

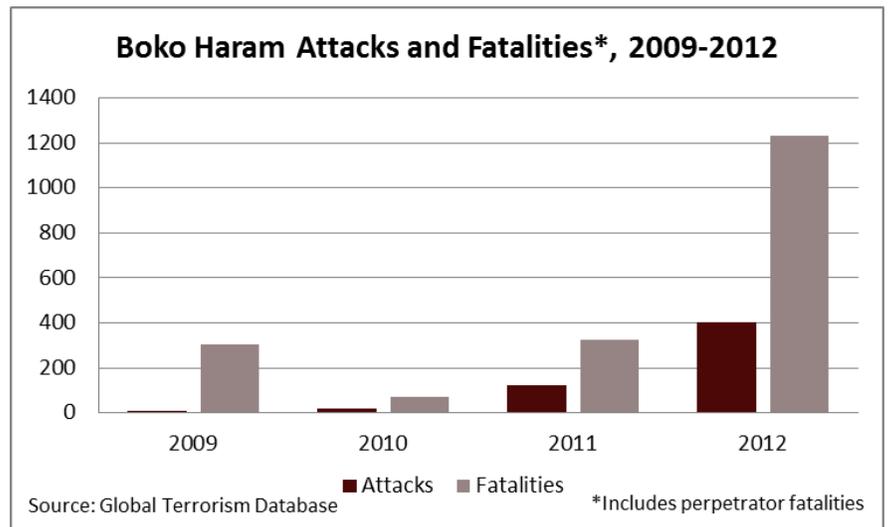
FTO Designation: Boko Haram and Ansaru

On Wednesday, Nov. 13, 2013, the United States Department of State announced the designation of Boko Haram and Ansaru as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs).¹ Boko Haram first carried out terrorist attacks in 2009, and Ansaru splintered from Boko Haram in 2012. The Department of State’s announcement of the official designation notes several highly lethal recent attacks carried out by Boko Haram and Ansaru against both domestic and international targets in Nigeria. START has compiled the following background information on patterns of terrorist attacks by Boko Haram and Ansaru.

PATTERNS OF BOKO HARAM ATTACKS, 2009-2012

Boko Haram, also known as “Jama’atu Ahl as-Sunnah li-Da’awati wal-Jihad” (People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet’s Teachings and Jihad), was founded in Maiduguri in the northeastern Nigerian state of Borno by Mohammed Yusuf in the early 2000s. The aim of Boko Haram, which translates to “Western education is forbidden,” is to establish and enforce a strict interpretation of Islamic law in the northern Nigerian states. Initially, Boko Haram operated in a nonviolent manner. This changed in 2009 when the sect clashed with Nigerian authorities, whom it regarded as corrupt and Christian-influenced. Government suppression of Boko Haram’s recruitment efforts as well as the use of force by police in response to the sect’s refusal to adhere to national laws also contributed to the onset of violence in 2009.²

During an uprising in July 2009, Boko Haram carried out 10 attacks against targets including a customs office, a number of churches, police headquarters and two other police stations, a primary school, a prison, and a state unemployment bureau in various cities. These attacks and the police response that followed resulted in more than 300 deaths, including nearly 100 perpetrators. The Nigerian army was deployed and reports indicate that by the end of the ensuing confrontation more than 800 people were killed, many of them Boko Haram members. Mohammed Yusuf and other members of Boko Haram were captured and publicly executed and Abubakar Shekau became the new leader of the group.³



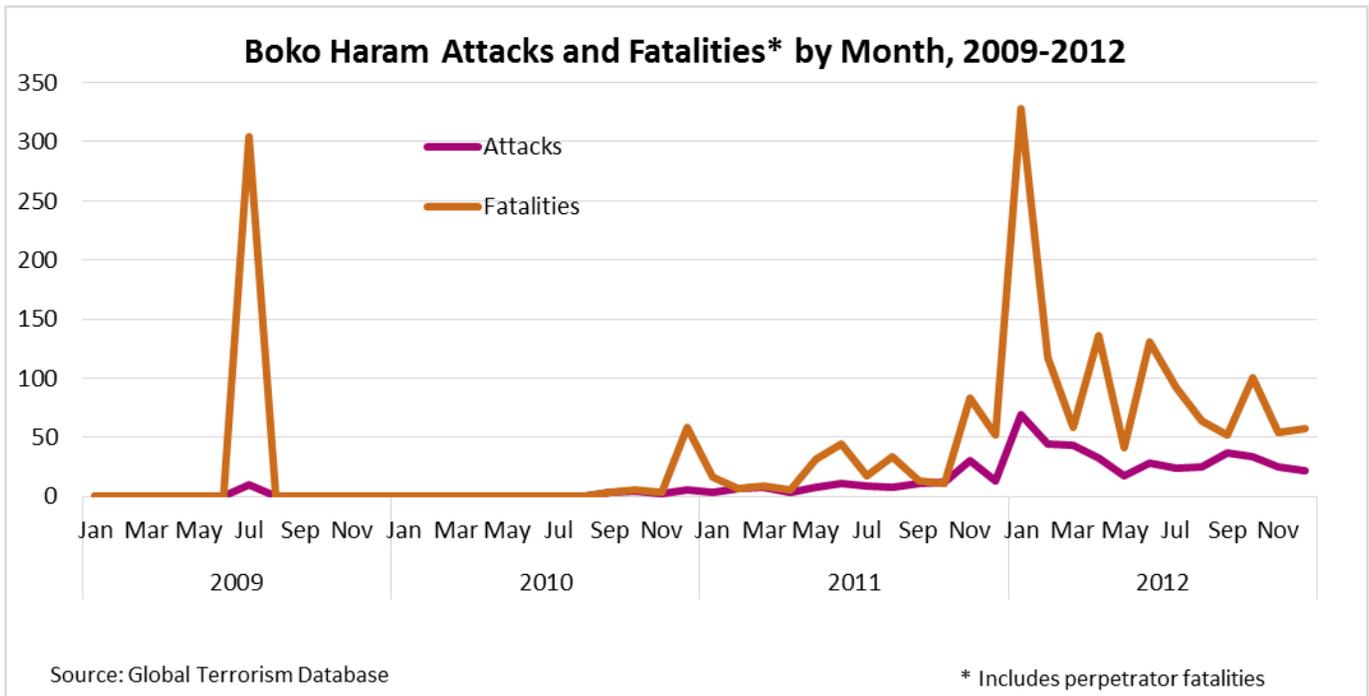
Following the July 2009 uprising, Boko Haram carried out no additional terrorist attacks until September 2010. The group’s activity gradually increased in late 2010 and continued through 2011, when attacks became more frequent, though less lethal than the initial 2009 attacks. According to the Global Terrorism Database, the group was responsible for 17 attacks and 70 fatalities in 2010, primarily targeting private citizens and property, Boko Haram began integrating bombings into its tactics, including a series of bombings carried out on Christmas Eve targeting churches and a marketplace.

¹ Bureau of Public Affairs Department of State. The Office of Website Management, “Terrorist Designations of Boko Haram and Ansaru,” Press Release | Media Note, U.S. Department of State, November 13, 2013, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/11/217509.htm>.

² James J.F. Forest, *Confronting the Terrorism of Boko Haram in Nigeria* (MacDill AFB, Florida: Joint Special Operations University, May 2012), https://jsou.socom.mil/JSOU%20Publications/JSOU12-5_Forest_BokoHaram_final%5B1%5D.pdf, 63.

³ Ibid, 64.

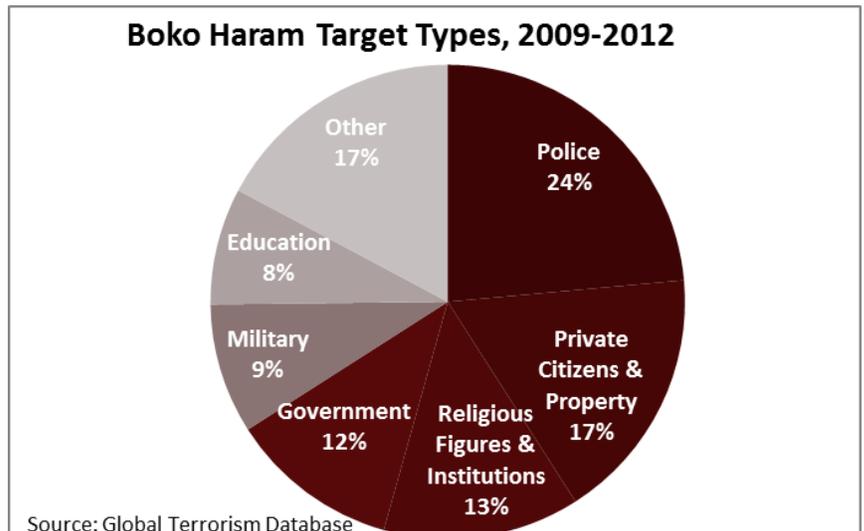
In 2011, violence escalated with more than 120 attacks and more than 320 fatalities, including a wide variety of targets such as police, private citizens and property, religious figures and institutions, and government entities. In 2012, violence carried out by Boko Haram increased to include more than 400 attacks and 1,200 fatalities, peaking in January with nearly 70 attacks and more than 300 fatalities.⁴



TACTICS AND TARGETING

TARGET TYPES

Boko Haram most commonly targets police (24% of attacks; 29% of fatalities), private citizens and property (17% of attacks; 19% of fatalities), religious figures and institutions (13% of attacks; 21% of fatalities), government targets (12% of attacks; 7% of fatalities), and the military (9% of attacks; 7% of fatalities). Boko Haram's major attacks on churches and religious figures have at times been followed by rioting and retaliatory attacks against Muslim targets, exacerbating religious polarization of the Nigerian population.



⁴ Beginning with 2012 data collection, START made several important changes to the Global Terrorism Database collection methodology, improving the efficiency and comprehensiveness of the process. As a result of these improvements, a direct comparison between 2011 and 2012 likely overstates the magnitude of the increase in total attacks and fatalities during this time period. However, analysis of the data indicates that this increase began before the shift in data collection methodology, and important developments in key conflicts around the world, such as Boko Haram's activity in Nigeria, suggest that considerable upward trends remain even when accounting for the possibility of methodological artifacts.

COORDINATED ATTACKS

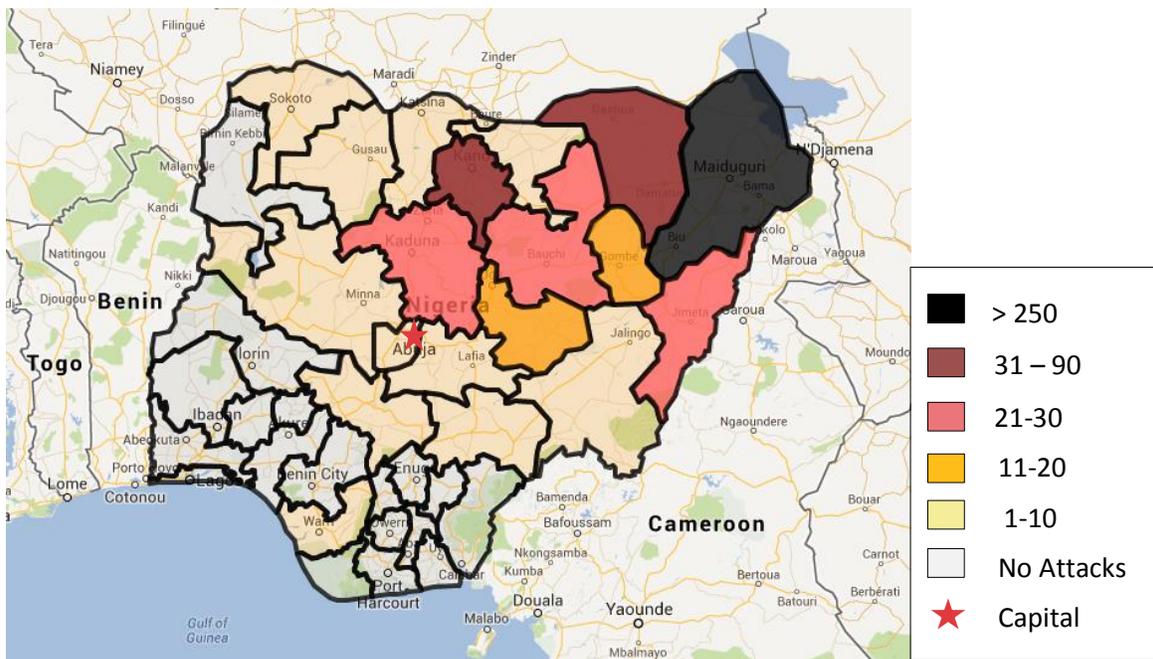
One hallmark of Boko Haram's terrorist activity is the use of coordinated attacks against a series of targets on a particular day, either geographically concentrated or spread across several states. More than 40 percent of its attacks between 2009 and 2011 were part of multi-part attacks, compared to less than 10 percent of all terrorist attacks worldwide during this time period.⁵ Attacks against businesses and religious figures and institutions were the most likely to be part of coordinated, multi-part events. Approximately 60 percent of attacks against these types of targets followed this pattern while approximately 40 percent of attacks against these types of targets were isolated events. Attacks that are part of coordinated events carried out by Boko Haram were on average 3.8 times as lethal as attacks that the group carried out in isolation.

SUICIDE ATTACKS

Boko Haram first began using suicide tactics on June 16, 2011 when an assailant detonated a vehicle borne improvised explosive device in front of the police headquarters building in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria. The group has most frequently targeted churches (41% of its suicide attacks) with this method. Of 34 total suicide attacks, approximately 82 percent involved vehicle borne explosives while approximately 18 percent involved explosives that were worn on a person's body. On Aug. 26, 2011, Boko Haram operatives carried out a suicide attack targeting the United Nations building in Abuja, killing 23 and wounding 81. In 2012, Boko Haram carried out nearly 30 suicide attacks.

GEOGRAPHICAL EXPANSION

In 2009, Boko Haram operated only in northeastern Borno state (shaded in black on the map). In 2010, operations expanded to include Plateau state, Bauchi state, and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. By 2011, operations expanded southward to Yobe, Kaduna, Niger, Adamawa, Benue, Delta, and Gombe States. In 2012, attacks reached as far west as Sokoto state in the Northwest, the original location of the Sokoto Caliphate established in the early 19th century. This is a strategic move by Boko Haram as Sokoto is home to the Sultan of Sokoto, Nigeria's highest Islamic authority.⁶



⁵ Note that the Global Terrorism Database records each part of a coordinated event as an individual attack. Data on coordinated attacks are not yet available for 2012; however several notable attacks by Boko Haram in 2012 indicate that this tactic remains in use by the group, in particular highly lethal coordinated attacks in January, April, and July 2012.

⁶ Jacob Zenn, "Boko Haram's Dangerous Expansion into Northwest Nigeria," *CTC Sentinel* 5, no. 10 (October 2012).

The map above shows this expansion based on the number of attacks per state. Borno state (shaded in black) and the city of Maiduguri has been a Boko Haram stronghold since the group's founding and has always been within its range of operations. There have been nearly 270 attacks in Borno state. The states shaded in dark red, Kano (north central) and Yobe (northeast) have experienced 86 and 64 attacks, respectively. The states shaded in pink (from west to east: Kaduna, Bauchi, Adamawa) have each been attacked between 21-25 times. In gold, Gombe (south of Yobe) and Plateau (south of Bauchi) states have been attacked 16 and 14 times, respectively. The other states in light yellow have been attacked between 1-10 times each, and the unshaded states have experienced zero attacks.

BOKO HARAM IN CONTEXT

More than 440 perpetrator groups committed terrorist attacks during the time period that Boko Haram has been active. From 2009-2012, Boko Haram was responsible for 2.4 percent of more than 23,000 terrorist attacks that took place worldwide. Additionally, Boko Haram was responsible for 4.8 percent of fatalities from terrorist attacks during this same period. The group is now among the deadliest in the world.

Most Lethal Perpetrator Groups (2009-2012)	# of Attacks	# of Fatalities
Taliban	1771	5082
Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)	333	2403
Boko Haram	552	1932
Al-Qa`ida in Iraq	279	1565
Communist Party of India - Maoist (CPI-Maoist)	1277	1554
Islamic State of Iraq (ISI)	197	1539
Al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)	321	1494
Al-Shabaab	516	1405
Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)	74	453
Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)	391	339

In Nigeria, Boko Haram was responsible for nearly 80 percent of all terrorist attacks between 1970 and 2012 for which a perpetrator group was identified, despite their relatively recent onset of violence in 2009. Likewise, deaths from Boko Haram's attacks represented 70 percent of all fatalities from terrorist attacks in Nigeria during this time period. The next most active group in Nigeria was the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), which carried out nearly 70 attacks and killed more than 270, beginning in 2006.

Ansaru splintered from Boko Haram in 2012. Since then, the group has carried out a number of attacks in Nigeria, including targeted kidnappings of international figures. According to statements made by Ansaru following several of their attacks, the group acts in retaliation for military intervention by Western nations in places like Afghanistan and Mali. Examples of these attacks include the kidnapping of a French national in December 2012 and seven foreign nationals kidnapped in an attack on a Lebanese construction company in February 2013.

NOTABLE BOKO HARAM ATTACKS, 2009-2012

JULY 27, 2009

During an uprising in July 2009, Boko Haram carried out 10 attacks against a variety of targets including a customs office, police headquarters and a number of police stations, a primary school, a prison, a state unemployment bureau, an unspecified number of churches, and local residences in several cities. These attacks and the police response that followed resulted in the deaths of more than 300 people, including nearly 100 perpetrators.

DECEMBER 24, 2010

On Friday night, in Jos, Plateau, Nigeria, in one of four related attacks, 38 people were killed and 74 others were injured when militants detonated four improvised explosive devices made with dynamite in the Kabong shopping market just minutes apart from one another. Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the attacks.

JUNE 16, 2011

At approximately 11 a.m. Thursday, in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria, a suicide car bomb detonated at the Nigerian police headquarters. The Inspector General of Police, Hafiz Ringim, may have been the intended target of the attack. The perpetrator, a traffic warden, and one other person were killed and at least five people were injured. The attack completely destroyed at least 33 vehicles and slightly damaged at least 40 vehicles. Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the attack.

JUNE 26, 2011

On Sunday afternoon in Maiduguri, Borno, Nigeria, between 8 and 10 suspected Boko Haram members threw bombs and fired gun shots in the Dala Kabompi neighborhood at a beer garden. The assailants attacked from the back of seven motorcycles. They set fire to a local bar, and shot anyone trying to escape. At least 25 civilians were killed and approximately 30 more were injured. Military sources suspect that three sets of explosives were used in the attack. The attack caused an unknown amount of property damage. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.

AUGUST 26, 2011

On Friday, in Abuja, Abuja Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria, 23 people were killed and 81 people were injured when a Boko Haram operative detonated a suicide vehicle borne improvised explosive device that had been concealed inside a Honda Accord at the United Nations (UN) headquarters building. The militant rammed the exit gate and drove the vehicle into the parking garage before detonating. The attack caused a tremendous amount of material damage to the UN building. Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the attack through a spokesman. This was Boko Haram's first recorded attack on an international target.

NOVEMBER 4, 2011

In a series of coordinated attacks across Yobe and Borno state, Boko Haram attacked at least six churches, four police stations as well as the military Joint Task Force Office, the State Security Services building, a college, and local businesses. At the end of the attacks, more than 60 people were dead. Boko Haram claimed responsibility for all of the attacks.

DECEMBER 25, 2011

Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the attack on St. Teresa Catholic Church in Madalla, Nigeria. This attack was one of four that day. A bomb exploded while the church was full of people attending Christmas mass. The explosion destroyed cars in the area and did substantial damage to the church itself. In total, 37 people were killed and 57 were wounded. A man named Kabiru Soko was arrested for his role in the bombing.

JANUARY 20, 2012

In a series of coordinated attacks primarily in Kano state, Boko Haram militants attacked police stations and barracks as well as state security services and other government buildings. The violence left more than 180 people dead.

FEBRUARY 20, 2012

Armed members of Boko Haram stormed a market in Maiduguri and opened fire on civilians. Joint Task Force (JTF) forces at the market noticed the group planted bombs and a gunfight ensued. At least 38 people were killed in the attack, including eight assailants. The bombs were detonated, either by Boko Haram or in controlled detonations carried out by JTF.

APRIL 8, 2012

In one of two bombings in Nigeria on Easter Sunday, a suicide car bomb exploded outside of All Nations Christian Assembly Church in Kaduna, killing at least 40 and wounding at least 10. No group claimed responsibility for the attack, but Boko Haram was suspected.

JULY 7, 2012

In six coordinated attacks, Boko Haram operatives attacked six villages across Plateau state near the city of Jos. This series of armed assaults left 56 people dead.

SEPTEMBER 5, 2012

In at least 21 coordinated attacks, members of Boko Haram attacked cell towers with explosives. In total, approximately 31 towers were attacked across four states late Tuesday and early Wednesday, killing approximately 15 people. Boko Haram claimed that the towers were targeted because the cell companies were assisting the government in their counterterrorism efforts.

SEPTEMBER 6, 2012

In a series of six coordinated attacks in Damaturu, the capital of Yobe state, Boko Haram militants attacked the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Pilgrims Welfare Commission building, two primary schools, a fire station, and an electoral office. The attacks killed approximately 15 people.

OCTOBER 18, 2012

In a series of coordinated attacks, Boko Haram members attacked an Islamic seminary school and two primary schools in Potiskum in Yobe state killing approximately 23 people.

NOVEMBER 25, 2012

In two coordinated attacks in the city of Jaji, Kaduna state, assailants crashed an explosive laden bus into St. Andrew Military Protestant Church. After the bus crash, a car bomb parked outside the church exploded, targeting first responders. Thirty-two people were killed and 11 wounded across both attacks.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This Background Report was funded through the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) by the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate's Office of University Programs through Award Number 2012-ST-061-CS0001, CSTAB 3.1. The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the author and should not be interpreted as necessarily representing the official policies, either expressed or implied, of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security or START.

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The data presented here are drawn from START's Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and reports from news media. The GTD contains information on more than 104,000 terrorist incidents that have occurred around the world since 1970. For more information about the GTD, visit www.start.umd.edu/gtd.



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