NEW\$ MONTHLY BULLETIN- (WANEP-NIGERIA)

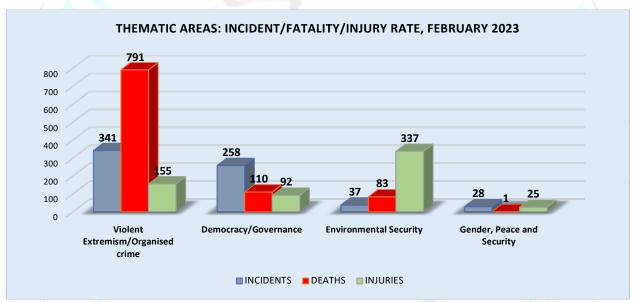


(FEBRUARY, 2023)

I. INTRODUCTION

As of February 2023, 664 incidents were recorded in the *Monthly Conflict Census* from the WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS). A cumulative fatality of 985 and 609 injuries/infected cases emanating from criminal attacks including election-related violence, road accidents; and environmental security related incidents such as Lassa Fever and Diphteria were recorded in February 2023².

As shown in the thematic graph below, Violent Extremism and Organised Crime recorded a total fatality of 791, accounting for the highest of the total number of fatalities (785) recorded in the reporting period, while Democracy and Governance theme recorded 110 deaths³. Also, Environmental Security theme recorded 83 deaths and Gender, Peace and Security thematic area recorded one fatality in the reporting period.⁴ (see annex for the monthly census).



Source: WANEP-NEWS⁵.

The *Monthly Bulletin* presents an analysis of the security challenges identified from monitoring trends of incidents through the WANEP NEWS and the mass media. It also offers recommendations for stakeholders' interventions and mitigation.

2. ORGANISED CRIME AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Terrorist attacks remain an existential threat to state and human security in the North-East region of Nigeria. The threats posed by terrorism is further worsened by the sustained interrivalry supremacy tussle between Boko Haram and the Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP) terrorists in the region. In the reporting month, an estimated 215 terrorists in Bama,

¹ Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS): www.wanep.org/news/

² Ibid.

³ Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS): www.wanep.org/news/

⁴ Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS): www.wanep.org/news/

⁵ Source : WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : www.wanep.org/news/

Konduga and Guzamala Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Borno State were killed in the interrivalry clash⁶. Additionally, the WANEP NEWS documented 141 terrorist fatalities during security clearance operations by military troops in Borno and Yobe States⁷.

Besides the considerable progress attained by the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in reducing the spread and influence of terrorist-related activities in the North-East, the continuous surrender of Boko Haram fighters and their families to military troops has also been attributed to the onslaught on Boko Haram terrorists by ISWAP. As documented by WANEP NEWS, 592 terrrorists and their families surrendered including 36 males, 212 females and 345 children in the reporting period⁸.

Also, terrorist attacks in the month resulted in the death of one (1) person with 5 other community residents injured during the Presidential and National Assembly elections on February 25, 2023 in Gwoza LGA of Borno State⁹. Despite reports of isolated terrorist attacks in the region, Nigeria ranked eight position in the 2023 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) from the sixth position it occupied in 2022¹⁰. The improvement in rating has been credited to the decline in terror-related casualties in 2022 compared to previous years¹¹.

Multiple security concerns emanating from **Organised Crimes** continues to have ripple effect on national peace and security stability. With the protracted security challenges and the dearth in security apparatus and personnel particularly in the rural communities, citizens now rely heavily on local security outfits for safety. The WANEP NEWS recorded incidents of banditry, kidnapping, cult-related violence, farmer-herders clashes/armed militia herders attack, human/drug trafficking, election related violence and other forms of communal violence which resulted in the death 396 fatalities. Out of the total recorded fatalities (396), 28 were security personnel, 22 females and 10 children¹². Additionally, 58 members of non-state armed groups were neutralized during security offensive in Zamfara, Kaduna, Gombe, Anambra, Rivers and Katsina States, amongst others.

Out of the total recorded fatalities (396) under Organised Crimes in February 2023, armed banditry attacks accounted for the highest fatality of 118 in Niger, Katsina, Kaduna and Kebbi States¹³, while election-related violence resulted in the second highest fatality of 82 in the month¹⁴. Also, attacks by militia herders/farmers-herders recorded the third highest fatality in the reporting period with 67, while incidents of armed violence/murder resulted in the death of 59 people as recorded in WANEP NEWS¹⁵. More so, cult-related violence continues to gain traction across some States in Nigeria. Supremacy tussle over leadership and reprisal attacks over the death of cult members have frequently fuelled cult violence. The month of February

https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/03/borno-about-1250-boko-haram-surrendered-after-200-fighters-killed/

Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS): www.wanep.org/news/
 Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS): www.wanep.org/news/

https://guardian.ng/news/boko-haram-attacks-borno-community-injures-five-voters/

¹⁰ https://www.thecable.ng/borno-remains-worst-hit-as-nigeria-improves-by-two-places-on-global-terrorism-index

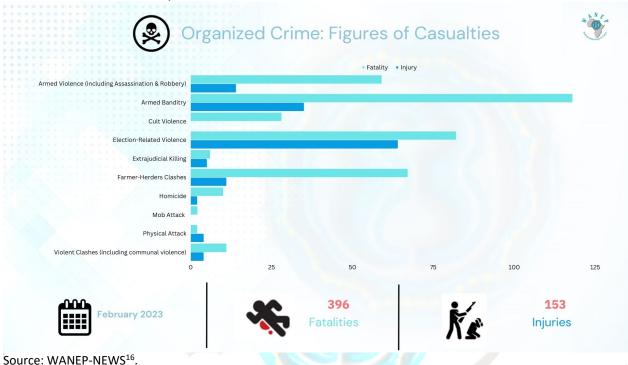
¹¹ https://www.thecable.ng/borno-remains-worst-hit-as-nigeria-improves-by-two-places-on-global-terrorism-index; https://www.channelstv.com/2023/03/16/nigeria-ranks-8th-inlist-of-countries-with-worst-terrorism-impact/

¹² Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS): www.wanep.org/news/

¹⁴ Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS): www.wanep.org/news/

2023 accounted for the death of 28 people in Lagos, Osun (South-West), Cross River, Rivers, Bayelsa (South-South), Anambra (South-East) and Benue in the North-Central Region of Nigeria.

Below the graphical representation of armed violence incidents and casualties recorded by WANEP NEWS in February 2023.



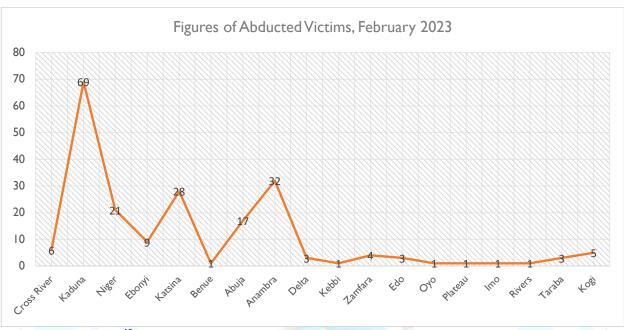
The prevalence of inter-communal violence threatens peaceful relations and socio-economic activities in the affected communities. Communal rivalry over land resources remain an additional communal security threat considering the resultant fatalities, destruction of livelihoods and internal displacement. The WANEP NEWS recorded 10 deaths in Anambra (Ayamelum LGA), Ebonyi (Afikpo North LGA) and Kogi State¹⁷. Other recorded violent clashes in Edo, Ogun and Taraba States led to the death of one (1) person with 12 others injured¹⁸.

Kidnapping for ransom and organ trafficking in Nigeria constitutes a national security challenge. In the reporting month, the WANEP NEWS recorded a total of 34 kidnapping incidents across 18 States in Nigeria. The month recorded 206 abducted victims, out of which 40 were females and 4 children. Febraury 2023 recorded a decline in the frequency of kidnapping incidents (34) and the statistics of kidnapped victims (206) compared to January 2023 with 83 incidents and 386 kidnapped victims.

The graph below illustrates the statistics of kidnapped victims per State in February 2023.

¹⁶ Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS): www.wanep.org/news/

¹⁸ Source : WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : www.wanep.org/news/



Source: WANEP-NEWS19

In addition, the WANEP NEWS recorded 108 incidents of arrest across States in the period.³⁰ The arrest cuts across several cases of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), election-related violence, robbery, violent demonstration, cyber bulling, human/drug trafficking, banditry, terrorism, kidnapping, amongst other crime.

3. DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE:

The 2023 general election was a major political event in Nigeria with the presidential election arguably the most keenly contested between the political parties of the All Progressive Congress (APC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the Labour Party (LP). The presidential candidate of the APC, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu emerged as the winner. However, the opposition parties have rejected and contested the outcome of the polls at the Supreme Court. The ethnic and religious dimension in the elections coupled with discriminatory and inflammatory comments have heightened tension capable of further deepening the existing ethno-religious divisions in the country.

The conduct of the presidental elections in February 2023 provoked widespread criticisms and public concerns, as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was accused of incompetence particularly due to the irregularities in logistics, election technology and conduct of some election personnel during the elections²⁰. The Commission had also acknowleged these glitches including the attitude of some political party agents and supporters as posing a huge challenge to the credibility of the elections.

The 2023 presidential and legislative elections recorded a voters turnout rate of about 24.9 million voters out of the over 93.47 million people who registered to vote. The statistics represents a decline compared to the 28,614,190 million voters' out of the 84,004,084 million

¹⁹ Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS): www.wanep.org/news/

²⁰ https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2023/03/12/inecs-weak-attempt-to-justify-elections-irregularities/

registered voters in the 2019 general election²¹. Several factors ranging from violence, intimidation, technical glitches associated with the BVAS, amongst others, have been attribiuted to the low voters' turnout rate in the 2023 general election. The WANEP NEWS recorded 108 armed violent incidents including assassinations and kidnapping during the electioneering period in February 2023. The armed violent incidents accounted for 82 deaths (including 3 females and 3 police personnel) and over 64 injuries²². The States with recorded deaths include Ebonyi, Kaduna, Kwara, Bauchi, Imo, Benue, Lagos, Osun, Enugu, Delta, Kano, Abia, Kogi, Rivers, Taraba, Edo, Lagos, Ondo, Akwa Ibom and Gombe States. Also, 23 people including INEC's adhoc staff were abducted in Ebonyi, Anambra, Kaduna, Taraba, Delta and Kogi States²³.

Reports generated by WANEP NEWS revealed cases of ballot box snatching, demonstrations over unavailability of voting materials, election malpractices, physical assaults on voters and journalists, armed attacks, kidnapping²⁴ and underage voting in Kano, Kwara and Kaduna States²⁵. Additionally, cases of alleged disenfranchisement of some Muslim women in Purdah during the elections was recorded in Osun State. The alleged exclusion followed the difficulties in facial and bio-data recongnition of the Muslim women in Purdah by INEC's BVAS devices²⁶. Nevertheless, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) commended the conduct of military personnel during the presidential and National Assembly elections in Nigeria²⁷.

The WANEP NEWS recorded 79 incidents of public demonstrations in the month. Also, three (3) industrial strikes by the Nigeria Association of Government Medical and Dental Practitioners (Kwara), Nigeria Labour Congress (Abia)²⁸ and the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) in Imo State were over alleged assault on medical workers, unpaid salaries/pensions and the assassination of a Magistrate were recorded by WANEP NEWS²⁹.

Out of the 79 public demonstrations, 25 deteriorated into violence, resulting in the death of 11 people in Oyo, Ogun, Edo and Delta State with several others injured. The violent demonstrations emanated from the difficulties in cash withdrawals occasioned by the redesigning of the naira notes and currency swap policy of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the recurring fuel scarcity in the country. The WANEP NEWS documented the destruction of government infastructure including commercial banks during the period. According to the Association of Senior Staff of Banks, Insurance and Financial Institutions (ASSBIFI), commercial banks had lost 5 billion naira following attacks and destruction of bank facilities by protesters over naira scarcity³⁰.

Other recorded peaceful demonstrations in the reporting month include; protest over alleged politicization of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFFC)³¹; alleged rigging and

²¹ https://dailytrust.com/the-lowest-voters-turnout-in-nigerias-election-history-what-happened-2/; https://guardian.ng/opinion/the-lowest-voters-turnout-in-nigerias-election-history-what-happened/

²² Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS): www.wanep.org/news/

²⁴ Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS): www.wanep.org/news/

²⁵ https://saharareporters.com/2023/02/25/elections-our-observers-witnessed-underage-girls-voting-two-nigerian-states-women; Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS): www.wanep.org/news/

²⁶ https://saharareporters.com/2023/03/16/many-osun-women-purdah-disenfranchised-during-bvas-process-because-they-cannot-open

https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/02/elections-60-attacks-recorded-during-party-rallies-cdd/

²⁸ https://punchng.com/abia-nlc-begins-indefinite-strike-over-unpaid-salaries/

²⁹ Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS): www.wanep.org/news/

³⁰ https://punchng.com/banks-lose-n5bn-to-destruction-on-facilities-over-naira-scarcity/

³¹ https://tribuneonlineng.com/bawa-must-go-protest-persists-in-lagos/

mutilation of election results by INEC³²; unavailability of voting materias in Bayelsa³³; delay by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to upload election results on the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV)³⁴, amongst others. The structural and systemic drivers of the demonstrations including ineffective social service delivery, working conditions, unemployment, high cost of living and inadequate social infrastructure in communities³⁵ further deepens citizens' mistrust for government's capacity to address the basic needs of the populations.

Again, the frequency in road accidents attributed to violation of traffic signals, speed, fatigue, bad roads and vehicle mechanical faults, amongst other glitches led to the death of 88 deaths and 47 injuries in the reporting month³⁶. Additionally, incidents of boat mishaps and building collapses documented by WANEP NEWS recorded 6 fatalities in Abuja, Rivers (building collapse) and Lagos State (boat mishap)³⁷.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY:

The WANEP NEWS recorded cases of Diptheria and Lassa Fever in the month of February 2023. Also, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) confirmed that no infected COVID-19 cases, however, as of February 27, 2023, 68,699,128 people were fully vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccines in Nigeria³⁸. The NCDC also recorded 49 fatalities and 279 infected Lassa Fever cases, while the outbreak of Diphtheria resulted in the death of 18 people with 56 infected cases in Nigeria³⁹. From January to February 2023, atleast one confirmed Lassa Fever case has been recorded across 88 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in 22 States in Nigeria with the majority of the infected/confirmed cases in Ondo, Edo and Bauchi State⁴⁰. Between January to February 2023, a total of 104 Lassa Fever deaths and 636 confirmed cases have been recorded in Nigeria⁴¹.

The table below highlights the statistics of deaths, confirmed and suspected cases of epidemics in Nigeria.

EPIDEMICS	Deaths	Confirmed Cases	Suspected Cases
Lassa Fever	49	279	1,650
Diptheria	18	56	189 ⁴²

To mitigate the outbreak of the epidemics particularly the diphtheria, the NCDC has continued its sensitisation programme, dissemination of surveillance tools across the affected States as well as training/re-training of health workers on management and prevention. The affected States with diphtheria in the reporting period include, Kano, Katsina, Lagos and Osun. The low

³² https://dailypost.ng/2023/02/27/labour-party-supporters-storm-inec-office-in-ebonyi-over-alleged-rigging/; https://saharareporters.com/2023/02/27/nigeriadecides2023-protest-rocks-river-community-over-alleged-manipulation-presidential

³³ https://dailytrust.com/protest-in-bayelsa-inec-office-over-voting-materials/

³⁴ https://leadership.ng/protesters-storm-national-collation-centre-over-irev-failure/

³⁵ WARM Policy Brief: 2023 General Elections: Implications for Regional Political Stability, Peace and Security. (WANEP, October 2022)

³⁶ Source : WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : www.wanep.org/news/

 $^{^{}m 37}$ Source : WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : www.wanep.org/news/

³⁸ www.ncdc.gov.ng

³⁹ www.ncdc.gov.ng

 $^{^{40}\} https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/585917-lassa-fever-nigerias-death-toll-hits-104-in-2023.html$

⁴¹ ibid

 $^{{\}color{red}^{42}}\underline{\text{https://thenationonlineng.net/ncdc-reports-}111\text{-confirmed-diphtheria-cases-}22\text{-deaths/}}$

accessibility to healthcare facilities especially in rural areas, amongst other factors, exacerbates the persistence of diphtheria, thus resulting in delayed diagnosis and treatment⁴³.

5. GENDER, PEACE AND SECURITY:

The reporting month recorded 23 cases of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), particularly rape in Gombe, Adamawa, Lagos, Rivers, Kano, Benue, FCT-Abuja and Ogun States. Out of the 23 cases, one (1) female was murdered in Rivers State. Accurate data of victims of rape remains a challenge due to fear of stigmatization. This continues to hamper the documentation of rape cases by victims and in some cases reports of corruption by the police also hinders effective investigation. Incidents of human trafficking were reported in Kano, Kebbi and Edo States in the month, while the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), rescued 2,743 trafficked victims in the reporting period of 2023⁴⁵.

The trend in female representation in politics in Nigeria remains low despite efforts by Civil Society Organisations and International Organisations in galvanising support for increased female participation in politics and governance. Further analysis of the February 25 Presidential and National Assembly elections reveals a decline in women's involvement in politics. Out of the 92 females who contested for the 109 Senate seats, only 3 won, while 15 of the 288 females won the House of Representatives seat in 2023 elections⁴⁶. In 2019, 8 females were representated in the Senate and 13 females in the House of Representatives⁴⁷.

Implications for Peace and Security in Nigeria

Despite the challenges associated with the 2023 elections, the presidential and National Assembly elections was successfully conducted and a winner announced. However, the political landscape in the aftermath of the 2023 elections remain tensed, as political party supporters have exploited and politicized ethnicity and religion to create chaos in the polity. The ensuing demonstrations over the conduct of the presidential elections continue to grow and threaten national stability and cohesion with allegations of an imposition of interim government considering the imminent security threats. The reporting month witnessed demonstrations by most electorates and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) challenging the credibility of the electoral process. This trend threatens not just the progress made in democratic governance, but also the prospects of democratic transitions in Nigeria.

Additionally, Nigeria remains saddled with multiple security threats caused by the proliferation of criminal gangs and weapons that continue to undermine peace and security in the country. In February 2023, the WANEP NEWS recorded over 364 armed violence incidents including kidnapping with recorded deaths and fatalities as highlighted above.

National Early Warning System (NEWS)-WANEP-Nigeria

⁴³ https://www.news-medical.net/news/20230328/Low-vaccine-coverage-fuels-recurrence-of-diphtheria-in-Nigeria.aspx

https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2023/01/20/tackling-the-rising-rape-cases/
 https://dailypost.ng/2023/02/22/naptip-records-2743-cases-of-trafficking-in-persons/

https://www.premiumtimesng.com/gender/587049-iwd-2023-nigeria-falling-in-womens-political-participation.html

RECOMMENDATIONS:

In view of the human security threats and the analysis highlighted, the following recommendations are proposed for response and mitigation by stakeholders:

- Utilizing the ECOWAS's Early Warning System and other civil society-based early warning systems, the Federal/State Governments and security agencies should increase security deployments to violence prone areas and hard-to reach communities to guarantee citizens' safety amid heightened insecurity.
- To mitigate the recurrence of violence, the Federal and State Governments should strengthen peace education through a robust engagement with political parties considering the current tension, youth/women groups, religious and traditional leaders and other relevant stakeholders across States. It is also important to promote peace education in primary, secondary and tertiary schools. Here, emphasis should be placed on nonviolence, tolerance, peaceful co-existence and negotiation among the youths in schools to foster integration and national cohesion.
- The State and Local Governments in collaboration with traditional and religious institutions, Civil Society Organisations and the media should reinforce trainings and sensitization of community health workers on the prevention and early detection of recorded epidemics including emphasis on personal and environmental hygiene for collective community safety.

CONCLUSION:

Given the widespread criticisms that the Federal Government and the Independent National Electoral Commssion (INEC) received following the conduct of the general elections, addressing the challenges in future elections is imperative. There are growing concerns around alleged manipulation of votes by political parties and the electoral commission, amid other daunting concerns despite the introduction of the BVAS and IREV. This trend threatens not just the progress made in democratic governance, but also the peace and security of the country. Despite the seeming political tensions and protracted insecurity bedevilling the country, there are resilient factors including dialogue that could be leveraged to promote social cohesion.

CENSUS OF INCIDENTS FOR FEBRUARY 2023

THEMATIC AREA	NO of Attacks.	VICTIMS	
		DEATHS	INJURIES
VIOLENT EXTREMISM: Boko Haram/ISWAP attacks	19	- 1 civilian	5
-Inter-rivalry clash: Boko Haram and ISWAP Terrorists		- 215 terrorists	-

_	_	1	
- Counter-Terrorist Attacks		- 141 terrorists	-
ORGANISED CRIME: (Armed-robbery, assassination, armed violence, armed bandits, mob attack, arson and cult/gang clash)	88	207	49
Armed Action/Shoot-out between security operatives and members of criminal gangs	22	58	2
Abduction (evident across 18 States)	34	-	-
Cybercrime/Fraud	11	-	-
Election-related violence	102	82	64
Extrajudicial killing	8	6	5
Physical/Armed Assault	8	2	4
Herder-Community Conflict	16	67	11
Violent Clash ■ University of Benin (UNIBEN) students and Soldiers in Edo State	3	1	12
 Clash over issuance of tickets by members of the motorcycle operators union in Ogun State. Operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and suspected 	1000000		
hoodlums in Taraba State.			
Drug Trafficking	17	40	- /
Homicide	2	10	2
Suicide DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE:		1	1
Demonstration (peaceful)	54	-	-0 /
Demonstration (violent)	25	11	4
Intimidation and Threats	19	-	- /
Industrial Strike Action	3	-	- /
Arrest/Detention	108	- ~ 10	/-
Road Accident	41	88	47
Building Collapse/Well Accident	5	9	41
Boat Acident in Kebbi State	2	1	-
Electrocution (Lagos State)	1	1	-
ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY: Communal conflict	3	10	2

Drowning in Kaduna, Abuja-FCT and Ondo	3	3	-
Pandemic/Epidemics:			Confirmed/Infected Cases
a. Lassa Fever b. Diphteria	1	49 18	Lassa Fever: 279 Diphteria: 56
Fire Outbreak Rainstorm	26	3 -	-\

Through its National Early Warning System (NEWS), the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP- Nigeria) develops and disseminates a monthly bulletin on Human Security at the end of each month to inform the different actors and / or partners and formulates recommendations to different decision-makers for targeted responses to the given alerts. This monthly monitoring is based on information gathered from the field by the WANEP-NIGERIA field monitors, and also information gathered from the various national and international media.

27, Adeniji Street, Adeniji Estate, off WEMPCO Road, Ogba Lagos State, Tel: +2348062072468; Website: www.wanepnigeria.org

GENDER, PEACE AND SECURITY: Sexual Assault/Rape	23	1	22
Human Trafficking Child Abuse	3 2		3
Total	664	985	609