Conflict Bulletin: Adamawa State

January 2014

Formed in 1991, the northeastern state of Adamawa is one of the largest states in Nigeria. It borders Cameroon to the east, Borno state to the north, Gombe state to the west, and Taraba state to the south. Its location makes it a key corridor between Borno, a hub of Boko Haram activity, and other states. Its population of about 3.5 million are mainly made up of farmers and cattle herders. The economy is predominately agriculture, although the state also has some mineral wealth. Common crops include maize, millet, sorghum, rice, yams, and cassava. Cotton and groundnuts are also produced as cash crops.

Between January 2012 and June 2013, Yola North/South Local Government Areas (LGA) had the most incidents overall, closely followed by Mubi North/South. Because Yola has a larger population than Mubi, however, the number of incidents per capita was highest in Mubi North/South. At the state level, according to Nigeria Watch data, violence increased in Adamawa through 2012 then began to decline in the first half of 2013.

On May 16, 2013, President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in three Nigerian states, including Adamawa, because of spikes in violence and terrorist activity in the area attributed mainly to Boko Haram. Recently, violence associated with Boko Haram has been most severe in neighboring Borno state, causing thousands of refugees to flee south into Adamawa.

This Conflict Bulletin provides a brief snapshot of the trends and patterns of conflict risk factors at the State and LGA levels, drawing on the data available on the P4P Digital Platform for Multi-Stakeholder Engagement (www.p4p-nigerdelta.org). The screenshot of the heat map shows the relative distribution of incidents from one LGA to the next from 2012-2013. The trend-line on the following page shows the number of incidents and fatalities over time. The bar chart shows the trend of incidents of insecurity by LGA per capita. The summaries draw on data collected by ACLED, FPFS UNLocK, the Council on Foreign Relations’ Nigeria Security Tracker, WANEP Nigeria, CSS/ETH Zurich, and Nigeria Watch integrated on the P4P platform.

LGA Level Summary

January 2012-June 2013

Yola North/South

Issues around the town of Yola included violence along sectarian lines as well as terrorist attacks. In January 2012, assailants reportedly attacked a church and killed 12 people. Also in January, alleged insurgents killed four people in coordinated attacks on bars and public drinking spots. In May of 2012, nine Igbo traders were killed in three separate attacks, although these could not be directly attributed to insurgents. In February 2013, 11 people died in sectarian fighting.

Other shootings were attributed to armed robbers and other unidentified groups, including an attack in May 2012 that reportedly left 10 people dead. Several shootouts occurred between police and armed robbers. In one case, the chief of a special police squad designed to combat armed robbery in the area was killed, allegedly by insurgents.

Further exacerbating demographic stress, in August 2012, flooding occurred after water was released from a dam across the border in Cameroon, causing temporary displacement and upheaval.
Mubi North/South

Council on Foreign Relations and Nigeria Watch data both suggest that violence in Mubi decreased in the early part of 2013. Insurgents were believed responsible for many of the shootings in the two LGAs throughout this period, including an attack on an Igbo community in early 2012 that left 20 dead. In October and November 2012, explosions in Mubi reportedly targeted Joint Task Force (JTF) patrols, killing at least 22 people. In October 2012, dozens of students were killed in attacks connected to student union elections at the Federal Polytechnic. Insurgents were believed to have been linked to all of these attacks.

Maiha

Maiha also continued to experience high levels of insecurity throughout the second half of 2012 and the first half of 2013. In December 2012, militants thought to be associated with Boko Haram attacked local government buildings including a police station, killing a reported 30 and freeing at least 35 prisoners. In addition, in May of 2013 an attack on a church and village market left at least ten dead in the village of Jilang in Maiha. In a statement given after the attack, the porous border with Cameroon was once again mentioned as problematic in allowing assailants to sneak into and out of the LGA with little to no detection.

Madagali

As in the other LGAs, Madagali also suffered throughout 2012 from attacks blamed on individuals and groups believed to be associated with Boko Haram. In particular, 2012 saw at least three attacks on local police stations, with one being burned to the ground in December. In April 2013, an attack on the village of Midlu left at least 11 dead and several others injured in an assault on the deputy governor’s home and surrounding residences. While initial reports blamed the attacks on Boko Haram, others attribute the attack on lingering political tensions between the deputy governor and House speaker based on the last local elections in which each were vying for the PDP nomination, with the speaker eventually securing the needed votes. During the attack, the deputy governor’s daughter was also reported kidnapped, although she was later released unharmed.

Larmude

Larmurde experienced steady levels of insecurity throughout 2012. In January and May of 2012, attacks on villages killed up to 50 people. The May attack was reported to be a reprisal killing by Fulani herdsmen for previous violence perpetuated against them by the villagers. In addition to the killings, the May attack was also characterized by the looting and burning of farm produce and homes while animals were also purportedly stolen.

In October, following Friday prayer, IEDs went off that were purportedly targeting the JTF, who were also involved in a shoot-out with unknown gunmen during the month. In addition, severe flooding during August caused wide scale displacement and property damage when Cameroon opened a dam on across the border. Although many parts of Adamawa experienced negative affects from the flooding, Larmude appeared to be particularly hard hit, with almost a dozen deaths attributed to the disaster.

Other LGAs

Although Ganye LGA reported fewer incidents than others, it merits some discussion as the only LGA to show an increase in violence in 2013. In February 2013, Fulani herdsmen allegedly raided a farm, killing one man. Local farmers stormed the Fulani camp in retaliation, and killed ten. Although 2012 was mainly characterized by reported violent clashes between Fulani herdsmen and local settlers, incidents of violent attacks, shootings and killings attributed to insurgency/counter-insurgency
increased steadily throughout the first half of 2013. In March, suspected militants stormed a town attacking a police station, a bank, and causing a jail break. About 30 fatalities were reported in all. During this attack, reports cited the deliberate targeting of civilians along with police and JTF personnel.

Finally, Hong LGA deserves mention as throughout 2012, militants were very active in the area and attacked several churches, opened fire at a student housing residence, and planted bombs targeting security forces. In January 2012, gunmen shot 17 people at a funeral apparently along ethno-religious lines. In October, alleged militants attacked a student housing area, killing 48 students and injuring at least 15 others. In June, bombs were discovered and dismantled at a police station and at a filing station. In late 2012, the JTF reportedly discovered an insurgent bomb-making facility while over 100 suspects were arrested, mostly in connection with the October attacks.

The data used in this analysis was pulled from the integrated digital platform for multistakeholder engagement developed by Partners for Peace (P4P), an initiative supported by PIND. For a deeper understanding of the conflict risk factors, visit www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.