



# Nigeria Conflict Insight

## Situation analysis

The modern state of Nigeria was the product of a merger, by the British, of the North and Southern Protectorates with the Colony of Lagos in 1914. Prior to the amalgamation, the country had been home to numerous kingdoms and tribes over millennia. Political independence was attained in 1960 but seven years later, the country plunged into a three-year civil war (1967-1970) prompted by an attempt by the Igbo-dominated Eastern region to secede from the federation and establish the Republic of Biafra. Over 1 million people died in the civil war, and in the decades after, the country oscillated between military dictatorships and multiparty civilian rule. Since the transition from military to civilian rule in 1999, Nigeria has seen a succession of four civilian administrations. However, intervals of violent conflicts have plagued Nigeria since independence, with political power shifting between the North and the South.

Recurrent political tension and violence, typically between northern and southern Nigeria, has mostly been linked to the zero-sum nature of political power in Nigeria, one in which the exercise of political power also means access to substantial economic clout in the distribution of national resources. The current situation in the country reflects popular dissatisfaction over the distribution of resources, unemployment and poverty. Compounded with this is the emergence of a plethora of militant and insurgency groups; particularly in the Niger Delta, but also in the country's north-eastern part where the Boko Haram movement continues to instigate severe instability and security concerns.

### ABOUT THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide analysis and recommendations to assist the African Union (AU), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Member States and Development Partners in decision making and in the implementation of peace and security-related instruments.

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POPULATION	GDP PER CAPITA (PPP)	LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH (YEARS)	HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX (HDI)	NEIGHBOURS	RECS
182 million	\$5,639	53.1	Index: 0.527 Rank: 152/188	Benin Chad Cameroon Niger	CEN-SAD ECOWAS

Figure 1: Country profile and demographics<sup>i</sup>

## Causes of the conflict

### Land ownership

The Land Use Act of 1978 was a crucial turning point in that it legally places access to and ownership of land in the hands of the government. Rather than address long-drawn contestations over land, however, the country has witnessed an upsurge in land-related disputes and violence, to the extent that disputes over land are now some of the major sources of intractable conflict in Nigeria, as elsewhere across Africa. To be sure, the causes of conflicts over land are multidimensional.

First, land disputes leading to violent clashes between farmers and pastoralists over right of way and access to grazing land are now very common in Benue, Taraba, Kaduna and Plateau in the north-central geopolitical zone. Second, land disputes occur between those who believe they are the original owners of land versus those they categorize as settlers. Third, land ownership disputes occur between and among villages with contiguous - but contested - borders, especially when the disputed area suddenly gains economic value such as new discoveries of natural resources or the establishment of a major infrastructure project by the government or the private sector capable of offering large numbers of employment.

Regardless of the source, each of these land-related conflicts tends to be exacerbated by how quickly they become politicized and the weak capacity of government as well as law enforcement and adjudication systems to handle land disputes before they degenerate into full-scale violence. Some sources have claimed, with some justification, that land disputes alone pose the single greatest threat to security in Nigeria, second only to the Boko Haram Islamist insurgency with its epicentre in the Northeast. The 2017 Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) Project reported that disputes over land in

the country resulted in over 884 fatalities the previous year.

### Distribution of resources

Nigeria operates a three-tier system of government, with one federal centre, 36 states and 774 local governments. One of the structural causes of conflict in the country is the unequal distribution of resources from the centre to the two lower tiers of government, as well as competition over these resources. Because allocation of resources is not even, tension quickly brews amongst citizens and the lower tiers against the powerful federal government. For instance, the Niger Delta alone accounts for an estimated 23% of Nigeria's population and is home to virtually all of Nigeria's oil reserves. Yet, it is one of the most underdeveloped and volatile regions in the country. It is within this context that the struggle over ownership and control of resources, particularly oil, has been a major source of conflict in the south-south geopolitical zone that comprises nine out of the 36 states in Nigeria. The rise of militancy and insurgency, as well as pockets of criminality, have become frequent in Nigeria's oil region because inhabitants of the region believe that they deserve a better share of the proceeds from the crude oil extracted from their land. This perception of unfairness in the distribution of resources has led to several conflicts, with the inhabitants of the Niger Delta seeking control over their oil resources or self-determination through any necessary means.

### Corruption

Corruption is another major structural cause of conflict in Nigeria, and it is deeply embedded in society, in politics and in the economy of the country. It is widely claimed that corruption became entrenched in the Nigerian system during successive military regimes, particularly under the dictatorships of Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha, when the public treasury was looted with impunity and a culture of prebendalism

<sup>i</sup> Source: Human Development Report, UNDP. 2016.

became high in national politics. Endowed with abundant natural and human resources, the potential for economic and human capital development is enormous, but nearly six decades after independence, the country is still struggling to fully harness its development potential due to fiscal leakages caused by massive corruption. Based on the 2016 Corruption Perception Index (CPI), Nigeria is ranked 136 out of 176 countries across the world. Widespread corruption has also made successive governments squander development opportunities that could have lifted large segments of the population from the trap of extreme and vicious poverty. Further, growing incidences of youth militancy and kidnapping for ransom can be traced to corruption, which can be illustrated using the example of the Niger Delta region where youth militancy first began as part of the anti-oil protests.

In response to widespread corruption, President Muhammadu Buhari immediately launched an anti-corruption war upon assuming office in 2015. The government's achievement in the fight against corruption is still a subject of unending public debate. While some acknowledged that the initiative has led to the arrest and prosecution of several prominent Nigerians and the return of huge sums of proceeds from corruption, critics believe it continues to shield politicians with close ties to the government or those that have decamped to the ruling party. At the just concluded January 2018 African Union (AU) Summit of Heads of State and Government, President Buhari was appointed to serve as the arrowhead of the continental initiative against corruption.

### **Ethnic and religious tensions**

Many conflicts in Nigeria occur along ethnic and religious fault-lines, or narratives around them are couched in such terms. This is not surprising given the significant overlap between ethnic and religious boundaries in the country, and how quickly this aggravates existing or new conflict fault-lines. Most of northern Nigeria which, for instance, makes up about two-thirds of the country's land mass is predominantly Muslim, with pockets of significant Christian minority groups. The southern part of the country is predominantly Christian, but again with an equally substantial number of Muslim communities, especially in the Yoruba-dominated south-west.

Although the constitution clearly states that Nigeria is a secular state, the government dabbles into religious issues in ways that sometimes makes it seem as though it is taking sides with certain ethno-religious constituencies over others. Since the early 2000s, a

significant number of the Muslim-dominated states in northern Nigeria have adopted Sharia law. There has been frequent political anxiety among sections of the Christian population in those parts that the politically dominant Muslims will use their size and clout to Islamize the whole country by imposing Sharia law nationwide. On the other hand, Muslims in the country, particularly in the north, fear that their religious values are unduly influenced and diluted by the influence of Westernization from the southern states as well as Christian minority groups in the North. Quite often, ethnic and religious issues become heavily politicized in ways that make quick resolution difficult, if not impossible.

### **Proliferation of small arms and light weapons**

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the country has made it easier for violent conflict to escalate. The sources of SALW are multiple; but they are mostly smuggled into the country as Nigeria is not a known arms producing country except for small pockets of artisanal manufacturers producing crude weapons. On four different occasions in January, May and twice in September 2017, the Customs Services intercepted a total of 2,671 pieces of heavy firearms despite the fact that the container with the first seizure had been checked, certified and released before it was intercepted far away from the port premises. The unauthorized access to and handling of firearms and ammunitions have, in turn, fuelled communal conflicts, insurgency, criminality, and threatened lives as well as political stability.

### **Actors**

It would be unwieldy to identify and give a comprehensive overview of the plethora of actors that are involved in the different conflict situations across today's Nigeria. At the time of writing this analysis, the country continues to face low-intensity insurgency activities in Niger Delta and the Northeast, incessant farmer-herder conflicts in North Central and across the federation, and indigene-settler conflicts, to name the key ones. For purposes of brevity, however, only actors involved in the first two major conflicts; the insurgencies in the Niger Delta and the Boko Haram movement in Northeast, will be highlighted. Even at that, it is difficult - if not impossible - to identify all the actors that are involved in the two conflicts, not least because of the transnational dimensions they have assumed.

## Pan Niger Delta Elders Forum (PANDEF)

The Niger Delta has witnessed the proliferation of different shades of armed groups over the past two decades and more. A 2007 study discovered 48 armed groups in Delta State alone, with over 25,000 identifiable members and around 10,000 weapons. Taking the Niger Delta region as a whole, it is estimated that no less than 60,000 people are currently involved in the various armed militia groups across the region. The various groups have emerged in response to the contradictions of crude oil accumulation that have seen the government and multinational oil companies reaping the lion's share of benefits from six decades of oil production activities, while local communities are economically disenfranchised and impoverished at the same time that they have had to bear the heaviest brunt of widespread ecological devastation.

Given the large number of groups involved in armed contestations in the Niger Delta, negotiations with government and multinational oil companies almost always become difficult to manage and bring to fruition. Currently, most of the active armed groups in the region are represented in negotiations by a coalition of elders and leaders under the umbrella of the Pan Niger Delta Elders Forum, PANDEF. The goal of the Forum is to provide a common platform for most of the militant groups in the region to engage in talks with the government to ensure the successful implementation of a new development strategy in the Niger Delta region that will address the myriad concerns of the people. Although it is not always successful, the coalition has managed to restore a modicum of peace in the region by dissuading armed groups from carrying out destructive attacks on oil production facilities in the region.

### **Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)**

One of the most prominent militias represented by PANDEF is the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). It became known in 2006 when it repeatedly targeted and abducted foreign oil workers and carried out a series of devastating attacks on oil installations in the Delta region. The activities of the group, despite seeing a drastic reduction, continue to be a major source of apprehension for the government given the repercussions for the oil industry and the national economy.

## **Niger Delta Avengers (NDA)/Reformed Niger Delta Avengers (RNDA)**

The Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) is also represented by PANDEF. The militant group announced its emergence in January 2016 with a spate of devastating attacks on oil installations in the oil region, leading to a significant decline in Nigeria's daily crude oil production and export. The arrival of NDA terminated the longstanding truce that had prevailed between the Niger Delta anti-oil militias and the federal government during the administrations of Presidents Umaru Musa Yar'Adua and Goodluck Jonathan (2009-2015), which had resulted in the launch of a comprehensive amnesty programme that promised educational and vocational trainings at home or abroad, and jobs to those that surrender their weapons and renounce violence.

By the end of 2016, the NDA and other militants had considerably scaled down attacks on oil installations in part due to negotiations between the government and PANDEF. This situation, however, soon changed with the emergence of a splinter-faction, the Reformed Niger Delta Avengers (RNDA) in 2017, which commits to ensuring the government delivers on developmental promises to the region or risk resumption of attacks across the region.

It is believed that most of the militants in the oil-rich region emerged from university campuses and then gradually morphed into gangs and other illegal activities due to unemployment and their frequent use by rival politicians. The militants generally speak to the grievances of the people in the region, including years of economic underdevelopment, poverty, political marginalization and environmental pollution. But elements within them also engage in criminal activities such as stealing of oil (or bunkering) and taking hostages for ransom.

## Boko Haram

Boko Haram, which literally translates to “Western education is forbidden”, is the main actor in the Islamist insurgency conflict that first appeared in northern Nigeria in 2002. The group’s official name is “Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati wal-Jihad”, which translates to “people committed to the propagation of the Prophet’s teachings and Jihad”. The group is believed to have gained its existence from the activities of a young and radical Muslim cleric, Mohammed Yusuf, whose teachings incited his followers to loathe and antagonize Western education. Boko Haram, however, became a highly radicalized militant group in 2009 when it launched attacks on government buildings and police stations in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State in the north-east where the epicentre of the group’s activity is located. These initial attacks led to several incidents of shoot-outs on the streets; a development that prompted the intervention of the Nigerian military, which eventually seized the group’s headquarters and killed its leader. The immediate goal of the group is to make Nigeria an Islamic state, and ensure that Muslims do not participate in any social, political or economic activity with overt Western influence or association. They also aim to bring the country back into the atavistic Muslim caliphate akin to the famous pre-colonial Sokoto Caliphate. The group also declared allegiance to al-Qa’eda in 2010 and promptly increased its military capabilities with the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), vehicle-borne IEDs, and suicide bombers (both male and female). In 2014, Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau, who succeeded Yusuf, declared a caliphate in the vast area under the group’s control in the north-east along the common borders of Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon.

By 2014, the capability of the group had increased to the point that they began carrying out daily attacks against the police and other security forces, as well as targeting Christians, schools, churches, politicians, media personnel, as well as Muslims they perceived not to be sympathetic to their cause. It was reported that the group had an estimated 4,000 to 6,000 dedicated fighters. The insurgency extended its cross-border operations into Niger, Chad and Cameroon, making it a major regional security threat. This development prompted the AU to support the deployment of a

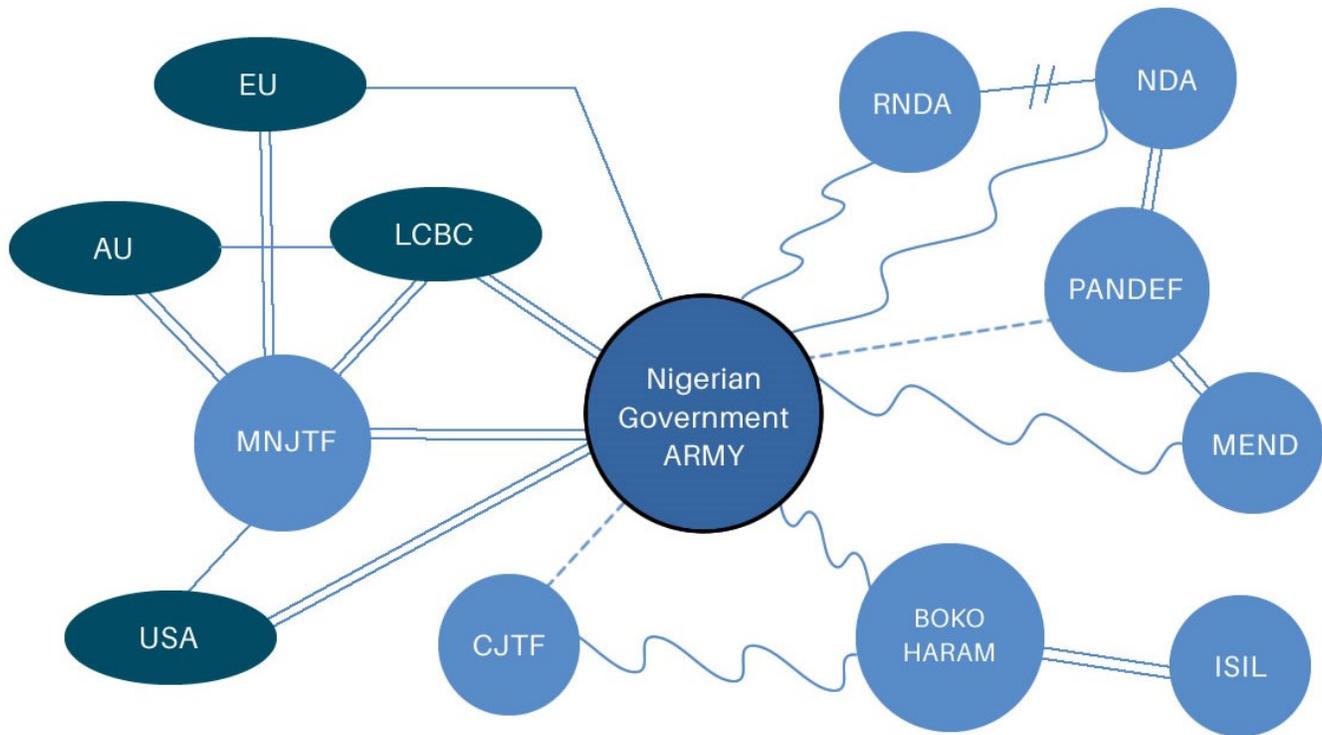
Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF); a combined multinational formation drawn from the armed forces of Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria with headquarters in N’Djamena, the capital of Chad, to diminish and end the insurgency. By 2015, Boko Haram had declared its allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), proclaiming and renaming itself as “ISIL-West Africa Province”. By so doing, the movement that began purely as an insurgency has now transformed into a full-blown terrorist movement responsible for a large number of deaths.

## The Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF)

The Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) is an umbrella of vigilante groups to fight Boko Haram and safeguard communities against the backdrop of the inability of the armed forces to effectively tackle the insurgency movement. Established in Maiduguri in 2013, the group is made up of about 26,000 male and female volunteer fighters who possess basic skills in the use of weaponry. It is estimated that the CJTF may have lost 600 or more of its members through suicide bombings perpetrated by Boko Haram. At the height of the Boko Haram insurgency, members of the CJTF joined forces to protect towns and villages after Nigerian troops could not hold out. Some of the members of this vigilante group have also fought side-by-side with the Nigerian army, and helped to prevent the fall of Maiduguri to Boko Haram’s massive assault in 2014. They continue to man checkpoints along major roads, refugee camps, markets and farms, to monitor the movement of people in and around the state.

## Nigerian government

The government of Nigeria has been waging wars on several fronts, including responding to the proliferation of militant groups in the Niger Delta, the war on terror against Boko Haram, religious and ethnic-based conflicts breaking out between communities, as well as recent incidences of farmer-herder conflicts over access to and control of land, among others. Its main goal is to stem the tide of insurgency and instability caused by non-state groups across the country. It uses the might of the Nigerian army to stop rebellions and terrorist attacks, negotiate to curb unrest, and generally implement policies to advance security.



### Key

Links/close relationships	—	Discord/Conflict	~~~~~	Alliance	==	Informal/Intermittent	- - - -	Broken/disconnected links		Power at Issue	●
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Figure 2: Actors mapping

## Conflict dynamics

The conflict dynamics in the Niger Delta have been shaped by decades of tension between host communities, militia groups and the federal government. Conflicts in Nigeria’s oil region are generally triggered by protests against oil companies and the colluding state, land disputes, gang violence, inter-communal violence, and rivalries among divergent political interests. Furthermore, attacks on oil and gas infrastructures, as well as the kidnapping for ransom of foreign oil workers, have become rampant. The attacks are mostly carried out by the armed militant groups identified earlier, and by pockets of criminal elements. In 1998, the Nigerian army sent two warships and several battalions of soldiers and navy personnel to occupy the two most volatile states in the region, Delta and Bayelsa States. In protest against perceived military aggression, over 2,000 youths marched to the state capital where soldiers opened fire on the protesters. Furthermore, recurrent tensions between the federal government and the Ijaws spread across the Niger Delta region has led Nigerian security forces to kill hundreds of people between 1999 and now, despite the country being under civilian rule.

In 2000, with a view to curbing violence in the region, the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007) established the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). The main focus of the Commission was to develop the region as the first step towards pacifying some of the grievances of local communities. With effect from 2003, however, more militant groups and splinter elements emerged, prompting the Nigerian army to engage in several clashes in major cities, especially Port Harcourt, leading to the death of innocent civilians. The militia groups declared war on the federal government, and routinely targeted oil infrastructures such as wells and pipelines to arm-twist the government into shifting ground. In 2009, the Nigerian government launched a weapons-for-amnesty programme which initially lasted for a period of 60 days. This initiative has been successful to some extent, and it is currently managed by a government agency called the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme (NDAP). However, the conflict in the Niger Delta still persists, with militant groups such as MEND and NDA continuing to carry out occasional attacks. MEND has reportedly hijacked 12 ships, kidnapped 33 sailors and killed four oil workers since 2012. This prompted the US government to enter into a

bilateral counter-insurgency military partnership with the Nigerian government to train armed forces personnel in maritime tactics against pirates.

Since 2016, PANDEF has been involved in several negotiations with the government to restore much-needed peace and stability to allow for unhindered oil production in the region. It has been somewhat successful in calming the situation in the region but in November 2017, the Forum issued an ultimatum to the government to either meet pressing demands around the development of the Delta region, or risk its withdrawal from negotiations. This comes amidst threats from militias like RNDA to resume attacks on oil facilities in the region for the same reason. The government has confirmed that it takes the demands of the militias seriously, and is working to give priority to the sustainable development of the region. However, the renewal and persistence of the violent conflict in the Niger Delta could continue to put the country under enormous financial, military and infrastructural strains if the demands of the militia groups are not met.

Boko Haram gained international attention in 2009. Prior to this, the average terrorist-related fatalities registered per year were 124. But between 2009 and 2013 when Boko Haram transformed into a violent extremist group, the number of casualties rose sharply to an average of 730. Many vicious attacks by Boko Haram on military and civilian targets since its radicalization have occurred, one of the most notable being the bombing of the UN headquarters in Abuja, the federal capital, on 26 August 2011. From this period on, Boko Haram carried out attacks almost on a daily basis throughout 2016, with casualties sometimes exceeding 100 people. It also engaged in acts of kidnapping, including that of over 260 girls at a government secondary school in Chibok, Borno State, on 14 April 2014.

With the creation of the MNJTF to combat the vicious threats of Boko Haram, a lot has changed in favour of the Nigerian government-led counter-terrorism campaign. The task force, with support from the international community, has been able to reclaim most of the territories (particularly in the urban centres) that were previously occupied by the terrorist group. This seeming defeat of the terrorist organization can however not be attributed to just the government but also to the vigilante groups who set up community checkpoints and continue to patrol and protect their towns.

The offensive taken by the Nigerian government unilaterally, or under the aegis of the MNJTF, seems to be yielding positive results. For instance, the estimated

number of deaths caused by Boko Haram has significantly dropped from 6,000 during 2014-2015 to 1,000 deaths in 2016 and even less in 2017. Boko Haram has however adjusted its methods and is now resorting to the use of suicide bombers, particularly women and children, to inflict random attacks. In December 2016, two girls aged seven and eight blew themselves up in a market in Maiduguri. The government also launched Operation Lafiya Dole, meaning "peace by all means", in 2015, which focused on the Nigerian army winning the war on terror and restoring peace to the north-eastern part of the country. In May 2017, the government was able to facilitate the release of 82 girls kidnapped from Chibok, in exchange for freeing five Boko Haram leaders in custody.

Boko Haram has now splintered into two factions, with ISIL (to whom they had earlier pledged allegiance) recognizing Abu Musab al-Barnawi as the new leader of Boko Haram. Although he continues to claim leadership of Boko Haram in videos, Abubakar Shekau is widely believed to have been sanctioned by ISIL for his indiscriminate attacks on Muslim populations. Nigeria's President Buhari has claimed that the country has won the war against Boko Haram as all of the terrorist group's camps have been destroyed except for some distant bases within the vast Sambisa Forest. Boko Haram fighters mostly dislodged from Nigeria, and have regrouped and found safer haven in neighbouring countries within the Lake Chad Basin namely Niger, Cameroon and Chad. In spite of the president's declaration and the militant group losing territory, they were still able to carry out attacks in 2017, and might be able to do so intermittently in the near future, a possibility acknowledged in a recent report by ACLED. The conflict has, in the final analysis, resulted in widespread humanitarian crises, particularly the shortage of food, shelter, and medical supplies to those who have lost their homes and livelihoods. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that 2.1 million people are in dire need of humanitarian assistance around the epicentre of the conflict in the north-east.

## Scenarios

### Best case scenario

The government should implement the major demands of the Niger Delta people, particularly those that border on the sustainable development of the region. This would be the best way to communicate the government's sincerity and commitment towards resolving the underdevelopment of the Niger Delta. For this purpose, the government should sustain the peace talks and agreements with the various militant groups in the region.

Similarly, the current campaign against Boko Haram may lead to total defeat and annihilation of the terrorist group in both Nigeria and in neighbouring countries. If the government can completely defeat Boko Haram, it will lead to the reduction of ethnic and religious tensions that are triggers of violence in many parts of the country. If this scenario occurs, the country can then deploy more resources to dealing with the root causes of conflicts nationwide.

### Worst case scenario

In the Niger Delta, the conflict could evolve into an all-out civil war, possibly with separatist campaigns similar to that of the Indigenous People of Biafra. This is because many of the conflicts in the region are based on the need for better access to and control of the oil resources.

In the case of Boko Haram, their campaign could further deepen the ethnic and religious divides already latent in the country. It is instructive how conflicts in Nigeria have become linked to, and exacerbated by ethnicity and religion. If Boko Haram is not completely obliterated, it could continue to stoke violent religious conflict in the country. Furthermore, the group can stage a strong comeback if the shortcomings of the MNJTF and the army, including those relating to adequate funding and cases of massive corruption in the procurement of weapons and materials, are not properly resolved.

### Most likely scenario

The federal government will continue negotiations with opposition parties in the Niger Delta to address their grievances. This may reduce the intensity of attacks on oil facilities. However, as this will not fully resolve the developmental challenges in the region, pockets of attacks may continue in some parts of the Niger Delta.

The Nigerian government will continue its campaign against Boko Haram; however, this may not lead to the total defeat of Boko Haram because the group has already expanded its operations across the countries of the Lake Chad basin. Furthermore, it has changed and adapted its tactics in order to evade capture and continue to spread its rhetoric. With the current trends of the conflict, it is likely that humanitarian crises will worsen. The government has made a request to the National Assembly for the allocation of US\$1 billion to tackle Boko Haram and improve humanitarian conditions in the region.

## Current response assessment

The MNJTF was established to tackle the menace of Boko Haram by countries within the Lake Chad Basin and beyond. The task force, established in 2015 under the authorization of the AU, comprises of 8,700 troops contributed by Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Benin and Niger. The MNJTF is tasked with both stabilization and offensive missions with the ultimate goal of eradicating Boko Haram, and any other terrorist organization or group operating around the Lake Chad Basin.

The MNJTF has successfully carried out military action in all the countries around the Lake Chad Basin where Boko Haram operates. The efforts of the task force yielded rewards when they were able to recapture most of the territories previously controlled by the terrorist group. The 2017 AU Chairman and President of Chad, Idriss Deby, advocated for increasing the personnel capacity of the regional task force in order to flush out the terrorist organization, resulting in the MNJTF troops being increased to 10,000 personnel.

The MNJTF operation has received substantial support from the international community. In 2015, the US government pledged a support package of US\$45 million for training and other defence services, and a further deployment of 300 troops to Cameroon to provide airborne intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance operations in the region. In 2016, the EU agreed to support the fight against Boko Haram by donating €50 million to MNJTF. Britain, China, Canada and Israel all joined the fight against Boko Haram by providing logistical assistance while France used troops already on the ground to counter terrorism. The UN has been committed to raising funds to respond to the growing humanitarian crisis, particularly regarding the supply of food and water.

## Strategic options

### To the African Union and RECs

- ❖ The AU should co-ordinate a more robust financing of the MNJTF in collaboration with ECOWAS. This underscores the importance of the AU's relationship with regional bodies in conflict management.<sup>ii</sup> This will help not only in defeating Boko Haram but also in enabling the AU to play a leadership role in the fight against terrorism in the region.
- ❖ There is a need for the AU and the Lake Chad Basin Commission to work in concerted effort to proactively tackle the humanitarian crises resulting from Boko Haram attacks in the region.<sup>iii</sup> This also requires better protection of civilians and the adoption of specific strategies to counter the new tactics employed by Boko Haram. There is, therefore, a need for the Peace and Security Council (PSC) to develop the capacity to effectively handle humanitarian crises in Nigeria.
- ❖ The AU should support the anti-corruption campaign of President Buhari's government. This can be achieved by activating Article 17 of the PSC Protocol which deals with the relationship between the AU and international organizations. This is important, particularly with regard to tracing and

repatriating looted public funds lodged in foreign bank accounts, punishing those involved in money laundering and capacitating the local anti-corruption agency.

### To the national government

- ❖ The government should support more creative forms of inter-faith dialogue and mediation between Christian and Muslim leaders in the country. This will help promote more religious tolerance and respect at all levels of the state and society.
- ❖ The Nigerian government should implement sustainable economic and peace agreements in the Niger Delta and the north-east regions of the country. To this end, infrastructure, economic and human capital development should become a priority in order for the local population to feel less marginalized and therefore less inclined to participate in violent conflict or easy recruitment into insurgency groups. It is also prudent for the AU to serve as a mediating and neutral body towards building a sense of national identity in Nigeria. This can be done using ad hoc committees for mediation. This will help reduce the religious and ethnic divide in the country.

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<sup>ii</sup> Article 16 (a) and (b) of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (PSC Protocol) which deals with relationships between the AU and RECs in the area of conflict management.

<sup>iii</sup> Article 15 and 16 of the PSC Protocol which addresses the need for humanitarian action.

## Nigeria Conflict Timeline: 1960-2017

<b>1960</b>	Nigeria attains independence from British rule on the first of October with Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa as its leader.
<b>1962-63</b>	A census carried out by the government fuels regional and ethnic tensions due to its controversial nature.
<b>1966 January</b>	First coup after independence leads to the death of Prime Minister Balewa. Maj-Gen Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi forms a military government.
<b>1967</b>	The secession of three eastern states to establish the Republic of Biafra sparks a bloody civil war (Biafra War). The war leads to the death of an estimated 1 million people.
<b>1970</b>	The leaders of the Biafra war surrender.
<b>1975</b>	Another coup leads to the overthrow of General Gowon by General Brigadier Murtala Ramat Mohammed. Gen. Murtala begins the process of moving the federal capital from Lagos to Abuja.
<b>1976</b>	A failed coup attempt leads to the assassination of General Mohammed who is replaced by his deputy, Lt-Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo. Lt-Gen. Obasanjo helps introduce a US style presidential constitution.
<b>1979</b>	Nigeria returns to civilian rule with the election of Alhaji Shehu Shagari as president.
<b>1983 December</b>	A bloodless coup is orchestrated by Maj-Gen. Muhammad Buhari.
<b>1985</b>	Ibrahim Babangida seizes power in another bloodless coup and restricts all political activities in the country.
<b>1993 June</b>	The military under Babangida annuls the results of the elections won by Chief Moshood Abiola.
<b>1993 November</b>	Gen. Sani Abacha seizes power and becomes the Head of State, suppressing opposition.
<b>1995</b>	The EU imposes sanctions on Nigeria until 1998 and the country gets suspended from the Commonwealth following the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa, writer and campaigner against the oil industry.
<b>1999</b>	The country returns to civilian rule with parliamentary and presidential elections being conducted and Olusegun Obasanjo sworn in as president.
<b>2000</b>	Several northern states adopt Islamic Sharia law resulting in hundreds of deaths due to the tension and clashes between Muslims and Christians.
<b>2001</b>	Ethnic war in eastern-central Nigeria (Benue State) displaces thousands of people. In retaliation to the abduction and murder of 19 soldiers sent to intervene in the war, the troops kill more than 200 unarmed civilians in the region.
<b>2002 February</b>	Clashes in Lagos between the Hausa, who are mainly Muslims, and the Yoruba who are predominantly Christians, result in the deaths of 100 people.
<b>2002 November</b>	Over 200 people die in four days of rioting caused by the fury of Muslims over the planned Miss World beauty pageant to be held in Kaduna in December.

<b>2003 12 April</b>	First legislative elections organized since the end of military rule in 1999 but are marred by delays and allegations of ballot-rigging.
<b>2004 May</b>	State of emergency is declared in the central Plateau State after more than 200 Muslims are killed in Yelwa in attacks by Christian militia; revenge attacks are launched by Muslim youths in Kano.
<b>2004 August-Sep</b>	Port Harcourt experiences deadly clashes between factions, which prompts a strong crackdown by Nigerian troops. Amnesty International claims that 500 people died during the attacks contradicting the number stated by Nigerian authorities of 20 fatalities.
<b>2006 January</b>	In the Niger Delta, militants attack pipelines, oil facilities and kidnap foreign oil workers. They demand more control over the region's oil wealth.
<b>2006 February</b>	Religious violence leads to the death of more than 100 people in mostly Muslim towns in the north and in the southern city of Onitsha.
<b>2006 August</b>	Under the terms of a 2002 International Court of Justice ruling, Nigeria agrees to cede sovereignty over the disputed Bakassi peninsula to Cameroon. The transfer takes place in 2008.
<b>2007 April</b>	Umaru Yar'Adua emerges victorious in presidential elections.
<b>2008 September</b>	Militants in the Niger Delta increase their attacks on oil installations in response to unprovoked attacks by the military on their bases.
<b>2009 July</b>	Boko Haram Islamist movement launches a campaign of violence which leads to hundreds of deaths in north-eastern Nigeria.
<b>2010 May</b>	Death of President Umaru Yar'Adua who is succeeded by Vice-President Goodluck Jonathan.
<b>2010 December</b>	At least 80 people are killed in Jos Christmas Eve bomb attacks with Boko Haram claiming responsibility, sparking clashes between Christians and Muslims.
<b>2011 August</b>	Boko Haram claims responsibility for a suicide bomb attack that kills 23 in UN headquarters, Abuja.
<b>2011 December</b>	Christmas Day bomb attacks on churches by Boko Haram kill about 40 people. State of emergency declared to contain Boko Haram.
<b>2012 January</b>	Over 100 people killed in single day of co-ordinated bombings and shootings in Kano, after Boko Haram tells Christians to leave the north.
<b>2013 May</b>	State of emergency declared in three northern states of Yobe, Borno and Adamawa. The government sends troops to combat Boko Haram.
<b>2013 September</b>	Boko Haram kills more than 150 people in north-east roadside attacks. Security forces intensify fights against Boko Haram insurgents in Abuja.
<b>2014 April</b>	Boko Haram kidnaps more than 200 girls from a boarding school in northern town of Chibok, which sparks national and international outrage.
<b>2014 November</b>	Boko Haram launches attacks in north-eastern Nigeria, capturing towns near Lake Chad.
<b>2015</b>	Boko Haram raids neighbouring Chad and Cameroon in early 2015 and pledges its allegiance to the Islamic State.

<b>2015 Feb-March</b>	A military coalition between Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon and Niger pushes Boko Haram out of all towns back into Sambisa Forest.
<b>2015 March</b>	Muhammadu Buhari wins the presidential election, becoming the first opposition candidate to do so in Nigeria's history.
<b>2016 October 29</b>	Boko Haram suicide bombers kill at least nine people in Maiduguri.
<b>2016 October 18</b>	21 of the approximately 270 kidnapped schoolgirls from Chibok are reunited with their families.
<b>2016 November</b>	Niger Delta Avengers bomb three oil pipelines in an attempt to renew southern insurgency.
<b>2017 January</b>	Several people die accidentally due to bombs dropped on refugee camps by the Nigerian air force instead of Boko Haram.
<b>2017 January</b>	Nigerian navy sends ships to the Gambia as part of a regional force to compel President Yahya Jammeh to step down after he lost the election.
<b>2017 May</b>	The government exchanges Boko Haram prisoners for 80 of the kidnapped Chibok schoolgirls.
<b>2017 September</b>	Human Rights Watch alleges that Cameroon has forcibly returned 100,000 Nigerian refugees.
<b>2017 October</b>	UNOCHA announces that the humanitarian crisis in Nigeria is the "most severe" in the world.

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