KIDNAPPING IN NIGERIA
Vol. 12

Location: NIGERIA

Issue: 1,181 people (including 362 children and 103 females) kidnapped in Nigeria between January and February 2021[2].

Date: March 2, 2021

COMMUNITY PROFILING	CRITICAL STAKEHOLDERS	INCIDENT PROFILING
Population: Nigeria has a population of over 206,139,589[3]. **Basic Demography and Geography of Hotspots:** Nigeria shares land borders with the Republic of Benin, Chad, Cameroun, Niger and the Gulf of Guninea of the Atlantic Ocean. The country has 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). There are 774 Local Government Areas (LGA's) divided across six (6) geo-political zones. **Ethnicity:** Nigeria has over 250 ethnic groups with Hausa-Fulani, Igbo, Yoruba[4] in the majority. **Kidnapping in Nigeria:** The rise in kidnapping for economic and ideological reasons by various criminal groups including suspected armed bandits, militants, pirates and terrorist groups (Boko Haram and ISWAP), amongst others remain a critical human security concern in the country.	**Direct Actors:** Criminal gangs including suspected armed bandits, terrorist groups (Boko Haram, ISWAP), suspected militants and pirates, amongst others. **Affected Persons:** Nigerians and Forerign expatriates. **Interested Actors:** Federal and State Governments, Nigeria Police Force, Nigeria Military, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Department of State Service (DSS), National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), Nigerian	The threat of kidnapping in Nigeria has generated much security concerns. The recurrent trend across States have created a climate of fear and insecurity that undermine sustainable national development and security. This security challenge continues to have a cascading effect on public safety, food security and social cohesion in the country. The recent mass abduction of students by suspected armed bandits from Government Secondary Schools in Kagara town of Niger State[7] and Jangebe town of Zamfara State[8] on February 17 and 26, 2021 respectively, increased conversations regarding the effectiveness of the nation's security archictecture to deal with crime. Similarly, on December 11 and 19, 2020, students were also kidnapped in Kankara town of Katsina State[9] and Mahuta village of Katsina State[10]. Enduring vulnerabilities including poor security intelligence, perceived marginalization, youth unemployment, porous borders, and the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), amongst others, continue to facilitate the prevalence of security challenges across communities. Between December 11, 2020 and February 26, 2021, the WANEP NEWS recorded the abduction of 730 secondary school students in Katsina, Niger and Zamfara States as recorded in WANEP NEWS[11]. Although the victims have been released following series of negotiations by the Federal and State Goverments, 3 male students out of the 27 kidnapped in Niger State are still unacounted for[12]. Since the beginning of 2021, the WANEP's National Early Warning System (NEWS) recorded 120 incidents of kidnapping, with 1,181 people (including 362 children and 103 females) kidnapped between January to February[13]. The frequency in kidnapping in the reporting months of 2021 revealed a higher statistics compared to the 90 kidnapping incidents recorded between January to February 2020 in which 467 people (including 38 children and 51 females)[14] were kidnapped. This suggests an increase in the prevalent trend of kidnapping in the affected areas.

[1] https://www.google.com/search?sxsrf=ALeKk024WZQdV9kevtu8o3POhTqEE6kSdQ:1602836211476&source=univ&tbm=isch&q=map+of+Nigeria&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjQ-5GY1rjsAhURCWMBHXBQDDQQ7Al6BAgBEHE&biw=899&bih=578
[2] www.wanep.org/news
[3] https://www.statista.com/statistics/1122838/population-of-nigeria/
[4] https://photos.state.gov/libraries/nigeria/487468/pdfs/Nigeria%203overview%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf
[4] http://snisnet.net/MFLDSS/MFLDSS.php?source=4&snu=0&factype=&owner=0&country=NG
[5] https://www.premiumtimesng.com/health/health-features/361373-n2igeria-budgets-n2000-for-the-healthcare-of-each-citizen-in-2020.html
[6] https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/03/25/nigeria-covid-19-cases-rise
[7] https://www.ncdc.gov.ng/themes/common/files/sitreps/bfd8f02878ff5ded5edc9c25308fdad.pdf
[8] https://www.ecowas.int/institutions/west-african-health-organisation-waho/
[7] **https://dailypost.ng/2021/02/18/niger-govt-releases-names-of-kidnapped-kagara-students-teachers/**
[8] https://punchng.com/317-students-abducted-from-zamfara-school-say-police/
[9] See WANEP-Nigeria'a Quick NEWS Update on 'Armed Bandits Kidnap of Students in Katsina State.
[10] https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/nwest/432212-in-fresh-katsina-attack-bandits-kidnap-80-students-all-rescued-later.html#:~:text=Armed%20men%20on%20Saturday%20ambushed,and%20abducted%2080%20of%20them.&text=The%20police%20in%20Katsina%20said,12%20rustled%20cows%20also%20freed.
[11] www.wanep.org/news
[12] ibid
[13] www.wanep.org/news
[14] www.wanep.org/news

A chronology of kidnapping incidents in Nigeria has shown an expansion in the location and pool of potential targets regardless of victims' social class or economic status. [5] Currently, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), schools, commuters and even poor communities, have become vulnerable to the menace; a departure from the targeted kidnapping of wealthy Nigerians and expatriates.

According to the WANEP's National Early Warning System, over 3,312 people (including 373 females and 574 children) were kidnapped between January to December 2020 across the 36 States including Abuja-FCT in the country.

Amid security interventions by the Federal and State Governments to mitigate the threat, the weakness of security intelligence and poor surveillance system of security agencies continue to undermine preventive efforts.

The last few years has also witnessed the Nigerian Senate and State Houses of Assembly review and pass into law the *'Kidnapping Prohibition Law' and Nigeria Terrorism Act (2011)* [6], that criminalises kidnapping with varying punishments including life imprisonment and death sentences for perpetrators. Not withstanding this, the threat of kidnapping continues to heighten insecurity in communities within the affected States.
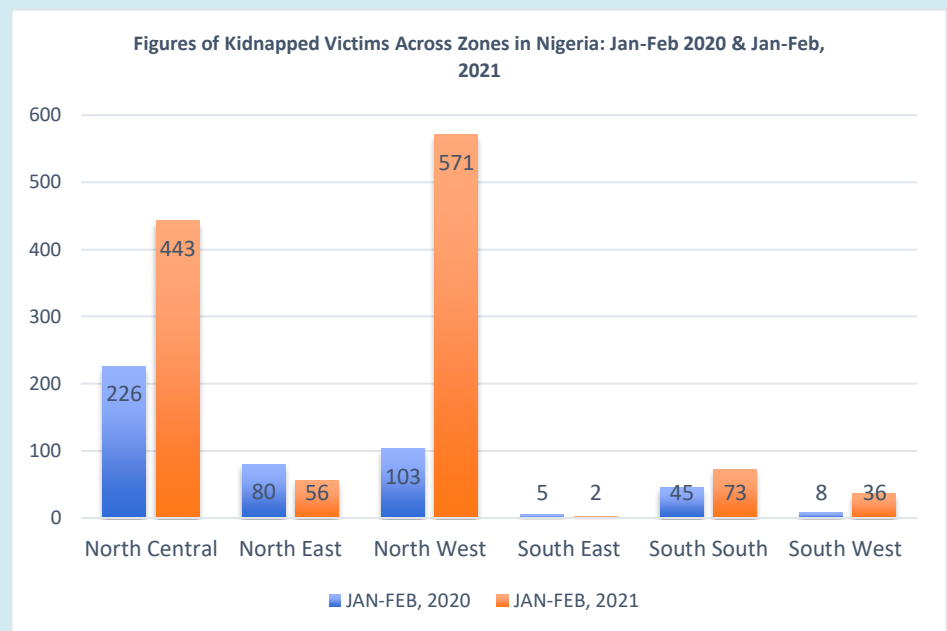
Senate, Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT), United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF), National Security Council, (NSC), Amnesty International, National Human Rights Commission, Arewa Consultative Forum, National/State House of Assembly, House of Representative, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and the Media.

In the reporting period, the North-West zone alone accounts for the highest figure of 571 kidnapped victims, while North-Central recorded 443[15]. This is followed by South-South (73), North-East (56) and South-West with 36 victims. The South-East recorded the lowest number (2) of kidnapped victims[16].

As a consequence of the frequency and impact of these criminal attacks in communities, some residents in vulnerable communities have fled to other areas for safety.[17]

Increased cases of kidnapping and other related crimes has also prompted several interventions from the Federal and State Governments in communities and schools. As of March 2, 2021, Yobe, Zamfara, Niger, Katsina, Jigawa, Kano and Sokoto States ordered the closure of all boarding schools, while others shut down all schools and health training institutions situated in volatile Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the States.[18] Additionally, the Federal Government on March 2, 2021, declared Zamfara State airspace as a no-fly zone to airlines due to the rising level of insecurity in the State, while other States in the country have been placed under surveillance by the intelligence agencies[19]. The Lagos State Police Command has also taken steps to enhance security through the deployment of police officers around primary and secondary schools in the State[20]. Other security measures include the construction of fences in Government schools in Ekiti State[21].

Below is a comparative statistical analysis of kidnapped victims per geo-political zone in Nigeria: January to February, 2021; and January to February 2020 as recorded in WANEP NEWS[22]:

Figures of Kidnapped Victims Across Zones in Nigeria: Jan-Feb 2020 & Jan-Feb, 2021

RISK ANALYSIS
- Given the trend of Boko Haram/ISWAP attacks and kidnapping incidents in the region, the increased cases of kidnapping by armed bandits has the potential to intersect with terrorist recruitment for economic gain.
- Youth bulge and unemployment remain critical challenges in the country. This has signifcant socio-economic implications on young people who mostly become marginalized, frustrated, and resentful of Governments' inadequacy to create jobs and provide opportunities that would improve their wellbeing. Growing unemployment among young people continue to

[5] https://www.cfr.org/blog/kidnapping-nigeria-growth-industry
[6] https://guardian.ng/news/senate-passes-law-prescribing-life-imprisonment-for-kidnappers/#:~:text=Nigerian%20Senate%20on%20Tuesday%20passed,years%20maximum%20sentence%20for%20kidnappers.&text=For%20instance%2C%20Section%203(3,with%20imprisonment%20for%2025%20years.
[15] www.wanep.org/news
[16] www.wanep.org/news
[17] https://punchng.com/residents-flee-niger-community-in-trucks-over-incessant-attacks/
[18] https://punchng.com/seven-northern-states-shut-schools-over-rising-banditry-abductions/
[19] https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/03/02/insecurity-fg-imposes-no-fly-zone-over-zamfara/
[20] https://dailytrust.com/kidnapping-lagos-deploys-policemen-in-schools
[21] https://punchng.com/abduction-ekiti-begins-fencing-of-public-schools/
[22] www.wanep.org/news

Situation Tracking is a periodic analytical report designed by WANEP through its National Early Warning System (NEWS) to monitor the changing trends of specific conflict threats as civil society support to peace and security in Nigeria

serve as a push factor for young people to engage in kidnapping for ransom as a viable economic venture. According to reports from SB Morgen Intelligence, atleast $18.34 million has been paid to kidnappers as ransom between 2011 and 2020[23]. This is likely to accentuate the cycle of kidnapping and other forms of criminality in volatile States.

- Besides, kidnapping has a negative impact on education of young people in the affected communities. In some instances, communities have withdrawn their children from schools due to the insecurity. This in turn contributes to the number of out-of-school children and also increases the job turnover of teachers in the affected States. Furthermore, kidnapping violates the rights of the child to education as well as exposing the school children to the risk of radicalisation, recruitment, sexual exploitations including including early marriage, defilement and rape, leading to the prevalence of unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and potential infection of COVID-19.

- Kidnapping continues to undermine livelihoods and sustainable economic development in the affected communities and the country. The livelihood of most farming communities have been disrupted especially communities and trading locations in proximity to the forest areas, as criminal gangs exploit these locations to attack communities. This has adverse impact on food insecurity, household consumption and income of populations who largely engage in agriculture.

- The constant negotiations with criminal gangs and the alleged payment of ransom by the Federal and State Government for the release of kidnapped victims has also been criticized by Civil Society as enough incentive for criminals to indulge in kidnapping. This has implications for human security, as communities are dissatisfied with the capacity of security operatives to defend and protect the communities from criminal attacks.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- Due to the existence of large unregulated and poor government-controlled forest areas in the country, the Federal and State Governments should continue to strengthen the capacity of security agencies and increase security presence in vulnerable communities. This should be bolstered with increase in citizens engagement in community sensitization;

- The recurrence in school kidnapping reflects a gap in the implementation of the 'Safe Schools Declaration (SSD)' for the protection of schools from attacks. Therefore, urgent steps should be taken by all State Governments to commence active implementation of the declaration.

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[23] https://www.sbmintel.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/202005_Nigeria-Kidnap.pdf