

Terrorist Attacks Targeting the Police in Nigeria: A Trend Analysis of 2009-2022

Usman A. Ojedokun

*Department of Sociology,
University of Ibadan, Nigeria*
uaojedokun@gmail.com
ua.ojedokun@ui.edu.ng

Noah Opeyemi Balogun

*Department of Conflict, Peace and Strategic Studies,
Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti*
balogunnoah@abuad.edu.ng

Muazu I. Mijinyawa

*Department of Sociology and Criminology
Kent State University,
Ohio, USA*
muazuimijinyawa@gmail.com

&

Oluwatobi A. Bolujoko

*Department of Sociology and Criminology
Kent State University,
Ohio, USA*
bolujokotobiloba@gmail.com

Abstract:

Since 2009, terrorist attacks targeting police personnel and police facilities have continued to gain momentum in Nigeria. Following the commencement of hostility and armed struggles by the Boko Haram terrorist group against the Nigerian state that year, many other insurgent groups and separatist movements have since emerged in the country (Ogbonnaya & Ehigiamusoe, 2013; Joshua & Chidozie, 2021). A common denominator that these terrorist groups jointly share is their adoption of violent attacks on police officials and police facilities as part of their major operational strategies.

Consequently, a high rate of police homicides and large-scale destruction of critical police infrastructures and material resources are annually recorded in Nigeria (Egigogo, 2023; Nseyen, 2021; Omonobi, 2022). Despite the fact that armed violence by terrorist groups against the police is increasingly being recognised to be a serious social problem, the issue is yet to command tangible scholarly attention. Against this background, this study investigated the trend of terrorist attacks targeted against the police in Nigeria between 2009 and 2022 by focusing on the yearly distribution of terrorist attacks, the situations and contexts exposing police officials to terrorist attacks, the terrorist groups targeting police officials, the types of weapons being employed by the terrorists, and the yearly distribution of police fatalities resulting from terrorist attack. Data were principally sourced through the content analysis of a corpus of two Nigerian newspapers' coverage of the recorded incidents of terrorist attacks that were directed at police officials. Results showed that 455 attacks were recorded between 2009 and 2022 with Borno state having the largest share (42.9%). Also, the largest single share of police fatalities (24.8%) arising from terrorist attacks occurred in 2021. Gun was the weapon of choice in most incidents (66.8%). IPOB (32.1%) and Boko Haram (31.2%) were the terrorist groups responsible for most of the attacks on police officials. The Nigeria Police Force needs to develop a functional institutional framework through which police officials can be adequately exposed to professional counter-terrorism training and strategies.

References

Ogbonnaya UM and Ehigiamusoe UK (2013) Niger Delta militancy and Boko Haram insurgency: National security in Nigeria. *Global Security Studies* 4(3): 1-14.

Joshua S and Chidozie F (2021) Terrorism in Nigeria. *Nigerian Politics*, 273-288.

Egigogo MR (2023) Police DPO, four others killed while repelling terrorists' attacks. *Premium Times*, 13 February. Available at: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/north-central/581648-police-dpo-four-officers-killed-while-repelling-terrorists-attack.html>

Nseyen N (2021) Police affairs minister condemns attack on zonal headquarters in Anambra. *Daily Post*, 19 April. Available at: <https://dailypost.ng/2021/04/19/police-affairs-minister-condemns-attack-on-zonal-headquarters-in-anambra/>

Omonobi K (2022) IGP condemns attacks on police officers as illegal, affront on rule of law. *Vanguard*, 29 August. Available at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/08/igp-condemns-attacks-on-police-officers-as-illegal-affront-on-rule-of-law/>