



# BOKO HARAM

## Background

- Boko Haram, which translates to “Western education is forbidden,” is an Islamic extremist organization based in northeastern Nigeria, which pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in March 2015.
- Since its insurgency began in 2009, Boko Haram has killed an estimated 20,000 people and displaced 2.3 million. The group is also responsible for the kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls from a village in northeastern Nigeria in April 2014.



*Official flag of Boko Haram*



*Nigerian schoolgirls kidnapped in April 2014*

## Threat to New Jersey: Low

*Boko Haram's capability to attack US interests is limited to Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Niger, and Benin, and it has demonstrated an intent to expand regionally.*

- Boko Haram has claimed responsibility for five kidnappings of Westerners since 2012, highlighting the threat to Western and regional interests in its area of operations. Since 2012, Boko Haram has conducted at least five attacks in Nigeria's capital, Abuja, where many US businesses have offices. In August 2014, the US Embassy in Abuja issued a warning that Boko Haram may have been planning attacks on US interests in Nigeria, though no attacks occurred following this warning.
- Since pledging allegiance to ISIS in March 2015, Boko Haram's regional expansion has resulted in a death toll of at least 30 in Cameroon, 106 in Chad, and 56 in Niger in the last quarter of 2015. According to Cameroonian police, since 2014, Boko Haram has recruited more than 500 men in villages along Cameroon's border with Nigeria.



*Abubakar Shekau, Boko Haram's leader*

## US Nexus

- Boko Haram is unlikely to gain support from extremists in the United States because of an inability to convey its message effectively, as well as its focus on local Nigerian issues over global extremist narratives.
- Although Boko Haram has only attacked US interests regionally, US President Obama has expressed concern the threat from the group could spread outside Africa. In October 2015, the White House announced the deployment of 300 US troops to Cameroon to conduct airborne surveillance on Boko Haram fighters.
- The United States continues to provide advisors, intelligence, training, logistical support, and equipment to soldiers from Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, and Benin to fight Boko Haram.



*Map of Boko Haram's operational area*

## Intelligence Gaps

- How will Boko Haram respond to the US special operations mission in Nigeria?
- What is the type and extent of support ISIS provides to Boko Haram?

## *Contact Information*

For more information, please contact NJOHSP's Analysis Bureau at [analysis@njohsp.gov](mailto:analysis@njohsp.gov) or 609-584-4000.