

# NIGERIA



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## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Nigeria should urgently clear any anti-personnel mines, including victim-activated improvised explosive devices (IEDs) on its territory on the basis of humanitarian needs and priorities.
- Nigeria should inform states parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) of the discovery of any contamination from anti-personnel mines, including victim-activated IEDs, and report on the location of all suspected or confirmed mined areas under its jurisdiction or control and on the status of programmes for their destruction.
- As soon as security conditions permit, non-technical survey should commence in Nigeria's three most conflict-affected provinces, Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states.
- Where appropriate, Nigeria should encourage and facilitate the provision of assistance and expertise from humanitarian demining organisations.

## CONTAMINATION

In 2015 and 2016, numerous incidents involving both civilian and military casualties from "landmines" and a range of IEDs planted by Boko Haram have been reported in the north-east of Nigeria. The majority of the reports appear to describe victim-activated IEDs made by Boko Haram, which function as anti-personnel mines and anti-vehicle mines.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. P. Moore, "This Month in Mines, February 2015", Landmines in Africa blog, 12 March 2015, at: <https://landminesinafrica.wordpress.com/2015/03/12/the-month-in-mines-february-2015/>.

The extent of possible contamination from mines and other explosive devices is not known. Incidents involving mines and IEDs have been reported in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states, with Borno state the most heavily affected. According to the Nigerian military, the Sambisa forest in Borno state, Boko Haram's stronghold, has been heavily mined, along with "extensive" mine use by Boko Haram around military positions.<sup>2</sup>

According to an assessment carried out in Adamawa and Borno states in November 2015 by international demining organisation Danish Demining Group (DDG), local community members reported a number of areas as suspected to be contaminated with explosive devices requiring clearance including: Dikwa, Marte, Kukawa, Ngala, Bama, Gwoza, and Kala-Balge local government areas in Borno state.<sup>3</sup>

DDG reported that interviewees, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), community informants such as teachers, religious leaders, and medical personnel, local and national government officials, military and police personnel, and UN and civil society actors, identified contamination as including anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines and cluster munition remnants, as well as various mortars and projectiles, rockets and rocket propelled grenades, grenades, Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS), small arms ammunition, and a variety of body-borne, vehicle-borne, and remotely controlled IEDs.<sup>4</sup>

One interviewee identified mines resembling Chinese No. 4 anti-personnel mines and Chinese Type 72 anti-vehicle mines based on photographs, but stated that she did not witness the emplacement of these mines, but saw Boko Haram fighters transporting them. Another IDP reported seeing a device similar to a Chinese Type 72 anti-vehicle mine along the Madagali-Gwoza road and an armoured personnel carrier damaged by what appeared to be an explosion nearby.<sup>5</sup>

In October 2015, the Nigerian army warned civilians of the possibility of encountering IEDs fabricated from submunitions and reported the discovery of caches of cluster munitions in Adamawa State. These were later identified as French-made air-delivered BLG-66 "Beluga" cluster munitions, alleged to have been taken from stockpiles of the Nigerian Armed Forces or smuggled from Libyan arms depots.<sup>6</sup>

Contamination from mines and IEDs has had a serious humanitarian impact by preventing the return of IDPs and exacerbating a crisis which saw over two million persons displaced in 2015.<sup>7</sup> Roads were closed to civilian traffic by the military due to the presence of mines or IEDs and there were numerous reports of civilian casualties and farmers who feared returning to work their fields due to the presence of mines.<sup>8</sup> This contributed to sharply worsening food shortages, which according to UN officials in October 2016, put Nigeria on the precipice of a major humanitarian disaster, with thousands already dead from hunger and malnutrition and hundreds of thousands more at severe risk of starvation.<sup>9</sup>

Civilian casualties from mines and IEDs were reported across all three affected states in many incidents during 2015, the majority occurring when IDPs returned to villages and attempted to resume agricultural activities. In one incident in May 2015 in Yobe state, seven people were reportedly killed by mines following their return to their fields, prompting the local government to initiate a risk education programme.<sup>10</sup> In April, in Borno state, five farmers were reported killed by a mine while trying to cultivate their farm, despite a belief that the Nigerian military had cleared the area. Many other farmers in the area were said to be afraid to farm their land due to the presence of landmines, despite lacking any other means of livelihood.<sup>11</sup> After a woman was seriously injured by a mine in Michika, Adamawa state, while digging weeds and replanting corn, a senior military official stated there had been many similar casualties from explosions in farm fields in recent months as increasing numbers of IDP were returning home.<sup>12</sup>

2 J. Payne, "Nigeria's military believes it has Boko Haram cornered, but landmines are getting in the way", *Reuters*, 2 May 2015, available at: <http://www.businessinsider.com/r-nigerias-offensive-against-boko-haram-slowed-by-landmines-2015-5>; and "Nigeria: Landmine Blast Kills Soldier, Three Vigilantes in Sambisa Forest", *AllAfrica*, 24 April 2015, at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201504240329.html>.

3 DDG, "Mine Action Assessment: Northeastern Nigeria (Adamawa and Borno States) 1-15 November 2015", undated, at: [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/assessments/drc\\_ddg\\_mine\\_action\\_assessment\\_nigeria\\_2015\\_12\\_08.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/assessments/drc_ddg_mine_action_assessment_nigeria_2015_12_08.pdf).

4 DDG, "Mine Action Assessment: Northeastern Nigeria (Adamawa and Borno States) 1-15 November 2015".

5 Ibid.

6 "Boko Haram has cluster bombs: Nigeria's DHQ", *The News Nigeria*, 8 October 2015, at: <http://thenewsnigeria.com.ng/2015/10/boko-haram-has-cluster-bombs-nigerias-dhq/>; "Nigeria: Boko Haram Cluster Bomb May Come from Nigerian Military", *AllAfrica*, 14 October 2015, at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201510141295.html>; and P. Hazlewood, "Boko Haram cluster bombs' may come from Nigerian military," *AFP*, 13 October 2015, at: <https://www.yahoo.com/news/boko-haram-cluster-bombs-may-come-nigerian-military-112651761.html?ref=gs>.

7 H. Idris and I. Sawab, "Nigeria: Liberated Areas - Why IDPs Can't

Return Home", *AllAfrica*, 7 March 2015, at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201503091257.html>; I. Sawab and H. K. Matazu, "Nigeria: Boko Haram - Plying Borno Roads Still a Nightmare", *AllAfrica*, 9 May 2015, at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201508101510.html>; and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, "Nigeria IDP Figures Analysis", 31 December 2015, at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/sub-saharan-africa/nigeria/figures-analysis>.

8 I. Sawab and H. K. Matazu, "Nigeria: Boko Haram - Plying Borno Roads Still a Nightmare", *AllAfrica*, 9 May 2015; and H. Idris and I. Sawab, "Nigeria: Liberated Areas - Why IDPs Can't Return Home", *AllAfrica*, 7 March 2015.

9 K. Sieff, "A famine unlike we have ever seen", *The Washington Post*, 13 October 2016, at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2016/10/13/they-survived-boko-haram-now-millions-in-nigeria-face-a-new-threat-starvation/>.

10 "Boko Haram landmine kills seven IDPs in Yobe", *Punch.ng*, 8 May 2016, at: <http://punchng.com/boko-haram-landmine-kills-seven-idps-yobe/>.

11 S. Isuwa, "North East farmers face landmine explosions, kidnapping", *Pulse.ng*, 4 May 2016, at: <http://pulse.ng/local/boko-haram-north-east-farmers-face-landmine-explosions-kidnapping-id4995133.html>.

12 "How Boko Haram is killing off farms", *IRIN*, 17 December 2015, at: <http://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2015/12/17>.

There were also numerous reports of military casualties from mines or from vehicles driving over explosive devices planted along main roads, particularly in and around areas held by Boko Haram. In one such incident, in April 2015, six soldiers and a “civilian vigilante” were injured when their vehicle hit a mine near the town of Baga, and one other soldier and three vigilantes were reported to have been killed by a mine during an attack by the Nigerian military in the Sambisa forest near to Boko Haram’s main camp.<sup>13</sup> In June 2015, there were reports of two soldiers and a policeman killed in a landmine blast on Damboa road, 35km from Maiduguri.<sup>14</sup> In August 2015, two soldiers died after stepping on a landmine and two others injured in an explosion in Dikwa. The military stated an armoured personnel carrier was also destroyed in the blast.<sup>15</sup> In September 2016, four soldiers were killed and sixteen were wounded and two vehicles were badly damaged by an IED planted in an ambush by Boko Haram outside Maiduguri.<sup>16</sup>

Military casualties have also been reported among soldiers clearing mines. In May 2015, two soldiers were killed and two others seriously wounded while clearing landmines in Gudumbali town.<sup>17</sup> Their unit had been clearing mines along the Gwoza-Yamteke road and seized a bomb-making facility in what formerly was a chemistry laboratory at the Dikwa School of Agriculture.<sup>18</sup>

## PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Both Nigeria’s armed forces and police carry out explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) activities and ERW clearance. The state police have EOD units that support the army in clearing UXO and IEDs. The army’s ERW clearance is primarily focused on military operations and clearing roads and areas to facilitate access for troops to carry out attacks and keeping military supply routes open.<sup>19</sup>

In March 2015, the Nigerian defence headquarters stated that 24 Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles (MRAPs) had been provided by the United States (US) to the Nigerian army and were being used in clearance operations in the north-east with “much success”.

However, it was also reported that most of the vehicles were not in serviceable condition when delivered, and as such had been unable to be put to use.<sup>20</sup> In May 2015, it was reported that the Nigerian government had ordered 10 additional demining machines from a Slovakian company, with five scheduled for delivery in 2015 and the remainder in 2016.<sup>21</sup>

## LAND RELEASE

It is not known how much mine or EOD clearance has been carried out by the Nigerian military. In August 2016, a military commander was quoted in the media that a “massive” demining effort was underway across Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states, following the purchase and delivery of demining equipment, as farmland around the Sambisa forest required clearance of explosive devices before it could be accessed by returning farmers.<sup>22</sup>

In February 2015, the military claimed to have cleared more than 1,500 landmines laid by Boko Haram around the town of Baga and in the Sambisa forest, using armoured personnel vehicles and armoured tanks with mine-sweeping capabilities.<sup>23</sup> In April 2015, the Nigerian military was reportedly using mechanised demining equipment to clear roads and paths for military operations against Boko Haram in the Sambisa forest.<sup>24</sup> Another report affirmed that the army had deployed mechanical demining equipment, but said “the available machines are insufficient for the vast area of the Sambisa forest”.<sup>25</sup> The military was also reported to have been clearing some roads, including in July 2015 when it announced that the Damaturu-Biu road had been cleared of mines and explosive devices by Special Forces EOD troops, with support from the police and local ‘vigilantes’.<sup>26</sup> In December 2015, a local governor in Adamawa state reported that the military was working to clear mines from recaptured areas, focusing on roads, schools, and clinics, but farms were not considered a high priority despite many casualties having occurred when civilians returned to their fields.<sup>27</sup> In another media report, the Nigerian police EOD unit was reported to have neutralised 67 landmines buried by Boko Haram around military barracks in Bama in September 2016.<sup>28</sup>

13 “Nigeria: Boko Haram Kill Two Soldiers, Injure Seven in Baga”, *AllAfrica*, 21 April 2015, at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201504220204.html>; and “Nigeria: Landmine Blast Kills Soldier, Three Vigilantes in Sambisa Forest”, *AllAfrica*, 24 April 2015, at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201504240329.html>.

14 “Explosions Kill 14 in Borno State”, *Channels Television*, 17 June 2015, at: <http://www.channelstv.com/2015/06/17/explosives-kill-14-in-borno-state/>.

15 “Two soldiers killed by Boko Haram landmine: army”, *Vanguard*, 22 August 2015, at: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/08/two-soldiers-killed-by-boko-haram-land-mine-army/>.

16 A. Haruna, “Four soldiers killed, 16 injured in Boko Haram bomb attack”, *Premium Times*, 26 September 2016, at: <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/211243-four-soldiers-killed-16-injured-boko-haram-bomb-attack.html>.

17 I. Sawab and H. K. Matazu, “Nigeria: Boko Haram – Plying Borno Roads Still a Nightmare”, *AllAfrica*, 9 May 2015.

18 P. Clotey, “Nigerian Army Disables Boko Haram Explosives”, *Voice of America News*, 5 August 2015, at: <http://www.voanews.com/a/nigeria-army-disables-boko-haram-explosives/2903551.html>.

19 DDG, “Mine Action Assessment: Northeastern Nigeria (Adamawa and Borno States) 1–15 November 2015”.

20 S. Iroegbu, “Nigeria: Boko Haram – Military Insiders, DHQ Wrangle Over US MRAP Donations”, *AllAfrica*, 27 March 2015, at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201603270178.html>.

21 Ibid.

22 N. Marama, “Military to clear off landmines, IEDs in North East”, *Vanguard*, 19 August 2016, at: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/08/military-clear-off-landmines-north-east/>.

23 M. P. Moore, “This Month in Mines – February 2015”, Landmines in Africa blog, 12 March 2015; and “Nigeria: Boko Haram – Why Military Offensive is Yielding Results – Dasuki”, *AllAfrica*, 21 February 2015, at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201502230830.html>.

24 “Nigeria: Sambisa – Military Deploys More Equipment, Continues Assault”, *AllAfrica*, 26 April 2015, at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201504271579.html>.

25 S. Iroegbu, “Nigeria: Boko Haram – Military Insiders, DHQ Wrangle Over U.S. MRAP Donations”.

26 “Nigerian soldiers remove bombs from Damaturu-Biu road”, *Premium Times*, 19 July 2015, at: <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/186911-nigerian-soldiers-remove-bombs-from-damaturu-biu-road.html>.

27 “How Boko Haram is killing off farms”, *IRIN*, 17 December 2015, at: <http://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2015/12/17>.

28 “Nigeria: Police Defuses 67 Landmines Buried by Boko Haram in Bama Army Barracks”, *AllAfrica*, 26 September 2016, at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201609260940.html>.