

2.13. Perceived Boko Haram members or supporters

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Hundreds of Boko Haram/ISWAP fighters were killed in battles following insurgent attacks on military sites[713] or during security operations.[714] Within the context of the ongoing armed conflict in North-East Nigeria since 2009,[715] and within the context of 'counterterrorism operations', serious human rights violations perpetrated by the Nigerian security forces have been reported, including the use of 'excessive force', 'extrajudicial killings, rape, torture and arbitrary detentions' against suspected Boko Haram members.[716] Amnesty International also reported numerous deaths occurring in military custody.[717] Among those affected were elderly civilians escaping Boko Haram-controlled areas.[718] In December 2024, Amnesty International submitted a legal filing to the International Criminal Court (ICC) on behalf of several victims' networks, urging an end to the ICC Prosecutor's indefinite delay in opening a formal investigation into war crimes and crimes against humanity in Nigeria. The filing reiterated allegations against the Nigerian military, including attacks on civilians, extrajudicial executions, torture, rape and enforced disappearances.[719] For more information on Nigerian security forces, including their *modus operandi* and violations see EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Security Situation November 2025.

The Nigerian Security Forces have continued to detain children during security operations, screening procedures, and military raids, including outside IDP camps. Arrests were often based on alleged association with armed groups and information provided by informants. Some of these children were held with their mothers due to the mothers' alleged links to ISWAP. All children arrested were subsequently released and systematically handed over to the Borno State Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development and received at the Bulumkutu transit centre in Maiduguri. From there, they were provided interim care and support prior to family reunification and reintegration into their communities.[720] Some of the children detained for alleged links to Boko Haram were as young as five, with infants also held alongside their mothers in harsh detention conditions. Boys returning from association with Boko Haram are reported to face greater discrimination than girls, due to the belief that they joined the group more willingly.[721]

Former Boko Haram affiliates face severe challenges to reintegrate. Many, especially women, have limited access to land, resources, and support; they remain displaced, unable to return home, and often experience multiple displacements. Lacking community support, they resort to

negative coping strategies like food restriction, sex work, or selling firewood. Former affiliates are also targeted by Boko Haram as traitors, with men at risk of killing and women at risk of abduction and sexual violence. Insecure conditions force women to take dangerous risks to support their families, while gender-based violence remains a significant threat. Insecurity has also pushed former associates and communities across international borders, with some Nigerian former associates relocating to Cameroon to join family members in the Minawao refugee camp, amid ongoing security force scrutiny in Nigeria.722

In a 2024 report, Amnesty International revealed that between 2015 and mid-2023, girls and young women who escaped Boko Haram in North-East Nigeria suffered further abuse, including unlawful military detention due to their real or perceived association to Boko Haram. After fleeing captivity, many were detained by the Nigerian military, while others were left in overcrowded displacement camps with limited aid. Some were later 'reunited' with former Boko Haram captors in government transit camps, placing them at renewed risk of abuse.723

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  In 2020, Amnesty International reported that since 2011, over 10 000 civilians have died in military custody, many at Giwa Barracks in Maiduguri, due to overcrowding, poor sanitation, lack of food, water, and medical care. The organisation noted that even elderly civilians fleeing Boko Haram-controlled areas have been unlawfully detained or killed without evidence of involvement in violence. AI, Nigeria: Older people often an invisible

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