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Boko Haram Ranked Ahead of ISIS for Deadliest Terror Group

By **Dionne Searcey** and **Marc Santora**

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DAKAR, Senegal — As much of the world remains focused on the Islamic State and its horrific attacks in Paris, another radical band of extremists has, by one account, captured the infamous title of the world's deadliest terrorist group: Boko Haram.

Boko Haram, the militant group that has tortured Nigeria and its neighbors for years, was responsible for 6,664 deaths last year, more than any other terrorist group in the world, including the Islamic State, which killed 6,073 people in 2014, according to a report released Wednesday tracking terrorist attacks globally.

The death toll in Nigeria mounted on Wednesday, with a bombing in Kano State in northern Nigeria, not even a full day after Boko Haram was suspected in an explosion that killed and injured dozens in another nearby region.

In Kano, the authorities said that two female suicide bombers detonated vests at a cellphone market at about 4 p.m., killing at least 12 people and wounding dozens. Witnesses and Red Cross officials said that as many as 50 or 60 people died, though the number could not be independently confirmed. Officials accused Boko Haram in the attacks.

In a statement Wednesday, President Muhammadu Buhari called for Nigerians to stay vigilant, saying that even his recently intensified military operation against Boko Haram could not prevent every attack.

“President Buhari reassures Nigerians that his administration is very much determined to wipe out Boko Haram in Nigeria and bring all perpetrators of these heinous crimes against humanity to justice,” the release said.

Mr. Buhari, who took office in May, ran on a platform of eliminating Boko Haram, which he has pledged to do by the end of December, as well as cutting back on corruption that has dogged the nation.

This week, Mr. Buhari accused the previous administration's national security adviser, Sambo Dasuki, of pocketing more than \$2 billion that had been allocated for warplanes, helicopters and other military gear to fight Boko Haram. Mr. Dasuki has denied the allegations.

Mr. Buhari has announced recent victories against Boko Haram, including seizing bomb-making materials and winning battles in the forest.

But still the bombings have come at a rapid clip in recent weeks, bringing death to a food market in Kano, areas of Niger and Cameroon and a village in Chad, prompting officials to call a state of emergency there.

Boko Haram has pledged its allegiance to the Islamic State, but it is unclear what support the group is giving Boko Haram beyond assisting with publicity.

The report released Wednesday, from the Institute of Economics & Peace, said the Islamic State and Boko Haram were responsible for half of all global deaths attributed to terrorism.

Last year, the deaths attributed to Boko Haram alone increased by more than 300 percent, the report said.

The report found a drastic increase in terrorist attacks last year, with the majority occurring in three countries: Iraq, Syria and Nigeria, where other militant groups besides Boko Haram operate.

“In Nigeria, private citizens are overwhelmingly targeted, most often with firearms resulting in very high levels of deaths per attack,” the report said.

Security experts, regional authorities and Western military officials have credited Mr. Buhari’s renewed push against Boko Haram for scattering the group, which gained notoriety in the United States when it kidnapped scores of schoolgirls and seized entire towns in northern Nigeria.

They say the string of recent attacks on various public places is evidence that the group is grasping to gain real ground and is no longer as capable of holding territory. Still, attacks in crowded spots like schools and markets, long a staple of Boko Haram’s mayhem, can be extremely deadly.

This is the third year the economics and peace institute has released its Global Terrorism Index, a study of terrorist activity around the world. The index is based on data collected as part of a program run by the University of Maryland dedicated to the study of terrorism around the world.

The report estimated that \$117 billion was spent worldwide to fight terrorism. It said that two countries, Cameroon and Ukraine, experienced no terrorism-related deaths in 2013 but that each had more than 500 deaths from terrorism the following year.

In Ukraine, the spike in deaths came largely from militants in the region who are suspected of shooting down a Malaysia Airlines plane, killing all on board. In Cameroon, the report said Boko Haram had expanded its reach into the country with bombings.

Dionne Searcey reported from Dakar, and Marc Santora from New York. Kabiru Anwar contributed reporting from Yola, Nigeria.

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