

Nigeria: Extremism and Terrorism

On March 21, 2021, Boko Haram militants ambushed Nigerian troops in Wulgo, northeastern Nigeria. Cameroonian Defense Force (CDF) soldiers were deployed from across the border to assist in countering the attack. The 40-minute gunfight left two CDF soldiers dead and three other CDF soldiers and a Nigerian soldier injured. (Source: [Agence France Presse](#))

On March 12, 2021, gunmen kidnapped 39 students from the Federal College of Forestry Mechanisation in Mando, northwestern Nigeria. Two days later, the assailants circulated video clips of the students calling on the government to cooperate with the captors. It is unclear if ransom requests were made. The kidnapping follows two other mass kidnappings that occurred at the Jangebe Government Girls' Secondary School in Zamfara, northwest Nigeria on February 26 and another in north-central Nigeria on February 17. Unidentified gunmen abducted 279 schoolgirls in Zamfara, but the students were later rescued by the Zamfara State Police Command in cooperation with the military on March 2. Unknown assailants kidnapped 42 people in the north-central abduction, but the abductees were released and received by the Niger State government on February 27. Regional analysts believe the recent kidnappings were carried out by armed bandits rather than jihadists based in the northeast. However, abductions for ransom have become an increasingly lucrative enterprise for both groups. (Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Voice of America](#), [New York Times](#), [CNN](#), [CNN](#), [Deutsche Welle](#), [Africa News](#))

On December 11, 2020, hundreds of Boko Haram gunmen abducted more than 300 schoolboys in Kankara, northwest Nigeria. On December 17, Katsina State Governor Aminu Bello Masari announced that the schoolboys—over 344 total—were released and handed over to the government in neighboring Zamfara State. Masari claimed the government had not paid ransom for the release, and that the negotiations took place with a group of bandits rather than Boko Haram. (Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Associated Press](#))

Nigeria continues to experience attacks at the hands of [Boko Haram](#) and its ISIS-endorsed offshoot, ISWAP. Although the groups share common roots, they diverge on the issue of targeting Muslim civilians. Under [Abubakar Shekau](#), Boko Haram continues to target Muslims in suicide bomb attacks at crowded marketplaces in northeast Nigeria. Most recently, locals have begun to organize vigilante groups as a way to defend their villages against ambushes, which has led to a series of “reprisal” attacks carried out by terrorist entities. On the other hand, ISWAP has attempted to avoid targeting Muslims and instead, carries out the majority of its attacks on military targets. (Sources: [Institute for Security Studies](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [New York Times](#), [Global News](#), [ABC News](#))

Overview

According to the U.S. Department of State, Boko Haram and its offshoots are responsible for the displacement of 2.5 million Nigerians, with approximately 200,000 seeking refuge in neighboring countries. Islamic extremism was a concern for 72 percent of the Nigerians polled in a study conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2014 and has been a top priority for Nigerian politicians. After Muhammadu Buhari was elected president of Nigeria in March 2015, he stated: “we shall spare no effort until we defeat terrorism.” During his first few months in office, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari led a vigorous military campaign against Boko Haram and declared victory against the group in December 2015. Despite Buhari’s continued assurances that Boko Haram has been “technically defeated,” the group continues to carry out attacks and has maintained control over territory in northeastern Nigeria. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Pew Research Center](#), [New York Times](#), [International Crisis Group](#), [Economist](#), [Africanews](#))

Since 2009, Boko Haram has carried out a regular string of attacks against Nigerian security forces and civilians. The group has killed more than 30,000 people in its effort to establish an Islamic caliphate. In August 2011, Boko Haram carried out its first attack against the West, killing 23 people in a suicide car bombing outside of the United Nations headquarters in Abuja. Boko Haram gained international notoriety after kidnapping 276 Chibok schoolgirls in April 2014. The kidnapping sparked the #BringBackOurGirls social media campaign, which was endorsed by high-profile individuals such as Pope Francis and then-U.S. First Lady Michelle Obama. With support from the International Committee of the Red Cross, Buhari’s government has secured the release 107 of the kidnapped Chibok girls. In January 2015—in Boko Haram’s deadliest attack to date—insurgents slaughtered more than 2,000 people in northeastern Nigeria. A few days later, the group allegedly remotely detonated explosives strapped to young girls in Maiduguri, the capital city of Borno State. (Sources: [Japan Times](#), [U.S. Office of the Director of National Intelligence](#), [Bring Back Our Girls](#), [Guardian](#), [New York Times](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [CNN](#), [NBC](#))

In 2016, after ISIS recognized [Abu Musab al-Barnawi](#) as the leader of the group, Boko Haram split into two factions. Militants loyal to longtime Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau have continued to carry out suicide bombings at crowded marketplaces in northeast Nigeria. Under al-Barnawi’s leadership, the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) has launched a series of attacks against Nigerian security forces and other government targets. The Nigerian government has continued to strengthen its legislation against terrorism and is working with regional and

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international allies against militant groups in and around Nigeria. (Sources: [Institute for Security Studies](#), [Amnesty International](#))

Radicalization and Foreign Fighters

Boko Haram

Boko Haram is a Nigeria-based terror group that seeks to rid the country of Western and secular institutions and to resuscitate the Kanem-Bornu caliphate that once ruled over modern-day Nigeria, Chad, and Cameroon. The group was founded by a Salafist cleric named Mohammed Yusuf in 2002. Yusuf opened the Ibn Taymiyyah Masjid mosque in Maiduguri and developed a significant following among disaffected youth in the area. Many of these followers went on to become Boko Haram militants. (Sources: [Brookings](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Oxford Research Encyclopedias](#), [BBC News](#))

In 2009, Yusuf was killed by Nigerian security forces and Abubakar Shekau became the leader of Boko Haram. Under Shekau's leadership, Boko Haram has grown more militant and has developed a reputation for mass violence. In addition to targeting Christians, who represent approximately 50 percent of the Nigerian population, Boko Haram routinely targets Muslim civilians outside of the organization (who are, by virtue of that fact, considered infidels). Boko Haram's ideology and tactics have alienated Nigerians making it hard for Boko Haram to recruit new members. As a result, the group has resorted to the conscription of thousands of boys and girls, many of who are trained in boot camps in northeast Nigerian and neighboring Cameroon. (Sources: [Combating Terrorism Center](#), [Brookings](#), [Pew Research Center](#), [Institute for Security Studies](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Strategic Studies Institute](#), [Wall Street Journal](#))

In 2012, a number of Boko Haram members who opposed Shekau's willingness to target Muslim civilians defected to form a splinter group called Ansaru. The group's full Arabic name, Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina Fi Biladis Sudan, loosely translates to "Vanguards for the Protection of Muslims in Black Africa." Ansaru is aligned with [al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb \(AQIM\)](#) and has executed a number of notable attacks against foreign targets. The United States designated the group a terrorist organization in 2013. Nigerian authorities captured Ansaru's leader, Khalid al-Barnawi, in early April 2016 and since then a number of Ansaru members have reportedly reintegrated with Shekau's Boko Haram. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [Combating Terrorism Center](#), [Bloomberg News](#), [BBC News](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [BBC News](#), [African Arguments](#), [African Arguments](#))?

Additionally, the group has more frequently resorted to the abduction of school children as a means of recruitment and ransom to fund their operations. According to UNICEF, in the period of 2013 until 2018, Boko Haram abducted more than 1,000 children in northeastern Nigeria. Notably, the jihadist group kidnapped over 276 Chibok girls in 2014, and as of January 2021, while some girls were rescued or freed following negotiations, around 112 of the girls have yet to be accounted for. Although the group steadily kidnapped children and women in the years that followed, it was not until December 11, 2020, that the extremist group once again carried out a mass abduction, kidnapping over 300 schoolboys in Kankara. However, on December 17, the schoolboys were released and handed over to the government, with the government claiming they negotiated with bandits rather than Boko Haram. (Sources: [UNICEF](#), [BBC News](#), [ABC News](#), [Voice of America](#), [Washington Post](#), [Associated Press](#))

Furthermore, Boko Haram has not limited their abductions to Nigeria. According to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, over 5,741 violations against children—within Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger—have been carried out by Boko Haram between January 2017 and December 2019. Reportedly, 3,601 children were recruited in that time frame with 1,385 children coerced into combat and a variety of support roles including sexual slavery. Although an exact figure was not released, the report also claimed Boko Haram mostly used girls as carriers of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) as "human bombs." (Source: [Children and Armed Conflict](#))

Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)

In March 2015, Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau announced the Nigerian terror group's allegiance to ISIS. Shortly after, ISIS's now-deceased spokesperson [Abu Mohammad al-Adnani](#) released an audio message directing individuals who could not enter Iraq or Syria to travel to West Africa. There is little evidence to suggest that Adani's message attracted a significant number of foreign fighters to Nigeria. On the contrary, an estimated 6,000 individuals, including the son of the former Nigerian Chief Justice Muhammad Lawal Uwais, reportedly left Nigeria and other African countries to fight with ISIS in Iraq and Syria. (Sources: [Institute for Security Studies](#), [Reuters](#), [The Punch](#), [Daily Trust](#))

Boko Haram split into two groups when ISIS appointed Abu Musab al-Barnawi as the head of the Islamic State's West Africa Province in August 2016. Although Shekau did not win the endorsement of ISIS, he refused to relinquish his authority and has continued to lead a group of followers

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under the banner of Boko Haram. Shekau has maintained his allegiance to ISIS and, in March 2017, began including ISIS logos in official Boko Haram videos. (Sources: [CNN](#), [Institute for Security Studies](#))

Since the split, the attacks carried out by each faction are difficult to differentiate. One difference, however, is that ISWAP controls territory in the Lake Chad Basin area in northern Borno State whereas Shekau's faction controls land in central and southern Borno State, including Boko Haram's historical territorial stronghold of the Sambisa Forest. (Source: [Combatting Terrorism Center](#))

With ISIS losing territory in the Middle East, Nigeria has recently seen an influx of foreign fighters joining the ranks of Boko Haram and ISWAP via Iraq and Syria. According to a CNN report, approximately 1,500 foreign fighters have joined Boko Haram and around 3,500 have joined ISWAP. (Sources: [The Punch](#), [CNN](#))

Currently, there are over 3,500 to 5,000 fighters who belong to ISWAP who regularly carry out attacks in Borno State. ISWAP has been effective in recruiting members and building support as they have learned to blend into the community at large, and have assured locals that they will not be harmed in ISWAP-controlled territories as long as they do not cooperate with the Nigerian military. Additionally, the group provides financial incentives to future fighters and young entrepreneurs in the region. By offering loans to businesses in the region, ISWAP reinforces the loyalty of their supporters while also receiving foods and goods services from the merchants. Furthermore, given that armed bandits have become more common in northeastern Nigeria over the past few years, some locals rely on ISWAP to protect them against that threat. (Source: [Foreign Policy](#))

On February 23, 2020, the United Nations Security Council listed ISWAP on the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List. (Source: [United Nations Security Council](#))

Kala Kato

Kala Kato is an Islamic fundamentalist movement with a following in Nigeria. It is considered a Quranist movement: Kala Kato followers rely exclusively on the Quran and reject the religious authority of the Hadith (a series of books describing the words and actions of the Islamic prophet Muhammad). The movement's reasoning for dismissing the Hadith is reflected in the name "Kala Kato," which translates to "a mere man said it." Kala Kato considers those who follow the Hadith to be infidels, which has caused tension between Kala Kato and other Muslim sects. This tension has been exacerbated by the fact that Kala Kato has challenged conventional Muslim practices such as reciting the Islamic prayer *Nasilat* and the act of alms-giving, or *zakat*. (Sources: [Nigerian Research Network](#), [Jamestown Foundation](#), [Niger Times](#))

Kala Kato followers have been known to publicly preach their views and promote militancy. The movement rejects western education and followers have reportedly tried to persuade Nigerian parents to pull their children out of school to study the Quran. According to a Nigerian security official, followers have successfully proselytized moderate Muslims in Nigeria and in neighboring countries such as Niger. (Sources: [Nigerian Research Network](#), [BBC News](#), [Northwestern University](#))

Izala

Izala is an anti-Sufi, Salafist organization that was founded by Sheikh Ismaila Idris in 1978 in the central Nigerian city Jos. The name "Izala" is short for Jama'atul Izalatul Bid'ah Wa'ikhamatul Sunnah, which translates to "society for the removal of innovation and reinstatement of tradition." Izala has established Islamic schools and mosques for purposes of recruitment and indoctrination and has reportedly managed to garner a significant following in and around Nigeria. (Sources: [University of Bayreuth](#), [Oxford University Press](#))

The organization finds its roots in the early 1960s as a movement centered on Sheikh Abu-bakar Gummi, a prominent preacher and scholar influenced by the Saudi Islamic doctrine [Wahhabism](#). Izala has maintained a connection to the Wahhabi movement and has reportedly received significant financial support from the Saudi Arabian government via its embassy in Nigeria. (Sources: [Strategic Studies Institute](#), [Washington Post](#))

Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN)

Founded by Nigerian extremist Malam Ibrahim al-Zakzaky, the Islamic Movement in Nigeria is a Shiite organization reported to be financially and ideologically supported by Iran. According to a 2013 report from the Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, the IMN is considered "Iran's proxy" by some Iranian officials and has adopted the Iranian government's anti-American, anti-western, and anti-Israeli political views. In July 2014, more than 30 IMN members were killed in clashes with government forces including during the IMN's yearly Quds procession—an event held to demonstrate IMN's solidarity with the Palestinian cause. IMN has reportedly emulated many of [Hezbollah's](#) recruitment practices. The

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group allegedly runs a radio station, newspaper, and more than 300 schools. According to Nigerian intelligence, IMN hosts training camps for new recruits across northern Nigeria. Ever since the detainment of al-Zakzaky in 2015 following charges of murder, IMN followers have regularly held protests across the country. Although al-Zakzaky was ordered to be released by a federal high court in 2016, the army simply ignored the order. Their protests reportedly turn violent due to national hostility and police overreaction towards the Shiite marchers. In one confrontation in December 2018, Nigerian soldiers opened fire on unarmed demonstrators, which the military later justified as their right to defense. On July 29, 2019, the federal court allowed the government to designate the IMN as a terrorist organization. (Sources: [Strategic Studies Institute](#), [Sahara Reporters](#), [Combating Terrorism Center](#), [Sahara Reporters](#), [Middle East Institute](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [Radio Farda](#), [New York Times](#))

Movement for the Islamic Revival (MIR)

IMN follower Abubakar Mujahid founded the Movement for the Islamic Revival (or Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah, Ja'amutu Tajidmul Islami) in the late 1990s in Kano, Nigeria. The group is known to exploit street violence and organize mass protests. Abubakar Mujahid and IMN founder Malam Ibrahim al-Zakzaky are reported to be an influential grass roots force capable of convening street demonstrations of up to half of a million people in Kano. Both Zakzaky and Mujahid are reported to have revered al-Qaeda leader [Osama Bin Laden](#). (Source: [Strategic Studies Institute](#))

Major Extremist and Terrorist Incidents

Boko Haram and its dissident offshoot, Ansaru, have executed the majority of their attacks against civilian and military targets in northern Nigeria. These attacks have included kidnappings, beheadings, shootings, and bombings. Neighboring Cameroon, Chad, and Niger have also been targeted, though to a lesser degree. Boko Haram militants are known for carrying out “hit-and-run” assaults, during which houses are destroyed, men of fighting age are killed, and women and children are kidnapped. (Sources: [Washington Post](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [Associated Press](#), [Amnesty International](#))

Boko Haram launched its deadliest attack to date on January 3, 2015, when insurgents opened fire on multiple northern Nigerian towns, killing more than 2,000 civilians. The multi-day assault began when militants entered targeted towns with cars and armored vehicles filled with motorcycles which were then unloaded. The jihadists shot indiscriminately at fleeing residents and destroyed more than 3,700 buildings. Amnesty International spoke to witnesses who characterized the damage as “catastrophic.” (Sources: [BBC News](#), [CNN](#), [Amnesty International](#))

Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari declared victory against Boko Haram in December 2015, though the announcement was followed by successive suicide bombings perpetrated by the terror group in the country’s northeast. As of August 2016, Boko Haram split into two groups when ISIS appointed Abu Musab al-Barnawi as the head of ISWAP in August 2016. Although Shekau did not win the endorsement of ISIS, he refused to relinquish his authority and has continued to lead a group of followers under the banner of Boko Haram. (Sources: [Premium Times](#), [Newsweek](#), [Economist](#), [Institute for Security Studies](#))

Abductions

Boko Haram has carried out a number of mass abductions since the launch of its insurgency in northern Nigeria. On April 14, 2014, the jihadist group kidnapped over 276 schoolgirls from their school dormitory in Chibok, Borno State. Around 57 of the schoolgirls managed to escape, but the other 219 were transported to the group’s base in Sambisa forest. The schoolgirls were reportedly forced to convert to Islam and married off to Boko Haram soldiers. Their abduction launched an international campaign for their release, with Boko Haram’s leader Shekau maintaining they would only be released in exchange for imprisoned Boko Haram members. As of January 2021, some girls have been rescued or freed following negotiations, but around 112 of the girls have yet to be accounted for. (Sources: [Voice of America](#), [Combating Terrorism Center](#))

On December 11, 2020, hundreds of gunmen opened fire and surrounded a school in Kankara, northwest Nigeria, abducting more than 300 schoolboys in the process. On December 15, Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the ambush and mass kidnapping. Given that the attack was carried out in Kankara—hundreds of miles from the insurgent group’s stronghold in the Lake Chad Basin—political analysts suspect that the group is expanding its operations across West Africa and has potentially formed alliances with other militant groups in the Sahel. On December 17, a Boko Haram-branded video was released that showed dozens of boys from Kankara begging the government to call off the army’s search for the schoolboys, dissolve vigilante groups, and close schools. Later that day, Katsina State Governor, Aminu Bello Masari, announced that the schoolboys—over 344 total—were released and handed over to the government in neighboring Zamfara State. Masari claimed the government had not paid ransom for the release, and that the negotiations took place with a group of bandits rather than Boko Haram. (Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Reuters](#))

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([New York Times](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Associated Press](#))

Although it is uncertain if armed bandits are colluding with Boko Haram, independent rebel groups have adopted Boko Haram’s tactics in carrying out mass abductions. On March 12, 2021, gunmen kidnapped 39 students from the Federal College of Forestry Mechanisation in Mando, northwestern Nigeria. Two days later, the assailants circulated video clips of the students calling on the government to cooperate with the captors. On February 26, unidentified gunmen ambushed the Jangebe Government Girls’ Secondary School in Zamfara, northwest Nigeria. The gunmen kidnapped more than 300 schoolgirls. The rescue operation was conducted by the Zamfara State Police Command in collaboration with the military. On March 2, the 279 schoolgirls—contrary to earlier reports of 300—were released. However, the details of their rescue remain unclear, with the Nigerian government maintaining that no ransom was paid to their captors. The mass abduction comes one week after unidentified attackers ambushed a boarding school in north-central Nigeria on February 17. The assailants kidnapped 42 people, including 27 students. Negotiations for their release between the Nigerian government and the armed group began on February 19. The hostages were released on February 27, with the Nigerian government offering no details on the release. Regional analysts believe the recent kidnappings were carried out by armed bandits rather than jihadists based in the northeast. However, abductions for ransom have become an increasingly lucrative enterprise for both groups. (Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [New York Times](#), [CNN](#), [CNN](#), [Deutsche Welle](#), [Africa News](#))

- **March 21, 2021:** Boko Haram militants ambush Nigerian troops in Wulgo, northeastern Nigeria. Cameroonian soldiers are deployed to help counter the attack. However, two Cameroonian Defense Force (CDF) soldiers are killed while another three CDF soldiers and one Nigerian soldier are injured. Source: [Agence France Presse](#)
- **March 12, 2021:** ISWAP militants ambush Monguno, northeast Nigeria. Military sources claim the assailants kill between 11 and 15 soldiers, four Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) members—a local group of armed men who defend their communities against Islamist insurgents—and kidnap an unidentified number of others. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **March 11, 2021:** ISWAP fighters ambush a Nigerian military convoy in Borno State. The attack kills 15 soldiers and four militia fighters. Source: [Agence France Presse](#)
- **March 2, 2021:** ISWAP militants ambush Dikwa, Borno State. The assailants—who targeted the town after the Borno State governor distributed cash and food to families in the area—burned a police station, the primary health center, and robbed humanitarian facilities of their vehicles before escaping. The ambush kills six and injures six others. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Defense Post](#)
- **February 26, 2021:** Unidentified gunmen ambush the Jangebe Government Girls’ Secondary School in Zamfara, northwest Nigeria. The gunmen kidnap more than 300 schoolgirls. As of March 1, the rescue operation was conducted by the Zamfara State Police Command in collaboration with the military. On March 2, the schoolgirls were released. Details of their rescue have not been reported. However, the Nigerian government maintains no ransom was exchanged for the release. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Voice of America](#), [New York Times](#)
- **February 25, 2021:** Suspected Boko Haram militants launch rocket-propelled grenades in Maiduguri, northeastern Nigeria. The attack killed at least 10 and injured over 47 others. Source: [Voice of America](#)
- **February 18, 2021:** Boko Haram militants ambush Nigerian soldiers in Marte, Borno State. The attack kills at least seven and injures an unreported number of others. Source: [Anadolu Agency](#)
- **February 17, 2021:** Unidentified attackers ambush a boarding school in Niger, north-central Nigeria. The assailants kidnap 42 people, including 27 students. Negotiations for their release between the armed group and the Nigerian government began on February 19. The hostages were released on February 27. However, details of their release have not been reported. Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [CNN](#)
- **December 29, 2020:** Seven hunters recruited to help the Nigerian military fight Islamist insurgents hit a landmine planted by Boko Haram in Kayamla, outside of Maiduguri. The explosion kills seven. Source: [Voice of America](#)
- **December 28, 2020:** A vehicle belonging to Nigerian soldiers hits a landmine planted by Boko Haram in Logomani village, near Cameroon. The explosion kills four. Source: [Voice of America](#)
- **December 26, 2020:** Boko Haram militants ambush loggers in Wulgo forest, northeastern Nigeria. The assailants abduct 40 loggers and kill three others. Loggers are commonly abducted or attacked around Wulgo forest, which is a known Boko Haram hideout. Source: [Agence France-Presse](#)
- **December 24, 2020:** Boko Haram militants ambush the majority-Christian village of Pemi, Borno State. After burning down a church, the assailants kill seven and abduct seven others. Source: [CNN](#)
- **December 21, 2020:** Boko Haram assailants launch a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) in Borno State. The RPG hits a military convoy, killing five soldiers. Source: [Anadolu Agency](#)
- On December 11, hundreds of gunmen opened fire and surrounded a school in Kankara, northwest Nigeria, abducting over 300 schoolboys in the process. Several days later, on December 15, Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the ambush and mass kidnapping. On December 17, a Boko Haram-branded video was released that showed dozens of boys from Kankara begging the government to call off the army’s search for the schoolboys, dissolve vigilante groups, and close schools. Later that day, Katsina State Governor, Aminu Bello Masari, announced that the schoolboys—over 344 total—were released and handed over to the government in neighboring Zamfara State. Masari claimed the government had not paid ransom for the release, and that the negotiations took place with a group of bandits rather than Boko Haram. Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Reuters](#)

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, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Associated Press*

- **November 28, 2020:** Assailants ambush agricultural laborers in Maiduguri, northeast Nigeria. At least 43 people are killed. Book Haram claims responsibility for the attack. Source: [Voice of America](#)
- **November 2, 2020:** Boko Haram militants ambush a village in Chibok, northeast Nigeria. The attack kills 12 and the insurgents kidnap at least seven others. Source: [Defense Post](#)
- **October 11, 2020:** Bandits ambush the Shau and Ruwan-Gaudiya villages in Kastina State, northern Nigeria. The attack kills at least eight. Numerous villagers are also reported missing following the attack. Source: [Garda World](#)
- **October 3, 2020:** Armed bandits attack the Tsauwa and Gundu villages in Katsina State, northern Nigeria. The attacks kill at least nine villagers. Source: [Garda World](#)
- **September 26, 2020:** ISWAP militants ambush the convoy of Borno governor Babagana Umara Zulum near the town of Baga on the shores of Lake Chad. The convoy was escorting displaced Nigerians back to their homes in Baga, Borno State. The attack kills at least thirty and injures over 13 others. Sources: [France 24](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **September 20, 2020:** Suspected Boko Haram militants launch an attack in Damboa, Borno State. The attack kills army commander, Colonel DC Bako. Source: [Garda World](#)
- **September 9, 2020:** ISWAP militants carry out two attacks in the Lake Chad area of Borno State. The ambushes kill over 12, with 27 soldiers unaccounted for following the attacks. Source: [Defense Post](#)
- **September 8, 2020:** Boko Haram militants attack three separate villages in northeast Nigeria on the outskirts of Maiduguri. The attacks kill at least 10 civilians. Source: [Defense Post](#)
- **August 27, 2020:** Boko Haram militants ambush the town of Gwoza in Borno State. The attack kills at least 75 elderly people. Source: [Daily Sabah](#)
- **August 20, 2020:** ISWAP militants overrun the town of Kukawa in northeastern Nigeria. The insurgents take hundreds of hostages, many of whom had recently returned to the village after spending two years in displacement camps. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
- **July 23, 2020:** Boko Haram militants kill five hostages, four of which were aid workers who were abducted between Monguno town and Maiduguri in northeastern Nigeria, a month earlier. Source: [CNN](#)
- **July 9, 2020:** ISWAP militants ambush a military convoy in Bulabulin village, northeast Nigeria. The attack kills 23 soldiers and wounds two others. Source: [Defense Post](#)
- **June 29, 2020:** Suspected Boko Haram militants ambush a civilian convoy of more than 100 vehicles in Komala Village, Borno state. The attack kills at least 11. The militants seize vehicles and supplies before withdrawing to their Sambisa forest hideout. Source: [Defense Post](#)
- **June 13, 2020:** ISWAP militants launch twin attacks in Monguno and Nganzai. In Monguno, a hub for international non-governmental organizations, militants armed with heavy weaponry overtook government forces and burned down the U.N.'s humanitarian headquarters. The attack kills at least 20 and wounds hundreds of others. In Nganzai, militants arrived on motorcycles and pickup trucks. The attack kills more than 40 people. Sources: [Voice of America](#), [Deutsche Welle](#)
- **June 9, 2020:** Suspected Boko Haram militants carry out an attack in Foduma Kolomaiya village, Borno State. The attack kills at least 81 people. Village residents claim the attack was in retaliation for villagers resisting an assault a few weeks prior. Source: [Deutsche Welle](#)
- **June 1, 2020:** Suspected Boko Haram militants shoot and kill a Christian pastor and his wife in Taraba, Northeastern Nigeria. According to the Hausa Christians Foundation, "pastors, Christian leaders and seminarians are either being kidnapped or killed every week" in Nigeria. Source: [Catholic News Agency](#)
- **May 29, 2020:** According to Nigerian Defense Ministry spokesman, John Eneche, Nigerian troops rescue over 241 hostages from Boko Haram in Gamboru, Borno State. The hostages were rescued following a clash that took place between the army and the militants. Source: [Anadolu Agency](#)
- **April 20, 2020:** Armed bandits coordinate attacks on farming villages in Katsina state, northern Nigeria. The attacks kill over 46 people. It is suspected that the bandits were members of criminal gangs specializing in theft and kidnapping. Source: [The National](#)
- **April 5, 2020:** Nigerian, Nigerien, and Chadian troops, under the Multi-National Joint Task Force, bomb a camp in the Tumbun Fulani area in Borno State that is a hideout for Boko Haram and ISWAP forces. The governments do not confirm the number of casualties, but claim that scores of terrorists are killed and that many structures in the camp are destroyed. Source: [The Punch](#)
- **April 2, 2020 - April 4, 2020:** On April 2, Chad's army, in coordination with the militaries of Nigeria and Niger, launches Operation Boma's Wrath. On April 4, the Chadian army destroys five bases belonging to Boko Haram in Niger and Nigeria. It is unreported how many terrorists were killed in the operation. Sources: [Anadolu Agency](#), [Telegraph](#)
- **March 24, 2020:** Boko Haram extremists ambush Goneri village in Yobe state, Nigeria. The attack kills over 70 soldiers. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **March 15, 2020:** Boko Haram militants ambush an army convoy near Mayanti, Borno State, on the border of Cameroon. The attack kills six Nigerian soldiers. Source: [The Punch](#)

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- **March 4, 2020:** Suspected Boko Haram militants ambush a military base in Damboa, Borno State. The attack kills six and wounds at least 50 others. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
 - **February 15, 2020:** An armed group ambushes two villages in Katsina, northwestern Nigeria. The attack kills at least 30, with 21 being burnt to death and nine others being shot dead. No group claims responsibility, but it is suspected that the assailants are jihadists. Source: [Reuters](#)
 - **February 10, 2020:** Suspected Boko Haram or ISWAP militants set several trucks carrying passengers on fire in Auno, Borno State. The attack kills at least 30. The trucks were stranded at a military checkpoint due to a curfew set by the military. Source: [New York Times](#)
 - **January 2, 2020 - January 21, 2020:** On January 2, Boko Haram militants kidnap Reverend Lawan Andimi, chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria in Adamawa State. The insurgents refuse a ransom and execute him on January 21. Source: [Human Rights Watch](#)
 - **January 18, 2020:** Heavily armed militants carry out a bombing at an aid facility in Borno State. At least 20 people are killed in the attack. The facility housed United Nations workers, in what is considered an insurgent campaign that directly targets aid workers. No group claims responsibility for the attack, but it is suspected that ISWAP is behind the attack. Source: [Reuters](#)
 - **January 6, 2020:** A bomb detonates on the El Beid Bridge on Nigeria's border with Cameroon. Casualty reports are conflicting, as sources say the attack kills anywhere from nine to 30 and wounds another 26 to 35. No group claims responsibility for the attack, but both Boko Haram and ISWAP are active in the area. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Defense Post](#)
 - **December 27, 2019:** ISIS releases a video showing militants beheading 10 Christian men in Nigeria. The beheadings and an additional shooting are claimed to be in retaliation for the death of ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and its spokesman. Source: [Reuters](#)
 - **December 13, 2019:** ISWAP militants execute four members of the French aid group Action Against Hunger. The militants kidnapped six members of the French NGO on July 18, killing one of the hostages in September. The whereabouts of the remaining hostage remains unknown. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
 - **October 3, 2019:** Gunmen kidnap six schoolgirls and two staff members in northern Nigeria. No group claims responsibility for the kidnapping, but both Boko Haram and ISWAP are active in the region. Unaffiliated armed groups are also rampant, and also carry out kidnappings for ransom. Source: [Reuters](#)
 - **September 30, 2019:** ISIS militants attack an army barrack in Gubio, northeastern Nigeria. The attack kills at least nine people. Source: [Reuters](#)
 - **September 11, 2019:** Boko Haram militants ambush a military base in Maiduguri, northeast Nigeria. The attack kills nine while 27 other soldiers are reported missing. Source: [Reuters](#)
 - **July 27, 2019:** Boko Haram militants kill at least 65 and injure another 11 following a funeral in the Nganzai area. Nganzai Council Chairman Muhammad Bulama suspects the attack was in retaliation for residents fighting off and killing almost a dozen suspected Boko Haram militants during an ambush on their village the week prior. Sources: [ABC News](#), [CNN](#)
 - **June 19, 2019:** Boko Haram attacks a military base in Gajiram, killing 25 soldiers. An unreported number are injured. The attack follows a similar assault the week prior. Source: [Reuters](#)
 - **June 17, 2019:** Three suicide bombers detonate explosives at a cinema hall in Konduga, Borno State. Over 30 are killed and 39 are injured. No one claims responsibility for the attack although Boko Haram is suspected. Source: [CNN](#)
 - **April 30, 2019:** Extremists attack a village in northeastern Nigeria, killing at least 25. It is suspected that Boko Haram is responsible for the raid. Source: [VOA](#)
 - **April 7, 2019:** Twin suicide bombings in Maiduguri kill three and injure more than 30. The attack was reportedly carried out by two female members of Boko Haram. Source: [Defense Post](#)
 - **March 25, 2019:** Suspected Boko Haram militants ambush a military and civilian convoy in Nigeria's northeast. At least 20 are killed and many others are missing. The convoy was relocating civilians to a displacement camp in Damboa. Source: [Associated Press](#)
 - **March 8, 2019:** A farmer's vehicle strikes a landmine buried by Boko Haram militants in northeastern Nigeria, killing at least five and wounding dozens more. The mine was planted by extremists on the eve of the February 23rd elections. Source: [Associated Press](#)
 - **February 16, 2019:** Three Boko Haram extremists attack a mosque in the Jere local government area. Seven are killed, including the militants. The attack was an attempt to disrupt Nigeria's presidential election that was being held the week after. Source: [Associated Press](#)
 - **February 16, 2019:** Members of Boko Haram attacks a military base in Buni Yadi. The insurgents captured military equipment, although the majority was recovered. Nine people were killed, including five militants, and another five were injured. Source: [Defense Post](#)
 - **January 28, 2019:** Boko Haram burns down hundreds of structures in the town of Rann. The attack kills at least 60 people. Sources: [Amnesty International](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
 - **December 28, 2018:** Extremists seize Baga, a Nigerian town and a key base for a multinational task force fighting Boko Haram. The insurgents claim to have killed and injured "dozens" although the exact number was never corroborated by the government. Source: [Associated Press](#)
 - **December 25, 2018:** Boko Haram extremists ambush security forces in Damaturu, killing 14 military and police personnel. Source: [Guardian](#)
 - **December 2, 2018:** Boko Haram militants kill eight soldiers in a gun attack in Buni Gari and injure five militia members in a suicide bomb
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attack in Maiduguri.

Source: [Defense Post](#)

- **November 18, 2018:** Boko Haram militants overrun an army base in Metele. Over 100 soldiers are killed. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **September 17, 2018:** Boko Haram militants kill a Red Cross worker who was abducted alongside two other healthcare workers earlier in the year in Borno State. The two others are still being held captive. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **September 7, 2018:** Boko Haram overruns a key crossroads and military outpost in Gudumbali, a town the Nigerian government previously claimed as safe for the return of thousands of displaced people. The number of casualties is reported to be around 32. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#)
- **July 27, 2018:** Boko Haram insurgents in three vehicles attack the Mairari village. Soldiers and the air force immediately respond, killing at least 16 extremists while also capturing their ammunition. One soldier and four civilians sustained non-fatal injuries. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **July 23, 2018:** A suicide bomber detonates explosives in a mosque in the remote village of Konduga, Borno State. Borno security forces suspect Boko Haram to be responsible for the attack. Eight are killed and seven are wounded. Source: [CNN](#)
- **June 17, 2018:** Twin bomb blasts follow an Eid celebration at a mosque in Damboa, Borno State. The explosions kill at least 20 and wound another 48. No group claims responsibility, but security forces suspect Boko Haram to be at fault. Source: [CNN](#)
- **May 1, 2018:** Two suicide bombings at a mosque and a market kill a total of 86 people in Mubi, a town located in northeastern Nigeria. Boko Haram is believed to be responsible for the attacks. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [New York Times](#)
- **February 19, 2018:** Boko Haram militants kidnap 110 schoolgirls from a boarding school in Dapchi, Yobe State. Five of the girls reportedly die while in transit to an undisclosed location. On March 21, Boko Haram returns 104 of the schoolgirls. One of the girls remains in captivity for refusing to denounce her Christian faith. Sources: [The Oracle](#), [Vanguard](#)
- **February 17, 2018:** Three female suicide bombers kill at least 20 and wound 22 others at a fish market in Maiduguri, Nigeria. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#)
- **December 2, 2017:** Suspected Boko Haram suicide bombers kill 13 people and injure 53 others in a market in Borno State. The bombers strike as aid workers are distributing food to citizens. Source: [Australian Broadcasting Company](#)
- **November 21, 2017:** A teenage suicide bomber kills over 50 people at a mosque in northeast Nigeria during morning prayers. Source: [Guardian](#)
- **August 15, 2017:** A female suicide bomber kills 27 people at a market in northeast Nigeria. Almost simultaneously, two other suicide bombers detonate their devices near a camp for displaced persons. A total of 83 people are wounded in the three explosions. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Chicago Tribune](#)
- **July 25, 2017:** Boko Haram militants ambush an oil exploration team belonging to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation in northeast Nigeria. The attack kills more than 50 people. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
- **June 7, 2017:** Boko Haram militants attack the northeastern Nigerian city of Maiduguri with explosives and gunfire, forcing civilians to flee as Nigerian military forces repel the extremists. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **May 7, 2017:** The Nigerian government releases six Boko Haram prisoners in exchange for 82 of the Chibok schoolgirls kidnapped in 2014. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **March 15, 2017:** Suspected Boko Haram fighters indiscriminately fire into civilian homes and kill “scores” of people in Magumeri, a town in northeastern Borno State. Sources: [Sahara Reporters](#), [Reuters](#)
- **February 22, 2017:** Boko Haram insurgents kill seven Nigerian soldiers during an attack on a military outpost in Gajiram, northeastern Nigeria. Source: [Vanguard](#)
- **January 17, 2017:** Boko Haram insurgents attack a refugee camp hours after it is mistakenly bombed by the Nigerian air force. Source: [Fox News](#)
- **December 9, 2016:** Two school-aged, female suicide bombers kill at least 30 people and wound 67 others at a marketplace in Madagali, Adamawa State. The Nigerian government blames the attacks on Boko Haram. The Nigerian army liberated Madagali from Boko Haram in 2015, and since then, the terror group is believed to have carried out at least three attacks in the town. Sources: [Guardian](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **October 13, 2016:** Boko Haram releases 21 Chibok school girls to Nigerian authorities. The release comes after negotiations between the militants and the Nigerian government brokered by Swiss officials and the International Red Cross. Source: [CNN](#)
- **September 18, 2016 - September 18, 2016:** Boko Haram insurgents launch three attacks in the village of Tallari in Borno State. Militants behead the village chief and his son, ambush a military convoy, and gun down eight Christians. A total of 40 persons are reportedly killed. Source: [Associated Press](#), [U.S. Department of State](#)

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- **June 14, 2016:** Boko Haram militants kill 24 people as they mourn at a funeral in the village of Kuda in Nigeria's Adamawa State. Most of the victims are women. Source: [Guardian](#)
 - **March 16, 2016:** Two female suicide bombers, suspected to belong to Boko Haram, kill 22 people outside of a mosque in Maiduguri. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
 - **February 9, 2016:** Two female suicide bombers detonate explosives at Dikwa, a displaced persons camp, killing at least 58 people and wounding 78 others. Boko Haram is believed to be responsible. Sources: [New York Times](#), [U.S. Department of State](#)
 - **February 1, 2016:** Insurgents belonging to Boko Haram kill at least 65 individuals in Dalori village near Maiduguri. Source: [CNN](#)
 - **January 28, 2016:** Six suicide bombers detonate explosives at a military checkpoint and a vegetable market in Chibok, killing a total of 16 people. Local residents blame Boko Haram. Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Guardian](#)
 - **January 6, 2016:** Boko Haram suicide bombers kill seven in northeastern Nigeria in one of the group's first attacks since President Buhari announced its defeat in December 2015. Source: [Agence France-Presse](#)
 - **December 28, 2015:** Boko Haram insurgents kill at least 80 people with rocket-propelled grenades and multiple suicide bombings in northeastern Nigeria. Source: [Washington Post](#)
 - **December 25, 2015:** Boko Haram insurgents launch a Christmas day attack on a town in northeastern Nigeria, killing at least 14 individuals and wounding several others. Source: [Agence France-Presse](#)
 - **December 16, 2015:** Boko Haram militants attack three villages in northeast Nigeria, killing 30 people and wounding 20 others. Source: [Agence France-Presse](#)
 - **November 19, 2015:** Suspected Boko Haram suicide bombers kill 49 people and wound more than 80 in the eastern city of Yola, Nigeria. Source: [Associated Press](#)
 - **September 3, 2015:** Suspected Boko Haram militants kill 50 people in an attack on a town in the Gwoza, a local government area in Borno State. Source: [NAIJ](#)
 - **August 31, 2015:** Boko Haram gunmen on horseback kill 79 people in remote villages in northeastern Nigeria. Source: [CNN](#)
 - **August 23, 2015:** Boko Haram militants attack a convoy carrying Lieutenant General Tukur Buratai, the new head of the Nigerian army. One Nigerian soldier is killed but Buratai is left unharmed. The troops kill 10 of the insurgents and capture five. Source: [Agence France-Presse](#)
 - **July 3, 2015:** Boko Haram insurgents murder more than 140 Nigerians in attacks across the northeast of the country. In one of the attacks, a young female suicide bomber kills 12 in a mosque in Borno. Source: [Business Insider](#)
 - **July 2, 2015:** In Borno State, Boko Haram militants gun down nearly 150 people as they pray in mosques during the holy month of Ramadan. Source: [Reuters](#)
 - **June 18, 2015:** Boko Haram insurgents carried out an attack on two towns in Niger's Diffa region near the Nigerian border. The assault targeted civilians and leaves 38 dead, mostly women and children. Sources: [Long War Journal](#), [BBC News](#)
 - **April 30, 2015:** Nigerian troops rescue 160 women and children in the northeastern Sambisa Forest that had been taken hostage by Boko Haram. Source: [CNN](#)
 - **April 28, 2015:** The Nigerian army rescues 200 girls and 93 women during an offensive against Boko Haram in the Sambisa Forest. This group does not include the schoolgirls abducted from Chibok in April 2014. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
 - **April 6, 2015:** Boko Haram militants, disguised as preachers, attack a village in Borno State, killing 24 men and women near a mosque. Source: [Voice of America](#)
 - **March 20, 2015:** A mass grave of approximately 70 individuals killed by Boko Haram is discovered in Damasak, Nigeria. Source: [BBC News](#)
 - **March 5, 2015:** Boko Haram militants armed with guns, knives, and petrol bombs invade Njaba, a remote village in Borno State, Nigeria and kill 68 people. The militants reportedly target children between the ages of 13 and 19 and elderly people. Source: [BBC News](#)
 - **March 2, 2015:** Coalition forces, consisting of troops from Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Benin, launch a ground and air campaign against Boko Haram. Source: [BBC News](#)
 - **February 2, 2015:** A female suicide bomber self-detonates in Gombe city in northern Nigeria, purportedly targeting Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan who had just left a campaign rally. Source: [BBC News](#)
 - **January 11, 2015:** Two ten-year old female suicide bombers kill at least three people in an open-air market in Potiskum, Yobe State. The girls are believed to be from the group of nearly 300 schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram in April 2014. Sources: [Reuters](#), [NBC](#)
 - **January 3, 2015:** Boko Haram launches its deadliest attack to date, killing over 2,000 civilians in a 10-day raid of multiple towns in northern
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Nigerian.

Sources: [BBC News](#), [CNN](#)

- **December 21, 2014:** Boko Haram releases a video of its militants killing civilians. The audio explains that the individuals are being killed because “they are infidels.” In the video, the leader states, “...from now, killing, slaughtering, destructions and bombing will be our religious duty anywhere we invade.” Sources: [BBC News](#), [CNN](#)
- **November 28, 2014:** Gunmen, allegedly belonging to Boko Haram, detonate three bombs and open fire on worshippers at a mosque in northern Nigeria’s biggest city, Kano. The attack kills at least 81 people. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **October 18, 2014:** Boko Haram gunmen abduct approximately 60 girls from a boarding school in a northern Nigerian town close to the border with Cameroon. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **July 28, 2014:** Boko Haram militants kidnap the wife of Amadou Ali, Cameroon’s vice prime minister and one of the country’s most prominent political figures. Source: [New York Times](#)
- **July 23, 2014:** Two Boko Haram suicide attacks in Kaduna, Nigeria, kill 82 people. One of the attacks targets former President Muhammadu Buhari. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **May 4, 2014:** Boko Haram releases a video claiming responsibility for the kidnapping. In the video, leader Abubakar Shekau threatens to sell the girls “in the market, by Allah... Allah has instructed me to sell them. They are his property and I will carry out his instructions.” Sources: [Reuters](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **April 15, 2014 - April 16, 2014:** The Nigerian military claims it has rescued nearly all of the girls. The next day, the Nigerian military admits it has rescued none. Source: [New Yorker](#)
- **April 14, 2014:** Twin bomb attacks during morning rush hour kill 71 and injure 124 in the Nigerian capital Abuja. On April 19, Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau claimed responsibility and threatens more attacks. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **April 14, 2014:** In an overnight kidnapping, armed men in Nigerian military uniforms arrive at an all-girls secondary school in Chibok. The girls are told that they are safe as they are herded onto trucks and motorcycles. It is when the Boko Haram members shout “Allahu Akbar” as they depart that the girls realize they are not with Nigerian authorities. Source: [New Yorker](#)
- **April 14, 2014 - April 15, 2014:** In one of its highest-profile attacks, Boko Haram kidnaps 276 girls from a boarding school in Chibok, Borno state. The kidnapping triggers international condemnation and social media demands to “Bring Back Our Girls.” Sources: [CNN](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- - : The #BringBackOurGirls campaign goes viral and the U.S. vows to help “in any way we can.” Source: [CBC](#)
- **February 26, 2014:** Boko Haram militants shoot or burn to death 59 students at an all-male boarding school in Nigeria’s northeast Yobe State. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **January 15, 2014:** Ansaru militants release a video of French hostage Francis Colump, who was kidnapped in December 2012. The group warned the French and Nigerian governments that they were responsible for his fate. Source: [SITE Intel Group](#)
- **December 20, 2013:** Boko Haram insurgents attack the Nigerian army barracks in Bama, southern Borno State, killing 20 military personnel and numerous civilians. Source: [SITE Intel Group](#)
- **February 16, 2013:** Ansaru militants kidnap and kill seven construction workers in Bauchi State, Nigeria. Source: [Telegraph](#)
- **January 20, 2013:** Ansaru militants open fire on a convoy of Nigerian troops on route to Mali. Ansaru confirms in a local newspaper that the attack was part of a mission to stop Nigerian troops from joining Western powers in their “aim to demolish the Islamic empire of Mali.” The statement continues: “We are warning the African countries to ... [stop] helping Western countries in fighting against Islam and Muslims or face the utmost difficulties.” Source: [Reuters](#)
- **December 19, 2012:** Ansaru militants kidnap 63-year-old French national Francis Colump in Rimi, Nigeria, a small town close to the Niger border. Ansaru releases a statement saying: “The reason we kidnapped him is ... the law the government created which prohibits the wearing of niqab by French Muslim women. This is a denial of their religious rights. And again the participation of France in supporting the military attack on Muslims in northern Mali....” Source: [Reuters](#)
- **August 26, 2011:** Boko Haram militants detonate a car bomb outside of the United Nations building in Abuja. The explosion kills 23 people and injures 76 more. Sources: [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#)

Domestic Counter-Extremism

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Legislation

On February 17, 2013, Nigeria's Senate and House of Representatives strengthened their anti-terror laws with the passage of an amendment to the 2011 Terrorism (Prevention) Act (the "Act"). In an effort to improve inter-agency counter terrorism efforts, the Act grants coordinating bodies with more power and delineates the specific counterterrorism functions of involved institutions. The Act allows law enforcement to detain and prosecute terror suspects. It also provides specific guidelines for judges to follow when setting punishment for terror crimes. Among other modifications, the amendment permits the death penalty for those found guilty of committing, attempting to commit, or facilitating acts of terror. In the period between 2017 and 2020, the Nigerian government commenced the prosecution of over 1,328 suspects. Reportedly, 366 suspects were convicted and given sentences ranging from three to 60 years, and 882 suspects were released for de-radicalization, rehabilitation, and reintegration. (Sources: [Nigerian Securities and Exchange Commission](#), [Reuters](#), [Nigerian Securities and Exchange Commission](#), [United Nations](#))

Nigeria's Terrorism (Prevention) Act gives the Office of the National Security Adviser ("ONSA") the responsibility of coordinating counterterrorism efforts between security and enforcement agencies, including the Nigerian Police Force (NPF), the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC), the Ministry of Justice, and the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF). The AGF is tasked with ensuring that Nigeria's counterterrorism laws and policies are in accordance with international counterterrorism legal instruments. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Reuters](#), [Vanguard](#))

The international community has expressed concern over allegations that Nigeria's security forces have committed human rights violations. According to the U.S. Department of State, "in its response to Boko Haram and ISIS-WA attacks... Nigerian security service personnel perpetrated extrajudicial killings and engaged in torture, sexual exploitation and abuse, arbitrary detention, mistreatment of detainees...and destruction of property." An October 2013 Amnesty International report documented that nearly 1,000 people died in military custody in the first half of 2013. The international community also expressed concern when Nigerian authorities were unable to rescue the nearly 300 Chibok girls kidnapped by Boko Haram in April 2014. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Amnesty International](#), [Henry Jackson Society](#))

States of Emergency

In May 2013, Nigeria declared a state of emergency in three northeastern states where Boko Haram was wreaking havoc: Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa. The state of emergency was renewed in November 2013 and again in May 2014. Under the first state of emergency, then-President Goodluck Jonathan created an interagency joint task force (JTF) with both military and police units to push back on extremists. These forces were reorganized into the Seventh Division, which reports to the chief of army staff. In some places, there are vigilantes known as the Civilian JTF Assist Division that attempt to provide supplementary policing to Nigeria's military and security forces. (Sources: [Voice of America](#), [International Crisis Group](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#))

Boko Haram Committee

In April 2013, the Jonathan administration established the Presidential Taskforce on Negotiations with Boko Haram, or the Boko Haram Committee, to engage in a dialogue with the terror group's leadership. The committee's objectives included (a) negotiating a framework for Boko Haram disarmament and (b) providing compensation for victims of Boko Haram violence. Some Nigerians were skeptical of the committee's ability to succeed where previous governments had long failed. (Sources: [Voice of America](#), [International Centre for Counter-Terrorism](#))

In a November 2014 video, Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau denied Nigerian government claims that a ceasefire agreement had been reached. Boko Haram Committee member and diplomat Bolaji Akinyemi stated: "We can accept this latest [Boko Haram] video at face value that this group is not willing to talk... maybe the solution is a military one." (Source: [BBC News](#))

The Boko Haram Committee disbanded following the March 2015 electoral defeat of former President Goodluck Jonathan to Muhammadu Buhari. Although Buhari promised to negotiate with "credible" leaders of Boko Haram for the release of the Chibok girls, the terrorist group heightened their number of attacks in the country—killing more than 600 people two months into Buhari's term. (Sources: [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [Reuters](#), [This Day](#))

Counterterrorism Measures under President Buhari

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Nigerian president Muhammadu Buhari was elected in May 2015 and, in accordance with his election pledge, declared victory against Boko Haram in December 2015. Although Boko Haram appeared to wane in the months following Buhari's declaration, the terror group quickly regained momentum and has continued to carry out attacks in the country's north. In October 2016, the Buhari government managed to secure the release of 21 of the nearly 300 kidnapped Chibok schoolgirls and in May 2017, another 82 were freed in exchange for six Boko Haram captives. These negotiations were facilitated by the Red Cross and members of the Swiss government. (Sources: [Premium Times](#), [International Crisis Group](#), [Economist](#), [CNN](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Guardian](#), [New York Times](#))

National Action Plan

In November 2017, the Nigerian government launched a national action plan for preventing violent extremism (PVE). The framework—developed by the government's Office of the National Security Adviser in consultation with civil society organizations, the media, students, and the academic community—focuses on four key areas: (i) strengthening Nigerian institutions to PVE; (ii) strengthening the rule of law and human rights; (iii) building community engagement and resilience; and (iv) integrating strategic communication to PVE. President Buhari introduced the framework to government personnel at the state house in Abuja, requesting that it be implemented by civil society organizations, state, and local governments. This came after the United Nations called on member states to develop respective national action plans for PVE in December 2015. As of October 2020, the 2017 National Action Plan was being implemented and led to over 366 convictions of terror suspects, with prison sentences ranging from three to 60 years. Additionally, at least 882 suspects were released into deradicalization, rehabilitation, and re-integration programs. (Sources: [Counter Terrorism Center](#), [This Day Live](#), [United Nations](#))

In April 2018, Nigeria partnered with the European Union, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) to launch the EU-Nigeria-UNODC-CTED Partnership Project III: Support for Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism and Violent Extremism. The project, which was launched to support the 2017 National Action Plan and is expected to last until March 2021, will focus on further strengthening the capacity of Nigeria to investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate terrorism offenses, as well as develop capacity building and policy assistance to counter violent extremism. Additionally, the program will prioritize attention to terrorism challenges in northeast Nigeria, where Boko Haram maintains a strong presence. (Source: [UNODC](#))

Counterterrorism Operations and Non-State Actors

According to a report by the Associated Press, in October of 2019, thousands of Nigerian hunters in Borno State have banded together to counter Boko Haram's insurgency. Nigeria's government originally discouraged the offensive five years ago, but Borno State's Governor, Babagana Zulum, has approved this mission. The non-state actors are mostly hunters by vocation, having an intimate knowledge of the terrain and the shooting skills necessary to actively repel the insurgency. More than 5,000 hunters are mobilizing from Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Chad, to eradicate Boko Haram. (Source: [Associated Press](#))

On October 8, 2020, Borno State Governor Babagana Umara Zulum appealed to Nigerian military authorities to alter counterterrorism strategies in the decade long fight against Boko Haram. Zulum encouraged the military to conduct clearance operations in Boko Haram's hideouts in the Sambisa Forest and Lake Chad region rather than just respond to insurgent attacks. Following Zulum's appeals, the Chief of Army Staff, Lt. General Tukur Buratai, announces the Nigerian Army will launch "Operation Fireball" against the insurgent hotspots of Sambisa Forest, Mandara Forest, and the Lake Chad region. According to Buratai, troops will switch over to what he calls a "war mode" that will be the final push in eliminating insurgents from the country. (Sources: [All Africa](#), [Daily Post](#))

International Counter-Extremism

The 2011 Terrorism (Prevention) Act and the 2013 Terrorism (Amendment) Act give the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF), along with the Minister of Justice, responsibility for ensuring Nigerian regulations abide by international policies and U.N. Conventions on Terrorism. The AGF responds to extradition requests and cooperates with international institutions and foreign states to prevent international acts of terrorism. Nigeria is part of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [U.S. Department of State](#))

U.S.-Nigerian Cooperation

Nigerian-U.S. counterterrorism cooperation ramped up in 2013 with the U.S.-Nigeria Binational Commission (BNC) Regional Security Working

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Group. The Nigerian government hosted the gathering in its capital Abuja. The working group defined challenges of mutual concern for the U.S. and Nigeria and outlined potential responses. Nigeria has been an active participant in regional events hosted by the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and co-hosted a GCTF workshop on the “Criminal Justice Sector and Rule of Law” in 2013. The government of Nigeria formally requested assistance to develop an intelligence apparatus, the Joint Terrorist Branch (JTAB), to act as the interagency coordinating body for counterterrorism efforts. Nigeria has participated in U.S. counterterrorism capacity building programs under the U.S. Department of State’s Antiterrorism Assistance program. (Source: [U.S. Department of State](#))

The United States has, at times, been prohibited from assisting Nigeria under the Leahy Amendment. The Leahy Amendment is an Act that blocks U.S. aid to foreign military units found to have committed human rights abuses. In 2012, the U.S. State Department denied training requests from more than 200 Nigerian security officials and a Nigerian army battalion under the Leahy Amendment. (Sources: [Voice of America](#), [Henry Jackson Society](#))

In August 2017, the Trump administration approved a nearly \$600 million sale of high-tech attack planes to Nigeria to help defeat Boko Haram and other militants, despite concerns about human rights abuses by Nigerian security forces. The sale had been put on hold by the Obama administration after a Nigerian fighter jet in January 2017 bombed a displaced-persons camp, killing at least 230 people. (Source: [Associated Press](#))

U.K.-Nigerian Cooperation

On August 29, 2018, U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May met with President Buhari in Abuja, the country’s capital. During the meeting, May pledged to provide military training and equipment to Nigeria in support of its fight against Boko Haram. The United Kingdom also promised to (a) invest approximately \$16 million in educational institutions for children living in conflict zones; (b) launch a crisis response program to improve Nigeria’s ability to respond to terror attacks; and (c) help hinder Boko Haram recruitment through promoting counter-narratives. (Sources: [Independent](#), [Quartz Africa](#), [Sky News](#))

Regional Cooperation

In January 2013, Nigeria committed ground troops and logistical support to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Nigeria is also a member of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership and the Inter-Governmental Action Group Against Money Laundering (GIABA) in West Africa. In 2013, Nigeria helped to establish the Global Fund for Community Engagement and Resilience (GCERF), a public-private partnership in Switzerland created to counter extremist messaging and recruitment. Nigerian counter-extremism efforts reportedly have been hampered by security forces’ harsh treatment of civilians, distrust between the security forces and communities, and the lack of economic opportunity in northeast Nigeria. (Sources: [Voice of America](#), [BBC News](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [U.S. Department of State](#))

Following a Boko Haram attack in Cameroon on July 22, 2014, the Nigerian government announced that it would coordinate with Cameroon, Chad, and Niger to create a force to fight extremists. The plan for a Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) was approved by the African Union on March 3, 2015. Since then, the MNJTF has operated in the Lake Chad region and has slowly gained ground on Boko Haram. The formation of the MNJTF followed a May 2014 intelligence sharing agreement between Nigeria, Benin, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger—in response to the Chibok girls kidnapping—in which the five countries agreed to improve border security. It is believed that Boko Haram separated the girls, sending them to various camps in some of those countries. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [BBC News](#), [Institute for Strategic Studies](#), [CNN](#), [Telegraph](#))

In March 2016, President Buhari announced that Nigeria had joined Saudi Arabia’s Islamic Military Alliance: a counterterrorism coalition comprising 39 Muslim countries. Buhari explained: “We are part of [the alliance] because we’ve got terrorists in Nigeria that everybody knows which claim that they are Islamic. So, if there’s an Islamic coalition to fight terrorism, Nigeria will be part of it because we are casualties of Islamic terrorism.” (Sources: [Pulse Nigeria](#), [Agence France-Presse](#))

On April 2, 2020, the governments of Niger, Nigeria, and Chad announced a joint bombing and clearance operation to rid the Lake Chad region of Boko Haram and ISWAP. Operation Boma’s Wrath was an eight-day military operation spearheaded by Chad in coordination with Niger and Nigeria. The operation is a response to a Boko Haram attack on a Chadian military base that killed over 98 soldiers and injured dozens of others on March 23. According to the Chadian military, the local population was asked to leave the area which has now been declared a war zone. Despite the Chadian Army’s claim that more than 1,000 Boko Haram militants were eliminated in Operation Boma’s Wrath, on April 10, Chadian President Idriss Deby stated that his country’s troops would no longer participate in military operations outside the country’s borders. According to Deby, Chad shouldered the majority of the burden of the regional campaign against Boko Haram. Given Deby’s frustration over the region’s inconsistent military support, he threatened to withdraw all forces out of bases in Niger and Nigeria by April 22. (Sources: [The Punch](#), [Voice of America](#), [Telegraph](#))

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, [Al Jazeera](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#))

On April 3, 2020, the military forces, under the Multi-National Joint Task Force—a military effort by Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria against jihadists that threaten all four countries—bombed a camp in the Tumbun Fulani area in Borno State that was a hideout for Boko Haram and ISWAP forces. The government did not confirm the number of casualties, but claimed that scores of terrorists were killed and that many structures in the camp were destroyed. (Sources: [The Punch](#), [International Crisis Group](#))

Public Opinion

Various polling results from 2014 through 2018 revealed that Nigerians view religious extremism as the biggest threat to the country. According to findings published by the Pew Research Center:

- 93 percent have an unfavorable view of Boko Haram;
- 72 percent are concerned about Islamic extremism;
- 88 percent say crime is a very big problem;
- 88 percent say corruption is a very big problem;
- 89 percent say electricity shortages are a very big problem;
- 74 percent say the country is going in the wrong direction;
- 59 percent say government officials do not care about the opinions of ordinary people;
- 50 percent personally fear violence;
- 79 percent were very or somewhat likely to vote in the presidential election;
- 72 percent believe most politicians are corrupt; and
- 60 percent are unsatisfied with how democracy works.

(Sources: [Pew Research Center](#), [Pew Research Center](#), [Pew Research Center](#), [Pew Research Center](#), [Pew Research Center](#))