

OVERVIEW OF PEACE AND SECURITY

The first quarter of 2013 raised a lot of security and peace issues concerning most countries of the West African Region.

NIGERIA: Nigeria has continued to battle with the incessant attacks by the militant Islamist sect “Boko Haram” which has claimed enormous lives and properties estimated at millions of naira. The scourge of “Boko Haram” has become a source of apprehension and a major threat not just to Nigeria but to the West African region, especially, as the sect has also been linked with other Islamic militants in Niger, Mali and the Sahel region. As the situation continues unabated, some Nigerians, including the government is considering amnesty for the sect in a bid to end the crisis while others have opposed the option of amnesty vehemently on the basis that such action is against the rule of law. Added to this, are the perennial communal and ethno-religious conflicts particularly between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in most of the Northern states but predominantly between the Christian/Muslims in Benue and Plateau States.

MALI: In an effort to restore normalcy in northern Mali, the French-led military intervention initiated on January 11 and the ECOWAS military mission of January 17 under the African-led International Support to Mali (AFISMA), were launched in the hope to recapture the cities of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu, where the rebels had taken control. However, with elections slated for July 2013, it has become imperative to maintain peace before, during and after the polls given that the outcome can destabilize the country thereby worsening the situation in the once relatively peaceful country noted for strong democratic principles. Analysts are of the opinion that the elections are essential for the country but the dates appear to be unrealistic and could be counterproductive.

[**Click on this link to read full Highlights of Activities for 1st Quarter of 2013 \[PDF-20MB\]**](#)