



Boko Haram



Bombing of Nigerian National Police HQ in Abuja, 2011¹

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US Army TRADOC G2
TRADOC Intelligence Support Activity (TRISA) – Threats



Purpose

- ❑ To inform deploying units, trainers, and scenario writers of the militant Islamist threat presented by Boko Haram in Nigeria.
- ❑ To identify the goals of and common tactics, techniques, and procedures used by the group.
- ❑ To identify possible courses of action to counter its influence in the region.

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Executive Summary

- ❑ **Boko Haram is a militant Islamist group based in Northern Nigeria and operating in Northern and Central Nigeria.**
- ❑ **Boko Haram's primary goal is to overthrow the current Nigerian government and create an Islamic state in its place.**
- ❑ **The group is responsible for several major attacks in the country, including the bombing of the United Nations Headquarters in 2011.**
- ❑ **Boko Haram's tactics, techniques, and procedures range from drive-by shootings to suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices.**
- ❑ **The group has possible links to global terror organizations, specifically al-Qaeda in the Lands of Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and al Shabaab.**



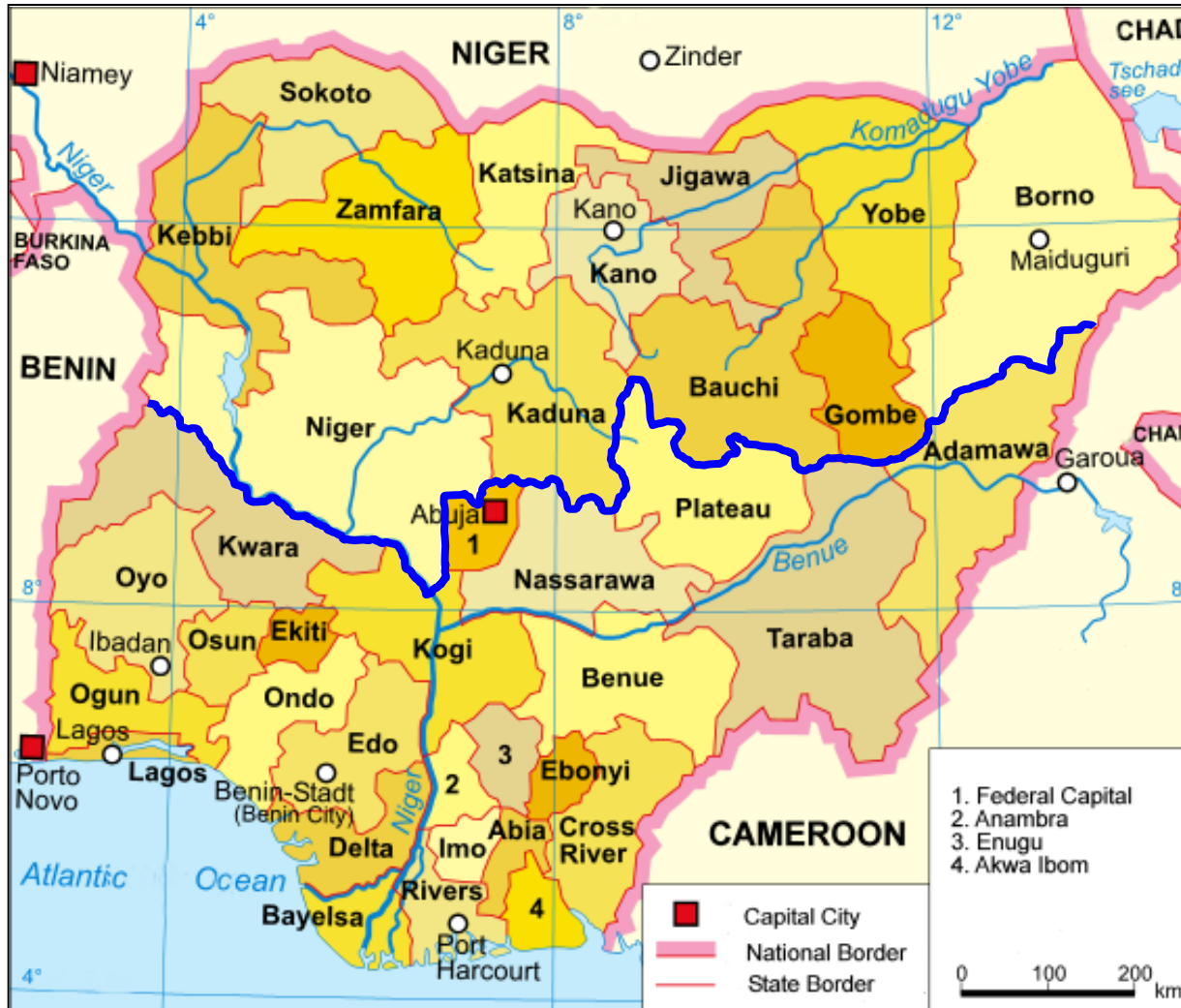
Nigeria²





OEA Team Threat Report

Nigerian States³



Blue line indicates division between Northern and Southern states



Nigeria Overview⁴

- ❑ **Nigeria divided into two main areas: North and South**
 - **Muslim North (12 states)**
 - **Predominantly Christian South, some animist (24 states)**
 - **Multiple regional ethnic groups throughout country**
 - **Region where North and South meet commonly called “Middle Belt”**
 - **Mixed religions**
 - **Contains Nigeria’s capital, Abuja**
 - **Often not mentioned in discussions of the country**

- ❑ **North formerly part of Sokoto Muslim Caliphate**
 - **Caliphate formed in early 1800s**
 - **British took control of region in early 1900s**
 - **Federated with Christian South in 1960**
 - **Country mainly under military rule until 1999 – often by Northern Muslims**
 - **New constitution and presidential elections in 1999**

- ❑ **Unequal socioeconomic conditions**
 - **Generally better in South, worse in North**
 - **Poverty: 72% in North, 27% in South**
 - **Oil in South**
 - **Better health care access in South**
 - **Higher female literacy in South**



Nigeria Overview⁵ (cont.)

- ❑ **Major social issues**
 - Pervasive corruption
 - Political violence
 - Human rights violations
 - Police brutality, including extrajudicial disappearances and killings
 - State institutions not trusted
 - Lack of health care, education

- ❑ **Informal country agreement regarding president**
 - Officeholder to alternate between Muslim and Christian
 - Change to occur every two terms (eight years)
 - Olusegun Obasanjo (Christian) elected 1999, re-elected 2003
 - Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (Muslim)
 - Elected 2007
 - Became too ill to perform duties
 - Died May 2010
 - Goodluck Jonathan (Christian)
 - Became acting president February 2010
 - Sworn in as president upon death of Yar'Adua
 - Elected outright in 2011



Nigeria Overview⁶ (cont.)

Sharia law

- Instituted in Northern states between 1999-2003; still in effect
- Expected to curtail corruption and crime
- May have been partially in reaction to election of Obasanjo

Northern grievances

- Non-adherence to agreement regarding president's religion
 - Believe a Muslim should be president since Yar'Adua did not serve two terms
 - Of note, Muslim candidate won all 12 Northern states in 2011, no Southern states
- Dissatisfaction with implementation of Sharia in Northern states
- Perceived waning of Northern influence



Overview of Boko Haram⁷

- Origins and official name uncertain**
- Called Boko Haram by local residents**
 - Roughly means “Western education is forbidden” in the Hausa language
 - Concept consistent with regional views
 - Northern Muslims resistant to Western education since British took control
 - Parents frequently deny children public education
 - Education not a priority for Northern political and economic leaders
- Present across Northern Nigeria**
 - Based in Maiduguri, Borno state
 - Mainly present in Yobe and Borno states
 - Support in Northern and Central Nigeria, Abuja environs
- Estimated membership⁸**
 - Late 2003 – less than 100
 - 2004 – 800-1000
 - 2010 – 5,000-8,000
- Member characteristics**
 - Mainly poor northern youth and clerics
 - Some university students and professionals
 - Possibly some of country’s elite



Philosophy/Belief System⁹

- ❑ Followers reportedly influenced by Koranic verse: “Anyone who is not governed by what Allah has revealed is among the transgressors.”
- ❑ Against Western influence socially and politically, specifically:
 - Multi-party democracy and voting
 - Secular/non-Islamic education
 - Western science
 - Western culture
 - Women’s rights
 - Homosexuality
 - Banking system
 - Weak punishment for violent crimes
 - Alcohol
 - Immodest clothing
 - Prostitution
 - Pornography
 - “Any interaction with Western society is considered a sin”¹⁰
- ❑ Believe Nigeria run by non-believers
- ❑ No major ideological statement of objectives or program
 - No clearly articulated mission statement
 - Beliefs and goals stated piecemeal
 - Defined by what it’s against, not what it’s for
 - Those in disagreement are considered infidels



Goals¹¹

- “Eradicate Christians from certain parts of the country”¹²**
 - Likely starting with Yobe and Borno states
- Make country ungovernable**
- Overthrow government**
- Create an Islamic state**
 - Including Sharia criminal courts countrywide
 - Original implementation of Sharia in Northern states did not go as planned; an entirely Islamic country is expected to resolve remaining issues
- Once Nigeria is secured, move on to other countries**
 - U.S. specifically mentioned as a target by group spokesman
 - 2011 attack on UN headquarters in Abuja consistent with this goal



History¹³

- ❑ **Uncertain origins**
 - May have started in mid-1990s as religious study group
 - Often reported as the group Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad
 - “People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet’s Teachings and Jihad”
 - May not be the same group as Boko Haram

- ❑ **Started or taken over by Mohammad Yusuf around 2002**
 - Based in Maiduguri
 - Created mosque and associated school

- ❑ **Boko Haram under Yusuf – the early years**
 - Group initially withdrew from society
 - Established small camps, schools in remote areas of Yobe & Borno states
 - Low-level attacks began in 2003
 - First attack December 2003 – likely to get weapons
 - Operations against alcohol consumption & other non-Islamic practices
 - Operations against police
 - Group became more urban around same time
 - Attacked Kano Police HQ in April 2007 – 10 policemen, one woman killed
 - November 2008 – attack on police station in Maiduguri
 - 17 followers killed
 - Yusuf subsequently arrested



History¹⁴ (cont.)

- ❑ **2009 – Yusuf’s final year**
 - Yusuf granted bail in January 2009
 - July 2009
 - Group refused to comply with new motorcycle helmet law
 - Police responded strongly
 - Resulted in armed uprisings by Boko Haram in Bauchi, Borno, Yobe, Kano states
 - Main fighting in the city of Maiduguri
 - Attacked police stations, government buildings, churches
 - Attempted to forcefully establish an Islamic state
 - Shoot-outs in the streets
 - Thousands fled Maiduguri
 - Police and Army responded with force
 - Captured Yusuf’s compound and mosque
 - Arrested Boko Haram fighters
 - An estimated 800 group members killed
 - Yusuf captured and extrajudicially killed by state security forces
 - Videotape of Yusuf’s killing shown on national TV
 - Group generally believed to be defunct after these events
 - No clear signs of group activity for remainder of 2009
- ❑ **After Yusuf – 2010**
 - Boko Haram quietly regrouped
 - Attacked Maiduguri prison in fall
 - Freed hundreds of prisoners
 - Many jailed group members escaped



History¹⁵ (cont.)

- ❑ **After Yusuf – 2010 (cont.)**
 - Began random shootings in Maiduguri
 - Muslim cleric killed in October
 - Bombed Christian targets in Jos, Plateau state, on Christmas Eve
 - Blamed for attack on Abuja military barracks on New Year's Eve

- ❑ **The violence escalates – 2011**
 - Borno state governor candidate, brother of governor, killed in January
 - Islamic scholar killed in March
 - Bombings in several states on presidential inauguration day, May
 - Brother of the Shehu [Emir] of Borno killed in May
 - Nigerian National Police HQ in Abuja bombed in June
 - First use of suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (SVBIED)
 - Security prevented access to building – bomb exploded in parking lot
 - Muslim cleric killed in June
 - Attacked a Maiduguri army patrol in July with explosives and gunfire
 - Civilians shot, homes burned – thousands fled
 - Army and Boko Haram blamed each other for burned homes, civilian flight
 - Members of Borno Elders Forum called for army to leave city
 - Bombed United Nations HQ in Abuja, August
 - Second use of SVBIED
 - First international target



History¹⁶ (cont.)

- ❑ **The violence escalates – 2011 (cont.)**
 - **Muslim cleric killed in September**
 - **Coordinated bomb/gun attacks in Yobe & Borno states in November**
 - Churches, mosques, police stations, banks attacked
 - At least 150 killed
 - **Bombed churches on Christmas Day, dozens killed**

- ❑ **The attacks continue – 2012**
 - **Bombings and armed assaults in Kano city, Kano state, 20 January**
 - Against government facilities
 - Included at least two SVBIEDs
 - More than 200 killed
 - **Bombings against two churches and a police station, 22 January**
 - Unsuccessfully tried to rob a bank as well
 - 10 dead
 - **Attacked a police station, 24 January**
 - Small arms and improvised hand grenades
 - Possible jailbreak attempt related to previous two attacks
 - **Market attack in Maiduguri, 20 February**
 - Small arms and improvised explosive devices (IEDs)
 - Accused vendors of cooperating with police in an earlier arrest
 - IEDs failed to detonate, were defused by police
 - **SVBIED attack against Christian church in Jos, 26 February**



Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures¹⁷

❑ Development

- Started with crude weapons and small raids
- Became greater in magnitude and more sophisticated with time
- Major attacks began after Yusuf's death
- Poisoned arrows, clubs, and machetes
- Drive-by attacks from motorcycles
 - Small arms
 - Molotov cocktails
 - Improvised grenades made from soda cans
- Small stationary IEDs
- Assassinations
- SVBIED attacks
- No success against "hard targets" to date

❑ Targets

- Both individuals and buildings
- Governmental
 - Police/Military
 - Politicians
 - Election activities
 - Other governmental
- Educational
- Christian
- Banks and markets
- Non-Islamic activities (e.g. alcohol)
- Critics, including Muslim leaders
- United Nations
 - Only non-Nigerian target to date



Associations¹⁸

Connections with AQIM

- Reports of members being trained by AQIM
- Algerian government found unspecified evidence of cooperation
- Small money transfers between groups
- AQIM leader announcement to provide group with weapons, support, training

Connections with al Shabaab

- Reports of members being trained by al Shabaab
- Boko Haram spokesman claimed such training in one statement

Other indicators of outside associations/influence

- SVBIED attacks
 - Successful change from small IEDs to SVBIEDs without going through medium-bomb stage – usually indicates training
 - Previously only al Shabaab and AQIM had performed suicide bombings in Africa
 - UN a global target – more in line with global groups such as AQIM
- Release of UN attack martyrdom video in fall 2011
 - Media usage common for al Shabaab and AQIM, new for Boko Haram
- Reports of some group leaders receiving training in Saudi Arabia



Possible Motivators¹⁹

- ❑ **Possible motivators for joining Boko Haram**
 - Poverty
 - Lack of education
 - Lack of health care
 - Poor regional development
 - Loss of political influence
 - Lack of economic opportunities
 - Injustice
 - Western “corruption”
 - Christian-Muslim violence
 - Police brutality
 - Corruption (political & otherwise)
 - Initial over-reaction by security forces

- ❑ **Suspicious that some Northern politicians surreptitiously fund Boko Haram to destabilize government and regain power from the Christian South**
 - Northern politicians deny, claim the group desires to destroy current government regardless of who is in power
 - Current Nigerian senator on trial
 - Allegedly provided phone numbers of politicians and government employees that were later threatened
 - Also accused of providing logistics to Boko Haram
 - Reports of Northern governors paying Boko Haram to not conduct attacks in their states
 - Boko Haram to retaliate against governors who renege on agreement or allow arrest of group members



Potential Courses of Action for Nigerian Government²⁰

- ❑ **Social and economic**
 - Reduce chronic poverty
 - Build education system acceptable to local Muslims
 - Improve health care
 - Enable regional development
 - Increase economic opportunities

- ❑ **Political**
 - Root out corruption
 - Improve governance
 - Name prominent Muslims to cabinet
 - Negotiation and amnesty
 - Government officials have reportedly attempted to open a dialog with Boko Haram
 - Some analysts claim dialog will lead to understanding, then solution
 - Other analysts believe ideological basis of the group will prevent a political solution
 - Group members fearful of a trap disguised as amnesty



Potential Courses of Action for Nigerian Government²¹ (cont.)

□ Military

- **Re-establish stability in Yobe and Borno**
 - Necessary so locals don't join "the only player in town"
- **Military force**
 - Cannot be extrajudicial in nature
 - Could escalate the conflict
 - Cannot just remove current leader(s) – need to eliminate entire network
 - Co-op group into the northern structure once militarily defeated
- **Seek assistance from other countries**
 - Possible areas of assistance
 - Intelligence sharing
 - Counterinsurgency operations
 - IED detection
 - Forensic analysis
 - Intelligence gathering and analysis
 - De-radicalization program
 - U.S. Congressional recommendation: "Increase U.S. Government Support for Nigerian Counterterrorism and Intelligence Programs"²²
 - Could easily backfire
 - Boko Haram would view any such countries as "fair game"



Potential Courses of Action for Nigerian Government²³ (cont.)

- ❑ **Actions already taken or in progress**
 - **Set up special joint military task force to eliminate Boko Haram**
 - **Installed closed-circuit TV in Nigerian federal territory (location of Abuja)**
 - **Formed committee to deal with Boko Haram**
 - **“Investigation” complete as of 19 December 2011**
 - **Passed Terrorism Prevention Act**
 - **Increased military presence in the North**
 - **Attempted infiltration**
 - **Reports that some soldiers sent to do so have defected to the group**
 - **Tightened border controls with Cameroon, Chad, Niger**
 - **Reports of soldiers being sent to U.S. for training**
 - **Counterinsurgency**
 - **Counterterrorism**
 - **Bomb disposal training**
 - **Military crackdown began after January 2012 attacks**
 - **State Security Services arrested Christmas Day bomber, suspected spokesman, and at least 30 others within 6-week period**
 - **Group either dismantled or gone into hiding**
 - **No elaborate attacks since late January**



Additional Considerations²⁴

- No clear leader since Yusuf killed**
 - **Some reports cite Abubaker Shekau as new leader**
 - **May not be operating as one unified group**
 - **Indications of splintered leadership**
 - **May have split into two factions**
 - **One focused locally**
 - **The other cultivating ties with outside terror groups**
 - **Local cells probably operating independently**

- Boko Haram message divisive in nature**
 - **Polarizing among Muslims**
 - **Fuels tension between Christians and Muslims**
 - **Group activities have hardened opposition against it**

- Local residents scared into silence**
 - **Group responded to recent crackdown by killing local politicians and clerics that had changed sides**



Analyst Assessment

- ❑ **Group is ideologically-based**
 - **Members will mainly fall into three categories**
 - True believers
 - Those joining due to secondary motivators
 - Poverty/lack of employment
 - Poor educational opportunities/health care options
 - Corruption/police brutality
 - And so on...
 - Those joining to avoid becoming the group's target
 - Group's mentality of "either you're for us or you're against us"
 - Those taking a visible stand against Boko Haram frequently end up dead
 - **Government will need a comprehensive information operations (IO) campaign to counter Boko Haram's message**
- ❑ **Negotiations and amnesty alone will not suffice**
 - **True believers, including leadership, will not cease activities**
 - May enter into negotiations
 - May reach an agreement
 - Will not honor it, as they view the government as illegitimate
 - **Amnesty can be effective for other members**
 - Must not have committed major crimes (shootings, bombings, etc)
 - Government must not be seen as being "soft" on group members



Analyst Assessment

- Military action is necessary, but carries risk**
 - Extra-judicial force will only enflame current Boko Haram members and encourage others to join the group
 - Military must avoid civilian casualties for the same reason
 - True believers cannot be dissuaded through dialog; they must be captured and tried openly in court
 - Excessive force may cause the group to go underground, thus making it harder to dismantle

- Secondary motivators need to be removed**
 - Starting with corruption and police brutality
 - Social and economic programs will not succeed otherwise
 - Begin with small problems that are easily fixed, then move to bigger issues
 - Long-term process – measured in decades

- Required course of action: all of the above**
 - Comprehensive IO campaign
 - Military force
 - Amnesty
 - Reforms related to secondary motivators



Analyst Assessment

□ Group Outlook

▪ Short-term

- Boko Haram members will maintain a low profile until pressure from the government decreases
- Leadership may use this time to strengthen ties with AQIM and al Shabaab
- Smaller, simpler attacks will continue

▪ Medium-term

- The group will reorganize and renew major attacks once pressure is reduced
- Newly-established ties with other terrorist organizations will become evident

▪ Long-term

- Group success and growth will be in direct proportion to the government's lack of ability and/or success in pursuing an appropriate course of action that both neutralizes leadership and removes secondary motivators



Training Implications

- ❑ **A Boko Haram-type group injected into a training or planning scenario can provide a multi-faceted means of increasing overall scenario realism and relevance.**
 - **Actions toward, and reactions from, the group emphasizes the need to understand the operational environment in which the soldier is functioning**
 - **Specific actions taken may either calm a situation or exacerbate it**
 - Application of force in response to citizen refusal to wear motorcycle helmet
 - **The “right action” is often not clear, but the “wrong action” is**
 - Extra-judicial killing of group members
 - **Second- and third-order effects must be considered at all times**
 - Speaking to security forces in public interpreted as collaborating
 - **Attacks against own and host nation forces offer multiple training opportunities**
 - **Improvised grenade and small-arms attack against local police station**
 - Anti-terrorism and force protection (ATFP) tasks
 - **Smaller IED placed at a church**
 - Opportunity for IED detection/defeat
 - **SVBIED attack**
 - Emergency response situations
 - **Bank robbery**
 - Incident investigation
 - **Assassination of influential Muslim cleric**
 - Information operations
 - **Host nation training in intelligence gathering**



OEA Team Threat Report



POCs

OEA Team
913-684-7920 (COMM)
552-7920 (DSN)

TRADOC G-2 Intelligence Support Activity (TRISA)
700 Scott Ave, Bldg 53
Ft Leavenworth, Ks 66027



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□ AKO

<https://www.us.army.mil/suite/portal/index.jsp>

Threat Products: AKO "Easy-Link"

Contemporary Operational Environment and Threat Integration Directorate

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