Ansaru

OVERVIEW

AS OF SEPTEMBER 2026

Ansaru is an al-Qa'ida–affiliated group and foreign terrorist organization (FTO) that operates mainly in northwestern Nigeria. Ansaru's members were originally part of Boko Haram but split off in 2012 because they opposed the group's indiscriminate attacks against Muslim civilians. Ansaru probably seeks to establish a Salafi-Islamist state and to expel secular and foreign influences from Nigeria and possibly Benin.

Operating Area

Northwestern and southwestern Nigeria; Benin-Niger-Nigeria tri-border area

Members

Unknown

Tactics And Targets

Ansaru has used small arms to conduct most of its attacks. The group obtained some of these weapons from al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and from AQIM's Sahel-based affiliate Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin. Ansaru has kidnapped politically connected individuals and others for ransom and has attacked Nigerian military elements. Before 2013, Ansaru also focused on opportunistically kidnapping Westerners, and the group killed several hostages it originally intended to ransom.

Terrorist Group Designation

The US State Department designated Ansaru as an FTO in November 2013.

NOTABLE ATTACKS

15 May 2026

Oyo State, Nigeria

Ansaru operatives kill a teacher and abduct seven teachers and 39 students from three schools, demanding the release of Ansaru leaders arrested in mid-2025. The abductees are released in July 2026.

20 August 2020

Kaduna State, Nigeria

Ansaru fighters overrun a Nigerian army base, killing 35 soldiers.

Ansaru *(continued)*

NOTABLE ATTACKS *(continued)*

14 January 2020

Kaduna State, Nigeria

Ansaru operatives disguised as soldiers conduct a small-arms attack against a Nigerian army convoy and a regional elder, killing up to 30 troops and civilians.

May 2019

Katsina State, Nigeria

Ansaru kidnaps a family member of the Nigerian president's top aide and an unspecified number of other victims.

16 February 2013

Bauchi state, Nigeria

Ansaru kidnaps seven foreign construction workers and kills a security guard. The group executes the hostages in March 2013.

May 2011

Kebbi State, Nigeria

Ansaru kidnaps one British and one Italian construction worker and demands ransom payments and that the Nigerian Government free prisoners in exchange for construction workers' release. Ansaru kills both hostages during a combined UK-Nigerian rescue operation in 2012.