



Rising insecurity in Abuja

ABOUT SBM INTELLIGENCE

Founded in 2013, SBM Intelligence, an arm of SB Morgen, is an organisation devoted to the collection and analysis of information. We offer comprehensive analysis for, and support to governments, businesses and NGOs.

SBM Intelligence runs a Nigeria-wide network of contacts and associates. In 2015, SBM Intelligence became a partner to Stratfor, one of the leading private intelligence agencies in the world.

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DISCLAIMER

The data contained in this report is only up-to-date as of Monday, 3 February, 2020. Some of it is subject to change during the natural course of events. SB Morgen cannot accept liability in respect of any errors or omissions that may follow such events that may invalidate data contained herein.

Our researchers employed methods such as one-on-one interviews and desk research to collate the available data. Our editors sifted through the data and prepared the report, using various proprietary tools to fact-check and copy edit the information gathered.

Our publicly released reports are formatted for easy and quick reading, and may not necessarily contain all the data that SB Morgen gathered during a given survey. Complete datasets can be made available on request.

INTRODUCTION

On the evening of 2 February 2020, a fully loaded Toyota Previa bus was forced off the Piri-Kwali road in Abuja, Nigeria's capital by gunmen who shot at the vehicle. The spokesman for the FCT Command of Nigeria's Police, DSP Anjuguri Manzah said that four suspected kidnapppers were arrested and "some of the passengers were rescued by a joint effort of the police and some youths of the nearby community, while others were still with the kidnapppers."

Mr Manzah's statement did not give an exact number of rescued



victims. A fully loaded Previa typically seats seven people. Contrary to the claims of the authorities, sources confirmed to SBM that the vehicle was fully loaded with seven people and that none of the kidnap victims has been rescued.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's overall security situation has deteriorated in recent months and is now threatening to engulf all parts of the country. The Boko Haram Islamist insurgency in the North East has now entered its second decade, a war which has claimed thousands of lives. In most parts of the South, gang violence, kidnap, sea piracy and organised robbery daily threaten the peace. In the North West, bandits are on the loose, making life miserable for rural dwellers, burning farms and razing houses. The North Central, the region that hosts the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, has not left out.

While in the grand scheme of things, the Federal Capital Territory has been spared these security concerns, lately, that has changed. There have been a rising number of abductions and robberies in recent weeks. Commuters particularly face a growing risk of being robbed in taxis operated by criminal elements commonly known as "one chance".

On an almost daily basis, reports of a kidnap make the news. In October 2019, gunmen abducted a policeman¹ identified as Nengba Mundi at Rubochi community in the Kuje district of the FCT. His rifle was taken away from him, and it is unclear if his abductors were ever found. This incident happened in the same week where the younger brother of a former chairman of Kuje Area Council, Mohammed Galadima, was kidnapped in the same community. In both incidents, their abductors stormed the community, shooting sporadically into the air as they whisked the men away without any challenge.

1 - <https://tribuneonlineng.com/gunmen-abduct-police-one-other-in-abuja/>

SECURITY INCIDENTS

Date	Location	Description	Incident type	Fatalities
28/02/2019	Lugbe	Gunshots in fracas between NURTW members.	Gang Violence	
20/03/2019	Nyanya	A policeman beat an officer of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps to death.		1
22/03/2019	Lokoja Expressway	Robbery and gunshots reported at the Abaji-Abuja section of the Abuja-Lokoja Expressway.		
04/10/2019	Tungan-Maje	Protests over a land dispute at Tungan-Maje on outskirts of Abuja. The youths blocked the Zuba - Gwagwalada Expressway to protest the killing of a youth by unidentified military personnel.		1
05/07/2019	Wuse 2	Gunshots heard during a robbery operation on Ademola Adetokunbo Crescent and IBB Way.	Gun violence	
22/07/2019	Federal Secretariat	About 12 people, including a policeman, were killed during a violent clash between the IMN and security operatives. A Channels TV reporter, Precious Owolabi died of his injuries, alongside a deputy assistant commissioner of police.	Protest	12

SECURITY INCIDENTS

Date	Location	Description	Incident type	Fatalities
23/07/2019	Federal Secretariat	Two members of the IMN are killed during a clash between the Islamic group and the police.	Protest	2
30/08/2019	Dutse	Kenneth Udeze, the national chairman of Action Alliance, and his wife, were kidnapped by armed attackers outside a Zenith Bank branch in Dutse Alhaji.	Kidnap	
30/09/2019	Dutse	Three suspected kidnapers were lynched by an angry mob at Dutse Alhaji.	Mob Violence	3
10/11/2019	Dafara	A security guard was fatally shot, while three members of a family were kidnapped in Dafara community by a group of gunmen dressed in military uniform.	Kidnap	1
28/10/2019	Kuje	Gunmen abducted a policeman, Nengba Mundi, at Rubochi community in Kuje.	Kidnap	
27/11/2019	Kuje	Gunmen abducted the traditional ruler of Rubochi in Kuje, Alhaji Mohammed Ibrahim Pada. Two of Pada's sons sustained various degrees of machete cut injuries in a struggle to rescue their father from his abductors.	Kidnap	1

SECURITY INCIDENTS

Date	Location	Description	Incident type	Fatalities
27/11/2019	Wuse	Schoolgirl was shot by police officers during a protest by the IMN at Wuse Market, Abuja. Also, two journalists with Reuters - were arrested by the police and taken to an unknown destination.	Protest/ Force Brutality	1
15/12/2019	Kwali	Gunmen killed a middle-aged man, Usman Dadonyi, and abducted his son, Nasiru Usman at Sukuku village in Kwali Area Council, Abuja.	Kidnap	1
21/12/2019	Kubwa	A police Inspector killed a corporal, injured a Deputy Superintendent of Police, then shot himself.	Murder/Suicide	2
05/01/2020	Abaji	Armed men abducted a woman, Anbgada Anyinu and her daughter, Favour Anyinu, at Nuku community in Abaji Area Council, months after their husband and father was released by his kidnapers.	Kidnap	
12/01/2020	Maraba	A DSS officer was killed by SARS officers in a beer parlor in Abacha Road, Maraba.	Police Brutality	1

SECURITY INCIDENTS

Date	Location	Description	Incident type	Fatalities
14/01/2020	Wuse	At least five people were injured following violent protests and a clash between police and members of the IMN at Berger.	Police brutality	
21/01/2020	Wuse	A passerby was killed when the police fired gunshots and tear gas canisters to disperse a protest by the IMN around Berger.	Police brutality	1
24/01/2020	Abaji	Gunmen abducted two sons of the Chief Imam of Abaji central mosque and one other person.	Kidnap	
28/01/2020	Rubochi	A 17-year old student of Federal Government College, Rubochi, Gift Abiikor, was abducted by gunmen.	Kidnap	
02/02/2020	Abaji	Gunmen abducted a man, Abdullahi Otto, and his pregnant wife, Maimuna Abdullahi, at Unguwar Kekeshi in Abaji.	Kidnap	
02/02/2020	Kwali	Gunmen force a fully loaded Toyota Previa bus was forced off the Piri-Kwali road and kidnap 7 passengers and the driver.	Kidnap	

ANALYSIS

Since the kidnap incidents in October, FCT residents have experienced more incidents and attacks by kidnapers. In November, gunmen abducted the traditional ruler of Rubochi², Mohammed Ibrahim Pada. The Daily Trust reported that the two sons of the traditional ruler sustained various degrees of machete cut injuries in a struggle to rescue their father from his abductors. One of them later died of his injuries. On 15 December 2020, gunmen killed a middle-aged man³, Usman Dadonyi, and abducted his son, Nasiru Usman at Sukuku village in Kwali. A resident of the community, who preferred anonymity, said the incident happened after up to 20 gunmen invaded the community, shooting sporadically.

Asides Kuje and Kwali, Abaji is another area that has come under increasing attacks by kidnapers. On 24 January 2020, gunmen abducted two sons of the Chief Imam of Abaji central mosque⁴ and one other person. Umar Bala and Hamza Bala, sons of the chief Imam, Alhaji Bala, were kidnapped with another resident, Sagir Isah, in the area. It is important to note that these areas are outlying towns that lead into the main city, where security is poor, and residents lack electricity and other basic amenities, which gives kidnapers the latitude to carry out their activities.

In the city centre, however, there is another menace that is worth mentioning. The almost weekly protests by the Islamic Movement of Nigeria over the continued detention of their ailing leader, Ibrahim El Zakzakky, has led to frequent clashes with state security agents. Wuse and the Central Area are the epicentres of these clashes, one of which claimed the life of a Channels Television reporter⁵, Precious Owolabi in July 2019. On 21 January 2020, a passer-by was killed⁶ when the police fired gunshots and tear gas canisters to disperse a protest by members of the IMN at the Berger area of Wuse.

Recreation centres including open-air gardens and parks in the city which were created to aid social interaction and relaxation are no longer safe zones for residents as these places have been turned into operating areas for bandits and armed robbers.

2 - <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/north-central/365429-gunmen-kidnap-traditional-ruler-in-abuja.html>

3 - <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/gunmen-kill-man-kidnap-son-in-abuja.html>

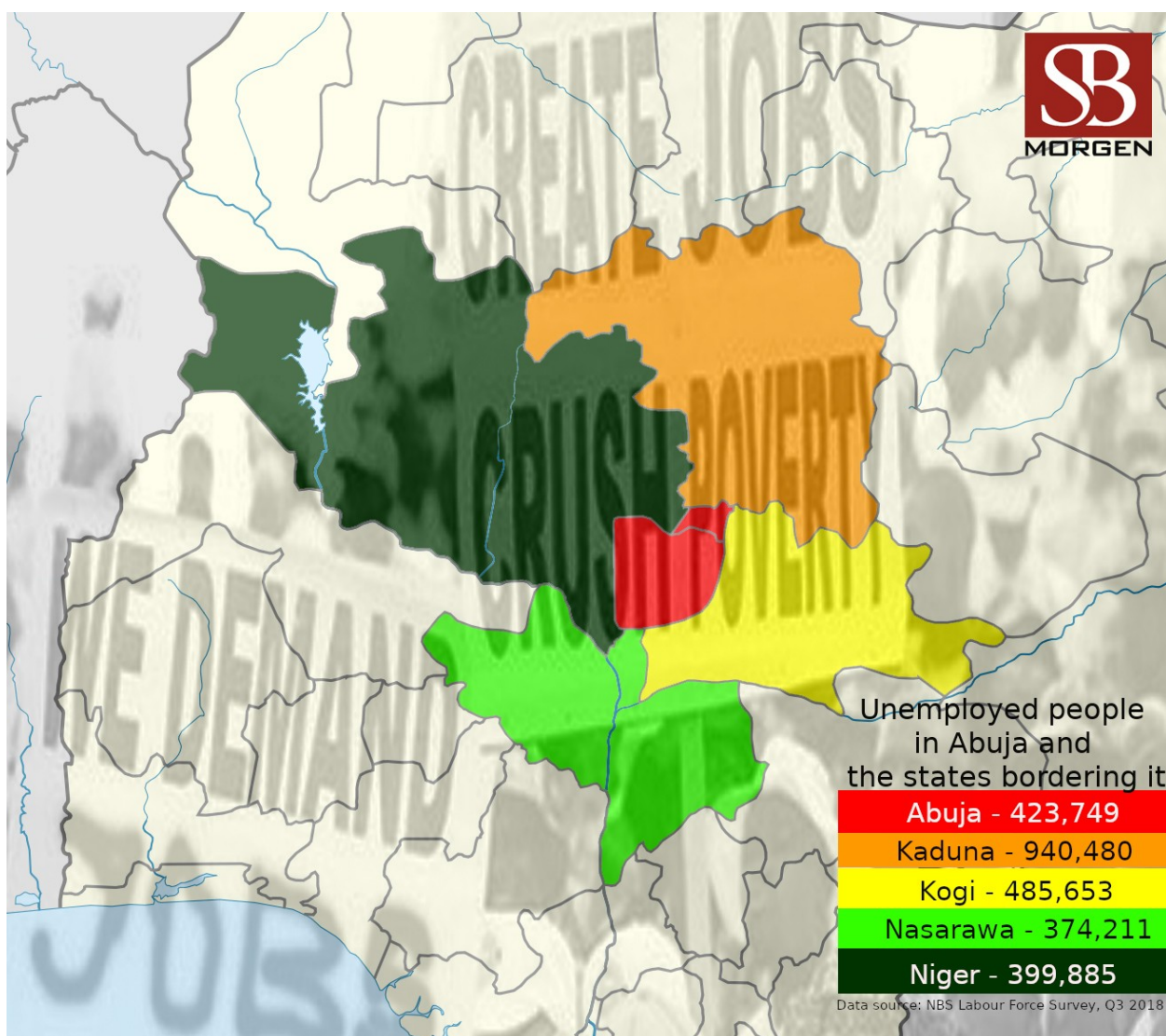
4 - <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/gunmen-kidnap-imams-sons-1-other-in-abaji.html>

5 - <https://www.channelstv.com/2019/07/22/channels-tv-reporter-shot-as-shiite-protesters-clash-with-police-in-abuja/>

6 - <https://www.thecable.ng/one-feared-dead-as-imn-members-clash-with-police-in-abuja>

ANALYSIS

The Abuja-Kaduna road is the major highway which links the North West with the FCT. This road has come under sustained attacks from bandits who have abducted many and demanded millions as ransom. This has led many commuters to abandon the road, making use of rail travel instead. Following this, the communities around the train station in Rigasa have witnessed and reported incidents of kidnap by bandits⁷ as they exit the train station.



The spike in the crime rate in the Federal Capital Territory may not be unconnected to the rising level of youth unemployment in the country. Abuja is located in Central Nigeria and borders four states, all of which are experiencing varying degrees of conflict. As people escape violence from the Pastoral Conflict in their villages in the troubled regions, the strain is felt on the city's resources. Young people—mostly unskilled and uneducated—get trapped in the prevailing unemployment fix and resort to crime for survival.

7 - <https://punchng.com/bandits-attack-abuja-bound-train-passengers-in-kaduna>

ANALYSIS

Migration to the city has no doubt fuelled the instability that is being witnessed today. Despite that, in September 2019, the minister of the FCT, Muhammad Bello said in a statement⁸ that Abuja is safe, as he called on residents not to leave security matters to law enforcement agencies alone.

This appeal, however, has proven to be just not enough to placate residents. Andikara Honourable, a resident of Kuje, lamented about the security situation. “It has been very bad in Kuje. Even a supposed safe zone such as Pegi which hosts a navy barrack is not spared the constant onslaught of armed robbery and kidnap. In December alone, 12 people were kidnapped.”

On 1 February 2020, the minister directed that three syndicate teams be set up to critically review existing security strategies in the city, with a view to enhancing them in the light of present and emerging challenges. This directive was issued following the first monthly FCT Security Committee meeting for the year 2020. As part of the growing clamour for community policing, the minister added that it would be considered as an aid to police duties.

The incidents of the past six months suggest that the federal capital is not exempt from the wider factors influencing and driving insecurity across the wider region. For the past half-decade, security fissures in such places as Kaduna, Nasarawa and even far-off states such as Benue and Plateau have fuelled a significant influx of people into the borders of the Federal Capital Territory. With most of these people either farmers or blue-collar workers, they cannot afford the high living costs of settling in the capital’s core districts, hence the growth in the satellite towns and more rural parts of the FCT. With the worsening picture in the central parts of the country, in the absence of more effective policing as well as an improvement in overall economic conditions, it is highly unlikely that the near-term security prognosis for Abuja is a positive one.

8 - <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/352907-amid-growing-insecurity-in-abuja-minister-says-fct-safe.html>



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