

A silhouette of a child's head and shoulders is shown in profile, facing right. The child is positioned against a background of floral wallpaper with a warm, golden-yellow color palette. The entire scene is framed by a large, semi-transparent white circle. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

# **“WHO WILL CARE FOR US?”**

Grave Violations against Children in  
Northeastern Nigeria

**WATCH LIST** ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

September 2014

## About Watchlist

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict (“Watchlist”) strives to end violations against children in armed conflicts and to guarantee their rights. As a global network, Watchlist builds partnerships among local, national, and international non-governmental organizations, enhancing mutual capacities and strengths. Working together, we strategically collect and disseminate information on violations against children in conflicts in order to influence key decision-makers to create and implement programs and policies that effectively protect children.

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This report was researched and written by Janine Morna, with substantial desk research and written contributions from Marina Gabriel and Bonnie Berry.

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## Photo Credits

Please Note: The people represented in the photos in this report are not necessarily themselves victims or survivors of human rights violations or other abuses.

Cover Photo:

Image of a girl, the daughter of a pastor, who was abducted by suspected members of Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati wal-Jihad, commonly known as Boko Haram, at age 15. She was forced to convert to Islam and was raped during her 3 weeks in captivity in 2013.  
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# **“WHO WILL CARE FOR US?”**

Grave Violations against Children in Northeastern Nigeria



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Map No. 4228 UNITED NATIONS  
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## List of Acronyms

<b>BOYES</b>	Borno Youth Empowerment Scheme
<b>Civilian JTF</b>	Civilian Joint Task Force
<b>CPEWG</b>	Child Protection and Education Working Group
<b>CPN</b>	Child Protection Network
<b>CPWG</b>	Child Protection Working Group
<b>CTFMR</b>	Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting
<b>DPKO</b>	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
<b>EiEWG</b>	Education in Emergencies Working Group
<b>HCT</b>	Humanitarian Country Team
<b>IA-EPRWG</b>	Inter-Agency Emergency Preparedness and Response Working Group
<b>ICC</b>	International Criminal Court
<b>IDMC</b>	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IEC</b>	Information, education, and communication
<b>JAS</b>	Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad
<b>JIPs</b>	Joint IDP Profiling Service
<b>LGA</b>	Local Government Area
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MNJTF</b>	Multinational Joint Task Force
<b>MRM</b>	Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism
<b>NEMA</b>	National Emergency Management Agency
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NHRC</b>	National Human Rights Commission
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>OCHA</b>	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>OTP</b>	Office of the Prosecutor
<b>PINE</b>	Presidential Initiative for the North-East
<b>PSWG</b>	Protection Sector Working Group
<b>RoE</b>	Rules of Engagement
<b>SCWG-CAAC</b>	Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict
<b>SEMA</b>	State Emergency Management Agency
<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedure
<b>SRS-CAAC</b>	Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict
<b>OSRSG-CAAC</b>	Office of the Special Representative to the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>WAEC</b>	West African Examination Council
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

# executive summary and recommendations

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Conflict between the armed group Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS), commonly known as Boko Haram, Nigerian security forces, and civilian self-defense militias, is ravaging Nigeria's fragile northeast. Despite President Goodluck Jonathan's declaration of a state of emergency in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states, the level of violence and the scale of grave violations against children have worsened. The conflict in the northeast, along with inter-communal violence, has displaced an estimated 650,000 people, primarily women and children, and affected millions of others. The parties to the conflict have subjected boys and girls to forced recruitment, attacks on their schools, killing and maiming, abductions, rape and sexual violence, and arbitrary detention. In April 2014, the seriousness of these abuses came to the forefront when JAS abducted over 200 girls from Chibok in Borno State, sparking national and international outcry.

The humanitarian response has been slow, fragmented, and unable to meet the fast-growing needs of those affected by the conflict. Few international actors engage in the northeast, leaving the government and local groups, with limited capacity, to address violations and support survivors. The overall lack of expertise on child protection in conflict-related emergencies has left critical gaps in the response including, inadequate protection-related data, a lack of standard operating procedures to manage children encountered in conflict, and limited emergency preparedness planning to address the continuous attacks on schools.

Between March and May 2014, Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict ("Watchlist") conducted a six-week research mission to shed light on grave violations perpetrated against children,<sup>1</sup> devise recommendations to strengthen the child protection response, and assist with the establishment of the UN-led Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM).

## Findings

### Attacks on Schools

JAS has carried out well-planned, coordinated, regular attacks on primary and secondary schools in northern Nigeria. While JAS initially focused on destroying school property, it now intimidates and targets students and teachers, killing and abducting hundreds. The insecurity in the northeast has led to mass school closures, the flight of teachers, and the withdrawal of many students from school. Watchlist's media survey suggests that since 2012, JAS and possibly other groups, has carried out attacks on schools, including places of higher education, that have resulted in the death, injury, or abduction of at least 414 students, teachers, or other civilians on the school premises.<sup>2</sup>



While it is possible that other groups have also carried out attacks on schools, none have claimed responsibility. One human rights group reported that the soldiers from the Nigerian Joint Task Force burned an unoccupied Quranic school in 2013, but Watchlist has not received information on other such attacks.<sup>3</sup> None of the interviewees had witnessed the use of schools by armed forces or self-defense militias, although a May 2014 interagency humanitarian needs assessment suggests this may be an issue of concern.<sup>4</sup>

## Abduction

The rate and scale of abductions by JAS in the northeast has increased since early 2013. Abductions occur in a variety of settings including from schools, markets, and during raids on villages and homes. The group sometimes abducts boys and girls for recruitment. In addition, JAS forcibly converts the Christian women and girls they capture to Islam and often coerces them and other female abductees into marriage. On occasion, JAS members have raped and sexually exploited women and girls in their camps. Few abductees who escape from JAS camps have access to counseling and other health services.

## Recruitment and Use of Children

Both JAS and the Civilian Joint Task Force (“Civilian JTF”), a self-defense militia formed in mid-2013 in Borno’s State capital of Maiduguri, recruit children for spying and, at times, participation in hostilities. JAS has recruited children through abduction, threatening children’s families, and incentivizing boys and young men to join the group by providing them with monetary compensation. Some speculate that the group has also recruited “almajaris”—poor children who are sent by their families to receive a free Islamic-based education. People interviewed by Watchlist had seen children as young as 14 in JAS’ ranks participate in hostilities.

Interviewees also reported members of the Civilian JTF forcibly recruiting primarily boys and young men into their ranks. The term “Civilian JTF” has been loosely used to describe a proliferation of self-defense groups operating in the northeast. Representatives arrive in villages, and chiefs allow them to select any able-bodied person to assist their efforts. This has included boys as young as 13 years old.

Security forces often detain children who are suspected or found to be members of JAS. These arrests sometimes take place during raids on JAS camps, but also occur arbitrarily, during mass arrests of civilians based on seemingly weak intelligence. Children affiliated with the conflict are often held incommunicado, in unofficial military detention facilities known for their mistreatment of detainees.





## Protecting Children from Grave Violations

Despite strong legislative provisions, including the 2003 Child Rights Act, state-level child protection networks, and humanitarian initiatives post the abductions of the girls in Chibok to assist survivors of violations, several gaps still exist in Nigeria's child protection system.

Only a handful of international actors work in the emergency states because of security concerns. Local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government entities lead efforts to assist survivors of attacks but, because of capacity constraints, security concerns, and poor infrastructure within the emergency states, many people affected by the conflict have limited access to services. The hundreds of thousands displaced by the conflict are largely invisible to key authorities and often seek refuge and support from overextended

host communities. Furthermore, a lack of formal child protection in emergencies expertise, among humanitarian and government actors, is hindering the response. For example, systems for protection monitoring and programming are still limited, and the Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) is largely dormant because of a lack of engagement from a number of actors.

Additionally, education stakeholders need to address persistent attacks on schools. The new Safe Schools Initiative, spearheaded by the Nigerian government, the United Nations (UN), and other international actors, has provided some much-needed funding and political support to develop programmatic responses to attacks on schools. This key initiative should support learning for out-of-school children, emergency preparedness training and drills for teachers and students, financial support for schools receiving displaced students, and new infrastructure to strengthen school security.

Finally, the listing of JAS for killing and maiming and attacks on schools and hospitals in the Secretary-General's 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict, has triggered the establishment of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) in Nigeria.<sup>5</sup> Actors setting up the MRM will need to address a number of logistical and security challenges to ensure its efficacy. This includes creatively overcoming limited monitoring capacity in the northeast, addressing the safety concerns for survivors identified under the MRM, as well as the monitors documenting cases, and promoting an understanding within affected communities of the distinction between MRM monitors and other government actors in order to maintain independence and impartiality.

## Key Recommendations

### To the Nigerian Federal Government

- Issue a directive mandating the release of children being held under suspicion of involvement with JAS into the custody of child protection actors. Denounce the recruitment and use of children by armed groups and develop and enforce rules of engagement (RoEs) and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the transfer of children encountered during conflict.
- Support and expand initiatives to promote school protection by issuing a policy mandating baseline emergency planning and budgeting for state and federal schools across the country.
- Collaborate with child protection actors to develop and enact comprehensive training on the rights and needs of children in emergencies and in situations of conflict, and provide this training to all members of the Nigerian security forces and relevant civil service members.

### To State Governments in Northern Nigeria

- State governments that have not yet adopted the 2003 Child Rights Act, which domesticates the principles enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Union Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, should do so immediately and take steps to enforce its provisions.
- Cease payments and assistance to civilian self-defense militias if evidence emerges of recruitment of children below the age of 18.
- Develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at the next governors' forum that outlines strategies for supporting the inter-state relocation of students from the states of emergency.

### To the Nigerian Armed Forces

- Take preventive actions to ensure that the Nigerian armed forces do not commit grave violations against children by developing and implementing trainings on child protection, as well as ending impunity by suspending and investigating any active duty members suspected of committing grave violations.
- Update the Code of Conduct for the Nigerian armed forces to ensure that children below the age of 18 are treated in accordance with the policies and procedures outlined in the 2003 Child Rights Act.
- Publicly denounce the recruitment of children by civilian self-defense militias, end informal support to any groups which are found to have recruited children, and ensure that no children below the age of 18 participate in military training programs for the Civilian JTF.

### To JAS:

- Allow international and domestic humanitarian aid agencies unhindered and safe access to key areas to provide assistance to civilians, in particular children, affected by the conflict.
- Immediately cease attacks against civilians including targeted attacks against schools, students, and teachers.
- Cease abductions of both boys and girls. Release all abductees, including the girls taken from Chibok in Borno State, immediately and unconditionally.
- Comply with national and international law which prohibits the recruitment of children under the age of 18; and immediately release all children who have been recruited into the group's ranks.

### **To the Civilian JTF and other Self-Defense Militia Groups**

- Comply with legal national and international standards prohibiting the recruitment of children under the age of 18.
- Transfer all children suspected or found to be affiliated with JAS to child protection actors.

### **To the United Nations Secretary-General and his Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict**

- In the 14<sup>th</sup> Secretary-General's Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict, to be published in 2015, list JAS for the recruitment and use of children, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1612.
- Encourage further investigation of rape and other forms of sexual violence by JAS members (in particular forced marriage) and consider listing JAS for rape and other forms of sexual violence, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1882.
- List the Civilian JTF and possibly other self-defense militias for the recruitment and use of children, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1612. Encourage investigation into other grave violations by civilian groups and by the Nigerian security forces.
- Call on the Nigerian government to sign, with all immediacy, an MOU on the treatment and transfer of children suspected or found to be affiliated with JAS.

### **The United Nations Security Council and its Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict**

- Take steps to adopt a resolution that establishes abduction as a trigger violation for listing parties to a conflict in the Secretary-General's Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict.

### **To the International Criminal Court**

- Investigate grave violations against children as part of any ongoing investigations on human rights abuses in northeastern Nigeria.

### **To Child Protection and Other Protection Actors**

- Take steps to strengthen child protection in emergencies capacity and programming by:
  - Advocating for the deployment of a relevant expert to assist in reviving the CPWG, which provides a forum for information-sharing and coordination on child protection.
  - Conduct child protection-specific assessments and encourage the establishment of an independent protection monitoring system by the Protection Sector Working Group (PSWG), which includes a tracking system for civilian and child fatalities.
  - Support the growth, decentralization, and training of Child Protection Networks (CPNs) on the rights and needs of children in conflict-related emergencies.
  - Embed individuals with child protection in emergencies expertise in national and emergency institutions, as well as relevant working groups.
- Work with communities to develop information, education, and communication (IEC) interventions to prevent the recruitment of children into armed groups.
- Work with partners to identify safe ways for survivors of grave violations to access adequate medical, psychosocial, and legal services, particularly in remote areas in the states of emergency. This should include engaging in dialogue with relevant actors to secure access to conflict areas and building the capacity of NGOs in the emergency states.

## To Education Stakeholders

- Collect periodic data on the state of education in the northeast and share findings on school attacks with the government, the Child Protection and Education Working Group (CPEWG) and the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR).
- Reinforce the security of schools using self-defense mechanisms such as fences and security guards. Limit the use of security forces and the Civilian JTF in school protection, as they may attract further attacks.
- Support continued education for out-of-school children, such as the provision of school-in-a-box kits for children in the states of emergency and in neighboring internal displacement person (IDP) hubs. If school closures persist, actors must explore alternate education methods, such as broadcasting lessons over the radio, or establishing classes in safe, undisclosed, community spaces.
- In preparation for the reopening of schools, work with school-based management committees to rollout emergency preparedness and risk mitigation plans, as well as training for students and teachers.

## To Donors

- Ensure flexible and sustainable funding for:
  - Strengthening the technical capacities of governmental and non-governmental actors in monitoring and reporting on children's rights violations under UN Security Council Resolutions 1612, 1882, and 1998.
  - Sustainable reintegration programs for demobilized children from JAS' ranks.
  - PSWG activities, particularly efforts to establish a protection monitoring system.
  - Medical, psychosocial, and legal services for survivors of grave violations.
  - School security, education for out-of-school children, and counseling for students.
  - Programming and data collection to support IDPs and host communities.

Implementing partners should coordinate with those already working in the northeast to minimize duplication and maximize synergy.

## Key Recommendations for Establishing the MRM

### To the Future Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting

- Undertake comprehensive awareness campaigns and conduct training on the MRM, grave violations, child protection monitoring, and handling of confidential and sensitive information, and all other identified gaps related to the skills and knowledge required for informed and responsible participation in the MRM.
- Take steps to forge partnerships with actors who can help to supplement information on grave violations. This includes potentially collaborating with the new CPEWG, cross-border humanitarian actors, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/ National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) protection monitors. Explore partnerships with non-traditional partners such as health workers and religious groups.
- Promote the formation of an inter-ministerial committee between the Government and CTFMR to engage in conversation and respond to violations.
- Take steps to help bridge the gap between monitoring and response. In coordination with the Nigerian government, prioritize establishing referral pathways for providing a response to violations, potentially through CPNs in the states of emergency, through developing SOPs for the treatment and transfer of recruited children, and where appropriate, coordination with working groups in relevant sectors.



# methodology

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Between March and May 2014, Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict conducted a six-week research mission to Nigeria. Due to limited access to the states of emergency, Watchlist gathered information on grave violations from IDPs and refugees who had fled from the states of emergency to neighboring states and Niger. Watchlist also conducted interviews with survivors who were referred to the organization by NGOs and human rights defenders. These interviews took place over the phone and in person. Watchlist documented violations that occurred between December 2012 and July 2014.

To document grave violations, Watchlist conducted qualitative interviews with 156 people, including 54 IDPs and refugees who had fled from the states of emergency. Watchlist also interviewed girls and boys between the ages of 11 and 16, some of whom were IDPs and refugees, and others who had relocated permanently from the states of emergency. Watchlist documented grave violations through interviews with: (1) children and young people who had been abducted, raped, attacked at school, or maimed during an attack, (2) families whose children were survivors of such violations including arbitrary detention, and (3) human rights defenders, drivers who operate in the states of emergency, and witnesses present during attacks. Watchlist also reviewed two videos from human rights defenders of boys who were allegedly recruited into JAS.

To assess the child protection response, Watchlist interviewed teachers, federal and local government authorities, members of the military, police, and the Civilian JTF, state emergency responders, UN and humanitarian agencies, domestic and international NGOs, faith-based organizations, and the Nigeria Union of Teachers. For security reasons, Watchlist was unable to interview members of JAS. Watchlist also attended PSWG and Education in Emergencies Working Group (EiEWG) meetings, as well as a humanitarian briefing coordinated by Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Nigeria.



Watchlist conducted focus groups discussions and, where possible, individual interviews in quiet, private settings. Some interviews were conducted in English, while others were conducted in a local language such as Hausa or Kanuri through the help of an interpreter. For safety reasons, no names are used to identify IDPs, refugees, or other people affected by the conflict. No inducement was offered or solicited by the interviewees.

All interviews with children were conducted in accordance with confidentiality and ethical standards. Watchlist consulted a guardian for all interviews with children below the age of 18. All children were informed of the purpose of the interview, its voluntary nature, and the ways the information would be used. Each child orally consented to the interview. Most interviews were carried out or facilitated by local child protection actors, allowing for further follow-up where necessary. In cases where girls and young women were survivors of sexual violence, Watchlist offered to connect survivors with groups able to provide counseling or psychosocial support. The interviews were semi-structured and not all children were asked the same questions.

Field research for this report was accompanied by an extensive literature review of publicly available documents, newspaper articles, assessments, legislation, and unpublished studies on the human rights situation in Nigeria and the broader socio-political context.

In this report, “child” and “children” are used to refer to anyone under the age of 18, consistent with the usage under international law. In cases where children did not know their specific age, researchers only classified children as interviewees when this was clearly indicated by the interviewees’ own assessment and physical appearance. The term “child protection actors” and “education stakeholders” includes relevant federal and local government ministries, humanitarian agencies, and international and domestic NGOs.

Several topics which merit comprehensive attention are not addressed in this report, either because they fall outside the specific focus of the situation of children affected by conflict or because of the difficulties involved in getting substantive information within a limited timeframe. This includes the denial of humanitarian access and attacks on hospitals. The report also does not extensively address rape and other forms of sexual violence against children because of the difficulties in documenting this violation. Finally, the report focuses narrowly on the conflict between JAS, self-defense militias, and Nigerian security forces and does not address inter-communal conflict.

# background

## The Rise of Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad

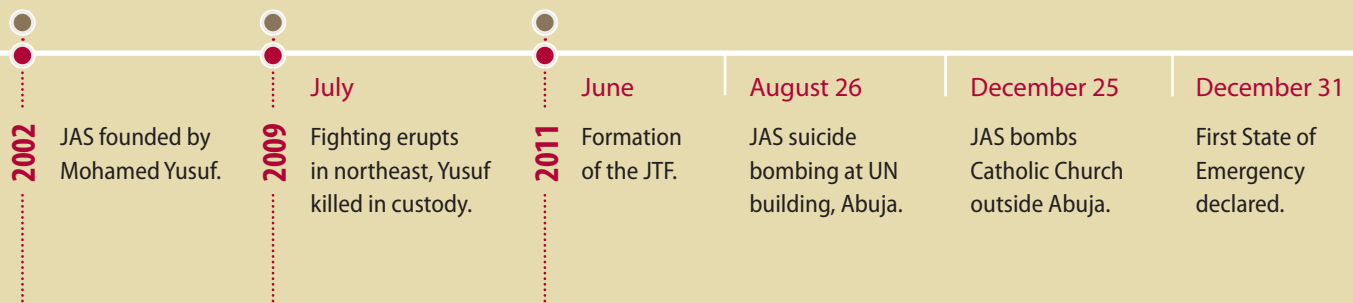
The group Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS) (People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad), known commonly as Boko Haram, has been waging a campaign of violence in northern Nigeria in its effort to create an Islamic state governed by strict Shariah Law.<sup>6</sup> The group has gained notoriety for its devastating attacks on thousands of civilians and for its targeted assaults against schools, teachers, and students.

Most accounts date the beginning of JAS to 2002.<sup>7</sup> Its founder was an Islamist preacher named Mohamed Yusuf.<sup>8</sup> Beginning in the northeastern capital of Maiduguri of Nigeria's Borno State, Yusuf's preaching followed a literal interpretation of the Quran; he advocated that elements of secular education contradictory to the holy book should be forbidden.<sup>9</sup> Yusuf gained followers not only from Borno State, but also from other northern Nigerian states, tapping into a large population of disaffected and unemployed youth.<sup>10</sup> Although Yusuf criticized northern Muslims for their participation in what he believed to be an illegitimate, un-Islamic state, JAS did not aim to violently overthrow the government prior to 2009.<sup>11</sup> Yusuf, rather, advocated a doctrine of withdrawal.<sup>12</sup>

Not all members agreed with Yusuf's non-violent approach.<sup>13</sup> In 2002, a more radical faction, led by Abubakar Shekau and Aminu Tashen-Ilimi, split from the group and relocated to Yobe, where following an initial peaceful phase, it launched attacks against several towns in northern Nigeria, including towns along the border with Cameroon and Niger.<sup>14</sup> Yusuf formed a truce with the splinter group in December 2004, and began preaching a harder line.<sup>15</sup>

Clashes between Nigeria's security forces and members of JAS came to a head in the summer of 2009. On June 11, 2009, a group of Yusuf's followers became involved in an argument with officers from a joint police and military unit in Maiduguri.<sup>16</sup> The officers fired upon the group, injuring 17.<sup>17</sup> While Yusuf demanded justice, the Nigerian authorities neither investigated the incident nor apologized.<sup>18</sup> In late July, five days of clashes between JAS and members of security forces in Borno, Yobe, Bauchi, and Kano states left more than 800 dead.<sup>19</sup> Shortly thereafter, on July 30, 2009, Yusuf was killed while in police custody.<sup>20</sup> While the specific circumstances of his death remain unknown, news reports and rights activists allege that Yusuf was summarily executed by Nigerian security forces.<sup>21</sup>

## Timeline of Major Events in the Conflict between JAS, the Nigerian Security Forces, and Civilian Self-Defense Militia



The use of violence escalated after the killing of Mohamed Yusuf, whose death became a rallying cry for the group. Yusuf's second-in-command, Abubakar Shekau, took over leadership of JAS, and unleashed a series of attacks, initially focusing on police stations, military barracks, and government officials and then expanding to civilian objects such as places of worship, UN agencies, bars, and schools, killing thousands of civilians, including children.<sup>22</sup> JAS has carried out attacks in the northeastern states of Nigeria, central Nigeria, and has a reported presence in neighboring states such as, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, and Niger.<sup>23</sup>

Thousands of Nigerians have been killed at the hands of JAS and security forces since 2009.<sup>24</sup> The violence has surged since the beginning of 2014. According to a Human Rights Watch press release issued on July 15, 2014, JAS has killed more than 2,053 civilians in an estimated 95 attacks since the start of 2014.<sup>25</sup> The intensity of the violence has led some bodies, including the International Criminal Court (ICC), Amnesty International, and Nigeria's National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), to declare a non-international armed conflict in the northeast.<sup>26</sup>

JAS' growth and evolving tactics have reportedly led to its fragmentation.<sup>27</sup> Disagreements among members, over issues such as the killing of Muslims in mass civilian attacks, have caused some members to break away and form splinter groups.<sup>28</sup> As a result, it is not always clear who is responsible for attacks in the northeast.

### Response by the Government

In response to the growing threats from JAS, the Nigerian government has deployed security forces to the northeast, issued two states of emergency, and attempted to economically revitalize the affected northeastern states so youth are less likely to join JAS. Despite these initiatives, it has faced significant criticism for what some view as a slow, inadequate, and sometimes heavy-handed response to the activities of JAS.<sup>29</sup>

A wide range of Nigerian and foreign security forces engage in counterterrorism activities in northeastern Nigeria. In June 2011, the Nigerian government created a Joint Task Force comprised of the Nigerian armed forces, the police force, the Department of State Security, the customs service, the immigration service, and the Defense Intelligence Agency, to respond to the crisis.<sup>30</sup> In addition, the mandate of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)—a group established in 1998 by Chad, Niger, and Nigeria to fight transnational crime—was expanded to include terrorism.<sup>31</sup> In August 2013, the Nigerian government

2013

April 16-17

Fighting in Baga, Borno State, between troops and suspected JAS members results in over 180 people killed.

May 15

Second State of Emergency enacted—Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states.

June

Formation of the Civilian JTF.

July 6

Attack on Gov't Secondary school, 22-46 students killed.

August

7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division of Army replaces JTF.

September 28

JAS attack on College of Agriculture, Gujba, Yobe – 40-62 students killed.

established the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division of the Army to take over operations of the JTF, although many of the commanders and units remain unchanged.<sup>32</sup> The 7th Infantry Division has since served as the umbrella command for northeastern security operations.<sup>33</sup> Following heightened attacks in 2014, neighboring governments, as well as France, the United Kingdom, the United States, and others have negotiated several other bilateral and multilateral security commitments.<sup>34</sup>

President Goodluck Jonathan has issued two states of emergency in response to the conflict with JAS. The first took place in December 2011 following a series of attacks across the country on Christmas Day, including an attack on a church in Abuja that killed at least 37 people and wounded more than 57.<sup>35</sup> Invoking section 305(1) of the 1999 Constitution, President Jonathan issued a state of emergency for 15 Local Government Areas (LGAs) across Borno, Yobe, Plateau, and Niger states.<sup>36</sup> International borders between those states and Cameroon, Chad, and Niger were closed.<sup>37</sup> Authorized for a period of six months, the President officially recognized the end of the state of emergency on July 18, 2012.<sup>38</sup>

President Jonathan declared a second state of emergency in May 2013, for the northeastern states of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa.<sup>39</sup> Twice the Nigerian National Assembly has extended this state of emergency, first in November 2013, and again in May 2014.<sup>40</sup> The issuing of the state of emergency led to further troop deployments from the Nigerian military along with aerial support to root out JAS.<sup>41</sup>

The government has also developed an accompanying "soft approach" to combat terrorism in the northeast.<sup>42</sup> Under the Presidential Initiative for the North-East (PINE), the government is planning to redevelop and revitalize economic activity in states most affected by the conflict.<sup>43</sup> Transforming the socio-economic fortune of the region will make it less attractive for youths to join JAS.<sup>44</sup> Through this initiative, the government has provided logistical support for the distribution of food to emergency states, and taken steps to fund and operationalize a new Safe Schools Initiative.<sup>45</sup>

The Nigerian security force's attempts to curtail the activities of JAS and restore law in northeastern Nigeria have received widespread criticism from citizens as well as human rights groups.<sup>46</sup> Reports have emerged of retaliatory attacks, by Nigerian security forces,

#### continued: Timeline

2014

February 25

JAS attack on Gov't College of Buni Yadi dormitory – 29-59 male students killed.

March 14

JAS releases detainees from Giwa barracks, Maiduguri-around 600 detainees allegedly killed by Nigerian security forces.

April 15

JAS abducts over 200 girls from Gov't Secondary School in Chibok, Borno State.

that have resulted in the deaths of civilians, including children.<sup>47</sup> Their actions may be adding to disenchantment with the Nigerian state and hindering government efforts to establish peace in the region.

### Rise in Self-Defense Militias

Following the escalation of acts of violence and killings by JAS and other unknown gunmen in Borno and other northeastern states, and the seeming deterioration of the security forces' ability to protect civilians, vigilantism has become widespread in northeastern Nigeria. Civilians have taken up arms against JAS, in defense of their lives and communities.

In 2013, the Civilian JTF or "Yan Gora", comprised of loosely organized vigilantes, was formed in Borno State's capital of Maiduguri to assist Nigerian security forces with the identification and arrest of suspected JAS members.<sup>48</sup> The name is used to demonstrate the association between the government-created JTF (formerly comprising the Nigerian army, police, and state security services) and civilians who have volunteered to fight against JAS.<sup>49</sup> The group, along with other self-defense groups, began to defend areas where government security forces were either absent or unreliable.<sup>50</sup> These civilian self-defense militias vary in organization and governance, with some reporting to community leaders.<sup>51</sup>

The Civilian JTF has fought against JAS by manning checkpoints, identifying and helping to arrest members of JAS, providing information to security services and, at least on one occasion, participating in operations with security services.<sup>52</sup> It has received military and state support in the form of training and material resources, as well as praise from the President.<sup>53</sup> Watchlist and other human rights groups have documented a number of abuses by the group, including the recruitment and use of children.<sup>54</sup> Some fear they are inciting JAS to target civilians.<sup>55</sup>

### Forced Displacement and Humanitarian Crisis

Prior to the conflict with JAS, northeastern Nigeria had some of the worst levels of water and food deprivation, access to healthcare, malnutrition rates, early marriage rates, and school enrollment in the country.<sup>56</sup> While the southern and southwestern states of Nigeria have thrived, in part due to Nigeria's oil wealth, the northern parts of the country still lack access to basic provisions, and the inhabitants of the northeastern states experience overwhelming poverty.<sup>57</sup> These poor socioeconomic conditions have worsened during the conflict.

Hundreds of thousands of Nigerians have been uprooted from their homes, as a result of the increasing violence, with many becoming refugees in neighboring countries.<sup>58</sup> Conflict in the northeast, along with inter-communal violence, has displaced roughly 650,000 people in the states of emergency and the neighboring states of Gombe, Bauchi, and Taraba.<sup>59</sup> About 3,128,000 children have been affected by conflict.<sup>60</sup> Emergency responders, humanitarian agencies, and human rights defenders have expressed concerns about the affected population's access to food, water, sanitation, and medical care.<sup>61</sup>









# part I: the impact of conflict on children

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**Photo:** An internally displaced family who fled from their home in Borno State, Nigeria, shows the emergency aid mattresses they received.  
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# attacks on schools

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**attacks include the targeting of schools or medical facilities** that cause the total or partial destruction of such facilities. Other interferences to the normal operation of the facility may also be reported, such as the occupation, shelling, targeting for propaganda of, or otherwise causing harm to schools or medical facilities or their personnel.

**targeted, deliberate, recurrent attacks on schools and teachers**, as well as direct, credible threats against groups or individuals for providing education, constitute grave violations that may lead to the listing of an armed group or force in the Secretary-General's Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict.

Note: A "school" denotes a recognizable education facility or learning site. Education facilities and learning sites must be recognized and known by the community as a learning space and marked by visible boundaries.<sup>62</sup>

JAS' targeted attacks on schools have devastated education in the northeast, which already has some of the lowest rates of enrollment, with only 20.8 percent of school-age children participating in primary school in Borno in 2008.<sup>65</sup> The group has destroyed and ransacked school property and carried out deliberate killings and abductions of hundreds of students and teachers. They have also created a climate of fear by threatening and intimidating teachers and students who continue to go to school. The growing insecurity in the northeast has led to mass school closures, the flight of teachers, and the withdrawal of many students. The Secretary-General has listed JAS for attacks on schools in the 13th Annual Report of Children and Armed Conflict.<sup>66</sup>

While it is possible that other groups have also carried out attacks on schools, none have claimed responsibility. One human rights group reported that soldiers from the Joint Task Force burned an unoccupied Quranic school in May 2013, but Watchlist has not received information of other such attacks.<sup>67</sup> None of the interviewees had witnessed the use of schools by armed forces or self-defense militias, although an interagency assessment conducted in May 2014 suggests soldiers have used some schools.<sup>68</sup>

## Targeted Attacks on Schools, Students, and Teachers

JAS carries out well-planned, coordinated, routine attacks on primary and secondary schools in northern Nigeria. Between 2012 and 2014, the group burned down hundreds of school buildings, threatened and killed teachers, and abducted and killed students.<sup>69</sup> JAS leader Abubakar Shekau has threatened teachers and students and warned against attendance in secular schools.<sup>70</sup> In one speech he stated, "If [Nigerian security forces] are going to places of worship and destroying them, like mosques and Quranic schools, you have primary schools as well, you have secondary schools and universities and we will start bombing them ... Touch us and see. That is what we will do."<sup>71</sup>

Until mid-2013, JAS' reported attacks primarily involved burning empty school buildings at night.<sup>72</sup> Watchlist spoke to six interviewees who described targeted attacks on schools to destroy school property.<sup>73</sup> One of these facilities was a Quranic school. A 12-year-old-girl who attended the school in Maiduguri explained, "The bomb took place one month before we left [late July/early August 2013]. The bomb was set off after we left school... we were not present ... That was when the bomb happened ... We left school after it was bombed."<sup>74</sup>



## case study

### **A 13-year-old boy in Junior Secondary School (JSS) 2 describes the Night Suspected Members of JAS attacked the Federal Government College Buni Yadi, in Yobe State, February 25, 2014:**<sup>63</sup>

“We were sleeping in the hostel. We heard the gun shots. I woke up from sleeping ... ten boys were in the room ... I went out of the room ... I was running ... I was feeling afraid... I had gotten out of the room and I was shot at in the leg ... The person pointed a gun at me... I fell down... I was hit with two bullets on my left foot ... I pretend[ed] like I died... because if I didn't pretend they would shoot me again ... it felt like 30 minutes ... When the people [were] not at the place I w[o]ke up. I w[o]ke up and entered the room again. The [other students] that didn't die... I said if they are able to run, let us run.” The 13-year-old boy then walked past several dead bodies with some of his classmates and exited the campus. He begged for someone who lived near the school to open the gate to their home. The residents of the house bound his leg and took him to the hospital the next morning. “I was there [at the hospital] for four hours... They put a bag of blood... my leg was very painful.” Many other students from the school were admitted into the hospital. Media reports suggest between 29 and 59 boys were killed during the attack.<sup>64</sup>

As Nigerian security forces strengthened their counteroffensive against JAS in 2012, the group's attacks on schools, along with other civilian targets such as places of worship and town centers, became increasingly frequent and destructive. Watchlist spoke to nine interviewees who described violent attacks on schools in or near their communities where students were injured, killed, and/or abducted between 2011 and 2014. According to UNICEF, 211 schools in Borno State and 21 schools in Yobe State have been attacked.<sup>75</sup>

Brutal attacks on schools continue today. In February 2014, members of JAS attacked Konduga village and allegedly abducted 20 girls from a Government Science Secondary School.<sup>76</sup> Although people interviewed by Watchlist reported the abduction, as well as several media sources, state police and school management deny it took place.<sup>77</sup> One interviewee who was present during this attack witnessed the girls being kidnapped. He explained, “They [JAS] got a truck in the market. This is a truck that was loaded with cola nut. They then packed the girls in the car...”<sup>78</sup>

Later that month, JAS killed between 29 and 59 male students in Yobe State as they slept in the dormitory of their boarding school (see the case study above).<sup>79</sup> The

attackers then burned down the majority of the school.<sup>80</sup> The girls at the school were released, and warned to return home, get married, and never return to school.<sup>81</sup>

On April 14, 2014, members of JAS, disguised as Nigerian soldiers, abducted over 200 schoolgirls from a Girl's Government Secondary School in Chibok, Borno State, though there has been some confusion over the specific numbers.<sup>82</sup> The mass abduction ignited domestic and international calls for action, prompting a multi-nation search for the missing girls and a surge in humanitarian support for the northeast.<sup>83</sup> Some of the girls have since escaped. The majority of those taken remain missing however, their exact whereabouts unknown.<sup>84</sup>

Hundreds of children and teachers have died as a result of these attacks. According to Amnesty International, at least 70 teachers and 100 schoolchildren were killed or wounded between 2012 and September 2013.<sup>85</sup> Watchlist's media survey suggests that since 2012, JAS and possibly other groups, have carried out attacks on schools, including places of higher education, resulting in the death, injury, or abduction of at least 414 students, teachers, or other civilians on the school premises.<sup>86</sup> A statement released by the Nigeria Union of Teachers in May 2014 claims at least 173 teachers have been killed

over the past five years of violence, while the Governor of Borno State, Alhaji Kashim Shettima, has cited a slightly higher figure of 176 teachers.<sup>87</sup>

As violence spills over from northeastern Nigeria, schools located in towns and villages in surrounding countries near the border with Nigeria have become increasingly unsafe. In Fotokol in northern Cameroon, a village located approximately 0.2 miles from Gamboru village in Borno State, a media report suggests stray bullets regularly travel through Fotokol high school.<sup>88</sup>

## Threats of Attacks against Teachers and Students

In addition to targeted attacks, JAS also threatens, and intimidates teachers and students from going to school.<sup>89</sup>

Watchlist spoke to a young woman who was abducted, at age 18, for three days by JAS while traveling home from school.<sup>90</sup> The group conditioned the release of her and her five peers, in part, on a commitment that they would no longer continue their education. She explained, "When the boss [of the suspected JAS members] came he was smiling and laughing ... He asked, 'will you go back to school?' We said, 'No we will not join again.' He said, 'okay go from here and don't go back to school.'"

In other cases JAS has sent letters and emails to students and teachers, stating they will be attacked if they continue to go to school.<sup>91</sup> Early in 2014, the Provost for the College of Education, Hong, in Adamawa State, said he was aware of five alleged threat letters from the group that had led to the departure of some students.<sup>92</sup> A July 2014 media report also indicated that three government secondary schools in Nasarawa State had received letters from suspected JAS members, causing students in at least one of the schools to flee their hostels.<sup>93</sup> In addition, a teenage boy from Baga told Watchlist he had witnessed a neighbor, who was a teacher, receive a bullet inside a letter from JAS.<sup>94</sup>

Sometimes threats are more tacit, with members of JAS ominously positioning themselves outside classrooms and listening to the lessons.<sup>95</sup> A report by Amnesty International describes a teacher from Borno State who claimed he was constantly monitored and that, "It was like teaching under gunpoint."<sup>96</sup>

Threats from suspected members of the group have also spread to villages across the border. In the village of Fotokol in northern Cameroon, flyers have appeared threatening future attacks on schools and teachers.<sup>97</sup>

## The Impact of Attacks on Schools and Access to Education

JAS' threats and attacks have led to the closure of many schools and the flight of teachers. UNICEF reports that one in every three primary school children and one in every four junior secondary school children are out of school in the northeast.<sup>98</sup>

Some schools in Borno and Yobe states were closed for fear of attacks. Others have been used by IDPs as shelters.<sup>99</sup> Watchlist spoke with 22 interviewees who stated that their communities proactively closed secular schools because they did not feel they could operate them safely.<sup>100</sup> The earliest school closure documented by Watchlist took place around April 2013.<sup>101</sup> Some children stopped going to school altogether.<sup>102</sup> Other children enrolled in some of the Quranic schools that remained open during this period.<sup>103</sup> Secondary schools in Yobe State closed in 2013 for a limited period following a July attack on a Yobe boarding school that killed 42 students.<sup>104</sup> In March 2014, news reports indicated that the Borno State government would close all of its roughly 85 high schools, affecting approximately 120,000 students.<sup>105</sup> An interagency assessment conducted in May 2014 suggests that, in fact, almost all state schools, including primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary schools, were closed in Borno State in March 2014.<sup>106</sup> Only a few schools remained open in low-risk areas so final-year students could take their West African Examination Council (WAEC) certification examinations.<sup>107</sup> Five federal government colleges located in the states of emergency have been closed and 200 students have been relocated to schools the federal government deems less risky.<sup>108</sup> The Borno State Ministry of Education recently announced that due to the conflict, over 250,000 school-age children are out of school.<sup>109</sup> The Commissioner for Education in Borno State, Inuwa Kubo, announced the reopening of schools in safe environments at the end of July 2014, although other sources suggest the reopening of the schools remains unclear.<sup>110</sup>

The attacks in the northeast have also caused teachers to flee in fear for their lives. Watchlist and other human rights groups have spoken to teachers who have left the region because of its insecurity.<sup>111</sup> A representative from the Nigeria Union of Teachers told Watchlist that teachers congregated in safe areas like Maiduguri, potentially limiting the number of qualified teachers in JAS strongholds.<sup>112</sup>

Even in the areas where schools are still operational, parents have withheld their children from attending school in fear of attacks. A teacher interviewed by Watchlist described enrollment decreasing dramatically at his federal school in Yobe State, because parents withdrew their children from the school.<sup>113</sup> A May 2014 interagency assessment found that parents prioritized basic needs such as food and shelter over education.<sup>114</sup>

Several parents interviewed by Watchlist expressed frustration at the negative impact the conflict is having on their children's education.<sup>115</sup> One parent said, "It is beyond explanation. Now children are not in school. All this is enough to devastate a person."<sup>116</sup> For those brave enough to continue schooling, morale is reportedly low. Teachers and children live in constant fear of attacks. A May 2014 interagency assessment found that schools are perceived as danger zones among parents and community members.<sup>117</sup> A teacher in Yobe told Watchlist that teachers never talked about the attacks, explaining, "If we showed worry it would affect their [the students'] morale."<sup>118</sup> A representative from the Nigeria Union of Teachers explained that teachers in the region were "psychologically and spiritually down."<sup>119</sup>

JAS' attacks on schools are likely to have far-reaching, long-term consequences on the right to education in the region.

## recommendations

### To the Nigerian Federal Government

1. Issue a policy mandating baseline emergency planning and budgeting for state and federal schools across the country.
2. Pass and enforce specific legislation making the use of schools by armed groups and forces illegal.

3. Monitor and respond promptly to threats of school attacks.
4. Build conflict-sensitive education and child protection into teacher training at all levels and mandate its implementation in private and public schools.

### To JAS

1. Immediately cease all attacks and intimidation of teachers, students, and other education personnel.

### To Education Stakeholders

1. Collect periodic data on the state of education in the northeast and share findings on school attacks with the government, the CPEWG and the CTFMR.
2. Reinforce the security of schools using self-defense mechanisms such as fences and security guards. Limit the use of security forces and the Civilian JTF in school protection, as they may attract further attacks.
3. Support continued education for out-of-school children, such as the provision of school-in-a-box kits for children in the states of emergency and in neighboring IDP hubs. If school closures persist, actors must explore alternate education methods, such as broadcasting lessons over the radio, or establishing classes in safe, undisclosed, community spaces.
4. In preparation for the reopening of schools, work with school-based management committees to rollout emergency preparedness and risk mitigation plans, as well as training for students and teachers.
5. Invest in psychosocial support and counselor visits for students and teachers.
6. Work with local stakeholders to develop interventions to strengthen the community security conditions in areas where schools are located.



# abduction

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**abduction is the unlawful removal, seizure, capture, apprehension, taking or enforced disappearance of a child** either temporarily or permanently for the purpose of any form of exploitation of the child. This includes, but is not limited to, recruitment in armed forces or groups, participation in hostilities, sexual exploitation or abuse, forced labor, hostage-taking, and indoctrination. If a child is recruited by force by an armed force or group, this is considered as two separate violations – abduction and recruitment.<sup>120</sup>



As illustrated by the incident in Chibok, large-scale abductions by JAS are escalating in the northeast. Boys and girls who are abducted during attacks carried out by JAS are sometimes forcibly recruited.<sup>122</sup> This is discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

In addition, JAS forcibly converts the Christian women and girls they capture to Islam and often coerces them and other female abductees into marriage. On occasion, JAS members have raped and sexually exploited women and girls in their camps. Few of those who escape have access to counseling and other health services.

While some steps have been taken by the government, UN, and other actors to provide some support to the families of the abducted Chibok girls, as well as the girls who escaped, there are still relatively few actors on the ground, particularly in remote areas of the northeast, to support other survivors.<sup>123</sup>

## A Targeted Policy of Abducting Young Women and Girls

JAS began employing tactics of gender-based abductions in early 2013 in response to the government imprisoning the wives of JAS members. The Nigerian government arrested more than 100 women and children, including Shekau's wives in 2012.<sup>124</sup> Shekau issued a number of statements, criticizing this strategy and threatening revenge on government officials.<sup>125</sup> In a video released in September

2012, Shekau stated, "Since you are now holding our women, just wait and see what will happen to your own women ... to your own wives according to Sharia law."<sup>126</sup>

JAS' first reported abduction occurred in February 2013, when they captured a French family, including their four children, in northern Cameroon.<sup>127</sup> These abductions continued in Nigeria. In May 2013, Shekau released a video message in which he claimed responsibility for abducting 12 women and children in an attack that took place on a police barracks in Bama.<sup>128</sup> The women had been visiting relatives at the police station.<sup>129</sup> A report emerged later that year of the abduction of soldiers' wives and children from a barracks in Bama in December 2013.<sup>130</sup>

The rate and scale of abductions has increased, with the group particularly targeting Christian women and girls.<sup>131</sup> Watchlist interviewed six girls and young women, between the ages of 15 and 22, who were abducted and escaped from JAS camps, as well as several people from the states of emergency who witnessed abductions during attacks.<sup>132</sup> The experiences of young women have been included in this section, because they provide some insight into the possible experiences of girls who are abducted. The documented incidents took place between December 2012 and March 2014.

Abductions occur in a variety of settings including from schools, markets, and during raids on villages and homes. Following the abduction of over 200 girls from a school in Chibok, many people became aware of abductions from schools.<sup>133</sup> However, this is not the first reported abduction of girls from schools in northeast.<sup>134</sup> Reports emerged

**Photo:** Image of a girl who was abducted by suspected members of Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, commonly known as Boko Haram, in 2013, at age 14. Her abductors held her captive in their camp where they forced her to convert to Islam and threatened her with guns and knives. © 2014 Watchlist/Ruth McDowall.





## case study

### A Teenager Recounts her Story of Abduction: <sup>121</sup>

One Friday in late December 2012 in Gwoza, Borno State, a 16-year-old girl was late for school. Soon after she arrived and greeted her friends, suspected members of JAS attacked the school and abducted her and five other girls before detonating a bomb on or near the campus. She explained, "I found myself in an Imam's house. I don't really remember how I got there ... The men said [to us], 'You are the real strong Christians. We want you to become Muslims. We will give you men to marry and if you refuse, we will kill you.' The five other girls accepted. I said, 'rather kill me.'" Nonetheless, JAS decided to prepare her and the other girls for marriage. Over a roughly one-month period, she cooked meals for the members and rehearsed prayers and verses with the girls. Just before her marriage, she seized an opportunity to escape when a core group of suspected members of JAS left the compound for an attack. The other girls have not been seen by the community since their abduction.

in February 2014 of an alleged abduction of 20 girls from a secondary school in Konduga.<sup>135</sup> Watchlist also interviewed a 16-year-old former abductee who described JAS capturing her and five other girls from her school in Gwoza in December 2012 (see case study above).<sup>136</sup>

Other abductions take place on local public transportation. A young woman who was 21 at the time of her abduction told Watchlist that she was abducted while riding public transport from her polytechnic in Maiduguri to her home in Gwoza on March 15, 2013.<sup>137</sup> Her bus was traveling in convoy with several other buses. The driver and passengers received information that JAS was coming and decided to take an alternate route to Gwoza. Unfortunately the drivers had been misled. The young woman explained,

**When** we were going we saw people in military uniform. They stopped us. But the insurgents were dressed like the military... They held many buses. They checked if you were Christian, in which case they would kill you. If you were Muslim you were allowed to pass. They identified... [Christians/Muslims] by their mode of dress. After searching and killing, and because it was getting dark, they assembled us to go to a camp. Many people were taken captive.

The young woman reported seeing many abducted girls at the JAS camp. She escaped 19 days later.

Similarly, another 19-year-old young woman told Watchlist that she was abducted while traveling to her home in Gwoza from Konduga Local Government College.<sup>138</sup> She was 18 years old at the time and had just completed her final exams. On May 10, 2013, she traveled home with six female classmates below the ages of 18. En route, four men holding guns stopped them. The men asked if there were Christians in the car. One of the Muslim girls provided a hijab for each of the other girls in the car who then pretended to be Muslim. The girls were held captive for three days before JAS commanders arrived and released them.

Women and girls have also been abducted during and after attacks on villages.<sup>139</sup> A young woman who was 19 at the time of her abduction explained to Watchlist,

**I ran to the hills.** I was short of food so I went to get corn... When people came, they came in a number and I ran and hid. When they started beating my grandmother, I surfaced from the hiding and I was caught. They started beating her and said we should go. I was the only person taken. I was caught with a gun.<sup>140</sup>

In June 2014, reports emerged of JAS invading and abducting scores of women and girls in villages in Borno State.<sup>141</sup> Sixty-three women and girls from one of these attacks successfully escaped in July 2014.<sup>142</sup>

## Conversion, Forced Marriage, and Rape and Other Sexual Violence in JAS Camps

Soon after Christian women and girls arrived in the camps, they were forced to convert and were told they would be married to members of the group.<sup>143</sup> A young woman who was 19 at the time of her abduction in Gwoza explained how she was forcibly converted: "They were pulling the noose around my neck and dragging around and said I should come back to Islam."<sup>144</sup> She eventually relented to save her life and the group set her dowry between N10,000 and N15,000 (approximately USD \$60 to \$90). The reports of forced conversion and marriage received by Watchlist are consistent with other reports appearing in the media.<sup>145</sup>

Four of the former abductees interviewed by Watchlist said they were raped during their abduction.<sup>146</sup> Similar reports have also been documented in the media and by human rights organizations.<sup>147</sup> The rape appears at times targeted and at other times opportunistic. A former abductee speaking to a local news organization explained that JAS leaders raped young virgins, while other members of the group took turns raping married and elderly women.<sup>148</sup> In two cases documented by Watchlist, members of JAS took advantage of an opportunity to rape the abductees when either the commanding officer was away or when the woman or girl was alone and vulnerable.<sup>149</sup> A young woman who was 18 years old at the time of the abduction explained,

**They** gave us an axe to dig a hole to ease ourselves. In the night I wanted to ease myself. I was trying to ease myself and as I was in the process [he approached] and I started screaming. He abused me. He slipped away. He tried to penetrate, but when people came, he didn't enter.<sup>150</sup>

## Escape, Reporting, and Rehabilitation

Women and girls sometimes escape from JAS camps but often lack sufficient support, counseling, and health services when they return home. Reports indicate that

these women and girls are rescued from JAS camps by the military and Civilian JTF, or through family members who pay ransom and negotiate their release.<sup>151</sup> Others, like the women and girls interviewed by Watchlist, escape or are released by the group.<sup>152</sup>

All of the women and girls interviewed by Watchlist returned to their families, but often had to leave home for fear of their safety. In one case, the parents had to leave because they were targeted by JAS following their daughter's escape.<sup>153</sup> Other reports suggest that families sometimes send their children to other cities to avoid the stigma of rape and pregnancy outside of marriage.<sup>154</sup>

Few of the women and girls interviewed by Watchlist officially reported the abduction because of either mistrust of the authorities, fear of retaliation by JAS, or a feeling that reporting was futile because authorities have limited capacity for individual assistance.<sup>155</sup> A mother of one of the abductees stated, "The issue of reporting is a waste of time... The cases are so rampant."<sup>156</sup>

In addition, none of the women and girls received support or counseling. Civilians, particularly in remote areas, have limited access to health and other services.<sup>157</sup> Many of the interviewees were traumatized by their experiences. One woman told Watchlist, "Immediately I left this place [the camp], it made me insane," while another said, "When I remember, I normally cry."<sup>158</sup>

While the government and other partners are providing some support to the families of the abducted Chibok girls, as well as the girls who escaped, it is unclear to what extent other survivors of abduction and sexual violence can access such services.<sup>159</sup>

## recommendations

### To the Nigerian Federal Government

1. Include, as an essential condition for dialogue, if any, and as a component for any reconciliation agreements, the cessation of abduction and all acts of rape and other forms of sexual violence, in particular against girls and women.

- 2. Take steps at the legal and policy level to protect women and girls by, for example, passing the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Bill and implementing Nigeria's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.
- 3. Conduct a national mapping on child protection systems to identify gaps in the provision and quality of investigative, medical, psychosocial, and judicial services.

### **To State Governments in Northern Nigeria and the Nigerian Federal Government**

- 1. Work with local authorities, civil society members, and members of at-risk communities to train and identify safe ways for survivors of abduction and sexual violence to access adequate medical, psychosocial, and legal services in their specific context, particularly in remote areas in the states of emergency.
- 2. Invest in data collection to understand the scale of sexual violence in conflict and, in particular, to capture the experience of boys and girls under 18, taking into account the best interests of the child and key principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and referral.

### **To JAS**

- 1. Cease abductions of both boys and girls. Release all abductees, including the girls taken from Chibok in Borno State, immediately and unconditionally.

### **To Child Protection and Other Protection Actors**

- 1. Promote the expansion and implementation of community-based, culturally appropriate programs to support the care, treatment, and outcomes of girls and women who are abducted and who may have experienced sexual violence, especially in remote areas in the states of emergency. Programs should include psychosocial support and counseling, including to families.

- 2. Support and strengthen efforts to document and collect data on sexual violence against children.
- 3. Take steps to help ensure that girls who have escaped from JAS camps and who wish to be protected from public exposure are provided privacy for their recovery and are not subject to re-traumatization.
- 4. Ensure coordinating mechanisms and strategies to support the families of the abducted Chibok girls, as well as the girls who escaped, also include strategies to prevent and support child survivors of grave violations and their families more broadly.

### **To the United Nations Secretary-General and his Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict**

- 1. Encourage further investigation of rape and other forms of sexual violence by JAS members (in particular forced marriage) and consider listing JAS for rape and other forms of sexual violence, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1882.

### **To the United Nations Security Council and its Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict**

- 1. Take steps to adopt a resolution that establishes abduction as a trigger violation for listing parties to conflict in the Secretary-General's Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict.

### **To Donors**

- 1. Where necessary, support child protection actors to expand the care, treatment, and outcomes of girls and women who are abducted and who may have experienced sexual violence.

# recruitment and use of children

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**recruitment:** refers to compulsory, forced or voluntary conscription or enlistment of children into any kind of armed force or armed group(s) under the age stipulated in the international treaties applicable to the armed force or armed group in question.

**use of children:** refers to the use of children by armed forces or armed groups in any capacity, including, but not limited to, children, boys and girls, used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies, and collaborators. It does not only refer to a child who is taking or has taken a direct part in hostilities.<sup>160</sup>



Children in northeastern Nigeria have been recruited on both sides of the conflict.

Those who evade recruitment by JAS are often approached to join

self-defense groups such as the Civilian JTF. One woman from Borno State explained, "If you are a part of the [civilian] JTF, they [JAS] will target you, and if you refuse, the [civilian] JTF will target you."<sup>161</sup> A May 2014 interagency assessment estimated roughly 1,861 boys and girls under the age of 18 as being directly or indirectly associated with armed forces or groups in the assessment areas in the states of emergency and neighboring states.<sup>162</sup>

Under the 2003 Child Rights Act, the Nigerian government prohibits the recruitment of children below the age of 18 into the Nigerian armed forces and has committed to ensuring that "no child is directly involved in any military operation or hostilities."<sup>163</sup> The Nigerian military has advised the Civilian JTF and other self-defense groups against the use of children in their ranks.<sup>164</sup> Still, both JAS and the Civilian JTF continue to use children in hostilities.<sup>165</sup>

One major challenge is the lack of a mechanism for the identification, transfer, and reintegration of alleged child combatants in Nigeria. Children who are suspected or found to be members of JAS are often detained by security forces and are sometimes held in unofficial military facilities known for their mistreatment of detainees.

## Recruitment and Use of Children by JAS

JAS recruits and uses children to carry out surveillance and participate in attacks. Nigerian security forces have caught children as young as 12 years old fighting alongside the group.<sup>166</sup> JAS uses a variety of tactics to draw children, both boys and girls, into their ranks.

Many children who are abducted during attacks carried out by JAS are forced to become members of the group.<sup>167</sup> A former abductee explained to Watchlist that JAS told captured boys and men that they would be killed if they did not join the group.<sup>168</sup> A 10-year-old boy who recently escaped from a JAS camp described his abduction, at age nine, to the international media.<sup>169</sup> A child of poor farmers and living under the care of an Islamic teacher in Borno State, the boy was captured, drugged, and trafficked into the hands of JAS members, where he carried out daily household chores for the group.

Accounts from interviewees and civil society also suggest that women and girls abducted by JAS are used for cooking and sometimes also forced to participate in attacks. One former abductee explained to Watchlist that while she never participated in combat, she was told to carry live ammunition and raid hospitals for drugs during attacks.<sup>170</sup> JAS also asked her to slaughter a man abducted by the group: "They killed four and asked me to slaughter the other. I refused." In mid-2014, a number of incidents occurred where female members of JAS carried out attacks, although it is unclear whether these girls and

**Photo:** Suspected members of Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, commonly known as Boko Haram, broke into the home of this 19-year-old young woman, shot her brother, and abducted her and her brother's wife in 2013. She was forced to convert to Islam and was sexually abused by one of her captors.

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women were abductees. One representative from civil society told Watchlist that during an attack by JAS fighters on July 10, 2014, in Marte Local Government Area, Borno State, eyewitnesses said girls from age 14 and other young women, armed with AK-47 rifles, were among the majority of the JAS fighters.<sup>171</sup> In July 2014, three bomb attacks in Kano were carried out by female bombers with possible links to JAS.<sup>172</sup> In addition, authorities reportedly arrested a 10-year-old girl who they suspected to be a member of JAS, carrying a suicide belt in July 2014.<sup>173</sup>

Watchlist also received reports of JAS pressuring boys to join their group by threatening their families. Watchlist spoke with an aunt whose 13-year-old nephew was approached by the group.<sup>174</sup> After the family moved him to another village for safety, JAS retaliated by abducting and killing two men in the family. The aunt further explained, "When my nephew heard what had happened he came back. Boko Haram had been checking around the house. He was coming from the market home when two boys asked him to stay. He knew them. They were the two people that killed him . . . I heard the gunfire."<sup>175</sup> Similarly, in a video shared by a human rights defender, a teenage boy described how JAS members entered his home, visibly showing their rifles, to "ask" his mother for permission for him to join their ranks.

In other cases, the group incentivizes children to join with cash.<sup>176</sup> JAS has reportedly paid children six dollars per day in exchange for their participation in attacks.<sup>177</sup> A teenager recruited by JAS and later arrested by the Nigerian military confessed to the media that he had been paid the equivalent in local currency of USD \$30 to burn down schools.<sup>178</sup>

Across the borders of northeastern Nigeria, JAS has also supposedly offered young men cash in exchange for their involvement in the group.<sup>179</sup> A BBC interview with a gang of young men in Niger uncovered that the gang was paid the equivalent of about USD \$3,000 to become informants and to carry out attacks.<sup>180</sup>

Other children may be recruited through Quranic schools in northeastern Nigeria where some students, known as "almajiris," are sent by their families to receive a free, religious-based education.<sup>181</sup> The majority of the children come from poor families and are often forced to beg for food and money to support themselves and their

classmates.<sup>182</sup> This poverty and the lack of opportunity, along with occasional encouragement of extreme religious teachings, may provide fertile ground for extremist groups to gather followers.<sup>183</sup> A recent article suggests that JAS' original founder, Mohamed Yusuf, preached to almajiris at a Quranic school.<sup>184</sup>

As a consequence of recruitment, children are increasingly involved in attacks by JAS.<sup>185</sup> The group has used children to burn down schools and churches, to transport weapons, and sometimes to carry out armed violence and killing and maiming.<sup>186</sup> Sixteen former residents of the states of emergency reported seeing children as young as 14 among JAS members during attacks.<sup>187</sup>

## Recruitment and Use of Children by Self Defense Militias and other Local Defense Initiatives

### The Rise of Self-Defense Militias and Local Defense Initiatives in Northeastern Nigeria

Self-defense forces have become widespread in northeastern Nigeria as civilians have taken up arms against JAS to defend their communities, filling a security void left by the government security forces.<sup>188</sup>

In 2013, the Civilian JTF was formed in Borno's State capital of Maiduguri to assist Nigerian security forces with the identification and arrest of suspected JAS members.<sup>189</sup> The group is generally made up of young men, adult males, and even young women, joined in their efforts to combat JAS' attacks in their towns and villages.<sup>190</sup> It formed as a direct response to growing attacks on the city and its surrounding areas.<sup>191</sup> It initially had no command structure but, as the months progressed, select individuals were made commanders and area coordinators.<sup>192</sup> It has no known code of conduct.<sup>193</sup> The group helps to man checkpoints, identify members of JAS, provide information to security services, and has participated in operations with security services on at least one occasion.<sup>194</sup> At the time of writing, its operations were primarily centered in Borno State and a few select areas of Yobe State.<sup>195</sup> The term Civilian JTF is now used quite loosely to describe a number of self-defense groups operating in the northeast, some of which have tenuous ties to the actual body of the Maiduguri-based Civilian JTF.



The Civilian JTF has received military and state support, as well as praise from President Jonathan. According to the International Crisis Group, the Joint Task Force— a group formed in 2011 comprising key Nigerian military and security forces— helped to “guide and monitor the activities of the Civilian JTF,” provided them with identity cards, and divided them into area-specific units.<sup>196</sup> They also supervised neighborhood sectors of Civilian JTF members, helped to pay for treatment when members of the Civilian JTF were injured during encounters with JAS, and provided financial assistance to the families of Civilian JTF members who died during hostilities.<sup>197</sup> Since the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division of the Army took over operations from the Joint Task Force in August 2013, the relationship between the security forces and the Civilian JTF is less clear.<sup>198</sup> News articles suggest the Civilian JTF has handed over suspected members of JAS to the 7<sup>th</sup> Division for further interrogation.<sup>199</sup>

The Borno State government has provided financial and material support to the Civilian JTF. Under the Borno Youth Empowerment Scheme (BOYES), the Borno State government aims to train at least 5,000 members of the Civilian JTF to assist in providing security by 2015 and, post-conflict, offer various professional trainings for those seeking employment.<sup>200</sup> The Borno State Governor has also reportedly paid some members of the Civilian JTF the equivalent of roughly USD \$100 per month. A former member of the Civilian JTF told Watchlist that the government (likely state authorities) promised to build him a house

in exchange for his service.<sup>201</sup> To facilitate Civilian JTF patrols and monitoring, a woman from Konduga village in Borno State, said the government (likely state authorities) provided the self-defense group with vehicles.<sup>202</sup> Moreover, President Goodluck Jonathan praised the vigilante youths fighting JAS as “new national heroes.”<sup>203</sup>

Since the abduction in Chibok, there has been a growing call from citizens to allow further involvement of volunteer forces to band together in self-defense units to fight JAS.<sup>204</sup> Members of these self-defense groups have petitioned the federal government requesting arms, claiming they can defeat JAS faster than the Nigerian military.<sup>205</sup>

### Forced Recruitment and Use by Self Defense Militias

The Civilian JTF, along with other self-defense groups, has experienced a heavy loss in membership, because JAS increasingly targets them in their attacks.<sup>207</sup> This loss may have increased the need for further recruitment of those who can fight. The Nigerian military has advised against the use of children in the Civilian JTF and several interviewees maintain the group does not recruit children.<sup>208</sup> However, 21 interviewees told Watchlist that they had seen children below the ages of 18 within the Civilian JTF ranks.<sup>209</sup> One former member of the Civilian JTF told Watchlist that the youngest recruit was 13 years old.<sup>210</sup>

The Civilian JTF employs a variety of tactics to recruit children.<sup>211</sup> In many cases, especially at the beginning of the group’s formation, new recruits joined the Civilian JTF to

## case study

### A Teenager Describes his Recruitment into the Civilian JTF.

A youth from Baga Borno State said that between the ages 17 and 18 he was forced to flee his village after an attack in late 2013. He described his experience of being recruited in the Civilian JTF: “When I returned, they [members of the Civilian JTF] suspected me of being part of Boko Haram ... Three of us were tied up. Someone came as a witness and said I was not part of Boko Haram. Then I was released. After they released me I went home. I went to the market and bought a machete and stick to be part of the [Civilian] JTF... If you refuse [to join], you are killed.”<sup>206</sup>

avenge the deaths of their families and friends at the hands of JAS, and to protect themselves and their villages.<sup>212</sup>

While the Civilian JTF has female members, it appears that teenage boys and young men are the specific targets for recruitment.<sup>213</sup> Residents of northeastern Nigeria seem to, at times, be supportive of the recruitment of teenagers, believing it to be a responsibility of these young men to defend their communities. A man from Konduga explained to Watchlist, “If you are a man you must join. At 13 and 14 you can join, you are a man.”<sup>214</sup>

Watchlist uncovered instances of forcible recruitment by the Civilian JTF. Villagers interviewed by Watchlist described a practice in which representatives from the Civilian JTF in Maiduguri or Baga in Borno State would visit neighboring towns and negotiate with the chief for new members.<sup>215</sup> According to a woman who lived near Lake Chad in Borno State, “The chief assembles all of the villagers and the Civilian JTF asks you to join them. They take all the boys that can fight ... Some people hide their children ... If you don’t give up your children, they will beat you.”<sup>216</sup> According to a former member of the Civilian JTF, the group “come(s) from Maiduguri and force(s) people to join. It is not voluntary ... No one can refuse.”<sup>217</sup> The same former member explained that recruitment is not based on age, but on whether or not a boy can fight—“We look at their [young men’s] structure and size. Not their age. That is how we decide who joins.”

Once recruited into the Civilian JTF, children can have a range of responsibilities including conducting armed patrols with knives, bows and arrows, and machetes, carrying out surveillance, gathering intelligence, manning checkpoints, and capturing people suspected to be members of JAS.<sup>218</sup> It is still unclear whether child members of the Civilian JTF participate in hostilities. Some interviewees stated that child recruits actively fight, while others claim only those above 18 receive training for combat.<sup>219</sup>

One troubling consequence of children’s participation in the Civilian JTF is that this often brings them directly in the line of fire. Interviewees and other external reports describe JAS deliberately targeting members of the Civilian JTF, potentially increasing the number of children who are killed by JAS.<sup>220</sup>

## recommendations

### To the Nigerian Federal Government

1. Enforce the 2003 Child Rights Act, which ensures children are protected from involvement in a military operation or hostilities, by publicly denouncing the recruitment and use of children and increasing programs that encourage economic empowerment opportunities among disaffected Nigerian youth and children.
2. Include as an essential condition for dialogue and as a component for any reconciliation agreements, the full demobilization of all children under age 18 within the ranks of all armed groups.

### To State Governments in Northern Nigeria

1. Adopt the 2003 Child Rights Act and, per provision 34(2), ensure children do not participate in military operations or hostilities by publicly denouncing the recruitment and use of children and ceasing payments and assistance to civilian self-defense militias if evidence emerges of recruitment of children below the age of 18.

### To the Nigerian Armed Forces

1. Publicly denounce the recruitment of children by civilian self-defense militias, end informal support to any groups which are found to have recruited children, and ensure that no children below the age of 18 participate in military training programs for the Civilian JTF.

### To Child Protection and Other Protection Actors

1. Work with communities to develop information, education, and communication (IEC) interventions to prevent the recruitment of children into armed groups.



### To JAS

1. Comply with national and international law which prohibits the recruitment of children under the age of 18; and immediately release all children who have been recruited into the group's ranks.

### To the Civilian JTF

1. Comply with legal national and international standards prohibiting the recruitment of children under the age of 18.

### To the United Nations Secretary-General and his Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict

1. In the 14<sup>th</sup> Secretary-General's Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict, to be published in 2015, list JAS for the recruitment and use of children, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1612.
2. List the Civilian JTF and possibly other self-defense militias for the recruitment and use of children, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1612. Encourage investigation into other grave violations by civilian groups.

## Detention of Children Suspected or Found to be Members of JAS

Security forces often detain children who are suspected or found to be members of JAS. These arrests sometimes take place during raids on JAS camps, but may also occur arbitrarily, during mass arrests of civilians based on seemingly weak intelligence. Children affiliated with the conflict are often held incommunicado, in military detention facilities known for their mistreatment of detainees.

Children who are recruited into armed groups should be treated as victims, because of their age and the forced nature of their association.<sup>221</sup> The Nigerian government, in partnership with other stakeholders, should take steps to develop standard operating procedures for the treatment and transfer of children found within JAS' ranks to civilian actors.

## Arbitrary Arrests of Suspected JAS Members

Evidence gathered by Watchlist and other human rights groups indicates that both Nigerian security forces and self-defense militias are arbitrarily detaining civilians, including children, who they claim or suspect to be members of JAS.

Under international law, government armed forces and non-state armed groups may not arbitrarily deprive an individual of his or her liberty.<sup>222</sup> The Human Rights Committee clarified that the term "arbitrary" must be interpreted broadly to include elements of inappropriateness, injustice, and lack of predictability.<sup>223</sup> Mass arrests and prolonged detention without trial are frequently considered arbitrary under international standards.<sup>224</sup> Enforced disappearance and secret detention are always considered arbitrary.<sup>225</sup> The prohibition on arbitrary detention must be respected at all times, even during a state of emergency.<sup>226</sup>

The President's emergency powers allow him to make orders for the detention of any person within the emergency area or elsewhere.<sup>227</sup> During large sweeps, security forces arrest people en masse, often with little evidence, and take them to military detention facilities.<sup>228</sup> Five interviewees described members of the Civilian JTF coming to arrest groups of villagers under suspicion of being members of JAS.<sup>229</sup> One former Borno State resident explained, "The military came after [the] ... attack and started arresting men. As soon as insurgents attack an area, the military will come and start arresting men. They arrest old, middle, and even young ones but only men ... Once you hear a gunshot you run because if military comes they will arrest every person."<sup>230</sup> A May 2014 interagency assessment conducted in Yobe State suggested that between 80 and 85 percent of youth aged 16 to 35 years are harassed by security forces because of suspicions that they might be members of JAS.<sup>231</sup>

Some children are targeted because security forces believe they work as spies for JAS. A military officer interviewed by Watchlist claimed that children were used as informants in areas where the government deployed the military.<sup>232</sup> A soldier, quoted in *The Guardian*, reiterated this perception by saying that JAS pays the children who hawk food near checkpoints to spy on them.<sup>233</sup>

The basis for some of these arrests seems weak. The Nigerian security forces rely heavily on intelligence from

the Civilian JTF— locals who they perceive to have knowledge about sympathizers and members of JAS in their communities. A Nigerian military officer explained they relied on the Civilian JTF because, “they were previously living with members of JAS.”<sup>234</sup> A former member of the Civilian JTF claimed he could identify and arrest members of JAS, because many months before, JAS wandered through his village in Konduga Local Government in Borno State with their rifles.<sup>235</sup> The Civilian JTF’s authority to label and detain supposed members of JAS raises concerns about the potential abuse of this power, in particular because of reports that members of JAS may have infiltrated the Civilian JTF.<sup>236</sup>

There have also been reports of forced disappearances, where family members have not been able to locate relatives in custody.<sup>237</sup> Families protested these arrests and disappearances in November 2013, demanding the release of their relatives. A distraught mother in the search for her son told a news reporter, “I have written several letters to the then JTF and even the present 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division [which currently serves as the umbrella command for northeastern security operations] in September and October but they never listened to me or respond to me. The last time I was there the commander chased me away that they don’t want to see anyone again. I became afraid and could not go back there again. If they are dead let them tell me so that I can mourn them in peace.”<sup>238</sup>

### Deplorable Conditions for Detainees in Unofficial Military Facilities

Nigerian security forces, sometimes in cooperation with the Civilian JTF, detain children in military detention facilities known for their mistreatment of detainees.

Security forces detain suspected and current members of JAS in unofficial military detention facilities, including in Giwa barracks in Maiduguri in Borno State and in Sector Alpha (a.k.a. “Guantanamo”) in Damaturu in Yobe State, as well as in other facilities throughout the country including the Special Anti-Robbery Squad detention center (a.k.a. “the abattoir”) in Abuja.<sup>239</sup> Watchlist and other human rights defenders have documented the presence of children in these facilities as recently as March 2014.<sup>240</sup> The President’s release of a number of women and children in military custody in May 2013, as part of an amnesty agreement with JAS, raises further questions about a military policy and practice of detaining children affiliated with the conflict.<sup>241</sup>

Human rights and news reports suggest conditions in unofficial military detention facilities are deplorable. Civilians who are detained are sometimes held incommunicado, without charge, trial, or access to their families and lawyers for long periods of time.<sup>242</sup> The military detention sites are known for mistreatment by the security force, with reports indicating the deaths of hundreds of detainees in detention facilities.<sup>243</sup> Between January and March 2014, the military reportedly brought about 150 dead bodies to the State Specialist hospital mortuary in Borno State.<sup>244</sup> Even the Governor of Borno State acknowledged to *The New York Times*, “A lot of lives are lost on a daily basis due to the inhumane conditions [at Giwa military barracks].”<sup>245</sup>

A former child detainee described the conditions in Sector Alpha in Damaturu in Yobe State to Amnesty International.<sup>246</sup> In March 2013, he was one of 50 people, the majority of whom were aged between 13 and 19, who were arrested on suspicion of being a member of JAS. While in custody, he described being beaten with gun butts, batons, and machetes, having melted plastic and cold water poured on him, and being made to walk and roll over broken bottles. Authorities also forced him to watch the extrajudicial executions of other detainees.

### Standard Operating Procedures for the Identification Treatment, Transfer, and Reintegration of Children Affiliated with Conflict

Children who are either suspected or found to be affiliated with armed groups should be treated as victims and, instead of being detained, transferred to civilian actors.

The Nigerian government has signed and ratified the Optional protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, which requires state parties to take all feasible measures to ensure that persons under 18 who are recruited or used in hostilities are demobilized and receive all appropriate assistance for their physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration.<sup>247</sup> It is imperative that the government develop clear rules of engagement (RoEs) and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for interactions with children associated with armed groups. While some limited steps have been initiated by civilian actors to train the military on child protection, at the time of writing, no SOPs existed for children encountered in armed groups.

Despite the President's release of a number of women and children in military custody as part of an amnesty agreement in May 2013, no other formal steps have been taken to address protection concerns for children suspected or found to be affiliated with armed groups.<sup>248</sup> Information revealing the presence of children within JAS' ranks should have triggered:

1. Consistent calls from the UN and NGOs to armed groups and the government for the children to be immediately released.
2. The establishment and signing of protocols between the government, security sector actors, and civilian humanitarian actors preparing for the handling and transfer of children from security actors to civilian ones.
3. The clarification and strengthening of legal provisions governing the accountability of children for their actions and the dissemination of these directives to security forces, the judiciary, and first-contact government responders.
4. The development of a process for verifying the age of captured combatants.

The first step towards developing a policy to manage children affiliated with armed groups is for the government to update the Military Code of Conduct, which, in contradiction to the federal 2003 Child Rights Act, treats children from the age of 16, instead of from the age of 18, as adults.<sup>249</sup>

Next, the Nigerian government should draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining SOPs for the treatment and transfer of children suspected or found to be affiliated with armed groups to civilian actors. Once signed by relevant stakeholders such as child protection actors and the military, the MOU will require comprehensive distribution, extensive training on its provisions, and follow up to ensure that it is well understood and enforced.

Once children are transferred to civilian actors they should be released and reintegrated into the community. Reintegration programs help to promote reconciliation and provide children with a viable alternative to involvement in armed groups through family reunification, education and training, economic and livelihood support, and, at times, psychosocial support.<sup>250</sup>

While children who have been demobilized and reintegrated are still liable for prosecution, Watchlist and other

child protection actors encourage the government to explore alternative forms of accountability. According to the Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict, "prosecution of a child should always be regarded as a measure of last resort and the purpose of any sentence should be to rehabilitate and reintegrate the child into society."<sup>251</sup> In addition, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict maintains that children should not be prosecuted for association with an armed group.<sup>252</sup>

Alternative approaches to accountability can take many different forms. They can occur within the context of a reintegration program, either through traditional healing, or reparations through voluntary work.<sup>253</sup> Other examples include truth and reconciliation commissions, or local traditional justice practices.



## recommendations

### To the Nigerian Federal Government:

1. Issue a directive mandating the release of all children being held under suspicion of involvement with JAS into the custody and care of child protection actors.
2. In anticipation of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM), establish an MOU outlining RoEs and SOPs for the treatment, transfer, and reintegration of children suspected or found to be affiliated with armed groups to the care of child protection agencies to support their return and reintegration back into their communities. Take steps to disseminate the MOU to all actors concerned, including the Nigerian Armed Forces, all security sector actors, the judiciary, the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, and other associate ministries, including health and education. Comprehensively monitor its enforcement.
3. Collaborate with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other child protection actors to develop and enact comprehensive child protection training on the needs of children in emergencies and in situations of





conflict, and provide this training to all members of the Nigerian Armed Forces, as well as to all relevant civil services members.

4. Allow human rights and humanitarian actors such as the NHRC access to monitor detention facilities, including unofficial military detention sites.
5. Develop legislation that places an obligation on administrative bodies to collect and report disaggregated data on children in detention.
6. Ensure that children are not prosecuted for association with an armed group or acts that are permitted under international humanitarian law. Explore alternative measures for accountability, which are in the best interest of the children and promote rehabilitation into society.
7. Endorse the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups.

### **To the State Governments in Northern Nigeria**

1. Adopt the 2003 Child Rights Act and take steps to ensure state legislation for juvenile justice administration.

### **To the Nigerian Armed Forces**

1. Update the Code of Conduct for the Nigerian Armed Forces to ensure children below the age of 18 are treated as children, and in accordance with the policies and procedures outlined in the 2003 Child Rights Act.
2. Release all children held in detention to civilian actors and ensure justice for children is pursued through the juvenile justice system or through other methods.
3. Conduct necessary trainings for military actors on child protection engagement.

### **To Child Protection and Other Protection Actors**

1. Develop programs for the identification, release, and reintegration of children

suspected or found to be affiliated with armed groups both during conflict and as part of the peace process. Focus on the specific needs of boys and girls.

2. Communicate clearly to children, their families, and communities, the purpose and objectives of reintegration assistance offered. Conduct awareness-raising to battle stigmatization.
3. Lobby for access on a regular basis to monitor treatment and conditions of detention for children.
4. Raise awareness of the legal safeguards to be provided to children.
5. Work with local lawyers to ensure legal representation for children held in detention.
6. Advocate for the Ministry of Justice to explore alternative accountability mechanisms, such as local traditional justice practices, in lieu of formal prosecution.

### **To the Resident Coordinator, UNICEF Representative, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG-CAAC), and the United Nations Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (SCWG-CAAC)**

1. Call for the Ministers of Defense, Justice, and Women Affairs and Social Development to sign, with all immediacy, the MOU, and support and advocate for all necessary dissemination efforts and follow-up to ensure its enforcement.
2. Request the immediate transfer of all children who are suspected or found to be affiliated with JAS and, who are currently in detention, to civilian actors.

### **To Donors**

1. Provide flexible and sustainable support and funding for programs on the identification, release, and reintegration of children suspected or found to be affiliated with armed groups.





ORIGINAL  
PARBOILED RICE  
LONG GRAIN  
50 KGS  
LONG GRAIN  
PRODUCT OF THAILAND  
PRODUCTION DATE: JUNE 2013  
EXPIRY DATE: JUNE 2015



# part II: protecting children from grave violations



# the domestic child protection framework

36



## Legal Frameworks for the Protection of Children in Conflict in Nigeria

The Nigerian Federal Government has ratified a number of key treaties as well as adopted national legislation to protect children. The government passed the 2003 Child Rights Act to implement the principles enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and in the African Union Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. While this is a substantial step in advancing children's rights in Nigeria, the Act is only effective at the state level if enacted by state assemblies. At the time of writing, 12 states had yet to adopt the 2003 Child Rights Act, including the three states of emergency—Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa. This limits certain key protections, particularly relating to juvenile justice and child marriage in areas where grave violations are committed.

The Nigerian government has taken critical legislative steps to limit children's participation in armed conflict. It has signed and ratified the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, which prohibits the use of children under the age of 18 by

non-state armed groups and the compulsory recruitment of children under 18 by national armed forces.<sup>254</sup> The Optional Protocol also requires state parties to take all feasible measures to ensure that children under 18 who are recruited or used in hostilities are demobilized and receive all appropriate assistance for their physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration.<sup>255</sup> Upon ratifying, Nigeria deposited a binding declaration setting 18 as the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the National Armed Forces. The declaration also states that under Part III, Section 34 (2) of the Child's Rights Act, the Nigerian government or any other relevant agency or body shall ensure that no child is directly involved in any military operation or hostilities.<sup>256</sup> The government has also ratified the legally binding African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention), which among other factors, prohibits members of armed groups from abduction, the recruitment of children, and in engaging in sexual slavery and trafficking.<sup>257</sup>

The government is also party to a number of key humanitarian law conventions, which govern during a period of non-international armed conflict, and international criminal law treaties. It has ratified the Geneva Conventions as well as its Additional Protocols I and II, which prohibit rape and sexual violence during conflict. It is also party to the Rome Statute, which considers recruitment and use of children under age 15 a war crime.<sup>258</sup> The ICC conducted a preliminary examination on the situation in Nigeria, which it publicized on November 18, 2010; the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) determined that there was a reasonable basis to believe that JAS had committed crimes against humanity.<sup>259</sup> In 2013, the OTP advanced the preliminary examination to phase three, admissibility, to assess whether Nigerian authorities were conducting genuine proceedings in relation to the crimes committed by JAS.<sup>260</sup>

In addition to specific legislative protections that prevent and address grave violations, the Nigerian Federal Government has a number of social economic rights obligations. Under domestic law, this includes providing

equal and adequate educational opportunities and endeavoring to provide children with the best attainable standard of health, including through adequate medical and health facilities.<sup>261</sup> It has also committed to protecting the rights of internally displaced people, including unaccompanied children.<sup>262</sup>

## The Child Protection System in Nigeria

The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development is the lead governmental agency for child protection, with both Federal headquarters and state-level offices providing direct social services, including one social worker per LGA. The Federal Ministry of Health and the Federal Ministry of Education support this work. Other relevant institutions include the NHRC, which promotes human rights legislation and policy implementation, as well as the Child Justice and Administration and Family Court Division, which manage legal cases involving children.

In 2010, UNICEF established state-level child protection networks (CPNs) across the country. These networks conduct community-based monitoring, documenting, and referral services to promote and protect the rights of children. At the time of writing, CPNs existed in all but two states: Kebbi and Zamfara. Membership in the CPN varies across the states, but typically includes the State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, the police, the Nigerian Red



Cross, NGOs, faith-based groups, and legal practitioners. In some areas, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) are also members. In 2013, the most common cases managed by the CPNs were children who were separated from their families, child rape and sexual abuse, and children in conflict with the law.<sup>263</sup>

While the CPN is a positive step towards strengthening the child protection framework in Nigeria, several networks, particularly in the states of emergency, require additional support and capacity-building. Many of the networks also only exist at the state level and need to decentralize and establish themselves at the community level.

## Post-Chibok Initiatives on Child Protection

The mass abduction of over 200 girls in Chibok, Borno State, has galvanized action on child protection in the northeast. However, a number of the new initiatives focus narrowly on assistance for the abducted girls and less on systemic issues and broader rights abuses against conflict-affected children in the region.

The Chibok attack prompted widespread domestic and international condemnation. French President Francois Hollande convened a meeting of the presidents of Nigeria and neighboring countries, as well as high-level officials from the United Kingdom, European Union, and the United States, to discuss security in Nigeria. At the meeting,

**Photo:** A woman grieves the death of a scout on security at his church in Nigeria, where a suicide bomber detonated a bomb outside the church. Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, commonly known as Boko Haram, claimed responsibility for the attack.

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the EU pledged support for strengthening socio-development programs, including on women and girls' educational rights, and support for survivors of sexual violence.<sup>264</sup> In a follow-up meeting in London, the United Kingdom, France, and the United States also pledged their support for girls' education.<sup>265</sup>

Within Nigeria, government and civil society actors committed support to the abducted girls as well as other victims more broadly. A number of coalitions and initiatives emerged with the goal of assisting efforts to find and support the abducted girls. Several of these initiatives are now coordinated under the Chibok Task Force. The Borno State government, in collaboration with NEMA, is leading the response to support the girls, their families, and their communities.<sup>266</sup> The Borno State government has allocated USD \$150 million to fund a rehabilitation program for the girls who were able to escape.<sup>267</sup> NEMA has coordinated stakeholders to produce a holistic, multi-sector response plan to reintegrate the girls and support their communities.<sup>268</sup> In July 2014, the Nigerian government concluded plans for a Victims Support Fund to assist victims of terrorism.<sup>269</sup>

As part of its response to the abduction, the UN announced an integrated support package for the Nigerian government, which includes support to the affected girls and families, the provision of psychosocial support, response to emergency needs in food and non-food items, and early recovery support, including the promotion of alternative livelihood activities.<sup>270</sup>

Broader responses to the attack have primarily been in the area of education and capacity-building for civil society. In particular in May 2014, the Nigerian government, in partnership with Gordon Brown, the United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education, and other actors, launched the Safe Schools Initiative, which has raised over USD \$21 million out of a target USD \$100 million, to promote school safety in Nigeria.<sup>271</sup>



## recommendations

### To State Governments in Northern Nigeria

1. Adopt and implement the 2003 Child Rights Act.
2. Conduct a mapping on child protection systems in the state to identify gaps in the provision and quality of services.

### To Child Protection and Other Protection Actors

1. Support the establishment of CPNs in the outstanding two states, and help to build the capacity of the new CPN in Yobe State.
2. Support training of CPNs in key areas on child protection in conflict-related emergencies, as well as trainings on grave violations and help to strengthen their capacity. Take steps to decentralize CPNs from the state to the community level.
3. Encourage and invite emergency responders like the NEMA and the SEMA to join CPNs.

### To Donors

1. Provide flexible and sustainable funding and support to strengthen local NGO and CPN capacity in the states of emergency.
2. Ensure program funding currently targeted at supporting the families of the abducted Chibok girls, as well as the girls who escaped, is strengthened and expanded to support other child survivors of grave violations.

# scaling up the child protection response

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## Strengthening Humanitarian and Child Protection Capacity

The overall humanitarian response has been slow, fragmented, and unable to meet the fast-growing needs of people affected by the conflict. Limited reliable humanitarian data exists and only a handful of international organizations work directly in the states of emergency because of security concerns. Local NGOs and national agencies lead the emergency response, but vary in their capacity. Many actors lack the expertise necessary to develop an effective child protection in emergencies response. While the Protection Sector Working Group (PSWG), in conjunction with the Child Protection Working Group (CPWG), should lead the protection response, they have yet to develop the monitoring systems necessary to inform programming. Some of their key activities were not implemented due to insufficient funding.

### Humanitarian Presence and Support for Local NGOs in Key Geographic Areas

Key actors with child protection in emergencies expertise are notably absent from the northeast. Many international humanitarian agencies are reluctant to intervene because of the insecurity. States like Borno are difficult to access without driving on dangerous, open roads. There are currently limited openings for humanitarian agencies to negotiate access with security forces and non-state actors.<sup>272</sup>

Local NGOs and national emergency responders lead efforts to assist survivors of attacks, but the capacity of these actors varies across the states.<sup>273</sup> In Borno State, politicians are sometimes involved in the distribution of food and non-food items to individuals affected by the conflict.<sup>274</sup> Many NGOs operate informally and without strong donor support. Most of the actors in states like Borno are concentrated in the state capital, which people perceive to be safer. While there are no reports of JAS targeting NGOs and humanitarian agencies in the states of emergency, at least one organization has been caught in crossfire.<sup>275</sup>

As a result of the limited humanitarian presence, many interviewees painted a dismal picture of basic services available to civilians and children affected by the conflict, particularly in remote areas.<sup>276</sup> NEMA reports that meal consumption has dropped to one meal per day in most communities and that only 1,000 out of 2,500 boreholes are still functional.<sup>277</sup> Other studies show that since February 2012, acute malnutrition rates in Borno and Yobe states, for children under five, have been above the global cutoff of 10 percent during an emergency.<sup>278</sup> In addition, NEMA estimates that only 37 percent of health facilities in the states of emergency are still functional, and those in operation often lack staff, supplies, and infrastructure.<sup>279</sup> In the areas most affected by the conflict, no facilities are thought to be open at all.<sup>280</sup> Watchlist interviewed a 14-year-old burn survivor, from an attack in Borno State, who waited almost two months before receiving treatment from a mobile support across the border.<sup>281</sup> She explained, "Everyone was scared. All hospitals were closed, so they didn't take me to the hospital ... I spent two months before going to the hospital."

An additional concern is the lack of support for people fleeing the conflict into perceived safer areas in emergency and neighboring states. Nigeria has the largest number of IDPs in sub-Saharan Africa and the third-largest number of IDPs, related to conflict and violence, in the world, but many remain invisible to authorities and humanitarian actors.<sup>282</sup> This is because host communities often absorb IDPs, thus masking the urgency and scale of the humanitarian crisis.<sup>283</sup> IDPs temporarily resettle within the states of emergency, as well as in neighboring states.<sup>284</sup> Borno State is the state most

affected by the conflict, with approximately 258,000 IDPs, about 100,000 of whom are displaced within Maiduguri, Borno's capital.<sup>285</sup> Authorities in neighboring states have adopted a passive registration policy, only identifying IDPs who proactively register themselves, who local authorities identify, or who emergency responders encounter during spot assessments. According to a May 2014 interagency assessment, there are close to 650,000 IDPs in the states of emergency and in the surrounding states of Bauchi, Gombe, and Taraba, with the majority living in host communities.<sup>286</sup> The majority of IDPs are women and children, and many are food insecure.<sup>287</sup> Authorities have been reluctant to develop formal IDP camps, because they deem them too risky.<sup>288</sup> Many host communities are often vulnerable themselves, with limited resources to support the influx of people from the states of emergency.<sup>289</sup> The insecurity and lack of livelihood opportunities in the region are reducing the possibility of IDPs returning home. The Internal Displacement and Monitoring Centre (IDMC) says that many IDPs aspire to integrate into their places of refuge.<sup>290</sup>

The role of humanitarian actors has at times been questioned because of the lack of clarity on the nature of the conflict. The intensity of the violence in recent months has led some key domestic and international bodies to declare a non-international armed conflict in the northeast.<sup>291</sup> An acknowledgment of armed conflict by humanitarian actors, whether tacit or official, may help to ensure appropriate measures are taken to address the crisis in the northeast.

Following the Chibok attack, the United Nations has taken some steps towards strengthening its system-wide engagement in Nigeria. The openness of the government to receiving external support has provided a key window of opportunity for greater international engagement. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is currently revising its country strategy and related presence in Nigeria to better address the growing in-country demand for its support. These efforts to strengthen international interventions should be accompanied by investments in local capacity-building for NGOs and national actors on the ground.

In addition, important steps are being taken to decentralize humanitarian coordination. In May 2014 the Inter-Agency Emergency Preparedness and Response

Group (IA-EPRWG) agreed to establish a sub-national multi-sectoral coordination platform in Bauchi. Stakeholders are also in the process of rolling out sub-national humanitarian coordination mechanisms, which will serve as platforms for response coordination, preparedness, and reporting in specific areas.<sup>292</sup>

## recommendations

### To the Nigerian Federal Government

1. Encourage and support the participation of international humanitarian actors in the response to the conflict in the northeast.
2. Take steps to support safe, independent access for humanitarian groups to the emergency states by facilitating dialogue between UN and NGO actors and security forces.
3. Adopt and implement the draft IDP National Policy.
4. Establish a standardized system for actively registering IDPs through the National Commission for Refugees and NEMA. Use this data to keep up-to-date records on the location, scale, and needs of IDPs.
5. Secure and reopen the airport in Maiduguri to commercial flights, to encourage engagement and field visits from actors outside the states of emergency.
6. Expand and support the capacity of NEMA, particularly in the northeast.

### To State Governments in Northern Nigeria

1. Actively monitor the number and specific location of IDPs internally and from outside of the state.
2. Design programs to support IDPs and host communities.
3. Provide material and technical resources to strengthen data collection, information management, and emergency response by SEMA.

### To Child Protection and Other Protection Actors

1. Invest in child protection training and capacity-building for local NGOs, community-based organizations, and national actors responding to emergencies on the ground.
2. Encourage relief agencies to establish programs in Nigeria, particularly in the area of child protection.
3. Develop measures that support both IDPs and their host communities, such as infrastructure developments and livelihood opportunities.

### To JAS

1. Allow international and domestic humanitarian and aid agencies access to key areas to provide assistance to civilians affected by the conflict.

### To the United Nations Humanitarian Country Team, and the Inter-Agency Emergency Preparedness and Response Working Group

1. Strengthen humanitarian coordination and presence by establishing a full-fledged office in Abuja and designating a humanitarian coordinator.
2. Conduct a mapping of local NGOs operating in the states of emergency, including information on their areas of specialization, and their locations.
2. Consider deploying staff to assist humanitarian NGOs in negotiating access to certain areas within the states of emergency.
3. Support initiatives to establish a standardized system for actively registering and profiling IDPs, through providing resources and technical support.

## Child Protection in Emergencies Expertise

Many humanitarian agencies, NGOs, and national institutions are grappling with the transition from a development to emergencies context in Nigeria. The lack of expertise and knowledge, particularly around child protection in conflict-related emergencies, has contributed to a slow-evolving response.

In anticipation of elections next year, where some actors believe violence in the northeast may increase, the United Nations and other humanitarian actors should take steps to improve training and staffing on child protection in conflict-related emergencies. This could begin with temporary seconded or surge capacity staff, but should ultimately involve hiring long-term staff with requisite expertise.

International actors should also work to strengthen national and local expertise on child protection in conflict-related emergencies. This includes through trainings with child protection networks and local emergency teams. One emergency coordinator explained that rather than funding, their team could benefit from experts who are embedded in their office.<sup>293</sup> He explained, "We need more than tools, we need personnel with knowledge."<sup>294</sup>



## recommendations

### To Child Protection and Other Protection Actors

1. Deploy and/or recruit experts in child protection in conflict-related emergencies and invest in growing long-term emergency teams.
2. Conduct trainings with relevant local, government, and emergency actors on child protection in conflict-related emergencies. These trainings should be complemented by general awareness-raising on grave violations and the monitoring and reporting mechanism.
3. Embed experts with child protection, protection, and data collection expertise in key national and emergency institutions including NEMA, SEMA, and select working groups to share knowledge and ideas and to help guide response programming.



## Strengthening the Protection Sector Working Group and Reviving the Child Protection Working Group

While the PSWG has initiated critical discussion and training on protection, at the time of writing, it had not yet taken important steps towards establishing its own protection monitoring system. As a result, limited information exists on conflict-related protection issues, including grave violations. Moreover, few mechanisms exist to allow survivors to hold perpetrators accountable.

The United Nations Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) was initiated in the aftermath of the floods in September 2012. Soon after, the Government of Nigeria helped to establish several sector working groups, including the PSWG, which formalized its existence in February 2013. The goals of the PSWG include broadening a common understanding of the scope of protection issues, determining priority interventions, improving protection monitoring, and supporting the domestication of the IDP

National Policy and compliance with the Kampala Convention.<sup>295</sup> Under the 2014-2016 Strategic Response Plan, which outlines a coordinated response by government and humanitarian actors to conflict and natural disaster in northern Nigeria, the PSWG has committed to mapping and analyzing risk and vulnerability as well as to monitoring human and child rights, in conjunction with other stakeholders.<sup>296</sup> The group is chaired by the NHRC

and co-led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It has two sub-groups— the data collection subgroup and the CPWG.

While the PSWG's formation is an important step towards monitoring abuses in the northeast, its response is lagging. Although attacks surged in the northeast at the beginning of 2014, occurring almost daily, the group's first meeting for the year only took place at the end of March.

Its main achievements to date have been training 23 trainers from northern Nigerian states on humanitarian protection and a further 23 people on the protection of IDPs.<sup>297</sup> The group attributed the slow implementation of its strategy to lack of sufficient funds, which it sources from its members.<sup>298</sup> At the time of writing, no funds had been committed to protection-related activities under the Strategic Response Plan.<sup>299</sup> The PSWG could benefit from inviting its donors to PSWG meetings, to ensure they have a strong understanding of key protection needs and resource demands.

Until recently, the group was reluctant to engage in monitoring activities, with some members commenting on the need to keep a low profile because of the sensitivity of the conflict issues. Although humanitarian actors have carried out multiple joint assessments, only the last assessment contained specific protection questions, including some questions related to grave violations. Previously, protection was integrated into other sector areas. To date, limited information has been collected on protection, hindering the capacity to design effective programmatic responses.

In 2014, the group has taken some steps towards gathering more information on protection needs. The group's priority is the development of standardized tools for data collection. The PSWG receives support from the IDMC and the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPs) to strengthen its data collection work. In addition, the group hopes to benefit from the training of a number of members of the NHRC, which was designed to strengthen their capacity to monitor and investigate cases in the northeast, as well as a program run by the NHRC and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to deploy 30 human





rights monitors for a six-month period across the states of emergency. The NHRC will help to consolidate the monitors' findings in a report. While this is a critical step towards gathering much-needed information on protection challenges, some actors raised concerns about the quality, safety, and geographic spread of the monitors. Moreover, very few of the monitors are women, potentially limiting access to key vulnerable groups. The PSWG has not sought to establish its own independent monitoring system at the national level or in key states, although it could potentially promote local coordination on protection-related activities through the new, subnational humanitarian coordination mechanism.

Some members also critiqued the capacity of the PSWG to work in a conflict context and called for participation from more organizations with expertise. The PSWG should look to engage other groups working on conflict-related issues in the northeast to help to address some of these shortcomings. One such initiative is the Peace and Security Working Group, which operates outside of the sector system and brings together peace experts and practitioners to develop local capacity for addressing conflict. At the time of writing, it was in the process of establishing a northeast subgroup. The PSWG could also engage organizations working on IDP issues, such as the International Organization on Migration as well as other relevant working groups on, for example, education and health, to ensure appropriate multi-sectoral coordination on protection. Fostering these broad relationships could yield beneficial results.

The CPWG is a sub-group of the PSWG led by UNICEF. While the group was fairly active in responding to the 2012 flooding, it has since been dormant. Interviewees attributed this to a lack of interest and engagement from key actors. As a result, there is no dedicated forum for coordinating and mainstreaming child protection responses. This group, though distinct and independent from a formal CTFMR, plays an important role in supporting the MRM, by sharing information and helping to respond to violations. Now is an opportune time to revive the group and capitalize on the renewed interest in child protection.

## recommendations

### To Child Protection and Other Protection Actors

1. The PSWG should establish an independent system for protection monitoring, which includes a tracking system for civilian and child fatalities.
2. Advocate for the deployment of a relevant expert to assist in reviving the CPWG, which provides a forum for information-sharing and coordination on child protection.
3. Develop and conduct periodic protection-specific assessments in the states of emergency, including through the new, subnational humanitarian coordination mechanism.

### To Donors

1. Participate in PSWG meetings to improve general awareness and understanding of relevant protection issues.
2. Provide financial and other material support for PSWG and CPWG activities, including through the Strategic Response Plan. Prioritize funding for the establishment of a monitoring system to better understand protection needs and to help develop more effective responses. Ensure any new program funding is based on mapping and assessment of existing work and requires implementing partners to coordinate with those already working in the northeast, so as to minimize duplication and maximize synergy.

# protecting and promoting education in the northeast

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Targeted attacks on schools by JAS have continued for almost two years, with the government and humanitarian agencies taking limited effective steps to support school safety and security.

The falling rates of enrollment, mass school closures, and the devastating abduction of over 200 girls from a school in Chibok have finally prompted national and international action on school safety. The discussion below outlines key areas for consideration as authorities, NGOs, and humanitarian partners devise strategies to respond to school attacks.

## Response to School Attacks

Until recently, local and federal government authorities drove the response to school attacks with limited involvement from outside actors. The measures taken were often ad-hoc and insufficient to ensure the safety and security of students and teachers.

The first publicly reported response to school attacks was the temporary closure of state secondary schools in Yobe State in mid-2013.<sup>300</sup> However, soon after schools reopened in September 2013, suspected members of JAS attacked an agricultural college in Gujba in Yobe State, killing approximately 40 students.<sup>301</sup> The state government responded by directing security surveillance in all schools.<sup>302</sup> Other states, like Borno State, ordered 30 buses with armed escorts to transport day scholars.<sup>303</sup>

Despite incremental steps towards improving school security, attacks continued unabated in 2014, eventually leading to mass school closures. News reports suggest that in March 2014, following shortly after the attack on Federal Government College Buni Yadi, in Yobe, local authorities in Borno State closed 85 high schools, affecting approximately 120,000 students.<sup>304</sup> An inter-agency assessment conducted in May 2014 suggests that, in fact, almost all state schools, including primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary schools, were closed

in Borno State since March 2014.<sup>305</sup> Federal authorities also took action, establishing a committee to develop an emergency response strategy for federal government colleges. The response includes plans to close high risk schools (so far five in the states of emergency) and relocate students, develop nationwide emergency preparedness plans and programs, and release funds for security-related expenses.<sup>306</sup> Prior to the group's formation, federal colleges had to allocate funds from their independent budgets for school security.<sup>307</sup>

Still, the new round of government initiatives fell short. Local authorities in Borno State temporarily reopened the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok to allow some students to take their final national exams. With no formal security for the girls, JAS entered the premises in military garb and loaded over 200 girls into a series of pickup trucks.<sup>308</sup> Amnesty International reports that Nigerian security forces had more than four hours of warning about the attack, but did not take steps to stop it.<sup>309</sup>

The attack in Chibok was a wake-up call for many, including several education actors. It prompted the formation of the Safe Schools Initiative which will help to provide a programmatic response to school attacks.<sup>310</sup> It also led to the formation of the Child Protection and Education Working Group (CPEWG), a new coordinating forum for actors working on education in emergencies. In addition, child protection actors are engaging education officials in training on psychosocial support and providing educational materials.

## The Way Forward

Certain issues raised by interviewees merit the attention of actors preparing to prevent and respond to attacks on education in the northeast.

The first is the need for appropriate policy-making at the federal level. Because local and federal governments manage education, there is no unified response to attacks on schools in the northeast. The federal government should issue a policy extract for all states that mandates baseline emergency planning and budgeting for schools. This may help to free up additional resources for school security and strengthen the capacity of state education ministries to prevent and respond to attacks, as well as to accommodate students from neighboring, insecure areas.

Government and humanitarian actors must also develop interim and long-term measures to facilitate access to education in the states of emergency, particularly in Borno State. Actors need to take steps to continue children's stimulation and learning during periods of school closure through, for example, providing school-in-a-box kits and recreational materials. So far, UNICEF has taken steps to distribute 900 school kits, which include some of these materials.<sup>311</sup> Child protection actors should also rollout these initiatives in internal displacement hubs where Watchlist found low levels of school enrollment among displaced children from the northeast.<sup>312</sup> If school closures persist, actors must explore alternate education methods such as broadcasting lessons over the radio, or establishing classes in safe, undisclosed, community spaces.

Long-term support will require critical decisions on which students should be relocated to new areas for learning, which schools can be rehabilitated, and what community-based initiatives can support students' security and learning.

A precursor to these decisions is a detailed education needs assessment in the states of emergency. Currently limited information exists on the condition and use of schools, the availability of teachers, and the security environment for teaching. UNICEF will be taking the lead on some initial school mapping. The response plan should include periodic data collection, with actors sharing new information on school attacks and military use of schools with the government, the CPEWG and the CTFMR.

Following the assessment phase, authorities and partners will make decisions on how best to overcome barriers to education in the states of emergency. Safety will be a critical area, not only of the physical school premises, but also of the community where the school is located. To help secure the school grounds, several education officials recommended providing perimeter fencing.<sup>313</sup> Some also called for an increased security presence.<sup>314</sup> Watchlist cautions that JAS directly targets security forces and groups, and that this may attract, rather than deter, attacks.<sup>315</sup> Moreover, evidence of recruitment and use of children by the Civilian JTF and other self-defense militias, raise concerns that schools may become recruitment grounds for children.<sup>316</sup>

Another key area relates to the psychological barriers to school enrollment. In light of recent attacks, one

education expert worried that even if schools reopened, students would not attend.<sup>317</sup> School enrollment must be accompanied by adequate community and psychosocial support. Moreover, teachers and students need to be empowered to address emergency situations. UNICEF is taking the lead on psychosocial support to children in Borno State, and will help to foster children's interest in learning and school attendance in the long-term. In addition, the EiEWG has developed emergency preparedness manuals for teachers and children to assist with disasters, epidemics, and conflict. Education actors should take steps to finalize and rollout the manual as soon as possible, in conjunction with other emergency preparedness drills and training.

As actors facilitate the return of children to schools, they should also make accommodations for the thousands of children who have never been to school.<sup>318</sup> Initiatives should encourage the enrollment of all students, including those who have never been involved in formal education. Authorities and partners could establish a second chance school to help older students gain basic literacy and life skills. In addition, partners should consider acceleration programs to assist children who have been out of school for months to catch up to their peers.

If the assessments reveal it is best to relocate learners to safer areas to attend school, authorities and partners should take steps to support "receiving" schools. So far, receiving schools outside and potentially within the states of emergency have been given limited support and suffer from resource and capacity constraints.<sup>319</sup> Some local government and emergency officials complained of high levels of enrollment.<sup>320</sup> Because local authorities have already set their budgets, one education official said there was no financial room to accommodate an influx of new students.<sup>321</sup> One way to encourage inter-state partnerships for the relocation of students is to advocate for governors to develop an MOU at the governors' forum which outlines details on how neighboring states can take on additional students.

The MOU should also address school enrollment for students who have already left the states of emergency. Watchlist found low levels of school enrollment among internally displaced communities in the northeast, sometimes because of limited resources and capacity.<sup>322</sup> In some receiving communities, schools were used for IDP

camps, further hindering access to education.<sup>323</sup> Some interviewees also complained that they were unable to enroll because they did not receive the requisite transfer letters and documentation from schools in Borno State.<sup>324</sup> State government actors and partners in areas with displaced communities should waive the document requirements for school admission and proactively enroll and support displaced students.

## recommendations

### To the Nigerian Federal Government

1. Issue a policy extract that mandates baseline emergency planning and budgeting for all schools across the country.
2. Build conflict-sensitive education and child protection into teacher training at all levels and mandate its implementation in private and public schools.

### To State Governments in Northern Nigeria

1. Develop a memorandum of understanding at the next governors' forum that outlines strategies for supporting inter-state relocation of students.
2. Review and amend existing education legislation to address emerging conflict issues.
3. The states of emergency and surrounding states should temporarily waive formal documentation requirements such as transcripts for school enrollment.
4. Make provisions for children who have never been to school by opening second chance schools and developing acceleration programs to assist children who have been out of school for a long time.

### To Child Protection, Protection, and Education Actors

1. During periods of school closure, support interim measures (such as the provision of school-in-a-box kits) for children in the states

of emergency and also within neighboring IDP hubs. Should school closures persist, actors must explore alternate education methods, such as broadcasting lessons over the radio, or establishing classes in safe, undisclosed, community spaces.

2. Prioritize the completion of the Emergency Preparedness Manual and ensure it is rolled out as part of emergency preparedness trainings.

### To Education Stakeholders

1. Collect periodic data on the state of education in the northeast and share findings on school attacks with the government, CPEWG and the CTFMR.
2. Develop strategies to reinforce school infrastructure such as perimeter fencing, but limit the presence of security and self-defense militias on school premises for security.
3. In preparation for the reopening of schools, work with school-based management committees to rollout emergency preparedness and risk mitigation plans, as well as training for students and teachers.
4. Provide support to schools receiving students from the states of emergency (both material and otherwise). Ensure steps are taken to accommodate the displaced children who have already left the states of emergency.
5. Invest in psychosocial support and counselor visits for students and teachers.

### To Donors

1. Provide technical and financial support for the Safe Schools Initiative in Nigeria. Provide flexible and sustainable funding and support for interim measures to encourage learning for out-of-school children, as well as measures to strengthen school safety and security, and the psychological well-being of students.



# awareness-raising and capacity-building for the monitoring and reporting mechanism



## Establishing the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism

Over the coming months the United Nations will, in collaboration with international and local NGOs, as well as affected communities, take steps to establish the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) in Nigeria. This is done in consultation with the Nigerian government.

Created in 2005 through United Nations Security Council Resolution 1612, the MRM is a UN-led process designed to gather timely, objective, accurate, and reliable information on six grave violations committed against children, by all parties to a conflict, in contravention of international human rights and humanitarian law.<sup>325</sup> It monitors: 1) killing or maiming of children, 2) recruitment or use of children into armed forces or groups, 3) attacks against schools or hospitals, 4) rape and other forms of sexual violence against children, 5) abduction of children, and 6) denial of humanitarian access to children. Information on these violations will help to foster accountability and should lead to effective child protection responses.

The MRM is automatically triggered if an armed actor is listed in the first annex of the Secretary-General's Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict. In situations that fall under the second annex of the report—which lists parties in situations that are not on the United Nations Security Council's agenda, such as JAS in Nigeria—the United Nations should consult the national government for the implementation of the formal MRM process.<sup>326</sup>

In 2014, the Secretary-General published the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict, covering the period of January to December 2013. The report lists JAS (described in the report as Boko Haram) for committing the grave violations of killing and maiming children and attacks on schools and hospitals and related personnel, prompting the implementation of the MRM in Nigeria.<sup>327</sup> The mechanism is tasked to monitor grave violations by all parties to the conflict, including JAS, self-defense militias, and the Nigerian security forces.

Once a party to armed conflict has been listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's annual report on Children and Armed Conflict and the MRM is established in a particular country, the UN convenes a Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR). The composition of the CTFMR varies depending on the situation in the country concerned (only UN agencies; or UN agencies and NGOs). The CTFMR is co-chaired by the UNICEF Representative and the Deputy Special Representative (or in some cases the Special Representative) of the Secretary-General in-country, who serves as the reporting conduit to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. In a country without a United Nations peacekeeping or political mission, such as Nigeria, the Resident Coordinator co-chairs the CTFMR. The CTFMR supports the operationalization of the MRM at country level in the areas of monitoring and reporting, including capacity building, data collection, information management, reporting, and advocacy in collaboration with UN partners (including Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), UNHCR, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), OCHA, and the World Health Organization (WHO)) and NGO partners.





The national government and parties to the conflict are not a part of the CTFMR, although the national government will be regularly consulted, particularly regarding prevention, response and accountability mechanisms, to improve the protection of children in the country. For example, this may take the form of implementation and enforcement of strengthened national legal frameworks protecting children in conflict, or strengthening budgeting for government sectors responsible for providing

basic social services and assistance to children affected by conflict. Most importantly, governments can take preventive measures to ensure that their own forces, and any other associated groups, do not commit grave violations against children.

The sooner the initial CTFMR meeting and agreement on the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the CTFMR is reached, the sooner violations are monitored and reported. The ToR includes tasks such as the accurate and timely collection of information on grave violations and engaging parties to conflict in dialogue. It also includes guidance on how the monitoring and reporting will take place, including necessary training for participants, what follow-up will be necessary, and how verifications of reported cases will be conducted. Once the system is in place, the CTFMR can monitor and report on grave violations within its area of operations. Every three months, a confidential quarterly report called a global horizontal note is shared with the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (SCWG-CAAC) with information about the six grave violations committed by parties to the conflict. A country-specific report is submitted on a regular basis and reviewed by the SCWG-CAAC, which then adopts conclusions recommending actions to improve the situation.

Outside the country, regional actors may be involved, particularly in cases such as Nigeria where cross-border violations in Niger and Cameroon may be a concern. Globally, the CTFMR will work closely with the MRM team at UNICEF headquarters and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG-CAAC) on reporting, the development of action plans, and other initiatives to improve protection for children.

## Challenges for the MRM in Nigeria

Listed below are some of the key challenges facing actors who will implement the MRM. Responsible partners will need to take swift, decisive action to ensure the establishment of the mechanism in the coming months.

- *Monitoring Capacity in the Northeast*

As discussed in the preceding chapter, humanitarian presence and child protection expertise is lacking in the states of emergency, particularly in remote areas. The CPNs face a number of capacity challenges and systems for child protection monitoring in key conflict-affected areas remain inadequate. The CTFMR should map the NGO capacity in the states of emergency and surrounding areas, and invest substantially in awareness-raising and capacity-building to facilitate the participation and contribution of local child protection actors in the MRM.

- *Insecurity and the Need for Strict Confidentiality*

Survivors of grave violations may fear retaliation by parties to the conflict for sharing their experiences with monitors. These security challenges are of particular concern because JAS members sometimes reside in affected communities and armed forces or other groups may be stationed in affected areas. The UN and other protection actors will have to adhere to strict confidentiality protocols to ensure the safety of victims and monitors documenting cases.

- *Government Presence during Monitoring*

It is possible that monitors engaged in the MRM will have to coordinate and cooperate with government actors to access victims of grave violations. This is partly because some of the main responders, such as the national and state emergency management agencies, are affiliated with the government. Moreover, humanitarian actors may have to rely on military escorts to facilitate access for monitoring, reporting, and verification. It is critical for monitors to be impartial; an association with the government may jeopardize their work and introduce additional risks of targeted attacks by JAS. Steps should be taken to mitigate these risks, by distinguishing between MRM monitors and other government actors, before data collection starts.

## A Blueprint for the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism

At this stage there are many unknown variables affecting the future shape and approach to the MRM.

It is crucial for the UN to reflect on best practices and lessons from other countries to tailor the response in Nigeria. Drawing on Watchlist's experiences and discussions, the following highlight key aspects to consider prior to establishing an MRM in Nigeria.

### Engaging NGOs in the MRM

Local NGOs are among the primary responders and service providers in the states of emergency. Their presence in these areas makes them important partners for the MRM. Their involvement in the mechanism and decision-making processes is critical from the very beginning.

In preparation for the MRM, the CTFMR and other protection actors should conduct general awareness-raising sessions for key CPNs, NGOs, and other humanitarian actors on the mechanism. While not all NGOs have the capacity to proactively engage in the MRM, several will come into contact with grave violations. Their general awareness of these issues may encourage them to alert key partners when such cases are brought to their attention.

In light of the potential personal risk associated with monitoring violations during active conflict, it is important that active NGO participation in the MRM results from a consultative process with the UN on roles, responsibilities, security, and confidentiality measures.

NGOs participating in the MRM should receive training to build capacity on safe monitoring practices as well as methodologies and tools to collect and assess data in a reliable and impartial manner.

### Establishing Partnerships that Bolster Access to Information on Grave Violations

In light of the capacity constraints for monitoring in the states of emergency, it will be important for the CTFMR to forge partnerships with groups and entities that may encounter grave violations.

For instance, the new CPEWG will be coordinating initiatives on school safety and security. The CTFMR should encourage the group to develop a database documenting attacks on schools and coordinate with the group so any information regarding attacks on schools, teachers, and students is shared with both entities.

From the onset, the CTFMR should also seek to establish a relationship with key protection agencies across the border that are providing support services to Nigerian refugees. Humanitarian capacity in areas like Diffa, Niger, far exceeds capacity in the states of emergency. Not only are agencies engaging with potential survivors of violations, but there are also reports of recruitment and attacks on schools by JAS in Niger and Cameroon. Establishing these relationships will ensure that the MRM is able to capture the full complexity of patterns and trends in grave violations.

The CTFMR should also engage the 30 protection monitors deployed by the UNDP and the NHRC to the northeast. While the NHRC is a national body, potentially jeopardizing its independence, it is worth noting the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights accredited it with an A, indicating its full compliance with the Paris Principles.<sup>328</sup> The monitoring program is temporary and faces some shortcomings, but any cases of grave violations documented by the monitors and referred to the NHRC could also potentially be referred to the CTFMR for further verification and follow-up. In addition, some NHRC monitors are being deployed to detect early signs of conflict and could also perhaps refer cases of grave violations to the CTFMR. Further training on child protection could increase the capacity of these monitors to capture information on grave violations.

Finally, the CTFMR could seek to develop relationships with non-traditional actors engaged in the northeast. Some of the groups that provide the most assistance to conflict-affected survivors are health workers and faith-based organizations. Exploring relationships with, for example, hospitals may yield valuable information. In addition, faith-based groups often help to relocate survivors of grave violations outside of the states of emergency, allowing easy access for verification.

### Linking Monitoring and Response

All survivors of grave violations should receive immediate and safe access to care and protection. The establishment of referral pathways for providing a response to violations is a basic principle of any protection monitoring activity. Bridging the gap between monitoring and response is

both an operational need and ethical imperative. Strict confidentiality and protection of identity for victims and witnesses is essential.

Because of capacity constraints in the northeast, the CTFMR will have to engage a number of different actors to ensure an effective response to survivors. While the CPNs in the emergency states face several limitations regarding their ability to document cases, they could potentially be engaged in some areas of the response. This will likely require some training and capacity-building, but it may be a way to facilitate the CPNs' engagement with the MRM.

In addition, as discussed in preceding chapters, the establishment of operating procedures for the treatment and transfer of children associated with armed groups will ensure child protection actors are engaged in demobilization, reintegration, and rehabilitation initiatives for recruited children.

Finally, collaboration between the MRM and the sector working groups, including the CPEWG, the PSWG, and the CPWG, would also help to develop potential broader responses to violations. This process should ensure that confidentiality and impartiality principles are maintained.

### Strengthening Conditions for Monitoring

Before the establishment of the MRM, the United Nations and Nigerian government should take steps to safely reopen the airport in Borno State to commercial flights. At present, the primary way to travel to the state is on dangerous roads. Opening the airport will greatly increase the capacity for UN actors to conduct spot visits for MRM verification and for human rights researchers, humanitarian actors, and NGOs to collect information. Groups cited the airport closure as one of the main reasons they discontinued travel and work in Borno State.

### Preventive Action in Relation to the Nigerian Armed Forces

The Nigerian armed forces are not listed in the Secretary-General's Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict. The CTFMR should urge the Government of Nigeria to take preventive measures, including by developing and implementing training on child protection, to ensure that Nigerian forces are not listed.

## Attacks on Schools, Resulting in Fatalities, Abductions, and Injuries of Students, Teachers and/or Civilians, as Reported by NGOs and Media Sources, 2012-2014

This table below includes attacks on primary schools, secondary schools, and places of higher education that resulted in the death, injury, or abduction of students, teachers, and/or other civilians on the premises. Watchlist only included attacks that could be corroborated by several sources. These attacks cover the period January 2012 to July 31, 2014. Only attacks in the northeast were included as they are most likely to be related to the conflict between JAS, Nigerian security forces, and civilian self-defense militia. Watchlist has not included attacks where only school property was destroyed.

<b>April 29, 2012</b>	Between 16 and 20 people were killed and 6 to 22 injured by explosives and gunmen during a Sunday campus Christian church service at Bayero University in Kano. <sup>329</sup>
<b>October 1, 2012</b>	Between 20 and 25 people, most of whom were students, were killed by gunshot or stabbing when unknown assailants stormed a residential area mainly occupied by students outside Federal Polytechnic, Mubi, Adamawa State. Residents claimed between 40 and 46 or more were killed. <sup>330</sup>
<b>March 12, 2013</b>	Between 3 and 4 teachers, including the Headmaster, were shot and injured by unknown gunmen at a primary school in Kano. The attack occurred during school hours, and the assailants fled on motorbike. No students were reported injured. <sup>331</sup>
<b>March 18, 2013</b>	3 to 4 students are seriously injured and 3 to 4 teachers are killed during attacks targeting 4 public schools in Maiduguri. <sup>332</sup>
<b>June 17, 2013</b>	Suspected JAS gunmen kill between 7 and 8 students and 1 to 2 teachers at a secondary school dormitory in Damaturu, Yobe State. <sup>333</sup>
<b>June 18, 2013</b>	Between 5 and 9 students are killed in an examination hall at Ansarudeen Private School, a secondary school, in Maiduguri, Borno State. <sup>334</sup>
<b>July 6, 2013</b>	Between 22 to up to 50 students and a teacher are killed at a government secondary school in Mamudo town, Yobe State. JAS leader, Abubakar Shekau, supported the attack but did not claim responsibility. <sup>335</sup>



<b>September 28, 2013</b>	Between 40 and 62 students are killed by gunmen at the College of Agriculture in the town of Gujba, Yobe State. <sup>336</sup>
<b>February 11, 2014</b>	JAS allegedly abducts 20 girls from the Girls Science Secondary School, and possibly also Ashigar School of Business and Administrative studies, Konduga, Borno State, during an attack, although this is disputed by government authorities. <sup>337</sup>
<b>February 25, 2014</b>	Between 29 and 59 male secondary school students are killed in their dormitory at the Federal Government College of Buni Yadi, Yobe State. <sup>338</sup>
<b>April 10-11, 2014</b>	8 teachers killed in an alleged attack on a Teachers College in Dikwa, Borno State. <sup>339</sup>
<b>April 15, 2014</b>	Between 200 and 276 female students are abducted from a Government Secondary School. Some have been able to escape, but the majority of the girls remain unaccounted for. JAS leader, Abubakar Shekau, released a video claiming responsibility for the attack and threatening to sell the girls. <sup>340</sup>
<b>April 20, 2014</b>	Gunmen set fire to staff residential building at a girls' secondary school in Yana, Bauchi State, killing a 5-year-old. None of the 195 students staying at the dormitories nearby were injured. <sup>341</sup>
<b>June 23, 2014</b>	During registration hours at the Kano School of Hygiene, a bomb blast killed approximately 8 people. It is unclear if the bombing was a result of a suicide bomber or if it was planted. The number of those killed includes a possible suicide bomber. Between 12 and 20 others were injured. <sup>342</sup>
<b>July 30, 2014</b>	A female suicide bomber attacked youths gathered at a notice board on the campus of Kano State Polytechnic killing between 3 and 6 people and injuring up to 7. <sup>343</sup>

- 1 Through resolutions 1612, 1882, and 1998, the UN Security Council has identified six categories of grave violations against children, which constitute acts that contravene international humanitarian law, international human rights law, international criminal law, or other international protection norms. They are: 1) killing and maiming of children, 2) recruitment or use of children into armed forces and groups, 3) attacks on schools or hospitals, 4) rape or other grave sexual violence, 5) abduction, and 6) denial of humanitarian access for children.
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