



## GLOBAL INTAKE | RISK INTELLIGENCE

Nigeria – Security Risk [Stand 01.06.2014]

### Summery

Despite its position as a regional, political and commercial power, Nigeria faces significant internal security and economic concerns. Political tensions are high due to the uneasy cohabitation of multiple religious, ethnic and linguistic groups under one federal government. These tensions can come to the fore during election periods. Domestic terrorist group Boko Haram presents the key security threat in the north-east and as far south as Abuja, continuing to cause widespread destruction in an ongoing, ill-defined rebellion against the government. In Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states a state of emergency has been imposed as a result. Other armed groups also threaten security and economic prospects in key areas such as the Niger Delta. The government faces the daunting task of reforming a petroleum-based economy where much of the revenue has been squandered through corruption and mismanagement. Nigeria is keen to attract foreign investment but is hindered by security concerns as well as by shaky infrastructure and regular power cuts. Crime and institutional corruption are endemic, with kidnapping a serious threat across much of the country.

### Current Analysis

#### Internal Conflict

There is a high risk of internal conflict in Nigeria, with multiple armed insurgent groups operating in different areas. There is a high level of internal tension in the country in general, fuelled by longstanding economic, religious and ethnic fault lines. Cultural and religious divisions between the north and the south are marked and high levels of economic inequality between regions could trigger greater calls for secession as well as, ultimately, the division of Nigeria into separate states. This is not an immediate threat but the federal system has multiple failings and there is latent potential for major political restructuring, including the redrawing of national borders in the longer term.

#### Terrorism

There is a very high risk of terrorism in northern and Middle Belt Nigeria, posed by the Islamist group Boko Haram and other sub-groups such as Ansaru. Nigerian militants have some links to Islamists in the Sahara and Sahel including al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

Using a mixture of hit-and-run shootings, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and suicide bombers, Boko Haram and its various splinter movements target government and security installations, churches and learning institutions, in both opportunistic and planned attacks. As a movement that began in the country's core northern states, the Boko Haram threat now also plays out in the federal capital, Abuja, and as far south as Taraba state near the Cameroonian border.

Boko Haram has not been associated with a strategy of political kidnap in the past but militant group Ansaru has abducted a number of individuals since December 2012 and has indicated that they will continue to target foreign nationals. Boko Haram also announced an increased emphasis on kidnap operations in early 2013. The risk of kidnap is higher in remote areas such as construction camps, oilfields and remote NGO bases for example.



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**Crime**

Crime is a major concern across Nigeria, particularly in urban areas after dark. Foreigners and wealthy Nigerians are frequently targeted. Nigerian security and police forces lack the resources to combat this problem effectively. Bandit groups operate in remote areas and on secondary roads in many areas, including Edo, Zamfara and the Delta states.

Extortion is a regular occurrence in cities and is often carried out by gangs at traffic jams, bus stops and markets. Home invasions and carjackings are also common. Financially motivated kidnappings occur primarily in the Niger Delta states, with the rate of incidents particularly high in Delta and Edo. Hostages are usually released for a ransom. There is a recent trend of kidnappings in Lagos targeting foreign nationals on Victoria Island as well as in other wealthy residential and commercial areas. Kidnappings in northern Nigeria are more likely to be politically motivated and will tend to last longer with fewer clear cut demands. Most Western hostages taken in the north since 2011 have either been killed or died in rescue attempts.

There is an increasing risk of piracy in Nigerian waters, and across the wider Gulf of Guinea. Piracy in the region ranges from opportunistic armed robbery and cargo theft, to more sophisticated instances of tanker hijacking and kidnap for ransom.

**Civil Unrest**

There is a high risk of civil unrest throughout Nigeria. Public gatherings can turn violent without warning, particularly in urban areas. The security forces have been known to use live rounds to disperse protests, sometimes leading to fatalities. This occurred during the general strike of January 2012, following the government’s attempt to remove the subsidy on fuel. Strikes and industrial action are less common as many people work in the informal sector.

**Projections**

- Boko Haram attacks will continue for the foreseeable future, particularly in the north-east around Yobe, Adamawa and Borno states. Boko Haram may also conduct attacks against high-profile targets in cities such as Kano, Maiduguri and Abuja over the coming months.
- The risk of kidnap will increase in the north-east, with a particular risk for foreign nationals operating in remote areas. The risk of kidnap elsewhere in Nigeria will remain extremely high, with a raised risk in south-eastern and central areas, as well as for expatriates in Lagos.
- The campaign period for the 2015 elections will drive up rates of unrest and localised violence, exacerbated by political thugs and ‘area boys’ affiliated with particular politicians and ethnic groups. Low income areas where political allegiances overlap are at particularly high risk of unrest over the coming year.

**Nigeria Country Risk Rating AKE33**

AKE’s Risk Rating was developed by AKE Intelligence for the insurance market. See also our World Risk Map

[http://www.globalintake.com/world\\_risk\\_map.php](http://www.globalintake.com/world_risk_map.php)

