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3.3.4.1. Indicators

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last updated: February 2019

The common analysis below regarding the degree of indiscriminate violence taking place in the different states of Nigeria combines quantitative and qualitative elements in a holistic and inclusive assessment.

The indicators applied are formulated in reference to the ECtHR judgment in *Sufi and Elmi*:

> *(…) first, whether the parties to the conflict were either employing methods and tactics of warfare which increased the risk of civilian casualties or directly targeting civilians; secondly, whether the use of such methods and/or tactics was widespread among the parties to the conflict; thirdly, whether the fighting was localised or widespread; and finally, the number of civilians killed, injured and displaced as a result of the fighting.*[33]

These indicators are further developed and adapted in order to be applied as a general approach to assessing the element of 'indiscriminate violence', irrespective of the country of origin in question.

The security situation in the respective states is assessed by taking into account the following elements:

✓ Presence of actors in the conflict

This indicator looks into the presence of actors in the conflict in the respective area, including the presence of non-State armed groups, and whether or not operations by the Nigerian security forces are being conducted.

In the case of the identified armed conflicts, all actors are reported to engage in activities which may (indiscriminately) affect civilians. See also Actors of persecution or serious harm.

✓ Nature of methods and tactics

The methods and tactics used in the armed conflicts ongoing in Nigeria differ according to the actors involved. Some acts are by their nature more indiscriminate than others and create a more substantial risk for civilians.

Boko Haram are particularly known to use methods which are of indiscriminate nature, such as (suicide) bombings and attacks on whole villages.

In the conflict between armed groups of herders and farmers, the violence is also increasingly affecting civilians, by targeting whole villages and communities.

The actions by the Nigerian security forces tend to be of a more targeted nature; however, they may also (indiscriminately) affect civilians, such as in the case of air strikes.

✓ Frequency of incidents

This indicator refers to the 'number of incidents (of the respective type) per week' during the reporting period (52 weeks).

The frequency of incidents is a useful indicator to assist in the assessment of the risk of indiscriminate violence. Based on available COI, derived from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) database, this indicator looks in particular at incidents reported as 'violence against civilians' and as 'remote violence', which is found to be of relevance in terms of its potential to indiscriminately affect civilians.

- **'violence against civilians'** according to the definition of the source (ACLED): 'Violence against civilians is a violent act upon civilians by an armed, organized, and violent group. By definition, civilians are unarmed and not engaged in political violence.'

- **'remote violence'** according to the definition of the source (ACLED) includes: 'Events where engaging in conflict did not require the physical presence of the perpetrator. The main characteristic of this event is when a group determines the time, place, and victims of the attack, but is not directly present. These include bombings, IED attacks, mortar and missile attacks, etc. Remote violence can be waged on both armed agents (e.g. an active rebel group; a military garrison) and civilians (e.g. a roadside bombing).'

ACLED data should be regarded as merely estimates, due to limitations in the reporting of incidents. See clarifications in *Security situation,* Methodology.

✓ Geographical scope

This element looks into how widespread the violence is within the area. It is not addressed as a separate indicator, however, it is reflected under other indicators, and the states which are particularly affected are highlighted.

Where the conflict severity varies within an area, the place of origin (state, LGA) of the applicant would constitute an important element to consider in the assessment. The higher the level of indiscriminate violence in the respective place, the less additional individual elements would be required in order to apply Article 15(c) QD.

The individual assessment should also take into account the accessibility of a certain territory.

✓ Civilian casualties

The data used for this indicator refers to the number of fatalities in relation to reported 'violence against civilians' and in relation to 'remote violence', as defined above with reference to the ACLED Codebook. Data on injured individuals, which would also be relevant to take into account under the indicator 'civilian casualties' is not consistently available and is not included in the assessment below.

It should, furthermore, be highlighted that ACLED data is regarded as merely estimates, due to limitations in the reporting of incidents, and especially with regard to the number of fatalities. Several incidents with unknown number of fatalities have been registered in the database (often referred to as 'scores', 'several', 'many', or 'large number' in original sources). According to its methodology, ACLED records such incidents as 10 casualties. See clarifications in *Security situation,* Methodology.

The data on civilian casualties per state refers the period 1 October 2017 - 30 September 2018. The reported number of civilian casualties is further weighted by the population of the state and presented as 'number of fatalities caused by the respective type of event per 100 000 inhabitants'.

This is considered a key indicator when assessing (the level of) indiscriminate violence in the context of Article 15(c) QD.

✓ Displacement

This element refers to conflict-induced (internal) displacement from the state in question. In some cases, it is furthermore deemed relevant to note that internal displacement *within* or *to* the state is observed.

Reporting periods vary as indicated in the analysis below.

In addition to the indicators above, some examples of further impact of the armed conflicts on the life of civilians are mentioned and taken into account in the assessment.

None of the indicators above would be sufficient by itself to assess the level of indiscriminate violence and the risk it creates for the civilian population in a particular area. Therefore, a holistic approach has been applied, taking into account all different elements.

It should, furthermore, be noted that the COI used as a basis for this assessment cannot be considered a complete representation of the extent of indiscriminate violence and its impact on the life of civilians. Concerns with regard to underreporting, especially pertinent to the quantitative indicators above, should be taken into account. Such concerns are particularly relevant to areas which are most affected by the violence. There may also be cases of over-reporting or biased reporting (e.g. by Christian interest groups in the Middle Belt).

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[33] ***Sufi and Elmi,*** **para.241.** [back to text]

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