



CIVILIAN PROTECTION SNAPSHOT: Monguno, Nigeria

I. KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For over a decade, the Monguno Local Government Area (LGA) in Northeast Nigeria has experienced violence and insecurity as a result of conflict between the Government of Nigeria and armed opposition groups (AOGs). In January 2015, AOGs briefly took control of the capital, Monguno town, from government authorities and security forces. Although Nigerian security forces reclaimed control over Monguno town the following month, AOGs have continued to pose a threat in many areas of the LGA and have repeatedly launched attacks on Monguno town – abducting and killing civilians, triggering displacement, and creating an environment of insecurity and fear for many communities.

In July 2021, Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC) interviewed civilians, traditional leaders, members of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), humanitarian actors, and a government official residing in Monguno town and the Maiduguri area to explore the impact of shifting AOG tactics on civilians and the Nigerian military's response. This civilian protection snapshot captures the research findings and follows an earlier protection snapshot on the situation in Gwoza that CIVIC published in December 2021.¹

Individuals interviewed by CIVIC in Monguno town all agreed that the security situation in the town and surrounding areas improved significantly in 2021 as compared to 2020, and that the situation was calmer than it had been since the AOG-related conflict reached the area in 2015. Civilians told CIVIC that small-scale attacks on the town used to be a regular occurrence and the sound of gunshots kept people awake at night and living in fear. “When we first arrived, there were lots of attacks by the AOGs. We were always in the midst of gunshots, but thank God, things have changed,” said one civilian. Another resident of the town explained, “When we first arrived, one could not go out even to look for firewood. If you [went] out, you would be abducted or killed. One could not go to the farm [either] but now you can go freely to get firewood or farm.”

Civilians reported to CIVIC that they felt comfortable traveling 15-20 kilometers from the town in most directions for livelihood activities, including farming, fishing, and collecting firewood.² Monguno residents adhere to a curfew that was agreed between the military and community leaders and is enforced by the military. Residents can freely exit and enter the town between the hours of 7:00 am and 5:00 pm but entrance is restricted outside these hours. Inside the town, small commercial taxis (called kekes) are allowed to operate until 6:00 pm and private vehicles can circulate up until 9:00 pm, while shops remain open until 10:00 pm. Most participants who spoke with CIVIC felt that these curfews helped to maintain security in the town and did not cause undue hardship to civilians. However, the two internally displaced persons (IDPs) interviewed raised concerns that the curfew on movement of small commercial vehicles can prevent IDPs from being able to quickly access medical care in the event of an emergency, for example, if a pregnant woman were to go into labor after 6pm.

According to interviewees, travel on the Maiduguri - Monguno road, which serves as an important

commercial lifeline for the town, had become much safer in the months prior (April, May, and June 2021). However, travel on roads to many neighboring LGAs still poses significant risks to civilians.³

Civilians credited the improved security situation to shifting dynamics among AOG factions and to strengthened protection and engagement efforts of the Nigerian security forces and the CJTF – an armed community group working alongside the Nigerian military. According to interviewees, improvements in the activities and behavior of Nigerian security forces are a result of the deployment of a new commander to the town and of community efforts to engage the Nigerian security forces in dialogue. Civilians and traditional leaders tended to view improvements in the protection situation as a trend that would continue into the future, while members of the CJTF and international non-governmental organization (INGO) officials were more skeptical that current improvements mark a real, sustainable shift in the conflict dynamics. A CJTF member illustrated his concerns about AOG activity by saying, “A ram goes back and you think he is withdrawing, but he is preparing to strike back. So, it could be like that.”

The Nigerian government, military, and INGOs are also working to reintegrate former AOG combatants and individuals previously detained on accusation of being combatants into Monguno town. While interviewees expressed some concerns and grievances, they also saw little choice or avenue for ending the ongoing insurgency without reintegration.

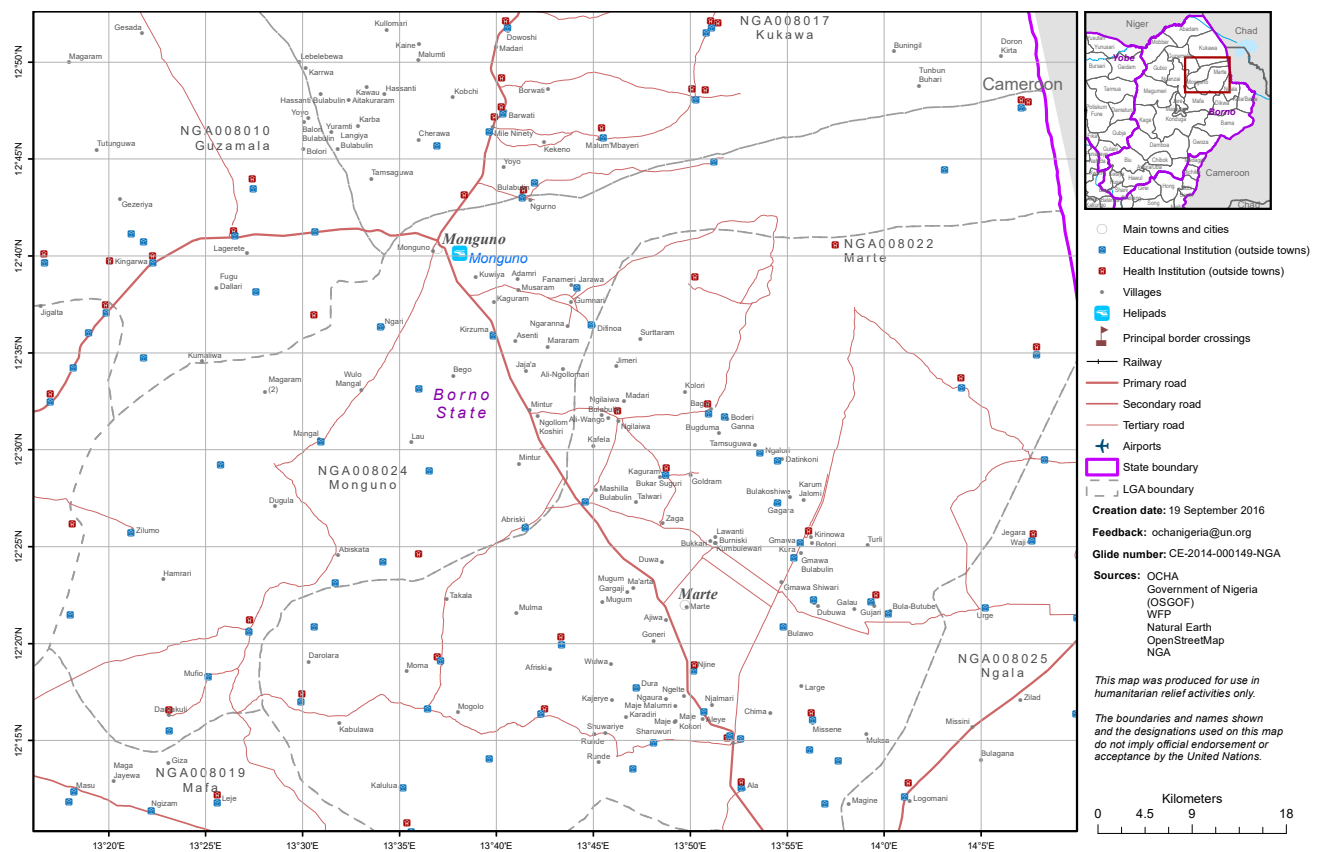
Despite improved physical security, food insecurity remains a major challenge to civilians in Monguno, leaving women-headed households, children, and persons with disabilities particularly vulnerable. The scarcity of food and other humanitarian assistance in Monguno has also led to some tensions between host communities and IDPs, who otherwise reported having good relationships with each other.

Finally, civilians living in the town were grateful for the reinforced presence of Nigerian security force personnel in Monguno town that resulted from the Nigerian military’s 2019 “super camp” strategy of closing smaller military outposts to consolidate strength in better-equipped garrison towns. However, interviewees also recognized the benefits of expanding the Nigerian military presence to support increased movement on roads, commercial activity, and voluntary returns as the security situation improves.

Based on these findings and the analysis provided in this snapshot, **CIVIC recommends stakeholders take the following actions:**

Going forward, the Nigerian military should:

- Continue to engage with civilians on their evolving security concerns as the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) gains dominance over other AOG factions, which could continue to change the protection threats civilians face;
- Where civilians request the support, consider scaling up farming and firewood security patrols to new areas across Borno state;
- Reassess the decision to concentrate military force in garrison towns and consider adapting military presence to evolving conflict dynamics;
- Coordinate strategically with civilian authorities to ensure returns are voluntary and provide adequate security for IDPs returning to their areas of origin both inside of Monguno town and in the surrounding areas;
- Ensure men, women, and children displaced to Monguno town from surrounding areas are not unjustifiably detained or treated as combatants without evidence of their having directly participated in hostilities as AOGs.



Nigeria: Reference map of Monguno LGA (as of 19 September 2016) OCHA

The Nigerian government and humanitarian actors should:

- If resources and security allow, and in line with humanitarian principles, increase food assistance for residents in Monguno town until they are able to harvest crops;
- Take measures to safeguard against food delivery exacerbating existing tensions between the host and IDP communities in Monguno town or between community members and ex-combatants being re-integrated into the town, such as monitoring and assessing these dynamics and, in line with needs and vulnerabilities, simultaneously providing support to different groups;
- Ensure assistance to Monguno residents takes into account particular vulnerabilities facing women-headed households, children, and persons with disabilities.

II. BACKGROUND ON MONGUNO

Monguno is a Local Government Area (LGA) located northeast of Maiduguri in Nigeria's Borno state, with a narrow border in the Lake Chad region that forms Nigeria's international border with Chad. The LGA has experienced violence and insecurity as a result of the conflict between the government of Nigeria and AOGs, including the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Jamaat Ahlussunah li-Dawa wal-Jihad (JASDJ). In January 2015, AOGs wrested control of Monguno town from Nigeria's military and many of the town's residents fled. Nigerian security forces launched a coordinated ground and air assault to regain control of the town in February 2015, and it has remained under the control of the Nigerian military and national authorities since. However, AOGs have repeatedly launched attacks on Monguno town, including in June 2020 when ISWAP successfully overran the military garrison before the Nigerian army and air force were able to repel the attackers.⁴ During the June 2020 assault, at least six civilians were killed and 37 injured while nine Nigerian soldiers reportedly lost their lives.⁵ A humanitarian hub

where over 50 aid workers were staying was targeted but did not sustain significant damage because a projectile fired at the hub failed to explode.⁶

While AOGs have been unable to retake Monguno town, they have maintained a presence and operations in many other areas of Monguno LGA and neighboring LGAs, triggering large-scale forced displacement of tens of thousands of Nigerian civilians, many of whom have fled to Monguno town to escape the AOGs. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), at the end of March 2020, 154,462 IDPs were living in 12 camps in and around the town.⁷

III. EVOLVING ARMED OPPOSITION GROUP DYNAMICS

A number of armed opposition groups, usually referred to broadly as Boko Haram by civilians, operate in Borno state, where Monguno LGA is located. Boko Haram was initially founded as Jamaat Ahlulsunah li-Dawa wal-Jihad (JASDJ) in 2010. In 2015, JASDJ's leader, Abubakar Shekau, pledged loyalty to Islamic State leader Abubakar al-Baghdadi, converting JASDJ into the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP). However, after a leadership dispute in 2016, Shekau split off from ISWAP and reclaimed the name JASDJ for the faction that followed him.⁸ Officially, ISWAP's ideology limits the targeting of most Muslim civilians while supporting targeted attacks on Christians, Nigerian government officials, security forces, and humanitarian aid workers. The group also maintains that Muslim civilians may lose their status as civilians protected from attack under ISWAP ideology if they interact with security forces or the government. Moreover, the group's tactics have varied considerably depending on group leadership and operational command at the time of attacks, and many attacks claimed by ISWAP have included significant civilian harm, including the execution and abduction of Muslim civilians. Generally, JASDJ does not distinguish between government authorities and civilians in its attacks and is viewed as more brutal in its tactics against the civilian population.⁹

In the year after their split, ISWAP and JASDJ forces clashed several times before reaching a stasis. They carved up control of Borno state but engaged in limited contact with each other until 2019. From 2019 to 2021, factional fighting between the two groups escalated. During a clash between ISWAP and JASDJ in May of 2021, JASDJ leader Shekau reportedly detonated a suicide vest to avoid capture, mortally wounding himself.¹⁰ In the months following his death, many JASDJ fighters surrendered to the government while others joined ISWAP, leaving remaining JASDJ cells weakened in many areas of Borno state.

At the time of CIVIC's research, the impact of these shifting AOG dynamics were still unfolding and were not entirely clear. Before Shekau's death, Monguno LGA was already primarily under ISWAP influence and, therefore, Shekau's death is likely to have less of an impact in Monguno than in areas that were under JASDJ control. Although CIVIC's research did not indicate the primary cause of evolving AOG tactics, stakeholders in Monguno reported that, over time, the tactics of AOG fighters in their area had become less violent toward civilians and more targeted toward humanitarian actors, members of the security forces, and members of the CJTF.

CIVIC spoke to two individuals who had personally experienced an AOG attack while traveling on the Monguno - Maiduguri road in 2020. Their stories lend credence to concerns that AOGs are increasingly focusing their attacks on Nigerian government actors. One of these individuals reported that the passengers were robbed and the identification cards of everyone in the vehicles were checked to try to find aid workers and government officials.¹¹ The second individual told CIVIC that the AOG fighters had spoken in Kanuri, telling the passengers that they were just looking for humanitarians and government officials and that civilians should lie down to avoid being hit by stray bullets.¹²



August 2021, Moguno, Nigeria: Community Protection Committee (CPC) and CJTF members in a joint activity at the Moguno fish market as part of a trust building exercise. Community Protection Committees are CIVIC-supported groups made up of 50 members each (25 women and 25 men). These groups are aimed at helping civilians identify threats and actions to advance self-protection and are a platform to build civil-military relations.

Interviewees also reported that Monguno town residents sometimes encountered AOG members when traveling outside the town for livelihood activities, but over the prior two to three months AOG members who confronted civilians appeared to be fewer in number and poorly armed. According to interviewees, AOG members sometimes attempted to tax civilians, warned them not to support the security forces, and tried to ascertain information about humanitarian and military targets inside the town. However, they did not kill, abduct, or harm civilians as they had in past years.¹³ Describing these changes, one civilian told CIVIC, “Yes, there are changes, but I have not witnessed it [directly]. People say when they go to the bush they see AOGs who tell them not to be scared of them and they won’t touch them and they should continue doing their work.”¹⁴ Another civilian explained, “We just know that now they are not harming people but we can’t give the reason behind it. ...We do hear from people that are going out about factions. They even advise on what direction to go, like [saying] ‘this direction is the Shekau people that are operating and that they can kill.’ And the other side, ISWAP, they say these factions don’t have anything to do with civilians.”¹⁵

It is unclear how these dynamics will develop over the coming months as ISWAP attempts to continue consolidating control over territory in the wake of Shekau’s death. ISWAP’s tactics have varied under changing leadership and have not always adhered to the group’s official ideology. Moreover, even if the group continues to avoid inflicting casualties directly on Muslim civilians, continued targeting of humanitarian organizations and Nigerian security forces is likely to negatively impact civilians in other ways. The Nigerian security forces will need to continuously assess how changing AOG dynamics affect civilian security and determine what adjustments they need to make to their own activities to ensure their presence and activities do not unintentionally lead to civilians being targeted by AOGs for presumed affiliation with the military.



August 2021, Monguno, Nigeria: Women returning from firewood collection in Monguno with a CJTF patrolling the area.

IV. PROTECTION AND ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS OF THE NIGERIAN SECURITY FORCES

Civilians largely credited improvements in the security situation in Monguno town and its surrounding areas to enhanced efforts and activities of the Nigerian security forces, some of which stemmed from community activism and engagement with security forces on civilian protection concerns. Community members observed that the mindset of the Nigerian military gradually shifted from harboring deep mistrust toward civilians to working with them to identify protection needs and adjust military operations in response to those needs.¹⁶ “When the military came to fight [AOGs], they didn’t have an idea of who was innocent and who were terrorists, so, they had the idea that everyone was a terrorist. They would detain and kill innocent people even,” said one member of the CJTF.¹⁷ Similarly, a civilian told CIVIC, “In the past, there was not a good relationship... civilians looked at military as the enemy and the military also did not trust civilians, but now, they sit together and are free.”¹⁸

Interviewees observed that some of these changes were the result of efforts by NGOs and community leaders to foster dialogue between civilians and security force officials. Additionally, the deployment of a new commander to Monguno in late 2020 helped consolidate this shift in the mentality and activities of the security forces. The commander has reportedly cultivated stronger relationships and engagement with the community in Monguno and adopted a more proactive approach in addressing threats reported by civilians.¹⁹ A traditional leader in Monguno noted, “If they hear any information now, they swing into action.”²⁰ Likewise, a civilian said, “When there is an issue concerning civilians, they are more active. That’s why I said they are very good, and we like them.”²¹

In addition to proactively responding to information on threats, civilians praised more routine protection activities that allowed them to resume some commercial and livelihood activities. For example, civilians reported that the military were more present on the outskirts of the city to deter attacks. They also noted that the military or CJTF—and sometimes both—undertook patrols every day along the roads that civilians use to access their farms and firewood to check for potential improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and deter AOGs from harassing civilians in these areas.²² Participants also expressed appreciation for the re-opening of a number of military checkpoints along the Monguno-Maiduguri road and for the provision of military escorts to bring convoys of vehicles along the road several times each day.²³

According to interviewees, the military commander in Monguno has not only improved the efforts of the military to protect civilians from potential AOG attacks, but he has also helped to curb harm that the Nigerian military themselves might cause through poor behavior and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). Several stakeholders told CIVIC that, before the arrival of the new commander, Nigerian soldiers would sometimes rent houses or stay overnight in the town.²⁴ This proximity led to incidents that adversely affected civilians. Multiple interviewees described an incident in which Nigerian soldiers, after excessively consuming alcohol, irresponsibly fired their weapons, accidentally injuring civilians and causing panic as some civilians thought the town was under attack by AOGs.²⁵ Many interviewees also reported significant concerns with SEA in previous years that compounded vulnerabilities for women and girls who were already in precarious situations.²⁶ For example, two community members highlighted cases where women became pregnant and were rejected by their families as a result of the pregnancies or received no support from the responsible soldiers who were rotated out of the area.²⁷ Participants told CIVIC that the new commander in Monguno moved all soldiers without direct duties in town to a camp outside of the town center, that he was personally patrolling the town many nights to prevent misconduct by soldiers, and that he had taken action to hold soldiers who were found to be responsible for abuses accountable.²⁸ As one civilian explained, “When we see violations, we find time, raise complaints and report them to their superiors. That has happened many times, and it has created fear in them that somehow one day they may be punished. ...Instead of doing bad things now, it’s help help help for us.”²⁹ It is also important to note that several participants told CIVIC that some cases of SEA are still reported in Monguno, even though the number of incidents has been majorly reduced.³⁰

While civilians were enthusiastic about recent improvements to protection in and around Monguno town, some of the improvements to security in Monguno town in recent years have come at the cost of protecting smaller towns and villages elsewhere in the LGA. The Nigerian security forces’ super camp strategy, adopted in 2019, involved closing many of the military’s smaller outposts and consolidating military strength in larger towns that could be better fortified, supplied with heavier weapons, and supported with air assets. Some analysts have criticized this move as abandoning large swathes of the country’s population to abuses in order to better protect its own soldiers.³¹

Most of the interviewees CIVIC spoke with in Monguno were from the town itself and therefore were not well-placed to speak about the potential negative impact of this strategy on protection in rural areas of Monguno LGA. Given that their primary concern was with security in the town, they were supportive of the military’s efforts to concentrate soldiers and firepower in Monguno town. One participant who supported the strategy noted that, when smaller military outposts were overrun in the past, not only were Nigerian soldiers killed, but AOGs were able to capture military equipment that they then turned against Nigerian security forces and civilians.³² Several interviewees also observed that many rural areas in Monguno LGA were already somewhat depopulated by AOG attacks when the military adopted the super camp strategy, making it difficult to justify leaving military outposts in these areas to protect the few remaining civilians.³³ Nevertheless, some interviewees raised concerns about the impact the

policy may have had on those civilians who remained, triggering additional waves of displacement and exacerbating vulnerabilities for civilians who found themselves without homes or farmland after fleeing to town.³⁴

Young men fleeing from rural areas that were abandoned by the Nigerian military were sometimes doubly victimized by this policy as, once arriving to major towns, they were treated with suspicion. Some were accused of being members of AOGs and detained.³⁵ Moreover, after a recent military airstrike in Monguno LGA that reportedly killed 20 fishermen last year, several Nigerian military officials implied that the men killed could not be civilians because they were in ISWAP controlled territory.³⁶ Stakeholders in Monguno acknowledged that civilians were sometimes mistaken for AOG participants in the past and that civilians arriving to town from other areas continue to be screened for possible support to or participation in AOGs.³⁷ However, respondents noted that CJTF and other community members are now engaged in the military's screening process to help prevent cases of misidentification.³⁸

Finally, even those civilians who felt that the policy of consolidating military force has had some benefits also acknowledged that it may now be preventing displaced persons from safely returning to their homes and were quick to praise the reopening of many military checkpoints on the Monguno – Maiduguri road that were closed as part of the strategy.³⁹ Two participants cited an AOG incursion in July 2021 into Mairari town in Monguno LGA. IDPs had returned to the town, but the Nigerian security forces did not have any presence there.⁴⁰ Describing the attack, a civilian told CIVIC, “Although they [AOG fighters] didn’t kill anyone, they looted all the food stuffs and left. ... [Civilians] decided to go back to farming to feed their families, but all the little food they have was taken away by the insurgents. This could have been prevented if the military was present.”⁴¹ Commenting on these overall dynamics, one civilian recommended, “There are places where civilians have returned to that do not have the military. They should try and deploy soldiers to give the civilians more confidence.”⁴²

While the Nigerian security forces will not be able to extend their presence to every town and village in Monguno LGA, they should regularly assess whether their current consolidation of forces is appropriate given changing conflict dynamics. In some cases, returns have been spontaneous, but in other cases the national authorities have applied significant pressure to IDPs to return.⁴³ IDP returns should be voluntary. If the state government is supporting voluntary returns, the military should coordinate its strategy to provide security in those areas of return. As one humanitarian actor stated, “If the government will consider the risk factor, I think they should slow down on resettlement, and then consider the security strength of those areas.”⁴⁴

V. HUMAN SECURITY CONCERNS AND COMMUNITY TENSIONS

CIVIC found that, generally, relationships between IDPs and the Monguno town host community were cordial. Community members explained that most of the IDPs living in the town are from the same ethnic group as those hailing from the town, speak the same language, and are viewed as being part of the same extended community. “We do not discriminate because we were also displaced, and we have felt what they are feeling. They are our people and we are all from one LGA. We see them as our brothers and sisters,” said one civilian.⁴⁵ Other participants offered examples of the good relationship between the host community and IDPs by noting that both groups visit each other to offer condolences when someone dies and members of the host community have donated supplies to those in the IDP camps.⁴⁶

In addition to hosting a large number of IDPs, former AOG combatants from Monguno and surrounding LGAs are currently being reintegrated into Monguno town. Several participants acknowledged that



Damila Onafuwa / CIVIC Photo

August 2021, Monguno, Nigeria: Farmers returning from their farms with the military patrolling the roads in Monguno.

former combatants and suspected combatants face some stigma in the town and that town residents harbor ongoing fears and grievances.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, most of the individuals who spoke with CIVIC stressed that reintegration is taking place without major tensions and that former combatants are living peacefully within the community. Interviewees noted that the reintegration is sponsored by the government and the military and that, having been asked by national authorities to accept the former combatants, they have little choice but to do so.⁴⁸ Genuine acceptance may take time, but many community members recognized the importance of reintegration in ending the conflict. “If those in the bush hear how their counterparts have been accepted it may be good for the military and they might all surrender,” observed one civilian.⁴⁹ Interviewees more directly involved in the reintegration process noted that, of the close to 100 former combatants that have been reintegrated into Monguno town, there were only a few cases where an ex-combatant went missing or attempted to contact former connections in armed groups.⁵⁰ Two participants who reported initially being reticent about reintegration explained to CIVIC that now they are no longer worried because they have not experienced any problems with the former combatants.⁵¹

While interviewees indicated that the risks civilians faced while traveling the Monguno - Maiduguri road had been greatly reduced by checkpoints and convoys established by the Nigerian military along the route, travel from Monguno to surrounding LGAs and neighboring countries is still very limited, leaving commercial activities and opportunities seriously stunted. Furthermore, while civilians were able to access their farms for planting and tending to crops in 2021, at the time of writing crops that were planted when security improved were still not ready to be harvested. General food distribution by humanitarian agencies had also been temporarily halted since the end of June 2021 after a misunderstanding with government authorities.⁵² As a result, Monguno town residents are facing

a situation of extreme food insecurity that several participants described as living on the verge of starvation.⁵³ “What to eat before the harvest is our concern,” stressed one civilian.⁵⁴

In the current food-insecure environment, community members stressed the heightened vulnerability of children; persons with disabilities who are unable to walk long distances or perform manual labor; and women-headed households, because these women struggle to both care for their children during the day and travel outside of the town for livelihood activities.⁵⁵ As a result of the conflict dynamics in Northeast Nigeria, women-headed households make up a significant proportion of Monguno’s population.⁵⁶ “Most of the problems are with women. Most men have already been killed by the insurgents. When you take their history, you will hear ‘I lost my husband. I lost my husband.’ That is most cases,”⁵⁷ explained one humanitarian worker. According to several interviewees, many women caregivers and their children are surviving by begging for support around the town, which makes them vulnerable to exploitation or abuse. Persons with disabilities are also at higher risk of being left out of food distributions because they sometimes struggle with mobility and can be less visible in communities.⁵⁸

Despite the generally good relationship between IDPs and the host community in Monguno, food insecurity and the limited humanitarian assistance available to Monguno town residents are creating some tensions between them. Members of the host community appear to view themselves as equally vulnerable to IDPs but less likely to receive assistance from humanitarian actors. “I want to let you know that the people in the host communities suffer more than the people in the camps, because the humanitarian assistance is focused more on the people in the camp than the host communities,” said one traditional leader.⁵⁹ While CIVIC was carrying out research in Monguno town, there was some confusion between Monguno residents over who among the host and IDP communities was eligible to receive assistance. The confusion resulted in a stampede on July 15, 2021 as civilians struggled to access assistance, in which at least five people died.⁶⁰ Given these tensions, many of the interviewees CIVIC spoke with stressed the importance of the government and humanitarian actors increasing food assistance to address the ongoing food insecurity until civilians are able to harvest their crops, and ensuring that food assistance is delivered in a way that takes into account different vulnerabilities and is sensitive to community tensions.⁶¹

VI. CONCLUSION

Civilians in Monguno town are hopeful that improvements in the security situation since the beginning of 2021 will be sustained going forward. If gains are sustained, civilians will be able to continue rebuilding their livelihoods and improving their food security. But some of the CJTF and humanitarian representatives that CIVIC spoke with were less confident that the current trend will continue. While JASDJ has been significantly weakened, ISWAP remains active and it is unclear how the shift in balance between AOG factions since Shekau’s death will affect ISWAP’s tactics and activities going forward. Monguno houses a major military base in a strategic location and could therefore be a high value target of ISWAP. In light of ISWAP’s current consolidation of power and its tactics which include direct targeting of military actors and assets, the Nigerian military will need to continue engaging proactively with civilians to understand their evolving protection needs and to ensure the military’s own operations and presence do not cause harm to civilians.



August 2021, Monguno, Nigeria: Community Protection Committee (CPC) and CJTF members.

VII. METHODOLOGY

For this research, CIVIC interviewed seven civilians (four women and three men), two traditional leaders, one government official, two members of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), and three humanitarian actors in July 2021. All of the civilian participants identified as Muslim and six were of Kanuri ethnicity while one was Hausa – largely reflecting the community demographics. Two of the civilians interviewed are internally displaced persons (IDPs) from areas of Monguno LGA outside of the town, and the rest were individuals who identified as being from Monguno town. In Maiduguri, CIVIC interviewed an additional four humanitarian actors about the situation in Monguno LGA. CIVIC contacted members of the Nigerian military in Monguno and requested to speak with them as part of our research. However, we were unable to interview any members of the Nigerian military in Monguno because ongoing activities and operations limited their availability during data collection.

Interviews were semi-structured and lasted between 30 to 90 minutes. CIVIC identified participants through purposive sampling. All interviewees were told the purpose of the research and gave their informed consent to participate. Given the limited number of interviewees, this snapshot is not intended to be a comprehensive overview of community concerns or needs. It also represents the views of only those currently living in the relative safety of Monguno town, rather than those living in more remote areas of the LGA.

- 1 CIVIC, Civilian Protection Snapshot: Gwoza, Nigeria, December 2021.
- 2 CIVIC interview with member of community security forces, #4, Monguno July 2021; CIVIC interview with INGO official, #5, Maiduguri, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #31, Monguno July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Monguno July 2021.
- 3 CIVIC interview with government official, #1, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with INGO official, #5, Maiduguri, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #31, Monguno July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Monguno July 2021.
- 4 Monguno, a strategic town in northern Borno state, is home to a large military base which has been integral to the military's then super camp strategy focused on concentrating forces in urban areas.
- 5 "Nigeria's Boko Haram crisis: UN 'appalled' by twin jihadist attacks in Borno," BBC News, June 14, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-53041886>.
- 6 "Nigeria: UN Appalled by attack hitting civilians and humanitarian facility in Monguno," UN Press Release, June 14, 2020, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/PRESS%20RELEASE%20-%20NIGERIA%20-%20UN%20APPALLED%20BY%20ATTACK%20HITTING%20CIVILIANS%20AND%20HUMANITARIAN%20FACILITY%20IN%20MONGUNO%20-%2014062020%20-%20final.pdf>.
- 7 UN OCHA, Fact Sheet: Monguno Local Government Area, March 31, 2020, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ocha_nga_monguno_factsheet.pdf.
- 8 The Soufan Center, Intelbrief: Boko Haram Factions Shifting to Northwestern Nigeria, September 3, 2020, <https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-boko-haram-factions-shifting-to-northwestern-nigeria/>.
- 9 International Crisis Group, Facing the Challenge of the Islamic State in West Africa Province, May 16, 2019, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/273-facing-challenge-islamic-state-west-africa-province>.
- 10 Kurtzer Jacob, Devermont Judd, Moss Kelly, "Boko Haram's Leader is Dead: What are the Humanitarian and Security Implications?" Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2021.
- 11 CIVIC interview with traditional leader, #4, Monguno, July 2021.
- 12 CIVIC interview with INGO official, #4, Maiduguri, July 2021.
- 13 CIVIC interview with community security force official, #3, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with traditional leader, #3, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with traditional leader #4, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #37, Monguno, July 2021.
- 14 CIVIC interview with civilian, #37, Monguno, July 2021.
- 15 CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Monguno, July 2021.
- 16 CIVIC interview with community security force official, #3, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with INGO official, #10, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #31, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #34, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #35, Monguno, July 2021.
- 17 CIVIC interview with community security force official, #3, Monguno, July 2021.
- 18 CIVIC interview with civilian, #35, M Additional information about these dynamics can be found in earlier CIVIC reports. For example, see: CIVIC, "When We Can't See the Enemy, Civilians Become the Enemy:" Living through Nigeria's Six-Year Insurgency, 2015; CIVIC, Barriers and Bridges to Protection: Civil-Military Engagement in Northeast Nigeria, October 2020. onguno, July 2021.
- 19 CIVIC interview with traditional leader, #3, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with traditional leader #4, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with community security force official, #4, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #37, Monguno, July 2021.
- 20 CIVIC interview with traditional leader, #3, Monguno, July 2021.
- 21 CIVIC interview with civilian, #36, Monguno, July 2021.
- 22 CIVIC interview with traditional leader, #3, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #31, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #34, Monguno, July 2021.
- 23 CIVIC interview with government official, #1, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #31, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Monguno, July 2021.
- 24 CIVIC interview with government official, #1, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with traditional leader, #4, Monguno, July 2021.
- 25 CIVIC interview with civilian, #31, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #33, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #34, Monguno, July 2021.
- 26 CIVIC interview with government official, #1, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with traditional leader, #3, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with INGO official, #5, Maiduguri, July 2021; CIVIC interview with

- INGO official, Maiduguri, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #33, Monguno, July 2021.
- 27 CIVIC interview with government official, #1, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with INGO official, #5, Maiduguri, July 2021.
- 28 CIVIC interview with traditional leader, #4, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with INGO official, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #33, Monguno, July 2021.
- 29 CIVIC interview with civilian, #33, Monguno, July 2021.
- 30 CIVIC interview with government official #1, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with traditional leader, #3, Monguno, July 2021.
- 31 CIVIC interview with INGO official #5, Maiduguri, July 2021. See also, Malik Samuel, “Nigeria’s super camps leave civilians exposed to terrorists,” Institute for Security Studies, November 30, 2020.
- 32 CIVIC interview with civilian, #33, Monguno, July 2021.
- 33 CIVIC interview with civilian, #31, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #33, Monguno, July 2021.
- 34 CIVIC interview with community security force official, #3, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with INGO official, #6, Maiduguri, July 2021; CIVIC interview with INGO official, #12, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Monguno, July 2021.
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- 37 CIVIC interview with community security force official, #3, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with INGO official, #6, Maiduguri, July 2021; CIVIC interview with INGO official, #12, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Monguno, July 2021.
- 38 CIVIC interview with community security force official, #3, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with community security force official, #4, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with traditional Leader, #4, Monguno, July 2021.
- 39 CIVIC interview with government official, #1, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #31, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Monguno, July 2021.
- 40 CIVIC interview with community security force official, #4, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Monguno, July 2021
- 41 CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Monguno, July 2021.
- 42 CIVIC interview with civilian, #31, Monguno, July 2021.
- 43 See, for example, Amnesty International, Nigeria: Plans to close IDP camps in Maiduguri could endanger lives, December 15, 2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/12/nigeria-plans-to-close-idp-camps-in-maiduguri-could-endanger-lives/>.
- 44 CIVIC interview with INGO official, #4, Maiduguri, July 2021.
- 45 CIVIC interview with civilian, #33, Monguno, July 2021.
- 46 CIVIC interview with traditional leader, #4, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #34, Monguno, July 2021.
- 47 CIVIC interview with INGO official, #10, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with INGO official, #11, Monguno, July 2021.
- 48 CIVIC interview with INGO official, #5, Maiduguri, July 2021; CIVIC interview with INGO official, #6, Maiduguri, July 2021.
- 49 CIVIC interview with civilian, #31, Monguno, July 2021.
- 50 CIVIC interview with community security force official, #3, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with community security force official, #4, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with INGO official, #12, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #32, Monguno, July 2021.
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- 53 CIVIC interview with community security force official, #4, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with

civilian, #37, Monguno, July 2021.

54 CIVIC interview with civilian, #34, Monguno, July 2021.

55 CIVIC interview with traditional leader, #3, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with INGO official, #5, Maiduguri, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #33, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #35, Monguno, July 2021; CIVIC interview with civilian, #37, Monguno, July 2021.

56 CIVIC interview with INGO official, #5, Maiduguri, July 2021; CIVIC interview with INGO official, #11, Monguno, July 2021. A needs assessment carried out by INTERSOS found that, of the new households arriving to IDP reception centers between May and October 2020, 67.5 percent were women-headed households: INTERSOS, Multi-Sector Needs Assessment: Monguno and Ngala Reception Centers, October 2020, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/msna_report20october202020_monguno20and20ngala.pdf

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Cover Image:

Cross section of the Monguno fish market after it reopened, August 2021.

Damilola Onafuwa/CIVIC Photo

ABOUT CENTER FOR CIVILIANS IN CONFLICT

Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC) is an international organization dedicated to promoting the protection of civilians in conflict. CIVIC envisions a world in which no civilian is harmed in conflict. Our mission is to support communities affected by conflict in their quest for protection and strengthen the resolve and capacity of armed actors to prevent and respond to civilian harm.

CIVIC was established in 2003 by Marla Ruzicka, a young humanitarian who advocated on behalf of civilians affected by the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Honoring Marla's legacy, CIVIC has kept an unflinching focus on the protection of civilians in conflict. Today, CIVIC has a presence in conflict zones and key capitals throughout the world where it collaborates with civilians to bring their protection concerns directly to those in power, engages with armed actors to reduce the harm they cause to civilian populations, and advises governments and multinational bodies on how to make life-saving and lasting policy changes.

CIVIC's strength is its proven approach and record of improving protection outcomes for civilians by working directly with conflict-affected communities and armed actors. At CIVIC, we believe civilians are not "collateral damage" and civilian harm is not an unavoidable consequence of conflict — civilian harm can and must be prevented.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This snapshot was authored by Lauren Spink (Senior Global Researcher), who also conducted data collection with Dr. Sarem Ugoh (Researcher, Nigeria) and Bulus Mungopark (Community Engagement Manager). Dr. Benson Olugbuo (Country Director, Nigeria), William Meeker (Africa Director), Dr. Sarem Ugoh, Jacob Price (Program Manager), and Alison Giffen (Interim Senior Director Programs) reviewed the brief and provided useful comments. Monica Zuraw (Communications Officer) also reviewed, copyedited, and designed the brief. CIVIC thanks all those who generously gave their time and shared their perspectives and experience during the research.

This research project was funded by the European Union

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