

Monthly intelligence briefing on remote warfare against Boko Haram

August 2017

International organisations

1. The UN deputy secretary-general, Amina Mohammed, briefed the UN Security Council on gender-based violence in Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 10 August.¹ Mohammed noted the importance of social and economic empowerment of women in order to prevent marginalisation that could lead to radicalisation in north-eastern Nigeria. The UK permanent representative to the United Nations, Matthew Rycroft, responded by noting that the United Kingdom has provided training to the Nigerian armed forces on preventing sexual and gender-based violence.²
2. On 10 August, UN World Food Programme (WFP) accepted a donation of 5,000 tonnes of rice and 2,000 tonnes of millet from the Nigerian government for distribution in north-eastern Nigeria.³ The United States has pledged to cover the associated distribution costs to ensure almost half a million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states have access to food supplies.
3. The humanitarian coordinator for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Peter Lundberg, indicated that the United Nations would continue to provide humanitarian support in north-eastern Nigeria despite Nigerian troops searching a designated UN compound in Maiduguri.⁴ In raids on 11 August, soldiers searched more than 30 buildings, including the UN compound, which the Nigerian Army claimed did not carry any UN designations.⁵ The more intensive, urban operations are in response to increased suicide attacks on soft targets in Maiduguri and political demands that the Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau be captured within a 40 day deadline that was issued in late July and has now passed. At the same time, the rainy season has curtailed air operations.
4. The UN secretary-general, António Guterres, denounced Boko Haram's attacks on IDP camps in Mandarari and expressed his condolences to the victims' families in a statement issued on 16 August. Guterres confirmed the ongoing UN support to the Nigerian government in fighting Boko Haram.⁶

¹ <https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc12949.doc.htm>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/women-have-spent-too-long-enduring-and-surviving-these-crises-its-long-past-time-for-them-to-play-their-fullest-part-in-solving-them>

³ <http://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/nigeria-channels-assistance-troubled-northeast-through-wfp>

⁴ <http://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/statement-un-deputy-humanitarian-coordinator-nigeria-peter-lundberg-press-conference> and <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/PRINT%20DHC%20Comments%20to%20Press%2012%20Aug%202017.pdf>

⁵ http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48879&catid=74&Itemid=30, and <http://sdvoice.info/nigeria-boko-haram-un-resolves-to-continue-operations-in-neast-despite-army-invasion/>

⁶ http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=57363#.WbD_XNMjEy4

5. On 22 August, UNICEF issued a press release and analysis showing that so far this year, Boko Haram has used 83 children as 'human bombs'.⁷ UNICEF observed that the increased use of children in suicide bomb attacks creates challenges for reintegrating children kidnapped by Boko Haram back into communities. During World Water Week on 25 August, UNICEF also highlighted that Boko Haram is estimated to have destroyed almost 75% of water and sanitation infrastructure in north-eastern Nigeria, leaving 3.6 million people without basic water services.⁸

International partners

6. The UK foreign secretary, Boris Johnson, and international development secretary, Priti Patel, announced a four-year (2018-22) £200 million extended DfID humanitarian aid package for north-eastern Nigeria during a visit to Maiduguri on 30-31 August.⁹ The package will provide food supplies, malnutrition interventions, education support and security for humanitarian service delivery. During the visit, Johnson met with Royal Marines from the resident British Military Advisory and Training Team who have been training the Nigerian Special Boat Service.¹⁰
7. US Africa Command (AFRICOM) announced on 4 August that it is conducting an inquiry into whether any US forces were aware of the torture that Amnesty International alleges Cameroonian soldiers were carrying out at the Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR) base in Salak.¹¹
8. The Nigerian defence minister, Mansur Dan Ali, held talks with the Russian defence minister, Sergei Shoigu, on the sidelines of the International Army Games 2017 forum held in Moscow on 23 August.¹² The meeting resulted in a new bilateral military cooperation and training agreement. The agreement reportedly includes joint troop training, peacekeeping exchanges and counter-terrorism and piracy training. The bilateral agreement is likely to underpin further arms deals between the two countries, which the Nigerian defence minister flagged to journalists reporting on the army games. Specifically, Ali was quoted as saying that Nigeria is looking procuring Yakovlev Yak-130 trainer aircraft and mine-resistant vehicles.

⁷ https://www.unicef.org/media/media_100686.html

⁸ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2017/08/childrens-access-to-safe-water-and-sanitation-is-a-right-not-a-privilege-unicef/>

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-increasing-support-to-save-lives-and-rebuild-north-east-nigeria-as-famine-looms-after-boko-haram-destruction> and <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/aug/30/uk-government-announces-200m-care-package-fight-famine-caused-by-boko-haram>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-champions-uk-nigeria-trade-and-partnership>

¹¹ <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/08/04/politics/us-military-inquiry-torture-cameroon-base/index.html> and <http://eunews.info/05-08-17/us-military-launches-inquiry-torture-allegations-cameroon-base>

¹² <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/241405-nigeria-considers-buying-fighter-planes-artillery-others-russia.html> and http://www.defenceweek.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=49072&catid=74&Itemid=30

9. The Pentagon notified the US Congress on 28 August that the \$593 million sale of 12 Super Tucano A-29 surveillance and attack aircraft to Nigeria is authorised after the US Defense Security Cooperation Agency granted its approval in early August.¹³ The Nigerian vice-president, Yemi Osinbajo, thanked the US government on Twitter for its decision to provide the aircraft, which he stated will be used to assist counter-insurgency efforts in north-eastern Nigeria. The contract will reportedly require US government or private contractors from Sierra Nevada Corporation to provide Nigeria with rules of engagement and operational training and support for the Tucanos.¹⁴ The US government had put a hold on the sale in the final days of the Obama administration citing concerns about the Nigerian Army's human rights records and the bombing of the IDP camp in Rann.¹⁵
10. A delegation US senators visited Nigeria on 28-31 August to discuss the Boko Haram insurgency and the humanitarian crisis in the Lake Chad Basin among other issues with Nigerian government representatives, including the vice-president, Yemi Osinbajo.¹⁶

Regional coalitions and local governments

11. In August, the Nigerian Army deployed 2,000 mobile strike force group soldiers with special forces training in a bid to prevent Boko Haram suicide attacks on urban targets.¹⁷ The chief of army staff, Lieutenant General Tukur Buratai, told members of Operation Lafiya Dole on 15 August that the army must intensify clearance operations against Boko Haram locations in order to reduce attacks by the insurgent group on soft targets. Buratai noted he had relocated to theatre command in Borno to directly oversee operations against Boko Haram. This move was most likely in response to the increased number of attacks by Boko Haram during and immediately after Ramadan and political demands to capture Abubakar Shekau.¹⁸

¹³ <https://qz.com/1064752/boko-haram-nigeria-has-purchased-593-million-worth-of-military-gear-from-the-us/> and <http://www.defense-aerospace.com/articles-view/release/3/185853/us-clears-%24593m-super-tucano-sale-to-nigeria.html>

¹⁴ <http://dailypost.ng/2017/08/30/boko-haram-osinbajo-thanks-us-sale-fighter-jets-weapons-nigeria/> and <https://www.upi.com/State-Department-approves-sale-of-A-29-Super-Tucanos-to-Nigeria/6631501791646/>

¹⁵ <http://thenationonlineng.net/boko-haram-trump-okays-600m-bombers-nigeria/> and <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/17/world/africa/nigerian-jet-mistakenly-bombs-refugee-camp-killing-dozens.html?mcubz=3>

¹⁶ <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/08/us-lawmakers-meet-osinbajo-saraki-dogara-north-east-crisis-2/> and <https://ng.usembassy.gov/u-s-congressional-delegation-visits-nigeria/>

¹⁷ <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/240327-nigerian-army-launches-special-mobile-strike-force-crush-boko-haram.html> and <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-15/nigeria-deploys-2-000-special-forces-troops-against-boko-haram>

¹⁸ <http://www.pulse.ng/news/local/buratai-take-the-fight-to-boko-haram-hideouts-army-chief-charges-troops-id7117964.html> and <http://thenationonlineng.net/buratai-troops-take-fight-boko-haram-hideouts/>

12. The Nigerian vice-president, Yemi Osinbajo, identified Boko Haram's increasing use of social media and the potential for non-conventional cyber operations as challenges the Nigerian government must confront.¹⁹ Osinbajo made the comments on 4 August at a graduation ceremony at the National Defence College in Abuja. He used the opportunity to urge military and political leaders to embrace new technologies and not solely rely upon conventional military forces to confront insurgency. This is the first time that the Nigerian government has openly acknowledged the importance of using technological superiority to create advantage in tackling insurgency.
13. Operation Lafiya Dole troops killed an estimated 13 alleged Boko Haram militants in clearance operations in Borno (Miyanti-Banki) and Adamawa (Madagali) states on 5 August.²⁰ Two Nigerian soldiers were killed during the operations when their vehicle drove over an IED.
14. A reported 70 academics from the University of Maiduguri have resigned from their appointments due to continued Boko Haram attacks on the University.²¹ The Academic Staff Union of Universities advised on 6 August that there was not sufficient security at the university, despite the recent construction of a perimeter fence and trench around large sections of the university. Boko Haram will see the retreat of academics as a major victory. The University of Maiduguri denied the reports that the staff have resigned due to security concerns.²²
15. On 6 August, the Nigerian defence minister, Mansur Dan-Ali, told a graduation ceremony at the Nigerian Army Special Forces School that the Nigerian Army will train the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and select law enforcement agencies in counter-terrorism tactics.²³ The aim is to create mobile strike teams from the NSCDC and police forces that can quickly counter Boko Haram attacks without the need for Nigerian Army forces. The army will then be able to focus on larger-scale clearance operations alongside the air force.
16. On 7 August, the chief of the air staff, Air Marshal Sadique Abubakar, told Nigerian Air Force personnel at the Yola NAF base that air power is critical to defeating Boko Haram.²⁴ Abubakar reiterated this message on 14 August in a speech to the 2017 African Partnership Flight (APF) exercise in Lagos.²⁵

¹⁹ <http://dailypost.ng/2017/08/04/boko-haram-internet-fake-news-influence-terrorism-osinbajo/> and <https://guardian.ng/news/embrace-technology-to-defeat-boko-haram-osinbajo-charges-military/>

²⁰ <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/239419-two-soldiers-13-boko-haram-members-die-battles-adamawa-borno-nigerian-army.html> and <http://christianlibraryapp.com/2017/08/09/two-soldiers-13-boko-haram-members-die-in-battles-in-adamawa-borno-nigerian-army-by-premium-times/>

²¹ <http://punchng.com/boko-haram-attacks-70-lecturers-quit-unimaid/> and <https://www.thecable.ng/fear-boko-haram-70-lecturers-quit-unimaid>

²² <http://leadership.ng/2017/08/10/unimaid-management-debunks-report-resignation-70-lecturers/> and <http://allafrica.com/stories/201708110029.html>

²³ <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/north-east/239413-boko-haram-nigerian-army-train-nscdc-police-north-east-minister-says.html> and <https://www.naij.com/1118962-nscdc-police-join-boko-haram-fight-minister-inspects-training-facilities.html>

²⁴ <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/08/without-sustained-air-power-complete-defeat-boko-haramll-difficult-air-chief/>

²⁵ <https://guardian.ng/news/we-have-substantially-degraded-boko-haram-says-air-force-chief/> and <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/08/15/weve-substantially-degraded-boko-haram-insists-air-force-chief/>

17. During August, the Nigerian air force intensified bombing raids on Boko Haram positions. On 7 and 8 August, the NAF conducted ISR missions and follow-up air strikes near Parisu supported by long-range patrols and mobile strike force groups that ambushed fleeing Boko Haram militants.²⁶ Operational Lafiya Dole theatre command claims that 68 militants surrendered during sustained attacks over August.²⁷
18. The Borno State government announced on 9 August that it had rebuilt over 5,000 classrooms previously destroyed by Boko Haram militants.²⁸ The federal government has also allocated N \$3 billion for further reconstruction work on school and education facilities.²⁹
19. The Tripartite Commission made up of Nigeria, Cameroon and the UNHCR held its first formal meeting in Abuja on 10 August to discuss the voluntary repatriation of Nigerian IDPs from Cameroon.³⁰ An estimated 58,000 Nigerian IDPs are residing in Cameroon, and the Tripartite Commission is trying negotiate a viable resettlement timetable and the necessary support measures.
20. On 16 August, Nigerian Army 8 Task Force Division ambushed and killed 10 suspected Boko Haram militants in the Marte local government areas of Borno State as they were reportedly returning to safe havens near Lake Chad.³¹
21. On 18 August, local hunters in the Madagali local government area of Adamawa State reported repelling a Boko Haram attempt to steal food and medical supplies recently delivered to the villages of Bitu, Gadamayo and Bakin Du.³² Reports suggest that the hunters killed two suspected Boko Haram militants as they countered the raid.
22. Nigeria's president, Muhammadu Buhari, marked his return from medical treatment in the United Kingdom with a televised address on 21 August in which he committed to 'reinvigorating' the fight against Boko Haram.³³

²⁶ <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/08/10/air-force-bomb-boko-haram-hide-out/> and <https://www.naij.com/1119505-air-force-launches-deadly-strike-boko-haram-sambisa-video.html>

²⁷ <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/08/bombardment-forces-68-boko-haram-terrorists-surrender/> and <http://solacebase.com/2017/08/10/air-force-kills-several-boko-haram-members-sambisa/>

²⁸ <http://dailypost.ng/2017/08/09/boko-haram-borno-rebuilds-5000-classrooms-constructs-others-56000-children/> and <https://nigeriantell.com/news/boko-haram-borno-rebuilds-5000-classrooms-constructs-others-for-56000-children#.WbTtStMjEy4>

²⁹ <https://www.naij.com/1121766-schools-ravaged-by-boko-haram-n3b-buharis-government.html> and <https://guardian.ng/news/fg-earmarks-n3b-for-rehabilitation-of-classrooms-destroyed-by-boko-haram/>

³⁰ <https://www.pmnewsnigeria.com/2017/08/10/boko-haram-58000-nigerians-repatriated-cameroon/> and <http://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/nigeria-situation-unhcr-situational-update-01-31-aug-2017>

³¹ <http://dailypost.ng/2017/08/17/boko-haram-troops-ambush-sect-borno-kill-10/> and <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/240514-nigerian-soldiers-ambush-boko-haram-kill-10-%E2%80%8E-official.html>

³² <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/08/hunters-kill-2-boko-haram-commanders-in-adamawa/> and <http://allafrica.com/stories/201708190025.html>

³³ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/nigerian-leader-returns-vows-to-step-up-fight-against-boko-haram-1503326052> and <https://www.bostonglobe.com/news/world/2017/08/21/nigerian-president-vows-step-fight-against-boko-haram/llajGOFeUggR6Fmu4Hhtll/story.html>

23. A Nigerian military spokesperson advised that the army and air force had killed six key Boko Haram leaders in a coordinated attack on Boko Haram locations between 26 and 31 August.³⁴
24. The Nigerian House of Representatives member for the Michika/Madagali federal constituency in Adamawa State, Adamu Kamale, claimed that the Nigerian military is not giving accurate accounts of Boko Haram's ongoing capacity and capability.³⁵ On 29 August, Kamale observed that Boko Haram continues to conduct unreported attacks in Madagali local government area in Adamawa State. Kamale argues that any withdrawal of troops will enable Boko Haram to retake territory in Madagali.

Boko Haram

25. Suspected Boko Haram militants raided Mildu village near Madagali in Adamawa State on 2 August. Six civilians were killed and three injured in the resulting gun battle and numerous homes were destroyed.³⁶
26. On 4 August, two suspected Boko Haram militants conducted an IED suicide attack on a general hospital near Maiduguri.³⁷ The attack killed one hospital assistant and injured four other people. Witness accounts suggest that the first bomber acted as a diversion in order to allow the second bomber more time to get into a position to inflict more damage on the facility.
27. Suspected Boko Haram militants killed an estimated 31 fishermen on Duguri and Dabar Wanzam islands near Lake Chad on 5-6 August.³⁸ The attacks happened shortly after military authorities lifted a two-year ban on fishing in the Lake Chad Basin. Boko Haram told survivors to keep away from the islands in a likely bid to control fishing resources and associated revenue in the basin.
28. Abu Musad Al-Barnawi released a video on YouTube predicting the defeat at the hands of the Nigerian military of the faction of Boko Haram led by his rival Abubakar Shekau.³⁹ Al-Barnawi criticised Shekau for indiscriminately attacking Muslims in campaigns in north-eastern Nigeria. The video has reignited speculation that the Al-Barnawi and Mamman Nur factions of Boko Haram are positioning themselves to negotiate an end to their insurgencies.⁴⁰

³⁴ <http://saharareporters.com/2017/08/31/troops-kill-deputy-boko-haram-leader-five-other-commanders-1> and <https://guardian.ng/news/military-kills-five-boko-haram-commanders-in-joint-operations/>

³⁵ <http://saharareporters.com/2017/08/29/military-giving-buhari-wrong-information-boko-haram-attacks-0> and <http://punchng.com/military-giving-buhari-wrong-information-on-bharam-attacks-rep/>

³⁶ <http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/boko-haram-attack-kills-6-in-nigeria-government-20170802> and <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/08/boko-haram-attacks-kills-6-adamawa/>

³⁷ <https://www.naij.com/1118548-2-boko-haram-bombers-attack-maiduguri-general-hospital.html> and <http://dailypost.ng/2017/08/04/boko-haram-3-killed-4-injured-molai-hospital-blast/>

³⁸ <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/239574-boko-haram-kills-31-fishermen-lake-chad.html> and <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/08/boko-haram-kills-31-fishermen-borno-sends-warning-troops-baga/>

³⁹ <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/08/boko-haram-factional-leader-predicts-shekaus-defeat-new-video/> and <https://www.naij.com/1119191-abu-al-barnawi-predicts-abubakar-shekaus-defeat.html>

⁴⁰ <https://www.cfr.org/blog/boko-haram-factions-may-seek-state-cooperation> and <https://guardian.ng/news/2-boko-haram-factions-ready-for-talks-with-fg-says-ex-commander/>

29. Analysis published by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point and Yale University on 9 August on the demographic characteristics of bombers used by Boko Haram revealed that since 2011 at least 244 of the 338 IED suicide attacks in which the bomber's gender could be identified were carried out by women.⁴¹ The report also highlighted that the use of women in IED attacks significantly increased after the international attention garnered by the kidnapping of the Chibok girls. The report's authors suggest that the use of women as suicide bombers has a potent symbolism in terrorist attacks.
30. Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau released a video in which he mocked the Nigerian president, Muhammadu Buhari, former president Goodluck Jonathan and the chief of army staff, Yusuf Buratai.⁴² His group released the video after the attacks on Amarwa in Konduga local government area on 13 August.
31. The governor of Kebbi State told a World Health Organization (WHO) delegation that suspected Boko Haram militants killed an estimated 42 farmers from Aliero local government area in mid-August.⁴³
32. Suspected Boko Haram militants attacked two villages in Madagali local government area of Adamawa State on 14 August. The militants reportedly killed at least seven people, stole food supplies and livestock and razed houses.⁴⁴
33. On 15 August, two suicide bombers attacked a market place and another attacked the entrance to an IDP camp in Mandarari in Borno State.⁴⁵ The attackers killed 28 civilians and injured at least 83 others. The coordinated attack was one of the deadliest in recent months, and demonstrates that Boko Haram can still inflict significant harm on north-eastern communities.
34. Boko Haram attacked and destroyed a newly-renovated hospital on 22 August in Madagali local government area in Adamawa State.⁴⁶ Local council representatives observed that the destruction of the hospital meant that villagers would need to travel further for medical care, exposing themselves to attacks on insecure roads.
35. Suspected Boko Haram militants killed at least 11 people (potentially upwards of 15) and kidnapped eight others during an attack on Gakara village in northern Cameroon on 25 August.⁴⁷ The militants also razed an estimated 30 houses. Boko Haram regularly carries out attacks in the area.

⁴¹ <https://ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Exploding-Stereotypes-1.pdf>

⁴² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibmkedl3NCQ> and <http://saharareporters.com/2017/08/14/boko-haram-leader-releases-new-video-taunting-buhari-jonathan-buratai>

⁴³ <http://dailypost.ng/2017/08/17/boko-haram-slaughters-42-farmers-kebbi/> and <https://naijaonpoint.com/latest-nigerian-news-today/boko-haram-slaughters-42-farmers-in-kebbi-state>

⁴⁴ <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/240291-many-feared-killed-boko-haram-attacks-two-adamawa-communities.html> and <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/08/15/boko-haram-attacks-two-communities-in-adamawa/>

⁴⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nigeria-security/suicide-bombers-kill-27-wound-83-in-northeast-nigeria-idUSKCN1AV25K> and <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/08/suspected-boko-haram-bombers-kill-dozens-nigeria-170815211110526.html>

⁴⁶ <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/08/23/boko-haram-attacks-adamawa-village-raze-hospital-houses/> and <http://nigerianewspost.com/boko-haram-attacks-adamawa-village-raze-hospital-houses/>

⁴⁷ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/08/suspected-boko-haram-fighters-kill-11-cameroon-170825145004120.html> and <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nigeria-security-cameroon/suspected-boko-haram-militants-kill-15-in-cameroon-idUSKCN1B51TC>



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