



## Militancy/Terrorism

27

APR

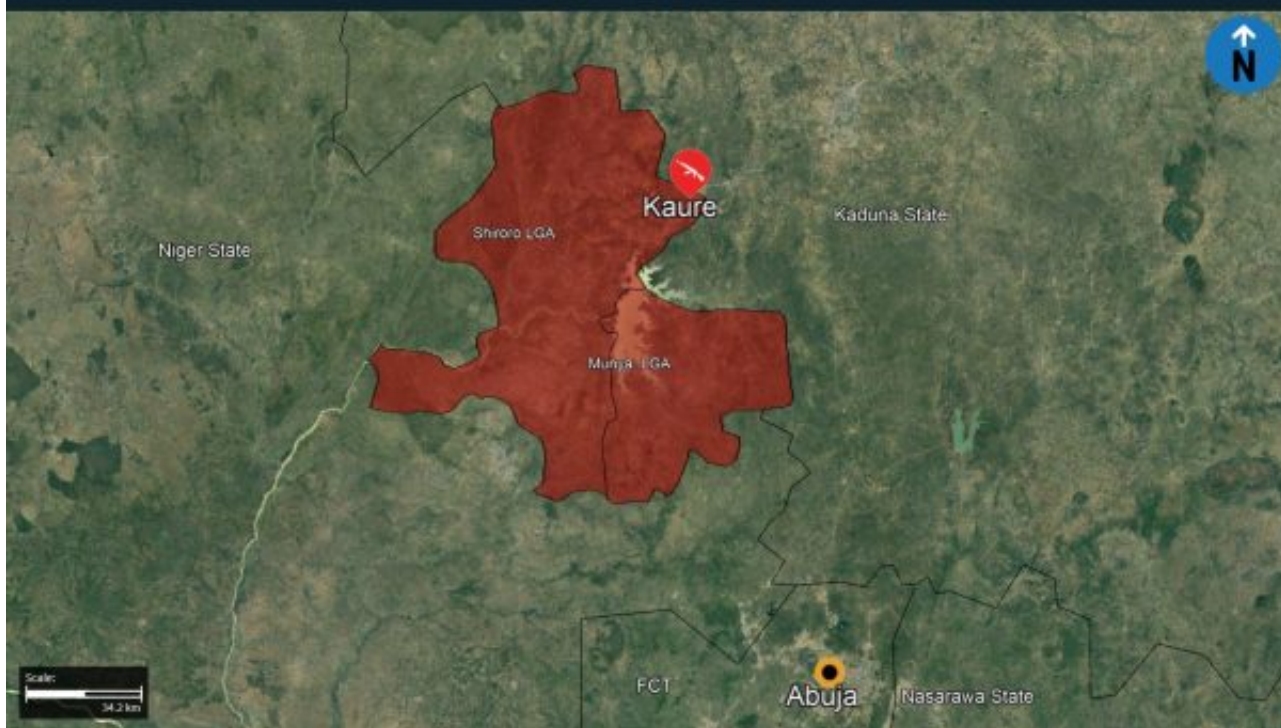
12:34 UTC

### **Nigeria Alert: Niger State Governor claims Boko Haram hoisted its flag in Kaure village, Shiroro LGA on April 26, attacked 50 other villages from April 24-25**

#### **Please be advised**

- In a press conference on April 26, Niger State Governor Abubakar Sani Bello announced that Boko Haram militants had taken over several towns in Shiroro and Munya Local Government Areas (LGAs), hoisting their flag over Kaure village in Shiroro following attacks on April 24-25.
- The governor claimed that at least 50 communities across Shiroro and Munya have been attacked and that militants have abducted several women. At least 3,000 residents are seeking refuge at a makeshift IDP camp at a primary school in Minna after fleeing the Shiroro and Munya areas.
- Governor Bello further stated that he has decided to take action against militancy and banditry in Niger State after appealing to the federal authorities for several weeks without success.
- As of writing, Boko Haram has yet to issue an official claim for these attacks or confirm the seizure of Kaure village.
- Separate reports from April 25 indicate that bandits overran at least eight villages in the Fuka District of Shiroro on April 24, injuring several people, destroying property, and kidnapping at least 35 others from the Chiri community. Several other villages in the Munya LGA were also reportedly attacked with the residents having deserted the areas.
- Sources cite a local youth leader who claims that bandits control ten out of the 15 districts in Shiroro LGA, with eight of those districts being situated along rivers, and warns that this could affect resource and food distribution in Niger State and across the country.

## LOCATION OF ATTACK IN NIGERIA'S NIGER STATE ON APRIL 24-25



## Assessments & Forecas

1. In [July 2020](#), Boko Haram fighters released a video claiming to have established links with armed groups in Niger State, and have since been known to be involved in banditry in northwestern and north-central Nigeria as the group attempts to expand its influence into other territories across the country. This is particularly evidenced by Boko Haram's claim to have kidnapped hundreds of students from a school in Kankara, Katsina State in [December 2020](#), which the authorities claimed was perpetrated by a network of bandit groups. Therefore, while Boko Haram has yet to officially announce control of territory in Niger State, Governor Bello's statements regarding the hoisting of the group's flag is the first explicit hard evidence confirming Boko Haram involvement in banditry activities in Niger State with the jihadist group mostly just claiming such involvement until now.
2. That said, with militancy previously contained to northeastern Nigeria, this advance of Boko Haram into Niger State could leave the center of the country and more densely populated areas increasingly vulnerable to militant attacks. However, given the relative escalation of banditry in Niger State in recent months, with several attacks perpetrated throughout Shiroro and Munya LGAs in the last few days, it remains possible that Governor Bello has exaggerated the involvement of Boko Haram militants to pressure the federal authorities to increase security operations in his state. This seems plausible as the Governor did not give additional details regarding the presence of militants in Niger State or the involvement of Boko Haram in recent attacks apart from the hoisting of their flag in Kaure. That being said, there is little distinction between the strategies and modus operandi of bandits and militants in Nigeria, and therefore, it is likely difficult for local authorities to distinguish between the two.
3. Thus, Bello's claims and the attackers alleged control of several areas in Niger's Shiroro and Munya LGAs notably highlight the attackers' presence only about 200 km northwest of Abuja, escalating the threat posed to Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory (FCT). **FORECAST:** Furthermore, the seizure of territory in Shiroro LGA itself could also be incredibly detrimental to Nigeria's infrastructure and power grid as the affected towns are situated close to the Shiroro Hydroelectric Power Station along the Kaduna River. This power station is one of the largest electricity providers for the country and the Kaduna River is used to transport other resources and commodities across Nigeria. That said, by capturing riverside districts near the power plant, assailants could have

access to other LGA headquarters, strategic infrastructure, and easily travel along waterways to southern states. The attackers could also use vessels to perpetrate similar attacks on riverside villages and to disrupt the transport of resources and goods.

4. **FORECAST:** In response to Bello's claims, the federal authorities will likely bolster security presence throughout the FCT, particularly in areas bordering Niger State. This will also likely result in the federal authorities ramping up anti-banditry operations and deploying additional contingents of troops to Niger State to begin security operations in the Shiroro and Munya LGAs to retake control of attacked towns. However, given precedent, bandit groups will likely remain resilient amid increased operations in these areas with additional large-scale attacks taking place in the near term across the affected LGAs. Additionally, Boko Haram will likely continue to grow its association with bandit groups and attempt to indoctrinate the locals to gain a foothold in the northwest and north-central Nigeria.

## Recommendations

1. We advise against all travel to outlying areas of Katsina, Kaduna, Niger, Sokoto, and Zamfara states due to the emerging militancy threat as well as the frequent bandit attacks and ongoing security operations in the region.
2. Travel to Abuja, Lagos, and Port Harcourt can continue while exercising increased vigilance and adhering to stringent security precautions regarding criminal and security threats.