

CONFLICT BRIEFING NOTES

CONFLICT BRIEFING NO. 19, December 2014

KEY MESSAGES	PAGE
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
2. CONTEXT ANALYSIS & CONFLICT PROFILE	2
3. POLITICAL	2
4. SOCIAL	3
5. ECONOMIC	4
6. THE NATIONAL CONTEXT	5
7. INCREASE IN FEMALE SUICIDE BOMBERS	5
8. GROWING HUMANITARIAN CRISIS	5
9. JAS SUFFERS DEFEAT IN AN ENCOUNTER WITH CAMEROUN	6
10. JOINT ELECTORAL ANALYSIS	6
11. IMPACT FOR PROGRAMMING IN SELECT STATES	6
12. RECOMMENDATIONS	8

*Disclaimer: The contents of this briefing note do not necessarily reflect the views of DFID or the UK Government.

** All reports are based on anonymous NSRP sources.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The upsurge of violent attacks in the North-East remained the greatest security challenge as the Jamaatu Ahlis-Sunna Liddaawati Wal Jihad (JAS) not only maintained its hold on captured territories but also launched several attacks on areas that had not experienced attacks since the insurgency started. The attacks have spread amidst claims of successes by Nigeria's military authorities.

As a result of the territorial gains of JAS, there has been forced migration of persons to Maiduguri, other states and neighbouring countries. Both official and make-shift camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) continue to witness large influx of people. There was palpable tension in the camps as the different political parties accused each other of seeking to reap advantages from the misery of displaced persons.

The tempo of political activities increased with parties conducting their primaries. While the primaries and congresses of the All Progressive Congress (APC) were conducted without much rancour, the primaries of the ruling PDP was marred by allegations of manipulation and imposition of candidate. The development further weakened the party as more party members decamped to opposition parties. This enhanced the electoral prospects of the APC which has been the primary beneficiary of the decampments of PDP members. The political campaigns and congresses were marred by reports of violence especially in Rivers State as the PDP and APC mobilised armed groups to neutralise each other. The falling oil prices, which have affected the value of the naira, also worsened the socio-economic conditions of the populace as many states had not paid salaries to civil servants by the end of the year. Sources claim this worsened the crime situation, which is usually a source of concern, during the Christian and New Year celebrations.

Context Analysis/Conflict Profile

Political

4,520 delegates reportedly unanimously affirmed Governor Kashim Shettima of Borno State as the gubernatorial flag bearer of APC in early December. This development, which took place when Senator Ali Modu Sheriff became more unpopular for his alleged sponsorship of the JAS insurgency, paved the way for an easy victory for Shettima. The prospects of Shettima at the polls are also brightened by divisions in the PDP following the substitution of Alhaji Gambo Lawan as flag bearer in the February polls. Senator Sheriff is alleged to be behind the substitution as Lawan was replaced by Mohammed Imam, an ally of Shettima. The situation has raised tensions within the party with key Borno PDP stakeholders calling on President Jonathan to reverse the substitution in the interest of justice and fair play. However, popular opinion in the state points to the futility of jostling nominees for the party, which apparently has minimal chances at the governorship polls. In Yobe State, the political atmosphere is less tense as the APC is considered to be in full control with the PDP posing very minimal threat to the incumbent governor. However, there are still concerns about the possibility of conducting elections in the North East given the worsening security situation. While efforts are being made to register IDPs to vote in order to ensure vast majority of the residents in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa are not disenfranchised, there are still fears that voters may come under the attack of JAS, which has in recent months stated its opposition to a democratic Nigeria.

In Kano State, the conduct of the primaries was relatively peaceful. This is because the ruling APC decided to return majority of aspirants to the state and national legislatures based on consensus arrangements. The emergence of Abdullahi Umar Ganduje incumbent deputy governor as winner of the governorship primaries took place without any party crisis. The governorship primary of the PDP was marred by allegations of favouritism and some aspirants have challenged the process of selecting the party's flag bearer in the courts. The courts have since suspended the results of the primaries pending its hearing of the matter. Following his loss at the APC presidential primary, Governor Kwankwaso secured the Kano Central Senatorial district ticket previously won by his son-in-law who is commissioner in his cabinet. It is widely believed that the commissioner was planted to hold the seat for the governor who was not likely to win the presidential ticket.

In Plateau State, Senator Gyang Pwajok emerged PDP governorship flag bearer against 12 other candidates including the Deputy Governor. However, aggrieved contestants and others who want the Governorship position to be ceded to other zones, have begun making new alliances with a view to re-aligning their interest. One of such contestants, Professor Sonny Tyoden from Mangu LGA in the Central Zone has decamped to the APC where he was adopted as the Deputy Governorship candidate. The APC Gubernatorial primary was conducted with Hon. Simon Lalong, a former speaker of the State House of Assembly emerging as the party's flag bearer for the 2015 election. The APC Governorship candidate is expected to benefit from protests within the PDP and the state at large about Governor Jonah Jang's reported interest in retaining the governorship in his family and clan.

Most residents of Kaduna State feel the heated campaigns for the governorship and presidential elections were dividing the state along traditional religious and ethnic lines. This is particularly so as residents of the Northern and Central Senatorial districts appeared to be tilting towards the APC while the southern district seems to favour the PDP. Governor Ramalan Yero is facing stiff opposition from Malam El Rufai, former minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The association of Yero with President Goodluck Jonathan and Vice President Namadi Sambo is believed to be hurting his re-election prospects.

Party primaries and campaigns expectedly generated tensions in the Niger Delta states given the high stakes of controlling power in the oil rich region. Rivers State was worse hit as party primaries of the APC and PDP ended with controversies. While most of the candidates boycotted the primaries for being primed for the emergence of Chief Nyesom Wike, former education minister, the consensus selection of Dakuku Peterside as APC flag-bearer led to protests. Dakuku's selection was seen as a breach of earlier commitments of Governor Rotimi Ameachi to favour the Ogoni in the choice of the governorship candidate. While both parties have tried to resolve their differences, intra-party conflicts and violence worsened with armed groups linked to both parties engaged in attacks and destruction of party figures and properties.

The emergence of Senator Ifeanyi Okowa as the Delta State PDP governorship candidate also raised controversies as Okowa defeated candidates of the incumbent governor and president. Sources claim Okowa's emergence signals the emerging influential roles of ex-militants in the politics of the Niger Delta. This is because Government Ekpemupolo popularly known as 'Tompolo' is believed to have sponsored and influenced Okowa's emergence. Another source of concern in the politics of the governorship in the state is the reported preference of the Urhobo, the dominant group in the state to produce the next governor against expectations of power-shift to the Ika-Igbo of the Northern senatorial district. The Urhobo are believed to be rallying around Chief Otega Emerhor of the APC after Chief David Edevbie who served as commissioner of Finance lost at the PDP primaries.

Although there were no governorship primaries in Bayelsa State, the party primaries for elections to state and national assemblies were heated as competition between Governor Henry Seriake Dickson and First lady Patience Jonathan to control the delegates intensified. The primaries of the PDP exposed the extent of polarization in the party with estranged party members joining the opposition APC, which has been boosted by defection of former Governor Timipre Sylva from the PDP. Sylva is leading the APC campaign in the state to revenge Jonathan's opposition to his re-election in 2012 governorship election.

Social

The Christmas season in the North East like the previous Muslim Sallah festivals was observed with restriction on vehicular movements. According to security agencies, the measure was taken based on intelligence reports that JAS planned to attack during the holiday period. Despite the restrictions, Christians were attended Christmas services and visited with friends and families. IDP camps also witnessed celebrations and presentation of gifts.



The restrictions paid off at the end as no incidence was recorded at all in both Borno and Yobe states during the yuletide. The peaceful nature of the end of the month contrasted with bloody attacks by suspected JAS militants earlier in the month. The increasing use of female suicide bombs and continuous targeting of soft targets like mosques, motor parks and markets affected social life as people avoided these areas. The attacks on Kano city where over 100 persons died after suicide bombers attacked the central mosque, petrol station and market have raised fears of economic downturns in Kano, which was just recovering. There are fears of food crises in parts of the North East as farmers are displaced from their communities. The enormity of the challenge is evidenced by the fact that the Borno State government admitted during the month that 20 out of 27 LGAs in the state were under the control of JAS insurgents.

The alleged failure of the military to protect life and property in the North East has continued to lead to clamour for self defence by traditional and religious prominent leaders. This follows several instances where the vigilantes and hunters have been instrumental to the recovery of captured territories in Adamawa and Borno states. However, there have been concerns about the tendency for the vigilantes to kill their suspects as well as the safety of volunteers since JAS has been known to target groups that cooperate with security services.

Throughout the Niger Delta, there were incidents of violence perpetrated by secret streets cult gangs. The groups fingered in the bloody attacks recorded in the month are Deebam, Deewell, Icelanders, Greenlanders Vikings and Black Axe. There are reports of the different armed groups aligned with politicians and being supplied new weapons. The crime rate also increased during as evidenced by the rise in incidence of piracy and other maritime crime in Bayelsa and Rivers State.

Economic

Economic activities in Kano suffered some set back as a result of the multiple bomb blasts. Businesses suffered because many traders were deterred from coming to Kano to purchase goods and patronized services. Also normal commercial activities within the city suffered as many people were scared from going to major markets in the city after two of the major markets in the city were targeted by suicide bombers. The state also witnessed further economic stress as a result of transfer of resources from economic investment to political spendings. The diversion of resources to political campaigns was evidenced by the fact that while several state governments could not pay salaries of workers they contributed generously to campaign funds of their parties.

There was hardship in most target states and nationally due to the three day warning strike by PENGANSAN, associated of senior staff in the oil and gas sector. The resultant hike in prices of products contributed to rising cost of transportation, which usually increases in December as a result of the increase in volume of travellers.

The Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) called for reduction in pump price of petroleum products due to the global fall in the price of oil. There are concerns that shortage will worsen if the NLC decides to press further for the reduction through a national strike. The Niger Delta states also continued to feel the pinch of the slump in oil price at the international market as some of the states failed to staff salaries for the months of November and December.

The National Context

Increase in Female Suicide Bombers

Early this month, two female suicide bombers detonated bombs at the Maiduguri Main Market leaving 22 people dead and 48 others injured. A failed attempt at detonating a bomb resulted in the apprehension of yet another female suicide bomber who revealed the existence of 50 other female suicide bombers allegedly in Maiduguri city with a mandate to kill 100,000 persons before the end of December 2014. The suicide bomber was apprehended by the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) at the main entrance of the University of Maiduguri. Another was apprehended at the busy Post Office area of the metropolis the same day. As at this date, already four female suicide bombers have caused the deaths of over 100 people in two incidents in Maiduguri.

Another woman was also arrested at Tashan Kano Motor Park on 15th December trying to convey explosives to Kano concealed in the stomach of a dead baby. She had even boarded a commercial vehicle carrying an about one year old baby covered with on her lap when a suspecting passenger sitting next to her asked whether the baby is alive. She then said the baby is dead and that she is taking the corpse to the father at Kano for burial. When the driver insisted that she should get down as he could not carry a corpse in this manner, the CJTF at the station then demanded to see the corpse. Upon opening, it was discovered that some explosives were stuck inside the dead baby's tummy. The lady was beaten and handed over to soldiers.

A girl of about 10 years old was also arrested by the entrance of Ramat Polytechnic with an empty bag which was believed to contain explosive. When beaten, she confessed to have emptied the content at a destination which she agreed to lead security men to. Another one was arrested by the entrance gate of El-Kanemi College of Islamic Theology carry a bag on her back like a baby, but turned out to an explosive.

There is no doubt considering their ages, these hapless women and children who are made to embark on such deadly missions do so out of compulsion, through brainwashing, drug inducement, ignorance or intimidation by those who conscripted them for that purpose. The perpetrators of this heinous crime now find it easy to use the vulnerable women and children to commit such crime by exploiting their vulnerability and gullibility.

Growing Humanitarian Crisis

JAS's siege on the border town of Damasak in Northern Borno on 2nd December and occupation of Gajiganna forced the villagers to flee across the border to Niger, where they sought refuge in the Diffa region, which has seen a largest influx of Nigerian refugees. An official with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Niger said 50 people were killed, some of whom drowned while trying to flee across a river.

The Government of Niger Republic has appealed for assistance to cope with the influx of refugees from Nigeria. According to a statement from the office of the Prime Minister, 13 Billion CFA is required to cater for the basic needs of 87,000 refugees, 45% of whom are children and 50% women. The statement added that this year's harvest was poor. Consequently, neither the citizens nor the government could shoulder this responsibility in spite of a committee set up to explore ways of meeting this demand. The government also assured INGOs who are willing to assist of adequate security.

The deputy governor of Borno state had disclosed that Borno has about two million IDPs to cater for and that it recently evacuated 45,000 IDPs from Adamawa State. The Borno State Government, according to Mustapha, "has been spending N657 million monthly" on the welfare of IDPs in various camps and established a "Free Food for All" for them currently being implemented in Maiduguri and Jere.

JAS Suffers Defeat in an Encounter with Cameroon

In a cross border attack on an army base in Cameroon's northern region of Amchide, JAS lost 116 fighters when Cameroon's army reacted fiercely to the attack conducted by about 3,000 suspected JAS fighters. According to sources the Cameroonian army engaged the insurgents in heavy fighting in Amchide and Limani after three Cameroonian soldiers were killed by insurgents the previous day.

About 1,000 militants attacked the villages and seized the nearby Achigachia military base, where they raised their black flag. The attacks were carried out simultaneously at the localities of Mokolo, Guirvidig, Waza, Amchide and Makari, villages along the frontier with Nigeria. This is was likely a reprisal attack because Cameroonian authorities has announced a week earlier that they had dismantled a JAS training camp on and had arrested 84 children who were being trained there. This encounter came less than a week after a previous attack during which the Cameroonian army pursued the JAS and engaged them in Nigerian territory of Gamboru/ Banki axis and killed at least 180 on Dec. 12.

Joint Electoral Violence Analysis

The Peace and Security Working Group (PSWG), a network of organisations, including NSRP, promoting peace and conflict mitigation in Nigeria, is concerned about the potential for violence around the upcoming presidential, national assembly, gubernatorial, and state assembly elections scheduled for February 2015. PSWG members, composed primarily of local and international civil society organisations engaging with donors, government actors, diplomatic missions and opinion leaders, have produced draft analyses and state and federal-level scenarios that examine the risk of election-related violence.

Members held consultations with government ministries, departments and agencies, civil society organisations and activists, security agencies and communities in 17 of the most conflict prone states in the country. Altogether over 30 sessions were held with groups across these 17 states. Analysis on political and conflict dynamics and potential scenarios of violence, based on these discussions, are presented in state briefings. The states examined are Abia, Adamawa, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Benue, Borno, Delta, Edo, Imo, Kaduna, Kano, Nasarawa, Plateau, Rivers, Taraba, Yobe and Zamfara.

The Peace and Security Working Group, after reviewing trends evidence at the state level, looked at national political and conflict dynamics and developed nationwide scenarios. Based on these scenarios, the group has also developed a set of recommendations for civil society, donors, and government actors that can be feasibly implemented in the limited time remaining before the elections are scheduled to begin. (see NSRP website for scenarios: www.nsrp-nigeria.org/publications).

Impact for Programming in Select States (Borno, Yobe, Kano, Kaduna, Plateau, Bayelsa, Rivers and Delta)

Increasing use of female suicide bombers by insurgents expose young women and girls to risk

The Northeast continues to be vulnerable to attacks by JAS insurgents although the region remains under an official state of emergency by the Government of Nigeria. With the seizure of more towns in northern Borno, Yobe and some LGAs in Gombe state, the lack of security continues to leave populations extremely vulnerable and the implementation of governance, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding programming extremely challenging. The residents remain concerned at the increase in female suicide bombers being used by JAS as occurred in Kano and Maiduguri in December.

Therefore, for programmes working on gender and psycho-social support and trauma healing in the country, considerations for additional programming for the northeast states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa may assist in curbing the alleged recruitment of women and young girls by JAS insurgents in these states. For programmes targeting the improvement of governance and security as well as peacebuilding programming in the region, additional coordination with economic programming to provide incentives for young people to deter them from potential recruitment may assist in the reduction of violent incidents in the region.

Increased reliance by the Nigerian military on local self-defense groups to reclaim territory from JAS may be a short-term solution with long-term implications

The lack of trust in the government's ability to provide peace and security in the Northeast has increased the reliance on the local hunters, self-defense groups and vigilante groups—all of which have been perceived by the community as contributing to increasing their safety and security in the region. For governance and security related programmes working in the region, awareness of the raising rate of reliance of communities on self-defense groups will be important for appropriate adjustments to programming beneficiaries and geographic location selection. Community reliance on informal networks for safety and security may be incorporated into current governance and security reform programming to adequately train these groups on basics of human rights and community policing in an effort to reduce the potential of both intentional and unintentional negative impacts of untrained and unqualified community members performing the traditional roles of the Nigerian police and military in the northeast.

Humanitarian Assistance remains vital to meeting the basic human needs of IDPs and residents in affected communities Nigeria and neighbouring countries

Attacks on the communities in the Northeast by the insurgents have led to population displacements. Most of the displaced persons have moved to the neighbouring countries and other states especially in the Middle Belt and North West. The deteriorating security situation has led to an increase in prices of scarce essential commodities. The influx of IDPs and refugees into communities already affected by declining crop yields and non-payment of salaries of civil servants is likely to lead to tensions between residents and IDPs and refugees.

For programmes working on humanitarian assistance, water and sanitation, health, education and peacebuilding in the region, continued support for both IDPs and refugees in neighboring countries is essential to restoring the social fabric of Nigeria once the insurgency has been controlled. Programme assessments should be both frequent to remain aware of the frequent movement of responders and potential beneficiaries, but also take into consideration the psycho-social trauma of the responders and assure that organizations conduct joint analysis to minimize over-tasking survivors of the violence in places such as IDP camps.

For humanitarian programming as well as health and governance programmes supporting state-based ministries, departments and agencies, the struggle for social services has the potential to drive additional tensions between IDPs and host communities and therefore, activities should provide support to alleviate that growing tension at the community level.

Rising insecurity in Kano affect economic activities

Rising incidence of bomb blasts in Kano State since November have raised fears and doubts among citizens about the government's ability to protect them from the insurgency. Fears have also arisen from a recorded statement in which JAS reportedly called for the assassination of the Emir of Kano, and several prominent religious leaders. Economic activities have been affected as both residents and visitors avoid markets which have been targeted by the insurgents. For programmes working on support for economic growth in Kano state, it is important to consider the impact of the targeting of public markets on the potential growth of a number of sectors and consider adjusting the indicators to account for the decline in patronage by residents of the state.

Opportunistic Crime Rises in the Middle Belt and Niger Delta as Focus Remains on the February 2015 Elections

The high rate of unemployment and high rate of poverty in Middle Belt and Niger Delta may have contributed to a rise in level of criminality in the month of December. For programmes working on peacebuilding as well as



security and governance, it is important to consider the ways in which opportunistic crime can impact the safety and security of programme staff and participants of events such as workshops and trainings.

Recommendations

NSRP recommends that diplomatic pressure is leveraged on peacebuilding and humanitarian assistance programmes initiated by the Nigerian Government to work closely with neighboring countries to provide assistance to Nigerians seeking refuge in Niger and Cameroon.

NSRP continues to recommend that humanitarian assistance to IDPs in the Northeast consider the breadth and depth of challenges facing both IDPs and host communities, and provide assistance to both directly and indirectly affected individuals outside the Northeastern states. For example, the impact of IDPs on strained communities in Kaduna and Plateau states for example can exacerbate tensions over access to social services, and therefore, programmes providing humanitarian assistance to IDPs should also consider how the host communities has been impacted by the arrival of citizens and allocate resources to account for these potential strains on services.

NSRP also continues to recommend that additional resources are provided to alleviate the gap in payment to civil servants prior to and throughout the election period given the strain on human and social services that several states are already experiencing. For communities in the Niger Delta where high rates of crime are connected to opportunism from high rates of unemployment, it is recommended to create incentives for youth to avoid or shun violence through income-generating activities such as small and quick impact projects to circumvent the opportunism prior to and during the election period.