



AKE – Weekly Nigeria Briefing 24 - 28 January

Summary

- Ongoing violence and heightened tensions in Central Nigeria
- Cargo ship attacked near Onne – 2 crewmembers taken hostage
- Bomb threat at Lagos International Airport
- Safeguard of Nigeria's inland waters affected by NIMASA's limited capabilities
- President announces new adviser to the Niger Delta
- Voter registration extended
- Increasing concern about Nigeria's public finances
- US\$130 billion lost through corruption between 2000-2008
- Shell accused of oil spills and pollution

Security Risk Updates

• **Clashes in Central Nigeria**

Tensions between Christian and Muslims continued throughout the week and are likely to intensify in the run-up to the presidential elections in April. A human rights group announced this week that more than 200 people have been killed in central Nigeria in the past month. The population has also started to accuse security forces and local politicians of being behind some of the incidents. Villagers staged protests against the military throughout the week, hurling stones and burning the tents of soldiers who they blamed for the killing of five local residents. There is also an increased number of robberies being reported in the area. Authorities believe that the suspected Islamist sect, Boko Haram, is behind those armed robberies in order to acquire money to buy weapons.

- On 24 January attackers on motorcycles killed a soldier guarding a church in the city of Maiduguri. Two other soldiers were killed during the week when armed men attacked a military checkpoint. There is also an increasing risk of armed men targeting voters' registrations centres, where policemen are on guard.
- On 25 January the killing of four people by men allegedly wearing military uniforms in a predominately Christian village outside Jos led to clashes between villagers and troops, with soldiers accused of opening fire in response.
- On 27 January 12 people were killed by Fulani herdsmen who attacked three villages near the city of Jos.
- On 28 January clashes between Christian and Muslim youths in Tafawa Balewa, Bauchi state, triggered by a game of snooker killed at least four people and led to the burning of houses, churches and mosques.

• **Kidnap for Ransom**

Armed men attacked a Greek-managed cargo ship near Onne on 26 January. The Ukrainian captain and Greek first engineer of the *Perseas*, which was flying under the flag of St Vincent and Grenadines, were abducted by gunmen whilst two Egyptian sailors were reportedly injured in the attack. No group has claimed responsibility, although militants from MEND are probable suspects. It is now likely the crewmembers will be held on shore for a ransom. Personnel are reminded that static vessels remain an accessible target for groups actively seeking to kidnap foreigners to raise financial and political capital for their campaigns. Maritime attacks and abductions may also increase as tensions rise ahead of the upcoming elections in April.

An Egyptian man who was abducted from a ship off Nigeria's coast last week has been released. No details were given on how the hostage was released or whether a ransom had been paid.

• **Airport Security**

As part of measures aimed at enhancing the level of security across airports in Nigeria, the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority announced the restriction of non-travellers within and around airports. The

directive followed a rumoured bomb scare at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos on 26 January. During times of heightened tension ahead of the elections similar threats might be possible.

- **Maritime Security**

A recent article published in [The Guardian](#) highlights NIMASA's limited capabilities to safeguard Nigeria's inland waters. NIMASA lacks the equipment, such as boats and helicopters, to effectively patrol the waters. In addition to weak naval response and limited security at ports, shippers are facing considerably higher costs in Nigeria than in other countries along the Gulf of Guinea.

Political Risk Updates

- **New Presidential Advisers**

President Goodluck Jonathan announced Kingsley Kuku as the new advisor for the Niger Delta and former national intelligence agency boss Zakari Ibrahim as co-ordinator of anti-terrorism efforts. Jonathan is keen to boost his security credentials ahead of April's elections following recent criticism over increasing insecurity in the Delta states, middle belt and remote north-east.

- **Voter registration**

The House of Representatives accepted a request from the Independent National Electoral Commission for voter registration to be extended by up to four weeks. The extension was requested following delays in the delivery and malfunctioning of necessary equipment.

- **Public Finances**

Advisers urged President Jonathan to cut the rising cost of government by merging ministries and agencies. There is an increasing concern about the state's public finances in the run-up to nationwide elections in April, particularly the amount of money the nation spends to keep government running. Jonathan presented a 4.2 trillion naira (US\$28 billion) budget proposal for 2011 to parliament last month, saying it represented a sharp reduction in approved spending for 2010. However more than 3.2 trillion naira of that figure was earmarked for recurrent expenditure, statutory transfers, which include payments to institutions such as the judiciary, and debt servicing. That leaves less than 1 trillion naira for capital expenditure, meaning that Nigeria, sub-Saharan Africa's second-biggest economy, is spending far more on government than it is investing in urgently needed infrastructure and other capital projects. Committees were set up in the past to review recurrent expenditure but there is considerable political resistance. Parliamentarians' salaries are not made public but it is believed that they are among the best paid in the world.

- **Corruption**

A recently released [US report](#) indicates that Nigeria might have lost US\$130 billion from 2000 to 2008 to illicit financial flows and corruption. According to the report Nigeria has the tenth-highest measured illicit outflows in the developing world, an average of US\$15 billion per year.

- **Oil Spills Allegation**

Amnesty International and Friends of the Earth filed an official complaint against Shell for shirking responsibility for oil spills in Nigeria and wreaking havoc on the environment. According to the environment minister John Odey, Nigeria recorded at least 3000 oil spills between 2006 and 2010.