

Child Sexual Assault and Violence in Nigeria's Kano State

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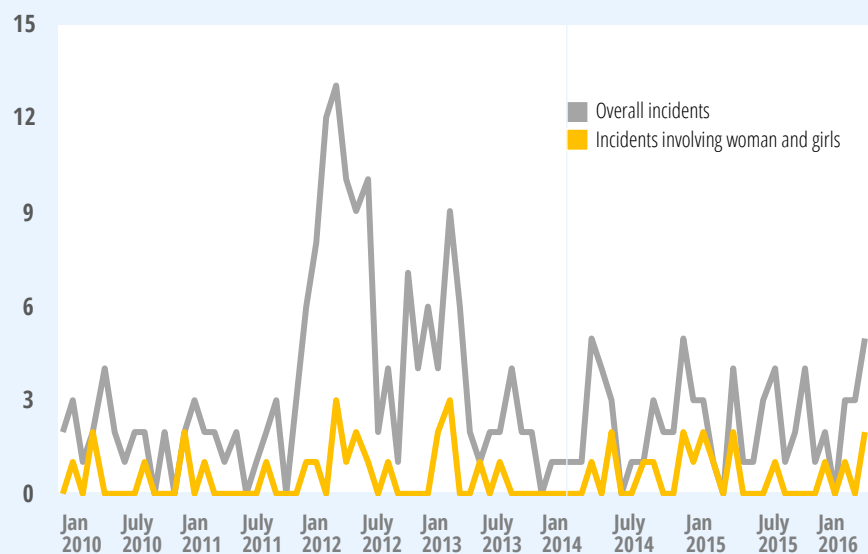
Comparatively, Kano is one of the more prosperous states in Northern Nigeria. It has the sixth largest state economy in the country as a bustling market and trade hub, dominated by the textile industry and agriculture. However, the distribution of wealth is uneven. According to the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, Kano ranks 24th out of 36 states in terms of poverty rate per capita. It has also faced a major uptick in insecurity since 2012, as a result of the Jama'atu Ahli Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad (JAS) insurgency (see Figure 1).

Gender roles within the state also remain unequal, with a report on women's rights in Northern Nigeria by the Ahmadu Bello University and DFID¹ detailing that women, particularly in rural areas, are often precluded from participating in economic decision making, employment outside the home, political engagement, and access to the same level of education as boys.

Within the context of both the heightened levels of violence and insecurity in the state, as well as the pervasive norms surrounding the role of women in many communities, the vulnerability of young girls and women to violence and abuse in Kano state remains high. Reporting of incidents and access to

Reported Conflict Incidents — Kano State

Figure 1



Graph shows the number of reported conflict incidents of Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG), using Nigeria Watch data — formatted for the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org. Each data source has different data collection methods, and therefore should not be seen as an indication of overall patterns and trends across time and space of violence. As this brief shows, violence affecting women and girls often goes unreported. The graph does however show more incidents impacting women and girls during months of higher levels of overall insecurity.

justice also remains limited, especially when many perpetrators are in positions of power and trust, or believed to have the “right” to abuse women and girls as they are considered part of household property.

This brief explores the impacts of violence on children and young women under the age of 18 years, and the patterns and trends in reported data of abuse and sexual violence in Kano state.

1. URL located at: http://www.ungei.org/srpbv/files/dfid_promoting_womens_rights.pdf

Data used in this Brief is based on incidents reported using Partners for Peace (P4P) Map, which integrates and formats conflict data from different sources including NSRP, Nigeria Watch and ACLED. The platform is supported by Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND) www.pindfoundation.org

Overall Trends in VAWG in Kano

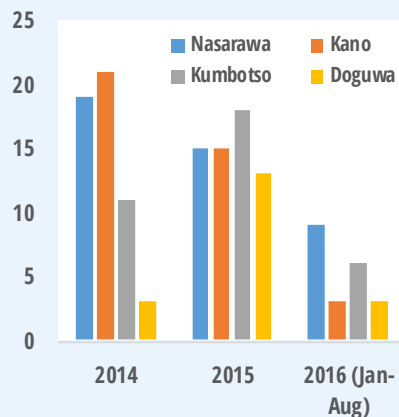
Based on overall levels of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) reported in Kano, the state has an extremely high proportion of violence perpetrated against children and young girls under the age of 18 years. As outlined in Figure 4, more than 40 percent of all VAWG conflict-related incidents since 2009 involved underage persons, based on incidents reported which include data from NSRP, Nigeria Watch and ACLED.

While reporting on VAWG has improved through the NSRP Observatory and other initiatives in Nigeria over recent years, many cases go unreported. Fewer still ever reach a court of law. As highlighted in Figures 2 and 3, much of the reported data on VAWG is concentrated in and around the state capital of Kano, as well as southern border areas with Bauchi state, where the Falgore Forest has been home to criminality and banditry, as well as media reports of gun running and rape.

Of the reported VAWG incidents from Kano, what emerges is that most incidents reported were perpetrated by strangers

VAWG Incidents by LGA

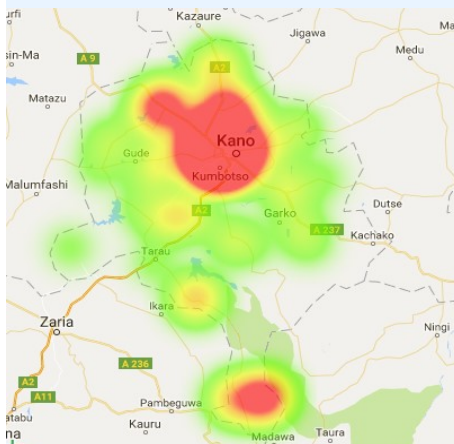
Figure 2: Reported Incidents 2014-2016



Graph shows the Local Government Area LGAs with the highest number of reported incidents of VAWG in Kano state, January 2014—August 2016. Source: All sources, formatted for the for the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

Heatmap of VAWG Incidents

Figure 3: Reported Incidents 2014-2016



Heatmap shows the concentration of VAWG incidents reported from the beginning of 2014 to August 2016. The main sources of VAWG reporting are in and around the state capital Kano and near the southern border with Bauchi state. Source: All sources, formatted for the for the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

when children and young girls were outside the home or at school. While this may be a reflection on underreported domestic abuse, this varies from other NSRP states

such as Rivers state, where reported incidents have a higher proportion of known perpetrators such as family members or legal guardians.

Examining the Patterns and Trends in Violence Against Children in Kano

Conflict disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable members of society. With the spike in violence in Kano state from 2012 as a result of the JAS insurgency in the North, women and children have been at the forefront of these impacts. Since 2014, tactics have included the increased deployment of female suicide bombers, often using girls as young as ten years-old to detonate devices in public areas around Kano Municipal. The conflict has also increased the vulnerability of children who have been displaced as a result of the violence, with reports of sexual assault in refugee camps as well as the exploitation of unaccompanied minors. These stories tend to dominate

the headlines in Kano as well as in national and international press. However, there is also a more pervasive culture of abuse of children and young women that goes beyond the effects of the JAS insurgency, occurring in Kano state. There exists a culture of impunity around abusing children within the community—especially young girls unaccompanied on their way to school, or hawking goods on the street. The prevailing belief that female children, as well as young domestic workers, are the property of the male heads of household may also impact the rate of abuse that occurs inside of the home, and the willingness to report it. Of the incidents reported since 2009 by

sources including NSRP, Nigeria Watch and ACLED formatted on the P4P Peace Map platform, over forty percent of Violence Affecting Women and Girls (VAWG) was perpetrated against persons under the age of 18 years old. More than half of these reported incidents involved sexual assault, including survivors as young as two years-old. This brief details the trends in violence based on incident data, as well as providing recommendations on how religious and civil authorities, along with communities, can work together to strengthen prevention efforts and bring perpetrators to justice.

Outside the Home: Abuse in Public Spaces and Schools

One of the most significant trends in reported incidents against children was the perpetration of abuse outside the home. This included scores of reports of girls being abused during travel to and from school, or at the school itself. In one incident in April 2016 in Kano Municipal, a woman reported that her two-year-old daughter has been sexually abused by a boy in her class at preschool. In 2016, an 8-year-old girl was reported to have been raped by a 19-year-old shop owner who lured her with sweets on her way to school in Gwale. In Gezawa during the same timeframe, it was reported to police that six teachers had been sexually assaulting four girls after school hours. In Bichi, three girls were reported to have been sexually abused by their 55-year-old school teacher, also in 2016.

The prevalence of sexual abuse of young girls, and in some cases boys, in and around a setting intended as a place of safety and learning for children, can act as a deterrent for parents to send girls to school. This is particularly telling in a state where the literacy rate for females above the age of six was at just 42% in 2012 according to UNESCO,² far below the average for other parts of the country.

It is also common for girls to be forced to leave school, and work and support their families. In the Ahmadu Bello University and DFID report,³ it describes the trend of mothers encouraging girls to hawk goods to support the family and go towards the girl's

kayan daki (marriage trousseau). In a case reported to the religious police authority, the State Hisbah Board, in 2015 in Fagge, a 14-year-old girl was forced by her mother to hawk on the street instead of going to school. The Hisbah took the case to Sharia court, highlighting the important role the religious authorities can play in advocating for vulnerable community members.

Unaccompanied young girls and women selling goods on the street can experience significant safety risks, with a number of reported VAWG incidents detailing sexual assault and harassment. In an incident reported in 2014 in Kumbotso, a 62-year-old man who was HIV positive raped a 12-year-old girl while she was hawking on the street, infecting her with the virus. In an incident reported to Hisbah in 2015, an 11-year-old girl was raped by a 55-year-old man when she was hawking at the construction site in Nasarawa LGA.

In another case also reported to Hisbah, a 13-year old girl was raped by a 40-year-old man while she was hawking in Dala. It was reported that the perpetrator also confessed to abusing a number of other children, including boys. In 2016 in Tarauni, it was reported that 60-year-old man attempted to rape an 8-year-old girl hawking ground nuts, after giving her money. The girl was able to escape after alerting passers-by.

Based on these cases, the need for the

Proportion of Reported Underage VAWG Incidents in Kano State

Figure 4: Reported Incidents 2009-2016

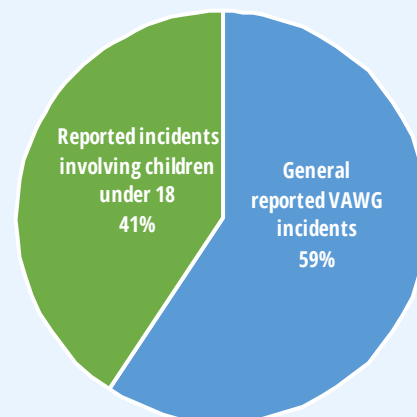


Chart shows that of the overall number of VAWG incidents reported from January 2009 to August 2016 (303 incidents), over forty percent (208 incidents) involved children and young women under the age of 18 years old. All data sources were used—including NSRP, ACLED and Nigeria Watch—formatted for the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

education of children about physical boundaries and calling for help should be an important part of increasing street safety, especially for unaccompanied minors. In addition, Hisbah has often played an important role in intervening and following up on cases of the abuse of children outside of the home. In many cases reported, survivors or their families appeared to request an intervention or support from Hisbah before reporting cases to the civil police, if they did at all.

While the majority of reported VAWG

2. URL located at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/pdf/Nigeria.pdf>

3. URL located at: http://www.ungei.org/srpbw/files/dfid_promoting_womens_rights.pdf

Violence Within the Home: Child Domestic Abuse

incidents involving abuse of persons under the age of 18 were related to rape or violence occurring outside the home, domestic abuse remains a pervasive issue within Kano state. Data from the NSRP Observatory often details incidents of sexual abuse and physical violence perpetrated against children and young domestic workers by family members and employers. In Kano Municipal in 2014, it was reported that a 14-year-old girl was raped by her 65-year-old father, who was subsequently arrested by police. Another incident reported in 2015 in Dawakin Tofa involved the rape and subsequent pregnancy of a 17-year-old girl, who accused her 27-year-old boyfriend and her stepfather of perpetrating the crime. Other cases reported during 2015 and early 2016 detailed instances where female domestic help, some as young as eight years of age, were raped or beaten by their employers, usually the male head of household or extended family members.

It is important to note that physical violence within the home can also be perpetrated by women and girls. In 2015, also in Kano Municipal, it was reported that a 54-year-old woman almost blinded her 12-year-old daughter after beating her with electric wire, after the girl had refused to go back to school. In Dawakin Tofa in 2015, it was reported that a 14-year-old housewife kidnapped and murdered her 10-year-old brother-in-law during a domestic dispute with her mother-in-law.

Many incidents of domestic violence, especially cases of child abuse perpetrated by family members or persons in position of

Reported Incidents of Child Abuse in Kano

Figure 5: Reported Incidents, 2010-2016

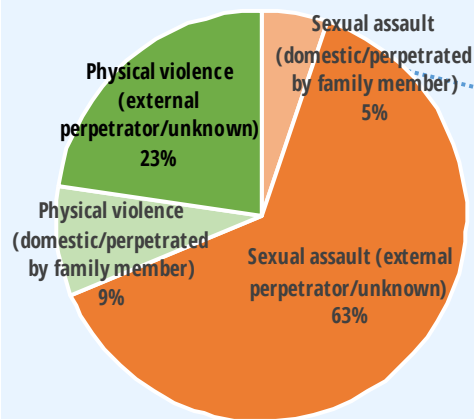
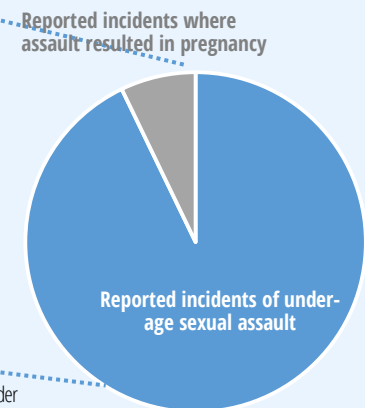


Figure 5 shows the types of violence reported involving children and young women under 18 years of age, during January 2009 to September 2016, with more than half of the incidents related to sexual assault by community members, or strangers. The next most salient category within the data was physical violence, including incidents such as beatings, abductions and murder.

Figure 6 shows that of those reported cases of sexual assault of children and girls under the age of 18, (143 incidents) at least eight percent (11 incidents) were reported to have resulted in pregnancy from abuse of the girl.

All data sources were used—including NSRP, ACLED and Nigeria Watch—formatted for the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

Figure 6: Prevalence of Reported Pregnancy from Child Sexual Assault



trust, often go unreported. Many are hesitant to get involved in cases of abuse that occur inside of the home, particularly when the violence is perpetrated by parents against younger children or by employers against female household help.

In data collected by the Observatory and in follow-up discussions held with OBSTEC members in Kano in mid-2016, it would appear that the prevailing perception that both young children and domestic help are the “property” of the male head of household appears to influence the decision, or lack thereof, for other family or community members to intervene. Since the

founding of the Observatory in 2014, there has been increased reporting on these incidents of VAWG. However, evidence would suggest that these incidents may be just a small percentage of what is regularly occurring and more efforts are needed in breaking the culture of silence, and informing prevention efforts. In particular, creative and culturally-sensitive efforts to counter the prevailing narrative of young children and domestic workers being the sole property of the male head of household, and thus able to be physically and sexually abused at will, are needed.

Impacts of the Insurgency and Regional Insecurity on Girls

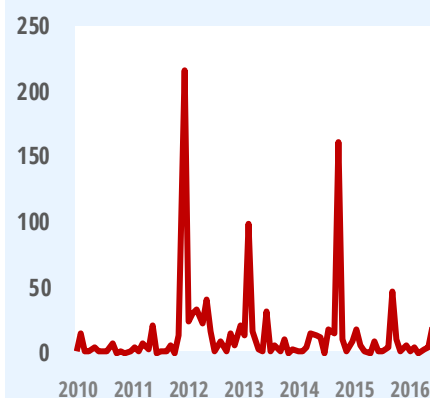
Finally, in exploring the predominant trends impacting VAWG in the state over the past several years, the insecurity linked to the ongoing insurgency of JAS, commonly known as Boko Haram, and counter-insurgency campaigns by public security forces, contributed sharp rise in VAWG-related violence in 2012 (see Figure 7).

While overall violence dropped in the beginning of 2015, the shift in tactics by JAS saw an increase in the use of young, female suicide bombers. Incident reports highlight a pattern in the use of young girls in Kano – along with other Northern States – to detonate devices in crowded public places (see Figure 8). In just one week in July 2014, four attacks were staged by female suicide bombers in Kano, targeting a petrol station, university, church and trade show. At least two girls aged 16 were reported to have detonated devices during the attacks. Also in that week, a 10-year-old girl was discovered with explosives strapped to her chest. In November 2015, an 11-year-old girl, accompanied by an 18-year-old girl detonated devices at a market in Kano Municipal, with a reported 15 fatalities and 100 wounded.

As outlined in a February 2016 FFP/NSRP brief⁴ utilizing data and interviews from both the Kano and Borno State Observatories, the motivations for JAS using women and children as weapons of war are not necessarily clear cut. Coercion, deception, and in some cases drug inducement, has been reported as tactics by JAS to get young girls to carry out the

Spikes in Overall Violence

Figure 7: Reported Fatalities 2014-2016



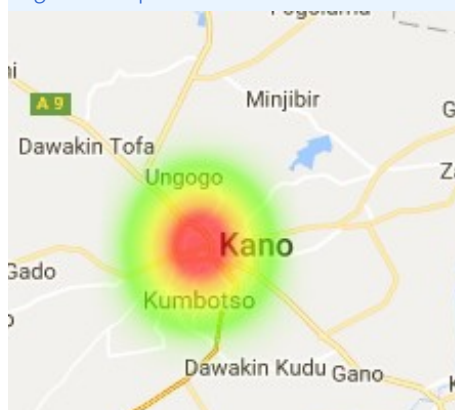
Graph shows the spikes in conflict related fatalities in Kano—notably the rapid increase in violence from 2011 to 2014, before dropping in 2015 and 2016. These drops coincided with shift in warfare tactics, including the use of children as suicide bombers. Source: Nigeria Watch, formatted for the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

attacks; especially those that may have been given by family members to the cause, or abducted. However, there are also cases where young women have been recruited or have volunteered to carry out the attacks.

Insurgency-related violence has had pervasive impacts on children and young women within the state. During conflict, vulnerable members of society, including children and women, are often disproportionately impacted by the violence. As highlighted in Figure 7, the overall conflict-related fatalities for Kano notably increased since the start of the insurgency. Temporary Internally Displaced

Heatmap of Incidents Involving Female Suicide Bombers

Figure 8: Reported Incidents 2015-2016



Heatmap shows the concentration of suicide bombing attacks carried out by females in Kano Municipal—most of which were reported to be under 18 years old. Heatmap covers the incidents reported between January 2015 and August 2016. Source: All sources, formatted for the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

Persons (IDP) camps set up in northern states at the height of the violence, including Dawakin Kudu LGA in Kano, have increased vulnerability to VAWG within the camps. In one incident reported in 2015 in Nasarawa LGA, a 14-year-old girl who was an IDP from Borno state, was forced into prostitution by a woman who had been appointed her guardian.

As people are repatriated into their communities as IDP camps across the North continue to close, civil society groups and government alike must ensure that children and young women are protected from the potential of violence and exploitation.

4. URL located at: <http://library.fundforpeace.org/fp303011602>

Conclusion

The safety of children and young women within communities – to attend school, and to move freely within their communities and within their homes without fear of violence or sexual assault – is a basic human right. However, as reported incident data shows, young women under the age of 18 are often survivors of physical or sexual abuse within Kano state. While there has been a noted uptick in violence in Kano from the JAS insurgency, a general environment of insecurity both in the streets as well as at schools is a daily reality faced by young women and girls in the state that may have very little to do with the insurgency. This insecurity unfortunately does not end at the doorstep to the home. As noted earlier, the prevailing belief that children and young domestic workers are the property of male heads of household and their relatives often seems to contribute to both the abuse and the reluctance of others to become involved to stop the violence. An increase in the reporting of these sorts of incidents since the founding of the NSRP Kano Observatory in 2014 is indicative that outreach through

Peace Clubs and engagement by OBSTEC members has begun to impact some of the reticence of reporting on the part of survivors or their family members. This is essential as challenging prevailing beliefs around the rights of women and children is most effective from within the community itself. This is where both the Peace Clubs and the OBSTEC members have and should continue to play a critical role.

Encouraging increased reporting of incidents – not only outside the home, but also domestic abuse – will help to break the highly pervasive culture of silence in Kano, and inform prevention efforts. The State Hisbah Board has routinely been cited in reports as being one of the few organizations that survivors and their family members often turn to for an intervention or assistance. Given this, Hisbah can also play a role in encouraging reporting and continuing to ensure that abusers are brought to justice. The use of Islamic teachings to support the protection of a women's right to education and prohibition

of rape and abuse is outlined in the report by Ahmadu Bello University and DIFID.⁵ As many VAWG cases within Kano are reported to Hisbah, rather than necessarily to the civil police, it is crucial that Hisbah and civil police authorities work closely together to prosecute perpetrators of violence against children. In 2014, the Kano State House of Assembly amended Section 283 of the Penal Code Law to enforce greater punishment for perpetrators of rape, with the act mandating minimum sentence of 14 years to life imprisonment. However, convictions remain limited, weakening the deterrent to potential perpetrators. In a 2015 Leadership⁶ article, the Kano Commissioner for Justice suggested more than 40 rapists were convicted and are now serving terms in prison. This is a small fraction of the reported abuses – let alone unreported abuses – and must be strengthened to change the culture of impunity around committing abuses against children.

5. URL located at: http://www.ungei.org/srgbv/files/dfid_promoting_womens_rights.pdf

6. URL located at: <http://leadership.ng/features/401024/kanos-high-rate-rape-cases-2014>

Recommendations

1 Greater data collection on judicial proceedings on cases tried and convicted on rape is needed. Legislation such as Section 283 of the Penal Code Law in Kano State can be a powerful deterrent to commit sexual abuses, with heavy fines and minimum 14-year prison sentences. However, without strong enforcement of the laws, their effectiveness is diminished. Limited public data exists about rape cases that are reported to civil police, tried in court, and convicted. Less data still is widely available on the number of perpetrators of sexual violence that are brought to account through the Hisbah Board proceedings. Increased reporting and transparency will help strengthen a case of deterrence.

2 Coordination between Hisbah and civil police on tackling violence against children. As identified in many reported VAWG incidents in Kano, the Hisbah play a key role on the front line of receiving and reviewing community complaints, and enforcing respectful conduct. Greater information sharing and collaboration between civil police and the Hisbah board to tackle child sexual assault violence and abuse can only increase effectiveness of bringing perpetrators to justice, and inform prevention efforts.

3 Increased training and information for military, police and those working within IDP camps about the vulnerability of young girls to being co-opted or coerced into becoming agents of violence and terror by insurgents. In the same vein, there needs to be more targeted campaigns in Kano that contribute to greater awareness about the special needs of children living within IDP camps and left orphaned or vulnerable because of the insurgency. While there has been an increased focus on this in Borno and Yobe states in the past year, Kano has received less attention and assistance and should be on the radar for civil society groups as well as international actors working to increase the health and safety of women and girls in the state.

4 Better awareness for children on boundaries and personal safety. Better information, through schools, religious institutions and government, is needed to educate children and parents alike about the dangers of violence and abuse. As reported incident data shows, particularly vulnerable are children and young women hawking or traveling to and from school unaccompanied.

5 Information campaigns and targeted awareness raising surrounding the sexual and physical abuse of young girls and young female domestic workers within households. The OBSTEC and the Peace Clubs have an important role to play here as it would appear that since the inception of the Kano Observatory, there has been an increased number of reports of domestic abuse where, in prior years of data, there were virtually none.