National Overview

Fuel scarcity continued throughout the country, increasing tensions and resulting in intense traffic congestion, particularly in Lagos. Those caught up in the congestion have also become more vulnerable to criminal activities as criminal elements take advantage of the gridlock and caution is recommended when traveling around the country. Compounding the problem, the Nigeria Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) is also now threatening to strike. In the north-east, Boko Haram launched a failed attack on Kayamla village and the Giwa Barracks in Maiduguri, the headquarters of the 7th Division of the Nigerian army, proving again that they can still launch direct attacks at strategic locations. The attack was their most serious attempt to enter the city since February and was accompanied by three suicide bomb detonations, resulting in an unknown number of casualties. Despite the continuation of military operations in the region, there is still a high risk of further incidents in the coming weeks, as the transition date nears. This week, media sources reported that a number of Boko Haram insurgents had allegedly been killed in Iraq during training, however this may be another attempt at propaganda by the group, who are trying to promote their links to Islamic State (ISIS).

South-West Zone

A number of Nigerian Security Forces (NSF) operations were reported in the zone this week, including the arrest of four gang members believed to be involved in the March bank robbery in Lekki Phase 1, where three policemen and a fish hawker were killed. The incident was regarded as a major public embarrassment and efforts had been increased to investigate and arrest the robbers. It is understood that the suspects were arrested in Lagos, Osun, Ondo, Ogun and Delta States, further illustrating the existence of a targeted, well-planned and well-executed interstate criminal investigation. Nevertheless, tracking these groups across state boundaries will continue to be a significant challenge for the NSF as they seek to disrupt similar activities in the future. Meanwhile, concerns arose in the zone over the increase in the number of kidnappings of medical practitioners in Ekiti State. Last week, the
Chief Medical Director of Ekiti State University Teaching Hospital (ESUTH) and a nurse with the Federal Teaching Hospital, Ido-Ekiti, Ekiti State were kidnapped. The kidnappers are yet to establish contacts with the management of the hospital or the families of the victims. It was also reported that an additional seven doctors in the state have received threats of kidnap from unknown gunmen via text messages. The motive behind the special interest in doctors remains unknown, but there are speculations that the doctors are required to treat criminals who may need medical attention but cannot approach hospitals for fear of being arrested.

South-South Zone

The Commission of Inquiry set up by the Rivers State government and tasked with probing the politically-motivated killings and destruction of property before and during the 2015 general elections began their investigations this week, which served as a catalyst for increased instability in the zone. Witnesses who are members of the All Progressives Party (APC) have begun to testify against the People’s Democratic Party (PDP), describing how they were victimized and injured during the period. The PDP have accused the Commission of being biased, and they may mount a response in the coming weeks. On May 11, unknown gunmen kidnapped the brother of Israel Okirie, who had petitioned for an inquiry into killings in Omoku, Onelga in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Areas (LGA), Rivers State. The victim was also billed to appear before the Rivers State Commission of Inquiry, but had been previously warned not to testify or risk being kidnapped. On May 11, unknown gunmen made a failed attempt to enter the home of the Chairman of the APC, in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The security agents on duty at the residence of the Chairman engaged gunfire with the men, preventing them from entering the property. Three Nigerians, employees of the French oil services company Bourbon, were kidnapped off the Nigerian coast on April 8 before being released on May 8 after the payment of an undisclosed ransom. In a positive development, police in Rivers State raided a kidnappers’ hideout at NDDC Road, off Iwofe Rumolumeni in Obio-Akpor LGA, Port Harcourt, rescuing a victim kidnapped on May 3 and killing two of the perpetrators. Additionally, on May 11, officials from the Joint Task Force (JTF) working under Operation Pulo Shield in the Niger Delta arrested four pirates allegedly responsible for attacks along the Mbikiri and Nembe 1 waterways. The suspects were arrested around Fontua in Brass LGA, on the Bayelsa waterways, with arms and ammunition. Meanwhile, the newly elected Inspector General of Police (IGP) Solomon Arase, this week deployed a special squad to Edo State to address the increased spate of cult activities, armed robberies and kidnappings in the area. 56 suspected cultists who had been engaged in various violent incidents were arrested.

South-East Zone

The IgboS continued to raise concerns over their exclusion from governance decisions and failure to secure major positions in government after the transition. This week therefore saw an increase in the activities of old Igbo groups, Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and BIAFRA, as they bid to maintain relevance in government. The BIAFRA group has now established a radio station with the name ‘Radio Biafra’, which began airing on the 88.0FM Channel in Rivers State. No major incidents were reported in the rest of the zone.
North-Central Zone

Little changed in the North-Central Zone this week, however tensions remained high following last weeks alleged killing of 38 civilians by soldiers in Plateau State. The military is insisting that the soldiers from the Special Task Force (STF) were not involved in the killings, which took place in Kadarko, Kurmi and Wadata villages, Wase LGA of Plateau State on May 2. The State House of Assembly is continuing investigations into the claims.

North-West Zone

The north-west remained largely quiet this week as Boko Haram continued to be restricted by ongoing offensive operations in the north-east. Last week a large number of policemen were deployed to the Niger State National Assembly complex to ensure that no meetings were being held at the complex, following fears that the new Speaker and other lawmakers would attempt to begin impeachment process against the state governor, Babangida Aliyu, on allegations of general misconduct. This week, the police finally vacated the premises and normal Assembly activities resumed. In other developments, an outbreak of lead poisoning, caused by illegal mining activities, has resulted in the deaths of at least 28 children in Shikira, Magiro Ward and Kawo, all in Rafi LGA of Niger State. There are fears that some regions in Kaduna State may also be affected, due to their proximity to the affected areas.

North-East Zone

While the military continued counter-insurgency operations in the North-East Zone, Boko Haram launched another failed attack in Borno State. On 13 May, the insurgents attempted to attack the Giwa Barracks in Maiduguri, the headquarters of the 7th Division of the Nigerian army and the largest army base in north-east Nigeria, but the offensive was successfully repelled by Nigerian soldiers. Traditionally, attacks are preceded by at least one suicide bomb attack. However, in this case, local reports indicate the female suicide bombers detonated their explosives at a military checkpoint away from the scene. This is contrary to military reports. The total death rate currently remains unknown, but military personnel, civilian JTF, Boko Haram militants and numerous civilian casualties were recorded. In response, the military imposed a 24-hour curfew in Borno State, fearing that some of the insurgents might have traveled to other villages and cities. On average, it appears Boko Haram is currently able to mount at least one attack a week, targeting strategic locations. The confidence of Nigerian soldiers has grown over the last four months, due to the recent successes, and the military now appears to stand, fight and defeat attacks by Boko Haram insurgents. Residents who had left their homes for fear of Boko Haram attacks and those whose properties were destroyed by the insurgents also continue to return home. However, there is a distinct lack of support from the federal government to provide basic support (food, water, shelter) to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), raising the possibility of the situation developing into a severe humanitarian crisis. The government’s failure to provide adequate provisions could be due to a number of factors; lack of funds, the overwhelming numbers of IDPs and the lack of interest from the outgoing administration in resolving the issue. However, with West Africa’s recent emergence from the Ebola Crisis, if the humanitarian situation further worsens, there are concerns that other diseases may take hold and spread in the region.
Key Security Events
May 8 - 14, 2015

NIGER STATE, MAY 10:
At least 27 children were killed as a result of illegal mining activities in Shikira, Magiro Ward and Kawo, all in Rafi LGA.

EDO STATE, MAY 9:
Unknown gunmen killed a clergyman, David Memeh, at his Government Reservation Area residence in Benin City.

RIVERS STATE, MAY 11:
Unknown gunmen allegedly made a failed attempt to enter the home of the Chairman of the APC in Port Harcourt.

RIVERS STATE, MAY 11:
Unknown gunmen kidnapped the brother of Israel Okirie, who was scheduled to appear before the Rivers State Commission of Inquiry.

EDO STATE, MAY 13:
56 suspected cultists, who had been engaged in various violent incidents, were arrested.

BORNO STATE, MAY 13:
Boko Haram insurgents launched a failed attack against the Giwa Barracks, the headquarters of the 7th Division of the Nigerian army, at Kayamla.
Politics and Security

• The Senate has passed the bill on an act to provide for the regulation, advertising, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco or tobacco products in Nigeria. The objective of the bill includes ensuring that Nigeria has comprehensive tobacco legislation for effective regulation and control of production, manufacturing, sale, labeling as well as advertising, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco and tobacco products in Nigeria. The bill also repeals the current law, which experts say is inadequate, and enacts the new Act to protect the present and future generations from the devastating health, social, environmental and economic consequences of tobacco consumption and exposure to tobacco smoke. In addition, the Bill would ensure balance between the economic consideration and the health implications of tobacco manufacture and tobacco use and exposure to environmental tobacco smoke and establish appropriate government organizations to coordinate the execution of the proposed legislation, prescribing punishments for those who flout the provisions of the legislation. Full Article

• President Goodluck Jonathan will on May 28 present to the President-elect, Muhammadu Buhari, his government’s handover notes, and will conduct Buhari around the Aso Rock presidential Villa ahead of the inauguration of the new government on May 29, the government has announced. The decision was discussed at the Council of State meeting Tuesday, the last for the Jonathan administration. The meeting is constitutionally chaired by the president, with all past presidents and heads of state and governors of the 36 states, as members. The heads of the National Assembly are also members, as well as former and serving attorneys general. All official documents prepared by the transition committee of the current administration will be handed over on the 28th, while May 29 will be reserved for the inauguration, Niger state governor, Babangida Aliyu, told journalists after the meeting. Full Article

International Community Behind Buhari

Former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, said yesterday that the international community is standing solidly behind the President-elect, General Muhammadu Buhari, and the Vice President-elect, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo. The assurance came as former governor of Bayela State and chairman of All Progressives Congress (APC) Inauguration Committee, Chief Timipre Sylva, declared that Nigeria could not afford a flamboyant transition program. Speaking after a meeting with Buhari, Blair said Nigeria has earned the respect of the whole world by the peaceful manner in which the general elections were conducted. The former prime minister said: “There is enormous support for Nigeria now in the international community. The support takes into consideration the challenges that lie ahead and there is great confidence in the country. “This is an election in which the country showed the majority of democracies the spirit and character of its people and its confidence in the president-elect and vice president-elect. It is a leadership that I know is determined to do its best for the country.

Responding, Buhari noted that at a meeting, “the issue of how Britain and the United States helped us in making sure that we conducted ourselves according to our constitution” were discussed and we thank them for their efforts at ensuring that the will of the people triumphed. “The fact that it has been so successful is a major relief for us and to all people of conscience throughout the world. I thank the former British prime minister for his concern for Nigeria and Nigerians, and what he is prepared to do by continuing to help us as a country and as a people.” Meanwhile, Timipre Sylva has revealed that the country is not presently fiscally able to have a flamboyant handover ceremony due to economic crunch facing the country.

Source: The Sun Full Article
Economics and Business

- The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on Wednesday night released the first quarter 2015 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) figure, stating that the country's GDP declined from 5.94 percent at the end of the fourth quarter of last year to 3.86 percent. The report stated that in nominal terms, the aggregate GDP stood at N21.04 trillion at basic prices in the first quarter. Compared with the opening quarter of 2014's value of N20.16 trillion, indicating 4.32 percent higher, whereas relative to the preceding quarter's value of N24.205 trillion, the nominal growth was lower by 13 percent. It stated, “In the opening quarter of 2015, Gross Domestic Product grew by 3.86 percent in real terms year-on-year. This was lower by 2.25 percent points from the preceding quarter and by 1.98 percent points from the corresponding quarter of 2014. Quarter-on-quarter, real GDP was lower by 11.57 percent. The NBS also on Wednesday night released the Consumer Price Index for the month of April, with the country's inflation rate rising to a 22-month high of 8.7 percent. Full Article

- The United States Consulate-General trained about 85 Nigerian women in Lagos on Thursday on how to be financially independent in their homes and other socio-economic engagements. The One-Day Seminar, “Take Charge of Your Financial Future” was organized by the Consulate to expose young and middle aged women to the processes of becoming financially independent. The Consulate-General's Public Diplomacy Officer, Rhonda Watson, said the training was part of the US government's commitment to the empowerment of Nigerian women. According to Watson, “This program is another demonstration of the US government's interest in the empowerment of Nigerian women. Watson urged Nigerian women to desist from “self-limiting beliefs”, and to begin to create and work hard at their visions. Full Article

Key Upcoming Dates

May 29 Transition to a New Government

Emir Sanus­i Reiterates that NNPC Diverted Billions of Dollars

The man who blew open the corruption saga that rocked the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Emir Muhammed Sanusi, has once again restated that the NNPC failed to remit billions of dollars to the federation account. In a piece for Financial Times, Sanusi states that he can be suspended as Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria but that the truth of the matter cannot be suspended.

Contrary to the claims of petroleum minister Diezani Alison-Madueke, the audit report does not exonerate the NNPC. It establishes that the gap between the company's oil revenues between January 2012 and July 2013 and cash remitted to the government for the same period was $18.5 billion. And it goes into detail about the NNPC's account of how it used that money, which raises serious questions about the legality of the state oil company's conduct. The auditors say a significant part of the unremit funds is supposed to have gone towards a kerosene subsidy that had been stopped two and a half years earlier by the late President Umaru Yar’Adua. His decree never appeared in the official gazette, leading some to question whether it ever had legal force.

The second major item raised in the report relates to the transfer of oil assets belonging to the federation to the Nigerian Petroleum Development Company, a subsidiary of the NNPC. NPDC has paid $100 million for these assets, from which it extracted crude valued at $6.8 billion but paid tax and royalties worth $1.7 billion in the period scrutinized by the auditors. Source: Premium Times Full Article
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Triple Canopy is a leading provider of mission support, security, training and advisory services to government agencies and multinational corporations across a range of market sectors and geographies. The company excels at delivering complete program management solutions to help clients achieve critical mission objectives in challenging locations worldwide. From logistics and life support to personal protection and training, clients rely on Triple Canopy to mitigate risk and ensure business continuity. Triple Canopy is ISO 9001:2008 certified and a founding signatory of the International Code of Conduct.