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1.2.1. Boko Haram, including JAS and ISIS-WA

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last updated: February 2019

[*Targeting,* 2.1]

A number of armed groups are operating on the territory of Nigeria, among which Boko Haram is considered the most powerful one. Boko Haram is a Salafi-jihadist group fighting for the replacement of the secular Nigerian state with an Islamic one based on a strict compliance to the Sharia law, throughout the country. It operates in the North East of Nigeria, exerting violence against westerners, Christians, and Muslims considered 'infidels'.

Since 2011 and as of April 2018, the reported deaths resulting from Boko Haram violence were approximately 17 000; another 14 645 persons had lost their lives in the clashes between Boko Haram and State actors. The group was added to the UN Security Council sanctions list in 2014.

The indiscriminate killings of civilians and in particular of Muslims caused divisions within the Boko Haram. In 2016 Boko Haram split into two groups: Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'adati wal-Jihad (JAS), led by Abubakar Shekau, and the Islamic State - West Africa (ISIS-WA), led by Abu Musab al Barnawi. However, this distinction is often not reflected in media reports, which refer to Boko Haram.

JAS is characterised by the use of more violent methods and continues to perpetrate systematic attacks against both Muslims and Christians. Anyone who does not support the group is perceived as a supporter of the government and may be targeted. It is reported that the group is more active near the border with Cameroon and it is present in South and Central Borno state.

ISIS-WA criticises the targeting of common Muslims, focusing its attacks on Christians and persons not abiding by Sharia law ('infidels'). Since the 2016 split, ISIS-WA has led 'less frequent but larger attacks' against military targets. This faction is considered to be more active near the border with Niger, in the areas north and west of Damboa and in Yobe state around Buni Yadi.

In its insurgency Boko Haram has committed widespread human rights violations across Northern Nigeria, such as: suicide bombings, massacres, burning down of entire villages, attacks on places of worship and schools, and the slaughter of people in such sites, attacks on IDP camps, cruel and degrading treatment following sentences by its 'courts', extrajudicial executions, political assassinations, abduction on a massive scale, including of children, forced

displacement, child recruitment, grave violation of the rights of women and girls such as slavery, sexual violence, forced marriages and forced pregnancy, etc.

Boko Haram has a decentralised structure composed by a number of cells and hierarchical layers. The primary sources of funding of Boko Haram are extortions, robberies and looting, cattle and livestock rustling, Islamic donations, local enterprises, kidnappings for ransom, arms smuggling and bank robberies.

Several incidents and killings of those who tried to leave or refuse to join Boko Haram are reported.

Boko Haram, including JAS and ISIS-WA, is considered an actor of persecution or serious harm in the areas where it operates.

The reach of a specific non-State actor and their ability to trace and target the applicant depend on the individual case. The individual power positions of the applicant and the actor of persecution or serious harm should be assessed, taking into consideration their social status, wealth, connections, gender, level of education, etc.

Finally, it should be noted that persecution or serious harm by non-State actors has to be assessed in light of the availability of protection according to Article 7 QD.

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