



Save The Date *National Day of Mourning*

May 28 2021
#NDOM

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Mass Atrocities Casualties **TRACKING**

2020 report

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Executive Summary

The year 2020 was a brutal year for most, as the coronavirus pandemic disrupted nations and systems across the world. COVID-19 heralded the largest and most fatal global health crisis in recent times, with incredible infection rates, and an unprecedented loss of lives in almost every nation. Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, continued its own trajectory of grief and loss, contending not only with the global health pandemic, but also with its endemic insecurity that has spiralled exponentially in the past decade

Our tracking of mass atrocities across Nigeria for 2020, (indicated through casualties of violent attacks, clashes, terrorism, kidnappings, and extrajudicial killings) informs that at least four thousand, five hundred and fifty-six (4,556) lives were lost between January and December 2020. A glaring spike of almost 43% in the number of casualties in comparison to the 2019 figure of Three thousand, one hundred and eighty-eight (3188). Of the above number, three thousand, eight hundred and fifty-eight (3,858) were civilians, while 698 were state security agents. For the second year running, for every 5.5 deaths recorded, at least 1 of them was of a security officer.

The state with the highest number of fatalities remained Borno state in the North East, closely followed by Kaduna state, in the North West. Interestingly, the state with the lowest number of fatalities was also in the North – Gombe state with one (1) victim. The Southern parts of the country fared better – at least numerically. The southern states also contended with their own security challenges which led to the establishment of the controversial Western Nigeria Security Network (WNSN) - codenamed Operation Amotekun.

It is important to note that these killings must be contextualized within the larger triggers of violence inherent in the Nigerian state. So, while our report has focused on the killings and kidnaps across the country, it acknowledges other forms of violence and atrocities by state and non-state actors. It is equally important to note that the swiftest method for determining a nation's propensity for violence, is to measure how its most vulnerable are faring.

In 2020, Nigeria's most indigent and vulnerable

groups fared poorly. For instance, in spite of the pandemic and its accompanying lockdowns, and need for social distancing, some state governments, particularly Lagos and Kaduna, and the Federal Capital Territory Administration, did not hesitate to demolish slum communities without prior notice to make room for 'development' projects, and walked away unperturbed about the humanitarian crisis that they had created, or how they had further jeopardized the public health crisis the nation was confronted with.

Rather than seek to protect unaccompanied and vulnerable minors in the wake of the pandemic, some northern state governors, hurriedly proscribed the informal Almajiranci system of education, which has for decades been notorious for engendering various forms of child abuse, rounded up Almajiri children and expelled these vulnerable class of children to their 'states of origin' as part of their response to curbing the spread of covid19. Several of these children eventually tested positive for covid19.

The brutality of security forces enforcing the lockdowns clearly were not commensurate to the threat 'erring' citizens posed. At least 33 persons were extrajudicially killed in relation to the enforcement of lockdowns.

Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) also spiked exponentially throughout the country, especially during the lockdowns. In that span of time, the most vulnerable – mainly children, women, underaged domestic workers, and disabled persons found themselves at mercy of their abusers with whom they were confined, without access to clearly thought-out state interventions.

Hunger. That one word summed up the experience of most Nigerians during the pandemic lockdown phases. Many were unable to access their livelihoods, or, had lost their jobs and became indigent. Most were also unable to access the much-touted government sponsored "palliatives" and conditional cash transfers, and clamoured for the lockdowns to end, stating that they would "rather die of covid19 than of hunger".

In August 2019, Nigeria's government unexpectedly closed its land borders intending to combat the illegal smuggling of goods from other countries, in particular – illicit small arms and light weapons, through the nation's porous borders. In addition, the government stated that it intended to prevent the indiscriminate importation of food products and force-boost local food production. While that sounded good on paper, the deeper context was of a country in which agriculture was lagging not only because of poor technology for propagation,

transportation, and storage; but also because of insecurity in its food basket states, which had forced a large number of farmers to abandon their farms, and was at the precipice of a food crisis; thereby engendering an increase in hunger and unemployment. The effects of this decision are manifested through the rise of inflation rate (12.88%), unemployment rate (27.1%) and a spike in crime and insecurity. Also, the border closure did not seem to have impacted the proliferation of arms and light weapons.

What was more tragic was the discovery of several warehouses across the nation in late October and early November, where palliative food packages meant to have been distributed during the lockdowns, had been hoarded with many of them already expired. These discoveries led to massive looting by indigent citizens who were already at their wits end, and had been triggered by the #EndSARS protests' tragic disruption.

The #EndSARS protests were a watershed moment in Nigeria. The protests had been ignited by the massive human rights violations by security forces; in particular, the Special Anti-robbery Response Squad (SARS). The movement which had began as a digital hashtag 7 years previously, against the highhandedness of the squad, especially against young Nigerians, finally reached its tipping point and spilled over into the streets in major cities across Nigeria. The protests were later disrupted by counter-protesters and security forces with fatalities.

The brutality against the #EndSARS protesters was not the only threat to the nation's civic space. Several protesters in other peaceful protests were arrested or brutalized by security forces. The government also sought to restrict civic freedoms through laws and policies. For example, the [Internet Falsehood and Manipulation Bill 2019](#), a.k.a [Social Media Bill](#), which sought to punish dissenting voices; the 'Control of Infectious Diseases' Bill under the guise of the Covid-19 pandemic; and the sly passage of an amended Companies and Allied Matters Act, 2020, which fulfils the objectives of previous attempts of civil society regulatory bills– all which seek to give despotic powers to government.

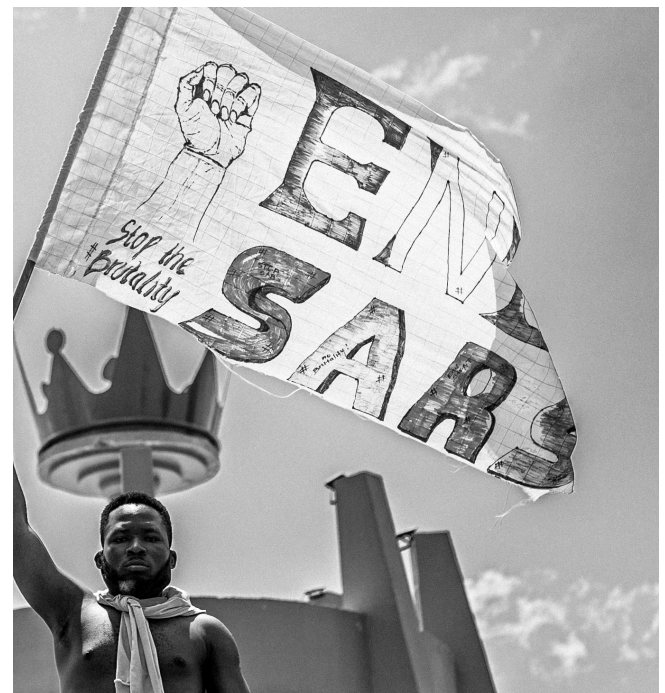
The pillaging, better known as "banditry" in North-Western Nigeria continued unabated and comingled with kidnappings. The attacks on communities in Southern Kaduna bore elements of pillage and kidnapping coupled with arson, and resulted in several displacement. Katsina, Zamfara and Sokoto suffered similar fate, with new informal IDP camps across Northern Nigeria, with scores of thousands of

Nigerians forced to seek refuge in neighbouring Niger Republic.

The landscape of organized crime in Nigeria remained relatively unchanged with its traditional actors: the terrorist groups Boko Haram, and The Islamic State in West Africa or the Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP) continued to hold sway in the North-East with hybrid spread to the North-West and North-Central, other forms 'herdsmen' bandits/pillagers, gang marauders, kidnap syndicates, an assortment of cult-gangs, continued across other parts of the country, and at its southern borders -pirate groups on the Gulf of Guinea.

The internal security response system landscape also remained largely the same with the armed forces taking the lead on security issues in most parts of the country – especially in the North and Middle Belt regions of the country. The police force continued to handle the softer law enforcement issues, but have remained overwhelmed. The calls for reforms trailed both the military and police formations. For the military formations, the calls for the retirement and replacement of the service chiefs, all of who had served beyond their statutory retirement age, continued to echo through the year, as it had in recent years. The call for police reforms also rang through the year cumulating in the #EndSARS movement. The launch of regional security apparatus in the South West, and promise of the same in the South East also point to attempts at reforms.

On the next page is a bird's eye analysis of the trends; and on subsequent pages, an elaboration on the numbers and of their impact on Nigeria.





Mass Atrocities Report: 2020



Banditry Attacks 1,982.
Boko Haram/ISWAP 1,173.

Communal Clashes/attacks 407.
Extrajudicial killings 271.

Herdsmen attacks 270.

Cult-gang clashes 247.

Isolated killings 185.

Mob action 12.

Politically motivated violence 7.

Pirate attacks 4.



NB: At least 2,002 people were abducted.

Violence according to region

North/East:

Insurgency, Pillage, Abductions.

North/West:

Banditry/Pillage Abductions.

North/Central:

Herdsmen attacks, Communal conflicts,
Pillage, Abductions.

South/South:

Cult-gang clashes, Communal conflicts, Abductions,
Extrajudicial killings, Politically motivated violence, Mob action.

South/West:

Extrajudicial killings, Cult-gang clashes, Isolated attacks,
Abductions, Politically motivated violence.

South/East:

Mob action, Communal conflicts, Isolated attacks,
Abductions, Politically motivated violence, Extrajudicial killings.



At least 4,556 killings were recorded



3,858 Civilians

698 Security Officers



North/West - 1527

Kaduna - 628 Katsina - 501

Zamfara - 262 Sokoto - 99 Kano - 19

Jigawa - 16 Kebbi - 2

North/East - 1508

Borno - 1,176 Taraba - 141

Adamawa - 111 Yobe - 74

Bauchi - 5 Gombe - 1

North/Central - 685

Niger - 254 Benue - 145

Plateau - 139 Kogi - 81

Nassarawa - 32 FCT - 28 Kwara - 6

South/South - 443

Delta - 141 Edo - 118

Rivers - 76 Cross River - 50

Bayelsa - 43 Akwa Ibom - 15

South/West - 231

Lagos - 87 Oyo - 42

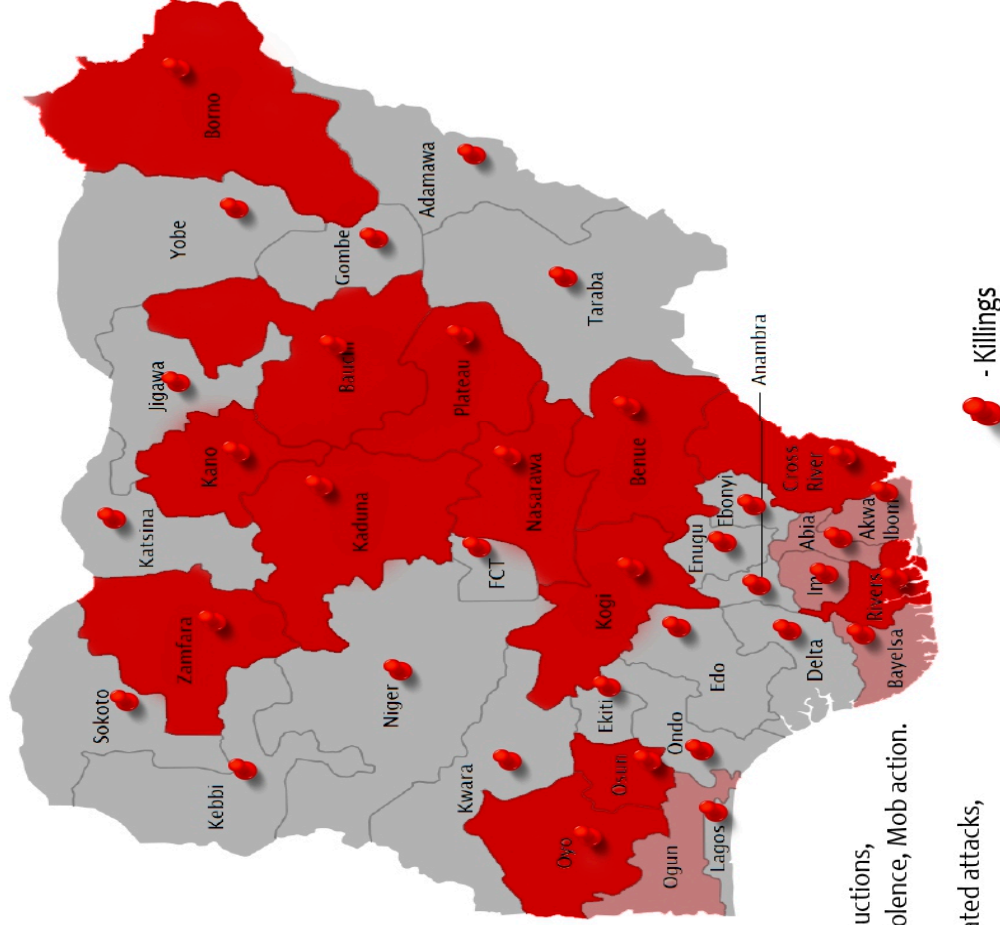
Ogun - 40 Ondo - 37

Ekiti - 15 Osun - 10

South/East - 162

Ebonyi - 50, Anambra - 39

Enugu - 34 Imo - 21 Abia - 18



- Killings

#NigeriaMourns

#NotAtWar

#NigerianLivesMatter

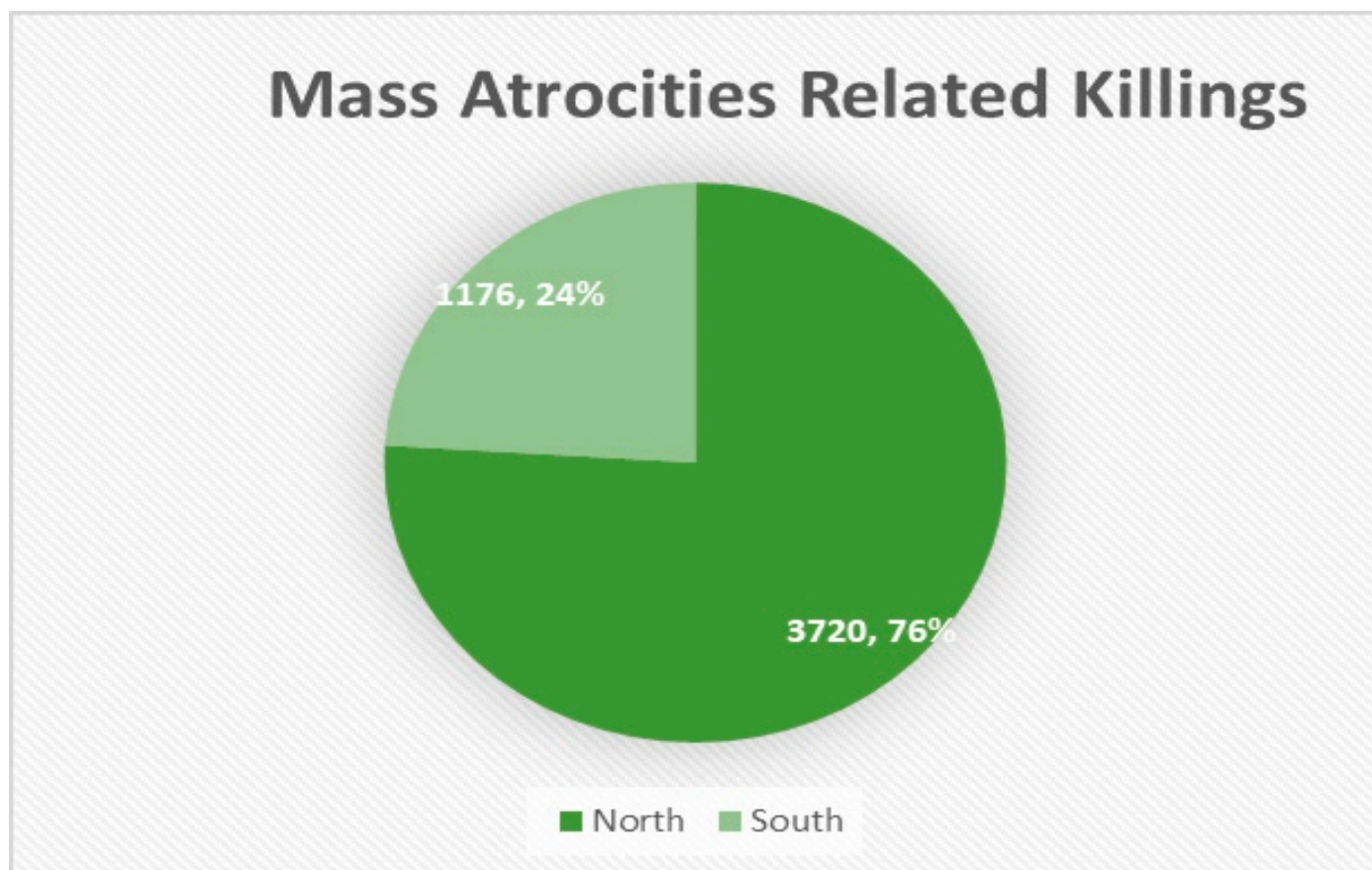
Through The Valley Of The Shadow Of Violence: An Analytical Summary

In 2020, Nigeria's struggle with inordinate and escalating insecurity rooted in mass atrocities continued unabated. Indicatively, violence-related deaths were recorded in all states across the country. The figures in 2020 - at least 4,556 killings - were significantly higher than that of 2019 - (at least 3188) – which shows that government's efforts at preventing violence or combating insecurity continued to be ineffective despite their increased budget for security.

The patterns of mass atrocities across the country continued to bear regional nuances, but the lines are increasingly blurring. Insurgency, pillages, and communal attacks characterize the major forms of atrocities in the North, while rival gang attacks, killings from mob actions, extrajudicial killings, politically motivated killings, and mob lynching.

Kidnappings were a recurrent decimal across the country. Other forms of atrocities included: arson, community displacements, forced evictions, extrajudicial slum demolitions, security force brutality (often accompanied by arbitrary arrests), incursions on the civic space, especially the brutalization of protesters, enforced disappearances, violent gags on media freedoms, and a spike in gender-based violence precipitated by impunity and disproportionate state responses. As a matter of fact, nearly all of the atrocities recorded were engendered/perpetuated by cycles of impunity.

The highest number of deaths were reported in the northern region of the country with a cumulative of at least 3,720 killings while the southern region recorded at least 828 killings. Borno State, the epicenter of the security crisis in the North-East, and which has for a decade been ravaged by insurgency retained its position as the state most impacted by insecurity with at least one thousand one hundred and seventy-six (1,176) related deaths. Gombe state in the North West however recorded the lowest number with at least one (1) mass atrocities-related death. the highest number of deaths in the southern region of the country, was recorded in Delta State, with at least a hundred and forty-one (141) killings, which were mostly attributed to rival cult gang clashes.



Analysis by Region

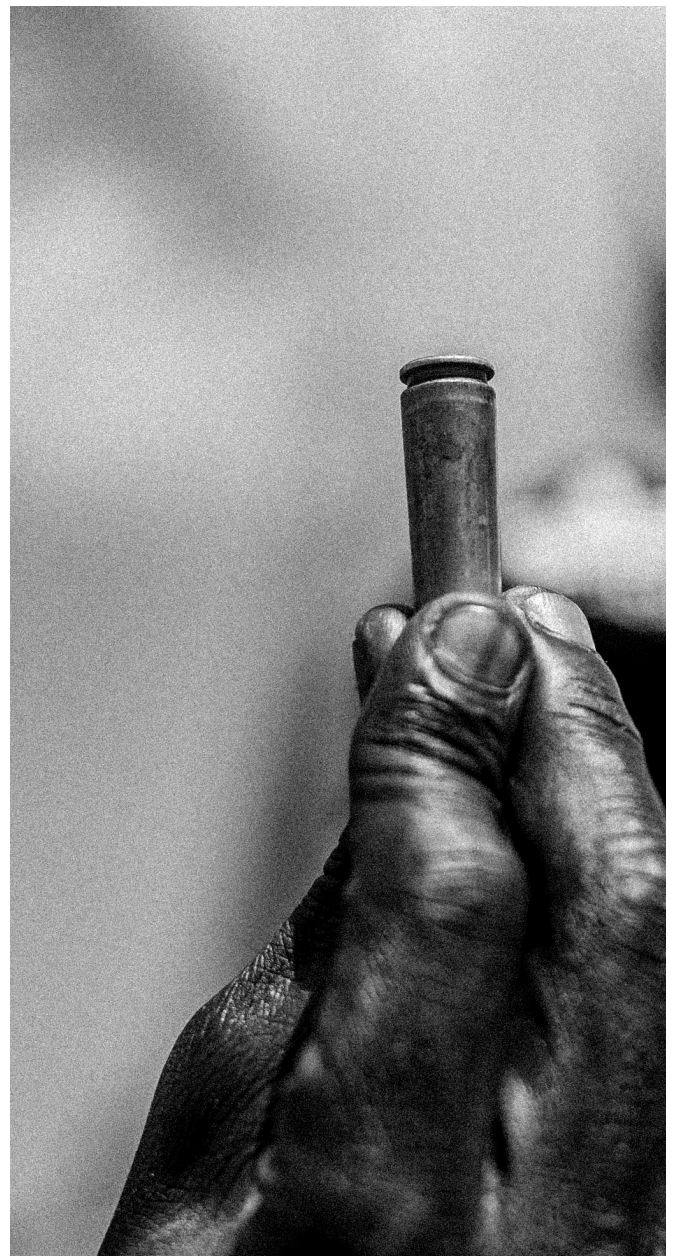
The year 2020 was a difficult year for most Nigerians and the nation as a whole. In addition to endemic poverty, a floundering economy, mass unemployment, and the fresh layer of crisis Covid19 brought to the country, it continued to battle with multiple forms of organized crimes manifested in a climate of insecurity.

The patterns of mass atrocities across the country continued to bear regional nuances, but the lines are increasingly becoming blurred. Insurgency, pillages, and communal attacks characterized the major forms of atrocities in the North, while the South struggled with rival cult-gang attacks, extrajudicial killings, politically motivated killings, and mob lynching. Other forms of manifested atrocities across the country included: arson, community displacements, extrajudicial slum demolitions, security force brutality (often accompanied by arbitrary arrests), incursions on the civic space, especially the brutalization of protesters, enforced disappearances, violent gags on media freedoms, and a spike in gender-based violence precipitated by impunity and disproportionate state responses. As a matter of fact, nearly all of the atrocities recorded were engendered by impunity.

Economically motivated Kidnappings and pillage/banditry attacks were a recurrent decimal across the country. However, these incidents presented differently in the various geopolitical zones. In the Northern States, the most common pattern of attacks were brigands' pillage of communities - mass kidnapping residents, burning homes and farm lands, rustling cattle, and sporadically killing residents. The nuance in the Southern parts of the country were more of selective kidnap of residents in communities by organized criminal groups, cult-gang attacks or clashes, highway attacks, and attacks on farmers and their farmlands by herders insistent on grazing their cattle in cultivated farms. In addition, highway abductions remained prevalent throughout the country in pretty much the same pattern.

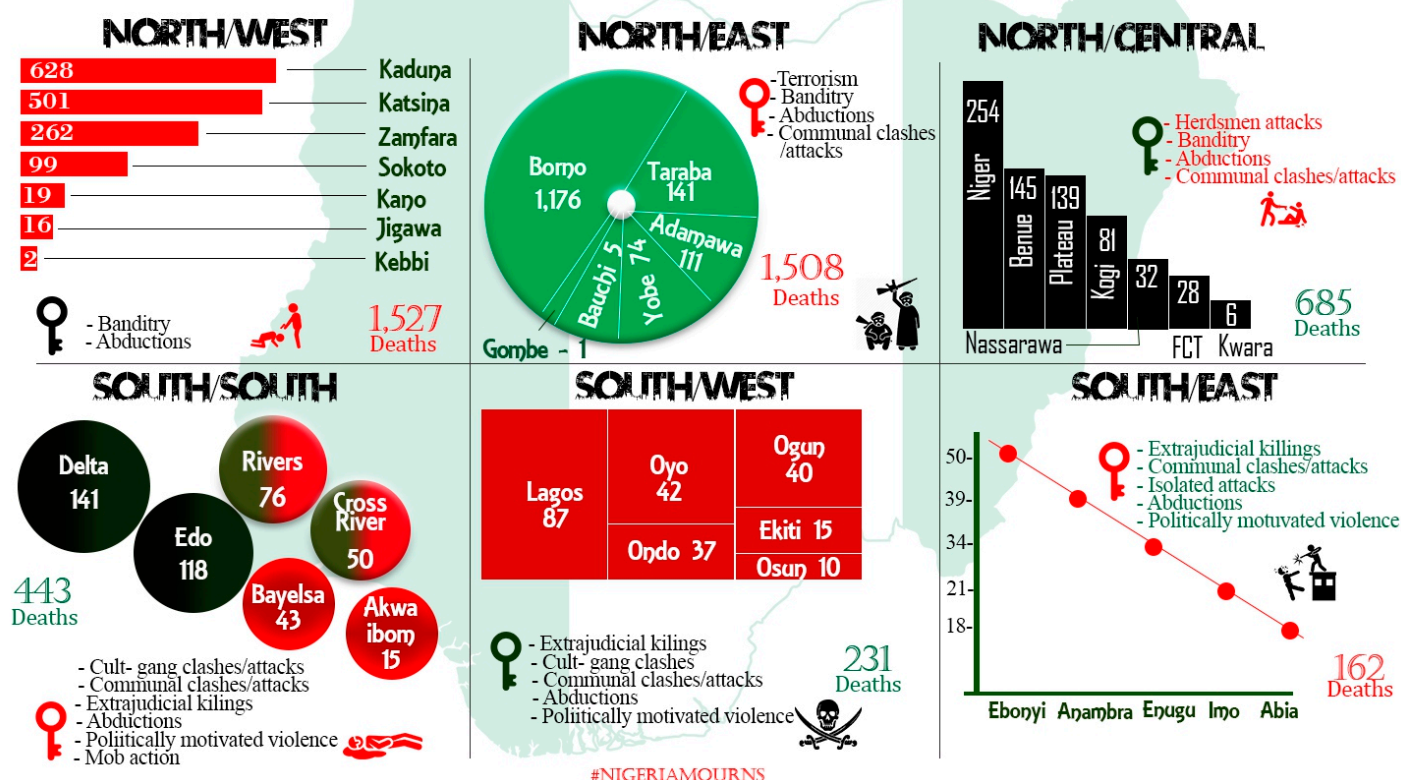
Extrajudicial killings were more frequently reported in the South than in the North of the country. We however noted the continued pattern of organized criminal groups killing security officers and dispossessing them of their weapons.

**Economically motivated
Kidnappings and
pillage/banditry attacks
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country**





MASS ATROCITIES BREAKDOWN ACCORDING TO GEOPOLITICAL ZONES - 2020



Northern Nigeria

As noted above Northern Nigeria continued to record the highest numbers of casualties in 2020. Contributory factors to mass atrocities in the region include:

Ungoverned Spaces: States in Northern Nigeria have the largest land mass in the country. Most of these are constituted of ungoverned spaces. We have noted a correlation between the size of the land mass of states in Nigeria, and their propensity for atrocious violence. Niger state for example has a land mass of approximately 8.6 million hectares constituting about 9.3% of the total land area of the country, with a population of nearly 4 million people. Less than half of the total land mass of the state is occupied or falls within active oversight by the government. The North East occupies slightly less than one-third of Nigeria's total area with 275,672 sq km. The Sambisa forest alone covers an area of approximately 60,000 square kilometres. Without the direct intervention of the government in developing these spaces, they will continue to be easy hubs for organized criminal groups.

Porous land borders: The trade in small and light

weapons across the national-border states of the North are enabled by its porous borders. In particular, interface communities with Niger Republic have continued to serve as smuggling port for arms and light weapons into northern Nigeria. The ease of trafficking and availability of these weapons to marauders, continued to fuel communal attacks and related threats to the security of the region.

Reprisal attacks: At the root of a number of attacks in the region, were widespread impunity occasioned by government's failure to ensure justice for previous attacks on communities. These invariably spurred communal self-help reprisals, and in a vicious cycle of unending violence, promoted further attacks and pillages by organized bandit groups.

Unresolved communal rifts: The intergenerational trauma of conflicts often snowball into more vicious manifestations. For instance, the legacy of the attacks in Southern Kaduna can be traced as far back as the 1940s. In spite of the Covid19 lockdowns and government-imposed curfews in 2020, at least 625 persons were killed in attacks across Southern Kaduna communities.

Amnesty deals: The Nigerian government has a history of negotiating with terrorists, which has created leverage for terrorists and bandits to continue to perpetuate attacks to garner attention. For instance, in a desperate attempt to end banditry in the North West, Governor Aminu Masari of Kaduna State proposed a peace deal between the governors of the North West and bandits. The governor had offered organized bandit groups an undisclosed amount of money in exchange for their weapons and amnesty. Consequently, the bandits acquired more weapons and resumed attacks two months after the deal.

Governance failures: Northern Nigeria continues to present the worst human development indicators. At the root of this is lack of good governance and corruption. State capture and lack of regard for the rule of law means that state institutions never become strong. Weak state institutions are then unable to protect citizens in the manner in which they were designed to do. Where governance is weak, organized criminal groups in different manifestations will begin to fill the vacuum created by weak governance structures.

Climate change induced natural resource conflicts: The impacts of climate change is evident throughout Nigeria. With lesser arable land for agriculture, shrinking water bodies, endemic poverty, and a population explosion, the perfect recipe for tensions and violence is found in Northern Nigeria, and pretty much the rest of the country.

Politically fueled ethnic and religious intolerance: Politicians in Nigeria have habitually fueled ethnic and religious identity fears which often manifest in intolerance. In the past, they have led to ethno-religious crises, accompanied by violence. While these are not at the core of the atrocities, they are clearly factoring that contribute to them. For instance, in Kano State, two cases of politically induced blasphemy charges that were levelled against a musician - Mr. Yahaya Sharif-Aminu, and 13-year-old Master Umar Farouq, these ignited frenzies of violence as the two were charged under the Sharia Penal Law.

The North-West

North-West Nigeria recorded the highest number of casualties in 2020 (at least 1527), closely followed by the North-East (at least 1508). Kaduna state recorded the highest casualties in 2020 in the North-West,

largely due to attacks on communities in Southern Kaduna, which resulted in the deaths of at least 628 persons. This number was closely followed by Katsina state with 501 persons killed.

Following the previous year's trend, in 2020, the North West region of Nigeria continued to grapple with the menace of organized bandit groups. These brigands engaged in an assortment of violent activities including, community raids, cattle rustling, commercial abductions, arson, sexual violence, and trading in small arms and light weapons. Banditry related incidents led to the deaths of at least 1,137 people, significantly higher than the 2019 figure of 974.

Kaduna state recorded the highest casualties in 2020 in the North-West, largely due to attacks on communities in Southern Kaduna, which resulted in the deaths of at least 628 persons.

The North-East

The decade long battle against Boko Haram terrorists and its splinter faction Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP) continued in 2020. Boko Haram's leader - Abubakar Shekau who had allegedly been killed at least 5 times by the Nigerian government kept resurfacing year after year. In 2020, he released several gruesome videos of his foot soldiers decapitating and killing victims. The terrorist groups attacked civilian residents, humanitarian workers, security agents, and government officials, killing at least 1,171 people in 2020. Of this number, 423 of these were soldiers deployed to combat the North/East insurgency. Most of these attacks were recorded in the BAY (Borno, Adamawa, Yobe) States, with most of them occurring in Borno state.

While the military announced that they had reclaimed communities previously captured by terrorists, it was clear that they also lost control of swaths of previously reclaimed areas. Interestingly, debates on government's proposed rehabilitation of 'repentant' former insurgents back into their communities continued to divide the polity. Many were incensed by

a bill sponsored at the Senate to, as part of their reintegration process, grant them scholarship access to foreign educational institutions.

The increase in security agent' casualties in the region continued to hint at their poor equipping and welfare. The buzz around their welfare was intensified after a viral video in which a Major General of the Nigerian army hinted at their poor equipping compared to the insurgents.

The North-Central

For the past decade, Nigeria's Benue Valley in its North-Central region (Benue, Taraba, and Plateau states) has been a theatre of protracted 'farmer-herder conflicts', aggravated by climate change, the competition for land and water, and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The region's legacy of communal conflicts, has more recently added an extra layer of violence - pillage attacks by armed militia.

For the second year running, resource conflicts in the Benue Valley significantly declined. In spite of this positive development, there were still a handful of farmer/herder clashes that led to at least 46 deaths in Benue State. On the other hand, there was a spike in banditry/pillaging in the region. In Plateau State for instance, pillages and abductions led to the deaths of at least 139 persons, and at least 99 other people in Benue state.

The rest of the North Central in 2020 did not particularly fare better. For instance, Niger state, the Federal Capital Territory's neighbour to the East, struggled with widespread attacks in several of its communities. Rafi, Shiroro, and Rijau Local Government Areas of Niger State were increasingly beset by raids, arson, and abductions which led to the deaths of at least 258 persons, this is more than a hundred percent higher than the numbers from 2019 in which we had documented 100 deaths.

The Federal Capital Territory's neighbour to the West - Kogi State, was also a hotspot for targeted and random abductions, as well as bandit attacks. As a travel connection hub, for various parts of the country, road attacks by kidnap rings became routine.

In spite of its exalted position and resources as the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), the Area Councils of Abuja, particularly away from the city centre (Gwagwalada, Abaji and Kuje) were also beleaguered by organized criminal groups which attacked communities, and kidnapped residents at will. Particularly worrisome was the yet to be understood

pattern of targeted kidnapping and killings of security agents – especially NSCDC and Immigration officers at Kuje.

Economically - motivated abductions remained prevalent on Federal highways leading into the FCT. Lokoja – Abuja highway and Kaduna – Abuja expressway were hubs for commercial attacks targeting road commuters.

The South-East

The South-East region recorded the least number of violent killings in 2020. But as with other parts of the country, there was a spike in the numbers compared with the previous year. (In 2019 we documented at least 94 atrocious killings in the region, and at least 162 in 2020).

We observed an upsurge in inter-communal crises. Of particular note was the intercommunal conflict in Ebonyi State that led to the deaths of 47 persons and the displacement of hundreds of residents. The inter-communal tension in some communities in Anambra State was also worrisome.

The strongest indicator that the South-West was no longer at ease with the level of insecurity in their region and no longer trusted the Federal Government to provide adequate protection, was the announcement by the governors of the region that they were initiating a regional security agency which they called Amotekun.

As noted in other parts of the Southern region, police brutality and extrajudicial killings were rife - at least 39 people were killed by state security agents in the region. It was also clear that the government sought to suppress the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) successionist movement, and that in the process, security officers deliberately targeted persons suspected to be IPOB members. Reports of arbitrary arrest and detention of hundreds of young men profiled to be members of the movement were reported within the period. Again, in contested circumstances that led to a clash between operatives of the State Security Service (SSS) and alleged IPOB members in Enugu State, the SSS reported that they lost 2 officers, while we were able to document that at least 21 persons believed to be IPOB members had been killed.

The South-West

Data analysis suggests that the highest number of casualties in the South-Western region of the country were from extrajudicial killings. In addition, there was an upsurge in nomadic herders' attacks on farmers and their farmlands. Cult-gang related incidents were also a recurrent decimal particularly in Lagos and Ogun state.

A large proportion of the extrajudicial killings in the region was attributable to the #EndSARS protests. In the aftermath of the protests, we documented a cumulative of 143 related deaths of both civilians and security officers across the country. Of this number, 82 people were killed in the southwest region.

The increase in atrocious crimes – including attacks on farmers and the destruction of their farmlands, kidnappings, and looting, were largely associated with nomadic herders, and bore ethnic colorations, thus deepened the “Fulani herdsman attackers” narrative. The strongest indicator that the South-West was no longer at ease with the level of insecurity in their region and no longer trusted the Federal Government to provide adequate protection, was the announcement by the governors of the region that they were initiating a regional security agency which they called Amotekun.

The South-South

The South-South region also known as the Niger Delta region was also bedeviled with various forms of violence including cult-gang attacks, extrajudicial killings, and abductions.

Cult-gang attacks were particularly prevalent in Edo, Rivers and Cross River States. Typically, the perpetrators of these violent acts were young men of rival cult-gang groups who perpetuated an assortment of crimes including - attacks against rival gangs in territory markings, assassinations,

extortions, abductions and robberies. Patronage by politicians ensure their protection from the legal consequences of their activities, and motivates their continued sway in the region. We noted that most cult-gang related killings occurred during territorial contestations between rival cult-gangs. At least 197 people were victims of cult-gang conflicts in the region in 2020.

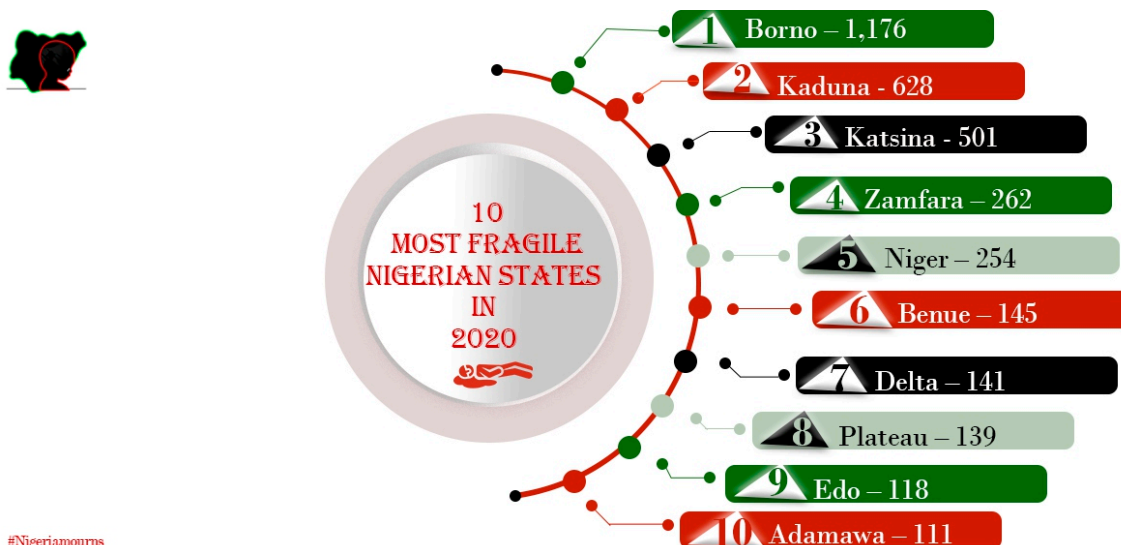
Conversely, the highhandedness of state agents in the region was palpable. Security officers systemically extorted and harassed residents. In addition to arbitrary arrests, forced disappearances, 'accidental' deaths from “stray bullets”, and extrajudicial killings for refusing to comply with unlawful demands, especially bribes, were also common.

Young people in the South region of the country lived in constant fear of harassment from both cult-gangs and the Police. Interestingly, the #ENDSARS protests began following a viral video which captured the shooting of a young man by police officers, who thereafter after the crime scene in his car, leaving him to die, at Sapele, Delta State.

The onslaught on Oyigbo community of Rivers state by security personnel attempting to smoke out IPOB members in the aftermath of the #EndSARS protests as highlighted in this report for the month of October, resulted in needless extrajudicial killings of at least 9 persons.

Most fragile states

Using atrocious killings as its litmus test, our tracking system reveals that the 10 most fragile states in 2020 were:



Month By Month Analysis

January 2020 kicked off with an uptick in the number of casualties, compared to the previous month, our data analysis revealed that at least one hundred and twenty-one (121) people were killed in the first 10 days of January 2020, and a total of four hundred and fifteen (415) by the end of the month. In a single incident, thirty (30) persons died after an improvised explosive device was detonated on a crowded bridge in the market town of Gamboru, Borno State, the terrorist group Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the attack.

In the same month, terrorists abducted and later decapitated Pastor Lawan Andimi, the Chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) Adamawa State Chapter, despite the global campaign and fundraising geared towards his release. Similarly, ISWAP released an execution video of a child soldier beheading a university student identified as Ropvil Daciya Dalep, who had been kidnapped earlier in the month along Maiduguri – Damaturu road in the North East. Other forms of violent incidents recorded in January included banditry, gang attacks, politically motivated forms of violence, mob lynching, extrajudicial killings, pirate attacks and isolated killings. In summary, at least 337 civilians and 78 security officers were killed in January.

The 6 governors of the South Western states announced the formation of a security outfit called the Western Nigeria Security Network (WNSN) and codenamed Operation Amotekun. The controversial move provoked heated debates across the country, with the Federal government first proscribing the group and later, seemingly coming to accept that it had come to stay.

The move by the governors of the South West appeared to have also catalyzed governors of the South Eastern states to, in February, commence plans to establish a South East Security Network. Unwittingly, it appears that the decentralization of Nigeria's security pivot began with the launch of Amotekun.

In **February**, we recorded at least three hundred and seventy-four (374) violent deaths related to mass atrocities across 21 states. This was a slight decline in the number of casualties from the previous month with a record of 415 deaths. The most prevalent security challenge in February were banditry/

pillage, which were recorded across the six geopolitical zones of the country and accounted for the highest number of deaths - 172.

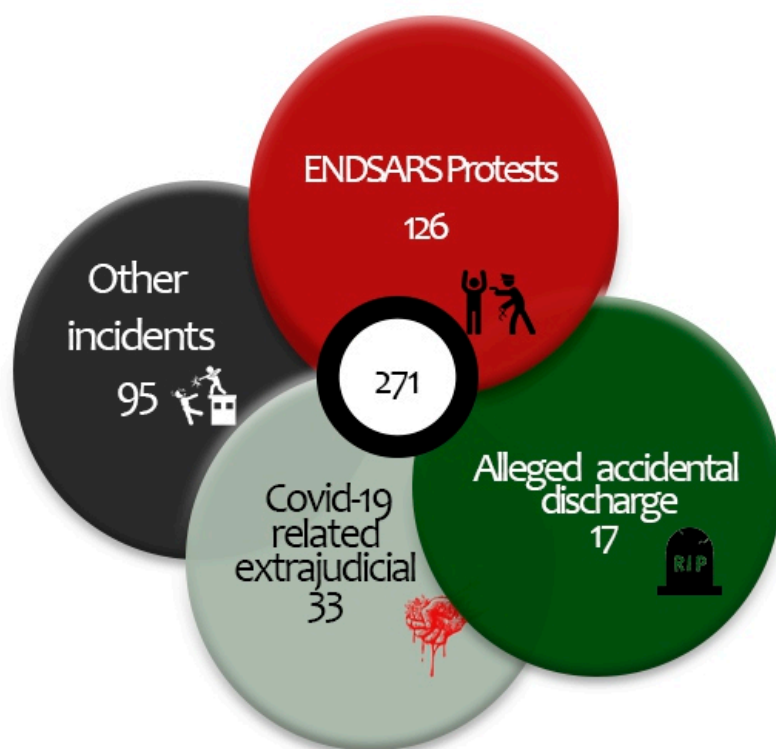
Several extrajudicial killings were also documented in February. Of particular note in this period was that a protest by enraged residents was spurred at Sagamu, Ogun state, when Kazeem Tiaminyu, a player with Remo star football club, a local football club in the city was killed by policemen attached to the Sagamu division. In response to the protests, men attached to the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) shot sporadically into the crowd, killing at least 6 people while many others sustained varying degrees of injuries. In another incident, a naval officer in Bayelsa state shot and killed a woman identified as Precious Okwuadigbo in the course of a heated argument. Another unidentified woman was shot dead by a police officer in Edo State.

Our data indicated a conspicuous increase in coordinated attacks on road commuters, with hotspots being the infamous Maiduguri-Damaturu way, the Ore-Benin way, the Benin – Owo road and the Abuja - Kaduna road. These attacks were often triggered for economically-motivated kidnaps and entailed sporadic killings. Other recorded killings were traced to an assortment of attacks: terrorism, herdsman attacks, communal conflicts, politically motivated attacks, a mob lynching, and cult-gang attacks. At least 351 civilians and 23 security officers were killed in February.

In response to the protests, men attached to the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) shot sporadically into the crowd, killing at least 6 people while many others sustained varying degrees of injuries.



BREAKDOWN OF EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS IN 2020



Location

Abia Adamawa Anambra
Bayelsa Benue Borno
Cross River Delta Ebonyi
Edo Enugu FCT
Imo Jigawa Kaduna Kano
Kwara Lagos Ogun
Ondo Osun Oyo
Plateau Rivers Sokoto
Taraba

#Nigeriamourns

#NotJustNumbers

#NotAtWar

March: In the first 30 days of Covid19 in Nigeria, (February 27 – March 27) the nation recorded 81 infections and 1 death, which led it to shut its borders and issued a lock-down order in an attempt to curtail the spread of the virus. However, within the same period, at least three hundred and fifty-three (353) lives were lost to violent atrocities across the country. Our tracking revealed multiple attacks on security officers by insurgents. Least one hundred and sixty-one (161) security officers were killed in March. Especially terrifying was the horrendous attack by Boko Haram terrorists in Borno State that led to the deaths of at least seventy (70) soldiers in a single incident. In spite of several highway security checkpoints spread across the country, attacks on, and kidnappings of commuters continued persistently. Extrajudicial killings by state security agents remained rampant. Of particular note was the tragic killing of a 15-year-old girl, identified as

Sekinat Agbelade, who was shot dead by Nigeria Customs Service agents at Agosasa, Ipokia Local Government Area of Ogun State, while they were in pursuit of suspected smugglers. There are no public records of the identities, investigation, or prosecution of the erring officers as at the time of this report.

Other recorded attacks bordered around terrorism, banditry/pillage attacks, economically-motivated abductions, communal clashes and rival cult clashes.

In **April** in spite of the restrictions on movement during the enforced lockdowns, at least two hundred and seventy-four (274) persons lost their lives to violent killings across Nigeria - 261 of them were civilians while 13 were security operatives. Particularly disturbing was the high-handedness of security personnel enforcing the COVID-19 lockdown orders. Their brutish acts alone led to the

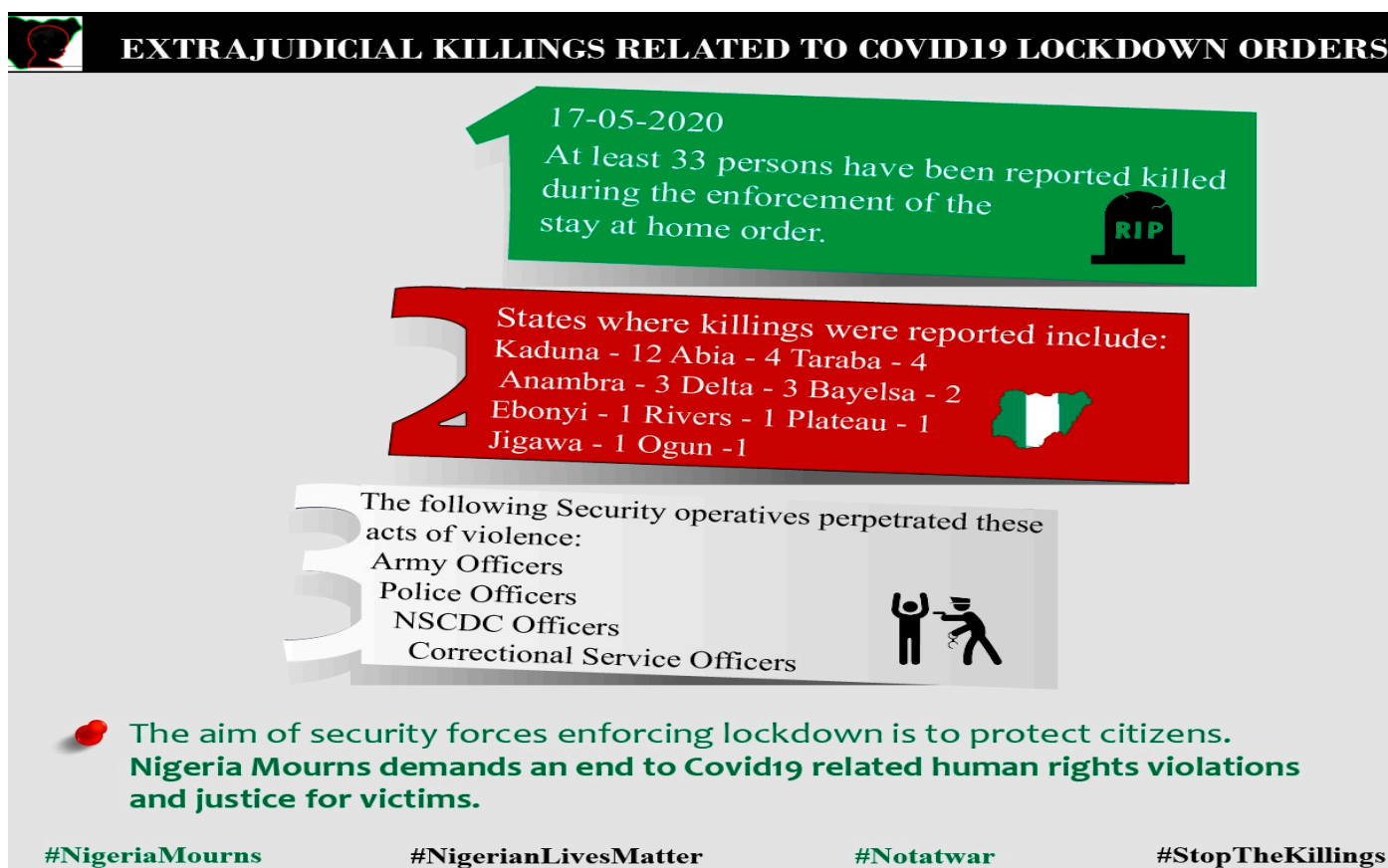
death of at least twenty-four (24) persons. In the wake of the COVID-19 lockdown order and the ensuing economic malaise, incidents of cult-gang attacks increased as armed gang-groups, in particular the 1 Million boys gang threatened and invaded areas such as: Alakuko, Ijaiye, Meiran, Iju-Ishaga, suburbs of Lagos state. Fearful residents remained indoors while others mobilized into vigilante groups and engaged the gangs, to repel them. Communities in places such as Surulere in Lagos formed self-defense vigilante groups. The Lagos state police command also increased the deployment of personnel to affected areas and gave out emergency numbers.

The North was not exempt and recorded a higher number of casualties, as armed bandits freely raided communities and ravaged their residents. At least one hundred and sixty (160) killings were attributed to pillage/banditry in April 2020. Witnesses confirmed that bandits operated unhindered, raided communities in their hundreds, kidnapped or shot victims indiscriminately, razed down houses, and left

several communities littered with corpses. Other incidents included Boko Haram attacks, cult gang clashes, random attacks and banditry/pillaging.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) confirmed that perennial violence in North-Western Nigeria forced about 23,000 Nigerians to seek safety in Niger Republic in April, spiking the numbers to about 60,000 persons that fled to the neighboring country in the span of a year. These of course do not include figures of other persons from other regions of the North, forced to take refuge in neighbouring countries, or as IDPs in other states tending south.

Reports of gender-based violence also rose exponentially with some fatalities. Government's responses remained lukewarm. For instance, while journalists were considered essential service and could move around during the lockdown, NGOs which provided frontline services to victims of SGBV did not receive similar waivers, and victims who could not reach police stations or access the hospitals were left to their fate.



1 Amzat, J., Aminu, K., Kolo, V. I., Akinyele, A. A., Ogundairo, J. A., & Danjibo, M. C. (2020). Coronavirus outbreak in Nigeria: Burden and socio-medical response during the first 100 days. *International journal of infectious diseases: IJID: official publication of the International Society for Infectious Diseases*, 98, 218–224. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijid.2020.06.067>

2 UNHCR 2020. Nigeria violence sees 23,000 refugees flee into Niger in last month alone. Viewed on January 25, 2020 at <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2020/5/5eba5d6f4/nigeria-violence-sees-23000-refugees-flee-niger-month-alone.html>

In **May**, we recorded at least three hundred and fifty-six (356) deaths. Of particular note was the escalating community attacks and pillages in Southern Kaduna, which led to the loss of at least fifty-six (56) human lives, and the loss of livestock, homes and livelihoods on a mass scale. The situation occasioned a nationwide outcry with the hashtag “#SouthernKadunaGenocide” trending on social media. We also observed an exponential rise in inter-communal clashes, with specific records in Adamawa, Benue, Anambra and Cross River States. In this period, at least eighty (80) deaths were attributed to communal clashes.

The spike in sexual, and other forms of gender-based violence across the country was within our radar, and we noted the start of a trend of rape-murders with a brutal rape-murder incident that aroused intense indignation across the nation and international community. Uwavera Omozuwa, a 22-year-old student was found raped and dead in a pool of her own blood, after she had attempted studying at a Church in Benin City during the lockdown. The hashtag #JusticeforUwa trended on social media for weeks, with Nigerians appealing to the government to find Uwa's killers. In August 2020, the Policemen attached to Benin City, Edo State announced that Uwa's murderers had been arrested and were being interrogated.

On the heels of Uwa's murder, another hashtag #JusticeforTina surfaced and took on a life of its own. Tina a 16-year-old school girl was murdered by a police officer in Lagos State.

Other incidents that occurred within this period included terrorism, herdsmen/bandit attacks on communities, extrajudicial killings, and rival cult clashes.

In this period, citizens also commemorated the third National Day of Mourning and Remembrance for Victims of Mass Atrocities; themed “Yet not at War”. While all of the activities marking the events were virtual, it recorded a wider and larger participation, with an uptick to citizens in 32 states and the FCT participating, and over 60 million impressions across social media platforms.

The spike in sexual, and other forms of gender-based violence across the country was within our radar, and we noted the start of a trend of rape-murders with a brutal rape-murder incident that aroused intense indignation across the nation and international community.

In **June**, the SGBV trend continued. Of note were other rape-murders of: A 19-year-old student, Barakat Bello, who was gang raped and murdered behind her home at I b a d a n , O y o s t a t e . In Kaduna state, the body of a 6year old girl Khadijat Ya'u, raped to death, was found at a mosque in Kaduna North local government area, days after another child (aged 11) had been brutally raped and found unconscious in the same community. Another 6-year-old child had been lured into, and raped at a church in Makurdi, Benue state. Across the country, the peculiar vulnerability of women and girls continued to be flagged with limited interventions.

On other fronts, Nigeria's security situation continued its sharp plummet —from three hundred and sixty-five (356) the previous month, to seven hundred and thirty-one (7 3 1) in J u n e . The highlight for June was Boko Haram's attack on Gubio, Borno state, which led to eighty-one (81) deaths. It took less than two hours for the attacking gunmen to kill more people in Gubio, than Covid-19 reportedly had in the past 3 months throughout the state. As at the time of documentation, twenty-three (23) deaths had been attributed to Covid - 1 9 in B o r n o . Other forms of violent incidents within this period included banditry/pillage attacks, continued terrorism, communal clashes, extrajudicial killings, and rival cult clashes.

In response to the clear increase in insecurity in the North West, especially the insistent attacks on communities in Southern Kaduna and Katsina state, citizens in the North commenced a digital protest, and subsequently a physical protest occasioning the use of the hashtag #NorthernLivesMatter. This also triggered several conversations at the National Assembly with little traction from the Executive, especially on the call for the resignation of the security chiefs who were all past their statutory retirement age, having spent more than 35 years in service.

In **July**, Nigeria's webs of violence were sustained with at least four hundred and fifteen (415) deaths occasioned by atrocious violence. Of this number, one hundred and thirty-two (132) were state security agents, implying that 1 out of every 3 persons killed in that month was a security officer.

The spike in communal violence in Southern Kaduna in July left more residents homeless, and at least one hundred and thirty-nine (139) persons dead. These killings spiraled despite the curfew imposed by the government and the proximity of military base assets within short miles of the communities.

In the same month, four aid workers that had been abducted in transit by Boko Haram terrorists in June were shot dead, a month after their abduction.



2020 Mass Atrocities Report

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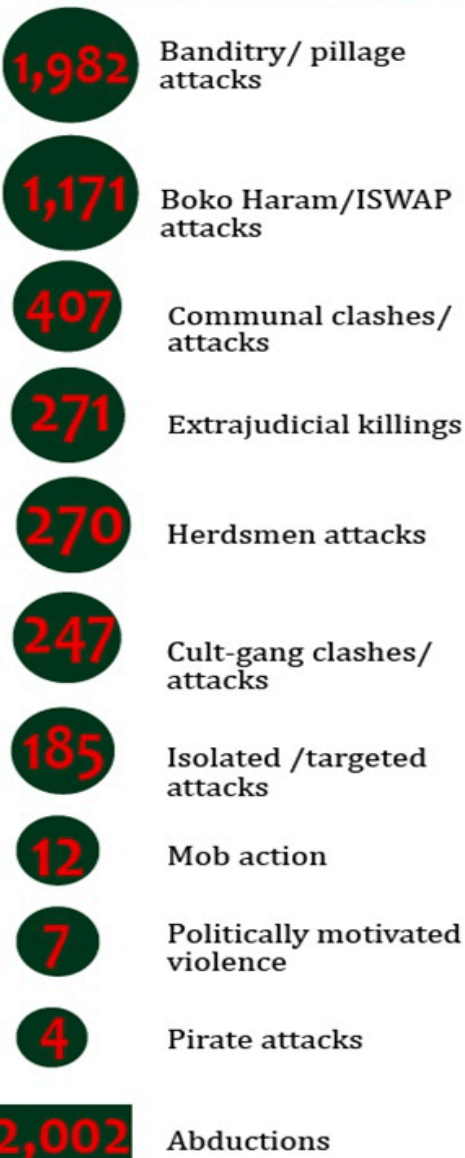
Reported number of deaths
from January - December 2020.

civilians

= 467 Soliders + 197 Police officers + 16 Naval officers + 12 NSCDC Officers + 6 Custom officers



Violent Incidents



Worst 5 states to live in



Regions

• North West - 1,527

Kaduna - 628, Katsina - 501, Zamfara - 262
Sokoto - 99, Kano - 19, Jigawa - 16, Kebbi 2.

• North East - 1,508

Borno - 1,176, Taraba - 141 Adamawa - 111
Yobe - 74, Bauchi - 5 Gombe - 1.

• North Central - 685

Niger - 254, Benue - 145, Plateau - 139, Kogi - 81,
Nassarawa - 32, FCT - 28 Kwara - 6.

• South South - 443

Delta - 141, Edo - 118, Rivers - 76,
Cross River - 50, Bayelsa - 43, Akwa Ibom - 15.

• South West - 231

Lagos - 87, Oyo - 42, Ogun - 40,
Ondo - 37, Ekiti - 15, Osun - 10.

• South East - 162

Ebonyi - 50, Anambra - 39, Enugu - 34,
Imo - 21, Abia - 18.

#NigeriaMourns

#NotAtWar

#StopTheKillings

The inhumane act was disseminated in a viral video. Concerns around violent episodes often described as 'herdsmen' attacks featured throughout July across various states, and particularly in the South-West, Middle-Belt and North-West regions. At least fifteen (15) farmers were shot dead by armed "herdsmen" while working in their various farmlands in Katsina State in the course of the month. In the same month, four aid workers that had been abducted in transit by Boko Haram terrorists in June were shot dead, a month after their abduction. The inhumane act was disseminated in a viral video. Concerns around violent episodes often described as 'herdsmen' attacks featured throughout July across various states, and particularly in the South-West, Middle-Belt and North-West regions. At least fifteen (15) farmers were shot dead by armed "herdsmen" while working in their various farmlands in Katsina State in the course of the month.

In **August**, Nigeria recorded a decline in the number of casualties from mass atrocities compared to the previous 2 months. However, at least three hundred and eleven (311) lives were lost in related incidents. Rafi, Shiroro, and Rijau Local Government Areas of Niger State came to the fore as hotspots for pillage, arson, and abductions; while the killings in Southern Kaduna continued unabated. At least 21 persons alleged to be members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), and 2 operatives of the State Security Service (SSS) were killed after the SSS operatives tried to quash an assemblage of IPOB members at Emene, Enugu State.

Other forms of attacks recorded, included economically-motivated, targeted, and random abductions; extrajudicial killings; and, the continued spate in banditry and terrorism.

In **September**, at least two hundred and two (202) persons lost their lives to violent killings across the country. These include recorded killings resulting from the endemic terrorism, banditry/pillage attacks, targeted and random abductions, and extrajudicial killings perpetrated by security personnel.

There were two attempted terrorist attacks on the convoy of Governor Zulum of Borno State. In the first attack, seven (7) Policemen and three (3) Soldiers were killed, while in the second incident, twelve (12) police officers, five (5) soldiers and nine (9) civilians were killed. In an unrelated attack by Boko Haram insurgents, Col Dahiru U. Bako and six (6) other soldiers were killed. Before his death, he was the commander of 25 Task Force Brigade in Damboa, Borno State.

Ahead of Nigeria's 60th independence anniversary,

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) issued a sit-at-home order across the South Eastern states. In response to this, the police in Imo State detachments of the Nigerian Army and Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) in a show of "strength" in Owerri. The convoy included an Armoured Personnel Carrier and several patrol vans, loaded with heavily armed security agents, causing tension amongst residents of the state capital.

The extrajudicial killings of Jennifer Abugu, a 24-year-old woman who had been unlawfully arrested by SARS officers in lieu of her fiancé; raped, murdered, and dumped at the Teaching Hospital of the University of Abuja, also ignited national outrage. However, not even calls for justice from the floor of the Senate was able to end the impunity that trailed her killing.

In the same month, in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, a young musician – Daniel Ikeaguchi, aka Sleek, was extrajudicially killed in sinister circumstances. Again, not even state governor's outcry challenged the failure of the police force to investigate his killing.

Conversely, we noted the start of the trend of abductions of security officers. In an incident, 12 officers of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) traveling in a 2-vehicle convoy were attacked by gunmen; two officers were killed, while 10 others were abducted.

It would seem that a timer went off in Nigeria after the nation's 60th independence commemoration on **October** 1, 2020. Citizens, particularly young people in the Southern and Middlebelt regions of the country decided that they could no longer cope with the extra pressure of insecurity from state security agencies alongside non-state actors, and began an organic, nonviolent protest that quickly spilled over from the digital space to the streets of major cities, particularly in the Southern states of the country, with pockets of Northern states joining the movement to #EndSARS.

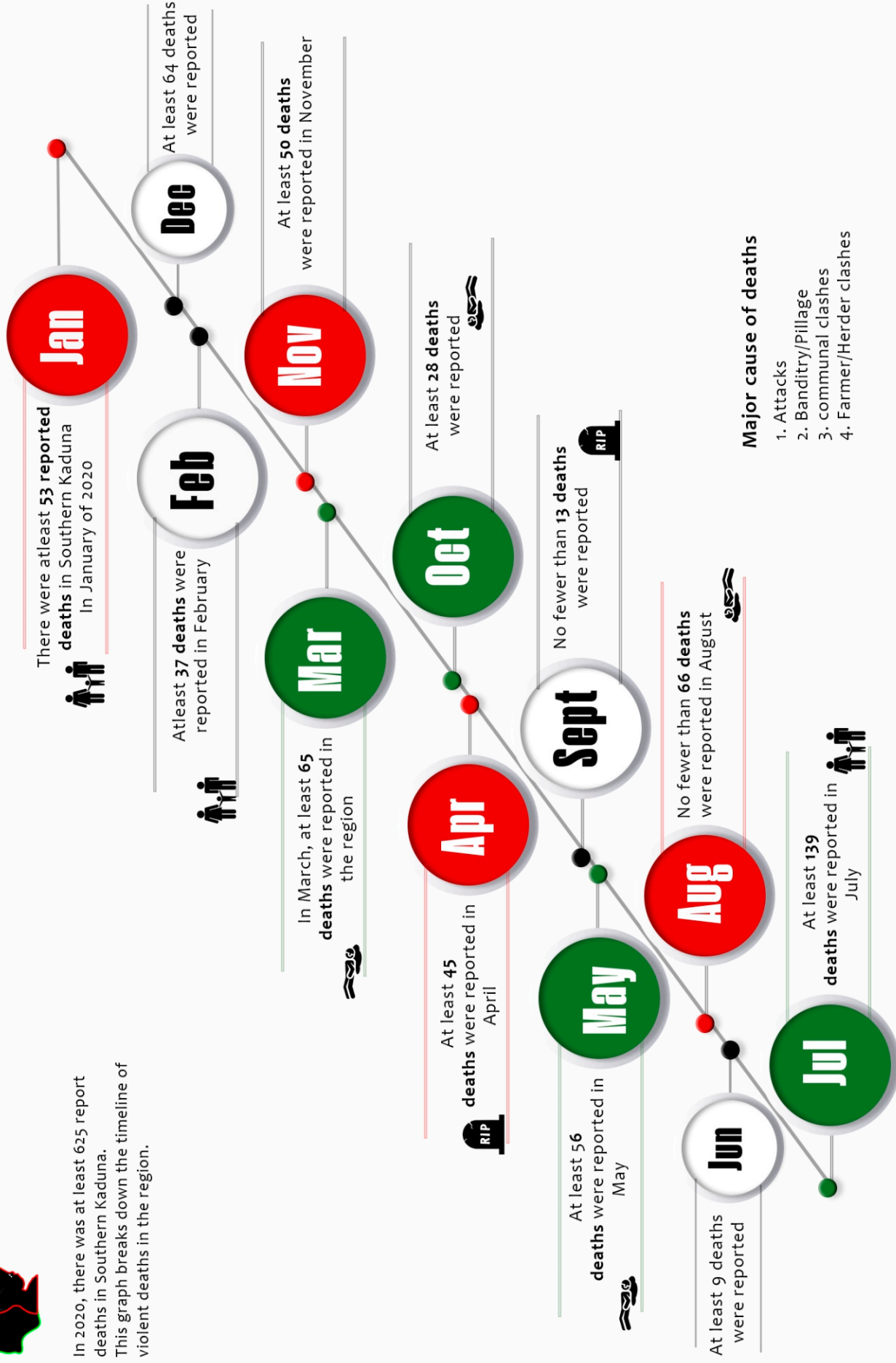
They were principally triggered following the release of videos of extrajudicial killings of citizens on social media, especially of a documented incident in Delta state, in which SARS officers shot and dumped a young man in front of a popular hotel in Delta state, and thereafter drove off with his vehicle on October 3. On October 8th, another video of an unidentified, unarmed woman who had been shoot in the mouth at a bus-stop in Lagos, by a police officer later identified as Sergeant Eze Aiwansoba emerged yet again on social media.

The citizen-movement for justice was not surprising. Between January and September 2020, we had recorded at least 122 persons killed in extrajudicial



Timeline of violence in Southern Kaduna Jan - Dec 2020

In 2020, there was at least 625 report deaths in Southern Kaduna. This graph breaks down the timeline of violent deaths in the region.



#EndTheKillings

#Justice4SouthernKaduna

#NotAtWar

#SouthernKadunaLivesMatter

circumstances by security forces including SARS. These numbers did not include the 'disappeared', or the other various forms of rights violations that citizens suffered; it also had not included their records from previous years. Amnesty International's special research report on SARS - Nigeria: A Time to End Impunity had also stated that within the period of January 2017 and May 2020, it had documented 82 cases of SARS brutality, which included various forms of extortion, torture and ill treatment such as: hanging, mock execution, beating, punching and kicking, burning with cigarettes, waterboarding.

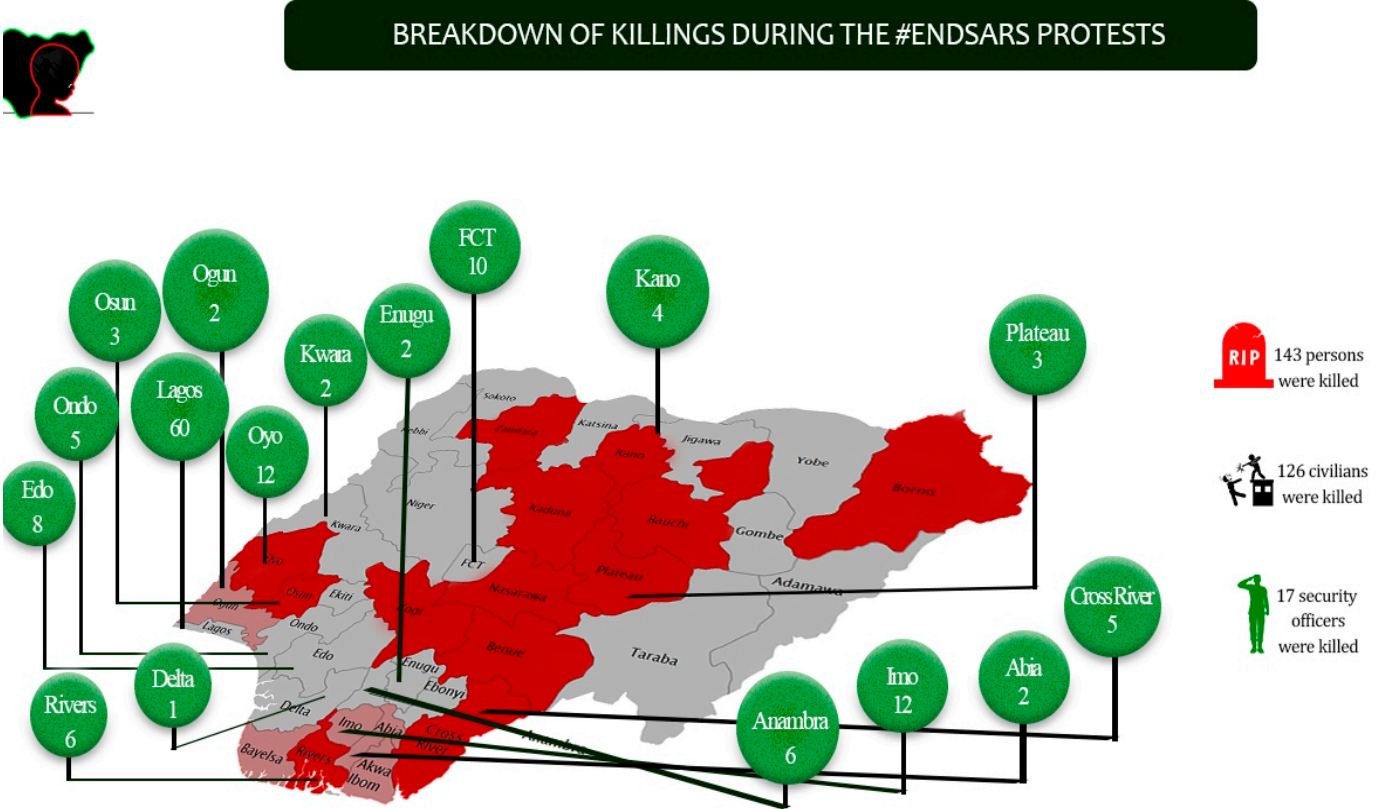
The #EndSARS movement was echoed by Nigerians in diaspora, and celebrities cross the globe. Just like the #BlackLivesMatterMovement, it would seem that the reflective period afforded citizens by the covid19 lockdowns ignited moments for reflection, and that its end result was a quest for social justice.

The #EndSARS movement were attacked by violent counter-protesters, many of who were linked to persons who had access to, and utilized state assets to disrupt the protests. On October 20, 2020, officers of the Nigerian army opened fire on unarmed protesters at the pulse center of the movement – the Lekki Toll Gate. The numbers of persons killed at Lekki

Toll Gate are still contested by its stakeholders on all sides. Apart from those killed at the Toll Gate, eye-witnesses reported sighting the drowned bodies of persons fleeing live bullets in the communities around the Lagoon, close to the Toll Gate; and many persons wounded in the attack. Thereafter, violent mobs in a spin-off of the counter protests, began a furry of looting and arson across Abuja, Lagos, Cross River and Edo states. Some of the buildings destroyed included the home of the state governor's mother, and the Courts complex comprising of the Lagos state High Court and the Division of the Court of Appeal. The BRT Bus terminal was also set on fire, while several other privately owned businesses were looted, and had their facilities destroyed.

It is important not to be distracted by attempts to change the facts of the narrative on the #EndSARS movement. The attempts by sponsored elements to disrupt the organic, peaceful, citizens led movement morphed out of control into uncontained violence in Lagos, Cross River, Abuja and Edo states.

The situation in Rivers State evolved from a protest to a massacre in Oyigbo, a satellite town in the border between Rivers and Abia State. Residents alleged to be members of the IPOB group reportedly killed 6 soldiers and razed more than 50 vehicles during the



protests. In an attempt to identify the culprits, the Nigerian army launched an attack on residents. In the heat of the crisis, the State governor Mr. Nyesom Wike imposed a curfew to control the already escalated situation. Under the cover of the curfew, soldiers invaded homes and harassed civilians. Some residents reported seeing dead bodies on the street, allegedly shot by soldiers. The total number of casualties from this incident remains uncertain, however we ascertained that there were at least 9 victims.

In addition, in the obsessive concentration of trying to decipher the tainted and mostly disappeared evidence of what happened at the Lekki Toll Gate, little attention is paid to other related killings across the country. The government's attempt to quash dissent by arbitrarily arresting persons perceived to be leaders of the movement, placing many supporters of the movement on travel bans, and freezing accounts related to the movement are also worthy of note.

Curiously, there was a sharp drop in the other established endemic forms of insecurity and atrocities across Nigeria while the #EndSARS protests lasted. Our data collation informs that there were at least four hundred and nineteen (419) deaths occasioned by atrocious violence in October 2020. One hundred and forty-three (143) of these killings were attributed to attacks on #ENDSARS protesters across the country. This figure also includes the unfortunate killing of seventeen (17) security officers.

The Lekki shooting which claimed at least twenty (20) lives was documented in videos, including in an Instagram live video. However, the government in a confusing sequence of denials and admissions, fluttered before the panels of inquiry it commissioned to investigate security forces brutality per state, especially that of Lagos. It is important to note that panels of inquiries set up to investigate atrocities in Nigeria are by their historic precedence, hamster wheels that never quite yield justice for victims, or punish perpetrators.

Other violent incidents within this period included organized banditry/pillage attacks, unrelenting terrorism in the North East, and pockets of communal clashes.

November: On the heels of the tragic anticlimax of the #EndSARS movement, the continued insecurity in Northern Nigeria, again rose to the fore. Out of the three hundred and forty-nine (349) lives that were lost to atrocious killings in November, at least one hundred and forty-nine (149) were lost in terrorist attacks. In a single gruesome incident, seventy-eight (78) farmers were decapitated in their farmlands in

Zabarmari, Borno State.

Other incidents recorded during this period included a surge in kidnap incidents (at least 290 people were abducted); extrajudicial killings, and rival cult clashes were also reported.

In **December**, at least three hundred and forty-eight (348) persons were killed. In that month, we observed an increase in cult-gang clashes and related killings, especially in Ogun, Lagos and Edo States.

Following the trend of an increase in kidnaps across the country as noted the previous month, 'Bandits' abducted at least three hundred (300) students from a boarding school in Kankara Local Government Area, Katsina State. They were later released after "negotiations" with the government. These faceless bandits have continued to distress residents and displace them from their communities.

The government of Lagos state also demolished a slum popularly known as "Monkey Village" giving residents barely 48 hours' notice, and without proper legal documentation; thus, following a trend of similar demolitions, even during the lockdowns.

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Methodology

Nigeria's violence is metastatic—in terms of its chronology, geography and causes. In this state of affairs, with fluid baselines in terms of human assets and violence markers, it is difficult to ascribe certainty to numbers and intensities. For this report, we chose to measure Nigeria's propensity for mass atrocities using killings and kidnappings as our core indicators. The forms of mass atrocities tracked focused on the most endemic and impunitious forms, which included extrajudicial killings, an assortment of forms of attacks on communities including pillages and herdsman attacks, sexual and gender-based violence, politically motivated violence, terrorism, and cult-gang activities.

Our data is sourced from multiple local sources including member organizations of the Community of Practice Against Mass Atrocities and Nigeria Mourns partners, and the media. We only accept incidents verified by at least two or more of the sources stated above through a blind verification process.

We are aware of a general tendency to under-report military casualties in theatres of operation in the conflict with Boko Haram in North-Eastern Nigeria, and other parts of the country. We therefore recognize that the actual figures for uniformed casualties are likely to be significantly higher.

We are also aware that kidnaps are underreported, in keeping with the contexts in which they usually occur; and so our figures which are derived from clearly verifiable incidents, are an indicator that the actual figures are much higher. In addition, because of the secrecy that often mark kidnap negotiations, we could not accurately track actual releases, the condition of their release, and the number of victims subsequently killed.

Our methodology errs on the side of the conservative, pointing to only verifiable incidents and locations. The figures provided here, therefore represent the least possible numbers of casualties.

Actual casualty figures are likely to be much higher but we are confident that the trends evident from these figures will hold up to scrutiny.



#NOTATWAR
 #KALIIPIPI
 #NIGERIAATSIXTY
 #NIGERIAMOURNS

WA, IGABI, CHIKUN, KAU, JEMA, KAU, GEFE, LIBERE, BUDARAFI, SHIRI,
 MARTE, ZURMI, BATSARI, DUTSINMA, BIRNIN GWARI, SABON BIRNIN, ETCHE, EMENE, OZU,
 ORI, APIAKO, ATAKMAWEI, POTISKUM, IKOM, ODUKPANI, GWER EAST, GWER WEST, MAKUR,
 NI GWARI, GWOZA, ARKA, BURUKU, KATSINA ALA, LOGO, UKUM, KWANDE, OJU, GBAJIMBAG,
 IO, WANNUNE, SANKERA, MAGUMERI, KUKAWA, APIASHYIM, KIBORI, APIAKO, ATAKMA,
 ANI, CHIKUN, KAJURU, GIWA, IGABI, CHIKUN, KAURU, JEMA, KAURA, KALLAH, GEFF,
 ABAKPA, UGBOKOLO, MAGUMERI, KUKAWA, APIASHYIM, KIBORI, APIAKO, ATAK,
 MAGANI, CHIKUN, KAJURU, GIWA, IGABI, CHIKUN, KAURU, JEMA, KAURA, KALLAH, I,
 SARI, DUTSINMA, BIRNIN GWARI, MAGUMERI, KUKAWA, OKIRO OFAMBE, KASUWA,
 WARI, GWOZA, NGALA, DIKWA, BAMA, MARTE, ZURMI, BATSARI, DUTSINMA, BIRN,
 YUGA, MAGUMERI, KUKAWA, APIASHYIM, KIBORI, APIAKO, ATAKMAWEI, MAGA,
 AJURU, GIWA, IGABI, CHIKUN, KAURU, JEMA, KAURA, KALLAH, GEFE, LIBERE, I,
 A, BAMA, MARTE, ZURMI, BATSARI, DUTSINMA, BIRNIN GWARI, SABON BIRNIN,
 A. KIBORI, APIAKO, ATAKMAWEI, MAGAMIYA, ATYPEPOM, KIRI,
 LAH, GEFE, LIBERE, BUDARAFI, SHIP,
 ABON BIRNIN, ETCHE, EMENE, C,
 DIKWU, MARIGA, UKURU, I,
 A. KALIIPIPI

NOT EVERY
 COMMUNITY
 IS CELEBRATING
 NIGERIA
 @
 60

Conclusion

Our indicators point to the fact that Nigeria's insecurity was heightened in 2020. It did not help that the country had to contend with Covid19 and dwindling oil sales at the same time. The casualties from 2020 were conspicuously higher compared to 2019 in which period we had recorded 3,188 killings (A difference of at least 1,360). Disaggregated, at least: 698 security personnel and 3,852 civilians were killed, and at the very least, more than 2000 persons were kidnapped in a single year, in a country not officially at 'war'!

Citizens frustration with the state of affairs was palpable throughout the year and especially in October. The #EndSARS movement was not just about police brutality, but about insecurity, and social injustice. It was a cry for good governance starting with one theme. Other citizens led movements on security that elicited viral hashtags included the #NorthernLivesMatter movement, and the #SecureNorth protests. It would seem that the communication gap between citizens and the government at the centre became wider, with the Federal government considering these several protests to be 'politically sponsored', and met most of them with brute force.

State governments also seemed to have registered their dissonance and lack of faith in the government at the centre to provide security leadership. The Western Nigeria Security Network (WNSN) codenamed Operation Amotekun, subscribed to by all of the governors of South Western Nigeria states, for all intent and purpose was a vote of no confidence in the federal government's ability to secure their states.

The security and welfare of the nation's security forces also did not seem to improve in 2020. Rather, military personnel were punished for demanding better equipment and conditions of service. A military court in Abuja in December 2020, convicted a former Theatre Commander of Operation Lafiya Dole, Major-General Olusegun Adeniyi, who once led the country's onslaught against Boko Haram, and his orderly, Tokunbo Obanla, for contravening a 2018 military social media policy, by sharing videos of their poor welfare on social media. As noted in this report, 1 in every 5.5 killings recorded in 2020 were of security personnel. This data did not improve from 2019 figures. It is worrisome that security officers and their weapons continue to be deliberately targeted.

Worrying indicators on the mental health of frontline security agents were also noted for the third year running. It would appear that because they do not receive structured psychosocial support, a number of them manifest symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) with sometimes tragic consequences. For instance, in December 2020, Police inspector John Markus committed suicide in Abuja, after fatally shooting his colleague Matthew Akubo. Shortly before the tragic incident, he had indiscriminately fired shots in the air while on duty as a guard. Earlier in September, a soldier on the frontlines in Yobe state, North East of the Country had also committed suicide. In February 2020, another soldier had shot 4 colleagues before killing himself in Borno state. It will be recalled that in 2019, we had documented similar incidents of security forces suicide, and PTSD related shooting of colleagues. Troubled from within and without, state security agents are highly vulnerable and in need of protection.

Civilians also continued to be vulnerable to attacks by state security personnel. At least two hundred and eighty (280) persons were extrajudicially killed in 2020. Impunity also remained the core cause of this form of atrocity, as there were very few arrests and convictions made, even in instances in which the killers were obvious.

Ongoing & Burgeoning Humanitarian Crisis: With the insurgency in the Northern parts of the country and various pillage, arson and herder attacks in the Middle Belt, coupled with government demolitions of settlements, Nigeria continues to record high numbers of internally displaced persons sheltering in IDP camps in the North East and in various settlements, with their host communities spreading westward and southward. Many cities have become inundated with the influx of destitute youth, women and children who take refuge in slums and other settlements – only to watch them displaced again due to demolitions or insecurity. According to UNHCR Official figures of internally displaced persons in the North East region alone, are estimated at 2.7million people; but we believe that these figures are higher as they do not include those displaced to the Middle Belt, the North West, the South South and other areas as a result of insecurity and other government

actions in places such as Oyigbo in Rivers State. Even in the other regions named, hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced in their own theatres of violence.

In August 2020, the government of Borno state encouraged nearly two million internally displaced people (IDPs) in Maiduguri and other areas to return to their communities. This decision was made disregarding the precarious state of the communities. Upon their return, some have again suffered attacks and were again displaced. For instance, Boko Haram insurgents attacked a community in Kukawa Local Government Area and abducted at least 100 people. Within this period, Borno state governor Babagana Zulum's convoy was attacked by Boko haram insurgents, however, while the governor survived, at least 18 people died. It was the second attack on the governor's convoy in just one month. In 2020 there were 4 attempts on the governor's life.

The government needs to do more work to ascertain the number of IDPs, to plan interventions and to rehabilitate IDPs across the country while improving security.

How to Stem the Tide

Projections for peace and security in Nigeria remain bleak. This state of affairs does not bode well for the peace and the welfare of its citizens. More than ever, the country was strongly divided along ethnic and religious lines. These divides are largely attributable to the optics of bias in governance which suggest the preference of certain ethnic groups or religion. In other instances, they are inherent fears in a highly unstable country in which most citizens feel 'marginalized' by government, based on their socioeconomic status, state of origin, gender, ability, or religion.

Impunity in its various forms, particularly – corruption, state capture and disregard for the rule of law, continue to jeopardize security across the country, especially with very limited state resources and weak institutions.

We reiterate the recommendations made in our [2019 report](#) for stemming the tide:

1. Strengthen Nigeria's state institutions and governance structures: It will take more than reforming Nigeria's 'security architecture's hardware'. The 'software' of strong, and functional state institutions remain essential for protecting the rights of citizens and ensuring their welfare.
2. Improve the Welfare and Work Conditions of

Security Forces: The government must also ensure the protection of the nation's security human assets and adequately equip them to deal with the security challenges with which the nation is confronted. The Police Force needs to be fortified to take up the task of internal security. Its personnel alongside other security agencies, must have their work conditions improved, including the prioritization of their mental health.

3. Reduce the proliferations of arms and weapons across the country: A report by SBM Intelligence "Small Arms, Mass Atrocities & Migration in Nigeria", estimates that there are 6,145,000 arms in the possession of non-state actors in Nigeria; while the nation's security forces had only 586,600 fire arms. The nation's porous land and sea borders have remained easy conduits for smuggling arms. In addition, a 2015 survey estimates that locally made small arms and light weapons have supplied at least 60% of the crimes in the landlocked South Eastern part of the country. In 2019, the indictment of 26 NSCDC officers and 26 military personnel for selling arms to bandits, confirmed the complicity of some state agents in the economy of violence across the country.

Nigeria's demand for small arms and light weapons, and its end-user's ability to afford them, are often linked to the nation's political cycles, which are notoriously violent. Creating disincentives for political violence will reduce the need for the importation and local manufacture of these arms, which after elections, are never mopped out of circulation, and are adopted by other franchise of violence across the country.

We do not believe that the closure of the nation's official borders is a permanent solution to reducing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria. It is clear that the harder work lies in disincentivizing violence and its various franchise across the country.

4. Efficacious Resource governance: Nigeria's poor governance of its natural and material resources trigger violence. And by natural resources, we mean not just minerals, but also land and potable water bodies. Poorly maintained capital infrastructure, lack of

fiscal justice, and prodigal disbursement of state and national assets have also increased citizens' frustrations. Nigeria needs to think beyond 'low hanging fruits' and be forward thinking about its future and govern its resources accordingly.

5. Invest in Human Development: In the face of dwindling oil resources from the nation's mono-economy, poor economic infrastructure, endemic poverty, a bugling youth population, youth unemployment rate of more than 14%, the highest number of out of school children in the world, and an educational system that does not appear to be future-responsive, Nigeria's young people face a bleak future. It is worsened by a sense of social injustice and failure of the state to invest in the welfare of this vulnerable population. It is a perfect storm for engendering the propensity to engage in crime and perpetrate atrocities.

The tough work of investing in its young population which technically is more than half of its population is the hard, long road Nigeria must walk to its stability. It must take into cognizance its population growth projections, the inevitability of climate change and its associated impact on natural resources including land, water and food security. It must also think deeply about the end of the oil boom and its next sources of revenue. If its citizens prosper, if its most vulnerable (women, children, persons with disability, the indigent) are provided with fulcrums for prosperity (quality education, skills, access to credit, and social security), it will end endemic poverty, incentivize faith in the nation-state, and mitigate violence in a sustainable manner.

6. Protection of Civic Rights and Freedoms: In addition to the forgoing, we think it is important to reiterate the importance of the protection of the rights of citizens and their civic freedoms. These rights include the constitutional right of participatory governance. Participatory governance directly links with the right to dissent, free speech, access to information and voters' rights. Attempts at enacting draconian laws, the continuous spate of arrests and detentions of activists and journalists, and the security forces' violent disruption of

peaceful protests, all underscore the government's attempt at muzzling freedom of expression.

Protecting Nigeria's civic space is imperative. Should citizens be unable to engage government and feel unable to participate in their own governance, they will engage in non-constructive means of doing so.

7. Respect for the Rule of Law: Government must lead by example. Respect for the rule of law must start with custodians of the law, public officers, law enforcement officers and institutions. Social contract is built on trust. For citizens to conform to the rule of law, they need to be assured that the leadership of their state will lead by example.

Endemic human rights violations, the failure of the State to fulfil and guarantee them, the impunity and indifference with which the State responds to the suffering, of its citizens have only fueled citizen frustration and the atrocities across the country. There has also been very little accountability for the various crimes perpetuated against individuals and communities in the past. The misapplied quest for justice, often results in self-help reprisal attacks, which morph and snowball into bigger crimes and conflicts. Also importantly, the rights of the most vulnerable: women, children, disabled persons, and the indigent must be respected by ensuring equality before the law and prioritization by the state.

8. End Impunity: As noted several times in this report, at the root of the mass atrocities in Nigeria is impunity. Impunity has birthed several genres of crimes across the country and continues to engender existing ones. The government must stop awarding blanket amnesty to certain crimes once they are labeled 'ethnic and religious crises', 'communal clashes' or 'political violence'. It must ensure equality before the law, and ensure transparent and accountable systems for justice. Negotiating with organized criminal groups does not fall within the confines of justice or bring permanent peace.

While extrajudicial killings and security forces brutality are rife in Nigeria, they are not always carried out by state actors. Quasi-

state security actors such as 'civilian JTF', 'Hisbah' 'Amotekun' etc., have become a regular feature in Nigeria's security architecture, but they are not held accountable for the various crimes they commit in the line of their exercises. While the government explains them as 'children of necessity' to augment the efforts of state security agencies, it is important to note that the buck stops at the government's door as enablers of their excesses. It is also critical to note that disarming these quasi-public security actors of their arms and powers will be an herculean task when their services will no longer be 'required'.

9. Secure Borders, Employ Ungoverned Spaces: Ungoverned spaces have provided physical harbours for several organized criminal groups across the country (especially in the North), while porous land borders have ensured the ease of their importation of arms and their escape after their activities. State governments must therefore harness ungoverned spaces for development, and to improve the GDP of their states by establishing social infrastructures that promote economic activities, and structures for human development. In addition, the Federal government must work to ensure the improved security of the nation's borders.



1 Chimaobi Nwaiwu. (2015) 60% of illegal arms in S/East produced locally —Presidential C'ttee Vanguard Newspaper. 27, October Seen on January 27, 2021 at <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/10/60-of-illegal-arms-in-seast-produced-locally-presidential-cttee/>