

Summary

After a relatively calm April, an upward trend of secessionist violence in the Northwest and Southwest regions, and Boko Haram violence in the Far North, has been seen in May and June. In June, the government intensified its operations against Boko Haram, which could lead to increased opportunistic criminal activity due to the military's shift in priorities. Meanwhile, the Nigerian decision to rescind a national fuel subsidy has negatively affected the economy of regions bordering Nigeria, thereby increasing the probability of economically motivated violence.

Recent events and developments

After a sharp decrease in events in April, both secessionist as well as Boko Haram related violence has been on an upward trend in May and June. On June 11 and 12, Boko Haram fighters attacked civilians in Ngaoundal, in the southern part of the central Adamaoua region. 2 civilians were killed, and several children were abducted. 500 kilometers south of Boko Haram's general area of operations in Cameroon and 350 kilometers north of capital Yaoundé, the attacks mark the group's southernmost activity since March 16, when it killed 3 people by placing a mine near Banki, 250 kilometers northwest of Yaoundé. The overwhelming majority of Boko Haram attacks are economically motivated or target the military and take place in the Far North region, especially along the border with Nigeria's Borno state. Throughout June, the Cameroonian government increased its efforts against the group. Meanwhile, anglophone secessionist battles with the government in the Northwest and Southwest regions continued throughout the past months, despite a power struggle in the secessionist camp. On July 4, Amnesty International accused both the government and secessionists of committing atrocities against civilians in these regions.

Impact assessment

The increased government action against Boko Haram may prove effective on the long-term, however on the short term there are two likely negative outcomes. Firstly, criminal gangs are known to take advantage when the government shifts attention to terrorist areas, making areas with lower terrorist activity more vulnerable to such gangs. Gangs are primarily economically motivated and can therefore target Western nationals, who are perceived as wealthy. Secondly, Boko Haram could also shift its focus to areas with lower military presence. The attacks of June 11 and 12 may indicate such a shift, although more data is necessary to determine whether these constitute a trend of southward expansion. In the Northwest and Southwest regions, the leadership struggle within the secessionist camp could further destabilize the area as different factions vie for supremacy. It is worth noting that the economically crucial black market for Nigerian petrol in all regions bordering Nigeria has collapsed after the abolition of the Nigerian fuel subsidy, causing local economic hardship. In the short term, this could cause an increase in economically motivated violence.

Advice from Forth Global

- Make sure all employees travelling to Cameroon undertake a 3-day HEAT training prior to deployment.
- Avoid all non-essential travel to the Northwest, Southwest, and Far North Regions. If travel is necessary, staff should plan their journey ahead, check the state of roads and be aware of potential checkpoints and roadblocks.
- Continuously monitor local news and liaise with local partners to stay up to date with any developments in the region.

Customized advice

Please contact us for specific advice:

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