

**White Paper**

Abridged Overview of Nigeria’s Operational Environment, Security Challenges, Intelligence Enterprise, ISR Collection Management, the Northeast Theater Command and UAV Unit, Maimalari Cantonment, and the Aerosonde Mk4.7 SUAS

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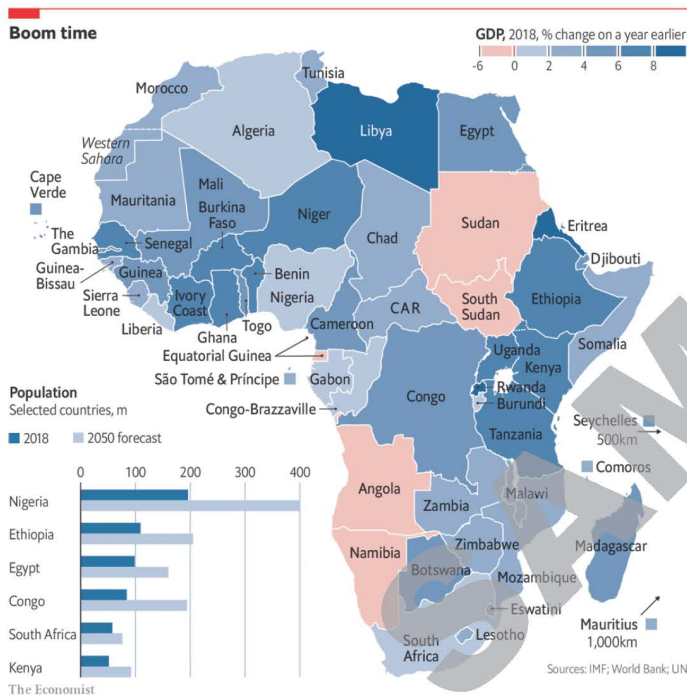


**20 JUNE 20XX**

# THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country, largest economy, and leading oil producer. According to United Nations estimates, by 2050, Nigeria will likely surpass the United States as the third most populous country hitting 400 million.<sup>1</sup> The country faces stark economic and development challenges. Home to one of the world's largest extremely poor populations, roughly 100 million people struggle daily with little to no access of basic services. In stark contrast, the oil sector contributes 85% of export earnings and over half of the government's total revenues.<sup>2</sup>

When governments fall victim to the natural resources trap, there is little incentive to aggressively pursue and promote GDP growth in less volatile sectors.<sup>3</sup> Heavily dependent on natural resource rents, Nigeria has made little progress cultivating industrial growth as a sustainable path to reducing poverty and raising the quality of life for its growing enclave of severely impoverished citizens. National unemployment is currently over 33% and more than 60% of the country's working-age population is under the age of 34. During the last quarter of 2020, unemployment hit 53.4% for ages 15 to 24 and 37.2% for ages 25 to 34.<sup>4</sup>



Developing nations with high population growth and large youth populations (15-24), 30.2% in Nigeria, are more likely to experience a high risk of political violence and civil strife.<sup>5</sup> Why Men Rebel expands this idea by revealing relative deprivation (RD) as a catalyst for mobilizing collective violence. RD occurs when an actor perceives a dissonance between their value expectations (goods and conditions to which people believe they are rightfully entitled) and their value capabilities (the goods and conditions they think they are capable of getting and keeping).<sup>6</sup> The young and disenfranchised have nothing to lose in a system that seemingly presents few if any opportunities to increase and attain their value expectations.

Nigeria's socioeconomic conditions reveal a series of difficult and challenging trends that will likely take decades to reverse. During that time, the country's national security enterprise will continue to undergird a sizeable burden of responsibility for maintaining

stability in a country overwhelmed by an expanding security crisis of political, criminal, and insurgent violence. Despite best efforts by the Government, conflict is now present throughout all geographic sectors of the country.

The remainder of this paper will provide an overview of Nigeria's growing security challenges focusing on the Nigerian Army's Intelligence Enterprise; Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Collection Management Challenges; a review of the Northeast Theater Command, the Maimalari Cantonment Forward Operating Base (FOB), and the Army's newly acquired Aerosonde Mk 4.7 Small Unmanned Aircraft System (SUAS); concluding with recommendations for future bilateral training opportunities.





# SECURITY CHALLENGES BY REGION

The Northwest and central “Middle-Belt” regions of the country are overrun by Bandits roaring into towns and villages indiscriminately looting and killing innocent civilians. Kidnap-for-Ransom has become a national past-time for these criminal gangs. In July, gunmen shot up a hospital in Kaduna and kidnapped ten people, including two babies.<sup>7</sup> Everyone is at risk, including civilians in vital sectors of the economy. In the Zamfara state, bandits shot dead 41 farmers as they were planting crops. The national network of roads, highways, and rail systems have become transportation corridors of death. Exposed to brazen attacks by criminal gangs including the recent high-profile rail attack of the Kaduna-Abuja rail line, 55 miles from the nation’s capital; eight passengers dead and 128 kidnapped or declared missing. This region is also marred by ethnoreligious communal violence between ethnic Fulani herders and ethnic Hausa / Christian farmers clashing over resources.<sup>8</sup>

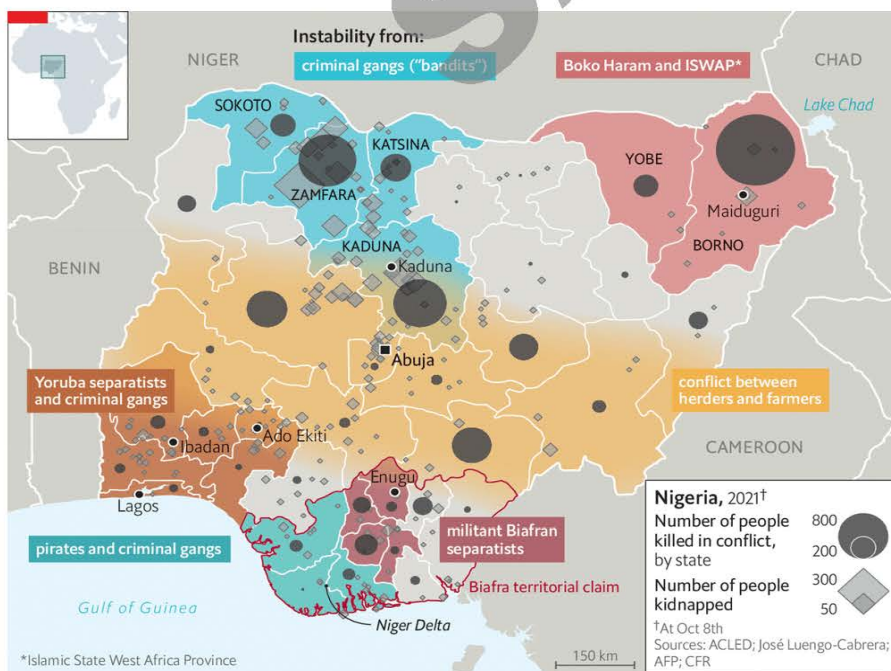
The Niger Delta and the Southeast regions of the country, where most of the oil production occurs, is home to the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) separatist movement. A revisionist endeavor to rewrite the legacy of the devastating Nigerian Civil War of 1967. Fought between the Biafra breakaway state and the Federal Government, the conflict endured for three years and claimed the lives of over one million fellow compatriots.<sup>9</sup> The majority of IPOB supporters are ethnically Igbo, one of three dominant ethnic groups,



Kaduna-Abuja Rail Line Attack - March 28, 2022

Christian affiliated. The other two major ethnic groups are the Hausa-Fulani, typically Muslim, and the Yoruba in the Southwest, a mix of Muslims and Christians. In 2020, IPOB launched an armed wing, the Eastern Security Network (ESN), and began attacking state security forces. ESN has also targeted police stations, electoral-commission offices, and a prison from which 1,800 inmates escaped.<sup>10</sup> The Niger Delta faces an array of additional security challenges including gang violence by secretive syndicates commonly known as “cults” or “confraternities,” intercommunal clashes, and violence related to political rivalries.<sup>11</sup>

The Northeast Borno State and surrounding regions including the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) have been under siege for more than a decade by the armed Islamists groups Boko Haram (BH) and a splinter faction, the



Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). The conflict has killed tens of thousands, displaced millions, and fueled a vast humanitarian crisis.<sup>12</sup>

Boko Haram, a Hausa-language name meaning “western education is a sin,” is an Islamic sect that views the federal and northern state governments, political and religious elites, as morally corrupt. Boko Haram rejects the west and the secular state and seeks universal implementation of “pure” sharia law to resolve the ills facing northern Nigerian Muslims.



Sharia law is practiced and applied in 12 northern Nigerian states because BH believes that politicians have corrupted the government for their own gain.<sup>13</sup>

reportedly established a cell in Nigeria's Niger State and in the neighboring state of Kaduna where the splinter group has reactivated the Ansaru terrorist brand.<sup>18</sup>



Deceased BH Leader Abubakar Shekau

Abubakar Shekau, Boko Haram's brutal and violent leader since 2009, led a devastating terror campaign throughout the region which received universal condemnation in 2014 when the organization kidnapped 276 schoolgirls from the remote village of Chibok; today, 112 girls remain unaccounted for.<sup>14</sup> Shortly after this horrifying event, Shekau pledged allegiance to the Islamic State rebranding BH as ISWAP. However, in 2016, an internal schism developed between senior members of ISWAP and Shekau over his indiscriminate violence and killings of Muslim civilians. A new paradigm emerged, with a smaller splinter faction retaining IS affiliation and the ISWAP brand to be led by the son of BH's founder, Abu Musab al-Barnawi.<sup>15</sup> Under this new paradigm, the smaller but rapidly expanding ISWAP would follow a more traditional insurgent path of attacking Christians and state targets whilst Shekau and followers, no longer affiliated, would resume the BH brand and his perverse modus operandi of indiscriminate violence and destruction.

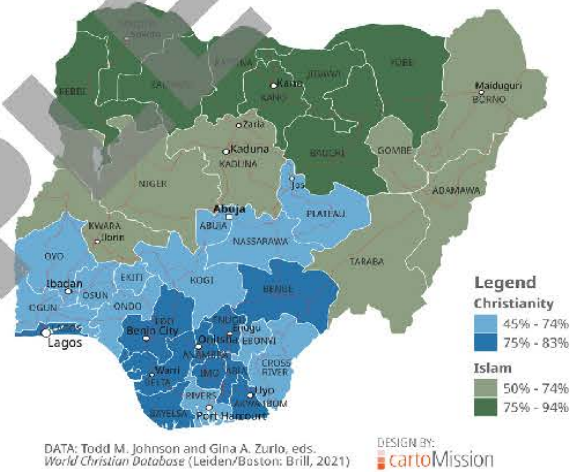
ISWAP is now the dominant insurgent group operating in the Northeast and surround regions, building legitimacy in areas it governs. Estimated to have 4,000-5,000 fighters, the group continues to attack military facilities, killing soldiers, and looting lethal materiel; funding itself through raiding, kidnapping for ransom, and taxing local populations.

During 2021, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) recorded a 22% increase in the number of organized political violence events in Nigeria; resulting in over 9,900 reported fatalities, nearly a 30% increase compared to 2020.

Yet to be authoritatively confirmed but accepted as factual by the Nigerian Government and the West, Shekau reportedly killed himself in May 2021 by detonating an explosive device. Evidence suggests his suicide was a desperate act to prevent capture during a confrontation with ISWAP fighters.<sup>16</sup> Prior to Shekau's final departure, ISWAP was growing in power and influence, displacing BH as the main insurgent actor. After Shekau's suicide, BH went into disarray as dozens of BH militants pledged allegiance to ISWAP and over 50,000 BH fighters and family members defected to Government forces.<sup>17</sup>

As of early 2022, one remanent Boko Haram faction remains active in the LCB whilst other members have

### NIGERIA Largest Religion by Province





## Endnotes

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