

KEY MESSAGES

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** All reports are based on anonymous NSRP sources.

ON THE GROUND

1. JONATHAN DISAPPOINTS NORTH EAST OVER AMNESTY FOR JAS

Expectations that the Presidential visit to the North East on 7-8 March, 2013 would open new vistas for the search for peace in the troubled region were dashed. Ironically, the visit coincided with the worsening of the security situation not just in the North East but across the North West and the entire country. President Goodluck Jonathan had led a high-powered government delegation to Borno and Yobe states on 7-8 March 2013, barely a week after Governors from opposition parties under the aegis of the All Progressive Congress (APC) paid a solidarity visit on the Governor Alhaji Kashim Shettima of Borno State. The Federal Government was expected to declare amnesty for the militants during the President's visit. This is because the visit was preceded by a renewed clamour for amnesty for militants among influential leaders from the North, notably Alhaji Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar, the Sultan of Sokoto. It was widely expected that the President would use the opportunity of the visit to extend an olive branch to the Jama'atu Ahli Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad (JAS). This expectation influenced the large-turnout by prominent political, community and religious leaders to the Town Hall meetings organized in the Government Houses at Damaturu and Maiduguri. However, the President disappointed both the leaders and long-suffering people of the two states by declining to offer amnesty to the militants. He claimed it was inappropriate to offer amnesty to an unknown group and that government would only begin to plan for amnesty when the group comes out in the open.

Some government sources claim the administration refrained from announcing amnesty because it felt there was need for more consultations and commitment from key factions of JAS. However, most residents of Borno and Yobe states considered the decision to be impolitic and insensitive. The position of the Federal Government on amnesty has undermined initiatives to continue negotiations with the moderate faction of JAS, led by Sheik Abu Mohammad Ibn Abdullazeez, which had announced a ceasefire early February 2013. This group linked escalation of violence after the announcement of the ceasefire to politicians and criminal elements. NSRP sources indicate that Imam Abubakar Shekau, the leader of JAS, was not the person in the widely circulated video where Shekau purportedly disowned Abdulazeez's offer of ceasefire.

Borno and Yobe states have witnessed escalation of violence since the Presidential visit. Shortly after the President's departure, the JTF attacked hideouts of the JAS in three neighbourhoods of Maiduguri. The gun-battle between JTF and the militants resulted in the killing of 52 suspected militants and arrest of 70 suspected militants. The JTF also claimed it recovered the largest cache of weapons it had ever recovered from militants since the insurgency started in the region. Among the weapons recovered were two vehicles equipped

to launch anti-aircraft missiles. Security sources claim the militants had planned to use the equipment to shoot down the Presidential aircraft.

The trend of violence directed at government officials, traditional rulers, community leaders, religious leaders, security agents and ordinary citizens continued across the North East especially in Borno and Yobe States throughout February and March. However, four significant developments are discernible since the Presidential visit to the two sister states. First is the killing of Alhaji Ibrahim Gula, deputy chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Borno State. Most of the previous targets of the JAS among the political class were members of the All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP), which holds sway in Borno and Yobe. Second is the resumption of attacks by suspected militants on schools. Militants first burned down four schools in Maiduguri few days after the departure of President Jonathan. One week later, militants also destroyed three schools in Biu, a town in Southern Borno that had been a major target by militants in the past two years. Residents of Maiduguri and Biu are concerned that the schools were burnt down at night when the government imposed curfew was in effect. The incidents further reduced confidence of the residents on the capacity of security agencies to guarantee their security. The perception that security agencies violated human rights and failed to protect the people persisted among residents of Borno and Yobe states. This explains why Borno and Yobe leaders asked the President during his visit to withdraw the Joint Task Force (JTF) from the states. The President said he was willing to withdraw troops if the leaders would sign an undertaking to guarantee security when the JTF is pulled out.

Third is the resumption of coordinated attacks on police stations and security formations. The attacks on security formations started a few days before the Presidential visit. On 2 March, gunmen in 4 SUVs and 8 motorcycles attempted to attack a military base at Monguno, a border town in Borno State. The military repelled the attackers killing 20 militants and recovering a cache of weapons. Two days later, another group of militants attacked a divisional police headquarters and a commercial bank at Gwoza, another border town in Borno State. The Divisional Police Officer (DPO), his deputy and eight other residents were killed in the ambush. At least four police stations and two prison complexes have been destroyed by suspected militants since the Presidential visit. Militants attacked a police station, office of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), a prison complex in Konduga, Konduga Local Government Area (LGA) and a police station in Gamboru, Ngala LGA of Borno State. A policeman was killed when militants attacked and destroyed a police station in Bara, Gulani LGA of Yobe State. The attack was the first attack on a police station in Yobe State in five months. Also on 22nd March suspected militants organized an invasion of Ganye, in Ganye LGA of Adamawa State. The targets of the attack which led to the death of 27 persons were a police station, office of the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), a prison complex and the branch of First Bank of Nigeria Plc in the border town. The successful

targeting of security outfits is indicative of the resilience of the militant groups and the reduced capacity of security agencies to gather intelligence in the midst of the climate of pervasive distrust for government since the President's visit.

The fourth development is the increasing targeting and killing of women by suspected militants. JAS is originally known to have taken a position not to harm women and children. However, late 2012 JAS threatened to kill wives of community leaders and others suspected of providing information to security agencies. Since the Presidential visit, five women have been killed in Maiduguri. Among the victims are a PDP supporter, a school teacher and a local food seller that had been warned of selling her delicacies to JTF soldiers.

The security situation in Borno and Yobe and most of the North East is unlikely to improve in the near future. Some individuals and groups that have played mediatory roles increasingly feel threatened and have no incentive to continue under the present turn of events. There is clear evidence that leaders of the zone feel let down by the government over the amnesty issue. Abuja has tried to mitigate the damage by asking the leaders of the North East to mobilise the militants to prepare to accept amnesty. The request is in response to assertions by some Northern leaders that Late President Umar Musa Yar'Adua declared amnesty to Niger Delta militants before the militants openly came out to accept the amnesty. Sources in the presidency claim Niger Delta leaders persuaded the militants to stop violence and accept amnesty. Also, the President has appointed Yobe born Alhaji Bukar Goni Aji as new Head of Service of the Federation in a gesture intended to appease the region. However, these gestures have not elicited a positive response in the region.

2. KADUNA REMAINS STABLE AFTER TRANSITION

The security situation in Kaduna State has remained largely stable since the transition of power to Governor Mukhtar Ramalan Yero. The new Governor has retained the security mechanisms put in place by his predecessor. The state has not experienced any major security breach linked to JAS since his assumption of office. The state has remained stable since neighbouring Kano State witnessed resumed bombings and killings of police and soldiers and ordinary citizens.

The major security challenge in the state in the past two months has been episodic killings of unsuspecting villagers in some communities in Southern Kaduna. Most of the villagers suspect Fulani herdsmen are responsible for the attacks. However, security agents have so far not arrested anyone in connection with the killings. This has prompted threats of reprisal attacks. Some organizations representing interest of Southern Kaduna such as the Southern

Kaduna Peoples Union (SOKAPU) have said the people may be forced to take the law into their hands since government has failed to protect them.

The general perception in Southern Kaduna is that insecurity is one of the consequences of the zone's alleged marginalization. Consequently, a delegation of the Southern Kaduna Consultative Forum, which visited President Jonathan late March, called on the Federal Government to establish a military barracks in the zone to curb attacks by militants on villages. The delegation also called for the redress of the marginalization of the zone in appointments in the Federal Government. It claimed only six out of 30 of political appointees from Kaduna State are from Southern Kaduna.

In the midst of the lingering discontents in the zone, there are fears that some events may trigger violence in the near future. Firstly, there are fears that the reported relocation of victims of violence in new waves of fighting in rural Plateau State to Southern Kaduna will worsen the security situation. These fears appear to have been confirmed when Zilang and Mafang villages in Kaura LGA Southern Kaduna were attacked by unknown assailants. The attack which occurred on 30 March reportedly led to the death of 20 persons. Another attack by unknown assailants was reported in Ataka community in the same LGA on Sunday 31 March led to the death of 19 persons. Many communities in the area blame suspected Fulani people who fled the violence in Plateau for the attack. Consequently, SOKAPU has reportedly called on Fulani residents in Southern Kaduna to leave the area.

Secondly, there are fears that the lack of progress on the submission of the report of the Peace and Reconciliation Committee established by late Governor Patrick Yakowa will raise tensions in the state. The committee failed to submit its report mid-March when some of its members declined to sign the document before its public presentation to Governor Yero at Government House. NSRP sources indicate that some groups that expected to benefit from the implementation of the committee's report may become frustrated and resort to violence.

3. VIOLENCE SPREADS ACROSS RURAL PLATEAU

Sporadic incidents of violence persisted in some rural areas in Plateau State for much of February and March. After resumption of violence in some parts of Wase LGA in February, several communities in Jos South, Riyom and Barkin Ladi LGAs experienced more incidence of violence in the state. Late March, many villagers lost their lives and homes in Dajak and Ganawuri in Riyom LGA in an early morning attack by gunmen. A policeman was also killed during the incident. The violence apparently spread to neighbouring Bokkos LGA where 24 persons including two police officers were killed during attacks and reprisal attacks in Mangor and Matol villages on 28 March.

The persistence of violence in rural communities in the state has continued to reduce public confidence in the security agencies especially the Special Task Force (STF). The general perception is that the outfit has only concentrated efforts in securing Jos metropolis and left other vulnerable communities unprotected. Some citizens and leaders from affected communities also accuse elements within the STF of taking sides in the conflict. For instance, Mr. Sam Gyan Audu, chairman of Riyom LGA has claimed that 100 lives have been lost in the LGA in the last one year. The LGA chairman recently joined those calling for the withdrawal of the STF. The neutrality of the STF has historically generated controversy in the state, with highly placed government officials including incumbent Governor Jonah Jang, accusing some STF commanders of complicity in killings targeted at some ethnic and religious groups in Plateau's divided polity.

Tensions over the Jos urban renewal programme persisted as victims of evictions who are mostly considered non-indigenes claim government is pursuing the agenda of some ethnic communities to dislocate rival communities from Jos. Protests over the demolition of houses have, however, remained generally peaceful. In March, 17 Jos residents instituted legal proceedings against the Jos Metropolitan Development Board over the demolition of houses. The urban renewal programme remains a threat to security in the state as it is perceived to reinforce ethnic and religious based polarization and segregation.

4. SUICIDE BOMBINGS AND EXPLOSIONS WORSEN SECURITY IN KANO

The bleak security situation in January and February in Kano State, which recorded assassination attempts on His Royal Highness Alhaji Ado Bayero, the Emir of Kano and killing of nine health workers administering polio vaccines worsened in March. Suspected militants continued to target individuals associated with the security services including a female police officer who was killed while off duty. The weakening of security in Kano was also manifested in a series of attacks widely believed to be linked to disappointments over the outcome of the Presidential Visit to Borno and Yobe States.

In what was the worst incident of violence in Kano since the January 2012 attacks on security outfits, two suicide bombers detonated Improvised Explosive devices (IEDs) in a busy transport park in Sabon-Gari, Kano on 18th March. Sabon-Gari is a neighbourhood that has historically been reserved for immigrants mostly from Southern Nigeria. The park is used mostly by southern Nigeria bound passengers. At least 25 persons were killed and dozens injured in the blast that destroyed three coaches. Victims were from different parts of the country. Kano also experienced two more explosions and gun-battles between suspected militants and security operators. Most of the clashes occurred in Hotoro Quarters, which has been the site of previous incidents of violence. Hotoro Quarters is located on the busy Kano

Maiduguri Road. It is a relatively new settlement mostly inhabited by low income earners and squatters and lacks the stronger community governance system that exists in older communities in Kano. NSRP sources claim Governor Rabiu Kwankwaso had planned to demolish the settlement which has become a haven for militants. Government's plan was put on hold when the Emir expressed concern over the likely social repercussions of the evictions.

The JTF continued its offensive against JAS in Kano to forestall more attacks by the militant group. Soldiers raided a suspected hideout of JAS militants in Unguwa Uku in the early hours of 31 March. The offensive led to the killing of 14 suspected militants and a soldier. The JTF also announced it recovered weapons including 14 AK 47 rifles and a Golf salon car that was wired for an Easter Day bombing. Like Hotoro Quarters, Unguwa Uku is on the outskirts of Kano and is located on the Zaria Kano Road. The foiled Easter day attack bore the characteristic agenda of JAS to instigate disaffection among the different faith communities in Kano.

Struggle for power and factionalization among the political elites in Kano continue to raise tensions in the commercial hub of Northern Nigeria. The political factions in the state jostled for supremacy over the inauguration of the State Independent Electoral Commission (KANSIEC). Kwankwasiyya (followers of Governor Kwankwaso), the dominant political faction has been accused of using the advantage of incumbency to upstage rival factions and parties in recent LGA elections. Early mobilization toward the 2015 general election is also generating tensions as some party stalwarts including a minister and an ambassador who are opposed to the Governor are deemed to have secured the support of the national executive of the party and the Deputy Governor to work against the interests of Kwankwaso. The Governor is reportedly interested in installing his preferred successor and running for a higher office under a different platform if he fails to get the support of the PDP. There are also feelers that some Kano elites are still strategizing to position themselves to succeed the Emir who has been on the throne for 50 years. NSRP sources claim Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, Central Bank Governor lent credence to speculation of his interest in the Emirship when he said he would not be seeking reappointment as CBN Governor after the expiration of his current tenure.

5. RIFT AMONG NIGER DELTA POLITICIANS DEEPENS

Politics and criminal violence remained the main threats to security in the Niger Delta in March. The rift among politicians which began to manifest early in the year deepened. Although long-standing feuds among political interest groups remain a key factor in the current crisis, the main driver of the political battles is the widely believed interest of President

Jonathan in contesting the 2015 elections. Subtle attempts by the President and his allies to mobilise support in his home region are strongly resisted by political forces opposed to the agenda. The stage has been set for confrontation between supporters and opponents of Jonathan's rumoured ambition. One of the stages where the two sides flexed their muscles is the Nigerian Governors Forum (NGF). Allies of the President reportedly plotted to remove Rt. Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi, Governor of Rivers State as chairman of the influential NGF. The plot was intended to install a Governor who is considered more favourably disposed to Jonathan's ambition. Amaechi is reportedly opposed to Jonathan's re-election and interested in teaming up as possible Vice-Presidential candidate of a northern Presidential candidate to challenge Jonathan at the polls. Amaechi survived the coup but the President's allies succeeded in creating a PDP Governors Forum, which is obviously aimed at undermining the influence of Amaechi. The decision to elect Chief Godswill Akpabio of Akwa Ibom State, who is a strong proponent of Jonathan's re-election, exposed the purported game plan of the President.

It is widely believed that the President's allies are working very hard to undermine Governors in the region that are opposed to the 2015 agenda. These include Amaechi and Governor Emmanuel Uduaghan of Delta State. On the other hand, the President is believed to be manoeuvring to bolster the influence of his allies, notably Akpabio and Governor Seriake Dickson of Bayelsa State. Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers are among Nigeria's richest states and Governors of the states can influence electoral outcomes. The President's men are uncomfortable that Rivers and Delta, which control more votes than Akwa Ibom and Bayelsa, are in the hands of their opponents. They are therefore mobilizing some politicians to oppose the Governors, especially over selection of candidates for the 2015 governorship and senatorial elections. This has led to cracks in the state chapters of PDP in Delta and Rivers States. An ostensible attempt of the PDP National Chairman to mediate in the crisis failed as both Uduaghan and Amaechi sabotaged the peace meeting through their early departure.

The rift over Jonathan's ambition is considered a serious threat to security because it is leading to realignment of ethnic groups in the region. It is believed that other ethnic groups in the region who feel marginalized under the Jonathan administration are not supporting the plan. Consequently, the President's allies are believed to be mobilizing to infiltrate the ethno-political associations in the region to influence elections and leadership selection. The presidency is believed to have taken a strong interest in the imminent election of the Ijaw National Congress (INC) since the outgoing executive included some persons opposed to the President's ambition. Sources also implicate the President's ambition in the emerging cracks in the Urhobo Progressive Union (UPU). The Urhobos are the dominant ethnic group in Delta State and control of the UPU is considered necessary to neutralise the influence of an uncooperative Governor. Concerns over the rift between politicians stem from the fact that the

Niger Delta militancy, which gravely affected Nigeria's political economy between 2005 and 2009, was exacerbated by political struggles. Many of the militant groups were originally militias and thugs maintained by rival political factions. There are fears that politicians may revive some of the militias to serve their agenda.

Meanwhile, criminal violence persisted with incidents of kidnapping, piracy and oil theft reported across the region. In March, victims of kidnapping included the mother of a serving commissioner in Bayelsa State. Operation Pulo Shield, the Niger Delta JTF, announced it had arrested 30 Nigerians and some foreigners involved in oil bunkering. The security outfit also impounded two vessels used for the illegal shipment of crude oil at the Onne Ocean Terminal in Rivers State. Nigeria continues to lose over 150,000 barrels of oil per day to oil theft. The intensity of oil theft in some locations has forced some oil companies to stop operations. For instance, Nigeria Agip Oil Company Limited (NAOC) stopped oil production in its swamp fields in Bayelsa State because it was losing 7,000 barrels of oil per day to the activities of oil bunkerers.

The outlook for the Niger Delta remains precarious. There are indications that some of the mechanisms initiated to manage conflicts in the recent past are weakening. Firstly, the resort of oil companies to channelling community development resources through community development foundations is facing challenges in several communities as community groups seek greater transparency. The approach was considered to be more sustainable and conflict sensitive than previous mechanisms where resources were channelled through unaccountable structures. Secondly, some of the peace agreements between warring communities in the region are reportedly being violated. For instance, NSRP sources report tensions are growing between Ijaw and Itsekiri communities in Warri over the failure of the power sharing and resource distribution agreements that contributed to the end of inter-ethnic violence in Warri.

THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

6. MILITANTS TARGET LAGOS

Suspicious that militants have been planning to attack Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital, became stronger when security agencies attacked a hideout of suspected militants in Ijora, Lagos. The military operation led to the arrest of over 100 suspects including foreign nationals from Republic of Niger and Republic of Chad and recovery of weapons and bomb making materials. Many of the suspects were arrested in a disused building belonging to the Bayelsa State Government. The proximity of the hideout of the militants to the main railway terminus and a major thermal power station in the commercial city showed how close the militants were to causing a major security breach.

Since 2012, Lagos State government and security agencies have had credible intelligence that JAS was planning to carry out an attack in Lagos. The seizure of container load of weapons linked to an Iranian at a Lagos seaport further put security agencies on alert. Lagos has also been receiving thousands of young men fleeing the violence in the North. Many of the youths resorted to commercial motorcycle business and fears that some of them were militants prompted the state government to place a ban on commercial motorcycle business (Okada) in Lagos. Barely two months before the raid on the hideout, the Lagos State Government commenced an urban renewal programme in Ijora, which led to the demolition of shanties and displacement of over 60,000 persons.

7. TENSIONS RISE IN BAKASSI PENINSULA

The unsettled issue of the fate of Nigerian residents in Bakassi Peninsula raised tensions in the disputed territory when Cameroonian authorities evicted over 1,000 Nigerians still living in the disputed territory. Local authorities in Cross River State claim the decision of Cameroon to evict Nigerians was in breach of the 2005 Green tree Agreement and the 2002 International Court of Justice (ICJ) judgment. Both judgments allowed Nigerians who were desirous of remaining in the territory to stay there under Cameroonian sovereignty. The unannounced eviction is reported to have caused suffering for the displaced persons and the death of four Nigerians.

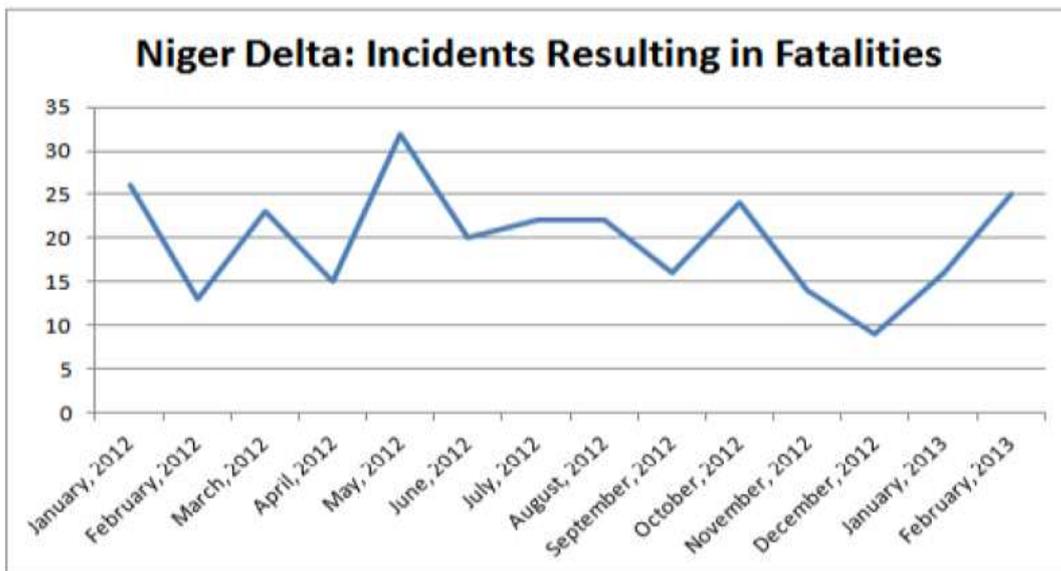
There has been no official response from the Nigerian Government. It is evident that the latest action of Cameroon was in response to recent moves by the Nigerian Government to appeal the judgment of the ICJ. Late 2012, the National Assembly asked the Federal Government to seek a review of the judgment following continuing pressures from Nigerians who have been living in the territory. The Bakassi Peninsula is rich in oil deposits and is a major trade route for smugglers. Incidents of piracy and smuggling are reported to have increased since Nigeria ceded the territory to Cameroon.

8. INCREASE IN INCIDENTS RESULTING IN FATALITIES

Data collated by Partnership for Peace (P4P) shows that there have been an increase in the number of incidents of violence resulting in fatalities in the last three months (December 2012 to February 2013). Incidents resulting in fatalities appeared to be rising in both the North and the Niger Delta (see figures below).

In February 2013, the states with the most reported incidents resulting in fatalities were Borno, Lagos and Delta States. Other states are Plateau, Enugu, Imo and Nassarawa. The cause of fatalities differs across the states. In Borno, most of the fatalities were linked to insurgency and counter-insurgency. Lagos appeared on the list on account of rising fatalities

associated with criminality, gang violence and inter-personal conflict. This is not surprising given the status of Lagos as one of Africa's biggest cities. Other states featured because of fatalities from a mixture of intra-communal violence, inter-communal conflicts, criminality and inter-personal conflicts. The report on incidents resulting in fatalities shows how widespread violence is in the country.



Incidents Resulting in Fatalities

