



WITH  
CONTINUING  
**BOKO  
HARAM**  
ATTACKS  
WHAT  
IS  
THE  
STATE  
OF  
THE

# NORTH EAST?

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Our researchers employed methods such as one-on-one interviews, and desk research to collate the available data. Our editors sifted through the data and prepared the report, using various proprietary tools to fact-check and copy edit the information gathered.

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[sbmintel.com](http://sbmintel.com) | [info@sbmintel.com](mailto:info@sbmintel.com)

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## Overview

Since early 2015, Boko Haram has been rapidly losing territory it once held. The towns of Mubi and Michika in Adamawa State, and Gwoza in Borno, which was the capital of the group's Caliphate, have been recovered from the terrorists by the Nigerian Army. Also, the Maiduguri-Damboa-Biu Road was reopened for passenger traffic, albeit movement along it still needs to be accompanied by military escorts.

However, as it has lost territory, Boko Haram changed strategy, and has refocused on its ability to carry out suicide bombings and quick raids on rural communities, and within the city of Maiduguri. Over the past few months, there have been a number of such attacks in motor parks, in and around the University of Maiduguri and on neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the city where Boko Haram can easily gain entry.

In order to avoid detection, they often use young girls to perpetrate these attacks. What is still unclear however, is if these girls are willing tools, or acting based on coercion. It has become clear that some of these attacks are coordinated, and are actually multiple attacks across various places, either suicide bombings or accompanied by gun attacks.



## Suicide Bombings and other attacks

The last Ei-del-Fitr celebrations passed on peacefully for most of the day across North-East Nigeria, with an enforced restriction on movement for vehicles and even animals until noon in Maiduguri, capital of Borno, and birthplace of Boko Haram. Residents, especially young children and young women went about dressed colourfully celebrating the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

However, at around 10:30pm on the night of Sunday June 25, the first of multiple explosions rang out, shattering the tenuous peace of the night. Rapid gunshots followed in what appeared to be an attack on two fronts on the University of Maiduguri. In the week of June 25-30, there were at least ten bombings within Maiduguri and its outskirts - Jere, Gwange, and others.

Suicide attacks and the occasional bombing in both Yobe and Adamawa have mostly gone unreported in the mainstream media. For example, there was a suicide bombing in Damaturu, Yobe on Thursday, 28 June. There were two at an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Diffa in neighbouring Niger Republic on the morning of June 29. This was the first such attack in Niger since April 2016.

There were reports of multiple bombings in Molai district, 1km southwest of Maiduguri on the road to Damboa. The road itself was only reopened in early 2016 and is still littered with bullet shells and spent ammunition used by untrained insurgents on previous raids to Damboa. Passengers commuting between Maiduguri and Damboa have to travel among a lean military convoy of vehicles, with motorbike riders at the front and rear, and several trucks of soldiers escorting civilians. The convoys, which are operated once each day, congregate at the NNPC Mega Station, just before Molai in Maiduguri, and depart at 7am. There is also a convoy, once each day, in the opposite direction.





### Army response

Roadblocks have been increased and reinforced across the North East as more displaced people return from Cameroon.

In Madagali, Adamawa and Gwoza, Borno, areas within close proximity of Sambisa Forest, often seen as the headquarters of Boko Haram, the army has beefed up security. Only military vehicles as well as those of the United Nations and Non-Governmental Organisations are granted permission to move within the towns and surrounding villages which are perceived to be even more dangerous because of the possibility of marauding insurgents creeping under cover of dark to loot homes, and cart away food and clothing supplies. Mobile network communications have been cut off from these towns, save for high-end gadgets used by the army and the UN for communications. Electricity installations have been destroyed and telecom network signals fluctuate daily across many towns including Michika, Madagali and Mubi.

The Nigerian Army has been criticised by the Americans in a recently released US State Department Trafficking in Persons report for the inclusion of minors in its peacekeeping operations in the region. According to the report, the use of children below 18 in operational support roles violates the American Child Soldier Prohibition Act (CSPA) 2008 which imposes restrictions on US military aid to countries who do not substantially comply with its human rights provisions.

In several interviews, SBM spoke with members of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), the local vigilante group that acts as a support structure for the army and other security outfits within the region which seem to contradict the conclusions of the reports. According to one of them, Farouk (we cannot publish his last name for his own security), the youngsters involved are those who were forcibly recruited by Boko Haram, but were subsequently apprehended during joint army-CJTF raids and now act as informants, providing intelligence on the group and their former colleagues. He stressed that these former combatants do not handle weapons and only experienced members of the vigilante group get access to weapons.

## Border movement and camp security

The eleven recognised border stations in Adamawa remain officially sealed since Brig. Gen. Rogers Nicholas of the Army's 23 Armoured Brigade exercised emergency powers to seal the border between Cameroon and Adamawa state on February 22, 2014. However, traders and other individuals regularly cross the borders while the Immigration and Customs officials turn a blind eye or request for bribes in both naira and CFAs, the national currency of Cameroon. People displaced from their homes and farms are also returning and are kept in transit camps close to the borders in both Adamawa and Borno, before being relocated back to host communities and larger IDP camps. The prevailing fear in the military, and among a lot of refugees is that among the returning population are suicide bombers sent on a mission; consequently, the men are separated from the women and children in some of the camps, such as Gwoza. The trade route from Customs Area in



Maiduguri to Chad, Cameroon and extending up to Libya has become an increasing concern in recent years, as trucks carrying food items for small-scale export have been known to only transit arms and militants. As a result, there have been frequent suicide bombings in that area, especially at the Muna Customs and Muna Garage camps, which are less than 1km from each other. Security officials are particularly concerned about the latter - where refugees live in the finished but empty quarters originally built for Customs staff - as being easy for prospective suicide bombers to gain access on the way into Maiduguri, pass the night there and continue their journey into the city centre the following day.

There is no fencing behind the Muna Garage and Muna Customs camps, just after the Sanda Kyarimi Primary School camp that was closed because the school is back in session.



SBM Intelligence visited the camps during Eid so it was not possible to fully ascertain the full capacity of the camp clinics but health workers under the employ of UNICEF were seen working.

Furthermore, strange objects believed to be undetonated explosives have turned up in some towns like Michika, a reminder to the total occupation of the area by Boko Haram between 2014 and early 2015.

## University of Maiduguri

The University of Maiduguri, the highest-ranking federal institution in Borno, has been targeted many times this year despite being seemingly ignored since Boko Haram metastasised in 2009 and became a full blown insurgency. In the June 30 attack the security department was targeted with nine recorded casualties and an unconfirmed number of injuries. Three of the bombs that went off on the night of Sunday, 25 June, 2017 went off here, killing a female security guard who also worked as a cook at a nearby hotel.

In its wake, the governor of Borno, Kashim Shettima, approved ₦50 million for a trench to be dug around the back of the campus which had hitherto no proper fencing. Boko Haram is yet to claim responsibility for this latest attack, but its long standing opposition to all forms of Western education coupled with the university's instruction being conducted in English puts them as firm favourites for orchestrating the incident.





## Number of deaths from Boko Haram activity in Nigeria

Date	Casualties (Boko Haram deaths in brackets)	Notes
January 4	0 (+3)	Three female suicide bombers were killed while attempting to detonate their vests at a market in Madagali, Adamawa State.
January 10	3 (+2)	Two female suicide bombers killed themselves and three other people, when they went to private residences in Kalari, Maiduguri.
January 11	1	A soldier was killed by a bomb in Yobe State
January 13	6	Suicide bombers killed and injured many in a crowded market in Madagali, Adamawa State.
January 14	2	Two soldiers were killed in Damboa, Borno State in a roadside bombing.
January 14	3 (+10)	Three soldiers were killed by Boko Haram in Kangarwa, Kukawa LGA, Borno State. Ten attackers were also killed.
January 16	3 (+2)	Two teenage suicide bombers attacked the University of Maiduguri, killing three people, including a professor.
January 23	8	An attack on Dzaku village, Askira Uba LGA, Borno, killed eight people and abducted an unspecified number of women and children.
January 25	3 (+1)	A suicide bomb attack killed three and wounded two others in Maiduguri, Borno State.
January 29	7	Attack on a convoy of motorists between Bulabulin and Dogonwaya villages, killing at least seven.
January 30	5 (+15)	A group of insurgents attacked an army unit somewhere between Buni Yadi and Karawoso in Yobe State.
January 31	1 (+1)	A suicide bomber attacked the Dalori quarters mosque, during the morning prayers, killing one of their members.

Date	Casualties (Boko Haram deaths in brackets)	Notes
February 7	2	Attack in Sasawa, Yobe State killed a soldier and a civilian.
February 11	7	7 soldiers killed in attack along Ajiri-Dikwa Road, Borno State.
February 11	1	Arson attack on residences in Mussa, Askira-Uba LGA, Borno State.
February 13	1	Muslim cleric killed in Mifa, Chibok LGA, Borno State.
February 17	2 (+9)	Two civilians were killed in suicide attack in Maiduguri.

## Number of deaths from Boko Haram activity in Nigeria

Date	Casualties (Boko Haram deaths in brackets)	Notes
March 13	3	Boko Haram releases video to Reuters showing the execution of three men accused of being military spies.
March 15	5	Four soldiers and a police officer were killed in a Boko Haram ambush in Magumeri, Borno State.
March 15	6 (+4)	Four female teenage suicide bombers killed six people in a residential area of Maiduguri.
March 17	1	A police officer was killed in Magumeri, Borno State.
March 19	4 (+3)	Three suicide bombers killed at least four people in Maiduguri.
March 20	1	A soldier was killed during raid on Gombe International Hotel following a tip-off that Boko Haram terrorists from Chad and Niger were there.
March 22	8 (+5)	Multiple suicide blasts in the Muna IDP Camp close to Maiduguri.
March 30	3	An ambush on trucks belonging to the Dangote Group at Kubuwa village, Damboa LGA, Borno State
March 30	12 (+1)	Multiple attacks on Wumyeduga, near Damboa, Borno State. The attacks started from the cemetery.

Date	Casualties (Boko Haram deaths in brackets)	Notes
April 7	7	Seven persons were killed in an attack on a cattle breeding community called Abbati, 20km from Maiduguri.
April 26	7	Two bomb attacks in Maiduguri killed seven people.
April 25	4 (+3)	Four civilians were killed by three female suicide bombers in Shuwari on the outskirts of Maiduguri.
April 28	5 (+1)	At least five soldiers were killed and another 40 injured when a Boko Haram extremist attacked a convoy at Manguzum, in Yobe State.

## Number of deaths from Boko Haram activity in Nigeria

Date	Casualties (Boko Haram deaths in brackets)	Notes
May 5	5 (+2)	Five killed in Mandarari, Konduga LGA, Borno State in an attack by two female suicide bombers.
May 13	1 (+3)	One person killed by suicide bombers at the University of Maiduguri.
May 15	11	Insurgents arrived Amarwa, a suburb of Maiduguri, on motorcycles and killed 11 farmers in their fields with machetes.
May 16	2 (+3)	Three female suicide bombers killed two people in an attack on a herding community, Shuwari Buri, 38 kilometres from Maiduguri.
May 19	(3)	Three suicide bombers attacked the University of Maiduguri.
May 20	7	Separate attacks on Mussa, Askira Uba LGA, Borno State kill seven.

Date	Casualties (Boko Haram deaths in brackets)	Notes
June 8	14 (+3)	Multiple, coordinated attacks kill at least fourteen persons in Maiduguri.
June 9	2	Two teenagers killed by a bomb concealed in a polythene bag in Fadama Rake, Hong LGA, Adamawa State.
June 10	4	Four people were killed in Hambagba, near Gwoza, in retaliation for the arrest of Adamu Rugurugu, a key member of Boko Haram. Six people were kidnapped.
June 14	10	Raids on Komdi and Tuyan, near Chibok in Borno State led to ten deaths.
June 18	12 (+5)	Twelve killed in suicide attacks by five women in Kofa, about 8 kilometres from Maiduguri.
June 20	2	Ambush on a police convoy thirty kilometres from Maiduguri.
June 26	9 (+7)	Suicide bombers killed nine people in multiple attacks in Maiduguri.

## Conclusion

January has been the deadliest month of 2017 so far, with 76 people killed in twelve Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria that month. Sadly, June was the group's most efficient as they 70 people were killed in seven attacks. A total of 43 attacks have happened in Nigeria as at the end of June 2017. The casualty figures from the attacks include Boko Haram members who were killed. The pattern of attacks, and the frequencies, suggest that the group is probing for weaknesses.

Although Boko Haram now lacks the capacity to hold territory, they are still a potent threat in as far as carrying out suicide bombings and attacks on isolated communities and rural areas are concerned. One factor that works in their favour is the vastness of Borno. At 70,000km<sup>2</sup>, it is Nigeria's second largest state in terms of landmass, and the population in the Central and Northern areas where Boko Haram still has a presence is sparse. The insurgency has driven many people to Maiduguri, further leaving the only other population centre in that area to be Bama. This makes other areas ripe for easy pickings by Boko Haram which hides either in the vast arid Sahel region or in the sprawling Sambisa forest, a Savannah shrubland that extends across the width of the state.

From a strategic point of view, the concentration of the population in Maiduguri and Bama, while providing safe havens that can be the focus of resources, also provides targets that Boko Haram can concentrate attacks on. It is clear that this is a path the insurgents are pursuing.

The Nigerian Army is stretched beyond its capacity to be able to man every inch of the state. The army's operational tactics leave much to be desired as they appear to mostly be on the defensive from Boko Haram attacks rather than taking the fight to them.

There is an urgent need for a strengthening of the intelligence capacity of the security agencies to enable them nip attacks prior to execution. For this, we recommend capacity building for the police, and better cooperation with the CJTF. Special attention should be given to the University of Maiduguri for two reasons: one, an attack on the University is symbolic for Boko Haram in line with its opposition to anything Western, including modern education. Secondly, the University is situated on the edge of the city and is very vulnerable to attacks as it is unfenced in many areas extending into areas where Boko Haram seems to be able to move around freely.

## **ABOUT SBM INTEL**

SBM Intel is an Africa-focused market intelligence and communications consulting firm focused on addressing the critical need for market data and big data analytics. We employ various methods of data collection. Our Data Collection Methodology team advises on data collection methods for all ONS social and business surveys. With clients both within the business and the wider government community, we aim to provide expert advice on data collection procedures and carry out research leading to improvements in survey quality.

Since 2013, we have provided data analytics and strategic communication solutions to clients across various sectors in Nigeria, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, the UK and France. In 2015 we became a partner to Stratfor, an American geopolitical intelligence firm that provides strategic analysis and forecasting to individuals and organisations around the world, including the various US departments and agencies like the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI). Since the partnership came into effect, several SBM Intel generated reports have been published on Stratfor's website.