

CONFLICT BRIEFING NOTES

CONFLICT BRIEFING NO. 18, November 2014

KEY MESSAGES	PAGE
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
2. CONTEXT ANALYSIS & CONFLICT PROFILE	2
3. POLITICAL	2
4. SOCIAL	4
5. ECONOMIC	5
6. THE NATIONAL CONTEXT	5
7. CLAMOUR FOR SELF DEFENCE INCREASES	5
8. CONTINUOUS PLANE CRASH IN THE FIGHT AGAINST JAS	6
9. FIGHTING JAS: NIGERIA'S CASE AGAINST THE US GOVERNMENT	6
10. IMPLICATIONS 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 incidence of violence in the North East worsened in November as Jamaatu Ahlis-Sunna Liddaawati Wal Jihad (JAS) apparently seemed determined to consolidate on its territorial gains over the past two months. For most periods of the month, JAS effectively maintained control over 17 local council areas in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. The sacking of traditional and political authorities as well as security formations in these areas triggered massive population displacements across the region with hundreds of thousands of displaced persons seeking refuge in overcrowded camps in state capitals and safer communities in neighbouring states. There are concerns that the humanitarian emergency will further undermine security as a result of outbreak of diseases and possible infiltration by JAS elements and insurgents into IDP camps and safe spaces.

During the month, JAS demonstrated that its capacity to organize attacks in Kano, Gombe and Bauchi had not been dismantled. The bombing and shooting incidents at a Kano petrol station and a mosque; and targeting of banks, markets and cement factory in Bauchi and Gombe showed that JAS had rebuilt its weakened structures. The resurgence of JAS evidenced by their capture of towns hosting military bases has furthered undermined public confidence in the ability of the security agencies to tackle the insurgency. This loss of confidence is aggravated by public perceptions that hunters and community vigilantes with crude weapons have been able to stop the advances of the insurgents from towns such as Mubi where soldiers and the police had abandoned their posts. Consequently, there are growing calls for resort to community and popular defense initiatives, which is likely to contribute to arms proliferation and militarization.

It is feared that the worsening security is linked to inter and intra group divisions associated with the political campaigns as politicians jostled for political positions in party primaries that commenced during the month. There is also concern that JAS took advantage of the diversion of attention of security agencies to politics and divisions within the government over the proposed extension of the state of emergency due to expire in the month.

The falling price of crude oil and feared devaluation of the naira also posed key security challenges for the Government of Nigeria, which was already struggling to fund counter-insurgency initiatives. Amidst allegations of poor funding of military operations, the government had not secured facility for weapons procurement. Furthermore, the disagreement between Nigeria and the United States over the latter's support to counter-insurgency initiatives climaxed with Nigeria's unilateral decision to call off joint military exercises between Nigeria and the United States.

Context Analysis/Conflict Profile

Political

The political tide in the North East has reportedly turned in favour of Governors of Borno and Yobe state. The apparent decision of the presidency and the PDP to disassociate with former Governor Ali Modu Sheriff- who defected to the PDP from the APC- after the bad press arising from the chance meeting in Chad between the President and Sheriff has put Governor Shettima of Borno (who has now been endorsed as the APC sole candidate) and his APC supporters on a strong footing for 2015. The Deputy Governor, Chief of Staff, Secretary to the State Government, National and State Assembly members and commissioners who earlier reportedly defected with the former governor have returned to the APC.

Similarly, Governor Ibrahim Geidam of Yobe state and his supporters are now more confident about his political future following the official 2015 declaration of President Jonathan in Abuja. The political atmosphere in Yobe had hitherto been that of quiet apprehension as a result of lingering concerns about the eligibility of Governor Geidam (having been sworn in twice like Jonathan, after the death of late Governor

Mamman Ali and re-elected in his own right in 2011). The political scene is now agog with activities with APC candidates conspicuously in the forefront.

In Kano, there are allegations that the Emir of Kano has turned his back on Governor Musa Kwankwanso who facilitated his emergence. This followed a number of developments that are indicative of reconciliation with President Jonathan after Sanusi's visit to the State House in October. The Department of State Security (DSS) promptly restored the Emir's seized passport and the Central Bank of Nigeria has reportedly settled his outstanding entitlements. These developments are deemed to have emboldened the Emir to take certain actions, notably the sacking of Alhaji Sanusi Ado Bayero (the eldest son of late Emir Ado Bayero) from the position of District Head of Gwale for alleged prolonged absence from his subjects. This has reopened the wound of lost power within the late Emir's family with resultant divisions within the Emirate council.

The key political developments that raised tensions in most parts of the country were the voter registration exercises and mobilizations for party primaries. In Kano State, the distribution of permanent voters card raised tensions due to late arrival of INEC officials, inability of some of the officials to operate the registration equipment, malfunctioning of INEC computers and reports that some people's registration data was 'lost' at the INEC headquarters. The situation resulted in chaos at several locations across the state allegedly leaving a significant portion of the Kano electorate without voter's cards. Consequently, the Kano State Government threatened legal action against INEC over what it terms "deliberate moves to disenfranchise Kano citizens". This accusation credited to Deputy Governor Abdullahi Ganduje is an indication that INEC's logistic mishaps are likely to give birth to party-specific conspiracy theories, which may not augur well for peaceful 2015 elections in the state.

The political atmosphere in Plateau state remains dicey as Senator Pwajok, the much touted protégé of Governor Jang, formally declared his interest to contest for the governorship position come 2015. Meanwhile, other PDP governorship aspirants from the central and southern zones have put up their campaign posters across the state in defiance of any zoning considerations. This may be attributable to insinuations in political circles that the influence of Governor Jang with the presidency is dwindling over concerns about Jang's ability to deliver the required grassroots support for his 2015 electoral victory in the state.

In Kaduna state, five PDP governorship aspirants have rejected results of the recently concluded wards congress in the state. These are former Aviation Minister Felix Hyat; Senator Haruna Aziz; Alhaji Lawal Abdullahi; Mr Jimmy Dung and Air Commodore John Ajeye (rtd). Also, the recent public declaration of support by Major General Muhammadu Buhari for Mallam Nasir El-Rufai's governorship candidature has alienated other aspirants. Overall, appeal to religious sentiments remains the underlying strategy for electoral manipulation in the state. The allegation that the President has been campaigning in southern states through churches is reportedly being used to garner northern Muslim opposition for his candidature in the central and northern zones. Hence, there is a strong likelihood of religious undertones to any election-related conflict that may occur in the state.

In Bayelsa state, results of the recently concluded PDP Ward Congress reveal that Governor Henry Dickson's loyalists constitute majority of delegates for the election of the State House of Assembly candidates while supporters of President Goodluck Jonathan constitute majority of delegates to elect National Assembly hopefuls. This situation portends stiff competition as Governor Dickson is reported to have promised to fight opposition from the presidency to a standstill.

In neighbouring Delta State, Governor Uduaghan is reportedly experiencing strong opposition to alleged attempt to 'impose' Tony Obuh on the state. The Urhobo People's Union (UPU) has made public its decision to work against the Governor's 'Igbo-speaking' choice following the group's *Uvwiamuge Declaration* (a declaration of the resolve to produce the next Governor of Delta state). In furtherance of this objective, Urhobo traditional rulers have reportedly made a public resolve to direct all Urhobo people to vote enmasse for any party that gives the Governorship ticket to an Urhobo candidate. This scenario suggests strong ethnic colouration in the run up to the elections in Delta state. In the meantime, the APC is finalising plans to produce its flag-bearer for the Governorship elections.

Social

There has been an upsurge of attacks on the North eastern states in the month of November. A suicide bomb attack targeting a Shi'ite Muslim procession commemorating the new Islamic calendar in Potiskum, Yobe state has left over 30 worshippers dead and about 80 others injured. Similarly, a suicide bomber disguised as a student detonated a bomb at the assembly ground of Government Technical Science College where over 2,000 people were gathered, killing 52 people and leaving 89 others with various degrees of injuries. In a swift reaction to forestall student casualties, the Yobe state Government has closed all schools in the state.

Additional incidents of violence in the region include the early November attack on the military base in Mubi (Adamawa State), the takeover of the local government in Hong LGA (Adamawa State) a market bombing in Azare Town (Bauchi State), an attack on Doron Baga border town, a market attack on Damasak in Mobbar LGA along the Niger border with Niger and the twin bombings in a market in Maiduguri City.

As attacks persist, the insurgents continue to capture and retain vast expanse of territorial space in the region. Large towns like Bama, Mubi, Gwoza, Abadam and Michika and hundreds of villages are among those living under what the insurgents term their "Caliphate". The fall of these towns has raised fears about the capacity of the military to reclaim JAS-controlled territories and rumours that JAS has amassed enough arms, food and funds to sustain its activities for at least a year.

In a related event, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and Adamawa State Emergency Management Agency (ASEMA) have recorded 10,496 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in five camps situated in Yola South and Fufere in the aftermath of the attack on Mubi. The Zonal Headquarters of NEMA confirmed to journalists recently that it has registered a total of 678,773 IDPs displaced by the insurgency in the three North eastern states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe from January till date. The agency which stated that the IDPs had been assisted with relief materials, named Borno state as the state with the largest numbers of IDPs.

In Kano state, twin bomb explosions at the 10,000 capacity Kano Central Mosque has left over 120 dead and 270 injured. In what is fast becoming the trend, several members of the insurgent group are reported to have engaged in a shooting spree targeted at people escaping the scene of the blasts. A recent statement credited to Emir Sanusi of Kano asking northerners to defend themselves against the JAS insurgents is been touted in many quarters as the reason for this latest attack. Earlier in the month, a suicide bomber disguised as a customer at a filling station detonated a bomb killing the station manager, a pump attendant and three policemen.

Jos the Plateau state capital has witnessed a protest by hundreds of IDPs from the North East. The IDPs accused the Federal Government of ceding the North eastern states to the JAS insurgents and called on the United Nations to deploy peace-keeping troops to secure lives and property within the region. The coordinated manner in which the protest was staged and the publicity it received (including a front page cover story in the Nation's Newspaper) suggests a clandestine political agenda. Speculations include the possibility of the protest being used to build credibility for the Federal Government's request for extension of emergency rule in the region.



In Kaduna state, a mass rally has been held to protest alleged plans by the Federal Government to assassinate Sheikh Zakzaky, the leader of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria. Members of the Shi'ite group have accused the United States Government of partnering with the Nigerian government to eliminate Sheikh Zakzaky amidst claims that both governments are apprehensive of Sheikh Zakzaky's growing influence amongst Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The Shi'ite group has a large following in Kaduna and a number of states in the Middle belt and North-western regions of Nigeria with a good number of educated and articulate members. There is the possibility that another insurgency may be triggered if their leader is killed as the group has vowed that any attempt on the life of the Leader will attract “supreme sacrifice of members with the last drop of their blood”.

In the Niger Delta, activities of violent gangs and armed robbers are on the increase as the Christmas season approaches.

Economic

Prices of goods and commodities continue to rise in Nigeria's North eastern states as activities of JAS insurgent continue unabated. The security situation in the region has impeded movement of people and goods resulting in scarcity of essential commodities and inflation.

In the North West, the one day public holiday and total closure of all markets within the Kano metropolis to enable workers and the business community obtain their Permanent Voter's Card in addition to the bomb blast at a Kano filling station (which led to the closure of several filling stations) has slowed down economic activity in the state. Also, the non-payment of Civil Servants' salaries has affected commercial activities in Plateau state.

The global fall in oil price and demand for oil is taking its toll on states, especially the Niger Delta states which receive more allocations from the Federation Account on the basis of derivation. The Bayelsa state government is reported to have abandoned several on-going projects due to dwindling oil revenue. In Rivers, Civil Servants are the worst hit as the state government has continued to make deductions from salary arrears under its Social Levy Policy (SLP).

Delta state has witnessed open protests by workers over non-payment of salaries and allowances and health services have been paralysed due to indefinite strike action by the National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives (NANNM). Similarly, employees of the Delta State House of Assembly (DSHA) have threatened to embark on a strike to protest non-payment of their salaries.

The resurgence of conflict over location of the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) between the Itsekiri and Ijaw neighbours in Delta state is threatening the \$16 billion project in Ogidighen, an Itsekiri village in the area. The Ijaws protested and issued threats over President Jonathan's proposed flag off of the EPZ. There are concerns over the development because the Ijaw and Itsekiri have a history of violent conflict arising from competition for political power and economic opportunities.

The National Context

Clamour for Self Defence increases

The Anglican Bishop of Adamawa state and newly elected vice chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Adamawa state chapter, Bishop Marcus Ibrahim Anfani has called on all Christians to be more security conscious and 'protect themselves' from JAS attacks. The Christian leader stated that the Nigerian government is unable to help or protect Christians as the insurgency continues to slow down the growth of the church in the North. Similarly, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, who is seeking the presidential ticket of the APC for the 2015 elections, has called on Nigerians to employ 'self-defense' against the JAS insurgents

since the Federal Government has allegedly proved its inability to protect the lives and property of Nigerians.

The position of both leaders is akin to the recent call by the Emir of Kano for Northern citizens to “acquire what they need to protect themselves” against the insurgents. The rising call for self-defense is an indication that many have lost faith in the ability of Nigeria's mainstream security agencies to protect lives and property within the country and may give rise to several civilians acquiring arms and ammunition for the protection of their families.

Continuous Plane Crash in the fight against JAS

The Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Adesola Amosu, has raised an alarm over the rate at which the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) is losing its pilots to plane crash in ongoing military operations in the North East. According to the NAF Chief, Adamawa state alone has witnessed 3 plane crash involving aircrafts of the Nigerian Air Force with the resultant death of almost all crew members. In one of such cases which occurred in September, the aircraft crew and two missing pilots have not been found. No explanation has been given for repeat crash of NAF planes in counter-insurgency operations.

Fighting JAS: Nigeria's case against the U.S Government

Prof. Ade Adefuye, Nigeria's Ambassador to the United States alleged that the United States Government has refused to assist Nigeria with technology to fight JAS. Adefuye told members of the Council on Foreign Relations that Nigeria is “not satisfied with the scope, nature and content of the United States' support” in the fight against the insurgents.

In refuting these allegations, the United States Government stated that it has given a great deal of aid to Nigeria. Releasing details of U.S assistance in the fight against the insurgents, Jen Paski, the U.S State Department spokesperson stated that Washington has shared intelligence with the Nigerian army, held high-level talks on the threat of JAS, provided and approved sales of military equipment to the Nigerian army and begun training a new army battalion. Ms. Paski however admitted that the U.S refused to sell 'Cobra attack' helicopters to the Nigerian armed forces because it was not convinced of the military's capacity to operate and maintain the helicopters in addition to concerns over protection of Civilians during Nigerian military operations.

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

Violence in Northeast escalates and major cities of Yola (Adamawa), Damaturu (Yobe) and Maiduguri (Borno) at increasing risk of being ceased by insurgents

Despite the announcement of ceasefire by Government of Nigeria, violence has escalated in the North East. The increase in number and severity of these attacks following Governments announcement of the purported ceasefire as well as the location of the attacks (in close proximity to major cities in the Northeast) has increased doubts that Yola, Damaturu and Maiduguri will remain safe from insurgents throughout the election period. The possibility of JAS overrunning the military in any of these three cities may have a significant impact on the human and physical security of programmes and staff operating within these cities in the near future.

The JAS insurgency continues to undermine the authority of and erode trust in the Government's ability to maintain peace and security in the region. In addition, there are rising fears that seizure of military bases means JAS has a significant amount of military-grade equipment and food items to sustain their activities for an extended period of time.

This understanding gives residents of the North East little confidence that peace and security can, and will be restored in the near future. Hence, programmes designed to strengthen livelihoods for IDPs and the host communities supporting them should consider long-term plans for supporting displaced persons including access to education, employment, social and health services.

There continues to be a growing need to support IDPs internally as well as refugees who have fled across the borders to neighbouring Niger and Cameroon. JAS insurgents have captured and retained large towns as well as hundreds of small villages in Borno and Yobe states increasing the number of IDPs in the region. Worthy of note is the growing concern among IDPs and host communities that insurgents can also infiltrate their camps which are currently weak on security.

Programmes providing support to IDP camps should be aware of the fear and risks of insecurity as perceived by IDPs and host communities and consider alternative humanitarian aid distribution for targeted beneficiaries so that IDP camps do not become additional targets by the insurgents because of the presence of aid.

Violent explosion at Central Mosque in Kano State undermines public perception regarding the State Government's ability to provide security

The two major incidences of bomb blasts in Kano state this month have increased fears that government may not be able to prevent JAS insurgents from extending their attacks to the North West and other parts of the country. The bombing of a local filling station on 14 November and the 28 November bombing of the Central Mosque indicates an increase in JAS activities in the region with the possibility that the early 2015 elections may be disrupted by continued insecurity.

It is unclear if the bombings in November are connected to the call for self-defense by the Emir of Kano. However, programmes operating in Kano should be aware that the erosion of trust between the central government, state government and citizens may increase the presence of small arms among the population who may have resorted to self-defense mechanisms for protection. This may impact programmes designed to strengthen citizen-state engagement as well as governance-related programmes designed to build and restore trust in the judicial and legislative system in the state.

Electoral competitiveness and employment-related injustices may increase risk of political instability in Middle Belt States of Kaduna and Plateau as well as the Niger Delta

The increase in political activism following the lifting of the INEC ban on political campaigns has birthed stiff competition in the selection of PDP and APC flag-bearers in both Plateau and Kaduna States. The high rate of unemployment and poverty in Middle Belt states coupled with the non-payment of salaries to state Civil Servants increases the potential risk for electoral violence in the next few months.

The irregular payment of state Civil Servants' salaries has generated discontentment with the population. This will continue to be compounded in Plateau state where a number of IDPs have moved into communities in Jos North and Jos South LGAs, and require access to social and health services. Humanitarian, health and governance programmes supporting state-based MDAs need to be conscious that the struggle for social services has the potential to drive additional tensions between IDPs and host communities. Hence, activities should target the provision of support to alleviate growing tension at the community level.

The Niger Delta states have also experienced challenges providing social services to its citizens. Civil servants in Rivers State have experienced salary deductions under the Social Levy policy. The strike by nursing staff in Delta state is one example of the negative impact of the non-payment of salaries on social service provisioning. This has been coupled with the challenges of the aborted commissioning of the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) in Ogidighen, Delta State.



These economic challenges have resulted in an upsurge in crime in the month of November in the Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States and remain connected to the high rate of youth unemployment and the uncertainties of the electoral process in the region.

Recommendations

It is recommended that humanitarian assistance to IDPs in the North East consider the depth and breadth of challenges facing both IDPs and host communities, and provide assistance to both directly and indirectly affected individuals outside the North eastern states. For example, the impact of IDPs on strained communities in Plateau for example can exacerbate tensions over access to social services. 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.

It is also recommended that additional resources are provided to alleviate the gap in salary 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 and the Middle Belt with high rates of crime and unemployment, it is important to consider small and quick impact activities to mitigate unemployment prior to and during the electioneering period.