STUDY NOTES · BASIC CONCEPT

Why the US Is Involved in strikes in Nigeria?

International Relations

25 Dec 2027

Main reasons are as follows:

The Trigger: Christmas Day Attack

On December 25, armed extremist groups linked to Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) carried out deadly attacks in northern Nigeria, killing civilians and security personnel. These attacks targeted Christian communities during Christmas celebrations. This triggered an urgent security response from the Nigerian government.

BECOME IAS
AI-Powered UPSC Preparation by ZINKPOT

Who Are the Targets?

The US-backed strikes targeted:

- ISWAP (Islamic State West Africa Province)
- Factions linked to Boko Haram
- These groups are officially designated terrorist organizations by:

    - Nigeria
    - United States
    - United Nations

They have carried out mass killings, kidnappings, bombings, and attacks on schools and villages for over a decade.

Why Did the U.S. Get Involved?

The U.S. involvement happened for three main reasons:

(a) Intelligence Sharing Agreement

Nigeria and the U.S. have a long-standing counterterrorism partnership. The U.S. provides:

- Satellite surveillance
- Drone intelligence

- Signal intelligence (SIGINT)

(b) Nigerian Government Request

Nigeria officially approved U.S. assistance. The strikes were not unilateral. Nigerian authorities confirmed that the operation was conducted with their consent.

(c) Preventing Regional Spread

Militant groups in Nigeria often spill over into Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. The U.S. wants to prevent instability from spreading across West Africa.

What Exactly Did the U.S. Do?

- Provided real-time intelligence for identifying militant camps
- Assisted with targeting and coordination
- Possibly deployed surveillance drones (not ground troops)
- No large-scale U.S. troop presence reported
- The Nigerian military carried out the actual operations on the ground.

BECOME IAS
AI-Powered UPSC Preparation by ZINKPOT

Why Is This Important Now?

- The attacks came amid rising instability in West Africa.
- The U.S. is increasing counterterrorism cooperation after coups in the Sahel reduced Western influence.
- Nigeria is Africa’s most populous country and a key regional security partner.

Is This a New US War in Africa?

No. This is not a war deployment. It is part of ongoing counterterrorism cooperation that has existed for over a decade.

The U.S. maintains a limited military footprint focused on:

- Intelligence sharing
- Training
- Surveillance support