Please cite as: EUAA, 'Indiscriminate violence in the North East Zone' in *Country Guidance Afghanistan*, January 2022.

Indiscriminate violence in the North East Zone

Adamawa[34], Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba[35] and Yobe

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last updated: June 2019

[*Security situation*, 2.3.7, 3.1; *Targeting*, 2.1, 2.5]

Since 2011 and as of April 2018, the reported deaths resulting from Boko Haram violence were approximately 17 000; another 14 645 persons had lost their lives in the clashes between Boko Haram and State actors. The activities of Boko Haram in the North East of Nigeria have also led to the destruction of about 1 million houses, religious buildings and public infrastructure, such as schools, hospitals, etc. The conflict has caused mass displacement.

Presence of actors in the conflict

The main actors in the North East zone are the NAF, MNJTF, CJTF, and the Boko Haram factions, JAS and ISIS-WA.

At the peak of the insurgency in early January 2015, Boko Haram controlled about 20 000 square miles of territory in Nigeria. Although they have lost the control of part of this territory, Boko Haram remains an important source of insecurity and instability in the Lake Chad Basin, posing a threat to both civilians in the area and to border security.

Boko Haram's areas of activities within Nigeria are mainly in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe. Both, ISIS-WA and JAS, continue to be active in the region.

Operations of the NAF and MJTF have taken place in the area and are ongoing to defeat Boko Haram, as well as to de-radicalise and rehabilitate repentant Boko Haram fighters and to facilitate the return of IDPs.

CJTF was set up to identify and apprehend Boko Haram insurgents. After realising the potential of the CJTF, NAF has supported some of its members by providing them with arms and basic military training.

Nature of methods and tactics used by the actors in the conflict

The tactics used by Boko Haram include (suicide) bombings, mass killings, (mass) abduction, sexual violence, destruction of property and public infrastructure, political assassinations, assaults, invasion of border communities, and seizure and control of Nigerian territory. After losing much of their territory Boko Haram changed their tactics from organised, large-scale attacks to more sporadic attacks, such as suicide bombing. Their focus are attacks on 'soft targets', i.e. targets which are vulnerable due to their open access, structural characteristics and limited security. It is reported that from 11 April 2011 to 30 June 2017, Boko Haram has deployed 434 bombers to 247 different targets during 238 suicide-bombing attacks. The source states that 'at least 56 % of these bombers were women, and at least 81 bombers were specifically identified as children or teenagers'.

The NAF and MJTF use aerial attacks and ground engagements in their operations. There are also reports of the army burning down villages. The CJTF operate in close proximity with the Nigerian security forces; several sources report that they engage in extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests and acts of torture.

Frequency of incidents and geographical scope

Incidents of 'violence against civilians' and 'remote violence' reported by ACLED in the states where Boko Haram was active in the period 1 October 2017 – 30 September 2018 took place with the following frequency:

- **Adamawa:** 1 incident of 'violence against civilians' and 0.2 incident of 'remote violence' per week were reported in the state. It should be noted that this state is also affected by the violence in relation to conflicts involving armed groups of herders and farmers. The number of incidents reported is not desegregated by actor/conflict.
- **Bauchi:** 0.02 incident of 'violence against civilians' per week were reported in the state; no incidents of 'remote violence' were reported.
- **Borno:** 1.3 incidents of 'violence against civilians' and 0.9 incident of 'remote violence' per week were reported in the state.
- **Gombe:** 0.04 incident of 'violence against civilians' per week was reported in the state; no incidents of 'remote violence' were reported.
- **Taraba:** 1 incident of 'violence against civilians' per week was reported in the state; no incidents of 'remote violence' were reported. It should be noted that this state is mostly affected by the violence in relation to conflicts involving armed groups of herders and farmers. The number of incidents reported is not desegregated by actor/conflict.
- **Yobe:** 0.1 incident of 'violence against civilians' and 0.04 incident of 'remote violence' per week were reported in the state.

The following map illustrates the incidents which were recorded by ACLED during the reporting period under 'remote violence' and 'violence against civilians'. Each circle indicates a location where one or more incidents took place. The size of the circle reflects the number of incidents recorded in the respective location. The circles are comparable within the map and not with other maps within this document.

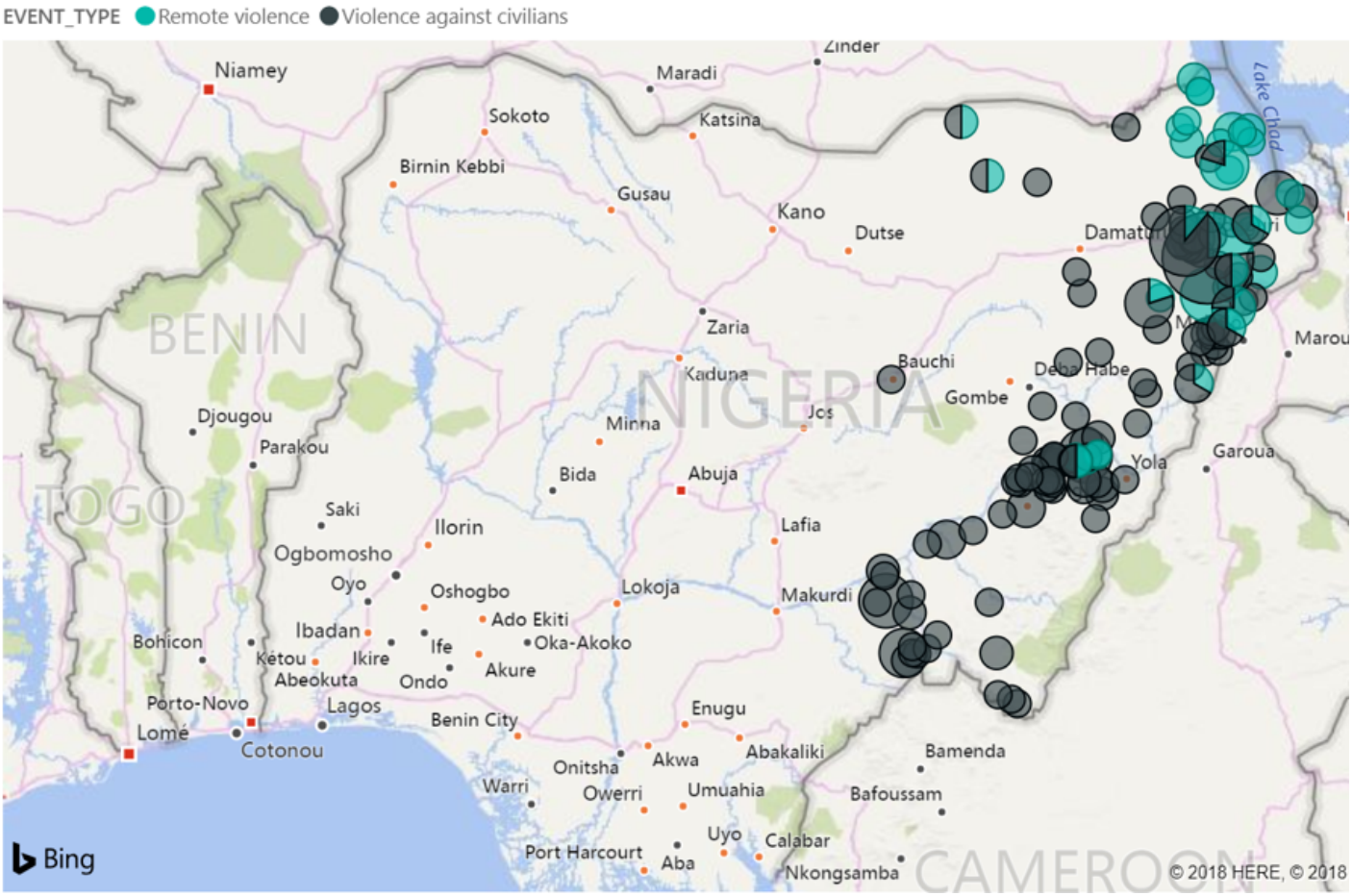


Figure 13. EASO, Visualisation of ACLED data concerning events of 'violence against civilians' and 'remote violence' in the states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe (1 Oct 2017 - 30 Sep 2018).

Civilian casualties

Compared to the period until 2015, the number of civilians killed in violence related to Boko Haram has decreased significantly. In the states which continue to be affected by Boko Haram activities, the reported fatalities in the period 1 October 2017 – 30 September 2018 included:

- **Adamawa:** 8.3 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants related to 'violence against civilians' and 1.2 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants related to 'remote violence' were reported in the state. It should be noted that this state is also affected by the violence in relation to conflicts involving armed groups of herders and farmers. The number of fatalities reported is not desegregated by actor/conflict.

- **Bauchi:** No fatalities related to 'violence against civilians' or to 'remote violence' were reported in the state.

- **Borno:** 8.7 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants related to 'violence against civilians' and 12.3 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants related to 'remote violence' were reported in the state;

- **Gombe:** 0.03 fatality per 100 000 inhabitants related to ‘violence against civilians’ was reported in the state; no fatalities related to ‘remote violence’ were reported;

- **Taraba:** 8.4 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants related to ‘violence against civilians’ were reported in the state; no fatalities related to ‘remote violence’ were reported. It should, however, be noted that this state is mostly affected by the indiscriminate violence related to the conflicts involving armed groups of herders and farmers. The number of incidents reported is not desegregated by actor/conflict.

- **Yobe:** 0.2 fatality per 100 000 inhabitants related to ‘violence against civilians’ and 0.6 fatality per 100 000 inhabitants related to ‘remote violence’ were reported in the state;

Displacement

The conflict has led to 1.9 million IDPs in the area as of 24 August 2018, amounting to 7.33 % of the population of the six states, as well as to displacement to neighbouring Chad, Cameroon and Niger. Close to 1.5 million IDPs were reported in Borno; close to 200 000 IDPs in Adamawa; and close to 140 000 in Yobe.

The displacement of the civilians affected by the conflict continues due to ongoing military operations and fear of attacks by armed groups in several localities in Nigeria’s North East.

After the recent operations of NAF, 1.6 million returnees have been reported, over 90 % of whom were former IDPs.

Additionally, it should be noted that the states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe are expected to reach emergency status in terms of food security. Education and health care are also severely affected, including by violence directly targeting schools and healthcare facilities, with more than 1 400 school destroyed and more than 40 % of the healthcare facilities destroyed or badly damaged. Infrastructure, including roads, bridges and water supply are also severely affected: according to UNICEF, Boko Haram has destroyed 75 % of the water and sanitation infrastructure and some 3.6 million people have no access to safe water in the North East. Houses and public buildings have been destroyed.

Looking at the indicators, it can be concluded that indiscriminate violence is taking place in **Borno**, **Adamawa** and to a lesser extent **Yobe**. The operational capacity of Boko Haram and the humanitarian situation caused by the conflict and affecting the three states should in particular be taken into account. However, the general level of indiscriminate violence currently taking place is not considered high and, accordingly, a higher level of individual elements is required in order to show substantial grounds for believing that a civilian, returned to these three states, would face a real risk of serious harm in the meaning of Article 15(c) QD.

In the states of **Bauchi** and **Gombe**, indiscriminate violence is taking place at such a low level, that in general there is no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected by reason of indiscriminate violence in the meaning of Article 15(c) QD. However, individual elements always need to be taken into account as they could put the applicant in risk-enhancing situations.

With regard to the state of **Taraba**, indiscriminate violence is taking place mostly in the context of the conflicts involving armed groups of herders and farmers. See Indiscriminate violence in the North Central Zone, South South zone, Adamawa, Kaduna and Taraba

---

[34] See also 'Indiscriminate violence related to the conflicts between herders' and farmers' armed groups'. [back to text]

[35] See also 'Indiscriminate violence related to the conflicts between herders' and farmers' armed groups'. [back to text]

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu