

1. INTRODUCTION

“We are in the middle of two things. If you take a look at your right or you take a look at your left both of them they are deadly. It’s a lose lose situation.”

A civil engineer, aged 32 from Maiduguri, whose brother was killed by security forces in June 2012.¹

Since 2009, acts of violence by the Islamist armed group known as Boko Haram have been carried out across northern and central Nigeria with increasing sophistication and deadliness.

Nigeria’s security forces have perpetrated serious human rights violations in their response. Hundreds of people accused of links to Boko Haram have been arbitrarily detained without charge or trial; others have been extrajudicially executed or subjected to enforced disappearance.

At the same time, the Nigerian government has failed to adequately prevent or investigate the attacks or to bring perpetrators to justice; and victims have not received prompt and adequate reparation and remedy.

The cycle of attacks and counter attacks has been marked by unlawful violence on both sides with devastating consequences for the human rights of the people trapped in the middle.²

I.S., an immigration officer working for the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), was shot dead at 5am on 22 June 2012 in Maiduguri, Borno state, as he was entering a mosque for early morning prayers. He was 44 years old and married with five children aged between one and 13. His family told Amnesty International they believe he was killed by members of Boko Haram because he worked for NIS and that he received threats before he was killed. No one has been arrested over his death.³

Almost a year earlier, on 29 July 2011, his younger brother, A.S., also an employee of NIS, was arrested in Maiduguri and has been in military detention since then. He has not been formally charged with a crime, although his family has been told he is accused of associating with a suspected member of Boko Haram. His mother was able to see him just once after his arrest, in December 2011; since then she has been refused every time she tried to visit. The family engaged a lawyer but according to the family the lawyer said they could not help because of the state of emergency (see box on page 8).⁴