Armed Conflicts Report

Nigeria (1990 - first combat deaths)
Update: January 2009

Summary:

2008 Violence continued throughout 2008 in the Niger Delta between the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), other militia groups in the region, and the Nigerian government. Kidnappings and hijackings of oil workers both on the ground and from boats continued throughout the year. Militia violence was at its worst in September, with 100 conflict deaths in the month alone. The rape of women by militias and militaries continued throughout 2008, with an increased worry over an increased prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the region. The greatest violence of the year occurred between Muslim and Christian gangs in Jos over an election dispute, killing 200 and displacing approximately 7000.

2007 Separatist, state, and religious violence continued in 2007, while gang violence increased for the first time since 2004. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) as well as other armed opposition groups, continued attacks against oil production facilities and employees, resulting in high financial losses for the government. President Yar’Adua was elected as president, marking the first civilian transfer to power in the history of Nigeria. The election was criticized as being illegitimate by both domestic as well as international actors and therefore undermined the authority of the government and has resulted in increased tension within the country.

2006 Violent clashes between various groups continued throughout 2006 resulting in the death of around 300 civilians. The most horrific incidents involved riots between Muslim and Christian citizens over the publishing of cartoons depicting the prophet Mohammed in Danish newspapers. Tension increased between the President, Olusegun Obasanjo and his deputy, Atiku Abubakar, which resulted in fear that a legitimate April 2007 election would not take place. A new rebel faction, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), emerged in early 2006 and is seeking independence for the region’s 14 million Ijaw people. Its favoured tactics reportedly include sabotaging oil production in the Delta region as well as kidnapping foreign workers.

2005 Religious, inter-ethnic, separatist, state and gang violence continued in 2005 although at an intensity lower than 2004. A national conference on constitutional reforms addressing religious and ethnic tensions collapsed without agreement.

2004 Inter-communal clashes, clashes with government security forces and attacks on oil facilities continued in 2004, claiming the lives of over 1,200 people. Most violence occurred between Muslim and Christian militias in and around Kano and between oil militias and government security forces in and near Port Harcourt. Piracy also became a problem with Nigerian waters now ranked among the most dangerous in the world. A new government report estimated the number of people killed by violence in Nigeria as over 50,000 since 1999.
Tens of thousands of people were displaced by this year’s violence bringing the total of displaced persons since 1999 to over 800,000.

2003 Inter-communal violence and clashes with government security forces claimed the lives of hundreds of Nigerians throughout the year. April’s presidential election was also a source of dissatisfaction and violence.

2002 Ethnically, religiously, and politically motivated violence claimed the lives of hundreds of Nigerians, most of them civilians, throughout 2002. Political violence intensified in response to elections scheduled for the beginning of 2003 and religious violence over the controversial “Miss World” pageant claimed over 200 lives.

2001 Religious and communal fighting targeting civilians continued in several Nigerian states throughout the year. Deaths from Christian-Muslim and ethnic clashes and from attacks by government troops likely exceeded 2,000.

2000 In February violence broke out between Muslims and Christians in the northern city of Kaduna, spreading to neighbouring towns and eastern cities following a march to protest the proposed introduction of Islamic law in the state of Kunda. In May, there were renewed hostilities between the two religious groups after other northern states announced their intentions to implement Sharia. There were some reports of continued fighting between ethnic groups in other regions of Nigeria. An estimated 2,000 (mostly civilian) people were killed, mainly due to clashes in Northern and South-eastern Nigeria.

1999 Regional, ethnic and religious fighting continued in several regions of Nigeria in 1999, claiming over 1,000 lives. Conflict flared not only between ethnic groups, but also between ethnic groups and the state, especially in the oil-producing region of the Niger Delta. Clashes were also reported between Muslims and Christians in northern states, killing at least 100 people. The government deployed troops to troubled areas around the country in an attempt to control the violence.

**Type of Conflict:**

Failed state

**Parties to the Conflict:**

1) The government’s security forces, under President Umara Yar’Adua, continued to be heavily involved in the conflict. It is alleged that these forces, often with the consent of the Nigerian Government, have used excessive force in performing their duties. The US government is reportedly providing military training as well as technical assistance to the distressed Delta region.

"Violence, corruption and impunity are not just problems that the government has failed to tackle; they are systematic abuses that flow from the heart of the very same government institutions that should be working to combat them". [Human Rights Watch, October 9, 2007]

"The US government has offered the Nigerian military technical assistance and training, but has provided only four old coastal patrol boats. Nigeria has also ordered 35 smaller high-speed patrol boats from a US company but fewer than half have been received, said a security analyst." [The Financial Times London, February 28, 2006]

2) Various ethnic groups are involved in conflicts with one another and/or with the Nigerian government particularly in the Niger Delta area were several groups, in particular the Ijaws, are fighting for self-determination and/or a greater share of the regions oil resources. While there are numerous ethnic groups who engage in sporadic fighting and hundreds of ethnic-based armed groups, only the largest and/or most significant in terms of scale and intensity of fighting are listed below.

a) Ijaws and Itsekiris in the Niger Delta;
b) Ilajes and Ijaws in the southwest;
c) Yorubas and Ijaws in the southwest;
d) Yorubas and Hausas in the southwest and north;
e) Tivos and Jukuns, Fulanis and Kutebs in central Nigeria;
f) Fulanis and Berom in the Riyomo district, south-west of Jos.
Armed groups include:

a) The newly created Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, composed of the Ijaw people living in the Niger Delta. The group seeks independence for the region’s 14 million Ijaw inhabitants and has also claimed responsibility for the recent rash of kidnappings involving foreign oil workers. The group has reportedly pledged to incite a wave of guerrilla warfare until its demands, which include the release of prisoners and the cessation of all oil extraction and production in the Niger Delta, are granted.

b) The Ijaws-based Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities (FNDIC), the Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force, (NDPVF) led by Mujahid Dokubo-Asari and fighting primarily for a greater share of oil wealth, the Egbesu Boys of Africa (EBA) and the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF).

c) The Yorubas-based O’odua People’s Congress.

d) Igbos in south-east Nigeria are represented in part by the unarmed Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB).

e) There are numerous small militias of other ethnic groups active on a local level.

"We are not interested in schools and clinics and the like... We are demanding control over our resources” Jomo Gbomo, leader of Mend [The Christian Science Monitor, May 8, 2007]

"Our resources you know, everywhere they are spoiled by our government... Everywhere in the delta we are suffering. All the promises and they do nothing. We want schools, we want them to employ our people, we want lights and water, all those things. It is for this that we are fighting, for our freedom... If the government does not do anything [to help the delta people] after the election, I will start to attack them again". Ateke Tom, leader of the Niger Delta Vigilantes [The Christian Science Monitor, May 8, 2007]

"Responsibility for both the kidnapping and the pipeline blast has been claimed by a previously unknown separatist group dubbed the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, which seeks independence for the region’s 14 million Ijaw people." [The Globe and Mail, January 16, 2006]

"The militant group claiming recent kidnappings and attacks, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), has displayed considerable military capability, repeatedly catching Nigerian security forces unawares." [IRIN, January 27, 2006]

"MEND is a faceless group that emerged early in 2006. Its sophisticated raids and hostage takings in January and February forced the closure of more than 500 000 barrels per day (bpd) of crude output from the world’s eighth biggest exporter." [The Mail and Guardian Online, December 11, 2006]

3) Fighting between religious groups:

a) Muslims and Christians in the north. The conflict between these groups was extremely intense in 2002. Muslim-based armed groups include the Arewa People’s Congress (APC), Hisbah Groups (Islamic vigilante groups that enforce adherence to Sharia), the Zamfara State Vigilante Service (ZSVS), and Al-Sunna Wal Jamma (also known as the Taleban). There are numerous small Christian militias. While some of the armed groups are clearly motivated by religion, often religion is used as a cover for disputes over land and cattle that have traditionally occurred between farming communities (who are mostly Christian or practice indigenous African religions) and cattle herders (who are mostly Muslims.) This is especially true in Plateau state where the most violent episodes of religious violence has occurred.

b) Sunni and Shiite Muslim communities in the northern state of Sokoto.

"Minority ethnic groups have exploited the religious component of these conflicts in order to further engage in farming and cattle rustling disputes in this mainly agrarian state. While both Christians (who are mainly farmers) and Muslims (primarily cattle herders) have pointed to identification cards recovered during combat as proof that their adversaries are religiously motivated, its true role is insignificant except for the fact that the various ethnic groups involved just happen to belong to one or the other. The Fulani and Wase militias are exclusively Muslim,
for example, while the Taroh and Gamai militias are non-Muslim—and are made up of Christians and practitioners of African traditional religions (ATR)." [Nicolas Florquin and Eric G. Berman (eds.) Armed and Aimless: Armed Groups, Guns, and Human Security in the ECOWAS Region, Small Arms Survey, May 2005]

"Traditionally Sunni Islam has held sway in Nigeria, but in recent years more militant Shi'ite groups have attracted support." [IRINnews.org, June 6, 2005]

4) Hundreds of armed gangs, known as "cults" also contribute to violence in Nigeria. Cults may be involved in a number of activities such as organized crime especially the theft of oil, vigilante actions/community self-defence, ethnic and/or religious violence and party politics (hired by local politicians to help influence political outcomes). They are usually made up of a small number of poor youths who view the gangs as one of the few opportunities for economic gain and protection. The largest among them include the Bakassi Boys in south-eastern Nigeria and the Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV) active in Rivers state. The Niger Delta Vigilante is led by Ateke Tom, one of the most wanted men in Nigeria, and has an active membership of several hundreds. It has a small fleet of speedboats used in the transporting of stolen oil and kidnappings.

"The oil-producing Niger delta of southeastern Nigeria has been plagued by powerful armed gangs for several years. Some of them have been set up to fight for the interests of rival ethnic groups and several make money from crime, particularly the theft and smuggling of crude oil and kidnapping for ransom." [IRINnews.org, June 21, 2005]


Status of Fighting:

2008 MEND continued to target oil facilities throughout the year, claiming responsibility for a number of attacks. The government increased efforts for peace talks however MEND refused to participate in any negotiations unless Henry Okah, a key rebel who was arrested in 2007, was released. Inter-communal violence continued throughout 2008. For the first time, MEND struck a deep offshore oilfield, a location which was thought to be relatively safe. MEND declared a unilateral ceasefire at the end of June which lasted two weeks. The ceasefire ended in protest of British Prime Minister Gordon Brown’s offer to assist the Nigerian government with military training specifically to target militias in the Niger Delta. The kidnapping of foreign oil workers and hijacking of foreign oil tankers continued in 2008, and at the height of the hijacks 8 ships and 93 crew were taken hostage. September saw 100 deaths in attacks on Chevron and Shell facilities by the militants, who then declared another unilateral ceasefire on 21 September supposedly in response to pressure from elders in the community. The government consequently arrested 400 suspected militants thought responsible for the attacks. In November, 2500 new Joint Task Force troops were deployed the Niger Delta region, militants responded with increased cries for violence. Also in November, tensions between Christian and Muslim gangs in Jos rose to new heights due to claims of a false election. Approximately 200 died, 157 were injured and 7000 displaced in the 2 days of clashes. The year ended with continued, although minimal, religious violence in Jos and with MEND threatening increased violence due to the arrest of a militant leader.

2007 The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) continued to target oil facilities with increasingly coordinated and sophisticated attacks, including the bombing of oil export terminals and the destruction of pipelines, as well as the kidnapping of foreign workers. The number of kidnapped foreign oil workers totalled more than 200 in 18 months, as of July 18, 2007. The kidnappers are said to be a mix of criminal gangs trying to earn profit, and separatist groups with political agendas. Fighting in Kano, one of the 12 northern states where Islamic law is practiced increased which has been attributed to the presence of militants from Chad who are said to have increased tension in the area. Islamic militants attacked a police station in Kano killing civilians, as well as police officers. Elsewhere in the Islamic states, sectarian clashes continued to result in tension between Christian and Muslim communities as well as the death of religious clerics, civilians and police officers. Militia and cult violence increased for the first time since 2004 when rival gunmen went on a rampage that killed 20 people. Following the release of two jailed leaders of the Ijaw ethnic group, 25 armed groups have joined into a united front to talk with the government for the purpose of addressing militant demands for more regional control over the delta’s oil resources. MEND refused to take part in the talks.
"Tactics and weaponry are increasingly sophisticated... We observe a very gradual, but steady and consistent... [progress] in the way they [MEND] operate and we expect that to continue. And so you will probably see more attacks as time goes on". Theresa Whelan, deputy assistant secretary of defense [US State Department, March 16, 2007]

“We are stranded here... There are no factories where our boys can go work. We used to fish, but our fish are being poisoned by the pollution coming from these refineries... If you box me, what am I going to do? I must fight. That is what is happening. It’s not a thing we want to do, it’s because of frustration". Pincewill Bipialaka, a traditional community elder from the village of Okujagu Ama, near Port Harcourt [The Christian Science Monitor, May 8, 2007]

"We are getting information that a lot of the violence between rebel gangs is over who controls the drugs that are now coming into the delta in growing quantities... Some of the ransom payments have definitely gone towards satisfying some drug cravings and that's why we’re worried that the kidnappings will get worse". [IRIN, July 24, 2007]

2006 Instances of violence have been increasing steadily since the emergence of a new rebel faction, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). The group is reportedly responsible for kidnapping at least four foreign oil workers every month as well as sabotaging numerous oil extraction and production facilities. Its efforts have contributed to a 10% reduction in Nigeria’s oil exportation. In addition, a massive wave of hostilities swept through the northern areas of Maiduguri, Onitsha, Bauchi and Enugu in February following the publication of cartoons depicting the prophet Mohammed in Danish newspapers. The violence began in Maiduguri as Muslim rioters burned Christian churches and attacked civilians. Christian inhabitants then retaliated by looting Muslim shops and by killing and burning Muslim civilians. Violence also erupted in March during the 2006 census, where numerous ethnic groups reportedly attacked census personnel as they attempted to count the population in the Ondo, Anambra, Enugu and Nnewi states. The group known as MASSOB, composed of the Igbo people and who are seeking an independent Biafra, has been blamed for a series of attacks on police stations in the state of Anambra. The group has also recruited a young fanatical movement, largely the result of extremely high unemployment among youth in Nigeria. Tensions in the Delta region as well as in the North and South have caused uncertainty over whether or not foreign investment can continue and if Presidential elections in 2007 will incite further violence amongst already hostile groups.

"A rash of attacks and kidnappings in recent weeks by militia groups demanding the release from prison of local leaders have cut Nigeria’s daily exports of 2.5 million by nearly 10 percent and claimed at least 23 lives." [CNN.com, January 24, 2006]

"The recent rioting began in the north-eastern city of Maiduguri, where Muslim mobs attacked Christians and their churches. The violence spread to Bauchi, another northern city, and then to the mostly Christian southern cities of Onitsha and Enugu." [The Washington Post Online, February 24, 2006]

"Mobs of Christian men wielding guns and machetes burst into shops, looted goods and money, and then began attacking people. The Muslims fled on foot, mostly across the bridge over the Niger River. Some were caught, cut to death and burned. Others were thrown into the river. Government health crews began collecting the bodies near the bridge. Police removed many others in the city overnight, according to traders who saw the effort. The city's general hospital reported only 11 bodies in its morgue, but Nigerian police often bury victims of violence in mass graves." [The Washington Post Online, February 24, 2006]

"Nigerian separatists have attacked census officials with acid and machetes in a violent campaign for the southeastern region to boycott the headcount, says human rights campaigners. Members of the Movement for the Actualization of a Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) attacked at least seven officials in the market town of Onitsha in Anambra state. In the neighbouring state of Enugu, five census takers were beaten or macheted and one car burned by MASSOB members trying to stop people from being counted, police and victims said." [Reuters, March 23, 2006]

"The violence that erupted in Dutse, capital of Jigawa state and close to the border with Niger, last week was sparked by rumours that a Christian market trader had blasphemed against the Prophet Mohammed. Analysts say the unrest is part of a trend whereby unemployed youths in the
dirt-poor, yet oil-rich, former British colony are using religious pretexts for looting sprees." [IRIN, September 26, 2006]

"While secession is not popular with the vast majority of Igbos, who number more than 30 million, MASSOB has won fanatical following from large numbers of young and unemployed youths in major cities in the Igbo areas. Most of its members were not born at the time of the civil war." [IRIN, September 04, 2006]

2005 Sporadic violence continued throughout Nigeria. Sunni and Shiite Muslims clashed in the north-western town of Sokoto while Christian – Muslim violence in northern Nigeria decreased significantly from last year. Major inter-ethnic clashes over land were reported in central-eastern Adamawa state. Violence by ethnic militias, gangs, local police and the Nigerian army continued in the Niger Delta mainly linked to access to land and oil wealth and to demands for self-determination.

"A secessionist protest left at least 12 people dead after violence erupted on the second of a two-day stay-home strike in southeast Nigeria, according to residents and witnesses. The Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) called for schools, businesses and offices to shut down on Monday and Tuesday in the ethnic Igbo-dominated areas of the southeast to back a demand for secession and protest the detention of their leader, Ralph Uwazurike, who is on trial for treason." [Reuters, December 7, 2005]

"Hundreds of armed riot police have been deployed in Nigeria’s northern city of Sokoto, where Sunni protesters razed a government building in escalating violence with rival Shi’ites that could engulf the mainly Islamic region, government officials said on Monday. More than a dozen people have died in Sokoto since February in tit-for-tat violence between the Sunni majority and Shi’ite minority, centred on demands by Shi’ites for access to the city’s biggest mosque to preach their brand of Islam." [IRINnews.org, June 6, 2005]

"Dozens of people died in clashes last week between two rival communities in southeastern Nigeria over ownership of prized farmland, residents and officials said Tuesday... John Otu, Ebonyi commissioner for information, confirmed there were many deaths but said he could not give definite figures. He said a longstanding dispute over farming land flared up again last week, with retaliatory attacks culminating in Thursday’s mayhem.The people are farmers and this is the farming season which often brings such conflicts," Otu told IRIN." [IRINnews.org, April 26, 2005]

"More than 200 soldiers in gunboats attacked the remote town of Odioma in the Nembe district of Bayelsa state on Saturday, burning houses and firing at the inhabitants as they fled in confusion, residents said. Nimi Barigha-Amange, a clan chief in the area, said more than 30 bodies had been recovered and that many people were still missing." [IRINnews.org, February 24, 2005]

2004 While sporadic fighting continued across the country, most clashes were between Muslims and Christians in the Plateau State (primarily in or near Kano) and between factions in the oil-rich area around Port Harcourt. A Christian militia attack on a Muslim town in May and reprisals killed hundreds of people. Muslim extremist clashes with Nigerian security forces and attacks by insurgents on oil installations in Port Harcourt contributed to the year’s violence. Piracy also became a significant problem and Nigerian waters were ranked as the third most dangerous in the world.

"Nigerian waters were the most deadly in the world during the first half of 2004 according to a new piracy report. Analysts blame the proliferation of weapons in the oil-rich Niger Delta region where armed gangs trade stolen crude. The Malaysia-based International Maritime Bureau (IMB) said on Monday that half of the 30 deaths recorded in pirate attacks around the world between 1 January and 30 June occurred in Nigerian territorial waters. In terms of the number of attacks, Nigeria ranked third with 13 attacks, behind Indonesia (50) and the Malacca Straits (20)." [IRIN, July 27, 2004]

2003 While sporadic violence continued throughout the country in 2003, the oil-producing Niger Delta area of southern Nigeria witnessed the most intense fighting. Clashes between Ijaw and
Itsekiri groups in March and August in the city of Warri, allegedly over the economic benefits from the exploitation of the region’s oil reserves, resulted in the death of hundreds. The violence had a severe impact upon the country’s oil production and led to the intervention of security forces. Violence also marred the presidential elections in mid-April as tribal and political rivals clashed prior to, and following, the elections.

"Many people in Warri believe the real dispute is about which of the heavily armed groups control the illegal trade in stolen crude oil. Industry analysts estimate that at least 100,000 barrels of oil are diverted from official exports every day - rich pickings for the criminal underworld, using ethnic rivalries as an excuse for gang warfare." [BBC NEWS, August 22, 2003]

"Disputes over the distribution of electoral wards among ethnic groups in and around Warri caused large-scale outbreaks of violence in February and March 2003. Dozens of people were killed and several villages were destroyed." [Human Rights Watch, April 10, 2003]

"President Olusegun Obasanjo said he was working with the police, the army and the navy 'to calm the situation and get the culprits responsible' for two weeks of violence that have killed more than 100 people ... Battles between Itsekiri militants and their Ijaw rivals have drawn in the army, and the fighting forced the oil multinationals Chevron Texaco, Royal/Dutch Shell and TotalFinaElf to reduce petroleum production in the region." [Associated Press, March 28, 2003]

2002 Religious and ethnic-based clashes occurred near the central city of Jos, south-eastern Nigeria, and the Plateau, Nasarawa, Bauchi, Taraba and Benue states. In some cases, conflict led to the mass internal migration of affected communities. Inter-communal tensions were exacerbated by ambitious politicians hoping to gain voter support and politically motivated deaths increased as a result of up-coming elections. The "Miss World" pageant, which was to be held in Kaduna in November, resulted in violence between the Muslim and Christian communities of Northern Nigeria and resulted in over 200 deaths.

"Warning shots rang out in Kaduna overnight as troops enforced a curfew five days after Christian-Muslim riots broke out. The Red Cross said yesterday that the death toll was 215, while civil rights and hospital sources put the figure at 250. Clashes erupted after a local newspaper enraged Muslims by saying the Prophet Mohammed probably would have married one of the contestants in the Miss World pageant." [Reuters, November 26, 2002]

"At least six people have been killed in more ethnic clashes in Nigeria. Fresh ethnic clashes in a village near the central Nigerian city of Jos, where 15 people died in a bout of bloodletting last month, have left six people dead. Police say the latest fighting erupted in the Riyom district, south-west of Jos, between ethnic Fulani herders and ethnic Berom, the dominant tribe in the area, and escalated after a botched peace meeting." [AfricaOnline.com, June 18, 2002]

"At least 15 people are reported to have been killed in unrest in south-eastern Nigeria. A political rights group representing the Ogoni people says fighting between two local communities has been ongoing for several days in a dispute that appears to be over access to land ... Even local rights campaigners admit that they have been taken aback by the ferocity of the clashes." [BBC News, May 11, 2002]

"At least 23,000 Fulani herders have fled Nigeria’s eastern Taraba State to Cameroon to escape clashes which broke out in the Mambilla plateau with farming communities at the beginning of the year, a pastoral association said. ... 'Attacks on Fulani pastoralists who produce 75 percent of the protein needs of the country are becoming incessant, particularly in states like Plateau, Nasarawa, Bauchi, Taraba and Benue states, " said the statement signed by MACBAN (Miyetti Alla Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria) secretary general, Tukur Abashe. He said the incident in the Mambilla plateau between 1 and 7 January resulted in the death of more than 96 herdsmen and the loss of 53, 791 cattle. Abashe blamed the violence on a Mambilla militia group known as 'Ashana - no case to answer.' ... Officials of the Sarduana local government council, however, dispute the account of MACBAN and accuse the Fulani herdsmen of inviting 'mercenaries' from neighbouring countries who launched attacks on farming communities of the Mambilla plateau." [IRIN, February 22, 2002]
2001 Religious and communal fighting targeting civilians continued in several Nigerian states through the year. Clashes occurred between ethnic groups as well as between Christians and Muslims over the introduction of Sharia Law. Government troops also killed over 200 people in retaliation for the deaths of 19 captured soldiers.

"Nigerian Red Cross officials said fighting between Christian Jarawas and Sayawas and Hausa-Fulani Muslims in June and July left more than 400 people dead and more than 22,000 displaced." [IRIN, August 29, 2001]

2000 On February 21, violence broke out between Muslims and Christians in the northern city of Kaduna, spreading to neighbouring towns and eastern cities of Aba, Umuahia and Obasanjo, following a march organized by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) to protest the proposed introduction of Islamic law in the state of Kunda. The clashes lasted for ten days, while homes and places of worship were burned and over one thousand people killed. In March, fighting also took place between rival communities in Ife, south-western Nigeria over disputed ownership of land. In May, there was a revival of hostilities between the two religious groups (Moslems and Christians), after other northern states announced their intentions to implement Sharia. By mid-October ethnic clashes broke out between a militant Yoruba group and Hausa-Fulanis in Lagos, resulting in up to 100 deaths.


"The fighting broke out between residents of two neighbouring towns, the Ife and the Modakeke, over disputed ownership of land...The two towns are in the heartland of the Youba people, one of Nigeria’s three main ethnic groups. The inhabitants are mainly Christians or animists. The two communities have a long-lasting rivalry over land ownership and political supremacy in the area..." [BBC News, 6 March 2000]

1999 Several distinct, although not necessarily unrelated, armed clashes occurred between various groups in different areas of Nigeria in 1999. Intense fighting continued in the Niger Delta region between ethnic groups (especially the Ijaw) and government soldiers and security forces. A state of emergency, declared for a few days at the end of December 1998, lasted into January 1999 after as many as 240 people were killed in clashes between protesting Ijaw youths and government troops in the Niger Delta state of Bayelsa. This and other regions of Nigeria also witnessed inter-ethnic violence during the year, including between the Ijaw and Itsekiri groups, between Ijaw and Ilaje groups in the southwestern state of Ondo, and between Yoruba and Ijaw in the southwest. Fighting in the southwestern and northern regions between Yorubas, who comprise the majority in the southwest, and the Hausa-Fulani who dominate in the north, reportedly claimed over 360 lives. In the north, occasional fighting between Muslims and Christians claimed almost 100 lives while clashes in the east between local farmers and Fulani herdsmen over cattle herding and access to land resulted in about 100 deaths. Control over land also sparked conflict between different Ibo groups in eastern Nigeria. The government tried to manage rising tensions and communal fighting by deploying several hundred soldiers to various regions of the country, although these efforts were generally ineffective in ending the violence. Human Rights Watch reports suggest that government troops were involved in destroying villages and played a role in perpetuating the violence in many regions.


Number of Deaths:

Total: Although past estimates have placed the number of deaths in Nigerian sectarian fighting since 1999 at about 10,000, a government sponsored report in 2004 estimated the number to be larger than 50,000. A 2004 study commissioned by Royal Dutch Shell estimated that 1,000 people, mostly youth, die each year as a result of violence between rival militia groups in the Niger Delta. In 2008, an additional 500 people were killed due to violence in the Niger Delta and religious violence in Jos.
2008 Violence claimed the lives of 500 civilians, militia combatants and government officials as a result of the continued fighting in the Niger Delta and religious violence in Jos. An additional 157 were injured in the two-day conflict at Jos and 7000 were displaced. Independent media hypothesize the death total could be higher due to unreported violence, the continued denying of violence and the remote areas in which the fighting occurs.

2007 Violence continued to claim the lives of civilians, foreign oil workers, government officials and religious clerics as a result of fighting over the control of Nigeria's oil resources, as well as Christian/Muslim clashes and inter gang/cult fighting. The number of people killed totaled more than 100 people, however due to the remoteness of the area where some of the fighting occurred the number is likely to be far greater, although difficult to estimate.

2006 Religious fighting as well as attacks on foreign firms in oil producing regions have reportedly resulted in the death of at least 300 people, mostly civilians, 200 of whom were killed during Christian/Muslim clashes. In addition, at least 50 foreign oil workers have been kidnapped from compounds in the Delta region.

2005 At least 350 people were killed, the majority in inter-communal fighting over land and oil resources.

"At least 30 people have been killed in inter-communal fighting in south-eastern Nigeria, officials say. But local reports quoting community leaders say more than 100 people are feared dead." [BBC News, April 29, 2005]

"Residents in a rural town in the southern Niger Delta said government troops killed at least 30 people and torched houses during a raid carried out as part of investigations into an oil dispute between two local communities." [IRINNews.org, February 24, 2005.]

"At least 30 people have been killed in a week of clashes between farming communities and nomadic cattle herdsmen in Adamawa state, near the eastern frontier with Cameroon, local officials and residents said on Tuesday." [IRINNews.org, February 8, 2005]

2004 Between 1,200 and 2,100 people were killed in 2004. There were many unconfirmed reports of casualties, particularly from sectarian fighting in Kano.

"The death toll of a bloody clash between Christian and Muslim mobs in the northeastern Nigerian state of Adamawa in June has been revised upward to 132, a government spokesman said on Monday." [Reuters, September 13, 2004]

"Rioters killed at least 50 people and burned down three mosques in fresh violence between Christians and Muslims in northern Nigeria, a journalist who visited the local morgue told AFP on Wednesday." [Agence France-Presse, June 9, 2004]

2003 Independent media reports indicate that approximately 500 people died in inter-communal conflicts or in clashes with government security forces throughout the first nine months of the year, with most of the fatalities occurring in the oil-producing region of southern Nigeria.

2002 Independent media reports indicate that at least 500 people died in religious or ethnic conflict, or clashes with government security forces in the first nine months of 2002.

"At least 36 Nigerians died in clashes between an ethnic militia group, Oodua Peoples' Congress (OPC), and security forces in the southwest on Saturday, police told IRIN on Monday... The deaths came barely a week after an estimated 100 people died in communal clashes in Nasarawa State, central Nigeria, over ownership of a fish pond. Thousands of people were displaced and property destroyed." [IRIN, January 14, 2002]
2001 According to media reports, at least 2,000 people lost their lives. The majority of the deaths stemmed from clashes between Christians and Muslims, but hundreds also were killed by security forces in communal violence.

"Ethnic and religious violence spread to other parts of Plateau State in Nigeria as calm returned to the state capital, Jos, after four days of fighting between Christians and Muslims. Some news organizations reported a Red Cross volunteer as saying there were 165 deaths." [IRIN, September 12, 2001]

"A fresh outbreak of ethnic violence has erupted in Nigeria’s central region Tabara State, with dozens of people killed and thousands forced to flee their homes. Reprisal attacks mounted by soldiers in October against several Tiv villages resulted in the death of more than 200 people and the displacement of tens of thousands of others. Residents of the affected areas have continued to report military activity in their districts against unarmed villages, with more people being killed, injured or forced to flee their homes." [IRIN, November 27, 2001]

2000 An estimated 2,000 (mostly civilian) deaths, mainly due to clashes between Muslims and Christians in Northern and South-eastern Nigeria.

"President Olusegun Obasanjo on Wednesday pleaded for an end to the ‘worst bloodletting...since the civil war’ after ten days of ethnic violence in which more than 1000 people have died. Up to 450 ethnic Hausas (Moslem) were killed in a massacre by ethnic Ibos in the town of Aba at the start of the week after hundreds of mainly Ibos (Christians) died in the northern city of Kaduna last week." [Daily Mail and Guardian, 2 March 2000]

"In March, hundreds of Muslims were massacred by Christians in the south-east seeking revenge for Christians killed in the north." [The Economist, 8 April 2000]

"Nigeria’s security forces have arrested more than 50 people after religious riots between Muslims and Christians in the northern town of Kaduna left 200-300 people dead last week...This fighting was a renewal of recent clashes after local leaders said they were moving to implement Islamic law in Kaduna’s home state." [Jane's Defence Weekly, 31 May 2000]

"Clashes this week in Lagos between local Yorubas of the militant Oodua Peoples’ Congress (OPC) and Hausa speakers from the north claimed more than 100 lives and highlighted the growing north/south political divide in Nigeria." [IRIN, 20 October 2000]

1999 An estimated 760 to 1,240 mostly civilian deaths have resulted from the varied clashes.

"Ethnic and religious tension have been running high since President Olusegen Obasanjo, a southern Christian, took office last May to end 15 years of dictatorship by soldiers from the largely Muslim north. More than 1,000 people have died in the clashes since then." [Globe and Mail, 23 February 2000]

Political Developments:

2008 Many appeals to municipal, state and federal election results were held in 2008, in addition to trials for suspected corruption within the government. The most awaited election appeal result was that of President Umaru Yar’Adua’s 2007 election which was upheld in December 2008. The oil rich area of Bakassi Peninsula was transferred to Cameroon in accordance with an International Justice Tribunal ruling. The transfer resulted in 60 000 Nigerians living in the region requesting transfer to other areas of Nigeria, unwilling to become citizens of Cameroon. MEND refused to engage in peace talks without access to Henry Okah, a key rebel leader who was arrested and given a secret trial in 2007 but who many suspect is no longer alive.

2007 On May 20, 2007, Umaru Yar’Adua was elected as President. The presidential election marked the first civilian transfer to power in the history of Nigeria however many observers have questioned the legitimacy of the elections due to reports of widespread vote rigging. Prior to the election the government rejected demands from opposition parties to delay the presidential election, leading 18 opposition parties to urge Nigerians to protest in a non-violent manner and call for a new electoral commission and also called up citizens to boycott
the election. The election went ahead as scheduled but has been described as deeply flawed, which undermines the authority of Umaru Yar’Adua’s presidency and has deeply upset citizens. Although the government engaged in preliminary talks with 25 armed groups, there are fundamental differences between the demands of these groups and the government’s goals for the development of the region leading many to conclude that peace will be difficult to achieve. There is still sentiment among the Ijaw people that their rights are not respected within the country and widespread discontent has allowed for growing and continued support of MASSOB and other armed opposition groups. Among accusations of widespread corruption and abuse of power by politicians and the political elite, President Yar’Adua has declared an investigation into the links between government officials in the Niger Delta and violent criminal gangs. This process has been criticised for being biased towards investigating opponents of the former president and therefore has not been able to relieve the high level of distrust that exists between civilians and the government. It is hoped that the presence of Vice-President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, an Ijaw and former governor of Bayelsa state, within the government will decrease tensions and armed action by Ijaw groups. Following the election, assassination attempts were made on the lives of both the President and Vice-President and there was an increase in violence that specifically targeted political leaders.

"People are upset, and if the elected officials take office, then there will be more and more people, especially the youth, that will start going after officials... People can’t accept the ballot, and [they] will start going after officials... People can’t accept the ballot, and [they] will start to use self help – the AK-47 – against the politicians who do not care about them except at election time” Anyakwee Nsirimovu, director of the Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law in Port Harcourt [The Christian Science Monitor, May 8, 2007]

"Everything done in Nigeria by the powers that be is done to our disadvantage... So we might as well have our separate country since we’re not wanted in Nigeria”. Uche Okpala, MASSOB activist [Associated Press, January 9, 2007]

2006 Political tensions increased between President Olusegun Obasanjo and his deputy, Atiku Abubakar. Obasanjo reportedly claimed that Abubakar was disloyal and corrupt, accusations that arose after Abubakar refused to back an extension of President Obasanjo’s time in office from two terms to three. The animosity between the two rivals caused a slowdown in governmental functions as well as a decline in confidence coupled by skepticism as to whether the electoral commission has the capacity to run a proper vote. Should the scheduled elections for April 2007 go as planned; it will be the first time in Nigerian history that power has been transferred between leaders through democratic means. All the major Nigerian political parties are fielding candidates from the primarily Muslim north, a power shift that is rousing sectarian sensitivities in the Christian south were minorities perceive a history of domination by northern rulers. In addition, Funsho Williams, the leading governor candidate of People’s Democratic Party (PDP) for Lagos, Nigeria’s most populous state, was found murdered in his bedroom. His death reportedly came as a result of challenging Bola Tinubu, the incumbent and opposition party candidate. Media harassment has also begun to rise, as two journalists were charged with sedition after publishing reports that were critical of Obasanjo’s government. In addition, massive unemployment continues to be a large problem for the country, as large numbers of unemployed and disillusioned youth are recruited into the ranks of rebel factions daily. The kidnapping of foreign oil workers in the Delta region has also become commonplace as rebel groups attempt to bargain for the release of their members from custody.

"Recruiting militias has never been easier, community leaders here say. Jobless youths have nothing to do and nothing to lose." [The Washington Post Online, March 6, 2006]

"All the major political parties in Nigeria are fielding candidates from the predominantly Muslim north after eight years of rule by President Olusegun Obasanjo, a Christian southerner. The expected power shift rouses sectarian sensitivities in the south, where minority ethnic groups see a history of domination by the northern ruling elite." [The Independent Online, February 12, 2007]

2005 A national conference on constitutional reforms meant to ease ethnic and religious tensions broke down in July without an agreement. In August, President Olusegun Obasanjo publicly confirmed that Nigerian police were guilty of systemic human rights abuses and promised reforms. Late in the year, the Nigerian government arrested and charged with treason and subversion the leaders of several militia and separatist groups who
could face the death penalty if convicted. Negotiation between leaders of the Ogoni people and Shell continued.

"Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo has confirmed widespread extrajudicial killings of suspects and innocent citizens by the country's police and promised tough action to clean-up the force. Obasanjo's speech in Abuja on Thursday, in a rare acknowledgement of gross human rights violations by security forces, confirming recent findings by the United Nations Human Rights Commission and rights groups." [IRINNews.org, August 19, 2005]

2004 Despite a pledge as part of a peace deal with the government, militia groups in Nigeria's oil-rich south announced they would not disarm, although after the government offered money for arms militia members began to turn in guns. Following an upsurge in violence in the River State, the governor fired his entire cabinet while in response to more violence in the Plateau State, the National Assembly gave the President of Nigeria sweeping emergency powers. Over 20,000 people were displaced by the fighting this year, bringing the total number of displaced people since 1999 to well over 800,000. The ruling party extended its lead over opposition parties after performing well in local elections in March.

"An ethnic militia group which threatened to kill foreign oil workers in southeastern Nigeria last month has started handing in its weapons under a guns-for-cash peace deal agreed with the government. Moujahid Dokubo-Asari told IRIN on Friday that his Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) had surrendered a total of 196 assault rifles and two general purpose machine guns to the government over the past week." [IRIN, October 29, 2004]

"Nigeria's National Assembly has approved eight new laws giving President Olusegun Obasanjo sweeping powers in strife-torn Plateau State where he imposed a state of emergency last month after a surge in inter-ethnic and religious violence. The laws approved by the two-chamber legislature on Tuesday gave the police and other security services the power to detain people indefinitely, conduct searches without warrants, impose curfews and ban public processions." [IRIN, June 2, 2004]

2003 The mid-April presidential elections, which resulted in the re-election of President Olusegun Obasanjo [leader of the People's Democratic Party (PDP)], were tainted with allegations of fraudulent electoral practices, despite the presence of international observers. As a result, opposition leaders refused to accept the elections as legitimate. The election heightened animosity between the Christian and Muslim populations as the main opposition to the Christian PDP was the Muslim-dominated All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP).

"European Union observers said earlier that fraud and irregularities had marred the April 19 election in Africa’s most populous nation. ...The Washington-based National Democratic Institute said on Monday it had found ‘ballot-stuffing, rigging, voter intimidation, violence and fraud,’ particularly in the southern oil-producing Delta region and the southeast. ... Any government that is formed on the basis of this so-called election shall be illegitimate and we shall not recognize it,’ Gen. Buhari’s All Nigeria Peoples Party said. 'A fraudulent democracy is worse than a dictatorship.’" [Globe and Mail, April 23, 2003]

2002 In the face of intensified ethnic and religious violence, the Obasanjo government continued to employ extreme measures to respond to social unrest and violence. A recent report by the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) claimed that security forces, operating with orders from the government, were responsible for over 10,000 Nigerian civilian deaths. According to the report, in addition to committing extra-judicial executions of alleged criminals, the state and its security agencies instigated and exacerbated communal conflicts, and failed to react to early warning signals of pending violence. In other developments, allegations of unfair voting registration procedures served to fuel political tensions.

"In over 50 separate and documented incidents, over 10,000 Nigerians have reportedly been victims of extra-judicial executions at an average of over 200 executions per incident. Security agents, acting in most cases on direct orders of the government, have been responsible for many of the deaths as well as accompanying rapes, maiming and torture of thousands of women, the aged, children and other defenceless civilians. The local and international media coverage of these incidents portrays them as ethno-religious in nature. However, our investigations show that this euphemism has helped in obscuring the visible roles of the state and its security agencies in the
perpetuation of these egregious violations, thereby shielding the government from full responsibility for their occurrence and recurrence." [Hope Betrayed: A Report on Impunity and State Sponsored Violence in Nigeria, World Organisation Against Torture, September 4, 2002]

**2001** A Human Rights Watch report criticized the Nigerian government for failure to prevent the violence which swept through the city of Jos, killing more than 1,000 people.

"Peter Takirambudde, Executive Director of HRW's Africa Division said in the report: 'There were clear signals that trouble was brewing in Jos, but these signals were ignored. Effective government action is urgently needed if the violence in hot spots across the country is not to flare up again and cause thousands of more deaths." [IRIN, December 18, 2001]

**2000** Early in the year, President Obasanjo implemented an anti-corruption programme, dismissing an entire layer of senior officers in order to pave the path for reform and development. However, renewed violence in the north set off calls for Nigeria to split into a looser confederation of ethnic regions. By the beginning of October eight states adopted the Sharia (Islamic law), giving rise to increasing tensions and grave concerns by opposing groups over implications for the constitutional order. Meanwhile, President Obasanjo indicated that there is no imminent danger requiring urgent action.


"In October last year, Zamfara - governed by Ahmed Sani of the opposition All Peoples' Party - became the first state in Nigeria to adopt Islamic law. Since then, eight others have followed. Zamfara and the other Sharia states insist that their interpretation of the 1999 Constitution that ended more than 15 years of military rule is that it allows the imposition of the Islamic legal system, which provides for corporal punishment, amputation of limbs and decapitation. But Catholic bishops who met in the northern city of Kaduna see imminent danger…Many Nigerians, both individuals and groups, also seem to believe that action is needed to contain the burgeoning political crises associated with the introduction of full Islamic law in parts of the north." [IRIN, 11 October 2000]

"Ethnic and religious tension have been running high since President Olusegun Obasanjo, a southern Christian, took office last May to end 15 years of dictatorship by soldiers from the largely Muslim north…Addressing Sharia poses a particularly difficult problem for Obasanjo, since he does not want to be viewed as further alienating the north, where there is a widespread feeling of exclusion from key government appointments." [Reuters, 22 February 2000]

**1999** Ending fifteen years of military rule, Olusegun Obasanjo was sworn in as the first civilian President in May following multi-party elections. Despite repeated promises, the Nigerian government has done little to end the communal fighting in the country. A peace agreement signed by Ijaw and Ilaje groups in August was ineffective in discouraging armed clashes between the two groups in the southwestern state of Ondo.

**Background:**

Approximately 120 million people in more than 200 ethnic groups live in Nigeria. Since at least 1990, military governments in Nigeria have tried to stifle the growing complaints within the Niger Delta region that decades of oil production have failed to benefit local communities. For more than ten years, ethnic groups in the Niger Delta demanding political autonomy and compensation for environmental damage caused by oil companies have often been met with repression. Demands intensified after 1995 when Ken Saro-Wiwa and other Ogoni activists were executed by the military regime for opposing the oil companies. In other areas of the Niger Delta, inter-ethnic fighting over land ownership has occurred between Ijaw and Ilaje groups.

Elsewhere, tension between the Hausa and Yoruba, Nigeria's two largest ethnic groups, has escalated into armed fighting in a number of regions of the country, but has concentrated in northern and southwestern Nigeria. Northern Nigeria is primarily Muslim and dominated by Hausa and the Yoruba make up the majority in the Christian south. Yoruba have traditionally accused Hausa governments of neglect while Hausa believe that Yoruba monopolize business and economic affairs. Tension intensified in 1993 after the cancellation of
presidential elections by military rulers was seen by the Yoruba as a grave injustice by the northern power elite. Yoruba groups have advocated succession, while other groups living in the southwest region have demanded decentralization of political power. Reports suggest that the election of President Obasanjo, a Yoruba, in 1999 shifted the balance of power to the southwest from the north, which had controlled the country since 1960.

Ethnic and regional tension often overlaps with religious differences making it difficult to differentiate between ethnic or regional conflict and religious conflict. Recent religious clashes in the north stem from Christian opposition to Muslim appeals for the adoption of the Islamic sharia law by some states where both Christians and Muslims live. Sharia law now exists in eleven Nigerian states. Economic inequalities and resource scarcities are also cited as causes of violence, as are the heavy-handed tactics of the government’s security forces. Moreover, media reports have accused politicians of fueling ethnic, religious or communal tensions for political gain.

**Arms Sources:**

Known recent suppliers of military equipment to Nigeria include Russia, China, Poland and Italy which supplied four light helicopters in 2004. In March 2003, the US suspension of military aid to Nigeria was attributed to human rights concerns about Nigeria’s military forces. However, some analysts held that the suspension was a result of Nigeria’s opposition to the US-led war on Iraq. Even so, the Nigerian navy was able to acquire, through a security cooperation programme, a third warship from the US to monitor the Niger Delta in an attempt to decrease the theft of crude oil from pipelines.

The various conflicting tribal and ethnic groups in the Niger Delta area are allegedly armed by the criminal organizations involved in the illicit trade in stolen crude oil. Many militia groups also obtain arms by either bribing police forces or attacking and raiding police stations, stealing arms and ammunition.

During 1999 the US and members of the European Union, previously the major arms suppliers to Nigeria, lifted the military sanctions imposed after the government execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others. Russia has also provided military equipment to Nigeria. In the Niger Delta, oil multinationals are accused of importing small arms and using armed soldiers. In addition, Nigeria has a domestic capacity to manufacture small arms. Other arms are smuggled into the country illegally from neighbouring countries such as Benin, Ghana, Togo, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad and Niger.

In 2005 Nigeria reportedly spent an estimated $845 million USD on arms as a result of acquiring 12 combat aircraft from China and increasing protection for foreign workers in the Niger Delta. In addition, only four countries in the entire African continent, Algeria, Morocco, Nigeria and South Africa, account for over 62% of all military spending. Small arms have also emerged as a serious problem, with rebel factions easily obtaining them from suppliers such as China. In 2007 the United States announced the initiation of a US led joint training and equipment program aimed add assisting Nigeria’s military counter the growing violence against oil facilities and their workers. The United States Defense Department also proposed a regional maritime awareness capabilities program for the Nigerian Navy worth $16 million USD. In 2008, the British Prime Minister Gordon Brown offered Nigeria assistance in training their forces to deal with militants in the Niger Delta, which prompted increased violence from MEND and other militia forces in the area.


“We have offered to provide training and assistance in small-arms and light weapons identification so they can better understand and track the illegal weapons coming into the delta... To help Nigerians establish greater situational awareness in the delta and to try and address some of the bunkering [large scale oil stealing] problems that contribute to the violence because it provides money to buy arms” Theresa Whelan, US deputy assistant secretary of defense [US State Department, March 16, 2007]

“We provided the navy with four US Coast Guard buoy tenders and the Nigerian navy also purchased 17 Defender class response boats. The only problem is that the navy is not appropriately trained to use those boats and so for the most part... They sit idle down in the delta”
Theresa Whelan, US deputy assistant secretary of defense [US State Department, March 16, 2007]

"Nigerian security sources said China was becoming one of Nigeria’s main suppliers of military hardware. They said new supplies would include dozens of patrol boats to secure the swamps and creeks that form the launching pad for rebel attacks." [The Financial Times London, February 28, 2006]

"The government, according to Nigerian news reports, is shopping in international markets for new weaponry. And the militants, who support their operations by tapping directly into pipelines and selling the stolen oil in a bustling black market, are using the proceeds to stockpile belt-fed machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades." [The Washington Post Online, March 6, 2006]

"The weapons come from many sources, according to analysts and independent groups such as Human Rights Watch. Corrupt police sell from their own stocks, sometimes offering training for an extra fee. Politicians import weapons to arm their personal militias. And oil companies hire and arm youths to protect their facilities. The guns often end up in the hands of militants, who also buy directly from international dealers." [The Washington Post Online, March 6, 2006]

"MEND has been reluctant to answer questions about where it gets its funding but says that it has nothing to do with bunkering. It is well-armed, equipped with machine guns, rocket launchers, assault rifles and heavy-duty outboard motors mounted on 25-foot fibreglass hulls. It kidnapped oil workers from an offshore oilfield, installations previously seen as secure." [The Financial Times London, April 7, 2006]

"The widespread availability of small arms and light weapons has helped stoke a decade of unrest in the region that produces nearly all of Nigeria’s oil, which is rife with hostage-taking, attacks on oil installations and fighting among rival militias." [IRIN, May 09, 2006]

"In November 1998, the E.U. Council of Ministers voted to repeal all sanctions imposed on Nigeria following the November 1995 executions of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other minority rights activists, except those relating to arms sales and military cooperation. In June 1999, the E.U. lifted all remaining sanctions ... With the inauguration of a civilian government at the end of May, U.S. sanctions against Nigeria were lifted, allowing for the resumption of military assistance to Nigeria, including under the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program." [Human Rights Watch World Report 2000]

**Economic Factors:**

The impact of oil multinational operations in the Niger Delta region is at the centre of community protest and conflict. The communities feel marginalized and impoverished and face environmental devastation after decades of oil production in the region. Some analysts argue that much of the sectarian violence in Nigeria is a result of economic inequalities and resource scarcity, not ideological or communal differences. The oil industry has become increasingly involved in the Nigerian conflict as its facilities have been targeted by various groups as a means to attract the government’s attention to their grievances. In 2004 militia groups demanding a greater share of oil revenues threatened "all out war" and increased attacks on oil installations. In addition, land has become a source of conflict, especially between pastoralists and farming communities, as increasing desertification has led to a shortage of arable land. In 2005 Nigeria signed a multi-million dollar agreement with PetroChina, which is looking to increase its offshore holdings in the country and which has also emerged as a significant player in the Nigerian arms trade. Despite this new deal, analysts are reportedly still worried that at least one billion US in oil revenues are continuously diverted by corrupt officials annually. In 2006 the federal government lost approximately 570 billion naira ($4.4 billion USD) in oil revenue due to disruptions in production. The government depends on oil for 95% of its export earnings and 80% of total government revenues. Armed local gangs and militant groups have increased their attacks on oil production by breaking into oil pipelines and siphoning off hundreds of barrels of oil at a time into waiting oil tankers or small fishing vessels. The oil is sold to off shore oil tankers bound for Asia, Europe, Russia and occasionally the United States. The shipping captains are increasingly paying the militants with arms and ammunition instead of money. In 2008, the government continued to lose billions of dollars in revenue due to disruptions in
production. With an estimated loss of approximately 100$M dollars a day due to the stolen oil black market, foreign investment interest waned in 2008, causing problems for the Nigerian economy.

"Since 2006, we have consistently lost between 180 000 and 700 000 barrels on average per day and we have been losing on average 1.3 billion dollars per month". Diezani Alison-Madueke, cabinet nominee [Agence Free Presse, July 18, 2007]

"The militants seems to be operating with almost complete impunity... on-shore oil production has been reduced by 500 000 barrels per day due to the insecurity and that means 1 billion a month in lost revenue". Theresa Whelan, US deputy assistant secretary of defense [US State Department, March 16, 2007]

"The problem is that our refineries are not working to capacity, so we can only turn 300 000 barrels per day into diesel or petrol for domestic consumption... So then Nigeria has this excess crude that it cannot sell, and the only way to sell it is illegally. 1.6 million barrels a day, at $65 USD per barrel, you're talking $100 million a day, and none of it goes into government coffers" Victor Fingesi, former Chairman of the central government's Petroleum Task Force [The Christian Science Monitor, May 8, 2007]

"Last year Nigeria signed a 800 million USD deal to supply PetroChina with 30 000 barrels a day of oil. This year CNOOC, China's largest offshore oil producer, agreed to pay 2.3 billion USD for a share in an oil block owned by a former defence minister. Oil industry officials say China is looking to increase its interest in future bidding rounds for potentially lucrative offshore oil acreage in Nigeria." [The Financial Times London, February 28, 2006]

"Over the last decade, clashes between indigenous farming communities and nomadic herdsmen have increased in several parts of central Nigeria, including the country's eastern flank. Increasing desertification in northern Nigeria has been forcing herders further south into the central region in search of pasture, raising the ire of farmers that work the land." [IRINNews.org, February 8, 2005]