the month. This could be attributed to under and late reporting of incidents as reports emerged that the seemingly



moderate threat Kebbi State was infested by bandits. Sakaba, Donka/Wasagu and Pakai LGAs were reportedly faced threats from bandits who attack during daylight robbing and rustling cattle without security forces intervention. Furthermore, reports emerged that many persons have had to move away from their homes and settle in makeshift camps in the city. Kaduna State remains the most volatile possibly due to its location being a central route between the North Central and North East regions. While the exact number of fatalities and kidnapped persons during the month remain inexact, there has not been a cohesive effort to find a lasting solution to the problem of banditry in the state. Also, during the month the Nigerian Labour congress after the dismissal of over 7,000 workers by the state governor, Nasir El Rufai shutdown the civil service for five days held mass protests at the metropolis. Rufai, immediately declared the President of the Union, Aliyu Wabba wanted for economic sabotage. This was highly criticised by other unions who threatened to join the strike and protests in solidarity. By the third day of the protests that is on 19 May, at least 100 armed men attacked the secretariat of the NLC while another group attacked protesters forcing the union's president to stop the mass protests. Notably, this was the same tactics used during the Endsars protest of October 2020 when hoodlums were used to infiltrate the ranks of the protesters which resulted in several fatalities and destruction of properties. Sadly, two days later a Nigerian Airforce aircraft crashed killing 10 top military officials onboard including the Chief of Army Staff, Ibrahim Attahiru who was newly appointed just some months prior to the incident.

On a positive note, Greenfield University student who were kidnapped on 21st April in Chikun LGA were released and abandoned along Kaduna – Abuja Highway on the afternoon of 29 May.

In the North East, it was reported that Abubakar Shekau the leader of Boko Haram was killed by terrorists affiliated to ISWAP after weeks of infighting between the two sides. The reports have not however been confirmed as in times past, the death of Shekau has been announced only for him to resurface with a video. It has been more than a week to date that his death was announced, and no confirmation report by his followers. This might however be due to lack of leadership amongst the ranks of both Boko Haram and ISWAP as the recent infighting may have resulted in the killing of several potential leaders.

More police officers were killed in the South East region now totalling an estimated 67 killed since January 2021. The Inspector General of Police therefore on 19 May launched a security operation with codename 'Operation Restore Peace' during a press briefing in Enugu State. The operation was part of Federal Government response in addressing the security situation in the region. During the announcement, the IGP made some unprofessional remarks pertaining to human rights violations which has raised concern amongst the populace especially on social media. In context, police brutality is common knowledge amongst the



citizens therefore those statements further alienated the populace from siding with the police and could result in retaliatory actions by citizens that have been affected by the order. Thus far, innocent bystanders have been killed by security forces during the operations such was the case on 20 May in Imo State. By 28 May, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) issued a stay-at-home order for 30 and 31 May to celebrate the creation of Biafra and remember the killing of millions of south eastern Nigerians during the civil war of 1967. Tension had mounted as attacks on police stations tripled in Imo, Abia and Anambra and on 29 May, a former presidential adviser was killed by unknown gunmen. On 30 May, security forces responded with brute force, indiscriminately arresting male students from their hostels in Owerri, arresting peaceful protesters in Enugu while some individuals were reportedly shot. The tension is not going to abate as more attacks are expected to be recorded in the next reporting month.

For the South West region, kidnappings were rife during the first two weeks of the month with an estimated 18 persons were kidnapped along routes and on farmlands in Oyo, Osun, Ogun, and Ondo states. The number of kidnapped persons could likely be more as incidents are rarely reported when they happen in remote towns or for fear of the assailants. Victims' families reportedly pay ransom without police intervention as most of the kidnappings have been attributed to Fulani Herdsmen. This might possibly be the reason for the unanimous decision by Southern Governors to ban open grazing which elicited several unprofessional commentaries from government officials including the Attorney General of the Federation who also doubles as Minister of justice.

The South South region during the reporting month recorded an upsurge in police station attacks with incidents recorded in Akwa Ibom, Delta and Rivers states. An estimated 15 police officers were killed in the onslaught which resulted in the issuance of curfews which were supposed to reduce the attacks but were ineffective. Also, a temporal ban was placed on police officers running escort into Rivers and other south eastern states while officers have also been forced to wear plain clothes to avoid being targeted in Rivers State.

Civil unrest further declined in the month as 26 incidents were recorded across the country. Protests over insecurity, dismissal of workers were common nationwide as people seek redress against injustice. During one of the incidents in Abuja FCT, the leader of Revolution Now was shot and injured by a police officer.

Nine fire incidents were recorded in the month and most were related to gas explosions raising concerns on the type of gas being distributed and sold to the populace, especially in the South West region. Investigations are still ongoing to understand the situation.

Threat Chart for March

- ◆ **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.

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



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