

**GLOBAL  
INITIATIVE**  
AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL  
ORGANIZED CRIME



# CONFLICT ECONOMIES AND URBAN SYSTEMS IN THE LAKE CHAD REGION

ANTÔNIO SAMPAIO

NOVEMBER 2022



The background features a minimalist design with several thin, light-colored lines intersecting. Two of these lines have small circular dots at their intersection points. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

# **CONFLICT ECONOMIES AND URBAN SYSTEMS IN THE LAKE CHAD REGION**

ANTÔNIO SAMPAIO

November 2022

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank interviewees who generously gave us some of their time to share their views and information. Thanks to the research team who helped with the report: Bobbo Moussa, researcher and consultant based in Maroua, Cameroon; Lawan Danjuma Adamu, northern Nigeria field coordinator, and Kingsley Madueke, Nigeria research coordinator, Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime; and Neneck Allah-Kauis, researcher and consultant, Centre de Recherche en Anthropologie et Sciences Humaines, N'Djamena, and several other researchers who contributed to data collection for this study.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Antônio Sampaio is a senior analyst at the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC). He examines the challenges posed by urban armed violence and non-state armed groups to governance and security. Before joining the GI-TOC, he worked at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, most recently as Research Fellow, and as a journalist in Brazil.

© 2022 Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.  
All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without permission in writing from the Global Initiative.

Cover: © *Stefan Heunis/AFP via Getty Images*  
Cartography: *Liesel Bohdanowicz*

Please direct inquiries to:  
The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime  
Avenue de France 23  
Geneva, CH-1202  
Switzerland

[www.globalinitiative.net](http://www.globalinitiative.net)



# CONTENTS

Acronyms.....	iv
<b>Executive summary .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Urban systems in armed conflict.....	2
Selective disruption of urban systems.....	3
Cities as illicit hubs .....	5
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Urban predation and system vulnerabilities .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Severing the connection between cities.....	13
Taxation and alternative trading markets .....	15
Looting urban economies .....	17
<b>Urban areas as trafficking hubs.....</b>	<b>18</b>
Illicit economies and urban communities.....	19
Drug trafficking .....	22
Arms trafficking.....	23
Cattle rustling.....	24
Illicit economies and IDP camps in Maiduguri.....	26
Diversification of illicit trafficking and new hubs.....	27
<b>Impact of conflict economies on urban systems.....</b>	<b>28</b>
Urban systems and conflict-affected towns.....	30
From urban system to conflict system.....	33
<b>Conclusions and recommendations .....</b>	<b>36</b>
Policy recommendations.....	39
Notes .....	41

# ACRONYMS

CJTF	Civilian Joint Task Force
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GIABA	Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering
IDPs	Internally displaced persons
ISWAP	Islamic State West Africa Province
JAS	Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Iid-Da'awati wal-Jihad
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
NDLEA	National Drug Law Enforcement Agency
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development



Nigerian military secure a part of Maiduguri following a militant attack in 2019. © Reuters/Afolabi Sotunde





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A bridge linking Cameroon and Nigeria in Borno, Nigeria. © Reuters/Afolabi Sotunde



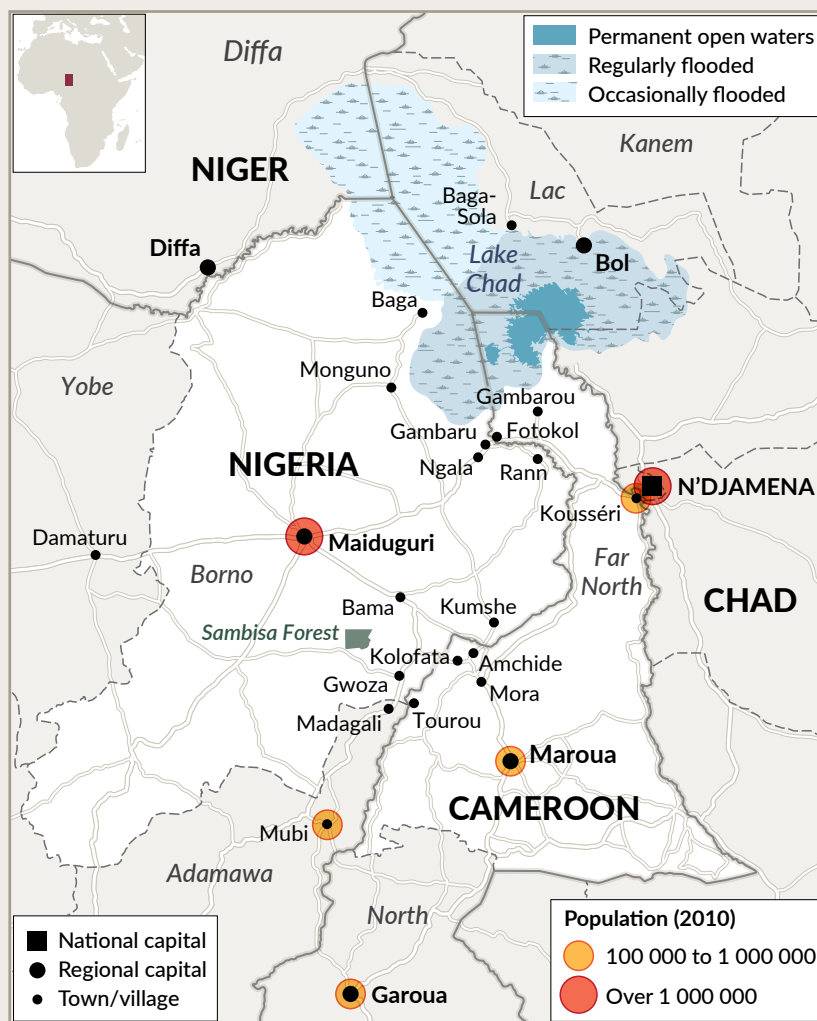


Urban areas in the Lake Chad Region are critical sources of revenue for violent extremist Islamist groups such as Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). This study shows that armed groups tracing their origins to Nigeria's Boko Haram movement, of which ISWAP is one, systematically prey on small but growing towns and the roads that link them to their agricultural hinterland. This network of towns connected by trade and social corridors comprises an urban system, whose weak points are regularly targeted by insurgent groups for both political and economic purposes.

Although insurgents rarely retain control of any towns, their parasitism disrupts food and other economic supply chains in a way that harms the region as a whole. Such predation severely affects the economies of large cities such as Maiduguri (Nigeria) and Maroua (Cameroon), which pay a heavy toll in terms of lives, reduced trading activity and higher costs for transportation and supply chains.

This report examines the role of urban areas in the illicit economies linked to armed conflict in the Lake Chad Region. Its main focus is on north-eastern Nigeria's Borno State and Cameroon's Far North region. Whereas numerous studies have explored the individual funding sources linked to Boko Haram and its breakaway factions, this research focuses on the ways that urban areas, both large and small, have been exploited by insurgents and criminal networks to generate this funding. It also analyzes the socio-economic impact of the conflict on communities throughout the urban system, investigating the ways in which cities, towns, roads and rural hinterlands are interconnected.

The challenges identified in this report are made even more urgent by rising urbanization in the Lake Chad Region, with population growth in towns far outpacing the global average. Nigeria, for instance, is forecast by the United Nations to contribute the world's third largest increase between 2018 and 2050 (after India and China), with 189 million new urban dwellers – a trebling of the urban population in 2018.<sup>1</sup>



**FIGURE 1** Urban areas and principal roads in the Lake Chad region.

One less understood consequence of urbanization has been that villages and small towns in agricultural or pastoral areas in Africa have grown considerably in a short span of time. Some of the towns analyzed in this study have doubled their populations in just 15 years. This has been driven by the resettling of displaced people, on top of economic migration and organic growth. The pressing security and humanitarian challenge is that these growing communities are the most vulnerable to the economic predation of armed groups and the violence that accompanies it.

## Urban systems in armed conflict

As a result of these vulnerabilities, the urban systems of the Lake Chad Region have transitioned away from legal and sustainable trading practices towards illicit economic exploitation. Routes that once connected towns and cities as part of a vibrant (and ancient) urban-rural nexus have now become relatively safe only for criminal networks transporting arms, drugs and stolen cattle under the protection of insurgents. This illicit trade essentially builds an alternative economic system which is both dependent on and sustains armed conflict. As the legitimate connections within the urban system dwindle, the illicit conflict system is strengthened and manages to adapt to government crackdowns.



ISIS propaganda showing Islamic State West Africa Province fighters in Borno. Photo: Social media

The concept of the regional urban system used in this report refers to a group of communities close to each other geographically that have over time developed important linkages, co-dependencies and economic specialization.<sup>2</sup> This understanding of the urban dimension of the armed conflict is crucial for the design of policies and humanitarian responses that address how communities are interdependent and how shocks in certain 'nodes' of this system affect other areas. This spread of vulnerability from one town to another or from one fishing community to the larger urban centre of Maiduguri, for example, happens due to the trade and socio-economic ties linking them together. This focus on networked urban areas is an important difference from the classic notion that 'urban' refers only or predominantly to large cities of a million inhabitants or more.

## Selective disruption of urban systems

The two main insurgent groups in the region, ISWAP and Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah lid-Da'awati wal-Jihad (JAS), control few urban areas – all of them relatively small towns. Their economic strategy is based on the selective disruption of urban economies, targeting different points in supply chains and trade flows. Attention is focused on the markets and food production of smaller communities which are linked to the region's urban hubs. This strategy allows them to control economic flows, taxing different routes at different times, diverting goods into areas they control (for instance, by disrupting fish supplies to a certain city) and exploiting major city markets through covert networks. Through this manipulation of city-bound trade, ISWAP and to a lesser extent JAS are able to retain their illicit revenue streams despite increased pressure from the Nigerian military.



Scenes after a market in Maiduguri was bombed in 2015. © Stringer/AFP via Getty Images

Over years of military pressure, insurgents have developed a guerrilla strategy to exploit urban areas and their surroundings. Despite only having effective territorial control over two local government areas in Nigeria's Borno state, the Sambisa forest and island systems on Lake Chad (see Figure 2), both ISWAP and JAS have been able to predate indirectly on a broader set of urban areas. Taxation is frequently extracted from the road network through improvised, rather than permanent, checkpoints established by insurgents on motorbikes. Cattle is taxed on the way to the major Maiduguri market as well as sold by agents linked to insurgents within the city. Bank robberies have been staged by insurgents themselves or gangs linked to them without requiring a visible group presence in the towns where they occur.<sup>3</sup> Fishing, an ostensibly rural activity, is the focus of much of ISWAP's urban strategy in the region, with fierce fighting over fishing hubs such as Baga (Nigeria), disrupting trade routes used by the fish industry to large centres such as Maiduguri and encouraging fishermen and traders to operate in ISWAP territory. Looting, an age-old method, has also been used as a simple and effective tool to acquire supplies with raids on towns followed by quick exits before the military can send reinforcements.<sup>4</sup>

This strategy exploits the unequal provision of security by states in the region. Security forces tend to focus on cities themselves, while the military presence outside them has now been concentrated into so-called 'super camps' maintained by the Nigerian army. These form a few protected garrison towns that, although effective in protecting the civilians inside them, do not tackle the insurgents' ability to predate on economic flows between towns and cities, or between rural producers and urban markets.<sup>5</sup>

The insurgents' strategy also highlights the importance of better understanding the interconnectivity of urban systems – as opposed to the traditional distinction made between urban areas, which are usually seen as relatively safe havens, and rural ones,



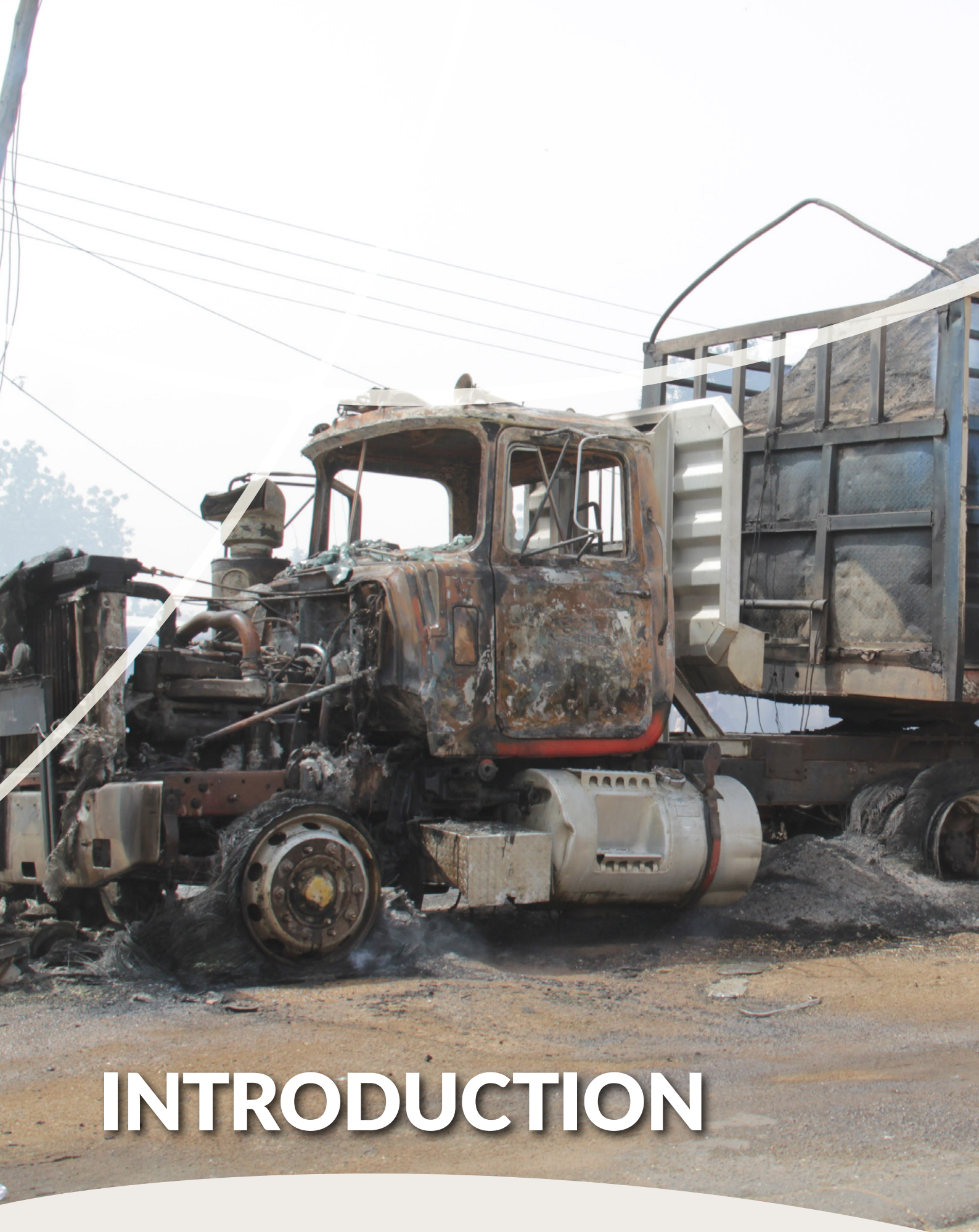
which are not. Whereas there are indeed important differences in conflict dynamics between the two geographic archetypes, recent scholarship on urban studies (partly encouraged by rapid urbanization patterns in Africa) has provided insights into how cities and smaller towns are interdependent and form a large, but fragile, system of economic and social exchange – connected by trade, ethnic and tribal ties, supply chains, language, education and ideas. The concept of urban systems is further examined in this report.

## Cities as illicit hubs

The territorial control insurgents have managed to exert in some areas of north-eastern Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin has allowed them to nurture a parallel economy based on smuggling products needed by fighters – from food to weapons – and transnationally sourced illicit goods such as drugs – including tramadol and cocaine. Cities act as hubs for transnational smuggling activities. Covert urban cells are used to acquire basic items for insurgents and illicit flows that transit through insurgent territories, benefit from the criminal networks operating in cities. These illicit flows include the trafficking of arms and drugs through insurgent territories to other regions – though both are also consumed in the region, with tramadol being widely used by insurgents and civilians.<sup>6</sup>

Alliances of convenience between insurgents and urban criminal gangs are common – for example, a JAS-allied gang operating in towns hundreds of kilometres away from the insurgents' hideouts, has kidnapped young boys before handing them over to JAS.<sup>7</sup> Cities are also key to insurgents' financial flows. Both jihadist groups use the formal financial system (banks) as well as informal forex traders and cash couriers in cities to move money, according to the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering (GIABA), a specialized division within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) – though reliable information on this is thin.<sup>8</sup>

The study draws from original data collected in Maiduguri and Maroua, together with primary data collected in the towns of Baga Sola and Bol in western Chad, close to the Nigerian and Cameroonian borders. The sites of primary data collection span the tri-border area of the countries, a territory densely intersected by illicit trading routes and heavily affected by the violence of extremist groups. The primary data was complemented with secondary data from the local press, policy reports and academic studies.



# INTRODUCTION

Auno, Nigeria, February 2020: the remains of a truck following an attack by suspected members of ISWAP, who raided the village, killing at least 30 and abducting women and children. © Audu Marte/AFP via Getty Images



Insurgent groups often struggle to operate in large urban areas, where state security forces are stronger and secure rebel bases are far more difficult to establish. Yet, many ostensibly rural insurgencies have gone to great lengths to engage with the urban world, from setting up clandestine political cells among the urban masses (such as Shining Path in Peru),<sup>9</sup> infiltrating cities located in strategically advantageous areas (such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia in Medellín)<sup>10</sup> and exploiting funding opportunities (such as al-Shabaab's extortion of businesses in Mogadishu, Somalia).<sup>11</sup> The insurgencies and civil wars of the twentieth century in Africa have shown that cities are valuable centres of political action through covert activities and attacks against governments and their constituencies. The Mau Mau insurgency in Kenya had cells and political support in Nairobi,<sup>12</sup> leading British colonial authorities to launch Operation Anvil in April 1954 and place 16 000 suspects in jail.<sup>13</sup> The Algerian uprising against French rule, soon after, saw significant violence wrought on urban areas, including the capital, Algiers, which was the stage for one of the key clashes of the conflict in 1957.<sup>14</sup> The city would again be a hub of violence by Islamist armed groups against both government and civilian targets during the civil war in the 1990s.

The armed conflict in the Lake Chad region, which has enveloped north-eastern Nigeria and spread to parts of Cameroon's Far North region, western Chad and southern Niger, has involved violent extremist groups firmly based in rural areas – in fact, Boko Haram has chosen the dense Sambisa Forest as a haven from the Nigerian government's forces. But, like so many insurgent movements, it has faced the unavoidable reality that urban areas act not only as concentrations of wealth and people but also as a host for various illicit economies.



## Overview of Maiduguri, Nigeria

Maiduguri is the capital city of Borno State and the largest urban centre in Nigeria's north-east region. Like other cities in the country's predominantly Muslim north, such as Kano, Kaduna and Katsina, Maiduguri is a centre of religious revival brimming with various Islamic sects. In the early 2000s, the most active sect in the city was Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah lid-Da'awati wal-Jihad (JAS) – a fundamentalist group known for deploring Western education and, as a result, becoming popularly known as *Boko Haram* (Hausa for 'western education is sin'). In the early years of its existence, the group was largely non-violent and garnered a significant following across the city. In July 2009, however, an altercation between state security forces and members of Boko Haram spiralled into deadly clashes that turned the city on its head. In the heat of the clashes, the sect's leader – Mohammed Yusuf – was captured and killed extrajudicially in police custody. About 700 people were killed in the ensuing violence in Maiduguri alone, including many Boko Haram members, while others were arrested. Surviving members who escaped arrest fled Maiduguri or went underground.

The uneasy calm that followed the suppression of Boko Haram was, however, short-lived and by 2011 the group had recruited hundreds, possibly thousands, of members within Maiduguri, gaining a strong foothold in several communities.<sup>16</sup>

Boko Haram worked to enhance its influence over Maiduguri. It offered residents in some neighbourhoods seed funding for small businesses in return for monitoring the activities of armed forces in the city. The group became strategic in choosing targets for assassination, attacking well-known and influential civilians. It was involved in local illicit economies from an early stage, extorting money from wealthy individuals, business owners, professionals and farmers. Residents who did not capitulate were killed. The eyes the group had across the city and the fear it instilled in people helped it to maintain a strong influence in many neighbourhoods as well as to raise revenues.<sup>17</sup> At that point in time (between 2011 and 2013), in the words of a Maiduguri government official, 'the fear of Boko Haram was all over Maiduguri'.<sup>18</sup>



Members of Boko Haram. The group has increasingly targeted urban areas in north-east Nigeria in the last 10 years.

© Social media

This impunity came to a halt in mid-2013, when a joint force of government security and local vigilantes dislodged the group from Maiduguri. This marked a shift to a more covert Boko Haram presence in the city. The group moved away from illicit revenue streams embedded within the city itself, and instead focused on the points of connection between the city, its rural surrounds and the rest of the state. For example, the roads that linked the city to other parts of Borno became sites of frequent armed robbery and extortion by insurgents. Commercial motorists who used the roads connecting Maiduguri to areas like Monguno, Bama and Gubio were either robbed or charged 'taxes' and passengers were sometimes kidnapped for ransom.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, the livestock market in Maiduguri became a major outlet for selling cattle stolen by the insurgents from the rural hinterland.

Another shift in Boko Haram's urban strategy around 2013 saw them rely more on towns and villages around Maiduguri. Local communities were subjected to the same extortion and killings perpetrated in Maiduguri but the group also created a more efficient system of taxation in some villages. Farmers and livestock owners were required to pay their tax in kind. For example, cattle owners paid taxes in cattle while farmers did so with farm produce.<sup>20</sup>



The report analyzes the network of towns, connected by age-old social and economic ties, that criss-crosses the region's porous borders. This urban system consists of three main elements: major urban centres such as Maiduguri, Borno's capital; smaller towns that serve as commercial and social hubs for cattle, fishing and agricultural industries; and the arterial roads that link them to larger markets. This web of cities, towns and agricultural producers is particularly vital for the Lake Chad region due, as a World Bank study put it, to its 'heavily landlocked' position – the nearest seaport is located more than 1 300 kilometres away from any of the region's major cities.<sup>15</sup> Imports to the region face steep transportation costs and, as a consequence, the flow of agricultural produce, cattle and fish through regional production and distribution hubs provides an essential source of food.

The engine driving this system has been severely impaired by the insurgents. There are two main factions of violent extremist Islamist groups operating in the region, both of which have historical ties to the Boko Haram movement that emerged in Maiduguri in the early 2000s. This was directed against what members saw as a political elite corrupted by Western education (*Boko Haram* translates roughly as 'Western education is sin'). Following internal splintering, the most prominent faction is currently Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), which, as the name implies, is an affiliate of the broader Islamic State movement that originated in Iraq. The other faction, which is currently greatly weakened, is Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah lid-Da'awati wal-Jihad (JAS). However, inhabitants of the Lake Chad region sometimes conflate these two groups and the term 'Boko Haram' is used widely to refer to either.

The means by which these groups extract revenue from cities and the surrounding areas is often related to their governance strategy. For example, ISWAP appears to have a different approach to revenue extraction in territories under its control, where maintaining legitimacy among the local population is more important, and zones that remain more contested. While analysis of different modes of governance is woven throughout, a detailed examination of ISWAP taxation and provision of services in areas under its control is not covered in this report. Further research should delve deeper into how approaches to revenue extraction cohere with the distinct strategies of armed groups.

The report starts with the geography of illicit economies and the predations of violent extremist groups in the region, highlighting the integration of urban areas. The following section explains the concept of urban systems and the impact of the region's conflict economies on communities and socio-economic development.

## Overview of Maroua, Cameroon

The proximity of Cameroon's Far North region to Nigeria and Chad has long been a driver of both economic opportunity and political and security turmoil. The region, and its capital, Maroua, in particular, has benefited greatly from its proximity in order to trade with its neighbours. But the very same geographical position that gives the city its economic dynamism has also made it vulnerable to the Boko Haram insurgency over the past decade. The conflict and its spillover into northern Cameroon have significantly altered the political economy of Maroua, helping to drive away some of its licit international trade activities while strengthening and expanding illicit economic networks.

Before the escalation of the conflict over the past decade or so, Maroua had long been a major hub for Cameroonians wishing to buy cheap goods. The city is plugged into a vibrant trade network, which connects it to the border towns of Limani, Kolofata, Mora, Fotokol and Kousséri, on the Cameroonian side, and further afield in Nigeria towards Maiduguri and other urban centres.

The outbreak of the Boko Haram crisis disrupted many of these trade links and redirected many of them away from Maroua. In 2015, the trend towards

increasingly deadly terror attacks reached Maroua itself, with devastating suicide attacks targeting a market and a bar on 22 and 25 July leaving a total of 33 dead.<sup>21</sup> The latter attack was reportedly carried out by a 12-year-old girl. Such attacks have predictably reduced the city's attraction as a market hub. At the same time, the trafficking of illicit products has intensified across the region, leading to a reconfiguration of the routes used for illegal economic flows and, since 2014, Maroua has increasingly acted as a transit and drop-off point for goods such as counterfeit medicines, weapons, drugs, motorcycles and illicit petrol (known locally as *zoua zoua*).

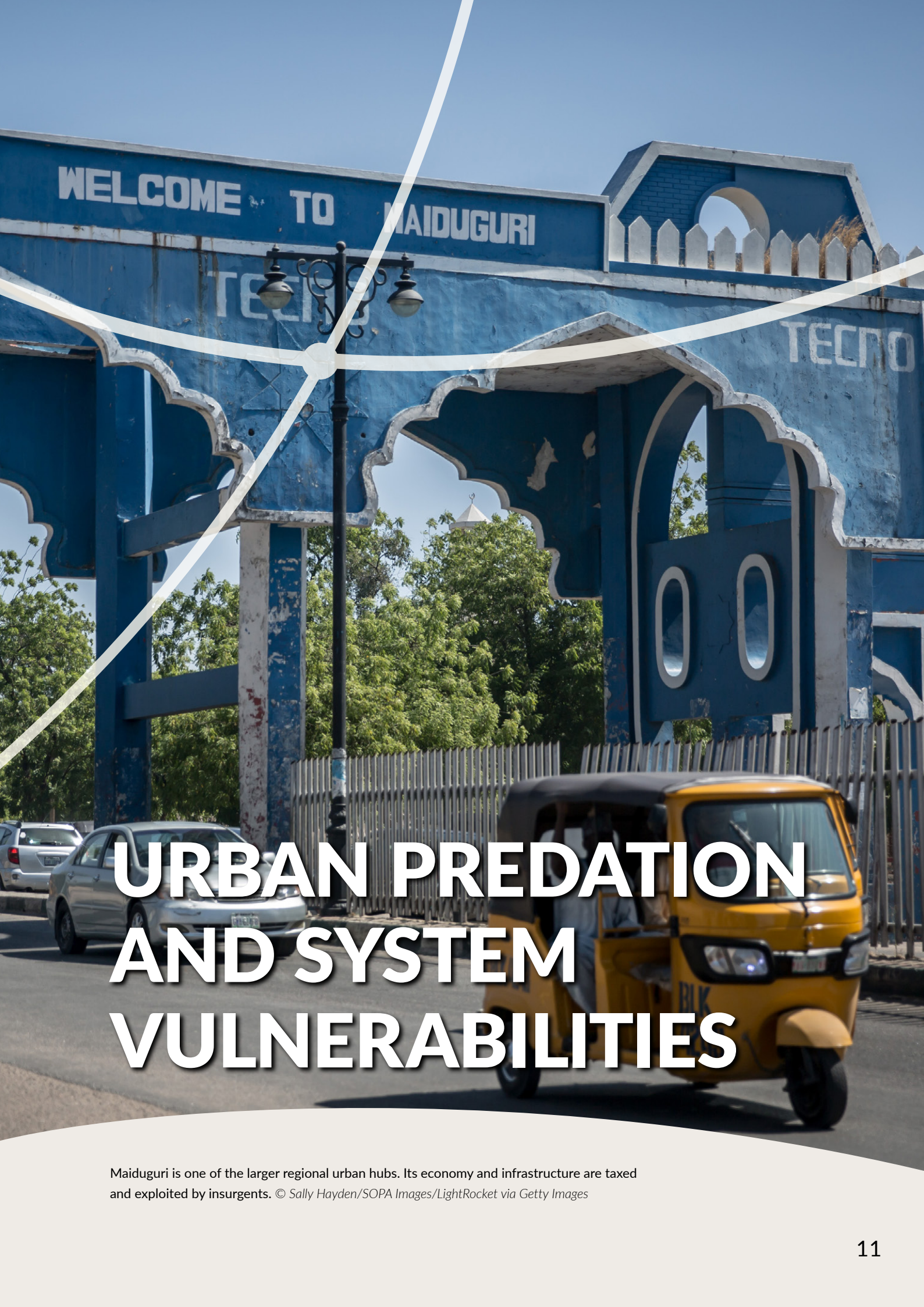
The violence linked to Boko Haram has also resulted in closures of schools, suffocated the local economy, and led to thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. Northern Cameroon has been heavily affected by the Boko Haram conflict, hosting, as of 2021, 116 000 Nigerian refugees and over 321 000 internally displaced persons.<sup>22</sup> As in the 25 July 2015 suicide attack in Maroua, many children have been either recruited or coerced into acting for the group.<sup>23</sup> According to local authorities, nearly 170 schools in the Far North have been forced to close, some damaged, and others open only intermittently.<sup>24</sup>



Security forces remove the remains of victims of a bomb attack in Maroua.

© Stringer/AFP via Getty Images





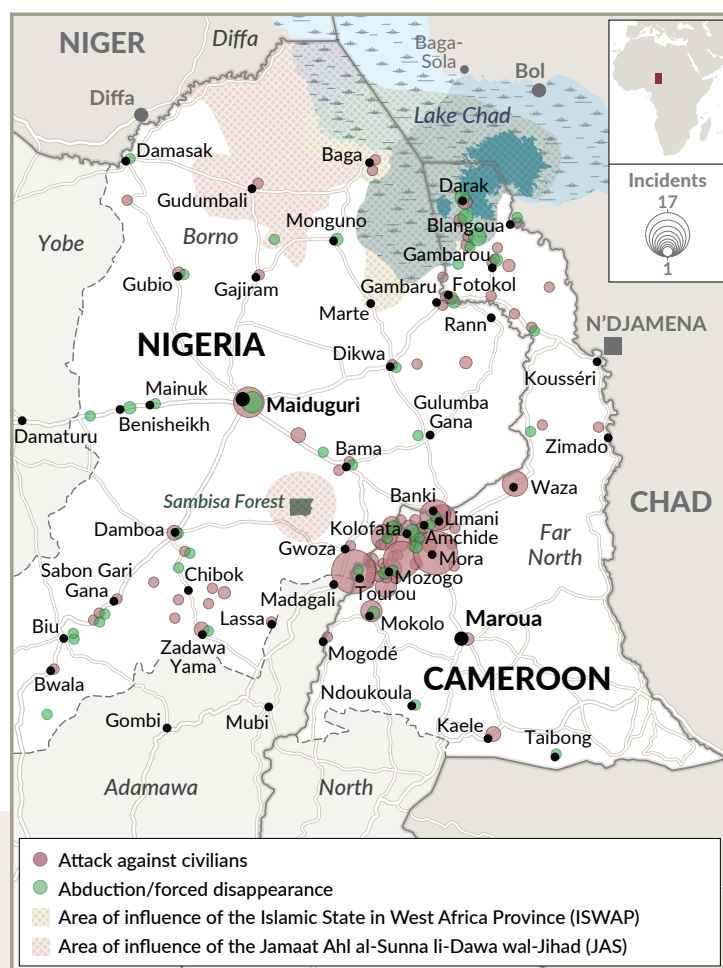
# URBAN PREDATION AND SYSTEM VULNERABILITIES

Maiduguri is one of the larger regional urban hubs. Its economy and infrastructure are taxed and exploited by insurgents. © Sally Hayden/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images

On 23 December 2021, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari gave a speech to troops from Operation Hadin Kai in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, telling them the campaign was entering its ‘final phase’ to restore ‘an economically viable northeast geopolitical zone’ where ‘Nigerians are free to go about their activities’.<sup>25</sup> The Nigerian media, however, was awash with talk of an ISWAP attack just before his arrival, with five dead from explosions hitting different locations around the airport.<sup>26</sup> The message, as press commentators did not fail to highlight, was clear: not even Borno’s capital and largest city is completely safe.<sup>27</sup>

This attack, and many others like it in cities and towns across northern Nigeria and the Lake Chad region, underscores the heavy toll that the Boko Haram insurgency has taken on communities. One of the main victims has been the government’s goal of restoring an economically viable northeast. Whereas Maiduguri and its Cameroonian ‘sister’ Maroua are safer than smaller towns from direct incursions and raids, their traders are heavily taxed, their populations’ movements restricted and their infrastructure and markets exploited by insurgents.

The two current Boko Haram factions have established a highly effective system to profit from the flow of trade, supplies and people to and from cities in the region. A consequence of this strategy to destabilize major economic routes has been the formation of a parallel, illicit economic system.



**FIGURE 2** The geography of armed conflict in northern areas of Nigeria and Cameroon, January 2021–July 2022.

SOURCE: The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>; GI-TOC



## JAS and ISWAP: Strategic differences

Both JAS and ISWAP are active in areas around Maiduguri and Maroua. Both were part of the original Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah lid-Da'awati wal-Jihad (known colloquially as Boko Haram) before a split in 2016. In March 2015, Abubakar Shekau – the leader of Boko Haram – pledged allegiance to the Islamic State. Following this declaration of loyalty, the group became known as Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). In August 2016, after friction over tactics and treatment of civilians, Islamic State central command removed Shekau and replaced him with Abu Musab al-Barnawi. In response, Shekau renounced his loyalty to the Islamic State and his breakaway faction reverted to the group's original name.<sup>28</sup> Shekau died in 2021, reportedly during clashes with ISWAP in Sambisa Forest.<sup>29</sup>

ISWAP has placed greater emphasis on gaining the trust and support of local communities than its rival. This has to some extent been reflected in modes of revenue collection, with ISWAP often relying more on taxation than extortion. In recent years, ISWAP has frequently invited communities in Nigeria's Borno State to move into their

areas of control to work in farming and fishing while paying taxes to the group. Even so, establishing the precise boundaries of ISWAP's territory is challenging because of its fluidity. The fishing town of Baga, for instance, has oscillated between government and ISWAP control in recent years. Sambisa Forest has quite possibly been the only area where insurgents have had stable territorial control, whereas towns this has been intermittent.

ISWAP has tended to maintain a more consistent presence on the islands of Lake Chad, though the Sambisa clashes and Shekau's death may have strengthened its presence in the forest as well. Recent reports have pointed to ISWAP trying to move from the Lake Chad islands to establish a more permanent presence in the Sambisa and Alagarno forests.<sup>30</sup> The former is located just south of Maiduguri and the latter stretches through western Borno and parts of Yobe State.<sup>31</sup> The forests, therefore, represent important strategic positions for attacks and predation on larger urban areas, in contrast to the more isolated Lake Chad islands.

## Severing the connection between cities

One of the most lucrative sources of funding for both armed groups (though precise figures are difficult to come by) has been the exploitation of urban economies. This is done through imposing indirect taxation on the trade routes connecting large urban areas and the looting of smaller towns that are important nodes in the region's economic network. Insurgents' predation on the roads hits city traders hard across the region, undermining entire industries and disrupting international trade routes.

Since late 2018, when ISWAP started to gain the upper hand on JAS in the conflict, it has combined taxing trade routes and economic activities with the provision of some public services – such as Islamic education and basic health care – and a less brutal approach to civilians than was the case under the deceased JAS leader, Shekau.<sup>32</sup> An ISWAP commander has even boasted to a journalist about having introduced a new regime of services to the local populace.<sup>33</sup>

Taxation is typically levied on those using the roads connecting Maiduguri to Chad, Cameroon and other parts of Nigeria. Routes to and from Maroua have been affected to a lesser extent, though the area between the city and the Nigerian border has been considered a high-risk area by traders.

Insurgents have set up temporary roadblocks approximately 50 kilometres from Maiduguri, targeting traders and businesses that operate on the highways linking the city to the adjoining villages and towns, including Baga and Monguno. Residents and traders circulating here have reported extortion and armed robbery by JAS members. Though members of ISWAP have also set up roadblocks on some parts of the road, their aim seems to be detecting and attacking security forces and vigilantes as they tend not to engage in armed robbery. This reflects the differing approaches of the two groups to building legitimacy among communities.

Roadblocks are mobile. They are set up quickly by insurgents travelling on motor-cycles and move constantly to avoid air strikes by government forces.<sup>34</sup> Insurgents often give receipts to travellers.<sup>35</sup> Travellers who are unable to pay have been known to have their mobile phones confiscated until they return with the cash. However, traders carrying larger loads face a steeper challenge, as the ISWAP approach does not always work as smoothly as their commanders claim. In one incident recalled to our researchers in Maiduguri, a group of 14 traders who had pooled their money to transport almost 300 sheep for sale in the city's market had their two trucks seized by insurgents, causing them to lose 9 million naira (approximately €20 500).<sup>36</sup>

Though the roadblocks and checkpoints along major roads take place several kilometres from the large urban centres, they are close to smaller urban areas in which economic activities and people are increasingly concentrated due to internal displacement. In January 2022, Borno governor Babagana Zulum said ISWAP was collecting taxes along major roads in Damboa,<sup>37</sup> a local government area whose eponymous town has more than doubled in population between 2000 and 2015, reaching 44 000 inhabitants.<sup>38</sup> Half of the local government area's 166 000 inhabitants are displaced people, the vast majority of whom live within host communities (as opposed to camps).<sup>39</sup> In a particularly intense period of displacement between 21 May and 6 June 2019, the town received just over 10 000 people, highlighting how small towns in conflict areas can quickly rise to become important population centres, despite being less protected from the attentions of armed groups.<sup>40</sup>

Roads in the region seem to witness significant violence, in stark contrast with the type of 'benevolent' taxation claimed by ISWAP. For instance, in February 2020, 30 people were killed by insurgents after stopping at a roadblock in the village of Auno, located just 14 kilometres from an air force base on the outskirts of Maiduguri.<sup>41</sup> During such roadblocks, insurgents also kidnap women, who are considered as spoils of combat to be sold – though recent accounts of such kidnappings have not specified which of the groups was the perpetrator.

Roadblocks have been particularly common over the years along the road connecting Maiduguri to Damaturu, another small urban centre that has faced rapid population growth (one study by Nigerian geographers from 2009 estimated that the town's area would expand by 82% by 2030).<sup>42</sup> Commercial drivers working in the area have reported abductions and vehicles being set ablaze.<sup>43</sup> This seems to indicate a distinction, among insurgents (likely ISWAP, given its greater geographical reach), between taxation within areas under their control, which tends to be more light-handed towards farmers and fishermen, and taxation in areas beyond their control, such as on roads close to government-controlled cities, where violence is more freely

meted out. This likely reflects the differing approaches adopted by ISWAP according to territorial control, with popular legitimacy prioritized in areas of higher control, and revenue in more contested areas. Vincent Foucher, an analyst, posited in 2020 that increased predation by ISWAP might be correlated to increased pressure on the group by the Cameroonian military at the time. This was translating into a greater drive for resources such as fuel, vehicles and cash from travellers and traders – despite the damage it may have done to ISWAP’s propaganda efforts.<sup>44</sup>

As a result, commercial and social flows between the major urban centres along the Cameroon–Nigeria border were severely curtailed, with serious repercussions for local livelihoods. Before the advent of Boko Haram, Maroua was connected to Maiduguri via the Maroua–Mora–Limani–Banki axis with significant trade activity that generated between 7 and 8 billion FCFA per month in customs revenue.<sup>45</sup> The crisis severed the link between these two economic poles, forcing traders to travel the long way to Maroua via the country’s economic capital, Douala, located about 1 600 kilometres away, in order to refuel. The detour of a truck through Douala on its way from Nigeria to Maroua adds approximately five days to the trip, whereas the direct route from Maiduguri barely took 10 hours. As a result, many traders have reduced their orders and others have gone bankrupt.<sup>46</sup>

## **Taxation and alternative trading markets**

Although extracting taxes in towns within government-controlled areas is not as easy for insurgents as on the roads and in their own territories, armed groups have been able to circumvent these obstacles to some extent. At an early stage of the insurgency, Boko Haram infiltrated Cameroonian towns near the Nigerian border and issued threats to traders and transport operators unless they ‘contributed to the financing of the jihad’ – possibly aided by the fact that the Cameroonian government at that stage still considered the problem to be one of banditry rather than a terrorist insurgency.<sup>47</sup> Research by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC) during the first half of 2022 in Baga Sola and Bol, two towns in south-western Chad, showed that Boko Haram factions still issued threats over the phone to traders and notables. This is despite the fact that Baga Sola and Bol are relatively well-protected towns – the former hosts forces from the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), a combined regional military force against Boko Haram, and the latter is the capital of the Lac region.

Another insurgent strategy that indirectly affects urban areas is the control of alternative markets in small urban hubs which can absorb the produce that would typically head to more established trading towns. ISWAP has set up fish markets in areas close to the Lake Chad in Nigerian and Chadian territories, drawing traders from Maiduguri and other urban areas who pay taxes to the armed group.<sup>48</sup> These alternative markets benefit from the fact that the supply to larger and more established markets, such as in Maiduguri, has been effectively neutralized due to attacks and road insecurity.<sup>49</sup> As a result, traditional trade routes between major cities and fishing hub towns have been replaced by new, often secretive, routes to insurgent-held areas nearer Lake Chad.



Nigerian troops patrol in Baga. © Pius Utomi Ekpei/AFP via Getty Images

ISWAP has been much more inclined than the JAS faction to appeal to Nigerians, especially those who fled to precarious IDP camps or communities on the urban peripheries, to move to its 'state' or *daulah*.<sup>50</sup> However, it has continued to destabilize areas outside its direct control. The towns of Baga and Doron Baga, located about 2.5 kilometres from each other, have traditionally been major fishing and farming hubs, but in January 2015 they became a grim reminder of how vulnerable smaller urban centres are to insurgents when a Boko Haram attack left 150 people dead, and damaged or destroyed 3 700 structures.<sup>51</sup> The towns, however, have more recently become a symbol of a more economically 'smart' approach by ISWAP once in control: 'they just told us to go to our farms as normal and do our business' said one former resident in 2019.<sup>52</sup> Control over Baga is frequently contested between ISWAP and government forces, ever since the insurgents went to great lengths to expel government forces in December 2018. The military later regained control of its base outside Baga, but the town and its 'twin' have since become frontier zones, with areas closer to Lake Chad's shoreline being subjected to ISWAP taxation. As of March 2022, this included a tariff of 100 000 naira (equivalent to approximately € 234)

to be allowed to fish and 'a large percentage of the catch' as tax.<sup>53</sup> The Islamic State's al-Naba newsletter has described the fishing industry as of strategic importance to the Lake Chad region.<sup>54</sup>

Although reports from the area in 2022 indicate that hundreds of fishermen left the area due to these charges, ISWAP was able to gain some tax income from the remaining fishing activity in the town.<sup>55</sup> The decline of fishing in Baga has also meant a rise in the fortunes of smaller or newer fishing and market centres within territories more firmly under ISWAP control, including some near the town of Kousséri in Cameroon, on the Chadian border. Kousséri is reportedly widely accessed by traders who travel there to buy fish and take it to other towns and cities in the region – traders who also frequently pay taxes on the roads to ISWAP.<sup>56</sup> More recently, in 2022, local press reported another ISWAP-established market in Borno's Marte local government area, indicating the strategy is enduring and widespread. This market control is being bolstered by the protection ISWAP offers to those who pay their taxes and the reformed image it has attempted to portray in Baga. According to one former resident interviewed by a news agency, 'they say we're crazy to stay in Nigeria'.<sup>57</sup>



## Looting urban economies

A more direct strategy is violent raids on towns that, despite hosting relatively small populations around 30 000 inhabitants, are considered urban settlements due to their density. These towns are an attractive target for Boko Haram as they are less protected by state security forces but still contain important economic communities linked to fishing and cattle.

In recent years, ISWAP has adopted this strategy. On 7 September 2018, the group attacked the town of Gudumbali, looting and then leaving the area – the first time since 2015 that militants had seized a local government area headquarters according to the International Crisis Group.<sup>58</sup> The town of Rann has been particularly hard hit by raids, possibly due to its proximity to both Lake Chad and the border with Cameroon's Far North, where armed groups have frequently ambushed trade routes. In 2019, an attack by suspected ISWAP fighters saw the looting of humanitarian agency premises and the local market, and left seven dead.<sup>59</sup>

Raids on small towns was a Boko Haram method even prior to the split that changed the conflict dynamics on the ground. Amnesty International recorded significant looting from houses, shops and markets during Boko Haram raids in 2014 and early 2015, which according to the organization comprised an important source of the armed group's funding.<sup>60</sup> Amnesty described the group's modus operandi during the larger attacks:

Often the gunmen divided their forces during attacks, with one group going from house to house to collect valuables and set houses on fire, one looting shops, one killing people and one abducting residents or preventing them from fleeing.<sup>61</sup>

A variant of this predation before the split into two rival factions saw Boko Haram extorting traders in border towns, including Amchidé, Fotokol, Makary and Hile Alifa, according to an International Crisis Group report from 2017.<sup>62</sup> Traders who did not receive financial help from the group were the principal targets for extortion, with insurgents giving out micro-loans to others who, if they cannot repay the loan, are forcibly conscripted into the armed group.<sup>63</sup>

In many ways, the centrality of urban areas to economic exchange dooms them to become key battlegrounds between insurgents and government troops. This was certainly the case with Malam Fatori, a historic trading post for trans-Saharan flows of fish, cattle and farm produce,<sup>64</sup> whose approximately 30 000 inhabitants fled when Boko Haram conquered it in November 2014.<sup>65</sup> Regional military forces clashed with the insurgents in April 2015 to some success but, following the withdrawal of troops from Chad and Niger, the town was re-conquered by insurgents, which led to further clashes. The town was deserted for seven years until in 2021 the local government announced plans to rebuild it.<sup>66</sup> In January 2021, the town was again the stage for renewed clashes between Nigerian troops and ISWAP.<sup>67</sup> Given its remote location, within Nigeria but close to the Niger border, it appears that the town's role in the regional trade routes supplying ISWAP strongholds in Lake Chad might explain ISWAP's ongoing interest.






# URBAN AREAS AS TRAFFICKING HUBS

The economic strategy of armed groups in the region is based on disrupting urban economies, including food supply chains.

© Friedrich Stark/Alamy





SWAP and JAS have been linked to transnational trafficking activities that use urban areas as hubs due to their transportation infrastructure and established position in regional trade. This activity can take a number of forms: alliances with criminal groups to coordinate transnational flows of drugs and weapons through cities like Maiduguri and Maroua; using covert cells and associates placed in or traveling to cities to trade in major markets (such as Maiduguri's cattle market); and ad hoc arrangements with passing traders and drivers who agree to carry supplies for insurgents hidden in their vehicles.

## Illicit economies and urban communities

Although conflict has severely affected livelihoods, it has created a thriving trade in connecting cities with insurgents. This trade has benefitted many local inhabitants who sell or transport the items needed by Boko Haram fighters.

The network of insurgent associates in Maroua has been particularly clear, with our research revealing that the number of people prosecuted there for 'financing of terrorist acts' jumped from 16 in 2015 to 71 in 2016, remaining above 30 until 2020. The number of people prosecuted in the same city for 'laundering the proceeds of terrorist acts' jumped from four in 2015, to 29 in 2016, 36 the following year and 39 in 2018.<sup>68</sup> Though this increase could be the result of stricter enforcement, it nonetheless shows the importance of the city and its surrounding region as a hub for Boko Haram stooges.

In Nigeria, transporting and selling fuel to insurgents has become a lucrative venture for commercial motorists plying the Maiduguri–Baga road since the government banned the sale of fuel in jerrycans in 2021.<sup>69</sup> According to a taxi driver, many motorists traversing this route have fabricated extra fuel tanks on their vehicles in which they can store between 50 and 100 litres of fuel to sell on to insurgents. This taxi driver further emphasized the huge profit that the commercial motorists can make through fuel smuggling: 'They buy a litre of fuel at about N165 and then supply the insurgents at N360. That means if you have a 100-litre fabricated tank, your profit is N19 500. Some drivers make several trips in a day'.<sup>70</sup> Though all the commercial drivers interviewed denied supplying fuel to the insurgents, they all admitted that they were aware of the trend and that it was ongoing.





putting themselves at the service of Boko Haram to organize markets for their stolen goods, such as oxen, to be sold at a low price.<sup>72</sup>

Maiduguri has also served as both a major market and a transit point for the fish trade.<sup>73</sup> There are seven major fish markets in Maiduguri, drawing buyers from within Borno and many other parts of the country.<sup>74</sup> This role, however, has been under significant threat due to the aforementioned insecurity in the fishing hub of Baga – though traders from Maiduguri have been among those traveling to alternative markets set up by insurgents to secure supplies for the city.

Some security officials have become embroiled in the illicit trade, particularly at crossings and other geographical points that concentrate trade flows. In Cameroon's Far North, on the Ngueli bridge between Kousséri and N'Djamena, some customs officers and police have done the smuggling for traders who leave their goods on one side and pick them up on the other, for a fee. The proliferation of roadblocks for security purposes has led to uniformed officials collecting kickback money and greatly increasing transport costs for traders.<sup>75</sup>

Similarly in Maiduguri, some security agents are suspected of playing a prominent role in drug trafficking, particularly in helping drugs to leave the city for its rural environs. More than 10 members of the security forces have been arrested with tramadol, Rohypnol, cannabis and codeine in Maiduguri, according to one operative.<sup>76</sup> Apart from being involved in transporting drugs, some security agents have also protected drug traffickers to ensure their areas of operation are not raided by National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) operatives, according to sources inside the agency.

## Urban hotspots for illicit economies

It is not surprising that cities are crucial hubs for illicit economies, but the findings in this report and from another major GI-TOC project help to highlight how and where exactly this 'hub' effect happens. The GI-TOC has conducted a comprehensive mapping of areas in West Africa that serve as transit points, nodes and clusters of crimes, measuring their relationship of illicit economies to armed conflict and political instability. A total of 71% of illicit hubs in the region are located in or near urban areas. While rural areas tend to host a higher proportion of illicit economies linked directly to armed conflict, such as arms trafficking, gold mining and kidnapping for ransom. This is likely due to the high visibility of such crimes in urban centres attracting security forces' attentions. But qualitative evidence for this report shows that a few large and well-connected cities, such as Maiduguri, are crucial licit and illicit hubs without which armed groups would lack a vital link to global markets.

## Drug trafficking

Stakeholders in both Maroua and Maiduguri have reported an increase in drug trafficking since the start of the insurgency in the early 2010s. Since then, smuggling in the region has been largely shaped by Boko Haram and the two rival factions that succeeded it. This is in part because of fighters' demand for the opioid tramadol and arms, which in turn have greatly strengthened the smuggling networks passing through the towns and cities of the Far North.<sup>77</sup>

In Maiduguri, security agents and government officials speaking to the Global Initiative reported an increase in the trafficking of tramadol, cocaine and cannabis in recent years.<sup>78</sup> The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) had seized approximately 20 tonnes of drugs in Borno State by August 2020, including cocaine, cannabis, codeine and tramadol.<sup>79</sup> In 2021, the NDLEA seized 105 kilograms of cannabis in Maiduguri – the largest seizure ever recorded in northern Nigeria.<sup>80</sup> Though seizures are not a reliable measure of the volume of drug trafficking, the large quantities seized during the insurgency strongly suggest a significant drug market in and around Maiduguri. Further, although official numbers are patchy and do not allow for comparisons over time, interviewees believed that the frequency and volume of seizures had increased when compared to pre-insurgency levels. One NDLEA operative stated that 'we arrest traffickers with cocaine and heroin every month in Maiduguri,' noting this far outstripped previous apprehension rates.<sup>81</sup> The trafficking takes place by road and by air. Many drug seizures have involved commercial vehicles delivering parcels in the region.<sup>82</sup>

Similarly, smuggling tramadol is one of the most active illicit economic flows through Maroua. From 2015 to 2021, more than 50 000 tramadol tablets were recorded by the security forces transiting through the Far North – though the number is very likely an underestimate,<sup>83</sup> since one operation by Nigerian authorities in January 2022 led to the apprehension of 48 000 tramadol tablets heading to Maroua.<sup>84</sup> Security forces in the Cameroonian town of Kousséri have seized approximately 7 000 tablets

of tramadol and 1 200 kilograms of cocaine and cannabis, since 2016.<sup>85</sup>

It is unclear if insurgents from either JAS or ISWAP are involved directly in the trade, but there is strong evidence that much of the drug flow is for fighters' own consumption. Tramadol in particular, a cheap and addictive opioid painkiller, has long been taken by Boko Haram insurgents and vigilantes alike to help them endure the tough conditions brought about by the conflict. Given the widespread addiction to painkillers among civilians in the region, insurgents are also likely to be profiting from the broader drugs trade. An official at the NDLEA has noted that insurgents' exact participation in drug trafficking is still unclear, but that he believes they are involved as a way of generating quick money to buy weapons and ammunition.<sup>86</sup>

The insurgency's negative economic impact on local economies has been one further driver of rising drug trafficking in the area. A state anti-drug operative in Maiduguri noted that participants in drug trafficking are often people that saw their original livelihoods dwindle in the face of the insurgency. This was corroborated by state officials supervising the running of the IDP camps in Maiduguri who explained that drug trafficking is rampant in IDP camps because it offers a lucrative source of income for people that have lost all their belongings and livelihoods.<sup>87</sup> A vigilante leader there estimated that drug trafficking increased by 70% between 2012 and 2021, with cannabis, cocaine and tramadol among the common drugs.<sup>88</sup>

The resulting increase in the supply of illicit substances (and growing availability of some legal ones) has driven an epidemic of dependency as the civilian population seeks a coping mechanism amid regional instability.<sup>89</sup> In Maroua, locals have noticed an increase in illicit drugs consumption in the city in recent years – though official numbers on consumption are not available.<sup>90</sup>

In Maiduguri, an official from the NDLEA who manages a drug treatment centre in the city stressed that many people who were devastated by the



insurgency have taken to drugs.<sup>91</sup> This is also true of many IDPs in camps near Maiduguri who reportedly use drugs to escape the trauma of their experiences.<sup>92</sup> Such is the dependency in the camps, there have been instances where IDPs have mobilized in order to prevent state anti-drug operatives from arresting a known drug trafficker in one of IDP camps.<sup>93</sup>

The insurgency has also added a gender dimension to drug trafficking. Before the insurgency, women were rarely involved in drug trafficking in Maiduguri. However, arrests in the last two years suggests this has changed. According to the NDLEA operative:

The role of women in drug trafficking in Maiduguri is massive. There are problems in arresting them for several reasons. One of the

reasons is religion and the dealers are aware, so they exploit it. The agency's staff are mostly men, so when they raid a place, they can't search women hiding drugs under their hijab. Women are heavily involved in terms of trafficking and usage.<sup>94</sup>

The desperate economic conditions that women face has pushed many into illicit activities. A young female suspect arrested by the NDLEA in 2022 was described by the anti-drug operative as 'devastated, traumatized and frustrated by the insurgency'.<sup>95</sup> A humanitarian worker who has interacted with female IDPs for several years added that adult females coordinate young girls to sell drugs locally, usually at night.<sup>96</sup>

## Arms trafficking

The regional black market in arms has been fuelled by decades of armed conflicts in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone and, more recently, Libya and Mali.<sup>97</sup> Weapons trafficking in the region not only provides the tools for armed groups to fight rivals and control territories, but also a source of funding for criminals and insurgents working in concert. Insurgents tend to take an indirect approach to arms

trafficking, benefiting from the protection racketeering associated with transnational smuggling by taxing convoys and offering escort services.<sup>98</sup>

Nigeria has long been a regional hub for arms trafficking due to its history of armed conflicts and porous borders.<sup>99</sup> Maiduguri, in particular, has been highlighted as an important node on two



Arms and ammunition recovered from Islamist insurgents, north-east Nigeria. © Pius Utomi Expei/AFP via Getty Images

transnational arms trafficking routes by the Small Arms Survey: one operates along an east–west axis running between Mali, Nigeria and Sudan,<sup>100</sup> the other runs on a north–south axis connecting Nigeria to Libya, where an arms market has flourished since the fall of the Muammar Gaddafi regime in 2011 triggered regional instability and conflict.<sup>101</sup> Trafficking groups and networks are highly diverse, ranging from so-called ‘ant trafficking’ by chains of multiple small-scale traders, to highly organized groups with deep-rooted connections to and knowledge of the ancient trans-Saharan trade routes.<sup>102</sup>

Maiduguri has served as an important entrepôt for several categories of arms trafficking, though it is not clear if this includes larger traders since their greater arsenals might be harder to hide from military and police forces in the big city. Our research has found evidence that Maiduguri is being used as a transit hub for ant traffickers crossing the Cameroonian border, as well as those bringing weapons across the Chadian border from Libya and the Sahel.

Female mango sellers, for instance, have used their pans to hide arms and ammunition on the journey across the border at the Gamboru-Ngala customs area to Maiduguri, where covert insurgents or their agents take possession of them.<sup>103</sup> According to

GI-TOC sources, these female mango sellers were pressured by insurgents into making this dangerous trade. Weapons can also be sourced from within the region from both security forces, through theft from national stockpiles or illicit syphoning of arms by state agents, and other insurgents.

Weapons from Cameroon, Chad and Nigeria’s national stockpiles are also transported from Maiduguri to other conflict-affected parts of Nigeria, including the north-central and north-west regions.<sup>104</sup>

A similar transit position seems to be played by Maroua. The most high-profile weapons seizure recorded there took place in September 2013, when 5 400 AK-47 rifles were found on a pick-up truck.<sup>105</sup> A significant quantity of arms flow through the Far North of Cameroon from Chad towards northern Nigeria, with the town of Kousséri on the Cameroonian side of the border, directly across from the Chadian capital N’Djamena, operating as a major transit hub.<sup>106</sup> Research conducted for the Global Initiative’s forthcoming report mapping illicit hubs in West Africa has shown that some of the arms passing through Kousséri are smuggled south from N’Djamena down the Chari River towards offloading sites closer to Maroua.

## Cattle rustling

Perhaps the biggest example of insurgents’ direct involvement in trafficking activities is the sale of the animals in urban markets, particularly the Maiduguri cattle market. This longstanding practice of Boko Haram has continued under the current factions. Such is the importance of the city to the insurgent economy that a security official said in 2017 that Boko Haram’s stolen cattle ‘have just one destination which is the cattle market in Maiduguri’.<sup>107</sup>

This practice illustrates the link between pillaging in smaller towns and the sale of the stolen commodities in regional cities such as Maiduguri. Boko Haram’s cattle rustling has involved raiding smaller towns such as Fotokol in Cameroon and Ikom in Nigeria in order to appropriate cattle and send them

to Maiduguri for sale, sometimes forcing the farmers themselves to transport the stock.<sup>108</sup> Stolen cattle is often sold at below market value, since, for the insurgents, the costs are relatively low. This manipulation of prices further undermines the businesses of those living off the cattle trade which is so vital for Maiduri’s economy.<sup>109</sup> The economic damage was worsened by the Nigerian government’s decision in February 2016 to completely close the cattle market there in an attempt to cut a funding stream to Boko Haram. According to a trade association at the time this move left over a million butchers in the country facing hardship.<sup>110</sup> The market later reopened, with the government imposing measures to prevent Boko Haram from using the market to sell its stolen cattle. But sources with knowledge of the local cattle





A cattle market in Maroua. © Patrick Meinhardt/AFP via Getty Images

market have told Global Initiative that the insurgents' associates still bring around 20 cows per day to the market, though the armed groups' ability to acquire cattle and transport the animals varies from time to time.<sup>111</sup>

ISWAP and JAS currently use a network of accomplices and informants in the city to conduct the trade and circumvent the government's checks and regulations.<sup>112</sup> They are therefore able to continue exploiting the Maiduguri market by operating through proxies.<sup>113</sup>

A member of the goat and sheep dealers and farmers association identified two channels through which the insurgents conceal the sources of stolen livestock. Cattle can either be sold through

associates with access to the market in Maiduguri, or by selling immediately in rural markets, from where unsuspecting livestock dealers buy the animals and resell them at the cattle market in Maiduguri.<sup>114</sup>

The same insecurity that disrupted several routes used by cattle traders into Maiduguri caused a temporary surge in trade in 2020, as displaced pastoralists moved to the city in order to sell their remaining cattle and resettle.<sup>115</sup> However, the overall economic toll on cattle dealers has been enormous. Before the insurgency, between 50 and 60 trailers of cattle would be taken from the market to other parts of Nigeria every week, but this number has now plunged to 10 trailers per week, according to a former official at the cattle dealers' association.<sup>116</sup>

Size of head of ram	Price before insurgency	Price after onset of insurgency
Big	N80 000 (€180)	N250 000 (€562.5)
Medium	N30 000 (€67.5)	N150 000 (€337.5)
Small	N15 000 (€33.75)	N75 000 (€168.75)

**FIGURE 4** Prices of rams in Maiduguri before and after the onset of the insurgency.

SOURCE: Interview with goat and sheep dealers' association member, Maiduguri, February 2022





The Bakassi IDP camp, November 2021. © Audu Marte/AFP via Getty Images

## Illicit economies and IDP camps in Maiduguri

Much of the humanitarian and economic disruption of the conflict is manifested physically in Maiduguri in the form of displaced populations. The rapid increase in IDPs, both in the city itself and in camps on the outskirts, coupled with lax security in the camps, has contributed to a variety of illicit activities springing up.<sup>117</sup>

As the capital of Borno State, Maiduguri has proved to be relatively safer than other areas and consequently has been the main destination for people displaced by the fighting, with around 80% of IDPs ending up in the city, according to a former state official.<sup>118</sup> Although most media and expert reports on displaced populations focus on IDP and refugee camps, a large share of displaced people worldwide flee to cities, staying in relatives' homes, community shelters and, for the few who can afford it, rented accommodation. A study from 2018 estimated that 53% of IDPs in Maiduguri live either with relatives or in community shelters.<sup>119</sup> Even those that can afford to pay rent end up living in very small spaces in areas affected by poor drainage and vulnerable to flooding and malaria.

The situation in the area has changed dramatically since late 2021, when the state government sought to accelerate the return of thousands of refugees to rural areas by closing IDP camps. Many of these resettled IDPs have now already returned to Maiduguri to seek work and accommodation, as their old livelihoods in their hometowns and villages have vanished due to the ongoing disruption to cattle farming and trade flows in the state. One man featured in a recent media report, a former successful cattle trader, fled his hometown again after the government resettlement and now sells kola nuts in Bulabulin-Ngarannam, one of Maiduguri's most impoverished areas.<sup>120</sup>

Before their closure, the camps hosted a thriving illicit economy based on drugs and human trafficking. The drug trafficking networks at the camp involved a range of actors, including camp officials and security operatives as well as the IDPs. One humanitarian activist explained the structure of a drug trafficking network in one of the camps:

The main drug suppliers live outside the IDP camps. These people supply to a group of

people working in the camps. I am not saying all camp officials are involved. There are very honest and good ones. But there are bad eggs. The drug dealers work with these bad ones. The camp officials supply to some male IDPs who live in the camp. These IDPs distribute it to women in the camps. These women are the ones that sell the drugs to the final consumer.<sup>121</sup>

Indeed, there is also a strong gender dimension to the trafficking of IDPs. Though men are involved to some extent, women play a particularly prominent role. Human trafficking networks tend to involve a group of women living outside the IDP camps, who work with women inside the camps. The women in the camp identify suitable young girls and boys to be trafficked out of the IDP camp to serve as 'house girls' and 'house boys.' One IDP camp official said that children are sometimes trafficked to neighbouring countries but most end up as domestic workers in Maiduguri.<sup>122</sup>

Many women and young girls in vulnerable positions sell their bodies for money, food or other

basic necessities.<sup>123</sup> This includes exchanging food for sexual favours with camp officials and militia groups that act as security forces around camps. A humanitarian worker cited incidents of sexual exploitation by operatives of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) including rapes and cases of minors being impregnated by militia members.<sup>124</sup> A senior member of a local civil society organization lamented what she described as the unchecked excesses of CJTF and said cases of sexual exploitation by the militia are underreported.<sup>125</sup> NGOs working to prevent exploitation and support victims have faced threats.<sup>126</sup>

It is not clear how the IDP resettlement programme will affect these criminal trends or the vulnerability of IDPs. The anecdotal evidence so far points to large numbers of resettled IDPs moving to precarious accommodation in Maiduguri or other large urban areas in search of (equally precarious) income given the disruption to rural economies due to the conflict.

## Diversification of illicit trafficking and new hubs

Pressure from security forces has created obstacles for several illicit economies – such as the new regulations in Maiduguri's cattle markets and regular military operations to weaken insurgents. Criminal networks have responded by creating new routes and increasing the vulnerability of more towns in the region in the process.

Military personnel have noted a restructuring of smuggling networks since the emergence of Boko Haram in northern Cameroon. Trafficking in drugs, weapons and pharmaceutical products was present in the Far North before the advent of Boko Haram, with the final destinations on the Cameroonian side being mainly Maroua and the market town of Kousséri (from where some commodities are trafficked into Chad).<sup>127</sup> However, the demand for contraband by Boko Haram fighters has encouraged a diversification of smuggling routes, with experienced smugglers finding new routes to circumvent surveillance by the security and defence forces.<sup>128</sup>

Smuggling groups trying to bypass armed clashes, areas strewn with landmines or those with higher security presence along the Nigeria–Cameroon border have turned what were once peripheral routes into major trafficking highways.<sup>129</sup> Consequently, urban centres that had been commercial backwaters acquired a greater role in the illicit economies developing in the region. These towns across Cameroon's North and Far North regions are closely tied into Maroua as a regional commercial and economic centre, as well as to their counterparts on the Nigerian side of the border. Following road and markets closures, the town of Mubi in northern Nigeria grew into a major hub for traffickers heading to the Cameroonian town of Guider.<sup>130</sup> Along this same border, a route has also developed further south through Garoua-Gashiga, which then enters Nigerian territory towards Maiduguri.<sup>131</sup>






# IMPACT OF CONFLICT ECONOMIES ON URBAN SYSTEMS

This woman was forced to flee her village in north-east Nigeria after it was attacked by militants.

© Seun Sanni/Reuters





**T**he predatory economies linked to the insurgency have had a profound impact on urban population dynamics and economic links in the Lake Chad region. In a region where cattle and fish trading have long been the backbone of the local economy, frequent attacks, theft and extortion along the road networks have shattered the connection between urban and rural on which the wealth of larger cities depends. The conflict has also caused significant population displacement, not only to camps organized by governments and NGOs, but also to towns and cities, which have seen their populations swell without a corresponding increase in security. This in turn has made the IDPs living in precarious accommodation on the edges of these small towns vulnerable to insurgent raids and to further displacement. The insurgents' economic exploitation of roads, and its attendant violence, has rerouted vital trade and supply chains to cities outside the region, greatly increasing transportation costs and risking the long-term relocation of economic activity to more stable areas in southern Nigeria and Cameroon.

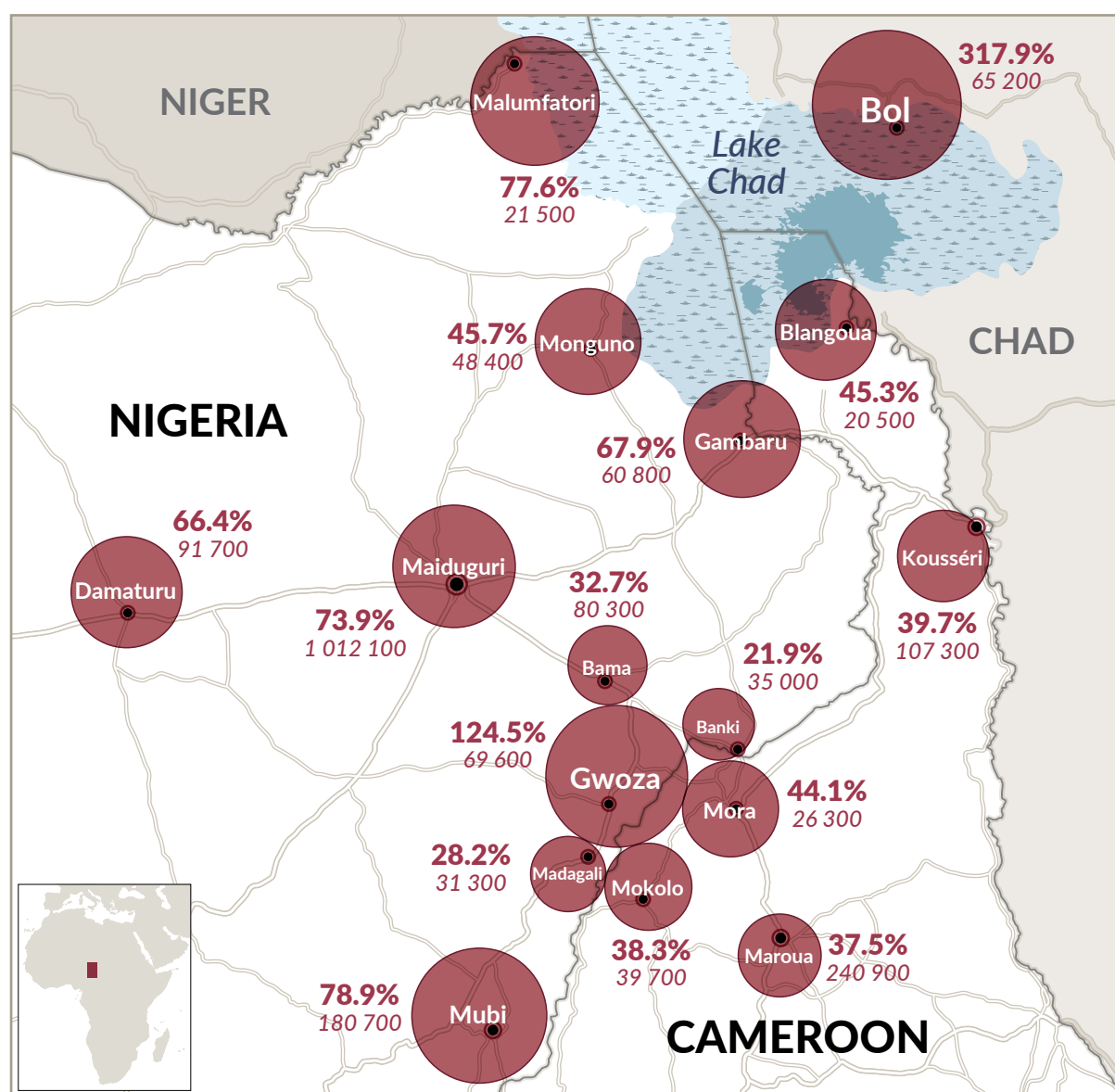
As a result of these vulnerabilities, the Lake Chad region shifted further away from legal and sustainable trade practices and towards illicit economic exploitation. Routes that connected towns and cities in a vibrant (and ancient) urban-rural system are now safe only for criminal networks transporting arms, drugs and stolen cattle. Towns that were important nodes in this system have either been deserted or stripped of their economies, serving only as pillaging grounds for insurgents. This section explores the impact of the conflict economies outlined above on the region's urban systems.

## Urban systems and conflict-affected towns

The economic activities on which communities in north-east Nigeria and the Lake Chad region rely are connected to rural areas: fishing, cattle rearing and agriculture. However, it would be a mistake to think of the impact of Boko Haram and ISWAP as purely rural. On the contrary, many small communities in Borno State and Cameroon's Far North region have experienced rapid population growth – driven partly by population displacement – and are becoming increasingly large towns. As a consequence, food production systems have increasingly

gravitated towards these towns, which are, in turn, connected to cities that serve as important trade hubs for national and international markets – such as Maiduguri, Maroua, N'Djamena – or directly to port cities. This urbanization of the countryside is far from unique to this region and represents a rising trend across Africa.<sup>132</sup>

Smaller urban areas, namely towns with less than 100 000 inhabitants, are particularly relevant in Sub-Saharan Africa given the region's rapid urbanization. The OECD estimated in 2020 that



**FIGURE 5** Population growth and latest population numbers in selected regional towns, 2000–2015.

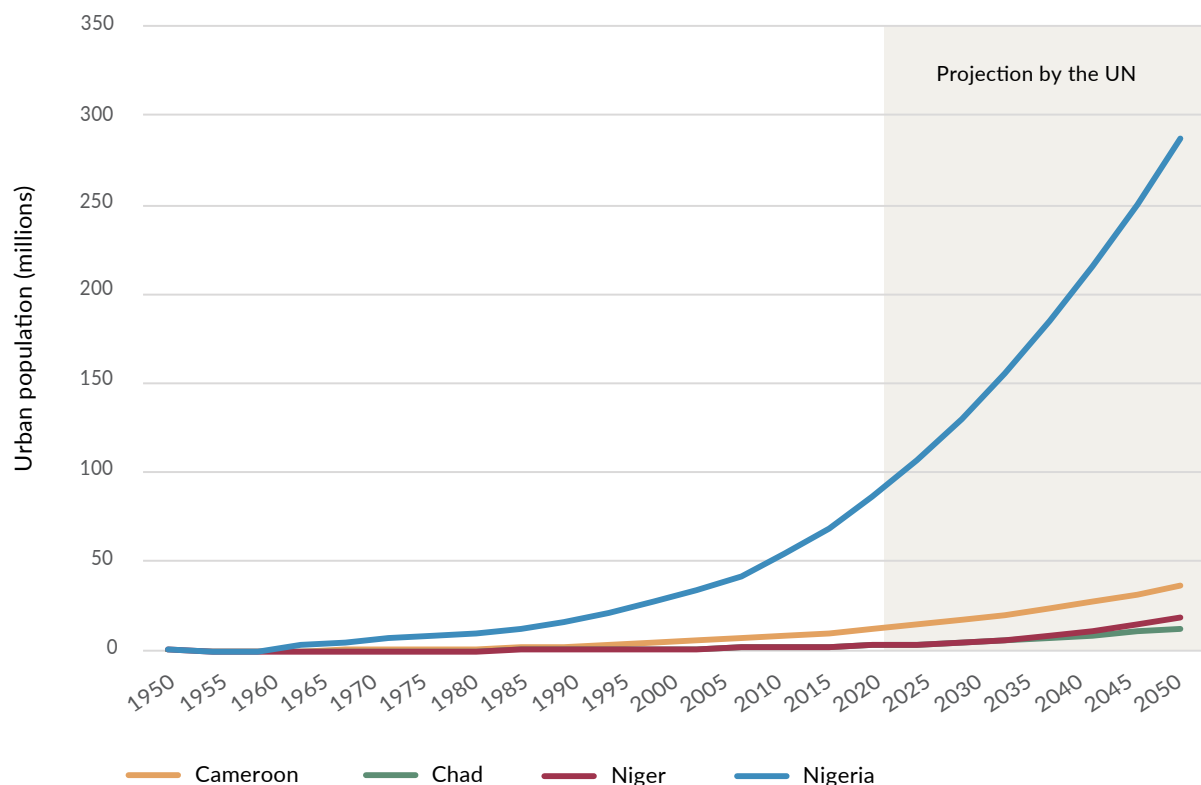
SOURCE: OECD; Africapolis, <https://africapolis.org/en/countries>

urban areas in the region would absorb nearly one billion more inhabitants in the following 30 years.<sup>133</sup> Between 1990 and 2015, the number of cities in Africa as a whole more than doubled, reaching 7 721. Although urbanization evokes images of skyscrapers and large cityscapes rising from the ground, one major source of growing urban population numbers is the reclassification of communities from rural villages to 'urban', by national governments.<sup>134</sup> An estimated 26% of Africa's urban population lives in towns of less than 50 000 inhabitants, meaning that significant portions of the continent's population and economic activity are concentrated in small urban areas that are less protected than their larger counterparts to violent attacks by armed groups.<sup>135</sup>

Population data for these smaller towns is difficult to come by. Figure 5 shows the estimated population growth for a selection of towns in Nigeria's Borno State and Cameroon's Far North region, showcasing rapid expansion in many. The data is taken from

Africapolis, a tool produced by the OECD's Sahel and West Africa Club focusing on urban data beyond large cities – in some cases only up to 2015. Still, the time period does allow us to illustrate the swelling of many small communities into significant towns during the armed conflict. Take, for instance, the Nigerian town of Gwoza near the Cameroonian border, which served as a base for Boko Haram during 2014 and 2015, was retaken by government forces and has now faced several attacks by ISWAP and JAS.<sup>136</sup> Between 2010 and 2015 alone, the town's population increased by 42% to 69 000. Somewhat counterintuitively, many towns in the region affected by the insurgency have seen their populations nearly double between 2000 and 2015 – towns like Damaturu, Mubi and Gambaru (located just over the border from Fotokol, another frequent insurgent target).<sup>137</sup>

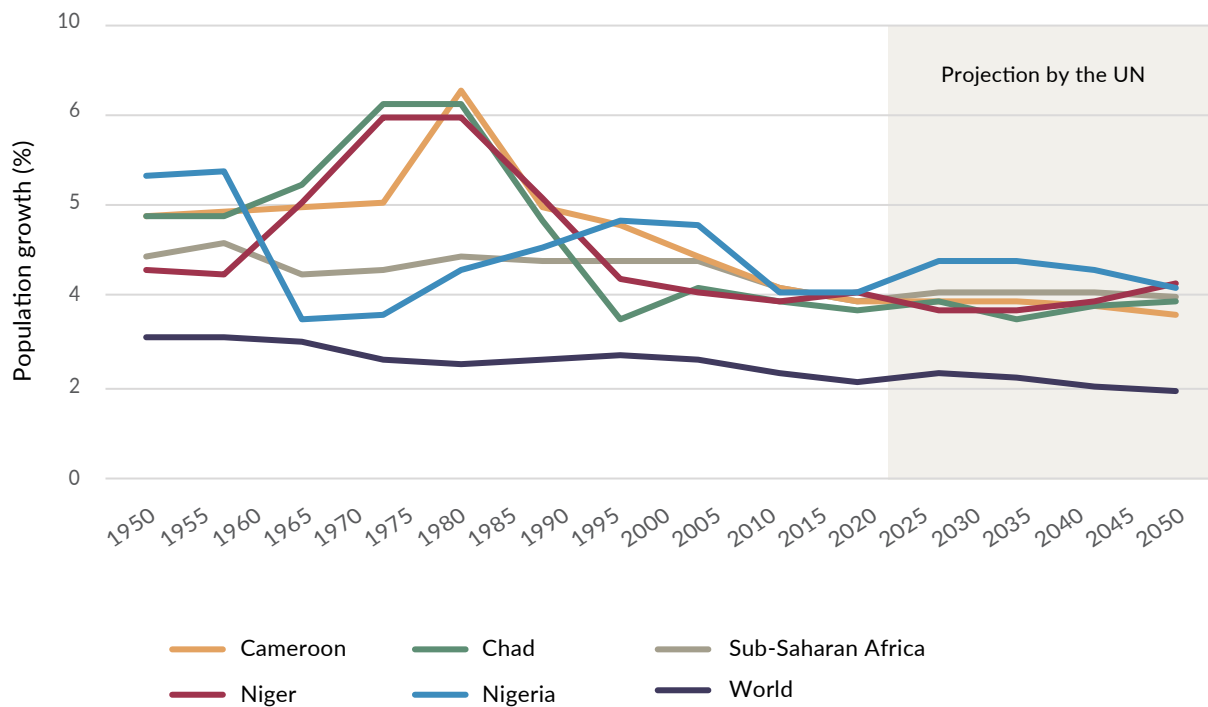
Often it is displaced people, usually living in precarious accommodation in these expanding towns, that are the victims of economic predation by ISWAP or



**FIGURE 6** Urban population in Lake Chad region countries, 1950–2050.

SOURCE: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018); World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 revision





**FIGURE 7** Average annual rate of change of the urban population, by per cent.

SOURCE: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018); World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 revision

JAS. This is especially the case in Nigeria, which has some of the largest numbers of urban IDPs in the world – almost 1.5 million as of 2019.<sup>138</sup> A significant share of the displaced population in north-east Nigeria is made up of people who have been displaced twice, having fled to towns that were later attacked by insurgents or caught in the crossfire of clashes with government forces.<sup>139</sup>

This was on full display in August 2020 when ISWAP arrived in 22 trucks to raid the town of Kukawa in Borno State, taking hundreds of hostages – most of whom were displaced people who had been relocated by the government from camps in Maiduguri.<sup>140</sup> Many of these incidents appear to have a primarily political purpose – to display insurgents’ strength in face of government efforts against them as well to intimidate communities seen to be cooperating with the government – but looting is also commonplace.

Political goals, terrorism and economic predation go hand in hand in the region’s armed conflict. A particularly brutal series of attacks in early 2019 hit the town of Rann, located near the Cameroonian border, killing 60 people and displacing 35 000. Once again many of the destroyed houses were temporary shelters for already displaced people.<sup>141</sup> During the attack, reportedly by ISWAP, fighters looted the warehouses, food market and pharmacies.<sup>142</sup> In November 2017, there were an estimated 50 000 displaced people in Rann, and 30 000 more residents in need of humanitarian assistance.<sup>143</sup> The attack on Rann a few years later illustrates – in devastating fashion – the way that small towns can grow into substantial but vulnerable urban settlements, lacking the security provided to the regional capitals that host government and NGO headquarters.

## From urban system to conflict system

At the same time that the connections and nodes in this complex web of community relationships are being disrupted by insurgents' predation, urban areas and transportation routes have acquired a greater importance for illicit flows (as described above). This illicit trade essentially builds an alternative system of economic relations dependent on and supporting armed conflict. As the usual connections within the urban system weaken, the illicit conflict system is strengthened or adapts to government operations.

The rise of newly urban communities – typically small agrarian villages turning into more densely inhabited towns – has intensified the potential for economic and social links between rural areas, towns and cities. This combined with ancestral practices of informal trade across national borders in the Lake Chad region, has seen communities of various sizes form an embryonic regional urban system.

A regional urban system is a group of communities more or less close to each other geographically that have developed important links, co-dependencies and economic specialization. These urban communities – some as small as 10 000 inhabitants – envelop rural hinterlands in these relationships.<sup>144</sup> Such analytical models have expanded the boundaries of 'urban' areas and eroded the straightforward urban–rural dichotomy common in conflict studies. The interconnection of cities, towns and rural hinterland is now seen as essential to understanding the complex web of interactions between human groups that, while geographically separate, form deeply interdependent relationships.<sup>145</sup> This is particularly important in an age of climate change, in which climatic effects on coastal, riverine and agrarian communities can lead to a global impact in terms of food security, migration and intercommunal conflict. Any disruption to small food-producing towns and rural areas can significantly damage cities' social stability, especially as most climate migrants are expected to move to cities in the next three decades.<sup>146</sup>

With the rapid population growth of recent decades, the area around Lake Chad affected by Boko Haram has developed the characteristics of an interdependent regional urban system. It contains only one city with more than 500 000 inhabitants (Maiduguri), but its population seems to be increasingly clustering around closely interconnected small towns of less than 100 000 inhabitants (though rapid growth may cause them to cross that symbolic population mark soon). These connections are not limited to trade but also human flows between ethnically aligned groups, cultural ties and political affinities.<sup>147</sup>

These links are even more vital for local communities because of the region's landlocked position – the urban hubs of Maiduguri and N'Djamena are located more than 1 300 kilometres from the nearest seaport making rural agriculture, town markets and supply networks critical to food security.<sup>148</sup> Cities and border towns have permanent markets and warehouses, which are crucial for storing and distributing food.<sup>149</sup> Fish from Lake Chad has traditionally been shipped to Baga and Maiduguri, although the former has diminished in prominence as a fish trading hub in recent years. These connections between different urban areas are deeply ingrained in the socio-economic traditions in the region, but they are also vulnerable to conflict. Insecurity

A poster displays members of Boko Haram suspects declared wanted by the Nigerian army. © Stringer/ AFP via Getty Images



along trade routes has significantly affected communities such as Diffa, in Niger. Before the spread of Boko Haram in 2014, an estimated 80–90% of the fish caught there was shipped to Nigeria, especially Maiduguri.<sup>150</sup>

The effects of the conflict have rippled throughout the regional urban system. Research has shown a reduction in crop output in Borno State between 2010 and 2016 due to movement restrictions imposed by Boko Haram, lack of human capital and the abandonment of fields after displacement.<sup>151</sup> The government has also played a role in these restrictions by shutting off roads and occasionally closing cattle markets, while soldiers have even engaged in the extortion of local populations.<sup>152</sup> As a result, food prices in Maiduguri have skyrocketed.

It is the legal trade by everyday economic actors – traders, transport workers, cattle producers, fishermen, farmers – that suffers most. The reverse is true for those smuggling goods for insurgents: who gain – or effectively purchase – protection. Smuggling supplies to ISWAP and JAS has if anything become more attractive over time due to the increased remuneration associated with the higher risks. The region's high poverty rates – estimated to be approximately 70% in north-east Nigeria and Cameroon's Far North region, both significantly higher than the national averages – make the higher rewards for participating in illicit flows particularly attractive in a time of acute insecurity.<sup>153</sup>

The intermittent predation of insurgents is particularly harmful to the resilience of the urban system – that is, the system's capacity to endure, adapt and transform in the face of changes and shocks.<sup>154</sup> Though our understanding of the links between armed conflict, its parallel economies and urban systems theories is at an early stage, it is clear that constant attacks have undermined the most vulnerable parts of the regional urban system – its connections and component parts: roads, towns and rural–urban intersections. In an adaptive and resilient system, shocks or stresses



– which can vary from a blackout, to a terrorist attack or climate change events – leading to the breakdown in one important component such as an urban service or area could be mitigated by switching to alternative providers or support mechanisms. If one source of energy supply fails, for instance, electricity can be temporarily ramped up in other plants. Examples of resilient cities include those that have been able to maintain, even build, good service provision and economic performance despite disasters or economic shocks. In other words, resilience relies upon redundancy in some elements of the urban system, so that one interruption does not bring the whole system down.<sup>155</sup>

In an area such as Borno, where roads are the only transport link between communities and there are few economic alternatives to food production, interruption of land routes and the emptying of towns cause potentially irreparable damage. This is made worse by the fact that governments' counterinsurgency efforts have focused not on ensuring security along the full length of some roads but on closing off entire road sectors, including a five-year ban on the Maiduguri–Monguno–Baga and Maiduguri–Gamboru–Ngala roads used by the fish trade in Borno.<sup>156</sup> Market closures in Maiduguri have compounded the issue.

But the crucial obstacle to safeguarding the interdependence and interactions between communities is the geographically dispersed and varying nature of Boko Haram attacks, which prevents people and businesses from being able to rely on any specific route. The resulting widespread insecurity deters all but the bravest, most financially secure, or well-connected businesses from risking alternative routes. Towns can be temporarily 'cut' off from the system due to insurgent raids – as happened after attacks on the major fishing market of Baga in 2015 – which leave communities uncertain about the prospect of return.

Illicit economies, by contrast, have adapted better to the insecurity thanks to the alliance struck between criminal networks and insurgents. This sometimes helps to alleviate the most acute human impacts of the crisis, through the smuggling of food and medicine towards insurgent-held areas. But the bulk of economic and human flows in the region remain disrupted and unsafe.

Heightened monitoring and surveillance are, of course, deterrents to illicit flows, but this is broadly counteracted by the constant military pressure from insurgents which diverts security efforts away from inspecting roads and cargo. The greater success of ISWAP in ensuring safety through the roads in its (smaller) territory has meant that many locals consider those routes safer.<sup>157</sup> Of course, such 'safety' comes at the price of severe behavioural and religious limitations on residents. But the involvement of small traders in the transport of goods for insurgents shows that for some hard-hit people in cities such as Maroua and Maiduguri one option has been to pivot from licit to illicit economies; from urban system to conflict system.






# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Soldiers look on as children take part in a reading lesson given by an NGO during a field visit by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Maroua, April 2022. © Daniel Beloumou Olomo/AFP via Getty Images





**U**rban areas in the Lake Chad region have played an important role in the economic strategies of violent extremist groups and, at the same time, have been reshaped by the armed conflict. The urbanization facing Nigeria is unprecedented, and its impact on the Boko Haram/ISWAP conflict should not be underestimated.

This study has shown that the conflict economy involving ISWAP and the other remaining Boko Haram faction, JAS, relies to a significant degree on predation over small but growing towns and the transport corridors linking agricultural hinterlands, towns and cities. This type of predation might be called selective disruption, since armed groups tax and pillage different parts of this interlinked urban system at various times. This predatory activity undercuts food systems, social links and economic supply chains in a way that harms urban areas in the region. This approach effectively amounts to taxation of larger cities such as Maiduguri and Maroua, which pay the price in reduced economic activity, higher transportation and supply costs and, most importantly, lives.

Of course, insurgents cannot operate entirely at the margins. Another role played by urban centres such as Maiduguri and Maroua is that of hubs for the trafficking of drugs (especially tramadol), weapons and stolen cattle, as well as the basic supplies needed by fighters, such as food and medicine. The intensity of such flows through cities varies according to government operations and the security dynamics on the ground, but our research has found that some city inhabitants have been lured by the 'high risk, high reward' prospect of such trade and have transported goods in their vehicles. Insurgents have maintained support networks in cities – for instance, they remain able to sell cattle in Maiduguri market, though probably not at the same levels as before closures and new regulations were introduced in 2016.

The population growth of small towns, especially in Nigeria's Borno State, in recent decades – partially driven by conflict-related displacement – has also increased the



urgency of examining the armed conflict from an urban perspective. This report has analyzed the conflict economies' impact on the Lake Chad area as a regional urban system. Examining the connections and specialized functions of urban areas has shown that food production in a rural area (to cite one example) is but one element in a much larger chain of economic and social exchanges that, once lost due to conflict, affects inhabitants both regionally and nationally. The fact that insurgents are able to strike in multiple locations without advance warning prevents communities from adapting or moving to other nodes in the system – since all roads are either blocked by government orders or at least partially unsafe and towns that are not part of the government's 'super camps' are vulnerable to raids.

**The long-term effects of these systemic disruptions are severe:**

- Socio-economic development in communities that are part of this interdependent system, even those considered 'secure' or part of 'super camps' is compromised due to the loss of food-producing towns, key routes and increased costs from insurgent taxation.
- Local and national businesses gradually shift trade routes and suppliers away from the Lake Chad region, resulting in new long-term connections with other urban systems and further harming development prospects in the region.
- Expanding towns, many of which host tens of thousands of displaced people (in both camps and host families' houses) become even more attractive targets for insurgents to attack for political and economic purposes. Urban population growth and displacement have not been accompanied by comprehensive security measures outside of a few 'super camps' set up by the Nigerian military, which expands insurgents' strategic choices.
- The illicit economy is increasingly replacing licit trade as a livelihood in the region, as trafficking routes are typically more resilient, and in some cases benefit, from insurgent protection. In turn, the local market for some illicit commodities grows, in part through overspill, heightening demand and fuelling further trafficking.

Urban population growth will continue in the region. Armed conflict, if anything, generally accelerates the trend due to population displacement. At the same time, illicit economies linked to Boko Haram/ISWAP, based on predation and smuggling, have continually looked towards the region's expanding settlements for resources. This sharpens the need for policymakers, development agencies and humanitarian actors to study the vulnerabilities not only of individual communities but of the wider system they make up. This study has shown immense socio-economic damage due to disruptions in vulnerable parts of the region's economic chains. Improving stability and security in key parts of this system – selected routes and major towns, for instance – could be a first step in allowing communities to build resilience and gradually rebuild their lives.



## Policy recommendations

### Build urban development strategies

- Regional governments and international agencies should urgently adopt urban development strategies for some of the region's largest towns, to help them cope with both rising populations and vulnerability to insurgent attacks.
- National governments, through their National Urban Policies (NUPs), have an important role to play in providing guidance for local governments to prevent the rising population from further straining resources and exacerbating intercommunal conflicts.<sup>158</sup> This should start with accurate official data on population, food security, service demands and infrastructure deficits, especially in areas heavily affected by violence and inflows of displaced people. This data is crucial to plan and resource local governments, which normally have a much more detailed understanding of local needs (in comparison to national or external governments) and can respond to local needs much more quickly.

### Link security with socio-economic development strategies

- Provide protection and develop infrastructure starting in groups of towns. Ensuring security in clusters of communities could foster a more stable environment for businesses and travellers to resume activities. This stability could then be geographically expanded in an 'ink spot strategy' – a process by which small bubbles of control are expanded over their surrounding areas until the different urban areas connect.<sup>159</sup>

A UN refugee agency vehicle crosses a branch of Lake Chad heading to the UNHCR camp in N'Gouboua. © Sia Kambou/AFP via Getty Images

- Build 'safe corridors' for trade and human capital to restore regional economic chains.<sup>160</sup> Governments and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) should consider increasing security on arterial roads through which they can guarantee safe passage between key economic hubs – such as from Maiduguri to Baga. This is far from easy but using surveillance technology – such as drones – and ensuring security forces' mobility and agility may facilitate such efforts.
- Engage with civil society. To foster community resilience, governments should assist local inhabitants in integrating displaced populations, in detecting vulnerabilities and in liaising between their communities and security forces.

### **Reform regional security approaches to build trust**

- A strong human-rights record is vital in gradually improving relations between civil society and the government. In light of previous heavy-handed responses to the Boko Haram crisis, national authorities should review the conduct of the armed forces and police – especially reports of soldiers collecting bribes at checkpoints which adds to trade disruption and undermines policies aimed at rejuvenating the urban system.<sup>161</sup>
- Ensure militias are accountable and respectful of civil society. Vigilante groups have, for instance, gained the trust of Maiduguri's population through their effective role in expelling Boko Haram from the city in 2013 (alongside state security forces). Many locals now prefer to report crimes such as theft and rape to vigilante forces rather than the police.<sup>162</sup> In the words of one resident, 'the insurgents are more afraid of the vigilantes than they are of the soldiers and police'.<sup>163</sup> The fact that many locals still trust the militias despite these allegations shows that there might be a role for community-oriented policing. However, their effective autonomy in the conduct of day-to-day law enforcement paves the way for abuses and represents a risk to building trust in the state.<sup>164</sup>



## NOTES

- 1 United Nations Population Division, World urbanization prospects: The 2018 revision, 2019, p 43, <https://population.un.org/wup/Publications/Files/WUP2018-Report.pdf>.
- 2 Jim Simmons, Urban systems: the new regional geography, *Espace géographique*, 10, 2, 136–138.
- 3 Afeez Hanafi, We used proceeds of bank robberies to buy explosives – Suspected Boko Haram commander, *Punch*, 5 January 2019, <https://punchng.com/we-used-proceeds-of-bank-robberies-to-buy-explosives-suspected-boko-haram-commander/>.
- 4 Dionne Searcey, Boko Haram is back. With better drones, *The New York Times*, 13 September 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/13/world/africa/nigeria-boko-haram.html>.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Tramadol is an opioid drug that serves as an effective painkiller and is also widely used to improve physical and work performance, including through lessening the need for sleep. Recreational use as a stimulant is also common. See UNODC, At the crossroads of licit and illicit: Tramadol and other pharmaceutical opioids trafficking in West Africa, 2021, p viii, [https://www.unodc.org/documents/nigeria/Tramadol\\_Trafficking\\_in\\_West\\_Africa.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/nigeria/Tramadol_Trafficking_in_West_Africa.pdf).
- 7 Nigerian gangs kidnapped children on behalf of Boko Haram: sources, *France 24*, 16 December 2020, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20201216-nigerian-gangs-kidnapped-children-on-behalf-of-boko-haram-sources>.
- 8 GIABA, Anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing measures – Federal Republic of Nigeria, Second Round Mutual Evaluation Report, 2021, pp 22–50.
- 9 Gordon H. McCormick, From the sierra to the cities: The urban campaign of the Shining Path, RAND Corporation, 1992.
- 10 Antônio Sampaio, The role of power for non-state armed groups in cities: marginalised spaces and transitions from armed conflict, *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal*, 2019.
- 11 Huma Yusuf, Conflict dynamics in Karachi, USIP, 2012, pp 16–17, [usip.org/sites/default/files/PW82-Conflict%20Dynamics%20in%20Karachi.pdf](https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/PW82-Conflict%20Dynamics%20in%20Karachi.pdf); Antônio Sampaio, Urban drivers of political violence: declining state authority and armed groups in Mogadishu, Nairobi, Kabul and Karachi, IISS, May 2020, <https://www.iiss.org/blogs/research-paper/2020/05/urban-drivers-of-political-violence#:~:text=This%20IISS%20report%2C%20based%20on,local%20tensions%20and%20weak%20governance>.
- 12 Daniel Branch, The enemy within: Loyalists and the Wwar against Mau Mau in Kenya, *Journal of African History*, 48, 2, 302–303.
- 13 UK National Army Museum, Kenya emergency, <https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/Kenya-Emergency>.
- 14 Faouzia Zeraoulia, The memory of the civil war in Algeria: Lessons from the past with reference to the Algerian Hirak, *Contemporary Review of the Middle East*, 7, 1, 36.
- 15 Peter Walkenhorst, Technical Paper 7: Trade patterns and trade networks in the Lake Chad Region, World Bank, 2021, p. 293.
- 16 Interview with government officials, security force members, academics and community leaders, Maiduguri, 22 February–4 May 2022.
- 17 Interview with former government official and academic, Maiduguri, 28 February 2022.
- 18 Interview with government official in Maiduguri, 2 March 2022.
- 19 Interview with commercial motorists, taxi drivers and motor park officials, victims of armed robbery, Maiduguri, 23 February–4 March 2022.
- 20 Interview with former government official and academic, Maiduguri, 28 February 2022.
- 21 Several dead after bomb attack on bar in northern Cameroon, *France 24*, 26 July 2015.
- 22 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Supporting people in Northern Cameroon displaced by conflict, 22 June 2021, <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/article/supporting-people-northern-cameroon-displaced-conflict>.
- 23 Interview with NGO worker, members of national commission of human rights and local journalists, Maroua, 17 February 2022.
- 24 Interview with Secretary General of the governor's services of Far North region, Maroua, 19 February 2022.
- 25 Stay Focused, Buhari charges troops fighting Boko Haram, *Daily Trust*, 23 December 2021, <https://dailytrust.com/stay-focused-buhari-charges-troops-fighting-boko-haram>.
- 26 Undeterred by bombings during his Maiduguri visit, Buhari says Nigeria in 'final phase' of tackling insurgency, *Premium Times*, 23 December 2021, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/north-east/502233-undeterred-by-bombings-during-his-maiduguri-visit-buhari-says-nigeria-in-final-phase-of-tackling-insurgency.html>.
- 27 Leo Sobechi, Revisiting President Buhari's 'warm reception' by ISWAP in Maiduguri, *Guardian Nigeria*, 28 December

- 2021, <https://guardian.ng/politics/revisiting-president-buhari-warm-reception-by-iswap-in-maiduguri/>.
- 28 Elizabeth Pearson and Jacob Zenn, Boko Haram, the Islamic State, and the surge in female abductions in Southeastern Niger, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, Research Paper, 5.
  - 29 Jeff Seldin, Nigeria says 'safe to assume' Boko Haram leader is dead, VOA News, 24 August 2021, [https://www.voanews.com/a/africa\\_nigeria-says-safe-assume-boko-haram-leader-dead/6209934.html](https://www.voanews.com/a/africa_nigeria-says-safe-assume-boko-haram-leader-dead/6209934.html).
  - 30 Malik Samuel, Islamic State's determined expansion into Lake Chad Basin, ISS, 3 August 2021, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/islamic-states-determined-expansion-into-lake-chad-basin>.
  - 31 Things you need to know about forests 'governed' by bandits, Boko Haram, Daily Trust, 27 February 2021, <https://dailytrust.com/9-forests-governed-by-bandits-b-haram>.
  - 32 International Crisis Group, Facing the challenge of the Islamic State in West Africa Province, 16 May 2019, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/273-facing-challenge-islamic-state-west-africa-province>.
  - 33 Obi Anyadike, Reporter's diary: Boko Haram and the battle of ideas, The New Humanitarian, 6 August 2019, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2019/08/06/Nigeria-boko-haram-ISWAP-and-battle-ideas-Lake-Chad>.
  - 34 Boko Haram mounts checkpoints on Borno highways, now collects 'taxes' from travellers, Sahara Reporters, 20 January 2022, <https://saharareporters.com/2022/01/20/exclusive-boko-haram-mounts-checkpoints-borno-highways-now-collects-%E2%80%99taxes%E2%80%99-travellers>.
  - 35 Photos of tax receipts issued by Boko Haram to farmers, herdsman in Borno controlled territories, Sahara Reporters, 19 January 2022, <https://saharareporters.com/2022/01/19/exclusive-photos-tax-receipts-issued-boko-haram-farmers-herdsman-borno-controlled>.
  - 36 Interview with official of Goat and Sheep Dealers and Farmers Association, Maiduguri, 22 February 2022.
  - 37 Atiku Galadima, Boko Haram still in control of some villages and LGAs, says Gov Zulum, Tribune, 12 January 2022, <https://tribuneonline.ng/boko-haram-still-in-control-of-some-villages-and-lgas-says-gov-zulum/>.
  - 38 SWAC/OECD, Africapolis, 2022, <https://africapolis.org/en/countries>.
  - 39 OCHA, Fact sheet: Damboa Local Government Area, December 2019, <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/fact-sheet-ne-nigeria-damboa-damboa-lga-january-2018>.
  - 40 Ibid.
  - 41 Chinedu Asadu, '30 killed', women abducted as Boko Haram attacks travellers near Maiduguri, The Cable, 10 February 2020, <https://www.thecable.ng/30-killed-women-abducted-as-boko-haram-attacks-passengers-near-maiduguri>.
  - 42 Muhammad Isma'il, Ibrahim Jaro Musa and Ahmed Abubakar Jajere, Analysis of future urban growth scenario of Damaturu town in Yobe State, Nigeria, *Global Journal of Research and Review*, <https://www.imedpub.com/articles/analysis-of-future-urban-growth-scenario-of-damaturu-town-in-yobe-state-nigeria.php?aid=10102>.
  - 43 Duku Joel, Boko Haram/ISWAP terrorists abduct travellers on Maiduguri/Damaturu highway, *Nation*, 6 June 2022, <https://thenationonline.ng/boko-haram-iswap-terrorists-abduct-travellers-on-maiduguri-damaturu-highway/>.
  - 44 Vincent Foucher, The Jihadi proto-state in the Lake Chad Basin, ISPI, 19 March 2020, <https://www.ispionline.it/en/pubblicazione/jihadi-proto-state-lake-chad-basin-25441>.
  - 45 Interview with retired customs officer, Mora, 19 March 2022.
  - 46 Interview with chief of traders of the central market of Maroua by local journalists, Maroua, 10 March 2022.
  - 47 International Crisis Group, Cameroon: Confronting Boko Haram, 16 November 2016, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/cameroon-confronting-boko-haram>.
  - 48 Boko-Haram, ISWAP takes over West Africa biggest fish market, *Business Day*, 1 February 2019, <https://businessday.ng/uncategorized/article/boko-haram-iswap-takes-over-west-africa-biggest-fish-market/>.
  - 49 Ibid.
  - 50 Ahmad Salkida, How Boko Haram sustain operations through international trade in smoked fish, *Premium Times*, 26 April 2020, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/389916-how-boko-haram-sustain-operations-through-international-trade-in-smoked-fish.html>.
  - 51 Amnesty International, Nigeria: Satellite images show horrific scale of Boko Haram attack on Baga, 15 January 2015, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/01/nigeria-satellite-images-show-horrific-scale-boko-haram-attack-baga/>.
  - 52 Obi Anyadike, Reporter's diary: Boko Haram and the battle of ideas, The New Humanitarian, 6 August 2019, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2019/08/06/Nigeria-boko-haram-ISWAP-and-battle-ideas-Lake-Chad>.
  - 53 Abdulkareem Haruna, Fishermen fleeing Lake Chad over forced conscription, taxes By ISWAP, HumAngle, 7 March 2022, <https://humanglemedia.com/fishermen-fleeing-lake-chad-over-forced-conscription-taxes-by-iswap/>.
  - 54 Jacob Zenn, The battle for Baga halts return to normalcy in Nigeria's Borno Province, *Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor*, 8, 18, <https://jamestown.org/program/the-battle-for-baga-halts-return-to-normalcy-in-nigerias-borno-province/>.
  - 55 Paul A. Onuh et al, Engagement in licit ventures by terrorist organisations and terrorism financing in the Lake Chad region, *Cogent Social Sciences*, 7, 1; Onyema Nwachukwu, Nigerian troops quell ISWAP Boko Haram's attempt on Damboa, PR Nigeria, 9 August 2021, <https://prnigeria.com/2021/08/09/nigerian-troops-iswap-boko-harams-damboa/>.
  - 56 Boko-Haram, ISWAP takes over West Africa biggest fish market, *Business Day*, 1 February 2019, <https://businessday.ng/uncategorized/article/boko-haram-iswap-takes-over-west-africa-biggest-fish-market/>.
  - 57 Obi Anyadike, Reporter's diary: Boko Haram and the battle of ideas, The New Humanitarian, 6 August 2019.
  - 58 International Crisis Group, Facing the challenge of the Islamic State in West Africa Province, 16 May 2019, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/273-facing-challenge-islamic-state-west-africa-province>.

- 59 Médecins Sans Frontières, Rann was attacked – and was left 'like a graveyard', 16 January 2019, <https://www.msf.org/rann-was-attacked-%E2%80%93-and-was-left-graveyard-nigeria>.
- 60 Amnesty International, Our job is to shoot, slaughter and kill: Boko Haram's reign of terror in north-east Nigeria, 2015, p. 14, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/AFR4413602015ENGLISH.pdf>
- 61 Ibid., p 4.
- 62 International Crisis Group, Cameroon's Far North: Reconstruction amid ongoing conflict, 25 October 2017, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/b133-extreme-nord-du-cameroun-le-casse-tete-de-la-reconstruction-en-periode-de-conflit>.
- 63 GIABA, Anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing measures – Federal Republic of Nigeria, Second Round Mutual Evaluation Report, 2021, p 23.
- 64 Murtala Abdullahi, Malam Fatori: Last outpost in Nigeria's extreme north, protected by brave soldier, HumAngle, 9 January 2021. <https://humanglemedia.com/malam-fatori-last-outpost-in-nigerias-extreme-north-protected-by-brave-soldiers/>.
- 65 Celia Lebur, Nigeria's Malam Fatori: A liberated ghost town, Yahoo News, 5 April 2015, <https://news.yahoo.com/nigerias-as-malam-fatori-liberated-ghost-town-102310345.html>.
- 66 Misbahu Bashir, Borno to rebuild Malam-Fatori town deserted for 7 years, Daily Trust, 3 July 2021, <https://dailytrust.com/borne-to-rebuild-malam-fatori-town-deserted-for-7-years>.
- 67 Murtala Abdullahi, Malam Fatori: Last outpost in Nigeria's extreme north, protected by brave soldiers, HumAngle, 9 January 2021, <https://humanglemedia.com/malam-fatori-last-outpost-in-nigerias-extreme-north-protected-by-brave-soldiers/>.
- 68 Maroua Military Court, Statistics on the financing of terrorist acts and laundering of the proceeds of terrorist acts period from 2014 to March 2022.
- 69 Interview with state security operative, Maiduguri, 27 February 2022.
- 70 Interview with taxi driver, Maiduguri, 25 and 26 February 2022
- 71 Interview with gendarme, Mora, 19 March 2022.
- 72 Interview with chief of traders in central market of Maroua by local journalists, Maroua, 10 March 2022.
- 73 Interview with state security operative, Maiduguri, 27 February 2022.
- 74 Ismail Abdlatif et al. Analysis of marketing channel and market structure of dried fish in Maiduguri metropolis of Borno State, Nigeria, *European Journal of Business Management*, 6, 7, 147–155.
- 75 Interview with NGO worker, national commission of human rights members and local journalists, Maroua, 17 February 2022.
- 76 Interview with NDLEA operative, Maiduguri, 2 March 2022.
- 77 Interview with gendarme, Maroua, 18 February 2022.
- 78 Interview with NDLEA operative, Maiduguri, 2 March 2022.
- 79 NDLEA destroys over 19 tonnes of drugs, psychotropic substances in Borno, Guardian Nigeria, 21 August 2020, <https://guardian.ng/news/ndlea-destroys-over-19-tonnes-of-drugs-psychotropic-substances-in-borno/>.
- 80 Interview with NDLEA operative in Maiduguri, 2 March, 2022
- 81 Ibid.
- 82 Ibid.
- 83 Number provided by the Regional Delegation of National Security of the Far North, Maroua, 21 February 2022.
- 84 Kazeem Ugboaga, 48,000 tabs of Tramadol enroute Cameroon intercepted, three arrested, PM News, 30 January 2022, <https://pmnewsnigeria.com/2022/01/30/48000-tabs-of-tramadol-enroute-cameroon-intercepted-three-arrested/>.
- 85 Police information retrieved in Maroua, 21 February 2022.
- 86 Interview with NDLEA operative, Maiduguri, 2 March 2022.
- 87 Interviews with NEMA officials, Maiduguri, 2 March 2022.
- 88 Interview with vigilante leader, Maiduguri, 22 February 2022
- 89 Interview with government official, Maiduguri, 2 March 2022.
- 90 Interview with police officer, Maroua, 21 February 2022.
- 91 Nigeria's tramadol crisis: The drug fuelling death, despair and Boko Haram, BBC News, 1 June 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-44306086>.
- 92 Interview with NDLEA operative, Maiduguri, 2 March 2022.
- 93 Ibid.
- 94 Ibid.
- 95 Ibid.
- 96 Interview with CSO official, 28 February 2022.
- 97 Méryl Demuynck, Tanya Mehra and Reinier Bergema, The use of small arms & light weapons by terrorist organisations as a source of finance in West Africa and the Horn of Africa, ICCT, June 2020, p 5, <https://icct.nl/app/uploads/2020/06/The-Use-of-Small-Arms-Light-Weapons-by-Terrorist-Organisations-as-a-Source-of-Finance-in-West-Africa-and-the-Horn-of-Africa.pdf>.
- 98 Ibid., p 7.
- 99 OECD, Illicit financial flows: The economy of illicit trade in West Africa, 2018, p 83, [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/illicit-financial-flows\\_9789264268418-en#page1](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/illicit-financial-flows_9789264268418-en#page1).
- 100 Tanya Mehra, et al, Cashing in on guns: Identifying the nexus between small arms, light weapons and terrorist financing, ICCT, March 2021, p 25, <https://icct.nl/app/uploads/2021/03/SALW-Report.pdf>.
- 101 Nicolas Florquin, Sigrid Lipott and Francis Wairagu, Weapons compass: Mapping illicit small arms flows in Africa, Small Arms Survey, 2019, p 44, <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/SAS-AU-Weapons-Compass.pdf>.
- 102 Tanya Mehra, et al, Cashing in on guns: Identifying the nexus between small arms, light weapons and terrorist financing, ICCT, March 2021, p 25, <https://icct.nl/app/uploads/2021/03/SALW-Report.pdf>.
- 103 Interview with CSO official, government official and members Borno Elders Forum, Maiduguri, 28 February–2 March 2022.
- 104 Interview with various stakeholders, including a retired state security operative, an academic and a journalist, Jos, 11 November 2021.



- 105 Arms smuggling to Boko Haram threatens Cameroon, The New Humanitarian, 21 February 2014. <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2014/02/21/arms-smuggling-boko-haram-threatens-cameroon>.
- 106 Interviews and literature review for hotspot mapping exercise; a member of the security forces also told a journalist in 2014 that several seizures were made in 2013 in Kousséri – see *Le Cameroun, plaque tournante d'un raffic d'armes destinées à Boko Haram*, L'Express, 4 April 2014, [https://www.lexpress.fr/actualites/1/monde/le-cameroun-plaque-tournante-d-un-traffic-d-armes-destinees-a-boko-haram\\_1506004.html](https://www.lexpress.fr/actualites/1/monde/le-cameroun-plaque-tournante-d-un-traffic-d-armes-destinees-a-boko-haram_1506004.html).
- 107 Philip Obaji Jr., How Boko Haram makes its cash from stolen cattle, Ventures Africa, 5 January 2017. <https://venturesafrica.com/boko-haram-makes-cash-from-stolen-cattle/>.
- 108 Ibid.
- 109 Ibid. This practice of insurgents selling stolen cattle at lower prices has also been tracked in other parts of West Africa, including in Burkina Faso. See for further detail: GI-TOC, West Africa Observatory Risk Bulletin, 4, <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/weaobs-risk-bulletin-4/>.
- 110 Closure of cattle market leads to crisis in Maiduguri, International Centre for Investigative Reporting, 1 March 2016, <https://www.icirnigeria.org/closure-of-cattle-market-leads-to-crisis-in-maiduguri/>.
- 111 Interview with cattle dealers association member, Maiduguri, 22 February 2022.
- 112 Interviews with commercial motorists in Maiduguri, 25 February 2022.
- 113 Kyari Mustafa, Maiduguri cattle market struggling for relevance without supplies, HumAngle, 25 December 2020, <https://humanglemedia.com/maiduguri-cattle-market-struggling-for-relevance-without-supplies/>.
- 114 Interview with goat and sheep dealers and farmers association member, Maiduguri, February 2022.
- 115 Kyari Mustafa, Maiduguri cattle market struggling for relevance without supplies, HumAngle, 25 December 2020, <https://humanglemedia.com/maiduguri-cattle-market-struggling-for-relevance-without-supplies/>.
- 116 Interview with former official of Cattle Dealers Association, Maiduguri, 23 February 2022.
- 117 Interview with former government official and academic in Maiduguri, 28 February 2022.
- 118 Ibid.
- 119 International Organization for Migration, Nigeria Displacement Report 36, May 2021, <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/nigeria-%E2%80%94-displacement-report-36-may-2021>.
- 120 Abdulkareem Haruna, Hunger, economic hardship forcing resettled IDPs back to Maiduguri, HumAngle, 1 March 2022, <https://humanglemedia.com/hunger-economic-hardship-forcing-resettled-idps-back-to-maiduguri/>.
- 121 Interview with a CSO official, Maiduguri, 28 February 2022.
- 122 Interview with NEMA officials in Maiduguri, 2 March 2022.
- 123 Interview with CSO official, Maiduguri, 28 February 2022.
- 124 Ibid.
- 125 Ibid.
- 126 Ibid.
- 127 Interview with police officer in Kousséri, Maroua, 22 March 2022.
- 128 Interview with local journalists, Maroua, 15 February 2022; interview with Dr Mbarkoutou, researcher in Center for Peace and Security Studies (CPSS), University of Maroua, 16 February 2022.
- 129 Interview with Divisional Officer of Mayo-Sava, Mora, 19 March 2022; interview with police officer, Mora, 19 March 2022.
- 130 Interview with company commander of gendarmerie (gendarmerie officer) of Mayo Sava, Mayo Sava, 19 March 2022.
- 131 Interview with local journalist, Maroua, 15 February 2022.
- 132 OECD, Africa's urbanisation dynamics 2022: The economic power of Africa's cities, 26 April 2022, p 51, [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/africa-s-urbanisation-dynamics-2022\\_3834ed5b-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/africa-s-urbanisation-dynamics-2022_3834ed5b-en).
- 133 OECD Africa's urbanisation dynamics 2020: Africapolis, mapping a new urban geography, 7 February 2020, p 14, [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/africa-s-urbanisation-dynamics-2020\\_b6bccb81-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/africa-s-urbanisation-dynamics-2020_b6bccb81-en).
- 134 Jytte Agergaard, et al, Revisiting rural–urban transformations and small town development in sub-Saharan Africa, *European Journal of Development Research*, 31, 2–11.
- 135 Ibid.
- 136 Boko Haram HQ Gwoza in Nigeria 'retaken', BBC News, 27 March 2015, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-32087211>.
- 137 All town estimates from OECD, Africapolis, <https://africapolis.org/en/countries>.
- 138 Cindy Huang and Jimmy Graham, How urban are IDPs and what does that mean for their economic integration?, Center for Global Development, May 2019, p 14, <https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/HowUrbanAreIDPsAndWhatDoesThatMeanForTheirEconomicIntegration.pdf>.
- 139 Eric Batonon, NRC alarmed by displacement of 30,000 people from Nigeria to Cameroon, NRC, 30 January 2019, <https://www.nrc.no/news/2019/january/nrc-alarmed-by-displacement-of-30000-people-from-nigeria-to-cameroon/>.
- 140 Armed fighters take hundreds hostage in Nigeria's Borno state, Al Jazeera, 20 August 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/8/20/armed-fighters-take-hundreds-hostage-in-nigerias-borno-state>.
- 141 Nigeria: Deadliest Boko Haram attack on Rann leaves at least 60 people murdered, Amnesty International, 1 February 2019, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/02/nigeria-deadliest-boko-haram-attack-on-rann-leaves-at-least-60-people-murdered/>.
- 142 Abdulkareem Haruna, How Boko Haram attack destroyed Nigerian community, Rann, Premium Times, 20 January 2019, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/north-east/306674-how-boko-haram-attack-destroyed-nigerian-community-rann.html>.
- 143 UNOCHA, Fact Sheet NE Nigeria: Rann, Kala/Balge LGA, November 2017, <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/fact-sheet-ne-nigeria-rann-kalabalge-lga-november-2017>.
- 144 Jim Simmons, Urban systems: the new regional geography, *Espace géographique*, 10, 2, 136–138.

- 145 Brian McLoughlin, *Urban and Regional Planning: A Systems Approach*, London: Faber and Faber, 1969, p 27.
- 146 C40 Cities, Why cities must prepare for climate migration, March 2022, [https://www.c40knowledgehub.org/s/article/Why-cities-must-prepare-for-climate-migration?language=en\\_US](https://www.c40knowledgehub.org/s/article/Why-cities-must-prepare-for-climate-migration?language=en_US).
- 147 Peter Walkenhorst, Technical Paper 7: Trade patterns and trade networks in the Lake Chad Region, World Bank, 2021, p 291.
- 148 Ibid., p 293.
- 149 Ibid., p 300.
- 150 Ibid., p 302.
- 151 Justin George, Adesoji Adelaja and Dave Weatherspoon, Armed conflicts and food insecurity: Evidence from Boko Haram's attacks, *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 102, 1, 118.
- 152 Teniola Tayo, Maiduguri's economic revival could be a lifeline for Lake Chad Basin, ISS, 21 October 2021, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/maiduguris-economic-revival-could-be-a-lifeline-for-lake-chad-basin>.
- 153 Rogelio Granguillhome et al., Lake Chad Regional Economic Memorandum: Development for peace, World Bank, 2021, p. XVIII; International Crisis Group, Cameroon's Far North: Reconstruction amid ongoing conflict, 25 October 2017, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/b133-extreme-nord-du-cameroun-le-casse-tete-de-la-reconstruction-en-periode-de-conflit>.
- 154 See, Facing up to the future: the City Resilience Index, Arup, <https://www.arup.com/perspectives/city-resilience-index>.
- 155 Kerri McClymont, et al., Understanding urban resilience with the urban systems abstraction hierarchy (USAH), *Sustainable Cities and Society*, 80, 103729, May 2022, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2210670722000609#bib0040>.
- 156 Malik Samuel, Economics of terrorism in Lake Chad Basin, ISS, 10 July 2019, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/economics-of-terrorism-in-lake-chad-basin>.
- 157 Ibid.
- 158 UN-Habitat, National Urban Policy, <https://unhabitat.org/programme/national-urban-policy>.
- 159 Steve Coll, 'Ink Spots', *New Yorker*, 27 September 2009, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/steve-coll/ink-spots>.
- 160 Such human flows should be seen as infinitely more valuable than, to cite one prominent example, oil and gas pipelines that are often the focus of counterinsurgency efforts in countries like Colombia. In the latter country, US support for counterinsurgency efforts in the early 2000s included surveillance technologies and the employment of informers and rapid-response forces stationed along pipelines to counter rebel attacks. See Juan Forero, New role for US in Colombia: Protecting a vital oil pipeline, *The New York Times*, 4 October 2002, <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/04/world/new-role-for-us-in-colombia-protecting-a-vital-oil-pipeline.html>.
- 161 Abdulkareem Haruna, Furious Borno governor accuses soldiers of extortion, *Premium Times*, 6 January 2020, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/371382-just-in-furious-borno-governor-accuses-soldiers-of-extortion.html>.
- 162 Vanda Felbab-Brown, Militias (and militancy) in Nigeria's North-East, in Adam Day ed., *Hybrid Conflict, Hybrid Peace: How Militias and Paramilitary Groups Shape Post-Conflict Transitions*, United Nations University, 2020, p 85.
- 163 Interview with resident, Maiduguri, 23 and 24 February 2022.
- 164 International Crisis Group, Watchmen of Lake Chad: Vigilante groups fighting Boko Haram, 23 February 2017, pp 14–15, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/244-watchmen-lake-chad-vigilante-groups-fighting-boko-haram#:~:text=Regional%20armies%20in%20the%20Lake,communal%20violence%20and%20organised%20crime>.



# GLOBAL INITIATIVE

AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL  
ORGANIZED CRIME

## ABOUT THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE

The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime is a global network with over 600 Network Experts around the world. The Global Initiative provides a platform to promote greater debate and innovative approaches as the building blocks to an inclusive global strategy against organized crime.

**[www.globalinitiative.net](http://www.globalinitiative.net)**

Supported by



Federal Foreign Office