

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### **Nigeria: Unlawful killings by Boko Haram may constitute crimes against humanity**

Amnesty International strongly condemns the unlawful killings of members of the public in northern Nigeria. The killing of at least 115 people in the last two weeks by unknown gunmen and other suspected members of Boko Haram may constitute crimes against humanity as defined in Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, to which Nigeria is a state party.

The deteriorating trend in the human rights and security situation in north-eastern Nigeria has further put the rights to life of many Nigerians at risk.

Amnesty International urges Boko Haram and any other armed groups operating in northern Nigeria to immediately stop attacks against the general population. The government must also ensure that people are adequately protected from human rights abuses and suspected perpetrators must be brought to justice in a fair trial without recourse to the death penalty.

Amnesty International has received information that since 20 October 2013, at least 115 people have been killed in attacks across different locations in Yobe and Borno states.

- On Sunday 3 November 2013, 32 people in a wedding convoy were according to Amnesty International's sources killed by unknown gunmen along the Bama- Maiduguri road in Borno state. But the military have claimed that only 5 people were killed. No group has claimed responsibility for Sunday's attacks on the wedding convoy.
- On 29 October, 30 corpses were reportedly deposited at the Sani Abacha General Hospital mortuary in Damaturu, Yobe state following an attack by unknown gunmen in Damaturu.
- Between 24 and 25 October 2013, an unspecified number of people were reportedly killed in Damaturu, Yobe state when gunmen attacked the city. One resident in Damaturu told Amnesty International, that at least 50 people were killed during the attack. Other sources state that 35 people were killed. On Sunday 3 November 2013, Boko Haram's purported leader, Abubakar Shekau, claimed responsibility for the attacks in a video statement.
- On 20 October, 19 people were reportedly killed by gunmen in the town of Lugumani, Borno state;

Amnesty International is seriously concerned that if such acts of violence and disregard for rule of law continue unchecked, the level of impunity in Nigeria will worsen.

The recent unlawful killings in north-eastern Nigeria require a thorough investigation with a view to bringing suspected perpetrators to justice. Amnesty International urges the perpetrators to stop attacks against the general population and to respect Nigerian law and the country's international human rights obligations and commitments. Such attacks demonstrate an absolute disregard for the right to life and may constitute serious human rights abuses.

**Background:**

The government of Nigeria needs to radically overhaul the way the security forces operate in north-eastern Nigeria and their response to the threat posed by Boko Haram. Amnesty International has urged the Nigerian security forces to act within the law, and ensure they provide adequate security for the people in Nigeria.

Since 2009, Amnesty International has documented numerous cases of unlawful killings and attacks by unknown gunmen and others suspected of being members of Boko Haram. The Islamist armed group, Boko Haram has embarked on acts of violence and human rights abuses, resulting in a general atmosphere of intimidation and fear among the population in Nigeria. They have claimed responsibilities in the past for bombings, murder, and attacks on churches, intimidation and killing of teachers, schoolchildren, journalists and attacks on school buildings. These acts constitute crimes under Nigerian law.

At the same time the security forces are failing to protect the population from human rights abuses committed by Boko Haram. There have been limited or almost no effective investigations and prosecutions of Boko Haram members for the violent criminal acts they have committed over the past years.