THE VIOLENT ROAD
An overview of armed violence in Nigeria
“The road will never swallow you. The river of destiny will always overcome evil”.
Ben Okri, The Famished Road

“Peace cannot be achieved through violence, it can only be attained through understanding”.
Ralph Waldo Emerson

The National Working Group on Armed Violence in Nigeria, founded in 2011, is a network of Nigerian civil society organisations committed to disarmament and armed violence prevention and reduction. It has representatives from each of Nigeria’s six geopolitical zones, and is coordinated by the Women’s Right to Education Programme (WREP).

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The National Working Group on Armed Violence in Nigeria (NWGAV) is a UK-based charity that works to reduce the incidence of armed violence and its impact on vulnerable populations around the world. AOAV has a successful track record in developing international law, global civil society networks, and local programmes for weapon control, armed violence reduction and civilian protection.

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Cover photograph: A youth protests in front of a burning barrier following the removal of a fuel subsidy by the government in Lagos, January 2012 (Associated Press).
Nigeria has had more than its fair share of armed violence. Since the end of its civil war in the early 1970s and successive military usurpations, the country has been treated to ethnic and political conflicts, kidnappings and armed robbery. All of this has lead to an unaccountable loss of life and property across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. And today Nigeria attracts the attention of the international media for the wrong reasons: terrorism. A terror that has destabilised most of the North East, North West, North Central, and, indeed, a terror that is threatening not only the whole country, but all of West and North Africa.

This is the first report of the mapping of incidents of armed violence in Nigeria with an eye towards reducing its impact on a vulnerable population. It is a report that has been produced by the National Working Group on Armed Violence in Nigeria (NWGAV) with support from the government of Norway through the London based organisation Action on Armed Violence (AOAV).

It is a report that covers all of Nigeria, with sampled states carefully selected from across each of the six zones so as to give an overview of the current nature of armed violence in Nigeria and what efforts are being done to combat it. It is a report that not only helps us track such incidents of armed violence but goes a long way towards deepening our knowledge of what causes armed violence in this country. To this end, this report forms the basis for an improved coordination among actors involved in reducing armed violence in Nigeria. We also expect that the report will help evolve a nationwide strategy for civil society and government to further fight armed violence.

The establishment of a national working group has undoubtedly set the stage for this. It is for this reason that I strongly commend the efforts put in producing this report. It is my hope that government at all levels will see armed violence in Nigeria as a challenge that requires a collective effort if we are ever to put it to rest and that government will embrace efforts made by civil society to fight the scourge. Because if the underlying issues addressed in this report are not met, armed violence will surely come in the wake of the 2015 national elections.

80% of civilian weapons in Nigeria have been obtained illegally.

Despite the numerous obstacles, this is a wide-ranging and compelling report. Sponsored by the Norwegian Government, it has used multiple sources to produce a comprehensive picture: the local actors of the National Working Group on Armed Violence, researchers from Action on Armed Violence, and commentators from academia and the media.

Whilst international assistance and support may go some way towards mitigating the problems of armed violence in Nigeria, the long-term solutions lie in the hands of local actors. The question now is whether Nigeria can take this vital first step on the road towards reducing the disastrous levels of armed violence currently prevalent within its borders.

According to Nigeria Watch, the main causes of violent death in Nigeria from 2006-11 were accidents, crime, economic issues, political clashes and ethno-religious fighting. (Nigeria Watch, 2011).
Nigeria is one of the African countries most severely affected by violence. It is ranked 148 out of 162 countries worldwide in the Global Peace Index,\(^1\) a multidimensional report of violence, security, and criminality. It has the third highest number of political violence events in the Armed Conflict Location & Event Dataset,\(^2\) and is ranked 16th in the Fund for Peace Failed States Index 2013.\(^3\)

A 2012 survey of Nigerians on crime and victimization by the CLEEN Foundation found that, on average, 5% of respondents had personally been victims of armed violence.\(^4\) In 2011, Human Rights Watch estimated that over 15,700 people had been killed in intercommunal, political and sectarian violence in Nigeria since the country transitioned to civilian rule in 1999.\(^5\) Across the country, the most common forms of crime and victimisation are burglary, robbery, physical assault and domestic violence.\(^6\) Disproportionate use of force by government authorities in response to outbreaks of violence has also been reported across Nigeria.

It is, therefore, a painful truth that Nigeria’s recent economic growth cannot be easily reconciled with high levels of armed violence and insecurity nor with the reality that there still is widespread poverty and inequality across the country. While the civilian government has remained in power since the transition from military rule, elections have been marked by spikes in armed violence, huge casualty numbers, and subsequent population displacement.

There are also very distinct (and important) regional variations in Nigeria’s armed violence. These include discrete incidences of militant activity, violent criminality, gang-related violence, gender-based violence, religiously motivated conflict, and non-combatant targeting by armed groups. For instance, Nigeria Watch data indicates that crime is the second highest cause of violent death in Nigeria (after accidents), but this crime is heavily concentrated in the south and in urban areas like Lagos and Port Harcourt.\(^7\)

In the South South region the security situation is particularly bad. It is dominated by the presence of armed groups and organised violence (i.e. the presence of criminal gangs). Despite this, there have been some improvements. An amnesty implemented in 2009, which offered money and other incentives (such as skills training) to all militants who surrendered their weapons, reportedly helped reduce the number of attacks. Casualties reported by the media dropped from roughly 1300 in 2009 to about 700 in 2012.\(^8\) However, criminality is still high with a third of the population saying they were victims of crime in 2011.\(^9\)

Kidnappings and piracy off the coast of Nigeria continue to contribute to a climate of insecurity in the South East, the Niger Delta and the South West region, with the former becoming increasingly common in the northern states. Between 2008 and 2010, the Nigeria Police Force recorded 887 cases of kidnapping.\(^10\)

In the Northern states, the number of attacks and bombings by Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati Wal-Jihad, commonly called Boko Haram, and other groups have risen sharply since 2010. According to the Nigeria Police Forces’ Anti-bomb Squad, over 400 bomb explosions have taken place in Nigeria in the last three years.\(^11\) Boko Haram’s violent agitation has continued to destabilize the North East, while the government’s efforts to quell the insurgency have so far proven unsuccessful, including most recently with the declaration of a National State of Emergency in three states in May 2013. Human rights groups estimate over 3600 people have died in Boko Haram related violence from 2010 through mid-2013.\(^12\)

In the North West, religious and sectarian violence has risen since 2010. In Kano and Kaduna, religious violence between Muslims and Christians has flared up on several occasions, resulting in over 1500 casualties being reported by the media between 2011 and 2012.\(^13\)

Inter-communal violence has also ravaged the country, especially in Nigeria’s Middle-Belt region. Plateau state, and its capital Jos specifically, has suffered outbreaks of religious and ethnic violence killing thousands of people since 2001, and causing millions of Naira worth of damage.

**NATIONAL WORKING GROUP ON ARME D VIOLENCE / ACTION ON ARMED VIOLENCE**

**Report methodology / Challenges of this report**

Information for this study was collected largely through a combination of a systematic literature review, desk-based research, interviews with leading NGOs and other experts – independent and governmental – working in the area of armed violence prevention and reduction, and field assessment by NWGAV members and AOAV researchers.

The literature on armed violence in Nigeria was drawn from academic, civil society and international organisation sources. Data sources include the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, the Nigeria Security Tracker, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Dataset (ACLED) and Nigeria Watch. AOAV also commissioned a freelance BBC correspondent to travel throughout the country to give a ‘ground view’ – a snapshot of armed violence at a particular time and in a particular place – to show the diversity of experiences in Nigeria around the issue of armed violence.

**CHALLENGES OF THIS REPORT**

There are several challenges associated with any research on armed violence in Nigeria. Some of these are common to research on armed violence; others are particular to Nigeria.

**ABSENCE OF DATA**

There are several gaps in the available data, particularly at the sub-national level. This means important regional variations can often be masked by mean and median scores across what is an extremely diverse and populous country. In a country where there are multiple flashpoints and drivers of conflict – sometimes overlapping, sometimes discrete – sub-national, local data is crucial to developing a properly nuanced understanding of armed violence. This data is often absent, or if it exists is not publicly available.

**CONFLICTING DATA AND REPORTING**

Missing data is not the only problem; conflicting data also obscures the ground truth. There are areas in which multiple organisations are producing contrasting data on similar topics using divergent sources, methodologies and theoretical approaches. Reliable casualty and/or fatality figures are particularly difficult to ascertain in a context of multiple, competing claims and methodologies.\(^14\)

**BIAS IN REPORTING AND COVERAGE**

Many sources consulted were open-source, publicly available documents. These may contain bias in their selection of case studies, their reporting of incidents of armed violence, and the attention and detail paid to analysing drivers of particular types, locations or perpetrators of armed violence.

**VIEW FROM THE GROUND**

Any ‘on the ground’ attempt to give a snapshot of armed violence faces restrictions of its own. The timing of the research visit, the biases of interviewees, access restrictions and the inherent difficulties in corroborating matters of importance against a backdrop of vengeful attacks, self-censorship and fear can all create confusion and a lack of clarity. This is why our fieldwork has to be balanced with an extensive and careful survey of existing data.

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\(^{1}\) Nigeria in the Global Peace Index, 2012; \(^{2}\) Armed Conflict Location & Event Dataset; \(^{3}\) Failed States Index 2013; \(^{4}\) CLEEN Foundation; \(^{5}\) Human Rights Watch; \(^{6}\) UNDP and other experts; \(^{7}\) Nigeria Watch; \(^{8}\) Nigeria Police Force; \(^{9}\) Human Rights Watch; \(^{10}\) Nigeria Police Force; \(^{11}\) Nigeria Police Force; \(^{12}\) Human Rights Watch; \(^{13}\) UNDP; \(^{14}\) Human Rights Watch.
There are numerous drivers of armed violence in Nigeria – some that are drivers of violence everywhere, some particular to the Nigerian experience.

**POVERTY, UNDER-DEVELOPMENT AND UNEVEN GROWTH**

In spite of Nigeria’s vast resource wealth, the majority of Nigerians live in absolute poverty. Even state-level rates of poverty, however, obscure important differences between elites and the rest of the population. Wealth levels in urban areas, and the resource-rich South East and South South, mask pockets of deprivation.

The relationship between poverty and armed violence is not simple: the North West is the worst performing region across a range of indicators of wealth and well-being, yet it has far less violence than other regions. However, significant inequality of wealth is often a reliable predictor of conflict, and southern Nigeria has some of the greatest imbalances in wealth – and greatest levels of violence – in the country.

**WEAK GOVERNANCE, LACK OF TRANSPARENCY, AND LIMITED TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS**

Corruption and unaccountable governance are central to Nigeria’s problems with armed violence. The levels and extent of armed violence in Nigeria originate from both political action and inaction. Political sponsorship of militant groups, for instance, is relatively common and well-documented in many parts of the country.

Meanwhile, the limited production and sharing of data makes it difficult for multi-faceted, multi-stakeholder efforts to address armed violence or to evaluate the government’s efforts to reduce it. Many Nigerians have lost confidence in the state’s ability to protect them from criminality and violence. This has led to communities, markets, businesses, and individuals taking responsibility for their own security through community watch groups, security companies, high walls and barbed wire, or personal arms, opening up a Pandora’s Box of vigilantism and paramilitary activity from which it can be difficult to return.

**POLITICISED GROUPS**

Nigeria has a heterogenous population, but diversity itself does not automatically lead to high levels of armed violence. Rather, tensions can be managed through responsive, inclusive and broad-based political, social and economic institutions which bind diverse groups together instead of drive them apart.

In Nigeria, it is rather the failure of government and society to sufficiently develop these institutions, the deliberate politicisation of groups drawn on ethnic or religious lines, and the overlap between these groups and deep socio-economic inequalities that combine to foment armed violence.

According to the Small Arms Survey, the majority of small arms and light weapons in circulation in Nigeria originated (by rental, sale or theft) from the country’s security services.
Geography and demography

With a population of more than 168 million people and a growth rate of 3%, Nigeria is Africa’s most populous country. The country has an extremely diverse population: it is conservatively estimated to be home to over 200 ethnic groups and 500 indigenous languages.

Some reports suggest that Nigeria may be the third most ethnically diverse country in the world. However, three major national groups constitute approximately two-thirds of the total population: the Hausa-Fulani, concentrated in the north, the Igbo, concentrated in the east, and the Yoruba, dominant in the west. This diversity has proven to be both Nigeria’s strength and — in the context of armed violence — a cause for concern. In a 2010 survey, 48% of respondents reported ethnic conflict as a ‘very big problem.’

GENDER

49% of the total population are female; counting for some estimated 80.2 million girls and women. Any discussion about armed violence in Nigeria must necessarily take into account women, the role they play and the barriers they face. For instance, 42% of Nigerian children are malnourished but this hides the fact that malnutrition (and poverty) is worse for girls. A similar dynamic holds true with regards to employment. Nearly six million young Nigerian women and men enter the labour market each year but only 10% are able to secure a job in the formal sector. Though discouraging enough, for women it is even worse; only one third of the newly employed are women.

According to an Amnesty International report in 2006, women are often unwilling to report certain types of violence, such as rape, partly because of shame and social stigma. As a result, very few cases are brought to court in Nigeria. According to surveys, one in five women has experienced some form of physical violence. And, it appears from the available data that violence experienced by women in Nigeria is reported to be an indication that violence is under-reported. Much but not all of the physical, sexual and psychological violence experienced by women in Nigeria is reported to be at the hands of family members, especially husbands, partners and fathers.

South South. The North East and North West report relatively fewer cases of violence, although this could be an indication that violence is under-reported. Much but not all of the physical, sexual and psychological violence experienced by women in Nigeria is reported to be at the hands of family members, especially husbands, partners and fathers.

CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS

Nigeria is home to both the largest number of Christians and the largest number of Muslims in the region. Although exact figures vary, a 2010 estimate indicates that the Christian population constitutes approximately 46% of the population, concentrated in the south. 52% are Muslims, concentrated in the north. However, in the middle of the country, there is significant inter-mixing of the two religions.

INDIGINES AND NON-INDIGENES

meaning that even families and groups who have been resident in a location their entire lives can be considered ‘migrants.’ The categories are determined by state and local governments, and can result in groups following ancestry back hundreds of years, preferential access to land, resources and public jobs, thereby potentially fostering deep social inequalities and feeding into inter-communal armed violence.

YOUTH

A fourth important demographic consideration is youth. According to the United Nations Population Division, over one-third (34%) of the Nigerian adult population (aged 15+) is between 15 and 24. Globally, individuals at those ages are particularly likely to be involved in armed conflict and violence. In a country as populous as Nigeria, this is an enormous and disproportionate cohort, which can create societal tensions.

Any linkages between a young population and armed violence are not direct, and research indicates that economic stagnation, leading to limited opportunities for young people, has an important role to play in the relationship. As Nigeria’s economy grows, the unequal distribution of those benefits limits the potentially positive effect. In Nigeria, the age group 15-24 has by far the highest rate of recorded unemployment, at 37.7%, with over one-third of people in this age group in both urban and rural areas reported as unemployed.

Over the next few pages, the report examines armed violence in Nigeria, with a focus on the impact it has on people of different ages and their families. This chapter provides an overview of the type of violence affecting the four major national groups: the Hausa-Fulani, the Igbo, the Yoruba, and the remaining groups.

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Politics

Politics and armed violence are closely intertwined in Nigeria. Elections and other political events are often accompanied by violent struggles over political power and a forcible redistribution of resources.\textsuperscript{29}

Militant groups – whether formal or informal – are often patronised, sponsored, sanctioned or tolerated by political officials in some of the country’s most volatile and explosive environments.\textsuperscript{25} These groups are then unleashed on political opponents and their supporters in an effort to suppress their ability to campaign and turn out the vote during elections.

Political violence in Nigeria takes many forms: from assassinations to clashes between rival groups of political supporters or militants; as well as larger collective actions such as the sporadic secessionist violence that has occurred throughout Nigeria's history, such as in Biafra in the 1960s.

Formal political processes in Nigeria are frequently accompanied by violence. The transfer of power from the military regime to civilian rule was not smooth or peaceful: Human Rights Watch estimates that over 11,000 Nigerians lost their lives in clashes along political, ethnic and religious and other lines between 1999 and 2006 alone, displacing an estimated three million Nigerians internally.\textsuperscript{21}

The country’s 2007 elections were widely criticised as deeply flawed, although levels of violence were relatively limited and casualty rates were lower than subsequent years. By contrast, Nigeria’s 2011 elections were deemed the freest and fairest in the country’s history, but were accompanied by at least 1,000 deaths and 74,000 displacements.\textsuperscript{26} Alongside countrywide violence during national elections, sharp spikes in violence also accompanied both the 2004 and 2008 local government elections.\textsuperscript{25}

Furthermore, the lack of trust in political institutions is a profound and troubling issue. Trust in the military, the police (Africa’s largest\textsuperscript{34}) and the independence of the judiciary is clearly lacking. This fuels an environment of impunity, and damages trust in the ability of individuals to achieve justice through legal means in a wide range of contexts.\textsuperscript{25} In a 2012 survey by Afrobarometer over half the respondents (53%) reported that they did not trust the police ‘at all’, 31% ‘just a little’, 12% ‘somewhat’ and only 4% ‘a lot.’ There were slightly higher levels of trust towards the army, but almost one-fifth (19%) of those surveyed reported they did not trust the military ‘at all’.\textsuperscript{38}

The result of this pronounced lack of public trust in political and security institutions is a high rate of vigilante activity and the militarisation of community defence and policing networks. This has most recently been evident in Northern Nigeria, where vigilante groups have gone as far as being legitimised, receiving the support and sanction of state and federal authorities to pursue Boko Haram militants.

Figure 2: Levels of political violence in Nigeria

These patterns also have distinct regional variations: a 2012 CLEEN Foundation survey found that respondents in Sokoto reported only 6% of crimes to the police, with comparably low levels in Kaduna (8%) and Plateau (9%). By contrast, the highest levels of reporting were found in Yobe (50%), Benue (43%) and Zamfara (41%), though these rates are still low.\textsuperscript{27}

According to the police force’s own statistics, officers killed an average of 491 armed robbery suspects annually between 2000 – 2009,\textsuperscript{39} although human rights organisations and civil society groups put Adeniyi Abdul the figure much higher.\textsuperscript{28}

The country's 2011 general elections were accompanied by at least 1,000 deaths and 74,000 displacements.

Figure 3: Incidents of political violence and reported fatalities

Nigeria’s 2011 general elections were accompanied by at least 1,000 deaths and 74,000 displacements.

Politics in Nigeria – regimes:
1960 – 1966: Democracy
1966 – 1979: Military Regime
1979 – 1983: Democracy
1999 – present: Democracy

Elections:
- February 1999: hailed internationally for bringing an end to military rule, but plagued by voter intimidation and fraud, though ‘conducted generally without violence’
- April 2003: re-election of incumbent, Olusegun Obasanjo, but voting marred by irregularities and violence, and over 100 people reported killed
- April 2007: accompanied by limited violence, denounced as ‘an election-like event’ and for potentially pushing Nigeria ‘further toward the status of a failed state’
- April 2011: deemed the fairest in the country’s history, but accompanied by violence along ethnic and sectarian lines, resulting in over 1,000 deaths in surrounding period.
Economy

Nigeria’s economy is overwhelmingly dominated by federally collected oil revenues. Despite Nigeria’s federal structure, which should lead to decentralised decision making and accountability, the sources and systems of revenue collection tend to push policy-making and governance in a centralised direction. In a country with the size, population, and diversity of Nigeria, these contradictory forces make it difficult to govern effectively.

According to Nigeria Watch, disputes related to economic resources are the third highest cause of violent deaths in Nigeria. Among these, oil is at the centre of the most disputes, followed by land, market control and cattle.

Against a backdrop of constant violence, international institutions and experts insist that Nigeria’s economy is booming, with average GDP growth of just under 7% over the last decade. In 2011, development economist Jeffrey Sachs asserted that ‘Nigeria is on the verge of a takeoff,’ maintaining that the country could aspire to join the emerging economies of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) within a decade.

POVERTY
This international optimism does not reflect reality for most Nigerians. Despite the country’s enormous wealth of natural resources, poverty, deprivation and under-development persist on a massive scale, highlighting the uneven development of Nigeria’s national economy. Nigeria’s National Bureau of Statistics reported that in 2010, 60.9% of the population live in ‘absolute poverty,’ a figure that actually has increased from 54.7% in 2004. Multidimensional measures of poverty, well-being and human development also confirm the pervasiveness and persistence of deprivation. In spite of its enormous resource wealth and economic growth, Nigeria ranks 153rd out of 186 worldwide in the United Nations’ Human Development Index. National unemployment in 2011 stood at 23.9%, with rural unemployment standing at 55.6% and urban unemployment at 17.1%.

While analysts refer to the centrality of underdevelopment and poverty in several regions, data from a range of sources indicates that northern regions perform the worst across a series of indicators of wealth, well-being and prosperity. For example, absolute poverty rates in the North West and North East regions are estimated at 77.7% and 76.3% respectively. By contrast, rates of absolute poverty in the southwest are considerably lower at 59.1%.

ABSOLUTE POVERTY
There are several caveats to this line of analysis. The first, and most fundamental, is that no claim of regional under-development, inequality and poverty in Nigeria is entirely without merit. The country boasts an enormously rich deposit of resource wealth and a promising economic trajectory, reflected in the increasing displays of wealth by the country’s upper classes. In contrast to this, the majority of Nigerians live in what has been deemed ‘absolute poverty’ and the grievances which accompany this state of affairs are intricately linked to the scale, level and intensity of armed violence in the country. Furthermore, the impact that corruption has on poverty in Nigeria is profound and must be considered in any understanding of the issue.

EXTREMES OF WEALTH AND POVERTY
The second important caveat is that even state-level data masks wide disparities between social groups: elites in the Niger Delta and even in less wealthy regions of the country reap enormous benefits and enjoy extremely high standards of living, while those relying on vulnerable livelihood strategies can struggle daily to survive. Inequality in urban areas is extremely pronounced in Nigeria, visible in the side-by-side disparity between enormous wealth and often violence-afflicted slums and shantytowns.

THE IDENTITY OF POVERTY
The interaction between identity groups and poverty is also important. Inequality, underdevelopment and poverty are often politicised and potentially volatile, because they often overlap with culturally defined religious, ethnic, regional and generational identity groups producing ‘horizontal inequalities. Horizontal inequalities refer to ‘inequalities in economic, social or political dimensions or cultural status between culturally defined groups. For example, a range of wealth and wellbeing measures indicate that populations in northern, predominantly Muslim and Hausa-dominated states enjoy a lower standard of living and higher rates of poverty than southern states with very different demographic compositions. Similarly, qualitative survey data indicates that more Muslims than Christians report facing hardship in affording food, medical services and clothing.

AVOID JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS
In Nigeria, poverty does not correlate directly with violence. States such as Sokoto and Zamfara perform extremely poorly across a range of state-level indicators such as absolute poverty, unemployment wealth generation, healthcare, and literacy. But these states witness generally much lower levels of recorded armed violence and political conflict than those in the northeast, where poverty levels are somewhat better. Further study of all the states and regions of Nigeria could bring to light the dynamics and factors that drive some areas to violence yet leave others relatively unscathed.

Nigeria’s National Bureau of Statistics reported in 2010, 60.9% of the population live in ‘absolute poverty,’ an increase from 54.7% in 2004.
Communal Violence

"Communal violence" refers to violent inter-group conflict between members of different culturally defined identity groups. These groups can be ethnically, religiously or locally bounded: for example, a communal militia might be formed of members of the same religious group or ethnic identity. Both of these examples are prevalent in Nigeria, with religiously defined communal militias extremely active in the Middle Belt region. A communal militia might also be formed as a local militant group which operates as a village or community militia: this latter form encompasses vigilante violence, which is common in Nigeria. Source: ACLED.

Database of actors tackling armed violence in Nigeria

All information obtained in the mapping is stored in a database administered by the National Working Group on Armed Violence. Its purpose is to share information with anyone interested in the actors involved in tackling armed violence. It is the hope of the Working Group that improved knowledge on "who does what" may help provide the basis for a coherent national response to armed violence in the future.

The database is searchable and contains information on:
- Expertise of organisations: Mission, thematic priorities and type of activity
- Institutional capacities: Staff strength, geographical coverage, annual budget, main funders
- Gender: of head of organisations and employees
- Projects: Type of violence addressed, scope and scale, monitoring and evaluation practices

Countless responses to curb violence are underway throughout Nigeria, including the deployment of government security forces, informal mediation by traditional and religious leaders, grassroots-level early warning systems and NGO education and advocacy work.

Yet, because of Nigeria’s sheer size, its large population and a chronic scarcity of data, these efforts are poorly understood. Little is known about the existing actors and their interventions against armed violence throughout the country’s 36 states and Abuja Federal Capital Territory. Successful initiatives are rarely reported to or shared with other regions, leading to missed opportunities to expand difference-making efforts nationally. To tackle armed violence in Nigeria, however, it is crucial to have a clear picture of the actors and practices currently in operation in this area, and to facilitate the spread of their most effective policies and programmes across the country.

To get a better idea of “who does what” in the prevention and reduction of armed violence, National Working Group on Armed Violence (NWGAV) and Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) mapped 457 organisations and 495 projects working against armed violence, and identified the legislation under which they operate. The aim was to contribute to a fuller understanding of current efforts to combat armed violence, and to help improve coordination among those involved in reducing armed violence.

Nigeria ranks 153rd out of 186 worldwide in the United Nations’ Human Development Index.
Civil society working in Nigeria

Out of the 457 organisations surveyed the largest share - 281 organisations - was from civil society. Figure 4 shows the proportions of the different types of stakeholders surveyed. The higher number of respondents gives a better picture of civil society organisational capacities and the projects implemented by them. This section highlights findings for 242 NGOs and faith-based organisations, without taking into account community-based organisations.

Organisational Capacities

Most civil society organisations recorded came into being in the last two decades. While a limited number of civil society initiatives existed during the country’s turbulent past and under military regimes, there was a marked increase in the 1990s, and a wave of new organisations after 1999 when Nigeria’s new constitution was adopted.

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<td>Since 2005</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5: Year of foundation

Across Nigeria, civil society organisations tend to work with rather small numbers of full-time staff – the most frequent number of employees is between six and ten. The national median is seven full-time employees. Many of them, specifically in non-urban areas, work with larger numbers of volunteers, sometimes twice that of paid staff. The civil society organisations mapped employ a median number of 12 volunteers.

Figure 8: NGOs and faith-based organisations by number of full time staff (n=241)

Figure 9: NGOs and faith-based organisations by number of volunteers (n=241)

Half of the organisations interviewed operate on less than 4 million naira annually, and three quarters work with less than 15 million naira. The overall national median is 3.8 million naira per year.

Figure 7: Percentage of NGOs and faith-based organisations by annual budget, in million naira (n=196)

The majority of the organisations mapped say they work either at state level or at national level.
FUNDING
The most important funders of civil society organisations are individual donors and private trusts. 173
of the 242 organisations surveyed are led by a man, and 38% by a woman. This average hides large differences
between states, with Benue having the largest number of female-led organisations (more than two thirds) and
Sokoto the lowest (less than one fifth).

PROJECTS
According to the OECD’s armed violence lens, projects to reduce the incidence and impact of armed violence can address
weapons, institutions, people or risk factors. 57 All organisations surveyed implement projects that touch upon one or
several of these areas.

WEAPONS
Roughly one third of the NGOs and faith-based organisations surveyed implement projects to control the abuse of arms. Their
main areas of activity are education and raising awareness about the negative impacts of uncontrolled weapons flow and abuse,
and data collection. NGOs and faith-based organisations frequently observe and document violence, albeit
often in a non-systematic way.

INSTITUTIONS
Over 60% of the NGOs and faith-based organisations surveyed are involved in work with existing institutions to
better control violence. The majority of them prefer engagement with informal over formal mechanisms
in their efforts to mitigate violence. The table below shows that elders/traditional leaders, religious leaders
and informal mediation mechanisms are the three most important counterparts for civil society attempting
to reduce violence.

Typically, civil society cooperate with informal structures to engage in alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, early warning and response systems, capacity building related to monitoring and reporting, and other types of data collection.

PEOPLE AFFECTED BY ARMED VIOLENCE
Over half of all projects indicate work related to victims. The majority among them engage youth who have suffered psychological harm, indirect victims such as women who have lost their husband, and victims of sexual or gender-based violence.

A wide range of different victim assistance programmes exist, with the most common type of civil society engagement being data collection and psychosocial assistance.

RISK FACTORS OF ARMED VIOLENCE
All projects surveyed work on risk factors in one way or another. They are the most common type of intervention to address armed violence, either as stand-alone projects or in combination with other interventions. Many among the NGOs or faith-based organisations are, however, not necessarily aware that their work contributes to the prevention and reduction of armed violence.

Given the wide array of different civil society organisations mapped, it is not surprising that the type of risk factors they address are very diverse, ranging from poverty reduction to youth programming to community empowerment to education and many more.
Counting the cost in Nigeria

Thousands of people have died violent deaths in Nigeria’s crisis-torn North East. Since the beginning of the insurgency by the Islamist insurgent group commonly known as Boko Haram, armed violence has killed and injured scores of civilians, insurgents and members of the security forces.

The exact human cost of the insurgency, however, is unknown. Human Rights Watch estimates that over 3600 people have been killed over the last three years. An official statement by the Chief of Army Staff in November 2012 said over 3000 had been killed up to that point in time alone.65

But this is as far as the records go. The names of most victims, and the circumstances under which they died, are unaccounted for.

What exactly happened, and when and where? Who was the victim – a civilian, insurgent, or soldier? How old were they and did they leave family behind? With which weapons were they killed or injured? And as important: who said it happened – what is the source?

In Nigeria’s North East, these questions remain unanswered. But victims of armed violence also go uncounted in other states. Despite the fact that states are obliged under international law to record civilian casualties64 of armed conflict, publicly accessible victimisation records are scarce in Nigeria.62 There have been some attempts at keeping casualty counts, including by the Ministry of Defence, the Nigeria Police Force, and non-governmental organisations, but data is, by and large, sparse and methodologies untransparent.

Recording casualties of armed violence is crucial. It dignifies the victims and holds perpetrators accountable. It provides a better understanding of the situation and helps target resources to curb violence. It informs the debate with hard facts in a context of uncertainty.

GOVERNMENT RECORDING SYSTEMS

The Ministry of Defence

Like in many countries, military casualties in Nigeria are recorded according to set procedures. The Ministry of Defence maintains a relatively sophisticated system called NOTICAS, inherited from the British army.

NOTICAS is a reporting system that feeds details of military casualties up a notification chain. Notice of the killing of a soldier is passed from the site of the incident up to superior headquarters, before being passed to the Ministry of Defence Headquarters in Abuja.

According to an anonymous army source, this system is functional and efficient to the point that “notice arrives in headquarters within two hours of the incident”.63 How the military counts civilian casualties is less clear. No information could be accessed in the course of this research, which casts some doubts over whether civilian deaths are actually recorded. According to a former general, during some incidents such as night raids, no-one counts the deaths or injuries. Dead bodies are reportedly left where they were shot, without being counted or identified.

Military casualty records are strictly confidential. They are inaccessible to both the media and to the general public, but rather serve purely as internal security assessments by the Armed Forces. Sometimes the Chief of Army Staff publicly provides overall figures but more detailed records are rarely obtainable.

The Nigeria Police Force

The Nigeria Police Force is theoretically in a prime position to count deaths and injuries caused by armed violence. It has a network of close to 350,000 police officers, has police commands in every state and the mandate to protect lives and property across the whole country.64 The Force operates in areas of high “criminality” such as the South South, and those riddled by “conflict” such as the North East.

Even in conflict situations it is still the police who maintain the records. A killing reported to the police will be recorded as a crime. The police are also obliged to keep records of unnatural deaths in custody, including name, date and cause of death.65

Compilation of police data starts at the police station. The collated data is passed to the Divisional Headquarters, then to the Command Headquarters, and finally to the Police Force’s Headquarters. The Zone Headquarters sometimes also obtains data from commands, and produces its own data, which is fed back to headquarters.66 A record of a criminal event includes the date, police station/district, information on the informant/complainant/accused/witness, and details of the event. Based on this, annual returns are produced. These regularly produced summaries form the basis of the Police’s crime statistics.

The most well-known and easily available dataset is the Nigeria Police Force’s “Annual Report”. Compiled on a yearly basis, it “presents the activities and performance of the Police”.67 The Report provides an insight into police deaths in service, listed under the category “manpower wastage”.68 In 2008, for instance, the official number of police deaths was 2,309.

As for civilian casualties, the reports contain quite a detailed breakdown of casualties from armed robbery, including “civilians killed by armed robbery”, “civilians injured by armed robbery”, “expatriates killed and injured by armed robbers”.

There are also figures for “armed robbers killed by the police”. More information on civilian casualties can be found under “offences against persons”, which includes statistics on murder, manslaughter, attempted murder, suicide, attempted suicide, grievous harm and wounding, assault, child stealing, slave dealing, rape and indecent assault, kidnapping and unnatural offences.

From a casualty recorder’s perspective, these figures are interesting, but not sufficient. The aggregated numbers conceal nothing about the cause of death, the incidents that lead to it, or the circumstances surrounding it. The names of the victims are also not published. This in itself would not be a problem if the details were available elsewhere. But they are not. While possible in theory, researchers often face lengthy bureaucratic obstacles when trying to obtain this information.

“The police will not tell you they don’t have data. They will create official and bureaucratic obstacles to hinder your search” says a representative of NOPRIN. Obtaining details on casualty figures in the North East, for instance, is close to impossible.

There are other problems with police statistics. It is an open secret that the police statistics suffer from serious shortfalls in resources and funding. With a chronic lack of resources, adequate recording is often not given top priority at police stations. The training of police officers in charge has also been criticised.69

There are more grey areas. Obtaining information on state-sponsored violence is one. The Nigeria Police Force is frequently accused of extrajudicial killings and other types of state-sponsored violence.70 No one knows how many of these killings are reflected in the statistics. Civil society organisations voice concerns that the category “armed robbers” is sometimes used to cover up extrajudicial killings.71 A NOPRIN report refers to the possibility that “the official number of police deaths is understated as a result of police inactivity in the compilation of police statistics.”72

In 2011, Human Rights Watch estimated over 15,700 people had been killed in inter-communal, political and sectarian violence in Nigeria since the country transitioned to civilian rule in 1999.
A 2012 survey of Nigerians by the CLEEN Foundation found, on average, 5% of respondents nationwide had been victims of armed violence.

**GOVERNMENT SOURCES OF DATA**

There are more government bodies in Nigeria that count the dead and the injured. Yet in none of them could a national or regional tracking system that matches the definition of casualty recording (systematic, continuous and aiming to be comprehensive) be found. Rather than being casualty recorders themselves, these institutions are sources of information for casualty recorders.

**Hospitals**

Most hospitals routinely record certain pieces of information about patients who are victims of violence. In the best case, this includes the date and location of the incident, the demographics of the patient, the nature of the injury, the nature of the weapon that caused it, and the incident behind it. However, the extent to which hospital records are standardised is doubtful.

A source within the Ministry of Defense’s hospital in Abuja said “all doctors learn to use the same forms at medical school, so I would imagine everybody uses the same”.

The local hospital’s records are often stored on shelves full of paper, and are not necessarily available electronically. And, as far as this research could ascertain, there is no central body collecting these records. It is also worth pointing out that, among all illnesses treated, violence and injury are often not separately recorded. This is because, in many hospitals, no comprehensive injury and death recording systems are maintained. A pilot study implemented across five African countries pioneered a violent injury surveillance system in a hospital in Kano – but that is as systematic an approach as this review found.

**Mortuaries**

Mortuaries are the last destination of dead bodies before their burials. They are, by nature, important sources of casualty records. The police and army often dispose of corpses with signs of unnatural death at mortuaries. In the North East for instance, a hospital morgue in Borno receives up to 60 dead bodies a day from the army, according, to the New York Times. In Rivers state, which has one of the highest incidences of violence in the Niger Delta, the police reportedly take people killed during operations to the morguary. However, civil society organisations point to the absence of systematic forensic investigations, and very limited criminal investigation. The Coroner’s laws, in place in many states of Nigeria, are not enforced. A recent study conducted in 20 states found that “all states researched had Coroner’s laws”, but that “the Coroner’s system has fallen, uniformly, into disuse”.

It is also worth noting that Muslim religious practice is to bury victims immediately after their death. Roughly half of Nigeria’s population is of Muslim faith, and this custom leaves little time to establish identity and the circumstances surrounding the death of Nigerian muslims.

Even though, like hospitals, they have the potential to keep registers invaluable for casualty recording, the records from most mortuaries are partial at best.

**Others**

The National Human Rights Commission runs a complaint mechanism for possible victims of human rights abuses. Reports can be submitted by victims, orally or in writing, for the NHDR to investigate alleged violations of human rights.

The Federal Ministry of Justice also holds information on death and injury. This research has not found a central mechanism collating information collected in, for instance, the courts of law. The Nigeria Prisons, similar to the Nigeria Police Force, produces regular returns on the prison situation and prison population. They pick up some of the information produced in the courts.

A note on government records

Many victims of violent crime in Nigeria do not seek help from official institutions. Some studies estimate that only 25% of crimes are reported to the police.

Records from hospitals are often incomplete, too, because victims seek treatment elsewhere or die before reaching the hospital, and because “deaths are not regularly reported to the police or health authorities”. This means that, even if all records of government bodies dealing with casualties were perfectly sound and transparent, they would still cover only a proportion of all incidents.

**Non governmental systems**

A great deal of Nigeria’s systematic and continuous casualty recording is being done by national and international non-governmental organisations.

Ibadan-based Nigeria Watch systematically collects and collates media reports on violent deaths for the whole of Nigeria. Its data is made available via a freely accessible web portal.

The Nigeria Security Tracker based in Washington uses a similar methodology – media surveys of national and international media – to map the number of deaths.

Partners for Peace in the Niger Delta runs a peace building map which functions as a hub of data, centralising these and other different sources of data.

The International Committee of the Red Cross maintains records of victims of violence for its own internal use, but these figures are rarely published.

Human Rights Watch has collected data on the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East since 2009, mostly based on media sources.

Other not-for-profit organisations record data, but are limited in their geographic scope. The Legal Defence and Assistance Project in Lagos for instance documents cases of killings of innocents in Lagos and surrounding areas. The CLEEN Foundation conducts annual crime victimisation surveys, but does not maintain a database of victims.

People gather around the ruins of the burnt Bama Market, which was destroyed by gunmen in an attack in April 2013 (Reuters/Afolabi Sotunde).
Overview by region and state

A national overview of armed violence in Nigeria masks important regional and geographic variation in the types, perpetrators, victims and drivers of armed violence in this extremely diverse country. Figure 16 depicts absolute and proportionate shares of political violence by type:

- Battles refer to violence between two or more armed groups;
- Riots/protests refer to both peaceful and violent demonstrations, as well as spontaneous mob rioting;
- Violence against civilians refers to armed violence directed at unarmed, non-combattant populations.

The data reveals the extremely high rates of political violence in Borno, Lagos, Rivers and Plateau States, and the relatively high rate of civilian targeting in the Northern and Middle Belt regions in particular.

In addition to important differences in the types of violence witnessed in distinct geographic areas, there are also significant variations in the levels of violence and conflict-related fatalities.

For instance, Borno witnesses high levels of both political violence and associated fatalities; Imo, Adamawa and Bauchi all experience relatively lower levels of both. Kano’s conflict profile is shaped by relatively few incidents of political violence, but extremely intense and deadly attacks when they occur; Plateau is similar. Lagos and Rivers witness very high levels of political violence, but typically of a lower-intensity with fewer reported fatalities.

Taken together, this data facilitates an understanding of the extent of insecurity, the intensity and levels of vulnerability to violence experienced by populations across the country.

The following regions and states are reviewed below:

- **Federal Capital Territory (Abuja)**
- **North Central** (Benue, Kogi, Plateau)
- **North East** (Bauchi, Borno, Taraba)
- **North West** (Kaduna, Kano, Sokoto)
- **South South** (Edo, Rivers, Delta)
- **South East** (Anambra, Ebonyi, Imo)
- **South West** (Lagos, Ogun, Osun)

Figure 16: Political violence by type

Overview of the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja)

**POLITICS**

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) is the political capital of Nigeria, located in the country’s North Central region. Politics and armed violence are closely intertwined in the territory: spikes in violence have been closely linked to electoral cycles in 1999, 2003 and 2011. In common with other urban areas, FCT witnesses a high rate of political demonstrations, some of which lead to violence and wider unrest.

**ECONOMICS**

Standard proxy indicators which highlight dimensions of poverty typically include maternal health, education and illiteracy. Across a range of these measures, the FCT region performs relatively well. Approximately 45.5% of the population live in absolute poverty compared to a national average of 69% and an average urban rate of 52%. The territory also performs relatively well across other indicators of poverty. For example, the FCT has some of the lowest rates nationally of respondents reporting they have no educational attainment whatsoever. These aggregate rates, however, likely mask sharp discrepancies in the living conditions of wealthy inhabitants, and those residing in overcrowded settlements.

**DEMOGRAPHICS / GEOGRAPHY**

The 2006 national census records the Federal Capital Territory as covering an area of 7,754 square kilometres with a population of 1,406,239 (These figures are from the 2006 census - estimates suggest this could be as much as 2.2 million in 2013) and a population density of 192 people per square kilometre. It accounts for 1.3% of Nigeria’s total population and has a population growth rate of around 3% annually. The region’s population is predominantly Christian, and in common with much of the North Central region, the territory is highly ethnically diverse, with no single large ethnic grouping dominant in the area.

Despite its being the political capital, one key demographic characteristic of the FCT is that over 60% still live in the rural areas across the six area councils. There has long existed the problem of urban priority in the FCT, since most government establishments are located in the Municipal area of the territory, this part of the FCT enjoys the privileges of resources and state aid. However, as high land values within the municipal council have caused people to commute from other parts of the territory this lack of a balance in state allocated resources might be changing. Also, some government agencies have relocated outside the Municipal area suggesting that, over time, the ‘primacy’ of the Municipal area will diminish.

**ARMED VIOLENCE**

The FCT experiences relatively low levels of armed violence overall. The Nigeria Security Tracker recorded just 34 fatalities from armed conflict in the territory since May 2011. Over half (56%) of the political violence recorded in the ACLED dataset for the territory involves rioting or protesting. The territory also sees a relatively low proportion of violence against civilians (27%) compared to the national average (41%).

Neither figure takes exclusively criminal armed violence into account: according to Nigeria Watch, FCT has the second highest relative number of deaths due to crime in the country.

In addition to political unrest and criminal violence common to urban areas, the territory also serves as a target for violence from other hotspots. Armed groups based elsewhere in the country have been known to target their violence in the capital to draw attention to their actions and direct violence at focal points of national and international power. Bombings in October 2010, December 2011 and August 2011 involving federal government and UN targets are examples of the risk factors that characterise the capital territory.
Civil society in the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja)

The majority of the organisations recorded here are headquarters, with activities in operation on a national or regional scale. 29 organisations were surveyed in Abuja.

![Figure 18: Number of actors mapped](image)

Civil society in Abuja shows the strongest financial capacities and large geographical reach of all civil society bodies across Nigeria. The NGOs mapped in Abuja have higher annual budget than NGOs elsewhere. Five out of the nine organisations operate on more than 15 million Naira annually. Their geographical coverage is also significantly larger than average. 69% of the organisations interviewed in Abuja work at the national scale, as opposed to the national average of only 39% of actors working at such levels.

There appears to be little formal collaboration with the security sector. Even where civil society is strongest and the physical distance to the government is smallest, little cooperation between civil society and the security sector takes place. None of the civil society organisations interviewed indicated formal collaboration with any security sector agency and none of the government agencies officially collaborates with civil society.

FIDA NIGERIA

The Nigeria National branch of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) strives to promote the rights and the status of women and children in Nigeria. It provides pro bono legal services to victims, including legal advice and lawyers. In addition to its legal work including a state-level legal reform programme for violence against women, it conduct campaigns on violence against women.

Federal Capital Territory

OVERVIEW OF ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE STATE

Levels of violence

In common with other urban areas, the FCT witnesses a high rate of political demonstrations, some of which leads to violence and wider unrest, although the territory experiences relatively low levels of armed violence overall.

The Nigeria Security Tracker recorded just 34 fatalities from armed, violent conflict in the territory in the 12 months after May 2011.36

Over half (56%) of the political violence recorded in the ACLED dataset for the territory involves rioting or protesting. The territory also sees a relatively low proportion of violence against civilians (27%) compared to the national average (41%), although 68% of reported conflict-related fatalities in the territory between 1997 and August 2013 can be attributed to civilian targeting in attacks.35 This indicates that while violent attacks on civilians are relatively low, the intensity of these attacks – as several high-profile incidents show – is relatively high.

None of these figures, however, take exclusively criminal armed violence into account, which is highest in urban areas such as Abuja, Lagos and Port Harcourt. According to Nigeria Watch, Abuja has the second highest relative number of deaths due to crime in the country, preceded by Lagos.36 According to the CLEEN Foundation, 51% of Abuja’s population has experienced crime in 2011.37

In addition to urban unrest and armed criminality common to urban areas, as the political capital of the country, the territory also serves as a target for violence from other hotspots around the country. The result is that the capital has also seen several bomb blasts. In October 2010, a double car-bombing in Abuja was carried out by Niger Delta militants.38

The following year, Boko Haram claimed responsibility for a car bomb that killed at least 18 people in a suicide attack at the UN headquarters in the city.39

This twin bomb explosion seems to have triggered what is becoming an extremely long, tragic string of deadly explosions in Nigeria. A total of nine explosions have been recorded in the FCT with casualties numbering up to 60 since then. However, there are cases of attempted explosions that were foiled by the police. One of such occurred on 19th July, 2012. The explosive device was planted under a mango tree where pupils buy biscuits and drinks.

PERPETRATORS AND VICTIMS OF ARMED VIOLENCE

The most common types of armed violence in the FCT are armed robbery and terrorist attacks. In cases of rape and armed robbery, perpetrators are often repeat offenders or, in some cases, members of law enforcement agencies.

Weapons used

Weapons used by perpetrators in the case of armed robbery are mainly rifles, while perpetrators of rape use weapons such as knives and pistols. Other weapons that perpetrators of armed violence use include double barrelled shotguns, AK-47 assault rifles and hand grenades.

It seems there is evidence of state institutions supplying guns to criminal gangs. In 2012 two police inspectors and a customs inspector were arrested for allegedly supplying arms and ammunition to armed robbers. This followed the arrests of armed robbers in Abuja, who confessed to getting their arms and ammunition from a customs official attached to the Niger State command. In a similar case, a comptroller...
of customs and his orderly were arrested for gun running in 2012 by the State Security Service (SSS) at Customs Headquarters, Wuse, Abuja.

Victims of armed violence
Women who are victims of rape are both adults and children, while victims of armed robbery are mostly adults (both male and female).

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE
The state institutions that are most frequently employed to address issues of armed violence are the police and the army. The major efforts that have been put in place are the use of community policing (in the case of armed robbery) and posting policemen to areas at risk of attack. In addition, speed breakers and roadblocks are mounted in some places to forestall suicide bombers driving into buildings. Camerass have been installed at entrance and exit points of Abuja.

AOAV’s mapping of armed violence respondents surveyed 29 organisations working in this area in the capital, many of which had their headquarters located here. Abuja is the location of the headquarters of the ECOWAS Commission, and the base of most international organisations with a presence in Nigeria, thus constituting the primary political centre of the country. The NGOs mapped in Abuja have higher annual budget than NGOs elsewhere; five out of the nine organisations operate on more than 15 million Naira annually. Their geographical coverage is also significantly larger than average. Of the organisations interviewed in Abuja, 69% work at the national scale, as opposed to the national average of only 39% of actors working at such levels.

Successes and challenges
In common to a number of violence-affected contexts was the limited collaboration or cooperation between civil society organisations and the formal security sector, even in Abuja where resources at the disposal of civil society organisations were higher and the physical distance to government institutions was smallest. This arrangement reflects in some contexts a fear of being seen to associate with the formal security apparatus for fear of being targeted by militants on this basis, indicating the vulnerability of even those working to reduce and address armed violence.

In 2012, the Nigerian Army’s Chief of Staff told an audience of soldiers that they should consider themselves at war against Boko Haram.

Located here, Abuja is the location of the headquarters of the ECOWAS Commission, and the base of most international organisations with a presence in Nigeria, thus constituting the primary political centre of the country.

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Abuja
Population size: 2.2m
Population growth (annual): 5.9%
Absolute poverty rate: 45.5
Unemployment rate: 21.1
Infant mortality rate: 59
Average household size: 5.9
Muslim share of population: 20%
Christian share of population: 40%

BoKO HARAM
History of the Group: Established in Maiduguri, Borno State, as a religious community in 2002 by a Muslim cleric, Mohammed Yusuf, the group developed an ideology based around the promotion of a strict interpretation of Shari’a law, the migration of Christian populations from the North, and opposition to Western cultural, ideological and social influences. The group’s activities led to conflict with the local authorities, and violence escalated in 2009 following the deaths of a number of the group’s members. Intense violence between the group and security forces resulted in the death in police custody of founder, Yusuf, an event which marked a turning point in the intensity of violence.

Area of Operation: Boko Haram activity has been concentrated in Borno since the group’s emergence, but over time militants have expanded their scope into North West and Middle Belt regions, as well as urban areas further south.

Violence Type: About 50% of Boko Haram activity involves violence against civilians (targeting unarmed, non-combatants), while the other half involves battles between armed groups, primarily the security forces of the state. The share of civilian targeting has grown since the group’s emergence in 2009, when it primarily engaged in clashes with security forces.

Sources: ACLED, acleddata.com; Africa Confidential, ‘How Terror Came to Kano,’ February 2012.

Security forces view the scene of a bomb explosion at St. Theresa Catholic Church at Madalla, Suleja, just outside Abuja, December 25, 2011 (Reuters/Afolabi Sotunde).
North Central regional overview

**BENUE, KOGI, KWARA, NASARAWA, NIGER, PLATEAU (EXCLUDING FCT)**

**POLITICS**
The North Central region has witnessed sharp spikes in violence surrounding elections and other critical junctures. The federal government has in recent years declared states of emergency in parts of the North Central region in response to high levels of armed violence there. For instance, in January of 2012, a state of emergency was declared in several local government areas in Plateau and Niger states. Most states in the North Central region were won by current president Goodluck Jonathan in the 2011 general elections. Niger was won by the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, President Jonathan’s strongest rival.

**ECONOMICS**
Across a range of poverty measures, the North Central region performs relatively well: the region (including FCT) has an infant mortality rate of 77 (compared to a national average of 87), while it also has a mid-range level of respondents reporting no educational attainment whatsoever. This regional figure masks significant variation across the zone, however: Demographic and Health Survey data includes the FCT within North Central, which owing to its status as an economic and political hub, drives up many of these average figures. There is a marked disparity in state-specific data, with over 60% of respondents reporting no educational attainment whatsoever in Niger, for example, compared to 34% in Benue.

**DEMOGRAPHICS / GEOGRAPHY**
The population of the North Central region (excluding FCT) is estimated at 22 million. The region’s population is predominantly Christian, with sizeable Muslim minorities. The region is extremely ethnically diverse, with significant concentrations of members of the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group, who make up approximately 28% of the national population, alongside a number of smaller ethnic groups in highly diverse areas. Conflict in the North Central region is often categorized as religious violence, but regional identities, ethnicity, ‘indigeneity’ and ‘settlement,’ access to land and livelihoods all overlap with religious identities to produce a volatile conflict profile. These tensions are exacerbated through institutional and legal frame works that have historically entrenched community and ethnic divisions as well as the politicisation of inter-group rivalry and fear.

**ARMED VIOLENCE**
The North Central region has some of the highest levels of violence involving armed communal groups. Communal militias have been involved in over 40% of incidents of political violence in the North Central region and over 73% of conflict-related fatalities. This can be contrasted with national averages in which communal militias were involved in just 17% of all violent events. Armed violence in the North Central region is characterised by extreme volatility: relatively low-levels of conflict are interspersed with sudden spikes, usually occurring around critical junctures such as elections.

In 2001, as many as 1,000 people were killed in the Plateau state capital, Jos, in less than a week in devastating inter-communal tension between “indigenes” and “settlers.” In 2004, an episode of inter-communal violence – primarily Muslims and Christians against one another – claimed as many as 700 lives in Plateau before the military intervened. In addition, the region also experiences high rates of violent crime. Nigeria Watch estimates that Plateau State experienced more than 40 deaths by homicide per 100,000 inhabitants between 2006 and 2011: the highest rate in the country.

Civil society in North Central has capacities below the national median, except for Plateau. The budgetary and staff capacity of the civil society organisations recorded is the lowest among all zones. However, these figures hide important differences between states - civil society organisations in Plateau have a relatively high median budget of eight million Naira, and nine full-time employees, whereas the organisations in Kogi and Benue work with quite limited resources – roughly one million Naira in both states, and four full-time staff. Like in the South South and the South East, long-standing conflict coupled with international attention seems to have some implications for NGO capacity; where these factors are common, civil society tends to be better organized and funded.

Civil society in North Central implements a high number of victim assistance projects. The highest absolute number of victim assistance projects was recorded in the North Central zone – 41, or 77% of the projects recorded support victims in one way or another. Like in the South South, the most common types of work are psycho-social assistance and data collection.

**Figure 20: Map of North Central region**

**Figure 21: Number of actors mapped**

Civil society in North Central: Benue, Kogi, Plateau

A total of 77 stakeholders, including 55 civil society organisations, were mapped in the three states.

**Figure 22: Political violence by type**

**WANEp: early warning, dialogue and community policing**
The West Africa Network on Peacebuilding (WANEp) is a regional network of civil society organisations with members in all ECOWAS states and in all states of Nigeria. It functions as a platform for dialogue and experience-sharing for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. WANEp’s work in Plateau facilitates enhanced cooperation among civil society peacebuilding practitioners, so that experiences can be shared and common responses developed. It also works to increase the security of communities through community policing.
Benue state

GENERAL INTRODUCTION
Benue state is located in the North Central region of Nigeria. It shares borders with Nasarawa state to the North, Taraba to the East, Cross River, Enugu and Ebonyi to the South, and Kogi to the West. The state’s capital is Makurdi. Benue state was created on 3rd February, 1976, by the administration of General Murtala Muhammed. The predominant languages spoken in the state are Tiv, Idoma, Igede and Etulo. According to the official figures of the 2006 census, Benue state has a population of 4,253,641 people.

Benue state has 23 local governments. The state’s predominant ethnic groups are Tiv, Idoma and Igede.

Benue is largely an agricultural and rural state. About 80% of the population derives its income from agriculture. In order to check migration from rural to urban areas, the government has prioritised rural development such as the opening of rural roads and rural electrification projects. One of the state’s major resources (and its namesake) is the River Benue, which both supports the state’s agricultural production and could be a source of tourism revenue in the future.

OVERVIEW OF ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE STATE
Incidences of armed violence arise from various factors including boundary conflicts, armed robbery, cultism, political and electoral violence. The state conflicts can be largely divided into two broad categories – interstate conflict and intrastate conflicts.

One of the biggest cases of armed violence in the state happened in 2001, when Nigerian soldiers responded to the purported kidnapping and murder of 19 of their comrades by massacring hundreds of civilians in the town of Zakia Biam. In Gwer West, Fulani men have attacked and killed local Tiv people increasingly in recent years. These attacks have displaced more than 10,000 people.

Violence in Benue state includes attacks caused by cultism, armed robbery, assassinations and electoral conflicts. Other types of violence include extrajudicial or accidental killings by the police and armed robbers.

Since the return of Nigerian democracy in 1999, every election has been fraught with violence. Of the last general election, some commentators have written that politicians of various parties, particularly the Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP) and Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), made use of organised violence to support their electoral claims. Of particular note was a violent clash between the ACN and PDP in October 2011. Although accounts vary, the violence appeared to start after assailants attacked the home of a traditional leader in the town, killing four members of his family. The ensuing clash between supporters of the two parties resulted in as many as 30 deaths, and 60 houses also were destroyed.

However, it is not just the general elections that bring crises and violence; local government elections have also resulted in clashes. Kwande is also renowned for its several political crises notably those arising from the 27th March, 2003, local government elections (Anza and Adzegeh 2004).

PERPETRATORS OF ARMED VIOLENCE
The primary perpetrators of armed violence in Benue include thugs, cultists, armed robbers and in some cases, the police.

Aside from the major armed actors, violence in Nigeria is often carried out by so-called cults – which are closer to youth gangs than to the Western idea of semi-religious cults. (Human Rights Watch, 2005)

Until early 2005, the Nigerian police motto was “Fire for Fire.”

In many situations, armed violence does not belong to one particular category or another.

Inter- and intra-communal violence accounts for some of the most serious incidents of armed violence in Benue state. The various boundary disputes between Benue and Taraba, Nasarawa and Ebonyi/Enugu continue to be a source of concern. Fulani herders and Tiv farmers continue to clash in Gwer West at intervals. Most of these disputes are usually over matters of property rights.

Political and electoral violence seems to be one of the most common forms of violence in the state owing largely to the fact that most of the revenue in the state originates with the government. The conclusion that is frequently drawn from this state of affairs is that the person who controls political leadership controls the whole state – and its potential profits. This has led to great violence during almost every election.

Most of the institutions of higher learning in the state host cults of various types. There have been reports of attacks and reprisals that have even led to the closing down of schools.

Weapons used
While there are no exact figures to show the exact numbers and types of weapons used in particular cases of violence, the most common weapons appear to be handguns and machetes. However, raids by the police have resulted in the collection of other weapons including AK-47 and G3 rifles, Beretta and Browning pistols and various types of ammunition.

VICTIMS OF ARMED VIOLENCE
The victims of armed violence in Benue state include students, politicians, farmers and others. Large areas of Benue farmland have been abandoned with consequences for the local area as well as the rest of Nigeria. For instance, the most recent Gwer East invasion by the Fulanis left an estimated 16 people dead and several more injured. These attacks traumatise the local population and lead to displacement as farmers flee their land for safer territory.
The estimated total number of guns (both licit and illicit) held by civilians in Nigeria is two million. (Small Arms Survey, 2007).

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES

Women Environmental Programme (WEP) categorize the responses to armed violence as being either those carried out by the state or those carried out by non-governmental organisations.

State responses include actions by the various security forces in the state, including the police, army and navy. Broadly though, the state response to armed violence includes deployment of security forces to conflict areas for peacekeeping; relief responses, which involve the immediate and short-term provision of relief items to victims of violence; the establishment of commissions and panels of enquiry; government social programmes designed to stop hostilities and embrace peace and tolerance; and the establishment of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) in 2000 to strengthen capacities for the promotion of peace through conflict prevention, management and resolution.

These efforts have been thwarted by various factors - corruption, inefficiency and orientation of the Nigerian police and security personnel are all seen to have severely compromised the ability of the force to fulfill its primary function of maintaining law and order while protecting the lives and properties of the general citizenry. The forces have also been negatively affected by chronic underfunding. Despite all this, the Nigerian Police Force has been one of the most important groups responding to armed violence in the state.133

In some cases, the state police forces have worked with their federal counterparts to address armed conflict. The state also inaugurated a Joint Task Force of the various armed forces (police, army etc.) called Operation Zenda to combat crime.134

Traditional and religious leaders have interacted with their communities of focusto curb armed violence more generally. According to WREP, ‘Some traditional leaders belong to the State and Local Government’s Security Council and are called to support state efforts in nipping conflicts in the bud when these occur. The challenge with this response has always been that these leaders themselves are often parties in the conflicts. Thus, in a situation where some of them have lost the respect of the people, their role in the process is minimal’135

Non-Governmental Organisations have also set up various seminars and programmes aimed at enlightening the society on the dangers of armed violence. Finally, there are various vigilante groups all over the state that are set up to counter violence and crime.

Success and challenges

Benue state has seen a large number of recurring violent situations. Both the government and NGOs must engage in more efforts to stem the tide. The police must be better funded and equipped to strengthen their capabilities. Community policing, as used in other parts of Nigeria, would help to make things far better. It has also been speculated that politicians supply youths with weapons during elections, which are not collected afterwards. With the guns in their possession, these unemployed youths then use them to enrich themselves. Better investigations and cooperation between state agencies would help prevent crimes committed with these weapons.

Kogi state overview

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Kogi state is in the North Central zone of Nigeria. It is popularly called the ‘Confluence State’ because the confluence of Rivers Niger and Benue is at its capital, Lokoja (the first administrative capital of modern-day Nigeria). Kogi state was created out of the former Kwara and Benue states on August 27, 1991. The state covers the area of the former Kabba Province, previously split between Kwara state and Benue state in the state creation exercise of 1976.136

Kogi state shares borders with Niger and Nasarawa states and the Federal Capital Territory to the north, Benue and Enugu states to the east, and Edo, Ondo, Ekiti and Kwara States to the west. The state has 21 Local Government Areas (LGAs).

The total population of Kogi state is 3.8 million.137 Some LGAs, such as Ajaokuta LGA, have witnessed sharp rates of increase in their population over time, with some reports attributing this to the migration of members of the Ebira (also Igibe) community from the cocoa-belt in South Western Nigeria with the establishment of large steel and iron ore mining initiatives in Kogi.138

There are eight languages spoken as a first language in Kogi state: Ebira in Kogi, Okene, Adavi and Oko; Igala in Ankpa, Idah and Dekina LGAs; Nupe in Kogi LGA and Yoruba in the western LGAs of Kogi state are the major languages. Other minority languages include Kakanda in Kogi LGA; Kupa in Kogi LGA around Abubu; Basa in Bassa and Ankpa LGAs; and Oko-Eni-Okoyen in Okene LGA, Ogori and Magongo towns.139

Agriculture is a mainstay of the economy of Kogi: 23.7% of women and 42.2% of men (the largest occupational category for men) are employed in agriculture.140 Farm produce from the state includes coffee, cocoa, palm oil, cashew, groundnut, maize, cassava, yam, rice and melon. Mineral resources include coal, limestone, iron and tin.

OVERVIEW OF ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE STATE

Kogi state is one of the most tempestuous and conflict-prone states in Nigeria. Cases of the use of illegal arms in the state are rampant. The fact that the state is bordered by 10 other states and is the main gateway to the north of Nigeria for people from the South makes it a strategic location. The most common type of violence in the state is gang and organised crime, such as muggings, kidnappings, carjackings and armed robberies which continue at high levels in the state.

Political thuggery and organised killings by terrorist elements operating under the name of Boko Haram, the so-called ‘Islamism’ militant group, are also common. Also top on the list are incidences of communal and religious violence. The motivations behind violent acts include political and electoral contestations, religious and ethnic rivalry, and resource-based violence.

Religious violence is a common occurrence in Kogi. In August 2012, gunmen killed at least 19 worshipers at a Christian worship centre near Okene City in the state, prompting the government to impose a curfew and 24-hour surveillance in some parts of the state.141

Among the immediate causes of religious violence in Nigeria, a number of reasons have been cited including: religious intolerance, fundamentalism and extremism; disruptive modes of worship by the two main religions (Christianity and Islam); disparaging preaching and stereotyping; proselytising; government patronage, religious preferentialism and marginalisation; and sensationalism in media reporting.142
The spectacle of terrorism in the state has taken many lives and left many families devastated. In February 2012, armed men from the Boko Haram group used bombs and heavy gunfire to storm a prison in Kokonkarfe LGA in Kogi state. They freed 119 inmates, among them seven of their members. 143

This attack was followed by several successful attacks by the same Boko Haram group as well as raids by the Joint Security Taskforce (JTF) deployed by government to restore law and order. Other acts of armed violence include indiscriminate attacks on security agents in the state. Between 2010 and 2012, at least 16 policemen were killed in the Okene area. 142

Criminal violence is extremely common in Kogi. Although exact figures are not available, an analysis of media reports in the last two years shows that over 50 persons might have lost their lives in armed robberies. In December 2011, robbers killed 15 people in Okene, Kogi state, in a wave of violent robberies of four banks. 144

**PERPETRATORS OF ARMED VIOLENCE**

Significant numbers of violent acts in Kogi state are perpetrated by thugs recruited by politicians to rig or influence elections. They range from illiterates to highly educated youths who are nonetheless jobless. In addition to this is armed robbery. Recently, religious extremists have also perpetrated armed violence in the state. Weapons used in the carrying out of armed robbery, political assassinations and thuggery include machetes, axes, cutlasses, knives and clubs and locally made guns. However, recently, groups have escalated to the use of rocket launchers, guns and improvised explosive devices to bring down their targets. Besides other unknown sources, bandits also raid police stations in search of weapons and ammunition. Such was the case at the Kabba/Bunu LGA Police station which was raided by attackers using suspected grenades, razing the building. The attackers carted away arms and ammunition from the armoury and killed two policemen. 145

According to Kogi State Commissioner of Police, Alhaji Mohammed Musa Katsina, there are no fewer than 1,000 illegally acquired AK-47 rifles in private hands in Okene, the headquarters of the Central Senatorial District of the state. 146

**VICTIMS OF ARMED VIOLENCE**

Victims of armed violence who survive suffer loss of property, psychological, and non- lethal physical harm. They also suffer economically and financially as businesses, shops, markets and even commercial motorcyclists close operations during attacks and following the imposition of curfews. Individuals who travel through the state, particularly the areas under curfew, suffer from limitations on their freedom to travel.

**INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE**

The government has responded to armed violence in Kogi at both national and state levels. The Federal Government has set up a Joint Task Force (JTF) made up of members of the Nigerian police, the army, air force and State Security Services (SSS), with a mandate to keep the peace. At the state levels, the government has responded with a series of actions. It has mobilised traditional rulers, religious and political institutions to interface and intervene with their subjects, faith members and followers. While the current government at the state level has received commendation from leading civil society figures in the state for not institutionalising thuggery, Chief Security Officers (CSOs) criticise the government for failing to institute a Peace Committee which in their view could play a vital role in healing wounds of political and religious rivalries.

In an interview, Centre for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Executive Director Idris Milik said that, generally, local civil society organisations are not doing much to address armed violence. Virtually none of the local CSOs has a strategic plan or programme on armed violence. They therefore respond to situations as they emerge. Responses include undertaking assessment and issuing statements to media for reportage. However, in 2007 the Centre for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution mobilised the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) and the Civil Liberties Organisation to undertake site visits to scenes of electoral violence in Oginima area. The resulting report was forwarded to the Senate Ad-Hoc Committee and became a subject of Senate investigation.

As a follow up, some civil society organisations (such as the Centre of Human Rights and Conflict resolution, the Kogi state branch of Campaign for Democracy, Journalists for Development Initiative and the Kogi state chapter of the Civil Liberty Organisation) partnered with Kogi LGA to implement an amnesty programme. This offers money and employment for warring youths who return weapons and renounce violence. To date, the programme reports 68 people have thus far submitted their guns and received appointments from government. Some critics of the amnesty programme for youths and others who renounce violence contend that the amount (Niara 4,000) offered is too small to attract beneficiaries.

Groups such as Network on Police Reform and CLEEN Foundation have had some programmes in the state in collaboration with local groups. However, they do not maintain offices and physical presence in the state.

Boko Haram’s founder, Mohammed Yusuf, died after being taken into custody in 2009, but the group has continued to conduct attacks across Nigeria.

A woman cries after a bomb placed in a market in Nigeria causes the deaths of dozens of civilians (Pan-African News Wire).
Plateau state

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STATE
Plateau, in the North Central geopolitical zone, was created in 1967 by the Murtala Muhammed Regime. The state covers 26,899 km² and shares state boundaries with Bauchi (north), Taraba (east), Nasarawa (south) and Kaduna (west). The population is highly heterogeneous, with more than 40 ethno-linguistic groups in a population of more than 3.2 million. No ethnic group is large enough to claim a majority.147

The state capital, Jos, is rich in minerals, such as tin and columbite, and has attracted migrants from all over Nigeria to work in the mines and related service industries.148 Farmers grow a variety of crops on the fertile agricultural land. The climate is near-temperate, with abundant water and pasture and an absence of disease, which attracted Fulani livestock herders to the area.149 It is also attractive to Nigerian and foreign tourists and retirees.

Although statewide estimates indicate that the Christian population is a significant majority, figures for the city of Jos, with a population of more than 1 million, indicate that the urban area is much more evenly split between Christians and Muslims.150

OVERVIEW OF ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE STATE
Levels of violence
Plateau is among the most conflict-affected states in Nigeria. The Nigeria Security Tracker recorded 1,016 violence-related deaths in Plateau between May 2011 and August 2013, and the Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset recorded 312 separate incidents of armed political violence in the state between 1997 and August 2013.151

Armed violence in Plateau is characterised by extreme volatility: relatively low levels of conflict are interspersed with sudden and devastating spikes in violence, usually occurring around critical junctures such as elections. Hundreds of people have been killed in short-lived, sporadic episodes of inter-group violence, revenge killings and raiding.152

Plateau has experienced very serious inter-communal conflict since 2000. Violence in Jos in September 2001 killed in short-lived, sporadic episodes of inter-group violence, revenge killings and raiding.152

Plateau has experienced very serious inter-communal conflict since 2000. Violence in Jos in September 2001 killed over 1000 people. 

Main underlying causes
Conflict in Plateau is often reduced to Christian/ Muslim violence, but issues of regional identities, ethnicity, ‘indigeneity’ and ‘settlement,’ access to land and livelihoods all overlap with religious identities to produce a volatile and explosive conflict profile.

Inter-group violence in Plateau concerns the largely Christian farmers, who see themselves as indigenous to the area, and the predominantly Muslim population of traders and pastoralists with origins in northern Nigeria.154 Under changes to the law in the 1990s, many Muslims and members of ethnic groups who are dominant in the North were denied eligibility for indigenous status. This led to federal intervention, which only stoked fears about access to indigenous legal status and resources.

The real drivers of inter-group armed violence are, therefore, the institutional framework by which indigenous status is granted to groups and its failure to institute inclusive broad-based citizenship; discriminatory access to resources, political...
At least 1,000 people died in religious and ethnic fighting in Plateau state in 2010 alone (NigeriaWatch, 2011).

power and opportunities; and the politicisation and manipulation of these fears by elites. 136

In September 2001, tensions exploded in Jos and around 1,000 people were killed in just six days. 137

What had originally been an ethnic and political conflict turned into a religious one, because the two sides exploited religion to mobilise large-scale support. The violence spread across the state; Human Rights Watch estimates that between 2,000 and 3,000 people were killed between September 2001 and May 2004. 138

PERPETRATORS OF ARMED VIOLENCE

Government action (and at times, inaction) has sometimes exacerbated this cycle of violence. Despite heavy police and military deployments, security forces have failed to defuse mounting tensions. During inter-communal violence in 2004, as many as 700 people were killed before the military intervened. 139

In the southern zone, some believe that security forces have accepted bribes to allow attackers in.

Inaction may partly be the result of the failure to unify federal and state responses to crises, 140 but it may also indicate a lack of political will to quell violence. Sometimes, elites have deliberately politicised ethnic, religious and regional identities to gain support and mobilise supporters. Politicians, traditional and religious leaders, drug lords, and organised crime syndicates have supplied or paid for arms.

As public trust in state security and police has deteriorated, people have increasingly put their trust in local militias, vigilantes and defence groups, and thereby fed the violence with the militarisation of non-state armed actors. 141

Nearly all groups in conflict-affected areas have formed armed militias or defence groups trained by members with previous military experience. Not all can afford small arms and must rely instead on traditional weapons such as swords, machetes and bows and arrows. 142

Some weapons originate from internal and cross-border trafficking; mercenaries and fighters have brought in others from the neighbouring states of Nasarawa, Bauchi, and Taraba, usually on hire. Non-Muslim armed groups apparently purchase most of their weapons from the southeast, whereas Muslim groups look to Chad, Niger and Cameroon. Corrupt security personnel have sometimes hired out their weapons for short periods of time and former personnel have donated large numbers of weapons.

VICE TIME OF ARMED VIOLENCE

More than half (52%) of incidents of political violence have targeted civilians (this includes some very high level individuals such as the recent death of a Senator); violence against non-combatants has caused approximately 48% of conflict-related deaths in the state. 143

A study based on hospital data revealed that 16 per cent of the victims of fighting in and around Jos during 2001-02 were aged 3-19 years old, and more than a quarter were women. 144

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

Although attempts to investigate episodes of violence are to be encouraged there are issues. So many inquiries have been established in Plateau, and yet so little action has been taken as a result of these inquiries, that the inquiry process has been largely discredited and politicised. This has led to institutionalised impunity, with few perpetrators brought to account for the consequences of their actions.

During a state peace conference in 2004 members of the affected communities acknowledged the need to disarm, but cautioned that it would create an opening for attacks by mercenaries from outside Plateau. They called on the federal government to initiate a nationwide arms recovery programme, target neighbouring states and stop armed attackers from entering Plateau. 145

A visit to Jos, capital of the North Central Nigerian state of Plateau, is, at first, reassuring. While armed security personnel still patrol the streets, they are fewer in number than at the height of the crisis a few years ago. But such is the nature of Plateau’s conflict: periods of calm punctuated with bursts of concentrated violence.

CHECKPOINTS AND ARMS TRAFFICKING

Our researchers found checkpoints along most major roads leading into and out of the state capital and many nearby towns and villages. These checkpoints are usually operated by 5-10 uniformed personnel armed with AK-47 rifles as well as plainclothes security operatives. One told us: “We look at the faces of passengers and observe their body language when their vehicles are stopped. We single out some passengers for questioning based on professional [experience].”

Our researchers observed some vehicles with government registration number plates pass unchecked, particularly those with tinted glass. A soldier told our researchers that these vehicles are allowed through because they are “big men” who take offense if delayed.

INDIGENITY

We were told that remote village communities often had their own security arrangements, believing the government fails to protect communities against criminals and vigilantes. This has had consequences. An anonymous security consultant told us that arms proliferation in the state is “unbelievable”, and that indigenes have begun arming themselves. “People… were used to just crying out for help when attacked,” he said. “Now they’ve realised the need to defend themselves against aggressors.”

An anonymous village chief confirmed this: “Our boys take turns…to keep guard. We got them some weapons because some of the attackers who come are well armed. You don’t expect someone with a stick to [fight] people with guns.”

A family gathers around the grave in Jos, where three murdered family members were buried together, December 2011 (Reuters/Abolaji Solundolu).
According to these villagers, official security personnel are mainly in urban areas so unable to protect vulnerable communities not easily accessible by vehicles. We were told some communities contribute money for village armaments or, in extreme cases, the employment of mercenaries. Kinsmen in the military or police are sometimes brought in to help acquire weapons or act as vigilantes. We were told repeatedly of stockpiles of arms and ammunition in many towns and villages across the state. In the Riyom region, our researcher witnessed vigilantes first hand. Some carried antique guns, others clubs and knives; a few had more modern rifles. Community leaders in these outlying regions said they feel they are not offered government help and that vigilante security remains their only option to defend their territory.

One of the non-indigenous groups our researchers encountered in outlying regions were migratory Fulani herdsmen. Social workers working in Fulani communities told us there is ongoing violence between the Fulani and indigenes. Despite the fact the Fulani have lived for over a century in these territories, they are still seen as settlers by indigenes. Our researcher was told the Fulani, armed with assault rifles, traditional knives and machetes, sometimes raid villages at dawn. There is a rumour the Muslim Fulani are supported by ‘external powers’ in attacking the mostly Christian Berom villagers (a belief underpinned by the sophisticated weapons used). Some Fulani attackers also wear military attire, leading to the belief security forces are supporting the Fulani. The military’s spokesman in Plateau, Lt. K. Amos, reacting to an attack where men dressed in military camouflage slaughtered a family of 10, said no soldiers were involved: “Somehow, criminals gained access to our old uniforms … but I can assure that none of our people were involved.”

**MEDIA**

The general narrative in Plateau is that there is a “return-to-peace”, but this is often not borne out by the situation on the ground. Many believe that this narrative is pushed forward by the media, not so much by direct collusion as by a withholding of information on the part of the security forces.

According to some villagers, killings in remote communities often go unreported; some that are reported never make it out of the files of the state security service. Five journalists told us they had very limited information on levels of violence in the state, and that there is little they can do to report on the violence without endangering their own lives. Some claim to have come under threat from communities that deemed their work ‘unfavourable reporting’. What’s more, most of the areas under attack are too remote or dangerous for journalists to travel to. So journalists are left with little more than phone interviews or security press releases. And telephone service is limited or nonexistent in many of the remote areas.

“I cannot risk my life to visit some of these communities being attacked,” said a journalist who wished to remain anonymous. “Even soldiers are afraid to go there so how would you expect an ordinary journalist who has no [weapons] to go and verify claims? That can never be possible.”

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

Representatives of the government told us that they are committed to making Plateau safe over the long-term. According to Alhassan Barde, Executive Secretary of the Plateau State Emergency Management Agency: “Governor Jonah Jang is aware of the crisis which has affected thousands of persons in the state and that is why he has always taken significant steps to enhance an effective and timely response to the needs of internally displaced persons.”

But perhaps most telling is the response of victims to their own situation. Many victims do not go to court to seek justice or compensation. They would rather concentrate on rebuilding and fending for themselves, hoping not to be attacked again. No military or security commanders would speak to our researchers.
North East regional overview

**ADAMAWA, BAUCHI, BORNO, GOMBE, TARABA, YOBE**

**POLITICS**

Discussions of politics in Nigeria are frequently characterised in terms of Northern and Southern rivalry, although this can mask much more complex dynamics of violence in the region. The most active militant group in the North East is the violent Islamist group Boko Haram, which has evolved over time to target not only security forces but also traditional leaders and public officials who have been critical of their agenda.

The federal government has in recent years twice declared a state of emergency in parts of the North East in response to high levels of armed violence there: most recently in the states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa in May 2013, 167 and previously in January 2012 of several local government areas in Yobe and Borno states. 168 Most states in the North East region were won by the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, the current President’s strongest rival in the most recent 2011 general elections. Taraba and Adamawa were won by President Jonathan. 169

**ECONOMICS**

Across a range of poverty measures, the North East performs particularly poorly. The region has the highest mortality rate in all national regions. 170 The North East also has the highest rate in the country of male respondents who reported having no educational attainment whatsoever, and the second highest rates of female respondents reporting they had no educational attainment. 171 Bauchi and Yobe in the North East are among the five states with the highest rates of absolute poverty (at 84 and 81.75 respectively). 172

**DEMographics/GEography**

The population of the North East region is estimated at 22.3 million people. 173 The region’s population is predominantly Muslim, 174 and members of the Hausa-Fulani and Kanuri ethnic groups (who make up approximately 29% and 4% of the national population respectively) are dominant in the area. 175

Conflict in the North East region cannot be easily reduced to violence between Muslims and Christians: Boko Haram has carried out several high-profile attacks on Christian communities and churches, and has also engaged in extensive violence against Muslim communities and Muslim clerics who are critical of their agenda.

**armed violence**

Much of the upsurge in armed violence in Nigeria since 2009 has been driven by conflict in the North East of the country. Conflict in this region has garnered international attention in recent years with the rise of Boko Haram, a violent Islamist group primarily operating in the North East, alongside other affiliated groups. Reports of violent Islamist activity are often attributed to Boko Haram, but may in fact represent the actions of a more diverse range of emerging militant groups 176 and a wide range of affiliates and members, including reports of forced recruitment 177 and the targeting of vulnerable youth. 178

Attempts by the government to quell violence in the North East have emphasised military responses, including aerial bombardments of suspected training camps following the May 2013 declaration of a state of emergency, and wide-ranging military-police raids in North East urban areas. 179 These have been met with claims of heavy-handedness and indiscriminate violence by state forces. 180 A more recent strategy of the federal and local governments has been to tolerate and in some cases support the deployment of vigilante forces, commonly referred to as the ‘Civilian JTF’, although this poses some risks in terms of the potential for counter-attacks 181 and further escalating violence. 182

**CivilSociety**

In Bauchi and Taraba, 50 organisations including 35 civil society organisations were surveyed.

Civil Society there has less money than counterparts in other zones. Getting information about budgets was even more challenging in the North East than in other zones. From the scarce data on finance, it appears that the median budget seems to under 3 million naira annually, which is lower than the national median of 3.8 million naira.

**FOMWAN addresses Sara Suka:**

The Federation of Muslim Women Association in Nigeria (FOMWAN) is a faith-based non-profit organisation founded in 1985. In Bauchi, one of FOMWAN’s interventions works with youth gangs who carry out armed robberies in urban areas and are sometimes linked to political parties in times of elections. The project works with potential youth perpetrators through engaging them in formal and informal skills acquisition programmes, neighbourhood watches and vigilante activities to reintegrate them into communities. 183

An attack by suspected Boko Haram gunmen at an agricultural college in Gujba, Yobe state in September 2013 killed more than 40 students.
Bauchi state overview

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Bauchi is located in the North East of Nigeria and had a population of 4,643,066 as of the 2006 census. The southern part of the state is predominantly Christian, while the north is heavily Muslim, with a minority of followers of traditional religions throughout the state. Bauchi also has a high level of tribal diversity, with 55 separate groups spread across its 20 local government areas.

Agriculture is predominant in Bauchi’s economy. However, as with its neighbours in Nigeria’s northeast, poverty is a major issue. Bauchi’s 49% poverty rate is the fourth-highest in the country, and its 30% unemployment rate is the second-highest nationally. The unemployment rate is also unbalanced by gender, with 19% of females employed and 87% of males. The youth bulge in Bauchi’s population – 55.4% are 19 years of age or younger – is also considerable and feeds into the potential for unrest there.

The drivers of violence in Bauchi are similar to those in the neighbouring states of the North East region. The state experiences high rates of absolute poverty, unemployment and infant mortality. There are some state-specific characteristics which may underscore the high levels of conflict witnessed there. A 2012 CLEEN Foundation survey found that 39% of survey respondents in Bauchi reported experiencing bribery and corruption among public officials, far above the national average of 24%.

OVERVIEW OF ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE STATE

Armed violence in many areas of Nigeria has escalated since 1999 and is destabilising and impoverishing communities. Small arms and light weapons (SALW) are freely available and both regional and state controls are minimal.

Bauchi has experienced overall moderate levels of violence, primarily involving Boko Haram militants. The Nigeria Security Tracker recorded 169 violence-related deaths in Bauchi between May 2011 and August 2013, while the ACLED political violence research project recorded 93 separate explicitly political incidents of armed violence in the state between 2000 and August 2013.

Inter-communal attacks, battles over control of natural resources and reprisals have flared up on several occasions, with tensions related to land/ political control and political rivalries compounding existing social tensions. Meanwhile, representatives of Nigeria’s State institutions, religious buildings and popular recreational spaces were the target of frequent bomb attacks and other deadly incidents in Bauchi.

Tafawa Balewa and Bogoro local government areas have seen a long period of communal violence and resultant fear amongst residents from 1991 to the present. Gunmen have adopted a hit-and-run strategy in raiding the area. Most recently, in August, 2013, a bus was attacked and two people were killed.

Post election violence erupted in May 2011 in various parts of the state, but Katagum, Bauchi, Misau, Danbam and Alkaleri LGAs were most heavily affected. Many people were killed, while cars, houses and other valuables were destroyed in the aftermath of the presidential election in different parts of Bauchi State. The basic cause of the violence in nearly all the communities concerned was political, although ethnoreligious sentiments were also raised by those stoking the flames.

In urban areas, armed gangs of youth exploited and sometimes financed by politicians or political groups during campaigns and elections engage in electoral violence. Outside of election seasons, these gangs frequently resort to armed violence and robbery.

Main underlying causes

Illiteracy is a major issue in Bauchi. The 2010 Nigerian Education Data Survey showed that Bauchi State is moving slowly to improve educational outcomes. Adult literacy is also uneven on gender lines – males have a 50.3 percent literacy rate versus 28.5 percent for females. This state of affairs is compounded by the high level of unemployment, the lack of access to capital or training and the widening gap between the rich and the poor. The opportunity for vocational skills is limited to few and where available the requirement is at least a post primary school education qualification.

The vulnerability of the population to armed violence is exacerbated by the chaotic nature of politics in Bauchi. Unemployed youths are bought off by unscrupulous politicians and used to attack or intimidate their opponents. These individuals are locally known as sara saka, meaning “to cut or stab.”

PERPETRATORS OF ARMED VIOLENCE

Mostly the perpetrators of armed violence in Bauchi state are males between the ages of 12 and 35. Some of these are in the employ of political leaders; others take part in communal violence. Another set of perpetrators are the religious leaders who encourage violence, as with Boko Haram.

Weapons used

Armed violence has been exacerbated by the fact that older variants of locally-produced guns have in the past few years been replaced by more modern weaponry. Many of these are imported (either legally or illicitly), usually second-hand rather than new. Among the weapons now in use in Bauchi are AK-47 assault rifles, Beretta and Browning pistols, carbine rifles, double-barreled shotguns, sub-machine guns, knives, improvised explosive devices, sticks, clubs and incendiaries.

VICTIMS OF ARMED VIOLENCE

Armed violence inhibits development for all, but women and children suffer the most during conflicts. Rape, gendered violence, reductions in living conditions, and displacement and homelessness are all results of recurring political, cultural and religious violence as well as ordinary criminality.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES

A commission was set up in 2009 in the wake of the violence which occurred in February of that year. Its mandate was to examine the causes of the violence and make recommendations for long-term fixes which could prevent such incidents from happening again in the future.

Local peace and reconciliation committees are designed to address issues of violence in situations that are not religious or political. The committees are inaugurated by village heads to tackle matters before the police or army become involved. In a similar vein, neighbourhood religious coalitions are committees made up of the clergy and other respectable persons within the community. They broker peace in matters pertaining to religion before they escalate into armed violence.

In the state capital and urban areas, the military and police have established checkpoints and patrols to stop and check persons likely to start or participate in armed conflicts. The state has also enacted an anti-thuggery law and a law compensating the victims of rioting. These are intended to curtail the rising armed violence within the state.

Responses to armed violence are highly localised: very few international organisations working directly on armed violence reduction and mitigation were recorded in Action on Armed Violence’s mid-term report, although two were recorded working on risk factors in health and maternal mortality. Similarly, although data on finances was limited, the organisation surveyed reported a median budget under 3 million Naira, lower than the national median.

Military retaliation for a Boko Haram ambush which killed one soldier in Baga, April 2013, resulted in 2,275 destroyed buildings and an indeterminate number of casualties. (Human Rights Watch)
Bauchi state: view from the ground

When our researchers arrived in the North East state of Bauchi, it was immediately apparent from the checkpoints drawn across major roads and the armed security personnel patrolling the streets that peace was not at hand. As one military officer who wished to remain anonymous told us, “Forget what you read in the newspapers that all is well. We are on a serious alert here.”

Movements are restricted in some areas, particularly those in which Boko Haram is believed to have sympathizers. Many people we spoke to in these areas said that they tend to stay indoors and avoid crowded areas – commercial activities have been hard hit by the restrictions and the population’s wariness. “Driving around the state is no longer easy,” says resident Sani Yusuf “A place that would have taken you 30 minutes [to get to] you end up spending hours [to get to now]. Soldiers and policemen will always stop you for interrogation.”

**BAUCHI HARAM**

Since a successful prison break in 2010, in which more than 700 prisoners escaped, Boko Haram has launched multiple raids on prisons in Bauchi state to free those being held for inciting sectarian violence. AOAUV has been told that little was done to search for the freed inmates. The few re-arrested are often non-Boko Haram criminals who escaped in the chaos.

What’s more, according to sources, no full investigation has been carried out on this rash of prison breaks. With no changes implemented by the prisons, and very little resistance offered by the guard, it appears to be a cycle destined to continue.

Recently, another terrorist group – Ansaru – has splintered off from Boko Haram. The group has reportedly claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of some foreign nationals in Bauchi state, and is thought to be better organised and more heavily armed than the normal Boko Haram militants. There are rumoured connections to Al-Qaeda groups displaced by fights in Mali and Libya.

However, Isa Yuguda, governor of Bauchi state, is optimistic that amnesty will separate the ideological from criminal terrorists. In a much quoted statement, Yuguda has said, “I believe the real Boko Haram may have genuine agitations, like joblessness. But once they accept amnesty we will fight the criminal ones.”

**CONFLICT OVER RELIGION AND INDIGENITY**

Like most of northern Nigeria, Bauchi state is primarily Muslim with a sizable Christian minority. Despite these minority numbers, many Bauchi Christians considered themselves region’s indigenes, resulting in conflict. In some areas, Muslims who have inhabited the area for almost a century are still considered settlers. As is often the case in Nigeria, it’s hard to separate the religious from the political. In the summer of 2013, the Tafawa Balewa Headquarters – Bauchi state’s governmental HQ – was moved from the town of Tafawa to Bununu, a strict Muslim enclave. This was seen by some as an invitation for Muslim extremists to attack in Bauchi state. As Rev. Isaac Istifanus told the Daily Post newspaper, “The relocation of Tafawa Balewa Local Government Headquarters was out of ill will as it was meant to pave way for attacks on residents of Tafawa Balewa and its environs.”

**POLITICAL INTIMIDATION**

Bauchi’s criminal gang Sara-Suka is often used as the pawn of political groups during election times, according to many of the people we spoke to. These drug gangs move in groups sometimes in the hundreds, stabbing and sometimes butchering their victims. At election time politicians reportedly hire Sara-Suka thugs to disrupt the polls and intimidate voters, particularly in the towns of Bauchi and Azare.

**MEDIA**

There is very little coverage of attacks within Bauchi in the media, and what information does get out is often incomplete or insufficient. Our researcher was told that, in the villages, casualty figures are sometimes speculative, and that locals keep information to themselves for fear of attracting reprisal attacks. Likewise, information is rarely released by government and security agencies. A security official, pleading anonymity, told our researchers, “We don’t trust anyone. Some persons come to us as journalists and we can’t confirm if they are agents of the Boko Haram, so we rather not talk but issue only press releases before we give out useful information.”

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

Residents told our researcher that victims of attacks get very little help from the government after the fact. They rarely get security reinforcement, and compensations are sometimes not paid. For example, some victims of the 2011 electoral violence are still chasing government promises of compensation, as are many victims of attacks by Boko Haram. Sources within the local government, wishing to remain anonymous, told our researcher that members of government panels set up to investigate violent incidents seem to see the position as a political compensation – with panel salaries and per diem allotments – rather than as a job to accomplish.

In 2012, the Bauchi state government set up Danga, a state-specific security force, and began drafting in larger numbers of personnel to step up security measures. Drawn from the local populations, unlike the federal security operatives, these Danga units are essentially better-equipped vigilantes. Residents say that the Danga are feared by criminal youths more than the police, because of their local knowledge and connections. Likewise, remote communities have created their own vigilante forces, patrolling the villages at night with arms that they conceal, as they are not authorized to carry weapons.
Borno state

**General Introduction**

Borno, in the far northeast of Nigeria, was created in 1976 and covers an area of 69,435 km². It borders Niger to the north, Chad to the northeast, and Cameroon to the east, as well as three Nigerian states to the south and west: Yobe, Gombe and Adamawa.

The state is subdivided into three senatorial districts: ethnic Kanuris dominate Borno North and Central, with ethnic minorities in Borno South. Some 30 indigenous languages are spoken; Kanuri dominates and the Shuwa Arabs speak an Arabic dialect. Under the traditional administrative structure, the state has three strong emirates (Borno, Dikwa and Buni) and four chiefdoms (Askira, Uba, Shani and Gwoza).

Official statistics estimated the population to be 5,158,680 million in 2012. Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy, and the majority of the active population is involved in fishing (on Lake Chad) or herding.

Clay, salt and potash deposits are found in the Chad plains. Limestone and kaolin deposits abound in the south and west: Yobe, Gombe and Adamawa. Limestone and kaolin deposits are found in the Chad plains. Limestone and kaolin deposits abound in the south and west: Yobe, Gombe and Adamawa.

**Overview of Armed Violence in the State**

Borno is the most conflict-affected state in the country. Since independence, the government has changed 14 times, on seven occasions through bloody military coups. The Nigeria Security Tracker recorded more than 8,600 deaths nationwide between May 2011 and August 2013 because of political, economic and social violence; 2,470 (28.7%) were in Borno. The state also had the highest recorded levels of political violence in the Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset, at 473 separate conflict incidents since 1997.

Information on responses to armed violence in Borno is limited: during the preparation of the interim report on armed violence reduction strategy mapping, the security situation deteriorated to such a degree that AOAV was unable to carry out research in the state directly. Initial research indicated that at least 34 organisations were conducting work in the area of armed violence response, including religious groups, NGOs and community-based associations. These were typically low-profile organisations.

**Main Underlying Causes**

There are three main theories of insecurity in Borno. The “armed robbery theory” posits that armed groups are increasingly sophisticated; that national politics is extremely competitive and elections are perceived as zero-sum contests, which leads to a marriage between the two. Armed groups subsequently develop their own bases of economic support (armed robbery) and free themselves from their political patrons. The fallout is the increasingly militarised nature of politics, the use of violence as an electoral tool, and the incultation of a culture of violence in society.

The “wobble economy theory” posits that with growing numbers of youths unable to find work in a saturated labour market, and against a background of high poverty levels, they are recruited and exploited as hired killers. Second-term politicians, determined to retain power at any cost, arm the youths before elections and the weapons are never recovered.

According to the “ruling-opposition party theory”, the ruling party accuses the opposition – and other groups it brands as anti-democratic – of engaging in violent crimes. Political marginalisation is the impetus for much of the violence in Nigeria, and no less so in Borno. “The ugly situations is a combination of poverty and [low] loss of public confidence in elections… with the electorate feeling they would not get justice from election tribunals, and the inability of political leaders to manage communal and interfaith relations”.

**Porous Borders**

Porous borders facilitate access to small arms and light weapons, and the heterogeneous nature of border populations brings other problems. During the 19th century, the colonial powers’ arbitrary boundaries did not recognise tribes and ethnic groups. For example, as well as living in Nigeria, Youbas and Borugs live in Benin; Hausas, Mandaras, Kanuris, Fulanis and Kotokos in Cameroon; Shuwa Arabs and Kanembus in Chad, and Hausas and Fulanis in Niger.

These trans-border communities are usually composed of kinfolk who owe allegiance to one another, sometimes at the expense of their governments. They intermarry and members of the same family commonly live on either side of a border. These circumstances are not conducive to the efficient policing of international borders. Locals know how to evade security checks and are reluctant to cooperate with security forces, especially on cross-border trafficking and crime, which may constitute their livelihoods.

**Historical Legacy**

According to International Crisis Group, armed violence in northern Nigeria has steadily increased over the past 30 years. This has often taken the form of urban riots, and religious disturbances between Muslims and Christians and between different Islamic sects.

**Borno**

Population size: 4.9m
Absolute poverty rate: 60.6
Unemployment rate: 29.1
Infant mortality rate: 60
Average household size: 6.3
Muslim share of population: 60%
Christian share of population: 20%

The Violent Road, thousands of Nigerians have fled the country’s North East to escape fighting between the government and local armed groups.
Armed religious militancy in Borno dates back to the 1980s. Boko Haram is believed to have originated in late 2004 out of a group that crossed between Nigeria and Cameroon. It was established in the state capital Maiduguri and remains by far the most active armed group in the state. Boko Haram has been involved in almost two-thirds (60%) of all recorded political violence; followed by the military (14%) and police (3%).

In June 2009, police killed 17 Boko Haram members at a funeral. Anger at perceived heavy-handed police tactics led to armed uprising in the northern state of Bauchi, which spread into Borno, Yobe and Kano. Following the uprising, the militants’ leader Yusuf, his father-in-law Baa Fugu and other members were killed outside Maiduguri police station. The police initially claimed that they died in an intense gun battle with officers, but video later emerged that showed they had been executed. Observers and human rights advocates described these as extra-judicial killings. The government eventually agreed: in late 2011, five police officers were brought to trial for allegedly murdering Yusuf, but the armed violence refused to abate. The Joint Task Force (JTF) was deployed to reinforce the overwhelmed local police; by the time they began to regain control, more than 800 people had been killed.

PERPETRATORS OF ARMED VIOLENCE
The main perpetrators of violence are Boko Haram and the JTF. In 2011, Amnesty International reported many cases of forcible disappearance of suspects, torture and extrajudicial executions; in addition to other ill treatment by the police and security forces, including arbitrary arrest, unlawful threats and extorting money from detainees. This situation has the result of turning Boko Haram and their sympathisers into, to some degree, victims.

Weapons used
Weapons range from very simple to sophisticated, for example: clubs; machetes; Molotov cocktails; locally made and foreign small arms; rocket launchers, rocket bombs; and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). IEDs may be either simple improvised grenades (e.g. soft-drink cans filled with explosives), which can be thrown from motorcycles or larger devices left at target locations. In June 2011, militants drove a suicide Vehicle Bomb (IED) into the Nigerian National Police headquarters in Abuja.

Boko Haram is believed to have access to large quantities of commercial explosives either stolen or extortion from mining companies in the north, or purchased via front companies. They are also believed to have sophisticated shoulder-launched weapons systems.

Apart from the ubiquitous AK-47 semiautomatic rifle, the Heckler & Koch G3 machine gun is widely used by both state security forces and militants. Boko Haram attacks police stations and security forces to obtain weapons.

VICTIMS OF ARMED VIOLENCE
Borno has the highest absolute and proportional levels of recorded attacks on civilians. This is because of the deliberate targeting of civilian political, traditional and civil society leaders who criticise Boko Haram, in addition to sporadic, high-profile attacks on extremely vulnerable civilian targets such as schools and churches.

In 2011, Amnesty International reported that the group was targeting the police, security forces, government officials and buildings. They had also killed religious leaders and reportedly put up posters threatening to kill anyone they suspected of giving information to the security forces.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE
The level of insecurity and its move into terrorism greatly concerns security experts. The police, armed forces and state security intelligence community are held to be the institutions best equipped to confront this. Religious groups and civil society organisations that are seen as neutral will also have great impact in addressing armed violence.

Borno state: view from the ground

During our visit to Borno, and in particular its capital city of Maiduguri (also the city in which Boko Haram was established), security sources told our researchers that insurgents have resurfaced.

BOKO HARAM
The militant Islamist group Boko Haram is at the heart of Borno’s insecurity. The insurgents still control some regions, especially areas bordering Cameroon, Chad and Republic of Niger, where difficult terrain confounds efforts by the Nigerian military to establish control.

One resident who fled fighting in neighbouring Bauchi state and now lives in Borno, said he had high hopes for the military surge that accompanied the state of emergency, but such hopes had not come true: “We were happy when the president declared a state of emergency and sent more soldiers to Borno. Now these Boko Haram seem to have come back and started killing people once again.” Dawn raids on remote communities, drive-by shootings, detonation of explosives targeting security personnel, bank robberies, raids for arms on police stations, and prison breaks are all ongoing in Borno.

Boko Haram attackers believe they have suffered injustice at the hands of the government, being detained or even killed for belonging to the group. Some who join the group are unemployed youths or ‘political thugs’ who feel as though the government has wronged them. In some cases, these grievances may be valid: the official civilian vigilante Joint Task Force (JTF) has been accused of abuse in detention centres and during anti-insurgent operations, including the arbitrary arrest of those suspected of sympathy for Boko Haram.

There are unconfirmed reports that Boko Haram is rearming with more sophisticated weapons smuggled in via Niger and Cameroun.

MEDIA
We were told by journalists that telephone and internet services are frequently cut off and communication is almost nonexistent, leaving them with no way to confirm military press releases and statements. Meanwhile, Boko Haram operatives continue to upload videos to YouTube telling their followers the group is winning the war.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE
A curfew is in place across Borno, and checkpoints manned by security personnel. At times of extreme conflict between the military and Boko Haram insurgents, such as October, 2013, the curfew is extended in some high risk areas - such as Maiduguri metropolitan council, Jere local government area and Bama town to a 24-hour statewide curfew. Heavy artillery weapons have been deployed by the military, as have fighter jets and armoured tanks. The Boko Haram response to this is to use assault rifles, IEDs and local intelligence to out-strategise the military.

The establishment of the JTF vigilante group has given the anti-insurgent fighters a boost, as local residents told us that they trust civilian JTF soldiers more than the official army. Unfortunately, such successes have been double-edged, as Boko Haram now sees civilians as a serious threat and has begun assassinating members of the vigilante group. Nigeria’s usual ethnic and political polarizations have begun to emerge in the JTF and we were told that in-fighting within the group is becoming more common. The military does not disclose the exact number of their men killed, arguably because they do not want to be seen as losing the war. Boko Haram takes this further, sometimes hurriedly burying their casualties in shallow graves to avoid any data being gathered on their losses.

The government of Borno has recently stepped up distribution of relief materials to victims. Food, clothing, sleeping mats and makeshift accommodation have been provided for some victims, and the government has begun efforts to renovate those school buildings and offices destroyed in insurgent violence.

In 2004, Nigerian authorities reported having destroyed 1466 guns surrendered in a firearms amnesty programme.
Taraba State was created on 27th August, 1991, from the former Gongola State. The state is in the North East region of the country. Taraba is bounded by Bauchi State and Gombe State in the northeast, Adamawa State on the east and Plateau State in the northwest. The state is further bounded to the west by both Nasarawa and Benue States. Taraba shares an international boundary with the Republic of Cameroon to the south and southeast. The state has 16 Local Government Areas (LGAs).

Taraba has an estimated population of 2.6 million people. The state is extremely ethnically diverse: ethnic groups found in the state include Mumuye, Iloko, Mambilla, Kuteb, Chamba, Jukun, Tiv, Yandang, Fulani, Jenjo, Kunini, Ndoro, Kambu, Kaka, Bandawa, Mungu, Zo and Banbuka. Other ethnicities such as Igbo and Yoruba are also found in Taraba State. Hausa is a commonly spoken language in Taraba State irrespective of ethnic grouping. The state is also religiously diverse with large populations of both Christians and Muslims.

Economically, the state suffers from relatively high rates of poverty: approximately 68.3% of the population lives in absolute poverty, although this rate is lower than all but one other state (Borno) in the North East.

OVERVIEW OF ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE STATE

Armed violence in Taraba State is dominated by tribal crises arising from land disputes, conflict between nomadic and farming communities, and chieftaincy issues. Criminal violence is also common, as is political violence. Since 2012, a small number of attacks in the state have been attributed to suspected Boko Haram militants.

Communal conflict has recurred between members of the Jukun / Chamba and Kuteb communities in Taraba at multiple points in recent years. In 1997, several people were killed and houses burnt in communal clashes and rioting during a period of local council restructuring which saw the removal of elected local council officials from office. Sporadic unrest following that campaign of violence continued into January 1998, by which time over 50,000 people had been displaced and property worth millions of Naira destroyed in the violence.

Armed violence in the state has a strong historical dimension, with the recurring crises involving Jukun / Chamba and Kuteb communities arising from a historical claim to the territory of Takum LGA and the chieftaincy title. Members of the Jukun / Chamba communities have asserted that they occupied the present location around 18th century, while the Kutebs maintained that the Chambas migrated more recently into the area from present-day Adamawa State.

In other politically-motivated violence, Taraba has witnessed high levels of rioting and armed violence between rival political party supporters. Around 30 people were killed in clashes between rival supporters and security forces following local government elections in 2004. Deadly riots also followed the general election in Taraba in 2011, resulting in two deaths.

Access and control over land is also a cause of armed violence in Taraba State. Generally land disputes have resulted from tussles over the right of succession, while others revolve round the right to land ownership. In July 2011, a councillor representing Kona Ward in Taraba State and six others were killed in communal conflict arising from a land dispute. The deaths occurred during a communal clash between members of the Mumuye of Lau LGA and the members of the neighbouring Jukun of Jalingo LGA. The number of casualties rose further to 12 as clashes spread to the village of Minda and Jalingo LGA.

In June 2012 communal clashes between members of the Bachama and Fulani communities in Adamawa State spilled over into Taraba when homes were burnt in clashes in Lau LGA. Members of the Yandang community, the indigenous ethnic group on the border
of Taraba and Adamawa States, have been an inter-ceeding actor in the crises, as they have been rescuing wounded Fulani fighters and treating them, while appealing to Bachamas to disarm.219 A small number of attacks in Taraba State have also been attributed to suspected Boko Haram militants, whose activity is mainly concentrated in the far north of the country.220

**PERPETRATORS OF ARMED VIOLENCE**

Perpetrators of armed violence in Taraba State include youths, politicians, elders and civil servants. Some reports document the involvement of security forces – both mobile police and military forces – in attacks on civilian populations and the destruction of property in Taraba State.221 Suspected Boko Haram militants have also been active in the state in recent years, though at much lower levels than in the far north of the country.

The political affiliations of those involved in armed violence in Taraba State vary from incident to incident, and often overlap with local or communal identities. However, reports of armed violence and statements issued by police indicate that among perpetrators of violence have been individuals hired by powerful figures to engage in fighting on their behalf,222 suggesting that the sponsorship of violent groups is an underlying driver of instability in the state.

Sophisticated weapons used in armed violence in Taraba include assault rifles and explosive weapons. Local weapons used include swords, javelins, bows and arrows, and fuel for burning of houses and other assets.

**VICTIMS OF ARMED VIOLENCE**

Outbreaks of armed violence in Taraba State have affected vulnerable civilian populations such as women, children, the elderly and the less privileged. Victims are directly affected through injury and fatality as a result of armed violence, and indirectly through the destruction of property and livelihoods, displacement of large numbers of people fleeing insecurity and conflict, and the longer-term impact on security, stability and development in the state.

**INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE**

Responses to armed violence in Taraba have included government initiatives. Among these was an initiative undertaken in response to the outbreak of armed violence in July 2011, in which prominent government functionaries, traditional rulers and civil society leaders were sent to the communities of Kona and Mumuya in Lau LGA to mediate between the two communities involved in the clashes. Relief efforts were also undertaken by the government to take stock of what had been destroyed and distribute relief materials to the affected persons.223

Civil society is also active in addressing armed violence in the state. Civil society groups in Taraba conduct advocacy targeting religious leaders, traditional leaders, and youth, and hold society forums to educate and inform people of the effects of armed violence. They also mobilise advocacy to raise awareness of the importance of peace in the community. Initiatives involving Taraba’s Youth Progressive Association in collaboration with Women Environmental Programme (WEP) have involved mediation between members of communities involved in armed violence, on the theme of connecting disconnected members of the Jukun, Kuteb, Tiv and Chamba communities in Takum.

Several peace initiatives have also been undertaken in collaboration with local authorities in an attempt to address longer-term underlying drivers of armed violence and establish a sustainable peace between Taraba’s diverse communities. For instance, in April 2009, members and leadership of the Tiv and Kuteb communities at the center of recurring violence participated in a conference at Kwanbui, Taraba State.

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*Taraba*

- Population size: 2.6m
- Absolute poverty rate: 68.3
- Unemployment rate: 24.7
- Infant mortality rate: 25
- Average household size: 6.4
- Muslim share of population: 55%
- Christian share of population: 30%
A January, 2012, bomb attack in Kano and subsequent gun battles attributed to Boko Haram claimed 186 lives. Armed violence in states across Nigeria, but in Kano in particular, cannot be assessed in isolation from other states: among the most devastating spikes in armed violence and inter-communal conflict in Kano occurred in apparent retaliation for attacks on Muslim communities in the state of Plateau in 2004.

In 2004, a campaign of inter-communal violence – primarily pitting Muslims and Christians against one another – claimed as many as 200 lives in Kano before the military intervened.

THE VIOLENT ROAD: AN OVERVIEW OF ARMED VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

Military officials stand near ammunitions seized from suspected members of Hezbollah after a raid of a building in Kano, May 2013 (Reuters).

North West regional overview

JIGAWA, KADUNA, KANO, KATSINA, KEBBI, SOKOTO, ZAMFARA

POLITICS

Politics in Northern Nigeria are often framed in terms of binary narratives that pitch the country’s North against South, or its Muslim population against its Christian community. These narratives mask much more complex dynamics. In the North West, violence has often accompanied key political junctures such as electoral cycles. All states in the North West were won by the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, the current President’s strongest rival in the most recent 2011 general elections. In the days following the election, unrest broke out in many Northern states, with rioters attacking supporters and officials of the PDP. Trust of the veracity of the election results, high levels of poverty, religious tensions and crowd manipulation by political figures all played a role in the causes of this violence. Among those targeted were officials and members of the traditional Muslim leadership in the North – figures such as the Sultan of Sokoto, and the Emirs of Kano and Zaria – who were perceived as being supported by the PDP. These dynamics point to the complex interactions between politics and religious and regional identities in Northern Nigeria.

ECONOMICS

Across a range of poverty measures, the North West performs very poorly. The North West region has an infant mortality rate of 91 (compared to a national average of 87). The North West has the second highest rate in the country of male respondents who reported having no educational attainment whatsoever (at 48.8%) and the highest rates of female respondents reporting they had no educational attainment (at 67.5%). Jigawa and Sokoto states in the North West have the two highest rates of absolute poverty in the country (at 88.5 and 86.1 respectively). Many factories in the region (particularly in Kano) are either closed down or operating at loss - a result partly of inadequate power supplies that leave many youths unemployed and vulnerable to violence.

DEMOGRAPHICS / GEOGRAPHY

The population of the North West region is estimated at 41.8 million people. The region’s population is predominantly Muslim, and members of the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group, who make up approximately 29%, are dominant in the area, alongside a number of smaller ethnic groups in highly diverse areas bordering the North Central region. The city of Kano in the North West is Nigeria’s second-largest city by population, following Lagos, and a commercial hub and historical cultural centre in the wider Northern region.

ARMED VIOLENCE

The North West region experiences lower levels of violence than neighbouring states in the North East, with just under 450 political violence events recorded in the region between 1999 and June 2013. Of this conflict, Kano and Kaduna witness the highest levels of political armed violence.

Armed violence has taken several forms. As with states in the North Central region, the issue of indigeneity has been central to recurring violence in the region. Violence of this kind has centred on issues of land control and access to economic and political resources, frequently occurring during key political junctures such as electoral cycles. Violent attacks by Boko Haram have also occurred in Kaduna and Kano since 2012, with attacks by the group roughly evenly split between attacks on unarmed civilians and those involving security forces.

Armed violence in Nigeria extends into the sea – armed attackers have struck oil facilities up to 50 miles offshore using speedboats.

A January, 2012, bomb attack in Kano and subsequent gun battles attributed to Boko Haram claimed 186 lives. Armed violence in states across Nigeria, but in Kano in particular, cannot be assessed in isolation from other states: among the most devastating spikes in armed violence and inter-communal conflict in Kano occurred in apparent retaliation for attacks on Muslim communities in the state of Plateau in 2004.

In 2004, a campaign of inter-communal violence – primarily pitting Muslims and Christians against one another – claimed as many as 200 lives in Kano before the military intervened.
Civil society in the North West: Sokoto, Kaduna and Kano

This research focused on Kano, Kaduna and Sokoto. 76 organisations, including 32 civil society organisations, were mapped.

44 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS
3 OTHER SECURITY PROVIDERS
7 GOVERNMENT SECURITY FORCES
19 OTHER GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS
3 INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

Civil society in the North West is composed of more faith-based organisations than other zones. Faith-based organisations are crucial in the North West in two ways: First, more of them were identified than in other zones. Second, while overall civil society budgetary and staff capacities correspond more or less to the national average, faith-based organisations tend to dispose of more resources and staff than regular NGOs.

It also seems to implement the least work on weapons among all zones. Only 3 – 8% of the organisations interviewed implement projects aiming to control weapons. The ones who do target weapons say they work against abuse of sharp or edged weapons and other objects used to cause harm, more than small arms and light weapons. This makes it the region with the least initiatives targeting firearms specifically.

Jamaatu Nasril Islam
Jamaatu Nasril Islam is an Islamic umbrella organisation for Muslim faith-based organisations. It is based in Kaduna and presided over by the Sultan of Sokoto, Sarkin Musulmi, an important religious authority for Nigerian Muslims and an influential traditional leader in Northern Nigeria. Jamaatu Nasril Islam aims to mitigate violence within and between communities and to foster peaceful coexistence among different faith groups.

Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), and its youth wing called Youth Can, is the umbrella organisation for Christian faith-based organisations. It is active at the national-level and functions with specific state chapters. Their range of activities includes setting up of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, peace education and non-violent conflict resolution, community policing and partnerships with traditional and religious leaders in reducing and preventing armed violence.

In Nigeria, there is no law that guarantees the right to bear arms. (Firearms Act, 1990).

Kaduna state

GENERAL INTRODUCTION
Kaduna state is situated in the North West of Nigeria, with a population of about 6,113,503 as of the 2006 census. The state was created in 1967, and modified by the subtraction of Katsina State in 1987.

Kaduna State has a political significance as the former administrative headquarters of the North during the colonial era. It shares boundaries with Niger State to the west, Zamfara, Katsina and Kano states to the north, Bauchi and Plateau States to the east and FCT Abuja and Nassarawa state to the south.

Kaduna has a roughly equal population of Muslims and Christians, and many tribal groups including the Jaba, Gbagyi, Kataf, Kagoro, Hausa-Fulani, Moroa, Ninzom, Koro, Bajju and Ikulu people. Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy of Kaduna State with about 80% of the people actively engaged in farming. The state’s economy is also heavily reliant upon extractive industries and tourism.

Since the early 1960s, the political leadership of Kaduna State has been in the hands of the Northern Muslims to the disaffection of the Southern Christians. Combined with the state’s high population density and many competing ethnic groups, this situation has caused much tension and at times escalated to armed violence. Kaduna has the unenviable record of having witnessed the most destructive crises in both lives and property in the history of Nigeria since the end of the civil war in the late 1960s.

Kaduna
Population size: 7.1m
Absolute poverty rate: 64
Unemployment rate: 30.3
Infant mortality rate: 116
Average household size: 6.9
Muslim share of population: 50%
Christian share of population: 35%

Armed violence in Kaduna has taken several forms. The issue of ‘indigene’ and ‘settler’ status has been central to recurring violence in a state almost equally split between Christian and Muslim populations. Communal militia along these lines make up a significant share of conflict actors in Kaduna. Violence of this kind has centred on issues of land control and access to economic and political resources, frequently occurring during key political junctures such as electoral cycles. Violent attacks by Boko Haram have also occurred in the state since 2012, with attacks by the group roughly evenly split between attacks on unarmed civilians and those involving security forces.

Kaduna State has been under overlapping tensions from population growth and political aspirations by various religious and ethnic groups. It is sometimes argued that tensions between the Hausa-Fulani and Southern Kaduna ethnic groups are the cause of conflict, but this is an oversimplified view which obscures the historical context and heterogeneity of those groups.
One proposed solution has been to create a new state in northern Kaduna, especially following the extensive violence around the April 2011 presidential election. But the state government’s Judicial Panel of Inquiry, which examined the question as part of its investigation into ongoing violence in Kaduna, ultimately decided that a division would not eliminate the tribal, ethnic and religious rivalries plaguing the state.\textsuperscript{502}

**OVERVIEW OF ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE STATE**

Kaduna has seen a number of violent crises in recent history. In 1987, a religious conflict broke out after a Christian cleric was accused of quoting from the Quran at the College of Education Kafanchan, resulting in widespread destruction of places of worship and hundreds of casualties. 1992 saw a violent land dispute between Hausa and Kataf populations in Zangon-Kataf which killed over 1000 people.

In 2000, demonstrations by Christian and Muslim residents around a legal debate over Sharia turned violent, resulting in two thousand deaths and massive property damage and displacement. Another clash between Christians and Muslims occurred in 2001 in Gwantu resulting in 11 deaths.

In 2011, Nigeria held what were widely hailed as its fairest elections, but they were accompanied by high levels of violence. This violence was particularly pronounced in Kaduna, where three days of riots killed more than 800 people. Finally, in June 2012, Boko Haram carried out three coordinated bomb attacks on churches, killing 48. Following the blasts, retaliatory and counter-retaliatory attacks spread rapidly throughout the state, killing many more.

**PERPETRATORS OF ARMED VIOLENCE**

The main forms of armed violence in Kaduna State are political, economic, socio-cultural and ethno-religious. The ethno-religious and cultural affinity within the Hausa and Fulani groups has been the source of some crises and conflicts between the two major groups. The creation of Local Governments, Senatorial Zones and Districts has sharpened the issues of ethnic affinity, obligations and loyalty and thereby breeds competitive and rival politics. While the violence related to the 2011 election has abated, the underlying issues which caused it have not been resolved. Organised violence occurs thanks to the high number of groups competing for state and natural resources, along with a high level of poverty and unemployment which provides a large number of recruits.

Most of the perpetrators of armed violence in Kaduna State are men and youths. In the majority of the violence, youths make up over 80 percent of active participants. Perpetrators can be members of political or religious extremist groups, or simply paid off to do violence.

**VICTIMS OF ARMED VIOLENCE**

While the negative effects of armed violence are universal, the plight of women and children is particularly pronounced in Kaduna. There has been an increase in vulnerable children losing their parents or guardians, as well as an increase in destitute elderly women living without carers.

Women are frequently the target of sexual violence, leading to direct harm as well as stigma and social exclusion. In cases where men are direct victims, women are rendered economically vulnerable as single heads of households or they may have to take care of survivors.

**Weapons used**

The weapons used in the various incidents of armed violence in Kaduna include machetes, local cutlasses (known as gariyos, asake or barandamas), knives, spears, bows and arrows, assault rifles, locally produced pistols, double barrelled shotguns and various types of improvised melee weapons.

**INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE**

The stakeholders that are working directly or indirectly with victims and perpetrators of armed violence in Kaduna include paramilitary agencies, the Nigeria Police Force, the State Security Services, traditional institutions, civil society organisations, faith based organisations, community based organisations, the judiciary, international organisations and media organisations.

Of these, civil society and faith based organisations are generally the most effective at addressing armed violence. Their work includes alternative dispute resolution, non-violent conflict resolution, community policing capacity building, curricula for violence prevention in schools, social inclusion, peacebuilding, reintegration of perpetrators into the society, rehabilitation services, and trauma counselling. Their effectiveness draws from the fact that they work at the local level and in response to local needs.

AOAV identified more faith-based organisations in Kaduna than in any other zone, and these groups tended to have more resources and staff at their disposal towards the goal of reducing armed violence than non-faith based NGOs.\textsuperscript{513}

**SUCCESS/CHALLENGES**

Accessing information from the Nigerian Police, the military, the security agencies or the State Ministry of Health is practically impossible due to high level of under reporting and lack of resources and training for those in charge of data collection.

The welfare of the police is a high priority for reform. The level of illiteracy amongst officers needs to be looked into while the National Youth Service Corps scheme should be made a feeder project to the police force and other security agencies. Community-based and preventive approaches should be prioritised by the government rather than its current strategy of heavily armed response.

Furthermore, the government should increase its efforts towards recognising the rights of victims of armed violence, providing assistance to them and putting in place effective measuring and monitoring systems. Ultimately, good governance and economic welfare are among measure solutions to violence in Kaduna.
Some of the shortcomings of NGOs in preventing and reducing armed violence in Kaduna State can be overcome by building their capacity to mediate and mitigate in community conflicts. Increasing their ability to intervene with young members and potential members of groups such as Boko Haram is especially critical.

CONCLUSION

The single most important issue in Kaduna is good governance. Improving the quality of state governance allows armed violence to be addressed preventively rather than reactively. Good governance should be characterised by an unquestionable ability to maintain law and order, provide social amenities, open opportunities for economic development and material well-being of the citizenry, lead accountably and transparently, engender fairness and equality in the distribution of opportunities and privileges, provide due process and the rule of law, and adhere to the principles of democracy such as checks and balances and the separation of powers.

When researchers visited in the wake of the July, 2013, suicide-bomb attack on a bus station in a predominantly Christian area of nearby Kano, killing 41 passengers and injuring dozens more, Kaduna state had beefed up an already ubiquitous armed state presence: military checkpoints that had been closed suddenly resurfaced, with more security personnel brought out to the streets. People had become even more cautious, and the roads of the state were deserted at night.

“It is unfortunate that one can no longer freely walk about at night in Kaduna,” one resident, Abdullahi Tanko, told our researchers. “It is as if one is in a prison in his own town. When you are driving, security people will be stopping you at intervals, asking you for identification [and] your destination, and they will be searching your vehicle as if you are carrying bombs.”

According to many residents, the blockades and checkpoints have not prevented violence from recurring, and localised bombings continue at intervals.

BOKO HARAM

Compounding difficulties in the region is the reported recent (since 2012) influx into Kaduna of Boko Haram, the militant Islamist group. Besides the security forces, Boko Haram has targeted Kaduna’s so-called “soft targets” – religious institutions, public buildings, shopping malls, and other densely populated areas.

Churches have begun building barricades around their buildings, and stationing security personnel to screen worshippers as they enter. “It is embarrassing when you go to church and security men stop you at the gate to frisk you,” said one resident. “It is some-thing we cannot help at the moment, so we have to continue to tolerate it until the security situation improves.”

Besides religion-related violence, common criminality – street gangs, drug-related crime and armed robbery – is also a concern to many in Kaduna, particularly in rural areas. Armed violence is also a common response to communal strife over control of land – so common that, at the time of our researchers’ visits in 2013, a statewide curfew was in effect to attempt to quell this violence. Another response has been the establishment of armed vigilante groups (see above) in many communities – the state government even officially recognized these groups as of June, 2013.

MEDIA AND OPENNESS

One important result of the prevalence of armed violence in Kaduna state is the chilling effect it has had on the media and general population alike “Now we don’t know what to report and what not to report when there is a violent attack,” a journalist, who begged for anonymity, told our researcher. “You can get attacked or targeted by insurgents if you write [anything] termed negative.”

Beyond journalism, AOAV researchers noted that average citizens have a similar hesitation about discussing violence in Kaduna state in any public place. Many of those engaged in conversation back off once issues of security and armed violence are mentioned. Such chilling effects may contribute to a societal rumour-mill that, often incorrectly, assigns a religious motive to just about any violent attack, attributing each violent act to Muslim or Christian actors depending on the attack’s location.
Kano state

GENERAL INTRODUCTION
Kano is northern Nigeria’s commercial hub and historical cultural capital. It is located in the North West of the country, bordered by Katsina State to the northwest, Jigawa to the northeast, and Bauchi and Kaduna states to the south. Created in 1967, it had a population of 9,383,682 people as of the 2006 census, spread over 44 local government areas.

Kano’s economy was heavily agricultural until the 1960s, when the region’s oil boom led to a major change of emphasis towards extractive industry. Today, Kano is one of the largest and most important commercial centres in Nigeria, and the country’s second largest industrial centre.

Only 27.8% of the adult population of the state is literate, according to the National Literacy Survey of 2010. 75% of the state’s people live in rural areas. The population of the state is largely Muslim.

OVERVIEW OF ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE STATE
Kano experiences moderate levels of armed violence overall, although this has been interspersed with sporadic periods of extremely high levels of violence and conflict-related fatalities. The Nigeria Security Tracker recorded 704 violence-related deaths in Kano between May 2011 and August 2013, while the ACLED political violence research project recorded 179 separate explicitly political incidents of armed violence in the state between 1997 and August 2013.

In addition to persistent low levels of violence, Kano has also witnessed sporadic high-profile and devastating attacks. In January 2012, a bomb attack and subsequent gun battles attributed to Boko Haram claimed 186 lives. Armed violence in states across Nigeria, but in Kano in particular, cannot be assessed in isolation from other states: among the most devastating spikes in armed violence and inter-communal conflict in Kano occurred in apparent retaliation for attacks on Muslim communities in the state of Plateau in 2004.

Government actions have at times served to exacerbate and escalate the violence. In 2004, a campaign of inter-communal violence – primarily pitting Muslims and Christians against one another – claimed as many as 200 lives in Kano before the military intervened.

When security forces did intervene, some engaged in extrajudicial killings, rather than protection of vulnerable communities and systematic investigation and arrest of perpetrators. In doing so, they contributed further to the cycle of violence and undermining the accountability and credibility of the security apparatus.

Other political and economic issues have also proved divisive, volatile and prone to outbreaks of violence in Kano; in 2012, labour unions suspended protests over the fuel price subsidy which raged elsewhere in the country, as a result of the outbreak of violence at demonstrations.

Recent years have seen an increase in the level of violence in Kano, not only in terms of the actual crime rate also in the grievousness of the crimes. Kidnapping and terrorism, once rare, have become commonplace. Understanding the trends and patterns of crime in the state is necessary for the design and implementation of effective countermeasures.

Historical legacy
Kano State has witnessed series of ethno-religious crises in recent history. In 1980, followers of an Islamic preacher named Mohammed Marwan became embroiled in conflicts with local authorities. These protests, which arose from growing frustration with decreasing economic fortunes in the north of the state, continued for months and resulted in hundreds of casualties and massive property damage.

In 1991, German evangelical preacher Reinhard Bonnike visited Kano. Controversy about his views of Islam resulted in fatal clashes between Christians and Muslims. Violence between Christians and Muslims also occurred in 2003 and 2005 over the sale of alcohol, resulting in deaths and the destruction of places of worship.

The underlying political, religious and ethnic tensions in Kano are great enough that small incidents can trigger large-scale clashes. In May, 1995, in Sabon Gari marketplace, an argument between an Igbo trader and a Fulani security guard led to clashes between members of the two groups which ultimately claimed more than 30 lives. In October, 2001, protests against the American bombing of Afghanistan turned violent. And in May, 2004, religious conflict spilled over from Yelwan-Shendam in Plateau state, with over 200 deaths occurring in Kano.

In 2011, following the national elections, violence broke out across much of Nigeria, including Kano. Christian residents were displaced from their homes, while the state government imposed a curfew to attempt to control the situation.

The Islamic extremist group Boko Haram has also been active in Kano, causing numerous casualties and extensive property damage as well as curtailing the state’s economic potential. However, the state’s recent attempts to contain the group seem to be succeeding.

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VICTIMS OF ARMED VIOLENCE

Armed violence mostly affects civilians, especially women, children and the elderly. A majority of the refugees are women and children, and the women are subjected to rape, sexual abuse, and economic and physical violence. The indirect effects of violence are also considerable, including the economic harm coming to families that lose their breadwinners and the psychological after-effects on communities affected by violence.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

To achieve the objective of reducing armed violence in Kano, there must be a joint effort between government, civil society and individuals. The weapons which enable this violence change hands many times throughout their life cycles. As a result, no single individual, group or institution can hope to control them. A combination of NGOs, CBOs, security agencies, judiciary institutions, international organisations, media, academia, traditional institutions, religious institutions and other stakeholders is necessary to address the fundamental inequities which cause the violence.

CONCLUSION

Gunshot injuries are a leading cause of death amongst the youth of Kano. The exact numbers are difficult to estimate, as some victims are buried before any official recording has taken place, and other incidents may not be reported to the police out of fear. Many of these deaths can be prevented by addressing the root causes of violence: poverty, unemployment, income inequality and substance abuse. Doing so has been superficially presented as part of broader economic development blueprints, but the role of youths as social agents has only recently become recognized.

In order to arrest the related and negative trends of electoral violence and youth restiveness, a specialised agency with the necessary legal backing independent from the government should be established at the national, state and local government levels, particularly for the task of empowering the youth.

Kano state: view from the ground

The commercial nerve centre of Northern Nigeria, Kano appeared to have transitioned into relative peace in recent months. But when researchers arrived in Kano, the state was reeling from a new rash of bomb attacks by suspected members of the militant Islamist group Boko Haram. Checkpoints had resurfaced. Several roads were cordoned off and heavily armed security personnel patrolled Kano and its adjoining cities. But while a heavily militarized presence, with communities playing a key role in reporting any suspicious activities, seemed to quell the attacks in these areas, this action has left remote areas with little police presence, and in those areas killings continue.

BOKO HARAM

 Sectarian strife has been the major cause of violence, with recent attacks by Boko Haram targeting both Christians and less hardline Muslims. It is believed most attackers are the ethnic group Kanuris, who infiltrate Kano from Borno State. Some attackers are also suspected to be crossing the border from the Niger Republic.

Boko Haram’s goal of Sharia law means mainstream Muslim clerics are as at risk as Christians. Churches and mosques no longer openly preach and pray against Boko Haram out of fear; many that have done so in the past have been attacked, religious leaders killed, and some churches and mosques razed. Opposition to the insurgents might still be discussed in private, but not from the pulpit. As one Muslim cleric told our researcher, “Once you preach against Boko Haram, you are in trouble. They have infiltrated our mosques and one has to be careful or you will be killed like other clerics.” According to our researcher’s sources, the insurgents send out warnings through leaflets delivered after-hours to religious centres, warning against preaching against Boko Haram.

Attacks have been largely conducted as drive-by shootings by men on motorbikes, prompting a ban on motorbikes. But this has only led to a change in tactics: our researcher was told Boko Haram attackers now have concealable weapons and often employ rapid, hit-and-run tactics.

Weapons employed by Boko Haram include AK-47s, IEDs and more professionally built explosives. In the use of explosives, Boko Haram generally aims to attack people, rather than destroy property.

MEDIA

The state’s security challenge continues to dominate the media. With six private media houses in Kano, as well as state and federal media, there is no lack of coverage, and most attacks are reported – even those occurring in rural areas. That does not mean, however, that information flows freely to Kano’s media. While the JTF holds weekly security press briefings, very little information is actually given out. Likewise, the police forces are notoriously tight with information.

Kano’s government has other ways, besides control of information, to keep a leash on the region’s media. As spokesman for the national broadcasting commission Awwal Salihu pointed out to Premium Times newspaper, “Section 3.9.1 of the national broadcasting code stipulates that language or scenes likely to encourage or incite crime, or lead to disorder, shall not be broadcast.”

This has had consequences. In February, 2013, Kano’s radio station Wazobia FM’s broadcast content allegedly encouraged people to reject the federal immunization programme. Soon afterwards there was an attack on polio vaccinators in which nine people were shot dead by unknown gunmen at two health centres in Kano state. Wazobia FM’s operating license was withdrawn until further notice, and as of the time of our researcher’s visit to Kano, the station was not back on the air.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The security forces in Kano often come under direct attack by Boko Haram. Sometimes these attacks extend to anyone in uniform, including private guards and road-transport union officials. A resident of Sabon Gari told our researcher that: “We have witnessed many killings of innocent security guards wearing uniforms. These Boko Haram boys just shoot anyone in uniform. I feel they are illiterates and don’t know the difference between security agency uniforms and ordinary guards.”

Our researchers were told by anonymous sources the state security service has been infiltrated by Boko Haram, leading to the murder of some officers.
In Kano state, knives were the most common weapons used in reported violent incidents.

This has fostered distrust amongst the police and a severely reserved attitude towards the sharing of information. Our attempts to interview security chiefs in Kano were consistently turned down.

Kano only has at most 8,000 policemen. Given the huge population to secure, the state’s parliament has seen fit to deputize 15,000 residents into an officially recognized vigilante group called “Kato Da Gora” to assist with security assignments. Initially charged with community watch, Kato Da Gora is now empowered to act as auxiliary police.

Other responses by the government and security forces include the establishment of a distress-call system, with its phone numbers displayed on security vehicles. Not only the police, but the militia-like Joint Task Force (JTF) is known to respond to these calls.

Much like western “see something, say something” programmes, this allows residents to monitor and report the influx of visitors in their communities. The ban on motorcycles led to attackers using tricycles (enclosed motorized three-wheel scooters), which are now registered and numbered. In the wake of the most recent bombings, while our researcher was in the state, a curfew was put in place between midnight – 6 a.m.

In addition to the above, the government also organized a series of security awareness workshops for various civil society stakeholders (for instance, inviting civil defence corps, Hisba groups, members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers). The participants of these meetings were given special phone numbers of the Police and Security Services to help with intelligence gathering. The Kano Civil Society Forum also proved a constant and vigilant observer of the JTF and any human rights abuses committed by them.

In Kano state, knives were the most common weapons used in reported violent incidents.

Sokoto state overview

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Sokoto state in its present form came into being in October 1966, after Niger State was carved out in 1976, Kebbi State in 1991 and Zamfara State in 1996.251 The state is in the far North West region of the country. Sokoto State is bordered by Niger in the north, Kebbi State to the south west, and Zamfara State to the east. There are 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the state.

Sokoto has an estimated population of 4.3 million people.252 The majority of the population in the state are Muslims; however, there are also communities which are predominantly Christian.253 Sokoto is an important historical, cultural and religious centre for Muslims in Nigeria. Islam reached the area in the 15th century. Three centuries later there were many Muslims but non-Islamic traditions were still being followed both by the ruler and by many of subjects. A powerful reform movement emerged in the mid-18th century seeking to reform the practice of Islam, led by Shehu Usmanu Fodio and many other scholars. All of them sought to achieve their aims through preaching Islam and calling on rulers to govern according to Islamic principles.

By 1809, most of the Hausa Kingdoms had been toppled and replaced with an Islamic government under a single administration with headquarters at Sokoto. What was later known as the Sokoto “Caliphate” was established, covering a very large territory of present day northern Nigeria extending to the kingdoms of Mali, Kenem-Bornu, Burkina Faso, Niger, northern Cameroon and some parts of the old Oyo kingdom of Nigeria. This continued until the arrival of the British in 1903, when the emirates of the former Sokoto Caliphate were reconstructed as administrative units independent of the Sultan whose authority was only recognised in the Sokoto Province. However, the Sultan of Sokoto, and title of Sarkin Musulmi (Sultan) continues to this day to be a spiritual leader of all Nigerian Muslims, and an extremely influential traditional ruler in northern Nigeria.254

 Communities in Sokoto today include Zamfarawa, living mostly in areas bordering Zamfara State; Gobirawa, found mostly in Sabor-Bimi, Goronyo and Ista areas bordering Niger; and Kabawa, usually found in Kebbi and Silarie areas bordering Kebbi State.
OVERVIEW OF ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE STATE
Sokoto state has recorded relatively few incidents of armed violence in recent years. Records of armed violence in the state are very limited where they exist at all. Therefore, donor agencies should support documenting these events, as well as supporting studies on the extent of the damage associated with armed violence, who is most affected, who are the primary perpetrators, and what its economic impact in the state is. It is important to share these findings with relevant stakeholders.

In recent years, Sokoto has witnessed sporadic outbreaks of sectarian violence between members of the Sunni and Shia communities there. Armed violence of this kind has involved gangs of youths blocking entry to mosques in the state, engaging in rioting, looting and the burning and destruction of properties. In 2005, sectarian clashes reportedly led to two deaths and 35 injuries.266 In 2007 there was again a sectarian crisis as a result of armed violence involving the Sunni majority and Shia communities in which three people were killed, many were injured and several properties destroyed.267 Violence of this kind flared again in 2010 when three people were wounded in sectarian clashes in the city of Sokoto.268

In recent years, there have also been instances of politicians mobilizing illiterate and redundant youth for campaigns of violence, especially during the 2007 general election. Politicians engaging youths in this way supported them with drugs and weapons to attack political opponents. However there was a decrease in the levels of political violence during the subsequent 2011 general election. At this time, a post-election crisis was recorded after the general election in the country. In Sokoto, as in many northern states, there were instances of rioting and violence. However, the violence was less intense than in previous electoral cycles as properties were destroyed but no lives were recorded lost. The 2012 re-run gubernatorial election was also relatively peaceful. There is no history of communal clashes among different ethnic communities or different settlers in the state.269

Since 2012, a small number of attacks involving the North East-based group, Boko Haram, have taken place in Sokoto. These include twin bomb blasts which occurred in the city of Sokoto in July 2012 which were attributed to the group and resulted in four deaths and several people wounded.266 Responses to Boko Haram activities have also involved armed violence: a raid in July 2013 on a suspected Boko Haram hideout by security forces resulted in the death of one suspected militant.270

PERPETRATORS OF ARMED VIOLENCE
Most perpetrators of armed violence are youths, politicians and some religious leaders. Youths probably engage in armed violence because of their ignorance, shallow reasoning, redundancy and religious fanaticism, while politicians may be involved because of certain hidden motives or to achieve selfish political interests. Some religious leaders promote violence because of extremism and a poor understanding or a racial interpretation of religious laws.268

In outbreaks of armed violence, small weapons which are mostly locally made are used. These include axes, machetes, knives, swords and sticks.

VICTIMS OF ARMED VIOLENCE
Among the victims of armed violence, women are most affected due to the culture and belief system of the area. The population most affected by armed violence are women who become widows and lose belongings, become the head of households and shoulder responsibilities for which they are not prepared. Also affected are children who lose their parents; professionals at an early age; youths that lose their lives or become permanently disfigured; and the society in general that loses properties and potential achievers.268

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE
Generally, the Nigerian police, Nigerian military forces, civil defence corps, and state security services are the institutions of government that combat armed violence in the state. The role of non-governmental institutions such as religious aid groups in combating armed violence is not clear in Sokoto. Likewise because of the relatively low incidence of violence in the state, there are no known institutions of government, NGOs or development partners that deal directly with the issue of armed violence in the state, according to the informant. Intervention from donor agencies or development partners on armed violence in the state is not pronounced.

Land disputes have been exacerbated by oil spills which have destroyed fisheries and farmland, and which will take decades to clean up, according to the UN.

A market in Sokoto (Andrew Buck).
South South regional overview

**POLITICS**
Economics, politics and armed violence are often closely interlinked in the region. With political elites buffered by proceeds from oil revenue, governance in the region is weak and often unaccountable, subsequently making limited progress addressing underlying drivers of conflict in the region.\(^\text{270}\)

The large urban centre of Port Harcourt, capital of Rivers State, witnesses high levels of political protesting and demonstrating, some of which have turned violent. Port Harcourt was a regional flashpoint for political violence during the 2003 and 2007 elections.\(^\text{271}\) and continues to serve as a hotspot of violent clashes between rival political supporters.\(^\text{272}\) All states in the South South region were won by current President Goodluck Jonathan in the most recent 2011 general elections.\(^\text{273}\) There was also ongoing violence in the state gubernatorial elections as heated debates during campaigning spilled over into bloodshed.

**ECONOMICS**
Across a range of poverty measures, the South South performs relatively well. The region has an infant mortality rate of 84,\(^\text{274}\) and relatively low rates of respondents reporting they have no educational attainment whatsoever.\(^\text{275}\) These figures likely mask patterns of uneven development: in spite of vast amounts of resource wealth in this region, the region suffers from environmental accidents which have contributed to undermining traditional agriculture, fishing and livelihood strategies on which communities outside the petroleum sector rely.\(^\text{276}\) Oil bunkering – the theft of oil which is processed at illegal refineries and sold on the parallel market – is a massive problem in the region.\(^\text{277}\) The practice poses risks to local community livelihoods through spillages and fires, and to regional stability as a share of proceeds are funnelled into armed groups and the purchase of weapons.

**DEMOGRAPHICS / GEOGRAPHY**
The population of the South South region is estimated at 24.6 million people.\(^\text{278}\) The region’s population is predominantly Christian,\(^\text{279}\) and ethnically is very diverse, with concentrations of Ijaw, Igbo and Ibibio ethnic groups (who make up approximately 10%, 18% and 3.5% of the national population), alongside several smaller ethnic groups such as the Urhobos and the Edo.\(^\text{280}\) This diversity has been a prominent issue along which violent competition and disputes over resources, land, economic and political power have occurred. An additional potential source of tension is the high proportion of young people in the population: the share of the population between the ages of 15-24 exceeds 20% in Akwa Ibom, Rivers and Cross River States.\(^\text{281}\)

**ARMED VIOLENCE**
Armed violence in the South South region is dominated by conflict in the oil-producing Niger Delta (Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States). In 2005, it was estimated that over 100 different militia groups were active in Rivers State alone.\(^\text{282}\) Armed violence in the region has experienced peaks and troughs over the past decade. An amnesty introduced in October 2009 has had some success in quelling militants, but groups concerned have remained vocal about their potential return to armed violence and are – according to some reports – regrouping at the time of writing.\(^\text{283}\)

The amnesty deal itself has been polarising. Critics have condemned the fact that the amnesty did little to change the region’s governance structures, and argue that state officials, governors and other elites benefit the most from oil revenues.\(^\text{284}\) Other analysts argue that these criticisms do not acknowledge the tangible dividends of the amnesty programme, reflected in reduced armed violence and kidnappings.\(^\text{285}\) In addition to the Delta insurgency, land disputes are common in the South South region and in recent years, disagreements over land use have turned violent.\(^\text{286}\) Furthermore, high levels of violent criminality have been reported in Port Harcourt, the capital of Rivers State.\(^\text{287}\)

\[\text{Figure 38: Map of South South region}\]

In Nigeria, private possession of fully or semi-automatic assault weapons is prohibited. (Firearms Act, 1990).
Civil society in the South South: Rivers, Delta and Edo

This research focused on Rivers, Delta and Edo where it surveyed 69 actors.

Civil society in the South South has more INGOs than other states. This is a reflection of the decade-long violence in – and media attention to – the Niger Delta, including states of the South South and the South East. Consequently, these states show the highest presence of international civil society organisations.

The South South has the strongest civil society capacities together with the South East, after Lagos and Abuja. Civil society organisations in the South South are among those with the highest budgets in Nigeria (median annual budget of 7 million naira) and the largest geographical coverage. In fact, no other region has a similarly high proportion of regional initiatives (45% of all recorded initiatives).

Civil Society in the South South plays an important role in victim-assistance. More than in any other zone, NGOs, faith-based organisations and community-based organisations engage in projects supporting victims. 84% (33) of the projects surveyed engage with victims. The majority of them focus on psycho-social assistance and data collection.

Niger Delta Amnesty Programme
The most well known, and arguably most effective, public intervention in the Niger Delta is the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme. Initiated by the Federal Government in 2009, the major agencies in charge of its implementation are the Federal Ministry of the Niger Delta, the Office of the Special Advisor on Niger Delta and concerned state governments of the Niger Delta. The programme granted unconditional amnesty as well as financial compensation to militants who surrendered their arms. No provisions, however, were made for victim assistance.

Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) attacks on oil infrastructure and kidnappings of oil workers are responsible for a decrease in the oil output of the Niger Delta by an estimated 33%.

The role of NGOs in the Amnesty Programme
The implementation of the amnesty has been supported by several NGOs, faith-based organisations and private companies, providing counselling services at rehabilitation camps, skills at the vocational training centres, peace education, and/or funds for enabling ex-militants to start up small projects at the community level.

NGO work with women survivors
The Ideal Women Advancement Initiative, an NGO founded in 2007, implements projects related to trauma-healing and re-settlement. It works with female victims who have suffered sexual or psychological harm, and who are indirect victims of violence, in that they have lost husbands or family members. The initiative trains women to establish peace networks in their communities. They also build up women’s skills related to livelihood generation, cooperative-group building and micro credit access, as well as providing psychosocial assistance.

Literacy in Nigeria is hugely regionalised – in some parts of the north, female literacy is below 5%, whereas in some parts of the south, the number is about 90%.
Edo state

GENERAL INTRODUCTION
Edo is an inland state in central southern Nigeria, created in 1991.167 Nicknamed “the heartbeat of the Nation,” Edo is one of the two states created out of the defunct Bendel State by the military government of General Ibrahim Babangida. Benin City is the capital of Edo state. Edo’s people speak a variety of languages, with Edo, Estria, Esan and Okpamherieh chief amongst them. The major ethnic groups in Edo are Bini, Esan, Afemai, Ora, Akoko-Edo, Igbankhe, Emai and Ijaw. Edo state is bounded in the north and east by Kogi state the south by Delta State and in the west by Ondo. The 2005 census estimated the state’s population to be about 3.5 million. The economic mainstays of Edo State include crude oil and gas; mineral resources; agriculture and tourism.

Like Nigeria as a whole, Edo is divided between Muslim and Christian communities with a smaller number of believers in traditional religions. In spite of this, the state has not witnessed the level of religious tension and violence seen around inter-faith relations in northern Nigeria and elsewhere in the country.

The State has many higher education institutions including: the University of Benin, Benin City; the Ambrose All University, Ekpoma; the Igbinedion University, Okada; the Benson Idahosa University, Benin City; and the Federal Polytechnic Auchi.

OVERVIEW OF ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE STATE
According to the Fund for Peace, Edo had the third-highest per capita level of violence in the Niger Delta between the beginning of 2012 and June 2013. The high proportion of the population who are youths and the level of unemployment are partially responsible for this state of affairs. Political figures give weapons to youths to engage in political violence, and those weapons are not collected when election seasons end, leading to their use in other forms of violence as well.

Generally, unemployment and misplaced priorities amongst youths, power struggles, poverty, competition for resources, the poor state and mismanagement of the national economy, desire to attain wealth and power rapidly by any means necessary and ethnic and cultural differences are major causes of crime in the state.

The perpetrators of armed violence are largely youth groups who are responsible for violence. Members of the Militant groups and cult groups have also engaged in violence rivalry for their own purpose. Politicians, businessmen, oil company workers, community leaders and groups, and union leaders have all contributed to armed violence by employing unemployed youths to engage in violence on their behalf. Some corrupt security agents who aid and rent their weapons to criminals for use in crimes (indeed, some of them are members of these criminal groups), and some ex-servicemen keep or do not surrender their weapons when they are discharged so as to use them for their own violent purposes later.

Edo

Population size: 3.7m
Absolute poverty rate: 64.1
Unemployment rate: 27.9
Infant mortality rate: 16
Average household size: 5.5
Muslim share of population: 5%
Christian share of population: 79%

The military ruled Nigeria from 1966 to 1979 and from 1983 to 1999.

There are many other types of violence occurring in Edo. Cultism and inter-cult rivalry clashes are a regular occurrence in the state. Such cults have become a threat to the peace within the tertiary institutions in the country and Edo State in particular. Political parties have used unemployed youth to intimidate their rivals and have used violent rhetoric to galvanise their supporters, resulting in violent clashes around election season. In the Niger Delta, there have been clashes over control of the crude oil resources between youths, militant groups and the Joint Military Task Force (JTF).

PERPETRATORS OF ARMED VIOLENCE
The perpetrators of armed violence are largely youth groups who represent a disproportionate share of Edo’s population, and are responsible for a disproportionate share of its violence. But they are not the only ones responsible for violence. Members of the Militant groups and cults groups have also engaged in violence rivalry for their own purposes. Politicians, businessmen, oil company workers, community leaders and groups, and union leaders have all contributed to armed violence by employing unemployed youths to engage in violence on their behalf. Some corrupt security agents who aid and rent their weapons to criminals for use in crimes (indeed, some of them are members of these criminal groups), and some ex-servicemen keep or do not surrender their weapons when they are discharged so as to use them for their own violent purposes later.

Weapons used
Weapons used in armed violence include: AK-47 assault rifles and AK-47 variants; FN FAL and other semi-automatic rifles; Uzis and other sub-machine guns; single, double-barrel and pump action shotguns; locally made pistols and rifles; axes; cutlasses; knives; and hand grenades.

VICTIMS OF ARMED VIOLENCE
Members of the oil producing communities, the general public, women, children, physically challenged persons, the aged, members of the various cult groups, members of unions and, in general, male youth have all been victimised.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES
The Nigeria Police Force is the primary lawfully constituted force for maintaining order in Edo. However, they are supported by other state agencies. Primary amongst these is the State Security Service (S.S.S.), which works with informants from most of the communities and members of the general public to arrest prospective perpetrators of armed violence. The military – particularly those with the JTF – is also involved in managing armed violence. The Nigeria Civil Defence Corps provides community policing and alternative security services.

The government has undertaken various strategies to control armed violence. It formed the JTF to combat militancy in the Niger Delta. In parallel, it set up an amnesty program that was intended by the Federal Government to rehabilitate and reintegrate Niger Delta youths and to recover their weapons and ammunition. On a more local level, neighbourhood watch and community groups have been set up, along with skills-training centres for formerly militant youth. Outside the government, civil society organisations have been doing a large degree of work with government on issues around law and for the care of victims of armed violence. Both community-based and faith-based organisations do work in this regard.

SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES
There are significant challenges to understanding and reducing armed violence in Edo. Many incidents of armed violence are not recorded or reported, making it difficult to form an accurate impression of the level of armed violence in the state. The government uses repressive tactics to manage armed violence, and has not been particularly willing to respond to enquiries about its approach or strategy. This, along with a dearth of information in publicly accessible sources, means that our understanding of the perpetrators and dynamics of violence in Edo is severely limited.

CONCLUSION
The lack of both information and willingness of those in the government to engage with NGOs and press on armed violence in Edo, coupled with its heavy-handed tactics, makes the suppression of armed violence more difficult. The government and its security agents in the state have been doing their best to curtail armed violence in the state, but much still needs to be done both in terms of armed violence reduction and awareness creation to help stimulate economic conditions conducive to peace.
Rivers state

GENERAL INTRODUCTION
Despite a relative drop in violence over the past decade, Rivers remains one of the most consistently violence-affected states in Nigeria. But it does not experience the same fluctuations that characterise other, sporadically violent states.

Rivers is located in the South South geopolitical zone. It is bounded to the south by the Atlantic Ocean, by Anambra, Imo and Abia States to the north, Akwa Ibom to the east, and Bayelsa and Delta to the west. The dominant ethnic groups are the Ijaw, Ikwerre, Etche, Ogoni and Ogba/Egbema.

The state was created in 1967 and occupies a total area of 21,850 km². According to the 2006 census, the population is about 5.2 million. Today, it is estimated to stand at 6.1 million. Agriculture is the main occupation, but the state has the one of the largest economies in Nigeria because it accounts for more than 40% of national crude oil production. A gigantic liquefied natural gas (LNG) project is located at Bonny in Rivers, and the state accounts for 100 percent of LNG exports to several countries. The state also has two refineries, a petrochemical plant, two seaports and an international airport.

In 2005, it was estimated that over 100 different militia groups were active. The government eventually normalised. Second, land disputes are extremely common and have the tendency to lead to violence. Furthermore, high levels of violent criminality have been reported in the state capital Port Harcourt. As the commercial capital and hub of the oil industry, the city also experiences high levels of protest and demonstrations, some of which have turned violent. The city was the flashpoint for political violence in the 2003 and 2007 elections.

Main underlying causes
The violence between armed groups in Rivers State was primarily the result of a struggle between the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and the Niger Delta Vigilantes (NDV) for control over illegal oil revenues. Underlying issues have fuelled the violence: unequal distribution of resources; lack of social services; corruption and youth unemployment; political marginalisation; the impact of oil money on community politics; the manipulation of frustrated youths by political elites and traditional rulers; and organised crime syndicates involved in oil theft.

Added to this is the widespread availability of small arms and other lethal weapons. This has resulted in armed violence ranging from communal clashes with the formation of ethnic militias to battles for supremacy between armed youth and criminal groups, all the way to violence between armed cult groups and government security forces.

PERPETRATORS OF ARMED VIOLENCE
Many communities develop collective responses to security: wealthy and politically influential community members buy arms to fortify their communities against external attack (for example, during land disputes). Militias are at the top of the pecking order in terms of legitimacy with their combination of grassroots support, reasonable quality of training, advanced weaponry, structural leadership and organisation, and a degree of political savviness. Militias have also played significant roles in kingship struggles in the state, with opposing factions hiring militias to end the debate forcefully.

In 2004, 103 armed cult groups were identified in the state. These included university- and village-based groups. Groups include the Deebam and Deewell cults; Icelanders; Greenlanders; Mafia Lords; Germans; Klanmen Konfraternity (KKK); Vultures; Outlaws; Gbenesakakaa; and Njemane Vigilante Service.

Weapons used
Weapons commonly used in Rivers State are: pistols; shotguns; revolvers; machetes; swords and axes; rocket-propelled grenades; rocket launchers; semi-automatic rifles; AK-47 assault rifles; machine guns; dynamite; and petrol bombs.

A UN Environmental Programme report in 2011 found that oil pollution in the Ogoniland region of Rivers state may require the world’s largest clean up ever, at an initial cost of US$1 billion, and take up to 30 years.

VICTIMS OF ARMED VIOLENCE
The main centres of cult activities are Tombia, Bukum, Buguma, Okrika, Port Harcourt and Ogbakiri. Some of the most intense fighting between October 2003 and October 2004 was around villages located on tributaries about 30km southwest of Port Harcourt. The rival Deebam and Deewell cults operate in almost all the 179 villages in Ogoniland. The area is noted for oil bunkering, communal clashes and political violence.

Victims of armed violence, as elsewhere comprise youth, women, children, men, the physically challenged and the aged. They often experience trauma and insecurity as battles are fought around their homes. They may also be caught in crossfire and have their property destroyed; many are forced to flee and become refugees. Schools have been forced to close, which affects students’ education. Oil workers - foreign contractors in particular - are often kidnapped for ransom. And fighters may themselves become victims of rival groups or government security forces.

Type of harms
Looking at state-sanctioned violence against civilians, the state government set up the Internal Security Task Force during the Ogoni crisis in the early 1990s, which terrorised the Ogoni people. Similarly, the federal government set the Joint Military Task Force to counter the activities of militants and cult groups.

Examples of inter- and intra-communal violence have included outbreaks of fighting between the Eleme and Okrika; the Tuboniju and Kanju in Okrika; the Ke and the Bile; and a chieftaincy struggle in Ataba. Ethnic militias and vigilantes include the NDPVF; the Bush Boys (a.k.a. Peace Makers); the NDV; Icelanders; Ijaw Youth Council; the Biafrans and the Nigerians in Ataba.

Rivers
Population size: 6.1m
Absolute poverty rate: 47.2
Unemployment rate: 25.5
Infant mortality rate: 39
Average household size: 5.6
Muslim share of population: 10%
Christian share of population: 60%

Groups fight over control of organised crime in Port Harcourt. This includes drug-dealing, robbery, car theft, extortion and petty theft. Some of them are paid to provide security for drug traffickers. They recruit youths aged 15-25, especially women, who are less likely to be suspected by government security operatives.

Youths are also recruited as political thugs, and militia groups become the armed wings of political parties.
The involvement of armed groups in the political process has made their leaders very prominent.

**INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE**

In June, 2009, the federal government declared an unconditional amnesty for militiants who surrendered their weapons within 60 days. Arms collection centres were set up in each state in the Niger Delta: 8,299 militiants accepted the amnesty offer, of whom 1,047 were from Rivers.

Despite occasional unrest, the Delta has experienced relative calm since the amnesty programme. Several civil society and private organisations provide services such as counselling at rehabilitation camps, and skills training at vocational training centres. The Oil and Gas Foundation has contributed to the reintegration process by funding projects that former militants are implementing at the community level, for example.

According to the recommendations of the Technical Committee on the Niger Delta on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration made in 2009, the state government should: investigate incidents of armed violence, including allegations of the role of state government officials in sponsoring armed groups; investigate alleged abuses and excessive use of force by state security forces; prosecute individuals held to be responsible for serious human rights abuses; appropriately compensate families that suffered loss of life and property because of armed violence; work with international and development agencies to provide assistance to all those internally displaced; provide adequate equipment and facilities to police and other security agencies to counter armed groups; adopt special measures to protect women, children and other vulnerable populations during times of violence; train security agents on human rights during conflict and peace time; take measures to stop the flow of small arms into the state; and ensure that government ministries and departments comply with the Freedom of Information Act to provide data and statistics about incidents of armed violence.

While statistics show a drop in armed violence in recent years, researchers found Rivers State remaining on edge, with the fear of kidnappings and gun violence a constant amongst many inhabitants.

**POLITICAL VIOLENCE**

Unlike the armed violence characteristic of many Nigerian states, which often fluctuates with political and social juctures, conflict in Rivers has long been tied to constants associated with rapid industrialization and wealth disparity: militant insurgency, crime and corruption. On a recent visit, our researcher found increasing cases of armed violence related to political activities – as well as sea piracy and other criminal activity – perhaps related to an upsurge of arms trafficking into the state. Our researcher found widespread belief that some militiants were rearming themselves ahead of forthcoming polls and that new militant group were rapidly emerging, some of which have already engaged security operatives in armed conflict. Our researcher also found that politicians, particularly in riverine communities, have re-established the common practice of arming their supporters to intimidate opponents and to protect politicians.

**ARMS TRAFFICKING AND CRIME**

Our researcher found evidence of links between oil bunkering – the theft and illegal processing of oil to be sold on a parallel market – and the arms trade. There is certainly some exchange of oil, crude or refined, for arms, and many in the bunkering trade are believed to also work in the large-scale importation of illegal arms. Likewise, while the amnesty may have shelved the militancy of some ideological insurgents, some in those groups simply turned to organized, armed criminal activity after 2009.

Kidnapping, which seemed to be disappearing just a few years ago, has crept back into Rivers State’s normalcy. High-profile kidnapping of government officials and their relations has returned, and even members of the influential clergy have been victims of the crime. Again, our researcher found widespread belief that the security agencies have done little to check increases in kidnappings.

One recent victim, Archbishop of the Niger Delta Diocese of Anglican Communion Ignatius Kattey, told researchers, “If the police said they freed me, it’s not true. I walked to this place.” Kattey believed that police were, at best, ineffective. “I know they made efforts but they did not rescue me and my wife. A helicopter flew over the area more than 500 times, but the [kidnappers] were smarter. They held me with them in a thick forest and no one could see me there.”

**MEDIA**

Rivers State’s media has made conscious efforts to educate and inform people about armed violence in the area. The print and electronic media devote most of their reports to issues about armed violence, which has become something of a societal norm. Our researcher recorded daily reports of attacks, kidnappings, and conflicts across the state. At least a few journalists have been attacked in the past by those behind violent crime, and some media houses threatened or shut down on orders of government for allegedly fuelling the fire of conflict with their reports on violence.
Delta state overview

GENERAL INTRODUCTION
Delta State emerged from the former Bendel State in 1991 following agitation for the creation of separate state by the Urhobos and Anioma regions. It is an oil-producing state in the Niger Delta/South region with a population of 4,086,291. The state capital is Asaba. The state has a wide coastal belt, which is interlaced with rivers and streams that form part of the Niger Delta.

The Niger Delta, (broadly defined to include nine southern states, of which Delta State is one) is home to approximately 140 ethnic groups. This diversity, combined with overlapping socioeconomic conditions, has been prominent in violent competition and disputes over resources, land, economic and political power.

Within Delta State, the ethnic Aniocha, Ika, Ukwaani and Oshimili dominate the north, the Urhobo the centre, and in the south the Isoko, Ijaw, Itsekiri and a few Urhobos. These groups are known to inter-marry. Christianity and traditional faiths are practised.

Various mineral deposits are present, which include crude oil, clay, silica, kaolin, tar sand, gemstones and limestone.

OVERVIEW OF ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE STATE
Historic legacy
Delta State has a long history of violence, which predates the discovery of oil in the region in 1957. According to a 2012 CLEEN Foundation survey, approximately 12% of respondents (the highest regional rate across the country) in the South region had been victims of armed violence. Delta State is well above the regional average in terms of incidents of violence per capita, though it has improved slightly (notwithstanding an increase in violence in the first half of 2013).

Levels of violence
Between 1997 and 2003, Delta was one of the most volatile states in the region and experienced episodes of violent armed conflict. Armed violence in the region has experienced peaks and troughs over the past decade. At least 2,000 people have been killed and thousands more injured. And property worth tens of millions of Naira has been destroyed and entire oil-producing state in the Niger Delta/South region.

Armed violence in the Delta has been reported to occur in two interrelated, multi-layered cycles. On the surface, violence is tied to election cycles: political actors recruit and arm youths in the run-up to polls; bands of youths use violence and intimidation on voting day to influence the results. Then a failure to demilitarise these groups following elections leads to the emergence of new militant organisations, with discrete command structures and objectives, resulting in more violence.

An endogenous logic of violence means that with each new militant group that emerges in the region, attacks increase in intensity and levels of destruction so as to demand government attention. This intensification of violence affects the Delta most of all.

Recorded patterns in armed violence appear to largely fit this analysis. Elections throughout Nigeria have been marred by vote-rigging, fraud, and violence, but this pattern has been pronounced in the Niger Delta, where politicians are reported to sponsor gangs to target opponents and supporters.

In this volatile environment, events such as the proposed termination of an amnesty programme for militants, and the upcoming 2015 federal and local elections, could serve as key flashpoints for armed violence in an unstable region.

Nigeria’s anti-corruption agency estimates that 70% of Nigeria’s oil revenue is stolen or wasted.

Main underlying causes
The underlying issue is that Nigeria’s vast oil wealth primarily comes from the Niger Delta (with some offshore platforms in the Gulf of Guinea), and underpins the country’s deeply dysfunctional political economy and endemic corruption. Despite the location of vast amounts of resource wealth in this region, uneven and under-development plague the Delta. Numerous environmental accidents have contributed to the depletion and – in some areas – outright destruction of the traditional agricultural, fishing and other livelihoods on which indigenous communities outside the petroleum sector have relied. Governance in the region has been commensurately weak. Buffered by oil revenue, there is limited accountability and almost no progress on addressing the underlying grievances of the multiple groups of armed actors.

Oil bunkering – the theft of oil processed at illegal refineries and sold on the parallel market – is a major issue. According to some estimates, as many as 300,000 barrels of oil per day were being stolen at the height of the problem. The process is not only dangerous for those involved, but has grave wider implications.

A wide variety of factors facilitate bunkering, which includes limited security infrastructure. The militant Islamist Boko Haram insurgency in the north has drawn away security forces and left approximately 7,000 km of pipeline largely unguarded.
Bunkering is also an enormously profitable industry not only for militants involved, but also for patrons, sponsors and affiliates of these groups. These include security sector, political, government and industry officials who collude with thieves, and use the profits to fund political campaigns, endemic corruption and sponsorship of violent groups. 211

An additional factor in armed violence in the state is wide under-development and high youth unemployment. Those engaged in agriculture and fishing are vulnerable to environmental factors such as the devastating floods in 2012, which endangered livelihoods across the region and contributed to the uptake of bunkering as a survival strategy. 213

The extent of corruption in the Niger Delta is central to the region’s problem of armed violence and the undermining of responses to this violence. In the wake of inter-communal violence in 2003, additional military personnel were deployed to the region. However, because of a culture of corruption throughout the security, political and industry sectors, instead of quelling armed violence the additions led to military officials’ greater participation in bunkering and corruption, and has further institutionalised violent criminality and militancy in the region. 214

PERPETRATORS OF ARMED VIOLENCE
Perpetrators of armed violence include: youths; community leaders; traditional leaders; former and serving military personnel; politicians and elites; ethnically based organisations and militias; vigilantes; oil companies; criminals, including armed robbers, illicit businesspeople and oil bunkerers.

The Joint Task Force was first deployed to Warri in Delta State following a sharp spike in inter-communal violence around the 2003 elections. President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua (2007-10) in October 2009 introduced an amnesty programme for militants of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). MEND emerged in 2006 and comprised a loose affiliation of militant groups that wanted a greater share of Nigeria’s oil wealth for the Delta region. Its militants attacked oil installations and took oil workers hostage;138 they were also involved in criminal activities such as kidnapping, gun-running and oil bunkering. The amnesty programme has had some success. But the groups concerned have remained vocal about their potential return to armed violence and are – according to some reports – regrouping. 215

Motivations/grievances
The motives for this violence relate to: socio-economic status; political leanings and personal beliefs; land; organisational control disputes with oil companies over oil revenue. The main reasons given for armed violence are poverty and unemployment. 217

Weapons used
Use of the following weapons has been reported: AK-47 assault rifle; pump-action shotgun; bazooka; FN Rifle, Uzi; self-loading rifle; sub-machine gun; locally made pistol; single-/double-barrelled shotgun; Mark 3/Mark 4 hand grenade; cutlass; and battle axes. 218

VICTIMS OF ARMED VIOLENCE
According to UN 2007 Habitat report, youths in particular are the victims of the armed violence in terms of sexual abuse, psychological trauma, non-lethal violence, murder and unlawful deprivation of liberty. Armed violence has mainly affected Effurun, Warri, Ekpia, Ogulagha, Oleh/Okomoro, Uzeze, Obge-Ijah Okarenkoko and Oporoza.

Kidnapping has persisted beyond the 2009 amnesty and expanded beyond conventional social boundaries. Not only politicians and petroleum industry figures, but children, doctors and religious authorities have all been kidnapped based on their families’ ability to pay ransoms. 219 As of 2011, at least 350 expatriates had also been kidnapped. Although the number of national staff kidnapped is not accurately known, it is likely to dwarf that of expatriates. 220

Type of harm
During 2012 and 2013, reported incidents included gang violence, criminality, and vigilante/mob justice. A number of abductions targeted political figures, their family members, or oil workers. Reports of abuses by public security forces also provoked mob violence and protest.

Other forms of armed violence that are less prevalent include: gender-based violence; resource disputes; chief/ancestral power struggles; extrajudicial killing/torture; and domestic disputes.

Nigeria is ranked 148 out of 162 countries worldwide in the Global Peace Index, a multidimensional measure of violence, security, and criminality.
South East regional overview

**ABIA, ANAMBRA, EBONYI, ENUGU, IMO**

**POLITICS**

As elsewhere in Nigeria, politics and armed violence have been closely interlinked in the South East region, with formal political processes and electoral cycles frequently accompanied by violence. Arms made available to political thugs during election periods have a deep link to post-election violence in the region.

It is relatively rare to have specific violence during voter registrations and even during elections in the South East. Rather it is the anger of being disenfranchised and the arming of thugs as a whole that fuels armed violence in the region.

**ECONOMICS**

Across a range of poverty measures, the South East performs relatively poorly. The South East region has an infant mortality rate of 95, the second highest (following the North East) of all national regions. These aggregate regional rates obscure considerable variation in poverty levels within the zone: Ebonyi state has an absolute poverty rate of 92.9%, putting it among the five highest rates in the country, and the only state of those five which is outside the northern regions.

States in the region which are significant producers of crude oil and natural gas (such as Imo and Abia) share similarities in terms of the political economy of the petroleum industry and its relationship with politics and armed violence as detailed in the South South. The South East also has the least numbers of publicly quoted companies in Nigeria. Overall, the South East economy is more informal and employs less graduates than other regions.

**DEMOGRAPHICS / GEOGRAPHY**

The population of the South East region is estimated at 18.9 million people, and the region's population is predominantly Christian, and members of the Igbo ethnic group, who make up approximately 18% of the national population, are concentrated in this area.

Demographically, youth make up a moderate to high share of the overall population in the South East, making up over 20% of the population in both Ebonyi and Enugu.

**ARMED VIOLENCE**

Armed violence in the region has been characterised by spikes in communal violence and more persistent low-grade struggle amongst vigilante and criminal networks. This has been partly fuelled by the high levels of drug consumption in the region, the long-term legacies of the civil war and also by inter-religious clashes. In 2000, for instance, religious tension spread to Abia and Anambra following rioting in the northern state of Kaduna - resulting in a wave of reprisal killings.

Nigeria had a brief border war with Cameroon in 1996 over the Bakassi peninsula, which has abundant oil resources.

Nigeria suffered a civil war that lasted from 1967 until 1970, when states in the southeast of the country unsuccessfully tried to secede under the banner of an independent Biafra.

Land disputes have also been a source of tension between rival communal groups; in 2012, at least 50 people were killed as a result of violent clashes between Ezza and Ezilo groups in the state of Ebonyi.

In the early 2000s, vigilante violence was widespread in the region, with the most prominent militant vigilante group, the Bakassi Boys, active in the large market towns in Abia, Anambra and Imo states. Vigilante violence has persisted at a lower rate in recent years, but still remains a major concern in the region.

An additional form of violence, perhaps influenced by the militancy in the South South, is kidnapping, which has persisted beyond the introduction of a 2009 amnesty for militant groups in the Niger Delta. As of 2011, there have been at least 350 recorded kidnappings of expatriates, and although the number of national staff kidnapped is not accurately known, it is likely to dwarf that of expatriates. Finally, there is very high gun ownership (both licensed and illegal) in the South East in relation to other states.
Civil society in the South East: Anambra, Ebonyi and Imo

The South East region is composed of Enugu, Ebonyi, Abia, Imo and Anambra. This research was conducted in Anambra, Imo and Ebonyi States. 75 actors were interviewed.

Civil society in the South East has some of the highest budgets in the country. Along with the South South, and after Abuja and Lagos, annual resources are on the high side of the spectrum and hover around seven million naira annually, which is almost double the national median. Like in the South South, this may be correlated with the high presence of international civil society organisations.

Civil society receives funding from private companies, unlike most states in the North. 12 out of the 28 NGOs and faith-based organisations in the region cite private companies as funders. However, international donors, government agencies and individual donors remain the most important sources of funding.

Civil Society in the South East works closely with traditional and informal institutions, such as town unions, self-help and community-based initiatives. 27 projects engaging with institutions, mostly traditional, religious and informal mechanisms, were mapped – among the highest numbers across the country. NGOs and faith-based organisations work through and with these mechanisms to engage in alternative dispute resolution, to build up early warning and reporting systems, and to provide security through community policing and collect data.

Civil society organisations

- 44 NGOs
- 3 other security providers
- 2 government security forces
- 17 other government institutions
- 9 international actors

Over 950 people died in detention facilities run by the Joint Task Force in the first six months of 2013. (Amnesty International).

Intersociety
International Society for Civil Liberties and the Rule of Law, or for short ‘Intersociety Nigeria’, was founded in 2007 in Anambra. It works to reduce human rights abuses. It conducts relevant research and monitors violence committed by vigilante groups, criminal gangs and state security forces. It organises workshops and roundtables on the role of politicians and business in the activities of kidnapping and other violent crimes.

Anambra state overview

GENERAL INTRODUCTION
Located in the country’s South East, the story of Anambra State is one of radical ongoing change. Its population is large and overwhelmingly young; it is rapidly urbanizing, creating densely populated cities and towns and, increasingly, this has resulted in slums in places such as Onitsha. With over 4 million inhabitants, it is one of the most populous states in the South Eastern Geo-Political zone, and nationally it is second only to Lagos in population density. More than half of Anambra’s population (52.9%) is under the age of 18.

While better off than many Nigerian states, the incidence of poverty in Anambra is still very high – disappointingly so, given its economic potential. It has a poverty index of 22.8%, making Anambra the sixth lowest in Nigeria. And in some studies the state has been rated as having the lowest incidence of poverty in the country. The state also still has a higher-than-national-average rate of unemployment (21.3%): this is one of the highest rates in the South East and must be considered when looking at armed violence in the region.

Anambra State has a large and skilled workforce and great resource potential, although much of that potential remains untapped. The discovery of oil (Aguieri, Umuleri) and natural gas (Ebenebe Ridge) has created a new sector to an already varied economy. Tungsten, lignite, kaolin and sandstone are mined for local use and export, and highly arable soil in the region contributes to a healthy agrarian economy including cash crops such as coco yam, cassava, rice, maize and oil palm. A major part of the River Niger crosses Anambra state, making the state one of the main riverine states in Nigeria.

The modern Anambra State, with its capital in Awka city, is the result of nearly 50 years of borders being redrawn within Nigeria. With 21 local government Areas, it also has the largest urban city, Onitsha, in the entire southeast region. Once a part of the East Central State, in 1976 the old Anambra State was broken off; further division in 1991 created today’s Anambra, separated from its old capital of Enugu (now a separate state).

Fig 46: Number of actors mapped

Fig 47: Map of Anambra State

More importantly, Anambra is still feeling the effects of the 1967-1970 Nigeria-Biafra war, in which parts of southeastern Nigeria declared themselves an independent Republic of Biafra. The ensuing civil war created a legacy of humanitarian disaster, religious and political violence, and ongoing insurgent conflict. Given the impact of cross border crime it is important to note that Anambra shares borders with three non-southeast states: Delta, Kogi and Edo.

OVERVIEW OF ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE STATE
Violent crime is a pervasive problem in Anambra State, particularly as it experiences major changes in its political, demographic and economic makeup. As in other parts of Nigeria, Anambra has experienced vast unemployment in its rural areas, contributing to a rapid urbanisation. Its young, densely packed population has seen a lack of opportunities plague even its educated sectors, making education less attractive and leaving a large population of young male school drop-outs at great risk of criminal activity. With a legacy of inter-communal conflict, secessionist insurgency and other political violence, and the lingering weaponeery and ideology of civil war, Anambra is ripe for all manner of armed violence.

Armed violence in Anambra State dates back to the Nigeria-Biafra civil war of 1967-1970, which contributed to the massive proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in the region. This brutal conflict was a humanitarian disaster in which as many
as five million people nationwide – largely women and children – lost their lives. In the decades following the Biafran war, Anambra witnessed inter- and intra-communal conflicts including the major conflict between the communities of Aguleri and Umuleri in 1999-2000, which killed hundreds and displaced thousands.

Not unique to Anambra, although notable for its scale and impact in terms of armed violence, is the problem of vigilante groups. The vigilantes were initially given the blessing of Anambra’s government when the Bakassi Boys gang became known as the officially recognized and state-supported “Anambra State Vigilante Services” in 2000. But in the years since, the government appeared to lose control of the vigilantes, and the arms possessed by these groups have remained unaccounted for. Eventually, the vigilantes drifted into civil matters including family, land and inter-communal disputes, and the unlawful arrest and – in some cases – extra-judicial execution of suspects. In the run-up to elections, the vigilantes are easily transformed into political press gangs; likewise, during other communal conflicts, the accessibility of armed men makes escalation likely.

Another vigilante-like group – the Anambra State Special Task Force on Street Trading (known as “Ndimplawazu”) – has recently engaged in clashes with members of the separatist Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB).

Inter- and intra-community violence continues to be a major problem in Anambra. Hostility continues to simmer between Aguleri and Umuleri; more recent conflicts have occurred between the Akpu and Ajali communities and between Owerre and the Ezukala/ Ogboji communities, as well as intra-communal conflict within Umunya. When such conflicts dissipate, the weapons and aggression often do not, leading to perpetrators regrouping as criminals or political gangsters.

Purely criminal activity is also a major problem in Anambra. The state has the highest rate of kidnapping in the South East of Nigeria, with 273 cases reported in 2011 alone, particularly within the commercial axis of the towns of Onitsha and Nnewi. Armed robbery and murder are also present at high levels in the state. Vigilante activities including political and criminal thuggery as well as extra-judicial arrests, detentions, torture and execution contribute greatly to the armed violence in the state. The separatist MASSOB is involved in clashes with these and other, often government-related, groups. And there are unemployed, uneducated, dropout youths committing crimes both as individuals and in gangs and “cults”.

Thanks to years of conflict and state-sanctioned vigilantism, Anambra is flooded with weapons. Despite a lack of specific documentation (if security forces know the extent of arms trafficking, they aren’t forthcoming with that information), we can form a picture from recent reports of raids by the State Security Service.

In September, 2012, in just three raids, the SSS captured around 30 AK-47 assault rifles, more than 16,000 rounds of ammunition, rocket launchers, grenades and assorted pistols and other rifles. The Awka axis of Anambra is known for producing blacksmiths who are alleged to produce locally made guns.

**Anambra**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population size: 4.8m</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absolute poverty rate: 53.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate: 10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant mortality rate: 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average household size: 5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim share of population: 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian share of population: 80%</td>
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</table>

In September, 2012, in just three raids, the SSS captured around 30 AK-47 assault rifles, more than 16,000 rounds of ammunition, rocket launchers, grenades and assorted pistols and other rifles. The Awka axis of Anambra is known for producing blacksmiths who are alleged to produce locally made guns.

**VICTIMS OF ARMED VIOLENCE**

Victims of armed violence in Anambra tend to be based in urban areas including Nnewi, Onitsha, Ekwulibio, Obosi and Uli. Due largely to the prevalence of kidnapping, these victims are often, surprisingly, from higher socioeconomic classes – men in business and politics. Women and children are particularly targeted by perpetrators, and also suffer through the loss of livelihood and social status that occurs even when not targeted, through the loss of husbands/fathers. Women in Nigeria are the main civilian victims of armed violence, but are simultaneously powerless to prevent it. Finally, the 30 bodies found in 2013 in Esiw River demonstrates the lack of accountability in the protection of lives and properties in Anambra.

**INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE**

The state government has been deeply concerned with the recent upsurge of armed violence in Anambra and the threat it poses to both population and economy. Through Anambra Integrated Development Strategy (ANIDS) and the Anambra Youth Reorientation and Empowerment Program (ANSYREP), the state government has implemented several job-creation initiatives to address youth unemployment, but with few tangible results.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) in Anambra engage in efforts to promote and implement economic empowerment programs with an eye towards keeping youths from joining a life of crime – this includes groups such as the Centre for Development and Civic Education and Anambra Rebirth. Similarly, there is some work within the Anambra State Association of Town Unions to create community policing efforts. The CLEEN Foundation, a Lagos- and Abuja-based NGO, conducts research into violence in Anambra, working towards establishing an empirical basis for advocacy and a baseline against which progress of intervention programmes can be measured.
Ebonyi state

GENERAL INTRODUCTION
In a 2011 survey by the CLEEN Foundation, 45% of respondents from Ebonyi State stated that they had fallen victim to crime in the previous year – the highest rate amongst Nigeria’s South East states.\(^{10}\) Ebonyi’s 4.3 million people are largely uneducated (around half the population has no more than a primary-school education) and poor, with a per capita income of just over half the national average. With 75% of its population living rurally and more than 70% employed in largely subsistence-level agriculture, the battle for land is a dominant issue in any understanding of the state’s violence.

Ebonyi is a young political entity, carved out of parts of Enugu (to its west) and Abia (to its south) states in 1996. The result is that Ebonyi has 13 Local Government Areas. It has, however, a relatively homogenous population, comprised primarily of Igbo people and so avoids at least some of the sectarian strife commonly associated with armed violence in some parts of Nigeria. But this by no means equates to a peaceful population: common inter-communal conflict reached new levels in 2011-2012 with deadly battles between the Ezza and Ezilö people that continue to foster.

OVERVIEW OF ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE STATE
Land disputes are the key causes of armed violence in Ebonyi State, with no end to the headline-dominating issue in sight. Clan differences, socio-political inequality and agrarian economic interests – the root causes of these disputes and their resultant inter-communal conflicts – have been difficult to control by governmental authorities. With a paucity of resources and a lack of infrastructure, combined with long-standing communal malice, even issues that may seem minor can escalate to the point of serious violence with major implications across the state and for years to come.

The Ezza-Ezilö crisis is one example. According to Afikpo Today magazine, the dispute between these two rival eastern Ebonyi communities was inflamed by a 2008 disagreement over ownership of a piece of land on which a phone booth was erected. By the end of December, 2011, the disagreement had escalated, with gunmen attacking Ezilö and killing over 70 men, women and children – including the local police chief. Besides the killings, Ezilö market and other properties were burned to the ground and indigenous communities’ animals slaughtered. The ramifications of this are still ongoing. In the summer of 2013, a bomb was found at a building site on the disputed territory, and as recently as October, 2013, politicians claimed that the withholding of infrastructural improvement money was tied to political and social differences related to the Ezza-Ezilö dispute.

Other drivers of armed violence in Ebonyi State include the University-based confraternity gangs known as “cults” that are much reported at Ebonyi State University in Abakaliki, as well as the so-called “do or die” nature of Nigerian politics. Renewed violence in 2012 and 2013 between University cults has resulted in gun battles, kidnappings, and murder, including the killing of a police corporal in 2012 and multiple deaths in 2013. Ebonyi has, in addition, the federal university in Abakiliki and a federal polytechnic in Uvwana, meaning that the potentials of armed violence through University cult activities is, in these areas, rife.

Meanwhile, the commonplace practice of politicians arming gangs for political purposes is not only a driver of violence in and of itself, but results in semi-organised gangs of youths being armed and purposeless after election time. In 2012, two commissioners and an advisor to Ebonyi State’s governor barely escaped an assassination attempt when they were attacked at a petrol station by gunmen; a bystander was not so lucky and was killed in the gunfire. Even with the headline-grabbing issues of cultists, political thugs and communal conflict, it is unemployment and underemployment that most in Ebonyi see as the most important drivers of crime and armed violence.

Finally, the fact that Ebonyi state has boundaries with the non-Igbo state of Cross River must be acknowledged. Cross River itself provides a major regional source of income through sand dredging and river transport, but the part of Cross River that sits at the boundaries records a very high incidence of communal violence. This violence has led to the loss of a huge number of lives, for instance in the Ezilö/Ezza clashes. And many people impacted by the Ezza/Ezilö conflict were just travelers passing through that and not linked to the grievances of the clashes per se.

PERPETRATORS OF ARMED VIOLENCE
The perpetrators of armed violence in Ebonyi tend to be young and poor, even when carrying out the will of wealthy and powerful political and cultural figures. A lack of opportunities for any kind of socio-economic advancement in this agrarian society, combined with the very real inequality that these same “have-nots” encounter amongst their leaders, has left a huge part of the young population frustrated.

Ebonyi has mineral and other potential industrial resources, but they remain largely untapped. Meanwhile, the traditionally communal form of agriculture leaves extremely limited potential crops beyond subsistence farming. Until something changes within the region’s resource exploitation, there is little chance of socio-economic advancement for most.

Income generated within the state amounts to less than a quarter of the state’s statutory revenue from the federal government, making Ebonyi the least developed state in Nigeria’s southeast, fully dependent on outside aid (according to CLEEN Foundation research).

VICTIMS OF ARMED VIOLENCE
Communal, political and gang violence, as well as less unique factors such as everyday crime and domestic violence, all disproportionately affect women and children in Ebonyi State (as they do throughout much of Nigeria). However, no class or demographic of people in the state is safe from violence, whether it be the communal violence that hits poor families and small businesses, the threat of kidnapping against the wealthy, or attempted assassinations and attacks against the politically powerful. The result is that the population of Ebonyi suffers, across the board, from a sense of insecurity and, ultimately, from fear.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE
Media and NGO sources, including newspapers and magazines such as the Advocate and Afikpo Today and the research organisation CLEEN Foundation, are attempting to do the basic background work necessary for any change to come in Ebonyi’s armed-violence situation. First and foremost it is necessary that the government and outside agencies understand the broad nature and effects of violence, particularly communal violence, in Ebonyi, which begins with this reportage and baseline data.

With frustration, poverty and inequality as major drivers of violence, changes to Ebonyi’s economic situation – and, in particular, its inability to generate revenue beyond subsistence – is of grave importance. To this end, the government has launched a program called Vision 20-20-20 that aims to improve internal revenue generation by 70% before 2020, when, according to the national Nigeria Vision 2020 concept, Nigeria could have one of the world’s 20 largest economies. Though the strategies and viability of both the Ebonyi and national 2020 plans are often considered optimistic or unrealistic, at least places revenue advancement on the state’s agenda.

Research by the CLEEN Foundation found that governmental incompetence and corruption was seen as an essential aspect of disillusionment amongst the people of Ebonyi – a huge challenge in successful governance. The current state government has placed an emphasis on reforming this corrupt governmental “attitude” as well as on utilizing the natural resources in the state to promote Ebonyi’s internal revenue.

**Ebonyi**
- Population size: 2.5m
- Absolute poverty rate: 82.9
- Unemployment rate: 25.1
- Infant mortality rate: 51
- Average household size: 5.8
- Muslim share of population: 23%
- Christian share of population: 67%
Imo state

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The inhabitants of Imo State are predominantly Igbo, making up a largely rural population of 4.8 million with a projected growth rate of 3%. The state’s high population density has led to pressure being on the land, forests and other natural resources, leading to widespread rural poverty. Land disputes at both an individual and a community level, as well as over-farming of the land, have caused an increase in urban migration in recent years.

The main vegetation of Imo state is tropical rain forest, annual rainfall being as much as 2,200mm. The economy of the state is agricultural, though oil, lead, zinc and natural gas in also mined in commercial quantities though there is little heavy industry.

Given the nature of available work, a high youth population and a large number of graduates every year, unemployment is an issue. It is estimated that as many as 70% of youths are unemployed.

OVERVIEW OF ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE STATE

Imo is relatively less affected by violence than other states in Nigeria and the South East. The Nigeria Security Tracker recorded 17 violence-related deaths in Imo between May 2011 and August 2013. The ACLED political violence research project also recorded 59 separate explicitly political incidents of armed violence in the state between 1998 and August 2013. However, the dearth of armed violence observatories in this region may mean that there may well be a higher level of armed violence than recorded publicly.

Levels can be analysed both pre- and post-amnesty: the frequency of all political violence levels - in select areas of Imo state at least - dropped from approximately 2.1 events per month between 1997 and September 2009, to 1.9 between October 2009 and August 2013. If we include only those most serious political violence events (i.e., excluding political demonstrations) which are more likely to reflect the dynamics relevant to the amnesty, the drop is even more pronounced: event frequency fell from 1.9 events per month before the amnesty, to 1.2 after the amnesty. Fatality data shows a similar trend: the pre-amnesty period witnessed an average of 2.5 conflict-related fatalities a month, while the post-amnesty period has seen an average of 1.8.

PERPETRATORS OF ARMED VIOLENCE

The drivers of armed violence have been identified in Imo as being the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW); the use of thugs for political violence; the rising rates of youth unemployment, economic hardship and inequality; the exposure to criminal violence through the media and the prevalence of a culture of materialism. The CLEEN Foundation in 2011 stated that the high insecurity in Imo State could be seen as an outcome of the insensitive political and socio-economic policies of past governments that exacerbated sufferings through exposure of the youths to poverty, starvation and joblessness.

In 2009 the Imo state House of Assembly passed a bill providing for the death penalty for anyone convicted of kidnapping.

There is a marked paucity of available data on the perpetrators of violence in Imo, as well as a lack of information on what kind of weapons are used. However media reports show that the main weapons used in Imo are guns, from assault rifles, to pump-action shotguns and grenade launchers.

The circulation of arms in the state is reportedly high. The sources of small arms include, local manufacturing, security agents who sell arms to criminals and a commission set up by federal Government in 2001, recovered 428 rifles, 494 imported pistols, 287 locally made pistols and 48 Dane guns, all valued around 50 million naira. An interview with Local vigilante, the Bakassi Boy members reveal that they use handguns, assault rifles, locally made pistols and cutlasses for their vigilante activities and operations. Said one, “We use assault rifles and Colt pistols for our vigilante operations because these criminals now use high caliber guns, we now use AK-47s made in the Ukraine.”

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE

The State Government has recently introduced an Imo Security Network, designed to combat armed violence. The Network, whose operations are not widely known to the community at large and who are not open to public scrutiny, brings together private and public partnerships. Further educational establishments have also agreed to develop their own controls to be vigilant to the growth of cult activities in Universities and other seats of learning.

There are other civil forces that have attempted to tackle the issue of armed violence in Imo, including local vigilante groups. Their attempts are admirable but hampered to some degree by the institutional secrecy in crime prevention and the lack of public data available even after successful prosecution.

The overall lack of data is of concern, for instance, because it does not supply civil society or state with any appropriate data to design armed violence reduction interventions. For instance, as one civil society member has opined: “One cannot commence effective gun control advocacy when the records, showing the types of guns being used, are neither available nor accessible”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imo</th>
<th>Population size: 4.6m</th>
<th>Absolute poverty rate: 39.4%</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unemployment rate: 28.1</td>
<td>Infant mortality rate: 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average household size: 5.6</td>
<td>Muslim share of population: 18%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian share of population: 80%</td>
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Some statistics show Imo to be less conflict-affected than its neighbouring South-East Nigeria states. Researchers, however, arrived in Imo to find its many inhabitants deeply troubled by a recent surge in armed violence. There are regular reports of killings – be they political assassinations, criminal attacks, struggle for property/land or simply business deals gone bad – and a terrible outbreak of kidnappings for ransom or to settle political/business scores. Our researchers found checkpoints manned by armed officials (comprising representatives of the Nigerian police and military as well as members of the Joint Task Force) across many major roads, but these stops seem to have had little effect on a state in which killers and kidnappers seemed to act with impunity.

**KIDNAPPING**
The kidnapping of public officials, the wealthy, their family members and other residents has become a multi-million-naira business venture in Imo, operated by well-organised criminal networks. It has been reported that since the wealthy no longer keep large amounts of cash available, the absence of such sums has caused more to resort to kidnapping. It is not uncommon to see upper classes travelling the state with heavily armed security personnel. Besides holding wealthy and politically powerful men for ransom, when female relatives are kidnapped they are frequently subjected to sexual assault or rape. According to sources, in some cases, poor people are mistakenly kidnapped when the kidnappers’ research fails and ultimately killed for being unable to raise the ransom money.

Because kidnapping affects the wealthy more than any other group, it is held that it was not difficult to enact a law in Imo state that imposed a very high penalty on offenders. Despite this, however, the number of kidnappings is not receding. And it does not address the problem that currently, in the law, there is no opportunity for victims to access compensation or recompense beyond the convention of a court trial.

**POLITICAL VIOLENCE**
While political violence has been relatively quiet in recent times, the situation is beginning to heat up in anticipation of elections in 2015. Our researcher heard reports of aspiring candidates being attacked and even killed and also of clashes between the supporters of rival politicians. The new structure of governance that outlaws development unions and empowers traditional rulers in Imo state, has – at community levels – created tensions and in many cases led to a violent struggle for the ‘traditional leadership stool’.

A high consumption of drugs by young people is also reportedly linked to political violence.

Furthermore, it cannot be understated how the way top political leaders break the law and circumvent justice has an influence on younger people. The springing up of so many uniformed agencies of government also gives the impression that politicians use such agencies to compensate those who worked for their electioneering victory.

**ARMS PROLIFERATION**
In Imo, it is common for individuals – often illegally – to publicly carry weapons at social gatherings: shotguns, pistols and other guns are often brandished at weddings, funerals, and other social gatherings. Researchers were told that nearly every household in Imo owns a gun because of a general fear that security agencies in the state cannot protect people from attacks, often that occur in rural and remote areas.

Our researcher also found the residents of Imo open to discussing the security situation in private, but not in public – in general, people are wary of being overheard. Members of the public are also often unwilling to speak to the media for fear of their lives. This culture of silence is brought, in part, about by the way the police themselves interact with the citizens of Imo and their own secrecy in sharing any information related to armed violence. Residents specifically told us that they believed an inefficient criminal-justice system means that witnesses cannot be protected.

**MEDIA**
Researchers found widespread concern amongst residents that the quality and quantity of reportage featuring armed violence have regressed in recent times. When we asked journalists why this was the case they claimed that they suffered harassment and intimidation from those at the heart of the violence on which they were reporting.
**South West regional overview**

**EKITI, LAGOS, OGAN, ONDO, OSUN, OYO**

**POLITICS**

The South West region is home to two of Nigeria’s three largest cities: Lagos and Ibadan. As a national and continental economic hub, Lagos sees a high level of political demonstrating, some of which has turned violent. The city saw high rates of rioting in January 2012, when violent demonstrations broke out against the federal government’s proposed cuts to a fuel subsidy, prompting some analysts to discuss the possibility of a “Nigerian Spring.” As elsewhere in the country, security forces have been accused of responding with excessive force against demonstrators.

Osun, in the South West, was the only state in southern Nigeria that was not won by the current President Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP in the most recent 2011 general elections; having been won by the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) candidate, Nuhu Ribadu.

**ECONOMICS**

Across a range of poverty measures, the South West region performs relatively well. The region has an infant mortality rate of 59, the lowest of all national regions. The South West also has one of the lowest rates of respondents reporting no educational attainment whatsoever. In 2006, Lagos was recorded as having the highest relative number of deaths due to crime in the country.

**DEMOGRAPHICS AND GEOGRAPHY**

The population of the South West region is estimated at 32.5 million people. The region’s population is predominantly Christian and members of the Yoruba ethnic group, which make up approximately 21% of the national population, are concentrated in this area. The population of Lagos is an estimated 10.7m with an annual population growth rate of around 3.2%. Many of the drivers of armed violence in urban areas are amplified in a city the size of Lagos: the city is densely populated with pockets of overcrowding and extreme poverty reflecting the inequality that prevails there.

**ARMED VIOLENCE**

Armed violence in the South West region is concentrated in Lagos, where over 55% of the recorded conflict events in the region are located. Lagos is the second most conflict-affected state in Nigeria, although levels of political violence were highest in the 1990s and early 2000s, in the early years of the transition to civilian rule. This figure does not reflect explicitly criminal armed violence, which is extremely high: Nigeria Watch data identifies Lagos as having the highest relative number of deaths due to crime in the country.

**Figure 51: Map of in South West region**

**Figure 54: Political violence by type**

**Civil society in the South West: Lagos, Ogun and Osun**

**LAGOS**

In Lagos, 26 organisations, including 18 civil society organisations, were surveyed.

Civil Society in Lagos also cooperates with the security sector more than in other zones: Lagos is home to a number of influential civil society organisations with important links to the security sector. Several of the big Lagos-based non-profit organisations state that they work with the police, the military and the National Human Rights Commission. Roles include, for instance, training the police and the army on violence-reduction in law enforcement.

Surveying the victims of crime

The CLEEN Foundation is one of the major civil society organisations involved in tackling armed violence in Nigeria. Based in Lagos, its mission is to promote public safety, security and justice. CLEEN is probably best known for its National Victimisation Surveys, which are conducted annually and in all states of Nigeria. This data is crucial for shedding light on the situation of crime and victimisation.

Reforming the police

The Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (NOPRIN) works towards a reform of the Nigeria Police Force, and to provide the opportunity for civil society involvement in this process. Created in 2000, this network of civil society organisations is one of the major NGO initiatives seeking engagement with the Government of Nigeria, and the Nigeria Police Force specifically, to improve accountability and legitimacy.
Lagos state

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Lagos is the historical and commercial capital of Nigeria, located in the southwest of the country. It is the country’s largest urban area, and one of the largest cities on the African continent, with some analysts predicting that Lagos will become the world’s third largest city by 2015, behind Tokyo and Mumbai.

Lagos is the second most conflict-affected state in Nigeria, according to the ACLED dataset, although levels of political violence were highest in the 1990s and early 2000s, in the early years of the transition to civilian rule. Nigeria Watch data identifies Lagos as having the highest relative number of deaths due to crime in the country.

Decentralised militias are the most common violent actor in the state. These groups operate on the border of criminal-political violence and engage in opportunistic rather than strategic violence for the most part. Many of the drivers of armed violence in urban areas are amplified in a city the size of Lagos: the city is densely populated with pockets of overcrowding and extreme poverty. In 2006, Lagos had a Gini coefficient of 0.64, amongst the highest in Sub-Saharan African cities.

City residents struggle with poor living conditions—nearly two-fifths of the population lives in overcrowded housing, and a quarter have no access to adequate sanitation—and limited opportunities: 40% of males and 12% of females were unemployed according to 2006 data.

Our researcher’s mapping of responses to armed violence identified 26 organisations, including 18 civil society groups, working to reduce and address armed violence in the city. Those surveyed had the second highest financial resources at their disposal (following those based in Abuja), with median annual budgets of 10 million naira, and 4 out of 5 these organisations operate on the national, as opposed to local or state level.

The indigenous peoples of Lagos State are the Yoruba subgroups of the Aworis in Ikeja, the Eguns in the Badagry area and the Ijebus in Ikorodu and Epe, while Lagos Island consists of a mixture of Berin and Eko Aworis as well as repatriated Yorubas and other immigrants.

OVERVIEW OF ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE STATE

Armed robbery, organised crime, disproportionate use of force by state authorities and domestic violence are perceived to be high in Lagos. It is also notorious for its ethnic militia and vigilante groups. According to the 2012 CLEEN victimisation survey, 23% of Lagos’ inhabitants were victims of crime in 2010. Among these, 13% have experienced robbery.

A 2005 assessment by Wale Adebanwi put the number of armed violence outbreaks recorded in Nigeria between 1999 and 2003 at over 50, with Lagos accounting for at least 15. Ginifer (2005) identifies at least 8 forms of armed violence in Nigeria, including Lagos. These include inter and intra-communal violence, ethnic militia and vigilante violence, political and electoral violence, armed criminality and ‘gangsterism,’ state armed violence, state-sponsored violence, arms racing and ethno-religious violence.

Few cases of domestic violence have also been reported in Lagos compared with states in other zones. According to the CLEEN Foundation, a non-governmental organisation headquartered in Lagos, 33 per cent of respondents in the South South said they had suffered or are suffering from it while the...
North East came in second with 26 per cent. Fewer cases were recorded in the South West region (including Lagos).

PERPETRATORS OF ARMED VIOLENCE
The main actors involved in armed violence in Lagos include ethnic militias, so-called Area Boys, youths, criminal gangs and the state security apparatus itself. Ethnic militias in Lagos and across the South West region, the dominant ethnic militia-cum-vigilante group is the OPC (Oodua People’s Congress).

‘Area boys’ are the unemployed young people – mostly men – who take part in opportunistic violence in Lagos. They are easily mobilized for armed violence and although no precise data exists, there are probably several thousand across Lagos. Area Boys have traditionally had some positive connotations as community service providers. But they started to turn into a negative phenomenon in the late 1980s as a result, in part, of government economic adjustment programmes that exacerbated unemployment and resulted in cut-backs on social service provision, and of the increase in narcotic trading and consumption in Lagos.

Not all youths are Area Boys. The UN estimates that there are 25 million economically, socially and politically deprived youths in Nigeria. The inequalities and difficulties faced by these youths contribute heavily to the incidence of armed violence in Lagos. Criminal gangs are involved in various types of violence including armed robberies and gang conflicts.

Finally, the state security agencies themselves – the police, paramilitaries, special security elements, and the armed forces – are involved in armed violence. Many of these are involved in illicit activities backed up by the threat of, or actual use, of armed violence.

VICTIMS OF ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE STATE
Victims of armed violence in Lagos are mainly ordinary citizens, including vulnerable groups such as women and children, the old and the physically challenged.

However, members of the Nigerian armed forces and the Nigerian Police have also remained both perpetrators and victims of armed violence. In a 2002 report, Amnesty International noted that the civilian govern-

significant threat to their own lives from heavily-armed gangs of robbers.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE
Since the return to civil rule in 1999, civil society organisations, international development agencies and state authorities have undertaken various efforts at reducing armed violence in Lagos. Police authorities and successive state governments have set up special joint task forces in response to increasing armed robbery and other violent crimes.

Civil society groups in Lagos generally have a broader focus – 81% of the organisations work at the national level. Lagos is home to a number of influential civil society organisations with important links to the security sector. Several of the big Lagos-based non-profit organisations work with the police, the military and the National Human Rights Commission on tasks such as training the police and the army on violence-reduction in law enforcement.

The Lagos State House of Assembly enacted a Domestic Violence Prohibition Law in 2007. However, the government’s failure to undertake genuine and radical security sector reform also predisposes the police and other security forces to violence and corruption.

Civil society groups have been collaborating with the police and the National Human Rights Commission to organise human rights training for the police officers.

CLEEN also runs a youth program aimed at reorienting youth against drug abuse and other crimes.

The British Department for International Development and Justice for All (J4A), in collaboration with CLEEN Foundation has developed an intervention plan to support the development of voluntary policing sector (VPS) groups (otherwise known as Vigilantes) in Lagos State. The aim of the project is to improve the responsiveness and effectiveness of the service delivery, increase accountability of vigilante groups in Lagos community and help them to work more closely with the Nigeria Police at the divisional command level and other relevant counterparts.

J4A said that the pivotal role that vigilante groups play in addressing the safety and security needs of poor communities is well documented. For many Nigerians, especially the poor, VPS groups are the first, and in some cases, the only groups they feel able to go to for their safety and security needs.

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding Nigeria (WANEP-Nigeria), a civil society network headquartered in Lagos, was established to provide an organised platform for collaborative peace-building for conflict transformation and development in Nigeria by indigenous Non Governmental Organizations.

CONCLUSION
Progress has undeniably been made in Lagos in recent years. As columnist Kayode Komolafe wrote in 2011: “The physical efforts to battle crimes should be coupled with a socio-economic war on poverty. The strategy must ultimately encompass social security. For in the long run, it is social security that could enhance physical security. The product of such a strategy would be a more enduring security model.”

According to the Small Arms Survey, the average price of an AK-47 in Nigeria dropped from US $1,700 in late 2003 to US $400 in March 2007.

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Lagos state: view from the ground

While political violence in Lagos continues, its attendant fatalities have decreased in recent years. Rather, AOAV found that armed violence in Lagos is often related to trade, specifically the control of land, motor parks and market places. Non-indigenes, especially those from South-East Nigeria, who are primarily traders, often come under attack during disputes with indigenes. These intimidation attacks are typically carried out by armed youths under the influence of alcohol.

Attacks on merchants and customer over-extortion along with demands for protection money and ongoing territorial disputes all plague Lagos' huge and bustling markets. At Lagos' Alaba International Market – with more than 5,000 traders, one of the largest in Africa – the market’s legal counsel, Festus Keyamo, recently wrote a petition to the Lagos State government: “These touts and hoodlums armed with all manner of weapons are stationed along the Oj ogbede Alaba road and its environs, collecting illegal tolls from drivers and owners of containers lawfully and dutifully cleared and paid for by traders. The most annoying in this show of shame is the brutality visited upon our clients and their customers in the course of extorting money from them.”

In Lagos, we saw that many markets in the city have established their own armed forces to defend themselves. Traders at Alaba International, Iddo, Idumota, Ladipo, Mile 12 and Owode Onirin markets have stockpiled arms and engage attackers in defensive and reprisal attacks.

Another source of armed violence in Lagos are the so-called “cults” – gangs organised as university-campus confraternities, and more recently as non-university street gangs, that use armed violence and intimidation as part of a slew of criminal activities.

**BORDER VIOLENCE**

Violence between smugglers and customs officials has been a part of Lagos life for some time, with a rise in reported killings on each side in recent years. Sometimes customs officials manage to intercept arms and ammunition, but the borders remain porous. A July 2013, interception announced by Lagos police commissioner Umar Manko illustrates the real dangers posed by smugglers’ wares: “[A] vehicle was brought to the station and a search was conducted. Twenty-six cartons of live cartridges concealed in T-shirts … were recovered. A Navy Warrant Officer’s uniform … ID card, beret and shoes were also recovered inside the vehicle.”

**MEDIA**

Lagos has the most vibrant media presence in Nigeria, with the highest concentration of print, online and electronic media in the nation. However, Nigeria’s media lacks both a full understanding of the country’s armed-violence problem and the skills and resources to do appropriate investigative journalism to cover the extent of this widespread issue. Most stories are covered as breaking news and not followed up.
Ogun state overview

GENERAL INTRODUCTION
Ogun state – also known as the Gateway State – was created from the former Western State in 1976 by the administration of General Murtala Muhammed. The new state was composed of the former Abeokuta and Ijebu provinces of Western State. Ogun borders Lagos State to the south, Oyo and Osun states to the north, Ondo state to the east and the republic of Benin to the west. Abeokuta is the capital and largest city in the state. Other cities and towns in the Ogun State are Ijebu Ode, Sagamu, Ijebu Igbo, Ilaro Ayetoro and Ota.

Ogun has 20 Local Government Areas (LGAs) each headed by a Chairman. It is divided into four geopolitical Zones, three Senatorial Districts, nine Federal and 26 State Constituencies.

Economic situation
Ogun is a largely agricultural area, and as such its population relies heavily on farming for their income. Of the state’s population centres, only Abeokuta has adequate water from the source. Other major settlements have between 25% and 70% of their present demand met. Rural areas are generally poorly supplied, with only about 50% having access to potable water.

Geography and demography
Ogun is located in the southwestern corner of Nigeria, bordering Oyo, Ogun and Ondo states and the Republic of Benin. The residents of Ogun State mostly belong to the Yoruba ethnic group, comprising mainly the Egba, the Yewa, the Awori, the Egun, the Ijebu and the Remo. As with Nigeria as a whole, Ogun is largely divided between Muslims and Christians, along with a small number of believers in traditional religions.

OVERVIEW OF ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE STATE
According to a survey by the CLEEN Foundation, Ogun state is the safest in Nigeria, with only 5% of respondents reporting having been the victim of crime. However, the same survey found that Ogun state’s residents had the highest fear of crime, at 94% of respondents claiming they feared the impact of crime in their lives.

The disparity between the actual experience of crime and the extent to which Ogun residents fear it demonstrates that the impact of armed violence is vast and far-reaching, and that the negative effects of armed violence extend well beyond human and economic cost. It is an opinion held that this further damages Nigeria’s much taunted image internationally at a time when foreign investors are being attracted to the country.

Historical legacy
The increase in armed violence in Ogun State and other parts of Nigeria was the result of an imbalance in the administration of justice and unfair distribution of resources. The frustrations caused by the lack of justice and widening economic gap between the privileged and the disadvantaged is a major impetus to armed violence incidence.

Main underlying causes
In Ogun state, many drivers and factors contributed to the increase of armed violence incidence, which was recorded mostly in the state capital and other major towns. These factors include: spontaneous reactions / expression, socio-economic factors, desire for retaliation for prior incidents, unemployment, poverty, policy disagreements, implementation of existing laws, corruption and religious disputes.

There are a number of more specific flashpoints, grievances and motivations for armed violence – some of which are specific to the state itself, but most are issues that are felt across Nigeria. These include armed robbery and burglary; land grabbing and land speculators (for instance in Omo Onile / Ajagungbale); cultism; local power struggles – such as the issue of chiefcy; e.g Oluke Orie (Ewekoro Local Government); religious tension e.g Oisosa (Odogbolu Local Government); political violence (mostly during election campaign and voting); commercial transport union violence; violence that impacts traditional or cultural festivals (e.g Egungun festival); and boundary disputes (e.g Bakatari).

Weapons used
Criminals in Ogun use a variety of weapons, including long guns, pistols, cutlasses, knives, machetes, acid, arrows, empty bottles and stones. In larger incidents, such as a clash between different factions of motorcycle riders in Abeokuta, most of these types of weapons are used simultaneously.

VICTIMS OF ARMED VIOLENCE
The victims of these criminal acts are both male and female while perpetrators are mostly men. According to the CLEEN Foundation, Ogun was on the low end of incidence of robbery, with 8% of residents reporting that they were the victims of the crime, the third-lowest rate in the country. However, the number of victims of physical assault is much higher, with 38% of Ogun residents reporting being victims – the fifth-highest rate in the country.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE
By and large, the Ogun state government’s reaction to armed violence has centred around seven policies. These are the introduction of a new Police / Army Joint Task Force; the purchase of armoured tanks and other security equipment; the introduction of a Quick Response Squad (QRS); the cancellation of Police checkpoints on highways; the establishment of a vigilante service of Ogun State; the provision of employment opportunity to youths; and an ongoing sensitisation / awareness campaign.

Which institutions are most effective at addressing armed violence
There are a wide range of institutions working to reduce armed violence in Ogun. These include the Nigeria Police Force; Nigeria Prison Service; Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps; State Security Services; Vigilante service of Ogun state; Central Department of Statistics, Ministry of Finance, Oke-Mosan; Non Governmental Organisations (NGOS); Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and Faith Based organisations (FBOs).

In Nigeria as a whole, only 18% of crimes are reported to police. But Ogun residents report 33% of crimes – the third-highest rate in the country. This indicates the Ogun population’s level of trust in the authorities in their state is higher than the national average. However, during the course of the research for this report, it also became clear that many governmental organisations and agencies use deeply bureaucratic approaches and adopt often hard-to-rationalise information sharing policies that act as a brake to prompt response and transparency. More in this area needs to be done.

Efforts to address armed violence
Few stakeholders working directly in armed violence reduction are government owned or their affiliated agencies. Those that work indirectly are generally non-Governmental organisations. This reinforces the belief among many local organisations that, for violence to be properly addressed in this state, states must come together and work in partnership with local, regional and international civil society organisations. Only by doing so will they be able to successfully address the challenges posed by armed violence.

International cooperation and assistance are also critical to reducing the level of violence in Ogun state, in order to better enforce existing law. Fundamentally, all levels of government must integrate strategies to cope with armed violence in their development plans.
**Osun state overview**

**GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

Osun state was created from Oyo state under the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida in 1991. It is located in the western part of Nigeria, with borders with Kwara, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo and Ekiti states. The majority of Osun people are Yoruba. The state has a heavy agricultural economy. Osun’s current governor is Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola, who was installed by a court order in 2010 after challenging the results of the 2007 elections. Osun has seen periodic disputes over the results of its elections.

**OVERVIEW OF ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE STATE**

Osun State has seen extensive violence around elections, particularly during the voters’ registration period and during and after Election Day. This violence, whose effects ranged from property damage to deaths and injuries, occurred in Ede, Iwo, Ilesa, Ile-Ife, Iku and Ikire in 2007 and to a lesser degree in 2011. Political opponents threatened and intimidated the electorate, destroying lives and property. In addition to the disruption of the electoral processes, this period saw significant amounts of cultural and religious violence in places such as Ifon, Okini, Ife and Modakeke. Efforts by informal social networks and formal community institutions to address the conflict have not produced lasting peace.

Despite this background of violence, the CLEEN Foundation’s survey of responses to crime and armed violence found that Osun State recorded the lowest level of fear of crime among people, with a low level of 40% of respondents indicating that they feared being victims of crime. (For comparison, in Taraba state, 99% of the population answered affirmatively.)

**Historical background**

In 2006, a post-census boundary adjustment led to an eruption of cultural violence amongst the people of Ifon and Ikobu in Oroko and Irepodun Local Government Areas. About 120 people lost their lives, and there was considerable injury and property damage in both areas.

In 2008-2009, cultural violence also was recorded among the people of Igbaye in Odo-Otin Local Government Area. Igbaye indigenes reacted aggressively to the person pronounced as Oba-elect (King-elect) by the state government, which escalated into violence.

The same period saw cultural violence in the Okini lands of the Egbedore Local Government Area, where two kings both claimed the same throne. Both royal families and their supporters became hostile to each other, leading to serious violence which was suppressed with the deployment of Nigerian Mobile Police units, but which only completely ended when the courts made a final ruling to settle the disputed case.

Some violence in Osun crosses both cultural and political issues. For example, in 2010, violence erupted in Iperindo after Rauf Aregbesola was declared Governor of Osun State by the courts. Members of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) party attacked the palace of the King of Iperindo believing he supported Aregbesola.

**PERPETRATORS OF ARMED VIOLENCE**

Much of the electoral violence has been perpetrated by unemployed youth. Unemployment is a critical issue here: many politicians, traditional leaders and wealthy individuals have taken advantage of rampant poverty and unemployment in order to recruit young men and women. These people are then used to intimidate and even kill their opponents or opponents’ supporters.

**Institutions**

The most effective institutions addressing armed violence in Osun are the Army, the Nigeria Police Mobile Force, the Red Cross Society and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps.

These institutions could be more effective if they operated in collaboration with non-governmental organisations. However, there seems to be a negative view toward work of this type. The result is that government agencies give incomplete information and do not fully cooperate with NGOs, making more accurate assessments of the state of armed violence in Osun impossible.

**Motivations**

Motivations for violence in Osun state vary. Political/ electoral violence and terrorism are motivated by poverty, lack of education and absence of opportunities.

Ethnic and religious violence is caused by a lack of understanding and tolerance. Sexual and criminal violence are generally opportunistic.

**Weapons used**

The weapons used in violence in Osun state tend to be knives, swords, handguns and long guns. Many of these weapons are paid for or provided by politicians for electoral violence. During the 2007 election, some prominent politicians were seen carrying guns around in broad daylight in order to intimidate the electorate. There is also a considerable unlicensed local arms production industry.

**Victims of Armed Violence**

In Modakeke, the people affected by armed violence were youths, children, women and men with an age range between 5 and 56. Modakeke has a long history of bloody clashes, including lengthy periods of violence in 1835-1849, 1882-1909, 1946-1949, 1981, 1983, 1997-1998, and 2000, making the violence there the oldest intra-ethnic conflict in Nigeria. The causes of armed violence include disputes over cultural identity, economic factors and politics.

While there is little to no armed violence in the Ile and Modakeke communities today, the psychological underpinnings of violence remain in place. In a survey of 360 individuals drawn equally from the two communities, 34.4% of the respondents agreed the conflict is not resolved while 22.1% said that they still expect a resumption of the crisis between the two communities.

**Between 2008 and 2010, the Nigeria Police Force recorded 887 cases of kidnapping.**
Conclusion

This report was the result of a desire for an answer to the fundamental questions: how extensive is armed violence in Nigeria? What are the causes of armed violence in Nigeria? And what actions are being taken to address armed violence there?

These are important questions, because it is easy to look at the spectre of armed violence in Nigeria and to come to the conclusion that its biggest challenge is insecurity, and that the best way to combat this insecurity is for a more rigorous state response.

This conclusion, however, would be premature. Yes, insecurity is present in Nigeria in large part but – as this report has shown – it has to be seen as a symp- torn not just a cause.

The fundamental issues driving violence in Nigeria are multi-faceted. They include regional isolation and economic underdevelopment. These, in turn, fuel poverty and corruption. They contribute ultimately to violence. And this violence creates barriers to further development. It is a vicious cycle that begs the further question: what more could be done in Nigeria to address armed violence and to break the cycle of violence?

This report has identified a number of areas where the National Working Group on Armed Violence believes more could and should be done to combat armed violence in Nigeria.

RESEARCH AND DATA
One of the major barriers to addressing this problem is the chronic national and regional failure to record and monitor the impact of armed violence. By and large, it has been found that armed violence in Nigeria is underreported, and that any data that does exist is infrequently shared and analysed.

To change this, this report concludes that there is:
- a moral duty for government and society to record and detail the circumstances and information on any individual killed in Nigeria by armed violence;
- a significant need for more research and statistical evidence on the causes and consequences of armed violence in Nigeria;
- a commitment by the NWGAV to working together to centralise data on armed violence in Nigeria.

- a commitment to run regional datasets to produce national and comparative analyses, with appropriate funding sought.
- an acknowledgement of the need to work towards national templates towards armed violence casualty recording, as recommended by the Global Alliance on Armed Violence (GAAV).

WORKING WITH INSTITUTIONS
As well as the issues tackling the lack of data and government transparency, there is also the constant reality of institutional corruption, lack of reform and levels of impunity – realities that impact every violent death in Nigeria. In order for armed violence to be properly addressed, the rule of law has to be seen to be both fair and impartial.

To this end, the NWGAV concludes:
- it will work to ensure the inclusion of civil society in debates and processes relating to institutional reform, particularly on issues of transparency, accountability and continually of the same.
- it will work to engage policy makers and the media on this matter at all levels.

It should be noted that the Nigerian Government has had some successes in armed violence reduction; improving security in Kano through multi-sectoral conflict prevention efforts, and implementing a relatively successful amnesty programme in the Niger Delta, for example. These successes should be applauded, learnt from and built upon to ensure the long-term improvement in the national security situation as well as sustainable, equitable economic and social development for all Nigerians.

WEAPONS
With so many illegal guns proliferating in Nigeria, the management of small arms and light weapons is a crucial issue that needs to be addressed in combating armed violence.

To this end the NWGAV:
- acknowledges that more work needs to be done on arms stockpile management, tracing and tracking and that Nigerian institutions should open up these processes to greater transparency.
- states that more funding should be made available for civil society to educate on the issue of small arms violence and to help investigate claims of trafficking and illegal arms sales.
- recommends that more focus should be put upon the implementation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Small Arms Convention and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)
- believes that more lobby pressure needs to be placed on government for the domesticalsement of the convention and treaty.

PERPETRATORS
The NWGAV commits in this report to undertaking general reviews and analyses of the consequences of armed violence: but more specifically, to examine whether perpetrators are brought to justice in a fair and judicial manner.

This requires:
- an analysis of the Nigerian judicial system, challenging legal corruption and impunity.
- research into prisoner quality of life as well as rates of re-offending and after prison re-integration and rehabilitation programmes.
- working with vulnerable youth in relation to armed violence.

VICTIMS
The NWGAV maintains that victim assistance is a significantly under-examined area of armed violence; and that much more needs to be done in victim assistance and research. More funding needs to be made available for such work.

The NWGAV believes:
- there must be national minimum standards for victim assistance as governed by the law.
- there should be more research to look at whether there is a lack of even reparations in victim assistance across Nigeria.

OVERVIEW
The NWGAV reflects a powerful and informed group of civil society members in Nigeria who are best able to understand the drivers and consequences of armed violence there. Their continuity of work and their expertise in this area is a vibrant hope for the reduction of armed violence in Nigeria as a whole.

In many cases, however, civil society coordination, budgets, staff strength, geographical coverage and technical capacities are limited. Many NGOs and faith-based organisations lack strategic planning, and so they respond to violence in an ad-hoc manner as it occurs. These limitations hamper their effectiveness.

To this end, this report – combined with a call for continuity funding from donors - is hoped to form the backbone of a public call for Nigeria to support a stronger, better-trained and more coordinated civil society. Such a civil society could use their presence and legitimacy not only to respond to, but also to prevent violence in the future.

It is the belief of the National Working Group on Armed Violence that such a supported and enfranchised civil society – with a dedicated female and youth involvement - could become a key interlocutor between grassroots and national authorities, and could assume a larger role in mediating between the international community and traditional Nigerian structures.

This report, it is hoped, goes some way towards highlighting the limitations faced by civil society as well as the deep challenges they face in Nigeria. It goes some way towards showing why the National Working Group on Armed Violence is a much needed entity. And, it goes some way towards helping Nigeria choose a less violent road.
End Notes


2 Armed Conflict Location & Event Dataset (ACLED), 2013.


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185 Boko Haram has been implicated in a series of attacks against civilians, including a suicide bombing in a crowded market in Maiduguri, Borno State, in 2012.


188 Author(s).

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