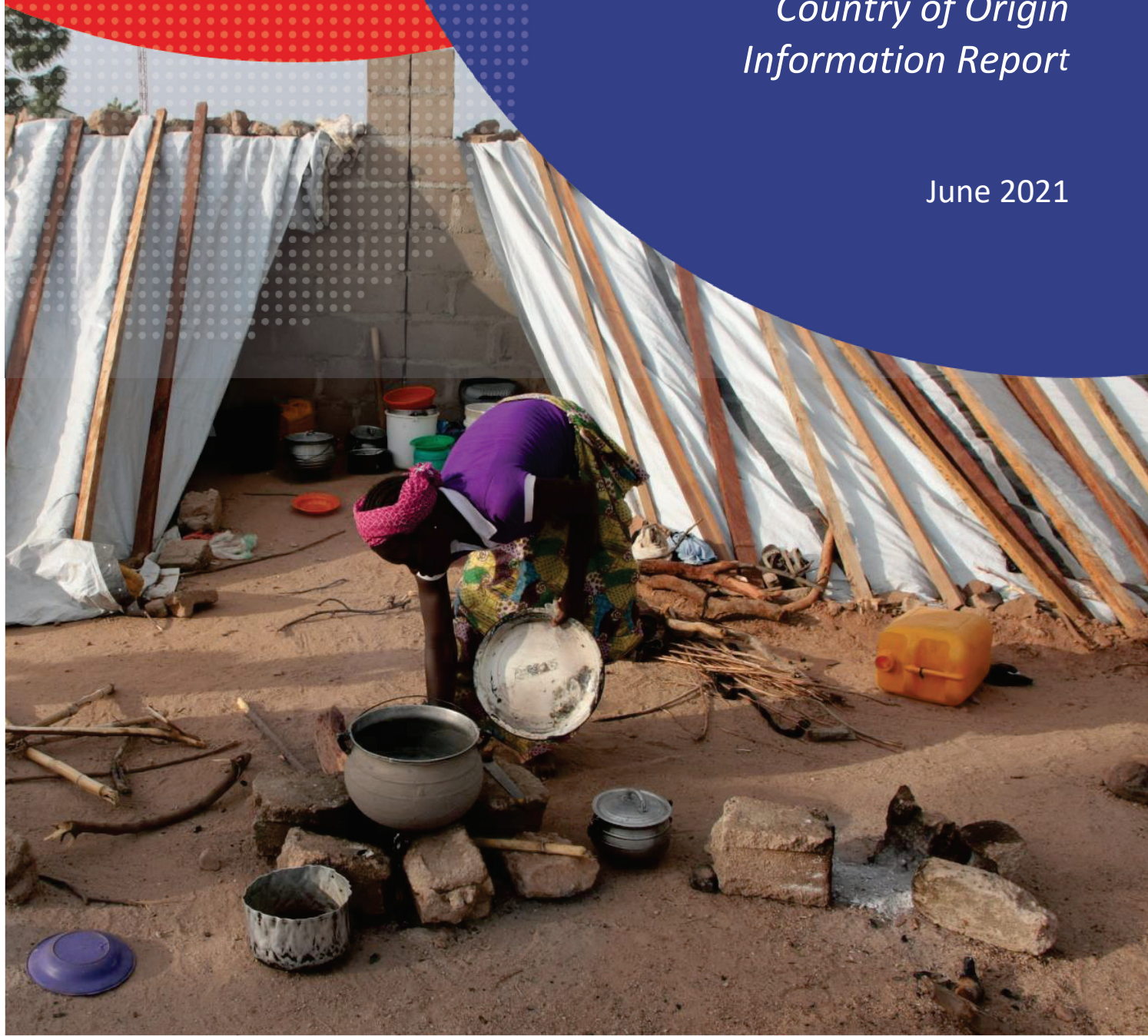




Nigeria Security situation

*Country of Origin
Information Report*

June 2021





More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://europa.eu>)

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Cover photo@ EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid - Left with nothing: Boko Haram's displaced @ [EU/ECHO/Isabel Coello](#) (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0), 16 June 2015

'Families staying in the back of this church in Yola are from Michika, Madagali and Gwosa, some of the areas worst hit by Boko Haram attacks in Adamawa and Borno states. Living conditions for them are extremely harsh. They have received the most basic emergency assistance, provided by our partner International Rescue Committee (IRC) with EU funds. "We got mattresses, blankets, kitchen pots, tarpaulins..." they said.'

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EASO would like to acknowledge Stephanie Huber, Founder and Director of the Asylum Research Centre (ARC) as the co-drafter of this report.

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The Netherlands, Ministry of Justice and Security, Office for Country Information and Language Analysis

Austria, Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, Country of Origin Information Department (B/III), Africa Desk

Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD)

It must be noted that the drafting and review carried out by the mentioned departments, experts or organisations contributes to the overall quality of the report, but does not necessarily imply their formal endorsement of the final report, which is the full responsibility of EASO.

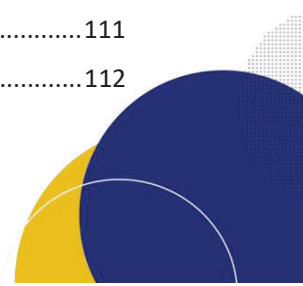


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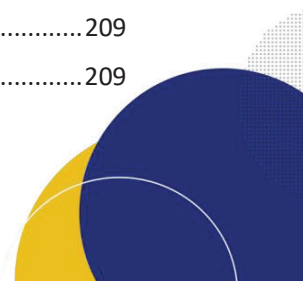
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Disclaimer

This report was written according to the EASO COI Report Methodology (2019).¹ The report is based on carefully selected sources of information. All sources used are referenced.

The information contained in this report has been researched, evaluated and analysed with utmost care. However, this document does not claim to be exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist.

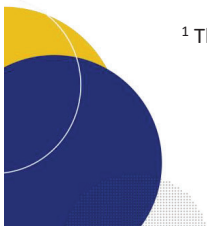
Furthermore, this report is not conclusive as to the determination or merit of any particular application for international protection. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

'Refugee', 'risk' and similar terminology are used as generic terminology and not in the legal sense as applied in the EU Asylum Acquis, the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

Neither EASO nor any person acting on its behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained in this report.

The first draft of this report was finalised on 22 March 2021. Some additional information was added during the finalisation of this report in response to feedback received during the quality control process, until 27 May 2021. More information on the reference period for this report can be found in the [methodology](#) section of the Introduction.

¹ The 2019 EASO COI Report Methodology can be downloaded from the EASO COI Portal [url](#)



Glossary and abbreviations

#ENDSARS	Protest movement against Special Anti-Robbery Squad
ACCORD	Austrian Centre for Country of Origin & Asylum Research and Documentation
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
<i>Amotekun</i>	Western Security Network
AOAV	Action on Armed Violence
APC	All Progressives Congress
AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
BAY	Borno, Adamawa, Yobe
CJTF	Civilian Joint Task Force
CNG	Coalition of Northern Groups
CRS	Congressional Research Service
CRSPC	Cross River State Police Command
CTU	Counter Terrorism Unit
DIA	Defence Intelligence Agency
DSS	Department of State Services
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ESN	Eastern Security Network
ESN	Eastern Security Network
EYN	<i>Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria</i> (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria)
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FOCs	Flag Officers Commanding
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTI	Global Terrorism Index
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IOM	International Organization for Migration



IPOB	Indigenous People of Biafra
IRT	Intelligence Response Team
ISGS	Islamic State in Greater Sahara
ISIL (also known as Da'esh)	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
ISWAP	Islamic State in West Africa Province
JAS	<i>Jamaat Ahl as-Sunnah Lid Daw awa al-Jihad</i>
<i>kesh kesh</i>	Shuwa vigilantes
<i>kungiyar maharba</i>	hunters
LCBC	Lake Chad Basin Commission
LGA	Local Government Area
MACBAN	Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria
MASSOB	Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra
MDC	Multi-Door Courthouse
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MNJTF	Mukti-National Joint Task Force
NASU	Non- Academic Staff Union
NDA	Niger Delta Avengers
NDGJM	Niger Delta Greenland Justice Mandate
NEC	National Economic Council
NGN	Naira
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIA	National Intelligence Agency
NPF	Nigeria Police Force
NSAG	Non-State Armed Groups
NSCDC	Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps
NSO	National Security Organization
ONSA	Office of the National Security Advisor
OSPAC	Onelga Security Planning and Advisory Committee
PAP	Presidential Amnesty Programme
PIND	Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta
PMF	Police Mobile Force
RNDA	Reformed Niger Delta Avengers
SARS	Special Anti-Robbery Squad
SfCG	Search for Common Ground



Shilla boys	Cult group/gang
<i>Shura</i>	Consultative Council
SSS	State Security Services
STS	Special Tactical Squad
SWAT	Special Weapons and Tactics
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
VGN	Vigilante Group of Nigeria
WANEP	West Africa Network of Peacebuilding
<i>Yan baga/ yan baka</i>	Local vigilante group
<i>Yan Komiti</i>	Local vigilante group
<i>Yan Sakai</i>	volunteer vigilante group
<i>Yan sara suka</i>	armed group
<i>Yan shilla</i>	youth gangs
<i>Yan-bindiga</i>	gun owners



Introduction

Aim

The purpose of this report is to provide relevant information for the assessment of international protection status determination, including refugee status and subsidiary protection. In particular, it is intended to inform the update of the [Country Guidance development on Nigeria \(2019\)](#).

In order to assess the application of Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive on a serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict, the security situation report examines the nature of armed conflicts taking place in the territory, the nature of the violence and presence of armed actors in different areas, and the impact on civilians, for example in terms of casualties/fatalities and conflict-linked displacement.

This report is an update of the [EASO COI report Nigeria Security situation 2018](#) covering events in the whole year of 2020, and in the period January-April 2021, while some information on events of 2019 are provided in order to provide a background to the conflicts and to highlight security trends. In contrast to EASO's 2018 COI report, this report covers all 37 states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Methodology

This report is produced in line with the EASO COI Report Methodology (2019)² and the EASO COI Writing and Referencing Style Guide (2019).³

Defining the terms of reference

The terms of reference of this report build on the input received from policy experts from EU+ countries⁴ and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) within the context of an update of the country guidance development on Nigeria. Terms of reference for this report can be found in [Annex 3](#).

Collecting information

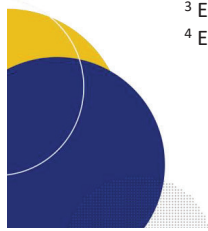
The information gathered is a result of research using public, specialised paper-based and electronic sources until 22 March 2021. During the peer review of this report, the currency of the information in view of developments in the security situation in the first months of 2021 was noted as a concern regarding the original reference period of the report, which was the calendar year 2020. Based on this, it was decided to also provide supplementary information holding an update of the main security developments over the period January-April 2021. This information was added until 27 May 2021 and was reviewed by The Netherlands, Ministry of Justice and Security, Office for Country Information and Language Analysis.

The sources used are referenced in the [Bibliography](#). Wherever information could not be found within the timeframes for drafting this report after carefully consulting a range of sources, this is stated in the report. The main sources consulted are included in the bibliography.

² EASO, EASO Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology, June 2019, [url](#)

³ EASO, Writing and Referencing Guide for EASO Country of Origin Information (COI) Reports, June 2019, [url](#)

⁴ EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland



Quality control

To ensure that the authors respected the EASO COI Report Methodology, a review was carried out by COI specialists from the countries and organisations listed as reviewers in the [Acknowledgements](#) section. All comments made by the reviewers were taken into consideration and most of them were implemented in the final draft of this report. EASO performed the final quality review and editing of the text.

Sources

ACLED

For data on violent incidents, publicly available curated datasets from the organisation Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED)⁵ have been used. ACLED collects data on violent incidents in Nigeria, coding each incident with the time and place, type of violent incident, the parties involved and the number of fatalities. The information is collected in a database that is accessible via registration, searchable and kept continuously up to date. The data primarily come from secondary sources such as media reports.⁶

ACLED bases the number of violent incidents on a set of categories (see below) which can be filtered in the database. When an incident occurs in more than one LGA (Local Government Area) or over multiple days, each LGA and each day is counted separately, as well as the number of fatalities in such incidents. ACLED's database only provides figures of deaths (fatalities) per event, not of injured persons.⁷

In ACLED's codebook their methodology is explained.⁸ According to its 2020 Fatality methodology, incidents of which the original source has reported that they had led to an unknown number of fatalities, ACLED codes the number of fatalities as 10 in 'an active warzone' or 'a significant attack outside of a warzone', and as 3 in 'an attack of more limited scope, in an active warzone' or 'an attack outside of a warzone'.⁹ This method may have an impact on overall numbers of fatalities reported.

ACLED codes security incidents as follows¹⁰:

- Battles:** violent clashes between at least two armed groups. Battles can occur between armed and organised state, non-state, and external groups, and in any combination therein. Sub-events of battles are armed clashes, government regains territory and non-state actor overtakes territory.
- Violence against civilians:** violent events where an organised armed group deliberately inflicts violence upon unarmed non-combatants. It includes violent attacks on unarmed civilians such as sexual violence, attacks, abduction/forced disappearance.
- Explosions/remote violence:** events where an explosion, bomb or other explosive device was used to engage in conflict.
- Riots:** are a violent demonstration, often involving a spontaneous action by unorganised, unaffiliated members of society. They include violent demonstration, mob violence.
- Protests:** public demonstration in which the participants do not engage in violence, though violence may be used against them.

⁵ ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁶ ACLED, ACLED Codebook, 2019, [url](#), pp. 7-34

⁷ ACLED, ACLED Codebook, 2019, [url](#), pp. 32-33

⁸ ACLED, ACLED Codebook, 2019, [url](#), pp. 7-14

⁹ ACLED, FAQs: ACLED Fatality Methodology, 2020, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁰ ACLED, ACLED Codebook, 2019, [url](#), pp. 7-14



- **Strategic developments:** information regarding the activities of violent groups that is not itself recorded as political violence, yet may trigger future events or contribute to political dynamics within and across states.¹¹

For the purpose of this report the following type of events were included in the quantitative analysis and graphs of the incidents: **battles, explosions/remote violence, riots** and **violence against civilians**. In addition, the number of **protests** was included to provide context.

Data on violent incidents and fatalities, including ACLED data, may not always be accurate. In Boko Haram areas or frontline areas inaccessible to regular media reporting, there may be underreporting of incidents, whereas, in areas with large media coverage and presence of NGOs and national armed forces, overreporting may occur. In this report, the ACLED data are regarded merely as estimates and indications of trends in violence. No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The ACLED database records solely the number of fatalities and does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting.

For this report, data on security incidents and fatalities and associated graphs/maps at country and state level are based on a publicly available ACLED curated dataset for Nigeria covering 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020, which was downloaded on 31 January 2021.¹² Data on security incidents and fatalities at country and state level, covering the period from January 2021 until 30 April 2021, have also been provided by ACLED's curated dataset, downloaded on 26 May 2021.¹³

ACLED information was cross-checked with sources from (inter)national media and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), amongst which the database from Nigeria Watch.¹⁴

Based on the ACLED data and on other sources consulted, the drafters conducted a selection of illustrative incidents. This selection is not exhaustive. It aims to present incidents relevant to evaluate the nature of the violence in the country.

Nigeria Watch

The research project Nigeria Watch 'monitors lethal violence, conflicts, and human security in Nigeria. It began in July 2006 and is hosted by the French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA-Nigeria) on the campus of the University of Ibadan since July 2013.'¹⁵

Nigeria Watch database¹⁶ is based on a wider range of types of conflicts (ethnic, social, political, religious or military) and actors than ACLED. It includes a large variety of types of violent incidents: caused by land issues, oil production, political and religious issues, market issues, cattle grazing, crime, road and plane/train/boat /pollution accidents, fire/explosions, natural disasters, sorcery.¹⁷ As the Nigeria Watch database cannot be filtered according to cause of violence, comparison of both sets of databases is not possible.

In [Annex 1](#), an overview of violent incidents and the corresponding fatalities is presented in the period 1 January 2020 until 31 December 2020 from both ACLED and Nigeria Watch. Although it is not possible to compare data, the results of both types of databases were included in Annex 1 since in various state-level chapters reference is made to incidents recorded in the Nigeria Watch database.

¹¹ ACLED, ACLED Codebook, 2019, [url](#), pp. 7-14

¹² EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

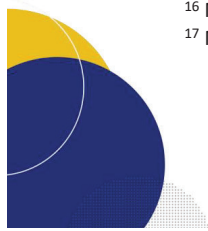
¹³ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

¹⁴ Nigeria Watch, The database, 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020 [url](#)

¹⁵ Nigeria Watch, About us, n.d. [url](#)

¹⁶ Nigeria Watch, The database, 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷ Nigeria Watch, The Database, Methodology, n.d. [url](#)



IOM-DTM

For data on internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees, this report uses data from the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) created and administered by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).¹⁸ The 'DTM is a system to track and monitor displacement and population mobility. It is designed to regularly and systematically capture, process and disseminate information to provide a better understanding of the movements and evolving needs of displaced populations, whether on site or en route.'¹⁹

In an email exchange with EASO, the Regional DTM officer further explained that 'DTM Nigeria collects and reports on IDPs who have returned to their place of habitual residence prior to displacement, and which have been captured during DTM return assessments. Furthermore, DTM in Nigeria reports only on returns within the BAY states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe as well as spontaneous returns from neighboring countries.'²⁰

Structure and use of the report

This report provides information on elements and indicators that may help in assessing the need for international protection. The report is divided into two parts. The first part presents an overview of the armed conflicts in Nigeria, and information on the main actors in the conflict, their organisation structures, aims and targets. It goes on to describe the security trends in different parts of Nigeria during 2020 and the first four months of 2021, with a focus on the nature of the violence and impact on civilians. The chapter also discusses the ability of the Nigerian federal state to secure law and order and ends with a description of issues of displacement and return.

The second part provides a description of the security situation of all 37 states. Each chapter includes a brief description of the state, background conflict dynamics and armed actors present in the area, recent security trends, including information on security incidents and fatalities, selection of illustrative incidents, the impact on the population such as civilian infrastructure and information on displacement and return.

¹⁸ DTM, Nigeria, last updated 1 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹ DTM, About, n.d. [url](#)

²⁰ Regional DTM Officer, email to EASO, 12 April 2021



Map



Map 1 Administrative map Nigeria © UN²¹

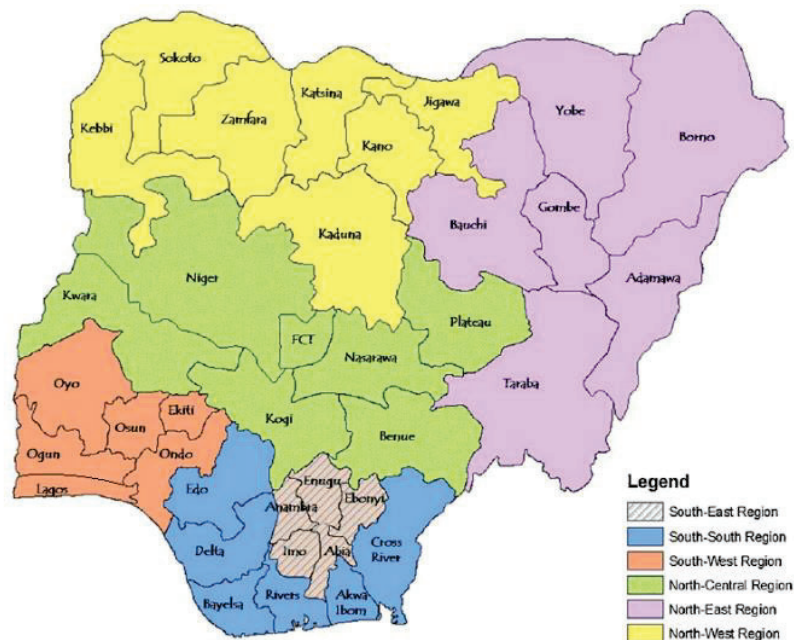
²¹ UN, UN Map No 4228, August 2014, [url](#)

1. General description of the security situation in Nigeria

1.1 Key information on Nigeria

Nigeria is a federal presidential republic. It is divided into 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.²² The 36 states and the FCT are grouped into six geopolitical zones (see map²³ below):

- North-Central (7 states): Benue, FCT, Kogi, Kwara, Na(s)sarawa, Niger, and Plateau
- North-East (6 states): Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe
- North-West (7 states): Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara
- South-East (5 states): Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo
- South-South (6 states): Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers
- South-West (6 states): Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo and Lagos.²⁴



Map 2 Nigeria geopolitical zones © NIMC²⁵

Geography

Nigeria is located in western Africa bordering Benin, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger.²⁶ The major urban areas by population were estimated in 2021 to be Lagos (14.862 million), Kano (4.103 million), Ibadan (3.649 million), Abuja (3.464 million), Port Harcourt (3.171 million) and Benin City (1.782 million).²⁷

²² CIA World Factbook, Country Profile: Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

²³ Nigeria, NIMC, NIMC Enrolment Centres, n.d., [url](#)

²⁴ Nigeria, Federal Republic of Nigeria website, n.d., [url](#)

²⁵ Nigeria, NIMC, NIMC Enrolment Centres, n.d., [url](#)

²⁶ CIA World Factbook, Country Profile: Nigeria: Geography, n.d., [url](#)

²⁷ CIA World Factbook, Country Profile: Nigeria: Geography, n.d., [url](#)

There are 'significant population clusters' throughout Nigeria, with the highest density areas in the south and south-west of the country.²⁸

Population estimates

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country with an estimated population of 209 843 780 as of March 2021 based on projections of UN data.²⁹ The population is estimated by the CIA World Factbook at 219 463 862 as of July 2021.³⁰ The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) stated in March 2021 that Nigeria's population is 'growing rapidly' with an annual population growth rate of 3.2 % and with over 41 % of Nigeria's population under the age of 15.³¹

Ethnicity and religion

Nigeria is estimated to have over 250 ethnic groups and around 500 diverse ethnolinguistic groups.³² According to 2018 estimates, the main ethnic groups were: Hausa 30 %, Yoruba 15.5 %, Igbo (Ibo) 15.2 %, Fulani 6 %, Tiv 2.4 %, Kanuri/Berberi 2.4 %, Ibibio 1.8 %, Ijaw/Izon 1.8 %, and those classified as 'other' 24.7 %.³³

Islam is the religion of 53.5 % of Nigerians³⁴ and is the dominant religion in the north, with Christianity dominant in the south³⁵ - Roman Catholicism practiced by 10.6 % and other Christian beliefs by 35.3 %. 2018 estimates indicate that the remaining population (0.6 %³⁶) holds traditional religious beliefs.³⁷

Economy

In 2020, Nigeria had the highest gross domestic product (GDP) in Africa.³⁸ It is heavily reliant on oil as its main source of foreign exchange earnings, accounting for 80 % of exports, half of government revenues and a third of banking sector credit.³⁹ According to the U.S. Congressional Research Service (CRS), 'corruption, infrastructure gaps, insecurity, and a failure to diversify the economy away from petroleum production have constrained economic growth and development.'⁴⁰

In 2020 the Nigerian economy experienced a recession, reportedly its worst in four decades, due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the fall in global oil prices.⁴¹ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated that the economy contracted by 3.2 % in 2020.⁴² The impact on revenue has curtailed service delivery and social safety net programmes.⁴³ Inflation in food prices has affected household consumption and access to food for the most vulnerable.⁴⁴ According to the World Bank, 40 % (83 million people) live below the poverty line [i.e. USD 1.90 per day] and a further 25 %

²⁸ CIA World Factbook, Country Profile: Nigeria: Geography, n.d., [url](#). See also CIA World Factbook, Country Profile: Nigeria: Population per square kilometre, n.d., [url](#)

²⁹ Nigeria, World Population Review, Nigeria Population 2021 (Live), n.d., [url](#)

³⁰ CIA World Factbook, Country Profile: Nigeria: People and Society, n.d., [url](#)

³¹ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#), p. 16

³² UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#); CIA World Factbook, Country Profile: Nigeria: People and Society, n.d., [url](#)

³³ CIA World Factbook, Country Profile: Nigeria: People and Society, n.d., [url](#)

³⁴ CIA World Factbook, Country Profile: Nigeria: People and Society, n.d., [url](#)

³⁵ Minority Rights Group International, Minorities and indigenous peoples in Nigeria, updated January 2018, [url](#)

³⁶ CIA World Factbook, Country Profile: Nigeria: People and Society, n.d., [url](#)

³⁷ CIA World Factbook, Country Profile: Nigeria: People and Society, n.d., [url](#); Minority Rights Group International, Minorities and indigenous peoples in Nigeria, updated January 2018, [url](#)

³⁸ Statista, African countries with the highest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2020, October 2020, [url](#)

³⁹ CIA World Factbook, Country Profile: Nigeria: Economy, n.d., [url](#); World Bank, Nigeria Overview, last updated 3 November 2020, [url](#)

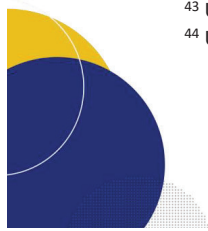
⁴⁰ US, CRS, Nigeria: Current Issues and U.S. Policy, updated 18 September 2020, [url](#), p. 1

⁴¹ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#), p. 14; African Development Bank Group, African Economic Outlook 2021, Country Notes, Nigeria, 2021, [url](#), p. 161

⁴² IMF, World Economic Outlook Update, January 2021, [url](#)

⁴³ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#), p. 14

⁴⁴ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#), p. 15



(53 million) are vulnerable.⁴⁵ The World Economic Forum reported in August 2020 that 27 % of Nigeria's labour force (over 21 million Nigerians) were unemployed.⁴⁶

Political situation

Following decades of military rule, Nigeria has been a multiparty democracy since 1999.⁴⁷ It has a bicameral legislature comprising a 109-member Senate and a 360-member House of Representatives.⁴⁸ Political parties alternate candidates for elected office on an 'ethnoregional' basis, also referred to as the Federal Quota System.⁴⁹ Reportedly this system 'has had a strong discriminatory effect'⁵⁰, and 'perceived violations of these arrangements have led to conflict.'⁵¹ According to the CRS 'Elections often serve as flashpoints for violence as political office at all tiers of government yields access to oil earnings and other state resources.'⁵²

2019 Elections

Presidential and legislative elections were held in early 2019.⁵³ President Muhammadu Buhari was re-elected and the All Progressives Congress (APC) regained its legislative majority, holding 217 national assembly seats, 64 senate seats and 19 of 36 state governors.⁵⁴ The election was 'deemed broadly free and fair'⁵⁵, but according to Freedom House 'marred by violence, the intimidation of electoral officials, and a one-week delay in the poll that weakened voter confidence'.⁵⁶ Human Rights Watch documented 11 deaths related to 'violent interference in the election process'.⁵⁷ Brookings described that the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), a Boko Haram fraction, was 'suspected of having orchestrated attacks in Northeast Nigeria, forcing many people, including potential voters, to flee the area hours before the polls were supposed to open'.⁵⁸

1.2 Brief overview of recent conflicts

Nigeria's long-standing security challenges continued in 2019 and 2020 and have been described as stemming from militant Islamists predominantly active in the North-East Region moving into north-western states; violence related to armed bandits and criminal violence in the North-West and North-Central Regions and street gangs in the South-West Region; conflict between farmers and herders mainly in the Middle Belt but increasingly moving to southern states; communal and ethnic clashes in the North-Central Region and increasingly in the southern states; Biafra separatists in the South-East

⁴⁵ World Bank, Nigeria Overview, last updated 3 November 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁶ WEF, Here's how COVID-19 has battered Africa's largest economy, 28 August 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁷ US, CRS, Nigeria: Current Issues and U.S. Policy, updated 18 September 2020, [url](#), p. 1

⁴⁸ US, CRS, Nigeria: Current Issues and U.S. Policy, updated 18 September 2020, [url](#), p. 1

⁴⁹ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI Transformation Index, Nigeria Country Report 2020, 29 April 2020, [url](#); CRS, Nigeria: Current Issues and U.S. Policy, updated 18 September 2020, [url](#), p. 1

⁵⁰ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI Transformation Index, Nigeria Country Report 2020, 29 April 2020, [url](#)

⁵¹ US, CRS, Nigeria: Current Issues and U.S. Policy, updated 18 September 2020, [url](#), p. 2

⁵² US, CRS, Nigeria: Current Issues and U.S. Policy, updated 18 September 2020, [url](#), p. 3

⁵³ CIA World Factbook, Country Profile: Nigeria: Background, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁴ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2019, 4 March 2020, [url](#); World Bank, Nigeria Overview, last updated 3 November 2020, [url](#); BBC, Nigeria Presidential Elections Results 2019, 26 February 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁵ CIA World Factbook, Nigeria Country Profile: Nigeria Country Profile: Background, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁶ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2019, 4 March 2020, [url](#). See also CIA World Factbook, Nigeria Country Profile: Nigeria Country Profile: Background, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁷ HRW, Nigeria: Widespread Violence Ushers in President's New Term, 10 June 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁸ Brookings, The 2019 Nigerian elections and Buhari's second chance to provide peace, prosperity, and security, 1 March 2019, [url](#)



Region and oil militants in southern Nigeria, particularly the Niger Delta.⁵⁹ Election-related violence mainly occurred throughout January to March 2019.⁶⁰

Covering the first half of 2019, the UN described the security situation in Nigeria as ‘volatile’⁶¹, with ongoing conflict due to Boko Haram’s presence, resulting in a worsening of the existing humanitarian situation and affecting population displacement and food insecurity.⁶² Global Rights described Nigeria’s 2019 threshold of violence as ‘very high’.⁶³

The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) covering events in 2019/2020 ranked Nigeria in 3rd place (same ranking as in the previous year⁶⁴), according to number of deaths from terrorist attacks, and ‘recorded the second largest reduction in deaths from terrorism in 2019’, a reduction of 39.1 % compared to the previous year and 83 % lower than during its peak in 2014.⁶⁵ The reduction was mainly attributable to falling terrorism-related deaths from ‘Fulani extremists’⁶⁶, despite a 25 % increase in deaths attributed to Boko Haram, compared to 2018.⁶⁷ Taking into account only those countries most impacted by terrorism, the GTI described Nigeria as being one of those that could be classified as in a ‘state of war’.⁶⁸ Of the 50 worst terrorist attacks recorded in 2019, four occurred in Nigeria, two of which ranked in the top 10 worst attacks in terms of deaths recorded.⁶⁹

According to the Global Peace Index 2020, Nigeria ranked 147th out of 163 countries (compared to 148th position in the previous year).⁷⁰ As in the previous two years, the Fragile State Index covering events in 2019, classified Nigeria in a state of ‘Alert’ and ranked it 14th out of 178 countries.⁷¹ The Brookings found that since 2018 ‘intense insecurity’ and violence have persisted and increased.⁷²

⁵⁹ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. i; BBC News, Katsina: The motorcycle bandits terrorising northern Nigeria, 5 July 2020, [url](#); FIS, Nigeria: Tilannekatsaus, Lokakuu 2020, 30 October 2020, [url](#), p. 1; VoA, Is Boko Haram gaining Foothold in Nigeria’s Northwest?, 31 December 2020, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, Nigeria, filtered 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁰ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, Nigeria, filtered 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, n.d., [url](#)

⁶¹ UN Security Council, Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Report of the Secretary-General, 5 July 2019, [url](#), para. 18

⁶² ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 4 June 2019, [url](#); UN Security Council, Children and armed conflict in Nigeria, Report of the Secretary-General, 6 July 2020, [url](#), para. 8

⁶³ Global Rights, Mass Atrocities Casualties Tracking, 2019 Report, 11 February 2020, [url](#), pp. 3, 4, 13

⁶⁴ IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2019, November 2019, [url](#), p. 8

⁶⁵ IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2020, November 2020, [url](#), p. 2

⁶⁶ Some criticism has been raised regarding the term and categorisation of ‘Fulani extremists’ used by the Global Terrorism Index, such as by ISPI: ‘In the Global Terrorism Index, the Fulani are portrayed as an ethnic terrorist group. This index aggregates conflicts that people of Fulani ethnicity are involved in and labels them as ‘terrorism’, while mass violence against Fulani communities, of which there has been much across the centre and north of Nigeria and in other parts of the region, tends not to feature. The violence is thus portrayed as being one-way, rather than as a dynamic with often many different armed actors involved and high numbers of civilian casualties across ethnic lines. Criminal gangs of bandits in north-west Nigeria, who are often Fulani in composition, are labelled as ‘Fulani extremists’ in the index, not as ‘criminals’, ‘bandits’ or ‘cattle rustlers’ [...] Outside researchers should perhaps make more effort to understand conflict dynamics and use accurate social categories’. ISPI, Herders and farmers in Nigeria: Coexistence, Conflict, and Insurgency, [Commentary], 19 March 2020, [url](#). The International Crisis Group noted that the Fulani are an ethnic group of whom some are members of militia. See International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria’s Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#). Other references calling for attention of this categorisation include: International Alert, If Victims Become Perpetrators, Factors contributing to vulnerability and resilience to violent extremism in the central Sahel, June 2018, [url](#), and Search for Common Ground, Transnational Dimensions of Conflict Between Farmers and Herders in the Western Sahel and Lake Chad Basin, April 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁷ IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2020, November 2020, [url](#), pp. 2, 13

⁶⁸ IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2020, November 2020, [url](#), p. 18

⁶⁹ IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2020, November 2020, [url](#), p. 95

⁷⁰ IEP, Global Peace Index 2020, June 2020, [url](#), p. 9

⁷¹ FFP, Fragile States Index Annual Report 2020, 8 May 2020, [url](#), p. 7. See also FFP, Fragile States Index, Country Dashboard, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

⁷² Brookings, As conflict intensifies in Nigeria’s North East, so too does a reliance on troubled militias, [Blog], 21 April 2020, [url](#). See also VoA, Fresh Kidnapping of 80 Students Shows Worsening Insecurities, 21 December 2020, [url](#)



Security across Nigeria has been reported as being ‘challenged’ in 2020 through Islamist groups’ operations in the north, ‘low-level insurrection’ in Niger Delta, ongoing farmer-herder conflict in the Middle Belt, which sometimes includes ethnic and religious components, and widespread criminality across the country.⁷³

In the first six months of 2020 violent attacks surpassed those recorded in total in 2019.⁷⁴ During 2020 Nigeria continued to experience various security challenges, including violent extremists’ attacks against security forces, kidnappings (for example from July to October 2020 there were about 102 incidents in the Federal Capital Territory alone), and protests which turned into violence and riots in a number of states.⁷⁵

1.3 Armed actors

1.3.1 State armed forces

In this section, the main actors involved in the various conflicts are briefly discussed.

More detailed information on the military and police, as well as other state actors is provided in EASO’s [COI report Nigeria, Actors of Protection, November 2018](#).

More information on actors, including organisational structure, modus operandi, human rights violations, and profiles of persons targeted by these actors is provided in EASO’s [COI report, Nigeria, Targeting of individuals, November 2018](#).

1.3.1.1 Nigeria Police Force (NPF)

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is designated by the 1999 Constitution as a federal unit and the principal law enforcement agency in the country, with staff deployed across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The Constitution prohibits state and local governments from forming their own forces. The NPF maintains law and order in each state and engages in border security, maritime and counter-terrorism operations. An inspector general of police commands the NPF, appointed by and reporting directly to the president.⁷⁶ The force is divided into seven administrative departments each headed by a Deputy Inspector General of Police, 17 operational Zonal Commands headed by Assistant Inspector Generals of Police, and 37 State Commands (including the FCT) headed by Commissioners of Police.⁷⁷ The current and 20th Inspector General of Police is Muhammed A. Adamu, appointed by President Muhammadu Buhari in January 2019.⁷⁸ The strength of the NPF is more than 350 000 men and women, covering 36 states and the FCT, Abuja.⁷⁹ Reportedly, the police to population ratio is ‘drastically below’ the UN’s standard of 1:450, with 1:600 in Nigeria.⁸⁰

⁷³ CFR, Nigerian president Buhari Shuffles Military Service Chiefs, [Blog], 2 February 2021, [url](#)

⁷⁴ IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2020, November 2020, [url](#), p. 29

⁷⁵ UN Security Council, Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Report of the Secretary-General, 24 June 2020, [url](#), para. 23; UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, 24 December 2020, [url](#), para. 24

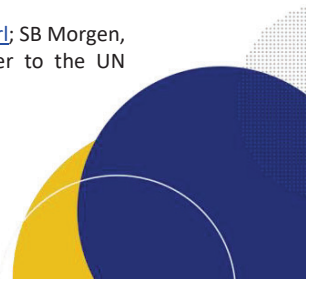
⁷⁶ Nigeria, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, [url](#), Part III, Nigeria Police Force, artt 214-216

⁷⁷ Nigeria, Nigeria Police Force, The Structure of the Nigeria Police Force, n.d., [url](#); Nigeria, Nigeria Police Force, Zones 1 – Zone 17, n.d., [url](#)

⁷⁸ Nigeria, Nigeria Police Force, The Inspector General of Police Speech, n.d., [url](#); Guardian (The) Nigeria, Elections will be free, fair, new IGP Adamu pledges, 16 January 2019, [url](#)

⁷⁹ Interpol, the Nigeria Police Force, n.d., [url](#)

⁸⁰ Chatham House, Police, Protest Power, and Nigeria’s Young Democrats, [Commentary], 16 October 2020, [url](#); SB Morgen, Under attack: The travails of the Nigerian Police, 1 December 2020, [url](#). Note that some sources refer to the UN recommended police-citizen ratio to be 1:400.



Nigeria Police Act 2020

On 17 September 2020 President Muhammadu Buhari signed the Nigeria Police Act 2020, repealing the Police Act Cap. P19, laws of the federation, 2004.⁸¹ Sources report that the Act includes provisions aimed at building a more professional and effective police force, supported by an appropriate funding framework, driven by principles of transparency and accountability in resource management and operations, and encouraging closer citizen-police partnership to maintain peace and combat crime nationwide.⁸² Reports link the introduction of the Police Act with longstanding calls for police reform, widespread concerns about corruption, human rights abuses and ‘violations of the civilian population’ by the NPF, and the widespread protests that led to the disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) in October 2020.⁸³

1.3.1.2 The Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS)

The Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a police unit established in 1992 to curb armed robbery, was disbanded in October 2020.⁸⁴ Some of the unit’s personnel are reported to have intimidated, arbitrarily arrested, extorted, tortured, raped, and killed citizens.⁸⁵ According to the International Crisis Group, SARS ‘became synonymous with bloodstained detention centres and the culture of impunity that pervades Nigeria’s security and intelligence services’.⁸⁶ In June 2020 Amnesty International reported that ‘The Nigerian authorities [...] failed to prosecute a single officer from [...] SARS, despite anti-torture legislation passed in 2017’, and that SARS agents continued ‘to use torture and other ill-treatment to execute, punish and extract information from suspects’.⁸⁷

On 11 October 2020 the Inspector General of Police announced the disbandment of the SARS unit. This followed widespread protests in response to viral footage of the shooting of a man by SARS officers, who then drove off in his car.⁸⁸ The NPF subsequently announced that they would set up a new Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team to replace the old unit, provoking widespread concern and further protests.⁸⁹ The SWAT team’s first task was to perform routine patrols to tackle the surge of insecurity in the country.⁹⁰

⁸¹ Nigeria, Police Act 2020, [url](#); Guardian (The) Nigeria, Debate over new police Act and implications for criminal prosecution, 20 October 2020, [url](#)

⁸² International Crisis Group, Nigeria’s #EndSARS Protest: De-escalate Tensions, Start Deep Police Reform, 26 October 2020, [url](#); PLAC, Bill Analysis, Comparison between the repealed Police Act 1943 and the new Police Act 2020, December 2020, [url](#); The Nation (Nigeria), Nigeria Police Act 2020: A game changer for police reform?, 22 December 2020, [url](#)

⁸³ IISS, Nigeria’s #EndSARS protests also concern counter-terrorism, 15 October 2020, [url](#); PLAC, Bill Analysis, Comparison between the repealed Police Act 1943 and the new Police Act 2020, December 2020, [url](#); The Nation (Nigeria), Nigeria Police Act 2020: A game changer for police reform?, 22 December 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁴ International Crisis Group, Nigeria’s #EndSARS Protest: De-escalate Tensions, Start Deep Police Reform, 26 October 2020, [url](#); ACLED, Lessons from the #ENDSARS movement, 9 February 2021, [url](#)

⁸⁵ AI, Nigeria: Horrific reign of impunity by SARS makes mockery of anti-torture law, 26 June 2020, [url](#); AI, Nigeria: Time to end impunity - Torture and other human rights violations by Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), 26 June 2020, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Nigeria’s #EndSARS Protest: De-escalate Tensions, Start Deep Police Reform, 26 October 2020, [url](#); ACLED, Lessons from the #ENDSARS movement, 9 February 2021, [url](#)

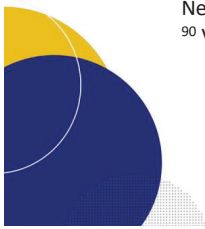
⁸⁶ International Crisis Group, Nigeria’s #EndSARS Protest: De-escalate Tensions, Start Deep Police Reform, 26 October 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁷ AI, Nigeria: Horrific reign of impunity by SARS makes mockery of anti-torture law, 26 June 2020, [url](#); AI, Nigeria: Time to end impunity - Torture and other human rights violations by Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), 26 June 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁸ Nigeria, Nigeria Police Force, IGP dissolves the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, 11 October 2020, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Nigeria’s #EndSARS Protest: Deescalate Tensions, Start Deep Police Reform 26 October 2020, [url](#); ACLED, Lessons from the #ENDSARS movement, 9 February 2021, [url](#)

⁸⁹ International Crisis Group, Nigeria’s #EndSARS Protest: De-escalate Tensions, Start Deep Police Reform, 26 October 2020, [url](#); BBC, End Swat: Nigerians reject police unit replacing hated Sars, 14 October 2020, [url](#); Nigeria, Nigeria Police Force, NPF New Tactical Team Commences Training Monday October 19th, 18 October 2020; [url](#)

⁹⁰ Vanguard, Insecurity: IGP deploys SWAT operatives for routine operations, 14 December 2020, [url](#)



The October 2020 largely peaceful country-wide protests were met with ‘brutal crackdown’⁹¹ by the Nigerian security forces.⁹² A judicial inquiry set up in its aftermath, which includes civil society representatives and members of the Nigerian Human Rights Commission, Citizens Mediation Centre and two youth representatives, will sit for six months to ‘investigate claims of police brutality with the aim to bring erring officers to justice and recommend compensations for victims’.⁹³

1.3.1.3 Nigerian Armed Forces

The Nigerian Armed Forces comprise the army, navy (including the coast guard), and the air force.⁹⁴ Sources estimate the 2021 size of the armed forces active military personnel between 120 000⁹⁵ and 135 000, including 100 000 in the army, 20 000 navy/coast guard, and 15 000 Air Force.⁹⁶ Paramilitary personnel (like the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), which is an agency of the Ministry of the Interior, but assists the military) is estimated around 80 000.⁹⁷

In 2021 Nigeria was the 35th most powerful military power in the world.⁹⁸ Nigeria’s military expenditure decreased in 2019 to 3.6 % of the government’s spending (0.5 % of GDP), down from 3.9 % in 2018. Total expenditure was USD 1.86 billion, down from USD 2.04 billion in 2018.⁹⁹ Reportedly, Nigeria has been the largest arms importer in sub-Saharan Africa since 2014 and the Nigerian Armed Forces’ military equipment consists of a wide variety of imported weapons systems of Chinese, European, Middle Eastern, Russian, and US origin. Nigeria is also developing a defence-industry capacity, including small arms, armoured personnel vehicle, and small-scale naval production.¹⁰⁰

The army, navy and air force are administered and coordinated by a Defence Headquarters, which is headed by a Chief of Defence Staff.¹⁰¹

The Nigerian Army is the land branch of the armed forces and by far the largest of the three branches, facing the brunt of the country’s security challenges, notably the Boko Haram insurgency.¹⁰² Hierarchically, the army is organised into the army headquarters, divisions, brigades, battalions/regiments, regiments, companies, platoons and sections. A division consists of 7 000 - 22 000 military personnel and is commanded by a major general.¹⁰³ The Naval Headquarters is the administrative and policy-making organ of the Nigerian Navy, which is commanded by the Chief of the Naval Staff. There are five commands headed by Flag Officers Commanding (FOCs) and five autonomous units and three operational commands, Western, Eastern and Central Naval Commands, which are responsible for the protection and policing of the nation’s maritime environment.¹⁰⁴ The Nigerian Air Force is commanded

⁹¹ Al, Nigeria, Denials and cover up mark 100 days since Lekki shooting, 28 January 2021, [url](#)

⁹² CNN, ‘They pointed their guns at us and started shooting’ How a bloody night of bullets and brutality quashed a young protest movement, 19 November 2020, [url](#); Al, Nigeria, Denials and cover up mark 100 days since Lekki shooting, 28 January 2021, [url](#)

⁹³ BBC, Nigeria’s Lekki shooting: What has happened so far at Lagos judicial panel, 27 November 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁴ US, CIA, The World Factbook, 2020: Nigeria, n.d., [url](#); Nigeria, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, [url](#), Part III Supplemental, Armed Forces of the Federation, artt. 217-220 [Note: The Nigerian Constitution does not explicitly mention the coast guard]

⁹⁵ Global Firepower, Nigeria Military Strength (2021), n.d., [url](#)

⁹⁶ US, CIA, The World Factbook, 2020: Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

⁹⁷ US, CIA, The World Factbook, 2020: Nigeria, n.d., [url](#); Global Firepower, Nigeria Military Strength (2021), n.d., [url](#)

⁹⁸ Global Firepower, 2021 Military Strength Ranking, n.d., [url](#)

⁹⁹ SIPRI, Military Expenditure Database, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰ US, CIA, The World Factbook, 2020: Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰¹ Nigeria, Defence Headquarters, The DHQ Story, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰² DefenceWeb, Nigerian Armed Forces, 7 October 2013, [url](#)

¹⁰³ Global Security, Nigerian Army Order of Battle, 9 February 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴ Nigeria, Nigerian Navy, Structure, n.d., [url](#)



by the Chief of the Air Staff from the Air Force Headquarters. It has six operational commands and ten staff branches, as well as several direct reporting units.¹⁰⁵

The Nigerian Armed Forces reported that in 2020 troops engaged in series of land, maritime and air operations, including 'land clearance, ambush, raid, picketing, cordon and search operations as well as artillery bombardments and aggressive patrols', maritime 'anti-piracy, anti-illegal bunkering, anti-crude oil theft and anti-pipeline vandalism [and] anti-smuggling operations', and 'air patrols, Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance missions, offensive air strikes, air interdictions, search and rescue operations as well as close air support and air cover for ground troops'.¹⁰⁶

The Nigerian Armed Forces are used primarily for internal security operations, although also tasked with 'defending Nigeria from external aggression'.¹⁰⁷ In the North-East Region, the military is conducting counterinsurgency/counter-terrorist operations against the Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa, where it has deployed as many as 70 000 troops at times. In the North-West Region, it faces threats from criminal gangs, bandits, and militants associated with ongoing farmer-herder violence, as well as Boko Haram and Islamic State in West Africa insurgents. The military also focuses on the Niger Delta region to protect the oil industry against militants and criminal activity, although the levels of violence there have decreased in recent years. The territorial and offshore waters in the Niger Delta and Gulf of Guinea remain a very high risk for piracy and armed robbery of ships. In 2020, there were 98 reported incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea region; a record 130 crew members were kidnapped in 22 separate incidents, representing 95 % of kidnappings at sea worldwide.¹⁰⁸

On 26 January 2021 President Muhammadu Buhari appointed a new military high command after years of mounting criticism over his failure to address security issues, and in the predominantly Christian south, for choosing his military chiefs from among his own northern Muslim Hausa-Fulani¹⁰⁹ community.¹¹⁰ The new appointments are reportedly balanced with respect to region of origin, congruent with federal principles.¹¹¹

1.3.1.4 Nigerian Intelligence Service

In June 1986, former President Ibrahim Babangida, through Decree Number 19, dissolved the National Security Organization (NSO) and re-structured Nigeria's security services into three separate entities under the Office of the Co-ordinator of National Security, now known as the Office of the National

¹⁰⁵ Nigeria, Nigerian Air Force, Organisation, n.d., [url](#); Nigeria, Nigerian Air Force, Our History, n.d., [url](#), Headquarters of the Nigerian Air Force and NAF Commands

¹⁰⁶ Nigeria, Armed Forces of Nigeria, Record of Armed Forces of Nigeria Operations for Year 2020 from 18 March to 30 December, 31 December 2020, [url](#)

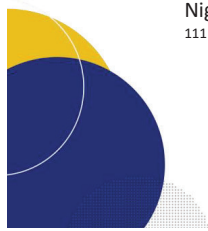
¹⁰⁷ Nigeria, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, [url](#), Part III Supplemental, Armed Forces of the Federation, art. 217

¹⁰⁸ US, CIA, The World Factbook, 2020: Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁹ Note that Hausa/Fulani are two ethnic groups as outlined in [section 1.1](#). However, in some sources the Hausa-Fulani are considered as one ethnic group for practical reasons: 'As the name suggests, the Hausa/Fulani are two ethnic groups which were formerly distinct but are now for all practical purposes intermixed to the extent of being regarded as one inseparable ethnic nation. Although found throughout the grassland belt of West Africa, the bulk of the Hausa/Fulani population is concentrated in Northern Nigeria especially in and around the urban centres of Sokoto, Kano and Katsina which were important market centres on the southern section of the trans-Saharan caravan trade routes in the past [...] Today, Hausa/Fulani influence has spread over much of the culture areas to its immediate south where the Hausa language has become important'. Nigerian House, The Hausa and Fulani, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁰ CFR, Nigerian House of Representatives Calls for Removal of Military Service Chiefs, [Blog], 31 January 2020, [url](#); CFR, Nigerian President Buhari Shuffles Military Service Chiefs, [Blog], 2 February 2021, [url](#)

¹¹¹ CFR, Nigerian President Buhari Shuffles Military Service Chiefs, [Blog], 2 February 2021, [url](#)



Security Advisor (ONSA).¹¹² The new entities include the Department of State Services (DSS), the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA).¹¹³

The DSS, previously known as the State Security Services (SSS)¹¹⁴, is Nigeria's domestic intelligence agency, primarily responsible for gathering intelligence within the country and protecting senior government officials, particularly the president and state governors. Headed by a director general under the control of the National Security Adviser, the DSS operates as a department within the Presidency.¹¹⁵ Reportedly the DSS occasionally acted 'outside civilian control' and committed human rights abuses.¹¹⁶

The NIA focuses on external threats to national interests and is therefore responsible for foreign intelligence. It is also involved in counterintelligence operations. The mission of the DIA is to provide an efficient system of obtaining military intelligence for the armed forces and the Ministry of Defence.¹¹⁷

1.3.1.5 Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC)¹¹⁸

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) is described as a paramilitary agency commissioned to assist the military in the management of threats to internal security, including attacks and natural disasters.¹¹⁹ Established in 1967 by the federal government it was initially known as the Lagos Civil Defence Committee and in 2003 statutorily empowered by law.¹²⁰ 2019-2021 sources indicate that the NSCDC has 80 000 active personnel.¹²¹ The NSCDC consists of a Directorate of Administration, Disaster and Crisis Management, Intelligence and Investigation, Operations, Technical Service, and Critical Infrastructure and National Assets.¹²²

In April 2017, the Ministry of Interior announced that personnel drawn from the NSCDC would be trained to become 'Agro Rangers' with the aim to protect farmers and their investments from attacks by criminals, as well as mediate local farmer-herders disputes.¹²³ The NSCDC has also been deployed to protect the Internally Displaced Persons' (IDPs) camps¹²⁴ and inform IDPs about COVID-19.¹²⁵

¹¹² EASO, COI Report Nigeria Security Situation, November 2018, [url](#), p. 29; US, USDOS, Country Reports on Terrorism 2019: Nigeria, 24 June 2020, [url](#)

¹¹³ EASO, COI Report Nigeria Security Situation, November 2018, November 2018, [url](#), p. 29

¹¹⁴ Premium Times, FACT-CHECK: How Nigeria's secret police, SSS, is violating the law and illegally parading itself as DSS, 26 August 2016, [url](#)

¹¹⁵ Nigeria, Lagos State Security Trust Fund, State Security Service (SSS), n.d., [url](#); US, USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 30 March 2021, [url](#)

¹¹⁶ US, USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 30 March 2021, [url](#)

¹¹⁷ EASO, COI Report Nigeria Security Situation, November 2018, November 2018, [url](#), p. 30

¹¹⁸ For an examination of the NSCDC's role in managing internal security see chapter 21 in Johnson, I., Internal Security Management in Nigeria, 2019, [url](#), chapter 21.

¹¹⁹ NSCDC, History of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁰ NSCDC, History of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, n.d., [url](#)

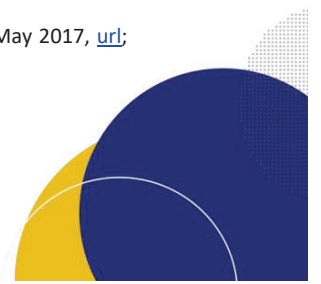
¹²¹ US, CIA, The World Factbook, 2020: Nigeria, n.d., [url](#); Global Firepower, Nigeria Military Strength (2021), n.d., [url](#)

¹²² NSCDC, Directorates, n.d., [url](#)

¹²³ Agro Nigeria, Farmers' security: FG to deploy 3, 000 Agro Rangers Corps to farms and ranches, 27 April 2017, [url](#); Vanguard, Agro Rangers to act as mediators in farmers, herders conflicts – NSCDC, 25 September 2019, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 31; France 24, On patrol with Nigeria's 'Agro Rangers', who protect farmers from Boko Haram, 22 September 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁴ Premium Times, Factsheet: What the Buhari administration has achieved in two years – Presidency, 30 May 2017, [url](#); Nigeria, NSCDC [Facebook], posted on: 1 October 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁵ NNN, Covid-19: NSCDC deploys 250 personnel to sensitise IDPs in Borno, 26 March 2020, [url](#)



1.3.1.6 Special forces / counter-terrorism

Multi-National Joint Task Force

The Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) was established in 1994 by Nigeria to deal with trans-border armed banditry in the Lake Chad Basin. In 1998 Chad and Niger joined the MNJTF to deal with common cross-border security challenges within the Lake Chad Region. With the authorization of the African Union Peace and Security Council, in 2015 Benin joined Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon. The MNJTF was reactivated and refocused on eliminating Boko Haram and creating a safe and secure environment for those affected by Boko Haram and other militant groups.¹²⁶ In 2016 the EU signed an agreement with the African Union Commission to provide EUR 50 million to the MNJTF for key assets.¹²⁷ Civilian oversight is provided by the sub-regional body, the Lake Chad Basin Commission. The force has its headquarters in Chad and is structured into four sectors based in Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. According to the African Union, the total strength of the MNJTF is around 10 000 uniformed troops, with an additional civilian component.¹²⁸

In July 2020 the International Crisis Group reported that the joint force had carried out periodic operations and won victories, though most advances have been short-lived. Joint operations helped to stem Boko Haram's spread in 2015 and 2016, and in 2017 and 2018 reversed some of their gains through short offensives, with a more sustained operation in 2019.¹²⁹ The force was also able to free some civilians captured or trapped by Boko Haram and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid. However, the effectiveness of the MNJTF has been compromised by 'confusion over priorities, the four states' reluctance to cede command to the force itself, and funding and procurement delays'.¹³⁰ Reportedly counter-terrorism operations are failing because 'of strategic and tactical imprecision due to poor intelligence and rivalry among security agencies involved in the operations' and 'corruption in counter-terrorism operations [...] may also be to blame'.¹³¹ According to the International Crisis Group, the 'under-resourced civilian oversight body, the LCBC [Lake Chad Basin Commission], has struggled to exert authority over the force or curb abuses by soldiers who remain accountable to national hierarchies'.¹³²

Self-defence militias and Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF)

Reportedly the police and military 'struggled to meet the multiple security missions across the country, including participating in the Multinational Joint Task Force, countering terrorism, enforcing maritime security, countering narcotics trafficking and other criminal networks, and peacekeeping. Police forces are viewed as oppressive and ineffective, thus putting more burden on the military to assume internal security missions.'¹³³ This crisis in federal security has led to the proliferation of state-level and local self-defence groups (militias) mobilisation to provide protection or security to local communities in the absence of state protection, sometimes organised by state governors.¹³⁴ Concerns have been raised by several sources that this trend could lead to the emergence of 'ethno-regional'

¹²⁶ Nigeria, Multi-National Joint Task Force, About the Force, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁷ EC, The African Peace Facility, Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram, Factsheet, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁸ African Union, Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram, n.d., [url](#); ICT, Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram – Reflections, December 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁹ International Crisis Group, What Role for the Multinational Joint Task Force in Fighting Boko Haram?, 7 July 2020, [url](#)

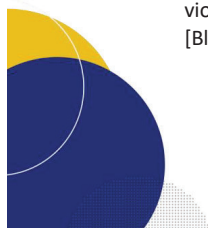
¹³⁰ International Crisis Group, What Role for the Multinational Joint Task Force in Fighting Boko Haram?, 7 July 2020, [url](#). See also ICT, D., Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram – Reflections, December 2020, [url](#)

¹³¹ ISS, Has counter-terrorism become a profitable business in Nigeria?, 4 February 2020, [url](#)

¹³² International Crisis Group, What Role for the Multinational Joint Task Force in Fighting Boko Haram?, 7 July 2020, [url](#)

¹³³ CSIS, Conduct Is the Key: Improving Civilian Protection in Nigeria, [Commentary], 9 July 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁴ CFR, The Prospect of Local Policing Amid Security Breakdown in Nigeria, [Blog], 14 July 2020, [url](#); ACAPS, Nigeria, Banditry violence and displacement in the Northwest, 24 July 2020, [url](#), p. 2; CFR, Nigeria Launches Local Community Policing Initiative, [Blog], 15 September 2020, [url](#)



security arrangements and the erosion of national cohesion.¹³⁵ Several community militias have been amalgamated into the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), particularly present in the North-East Region¹³⁶, which now performs a range of security functions, often alongside the military. Some have received state funding and other support, although civilian authorities do not have full control over their operations. Some CJTF forces have been implicated in civilian harm and human rights abuses, in a context where they are not held accountable. They are reported to have become part of the local war economy, participating in criminal networks, while acting as a local police force.¹³⁷

1.3.1.7 State armed forces and human rights

According to Amnesty International, while engaged in fighting insurgent groups that commit atrocities against civilians, the security forces - including military, police and community-based militias – have also been implicated in ‘serious civilian harm’ and human rights violations, including unlawful killings, sexual violence and abuse, recruitment and use of child soldiers, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and other forms of ill treatment of civilians.¹³⁸ In December 2020 the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court ‘concluded that war crimes and crimes against humanity had been committed by Boko Haram, and the Nigerian military and that Nigerian authorities had failed to investigate and prosecute these crimes, therefore warranting a full investigation’.¹³⁹ Civilian authorities have not always maintained effective control over the military and police.¹⁴⁰

In September 2020 Amnesty International reported that the government failed to release the report of the Presidential Panel to Review Compliance of the Armed Forces with Human Rights Obligations and Rules of Engagement, three years after it was submitted to the President, indicating a situation of ongoing impunity for security forces.¹⁴¹ Amnesty International further stated that the Nigerian authorities have also failed to address and bring to justice those suspected to be responsible for the ‘brutal crackdown by security forces on peaceful #EndSARS protesters’ in October 2020.¹⁴²

Lockdowns due to the Covid-19 pandemic are reported to have led to additional ‘security force abuses and instances of police brutality. Nigerian security forces have been accused of biased enforcement of lockdown measures and have been implicated in the majority of attacks on civilians related to the pandemic.’¹⁴³ In April 2020, according to Nigeria’s National Human Rights Commission, during restrictions imposed due to the Covid-19 pandemic more Nigerians have been killed by Nigerian

¹³⁵ US, USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, March 2020, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 17-19; CFR, Nigeria: Atrocity in the Northeast, [Blog], 2 December 2020, [url](#); CFR, Darkness in Northern Nigeria, [Blog], 23 December 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁶ Brookings, As conflict intensifies in Nigeria’s North East, so too does a reliance on troubled militias, 21 April 2020, [url](#); Agbibo, D.E., Vigilante youths and counterinsurgency in Northeastern Nigeria: the civilian joint task force, Oxford Development Studies, 48:4, pp. 360-372, 2 November 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁷ CSIS, Conduct Is the Key: Improving Civilian Protection in Nigeria, [Commentary], 9 July 2020, [url](#). See also US, USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, March 2020, [url](#); Brookings, As conflict intensifies in Nigeria’s North East, so too does a reliance on troubled militias, 21 April 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Excesses of vigilante groups worry South East communities, 29 July 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁸ AI (Nigeria), Open Letter to the OTP Requesting Immediate Action on the Situation in Nigeria, 13 February 2021, [url](#). See also CSIS, Conduct Is the Key: Improving Civilian Protection in Nigeria, [Commentary], 9 July 2020, [url](#); AI (Nigeria), Denials and cover up mark 100 days since Lekki shooting, 28 January 2021, [url](#)

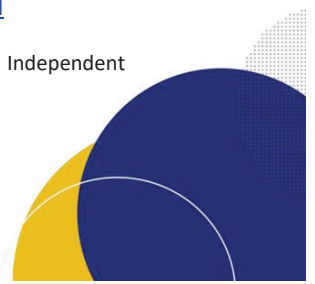
¹³⁹ ICC, Statement of the Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, on the conclusion of the preliminary examination of the situation in Nigeria, 11 December 2020, [url](#); AI (Nigeria), Open Letter to the OTP Requesting Immediate Action on the Situation in Nigeria, 13 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰ US, USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, March 2020, [url](#), p.11; CSIS, Conduct Is the Key: Improving Civilian Protection in Nigeria, [Commentary], 9 July 2020, [url](#); US, USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 30 March 2021, [url](#)

¹⁴¹ AI (Nigeria), Failure to release report of Presidential Panel a setback for rule of law, 11 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴² AI (Nigeria), Denials and cover up mark 100 days since Lekki shooting, 28 January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁴³ Critical Threats, Forecast: The African Salafi-Jihadi Movement After COVID-19, 13 May 2020, [url](#). See also Independent (Nigeria), Lagos Protesters Kick Against Alleged Police Bias In Enforcing Lockdown, 28 April 2020, [url](#)



military and police than by the coronavirus.¹⁴⁴ For example, Global Rights documented that in May 2020 around 33 individuals were killed ‘during the enforcement of the stay at home order’, of which 12 in Kaduna state alone.¹⁴⁵

1.3.2 Non-state armed actors

1.3.2.1 Boko Haram (incl. JAS, Ansura, ISWAP, Bakura)

According to the Global Terrorism Index, Boko Haram ranked as the second deadliest terrorist group in 2019.¹⁴⁶ Since its rise in 2009, the Boko Haram insurgency has adversely affected some 15 million people, displaced over two million people and caused an estimated 20 000 to 30 000 deaths.¹⁴⁷ In December 2020, the Office of the International Criminal Court stated there was ‘reasonable basis to believe’ that Boko Haram and state security forces have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in Nigeria.¹⁴⁸

The origins of Boko Haram date back to the early 2000s, inspired by the sermons and activism of Muhammad Yusuf who advocated for religious societal transformation.¹⁴⁹ After Yusuf was extrajudicially executed by the police in July 2009, his deputy, the radical Abubakar Shekau, took over the movement¹⁵⁰, the Sunni Muslim Group for Preaching and Jihad (Jamaat Ahl as-Sunnah Lid Daw awa al-Jihad or JAS), commonly called Boko Haram (‘Western education is blasphemous’ in Hausa language). According to Jamestown Foundation, ‘JAS had been the group’s formal name from the time when Shekau succeeded Muhammed Yusuf in 2010 until Shekau pledged loyalty to Islamic State (IS) in March 2015 and JAS rebranded as ISWAP.’¹⁵¹ In 2016, the Al-Barnawi-group broke away, keeping the name ISWAP and leaving Shekau with the JAS faction. ISWAP gained recognition and support from ISIS, with commentators suggesting the organisations are drawing closer.¹⁵² In March 2019, ISWAP incorporated Islamic State in Greater Sahara (ISGS) and in April 2019, IS announced its new Central Africa Province.¹⁵³

Between 2009 and 2015, Boko Haram took control of extensive territories in Nigeria’s North-East Region.¹⁵⁴ During this time and as a result of brutal tactics deployed, a group called Jama’at Ansar al Muslimin fi balad al Sudan (Group of Supporters for Muslims in Black Lands), commonly known as Ansaru, broke away in early 2012. Key leaders of Ansaru included Khalid al-Barnawi and Mamman Nur, who both reportedly have links to Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).¹⁵⁵

Boko Haram has a decentralised structure comprising a number of cells.¹⁵⁶ It is reported that there is little overt difference in the structural make up of ISWAP and JAS, the two Boko Haram factions, with some differences noted such as the roles and responsibilities of the Amir.¹⁵⁷

¹⁴⁴ CSIS, Conduct Is the Key: Improving Civilian Protection in Nigeria, [Commentary], 9 July 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁵ Global Rights, Mass Atrocities Casualties Tracking, 2020 Report, 22 February 2021, [url](#), p. 13

¹⁴⁶ IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring the impact of terrorism, November 2020, [url](#), pp. 14-15

¹⁴⁷ Felbab-Brown V., Militias (and Militancy) in Nigeria’s North-East: Not Going Away, 2020, [url](#), p.70

¹⁴⁸ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, Nigeria, filtered 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁴⁹ ISS, Factional Dynamics within Boko Haram, July 2018, [url](#), p.6

¹⁵⁰ IFRA-Nigeria, Killings by the security forces in Nigeria: Mapping and trend analysis (2006-2014), 2014, [url](#), p. 22

¹⁵¹ Jamestown Foundation, Boko Haram Factionalization: Who are Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) Fighters in Niger and Chad?, 14 June 2019, [url](#)

¹⁵² International Crisis Group, Facing the Challenge of the Islamic State in West Africa Province, 16 May 2019, [url](#)

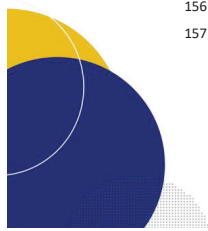
¹⁵³ Jamestown Foundation, Islamic State in West Africa Province’s Factional Disputes and the Battle With Boko Haram, 20 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴ United Nations University, Center for Policy Research, Hybrid Conflict, Hybrid Peace How militias and paramilitary groups shape post-conflict transitions, 2020, [url](#), p. 70

¹⁵⁵ Critical Threats, Backgrounder: Boko Haram in Nigeria, 16 November 2017, [url](#), pp. 2-3

¹⁵⁶ Counter Extremism Project, Boko Haram, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁵⁷ ISS, Factional Dynamics within Boko Haram, July 2018, [url](#), p. 16



Despite the Nigerian government and military mobilisation against Boko Haram between 2015 and 2018, violence increased since 2018. ISWAP has become politically entrenched and seems to pose an even larger challenge to the Nigerian military than the remainder of Boko Haram.¹⁵⁸

Internal tensions have existed within ISWAP since Mamman Nur's execution in 2018, including along doctrine and ethnic lines.¹⁵⁹ Although ISWAP's leadership is largely ethnic Kanuri, it has recruited significantly among lake-side communities, in particular the ethnic Buduma.¹⁶⁰

In 2019, a third faction of Boko Haram emerged called Bakura¹⁶¹, a Lake Chad-based faction, led by Bakura.¹⁶² This meant that the Lake Chad region was no longer exclusively ISWAP's area of operations.¹⁶³ By comparison, ISWAP's reach has expanded further north and into Niger and Chad.¹⁶⁴

In March 2019, the *shura* (consultative council) of ISWAP announced Abdullah Ibn Umar al-Barnawi (a.k.a. Ba Idrisa) as ISWAP's new leader¹⁶⁵, leading to a more extreme approach¹⁶⁶, whilst al-Barnawi was demoted to *shura* member.¹⁶⁷

Following internal conflict, on 9 February 2020, ISWAP fighters reportedly executed faction leader Idris al-Barnawi and Ba Idrisa.¹⁶⁸ It is unclear whether Ba Idrisa or al-Barnawi are still alive after the infighting. Two previously unknown ISWAP leaders have now reportedly climbed the leadership ranks.¹⁶⁹ In March 2020, it was reported that the Nigerian militaries claimed to have killed Bakura along the Nigeria-Niger border.¹⁷⁰ Despite ISWAP's internal feuds, the group has continued attacks in Nigeria, including in southern Borno, northern Yobe, and around Lake Chad.¹⁷¹ On 23 February 2020, ISWAP was included in the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida UN sanctions list.¹⁷²

Since 2009, Boko Haram's rule has been characterised by 'brutality and predation', involving widespread killings, executions, torture, torching villages, forced military recruitment of men and boys, and forced marriage.¹⁷³ Additionally, the group has offered almost no social services in the areas

¹⁵⁸ Felbab-Brown, V., Militias (and Militancy) in Nigeria's North-East: Not Going Away, 2020, [url](#), p. 67

¹⁵⁹ ISPI, The Jihadi Proto-State in the Lake Chad Basin, [Commentary], 19 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰ International Crisis Group, Facing the Challenge of the Islamic State in West Africa Province, 16 May 2019, [url](#)

¹⁶¹ UN Security Council, Children and armed conflict in Nigeria Report of the Secretary-General, 6 July 2020, [url](#), para. 16

¹⁶² Jamestown Foundation, Islamic State in West Africa Province's Factional Disputes and the Battle With Boko Haram, 20 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶³ Jamestown Foundation, Boko Haram's Expansionary Project in Northwestern Nigeria: Can Shekau Outflank Ansaru and Islamic State in West Africa Province?, 28 July 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴ Jamestown Foundation, Boko Haram Factionalization: Who are Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) Fighters in Niger and Chad?, 14 June 2019, [url](#)

¹⁶⁵ Jamestown Foundation, Boko Haram Factionalization: Who are Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) Fighters in Niger and Chad?, 14 June 2019, [url](#)

¹⁶⁶ UN Security Council, Children and armed conflict in Nigeria Report of the Secretary-General, 6 July 2020, [url](#), para. 16

¹⁶⁷ Jamestown Foundation, Islamic State in West Africa Province's Factional Disputes and Battle With Boko Haram, 20 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, Nigeria, filtered 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, n.d., [url](#); Premium Times, ISWAP, terror group in Nigeria, rebrands, reversing tradition, 27 February 2020, [url](#); Jamestown Foundation, Islamic State in West Africa Province's Factional Disputes and the Battle With Boko Haram, 20 March 2020, [url](#)

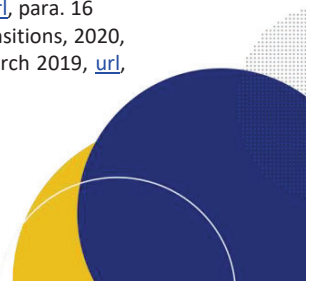
¹⁶⁹ Jamestown Foundation, Islamic State in West Africa Province's Factional Disputes and Battle With Boko Haram, 20 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰ Jamestown Foundation, Islamic State in West Africa Province's Factional Disputes and Battle With Boko Haram, 20 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷¹ Jamestown Foundation, Islamic State in West Africa Province's Factional Disputes and Battle With Boko Haram, 20 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷² UN Security Council, Children and armed conflict in Nigeria Report of the Secretary-General, 6 July 2020, [url](#), para. 16

¹⁷³ UN University, Hybrid Conflict, Hybrid Peace How militias and paramilitary groups shape post-conflict transitions, 2020, [url](#), pp.70-72; UN Security Council, Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of the Secretary-General, 29 March 2019, [url](#), paras. 119-120



under its control¹⁷⁴ and frequently deployed suicide attacks involving female and child bombers.¹⁷⁵ Previously commonly using bombings, Boko Haram have in recent years shifted to armed assault and hostage takings. The group has also recently started recruiting children for intelligence gathering and support roles to expand around the Lake Chad area.¹⁷⁶

ISWAP distinguishes itself from JAS by taking a ‘hearts and minds’ approach towards civilians, and primarily attacking security forces.¹⁷⁷ ISWAP targets civilians less frequently, focussing its targets on government figures, traditional leaders, and contractors.¹⁷⁸ ISWAP has tried to gain the support of local communities by providing services such as digging wells and providing fertilizer, whilst conducting targeted attacks on military structures, government and security personnel.¹⁷⁹ Similarly, the two factions differ ideologically with ISWAP taking a stricter approach to Muslim civilian targeting, focussing instead on government forces and installations¹⁸⁰ and trying to avoid civilian casualties.¹⁸¹ However, attacks in 2020 including those in Gubio Monguno, which killed 81 people, and Goni Ismanti, which killed 38, ISWAP showed a shift in stance targeting Muslim civilians.¹⁸² Both groups generate revenue through extortion, looting illicit trade and criminal activities, such as kidnappings for ransom.¹⁸³

ISWAP owes its military successes in part to its novel, flexible strategy, and improved tactics.¹⁸⁴ Over the years it has developed its military capabilities, attacking larger military bases, and identifying weaker military targets as well as targeting convoys with ambushes and improvised explosive devices (IEDs).¹⁸⁵

It is estimated that whilst JAS has 1 500 – 2 000 members, ISWAP has 3 500 – 5 000 members and is both militarily stronger and expanding its reach.¹⁸⁶

Boko Haram continues to operate in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states.¹⁸⁷ In 2019, a resurgence and escalation of the Boko Haram crisis was witnessed across north-eastern Nigeria.¹⁸⁸ Since 2019, Boko Haram’s reach has extended into north-western Nigeria with attacks taking place in Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara, killing ‘thousands of people’.¹⁸⁹ In 2020, violence continued to escalate.¹⁹⁰ Commentators note that with the lack of available state protection and growing insecurity, communities in the North-West and North-Central Regions of Nigeria are growing vulnerable to converging threats, including extremism.¹⁹¹

¹⁷⁴ UN University, Hybrid Conflict, Hybrid Peace How militias and paramilitary groups shape post-conflict transitions, 2020, [url](#), p.72

¹⁷⁵ ISS, Factional Dynamics within Boko Haram, July 2018, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁷⁶ IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring the impact of terrorism, November 2020, [url](#), p. 16,

¹⁷⁷ UN Security Council, Children and armed conflict in Nigeria Report of the Secretary-General, 6 July 2020, [url](#), para. 16

¹⁷⁸ US Department of State, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights: Nigeria, 11 March 2020, [url](#); US, USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 30 March 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷⁹ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Stabilizing Northeast Nigeria After Boko Haram, 3 May 2019, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰ ISS, Factional Dynamics within Boko Haram, July 2018, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁸¹ UN University, Hybrid Conflict, Hybrid Peace How militias and paramilitary groups shape post-conflict transitions, 2020, [url](#), p. 73

¹⁸² CFR, ISWA’s Recent Attacks Could Signal a New, Deadlier Approach in Nigeria, [Blog], 19 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸³ ISS, Factional Dynamics within Boko Haram, July 2018, [url](#), p. 31

¹⁸⁴ International Crisis Group, Facing the Challenge of the Islamic State in West Africa Province, 16 May 2019, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵ ISPI, The Jihadi Proto-State in the Lake Chad Basin, 19 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶ International Crisis Group, Facing the Challenge of the Islamic State in West Africa Province, 16 May 2019, [url](#)

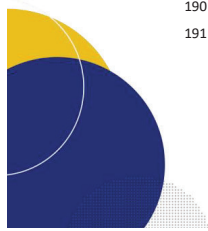
¹⁸⁷ ACAPS, Overview: Boko Haram, 13 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸ ACAPS, Overview: Boko Haram, 13 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹ ISS, Nigeria’s growing insecurity offers expansion opportunities for Boko Haram, 3 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁰ CFR, After Lake Chad Offensive, April One of Deadliest Months in Boko Haram Conflict, [Blog], 12 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹¹ ISS, Nigeria’s growing insecurity offers expansion opportunities for Boko Haram, 3 August 2020, [url](#)



JAS remains confined to its stronghold in south-central Borno around the Sambisa Forest, and along the Cameroonian border.¹⁹² Their attacks focus on south-central Borno, including in Maiduguri and along the Cameroonian border.¹⁹³ The group has also been establishing bases in north-western Nigeria, particularly Niger state.¹⁹⁴

On 19 May 2021, JAS's leader Abubakar Shekau with his troops were ambushed and captured by ISWAP in the Sambisa Forest, a longtime stronghold of Boko Haram/JAS. At the time of writing this report it was not clear whether he was dead or seriously wounded.¹⁹⁵ Military intelligence forces are investigating the reports.¹⁹⁶

ISWAP's stronghold lies in Lake Chad¹⁹⁷ and has a permanent presence in the Alagarno forest.¹⁹⁸ Its influence also extends into the northern Borno countryside¹⁹⁹, and southwards into Yobe state and parts of south-central Borno.²⁰⁰ It has a presence around Maiduguri, particularly in the Konduga local government area. Some commentators suggest operations extend into North Adamawa and that ISWAP is trying to deploy networks into Taraba, Kogi and Jos states.²⁰¹ ISWAP is also capacity building radical groups in the north-west of Nigeria in Kebbi state by offering livelihood support.²⁰²

The border between JAS and ISWAP territory is fluid and runs through the Mafa, Dikwa and Kala Balge local government areas.²⁰³ The lesser known Ansaru group claimed several attacks in 2020 in Kaduna state.²⁰⁴

Children have been continuously targeted by Boko Haram through abductions, forced recruitment, forced marriage, sexual violence and repeated attacks on schools.²⁰⁵ Boko Haram also kill and maim children, and use children, particularly girls, to carry improvised explosive devices.²⁰⁶ Furthermore, Boko Haram are known to target humanitarian workers.²⁰⁷ See further EASO's [COI report, Nigeria, Targeting of individuals, November 2018](#).

The MNJTF is the main counter terrorism state response and operates in conjunction with the Nigerian military.²⁰⁸ See further [1.4.1.2 Major military operations](#) and [1.5 State ability to secure law and order](#).

Despite the MNJTF's operations forcing Boko Haram to retreat in 2015, the group remains active²⁰⁹ and in 2019, secured safe havens in the North-East Region and parts of Lake Chad.²¹⁰ In August 2019, General Olusegun Adeniyi, Nigerian Army's Theatre Commander for operations in Borno, implemented a change in military operations in Borno state, involving the regrouping of small units into 'super camps' in a bid to strengthen defence capabilities.²¹¹ Whilst this reduced military

¹⁹² ACAPS, Humanitarian Perspectives: Highlights from 2019 – Risks in 2020, 2 December 2019, [url](#), p. 8; ISS, Factional Dynamics within Boko Haram, July 2018, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁹³ ISS, Factional Dynamics within Boko Haram, July 2018, [url](#), p. 22

¹⁹⁴ CFR, Niger Attack Demonstrates Islamic State in West Africa's Growing Reach, [Blog], 25 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵ Guardian (The), Boko Haram leader tried to kill himself during clash with rivals, officials claim, 20 May 2021, [url](#)

¹⁹⁶ AA, Nigerian army probes alleged death of Boko Haram leader, 23 May 2021, [url](#)

¹⁹⁷ ACAPS, Humanitarian Perspectives: Highlights from 2019 – Risks in 2020, 2 December 2019, [url](#), pp. 8-9

¹⁹⁸ ISPI, The Jihadi Proto-State in the Lake Chad Basin, 19 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁹ International Crisis Group, Facing the Challenge of the Islamic State in West Africa Province, 16 May 2019, [url](#)

²⁰⁰ ISS, Factional Dynamics within Boko Haram, July 2018, [url](#), p. 3

²⁰¹ International Crisis Group, Facing the Challenge of the Islamic State in West Africa Province, 16 May 2019, [url](#)

²⁰² International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#)

²⁰³ International Crisis Group, Facing the Challenge of the Islamic State in West Africa Province, 16 May 2019, [url](#)

²⁰⁴ CFR, Niger Attack Demonstrates Islamic State in West Africa's Growing Reach, [Blog], 25 August 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁵ AI, "We Dried Our Tears" Addressing The Toll On Children Of Northeast Nigeria's Conflict, 27 May 2020, [url](#), p. 7; UN Security Council, Children and armed conflict Report of the Secretary-General, 9 June 2020, [url](#), p. 1, paras. 206-211

²⁰⁶ UN Security Council, Children and armed conflict in Nigeria Report of the Secretary-General, 6 July 2020, [url](#), para. 2

²⁰⁷ UN Security Council, Children and armed conflict in Nigeria Report of the Secretary-General, 6 July 2020, [url](#), para. 8

²⁰⁸ IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring the impact of terrorism, November 2020, [url](#), p. 16

²⁰⁹ ACAPS, Humanitarian Perspectives: Highlights from 2019 – Risks in 2020, 2 February 2019, [url](#), p. 2

²¹⁰ IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring the impact of terrorism, November 2020, [url](#), p. 16

²¹¹ ISOI, The Jihadi Proto-State in the Lake Chad Basin, 19 March 2020, [url](#)



casualties, it also allowed ISWAP to operate freely in the countryside²¹² leaving rural areas unprotected and prompting analysts to believe they may seek to expand into urban areas.²¹³

Between 2009 and 2018, the Nigerian government has conducted over 20 different inquiries to examine the crimes and violations committed by Boko Haram. Thousands of individuals suspected of Boko Haram membership have been arbitrarily arrested and detained since the conflict started in 2009.²¹⁴

Nigerian security forces treated many civilians as alleged Boko Haram members, subjecting them to arrest, detention, extra judicial killings²¹⁵ and the collective punishment of villages suspected of falling under Boko Haram control²¹⁶, including the burning of villages.²¹⁷ In 2019, the Nigerian Army, Police Force and the Department of State Services carried out counter terrorism operations against Boko Haram with reports of extrajudicial killings and arbitrary arrest.²¹⁸ Children suspected of association with Boko Haram were detained²¹⁹ with reports of harrowing violations, including sexual violence²²⁰ and torture.²²¹ The UN has documented over 3 600 detentions of children, most of which were unlawful.²²² See further [1.5 State ability to secure law and order](#) and EASO's [COI report, Nigeria, Targeting of individuals, November 2018](#).

The Nigerian state response to Boko Haram has been largely ineffective, providing fertile ground for anti-Boko Haram militias to develop.²²³ Additionally, since 2019, Borno state government has increasingly recruited vigilantes.²²⁴ These militias provide security in the North-East Region, provide the military with intelligence and support for defence and offensive actions and face little accountability. Militia groups include the Civilian Joint Task Force (*yan gora*), vigilantes (*yan banga*), hunters (*kungiyar maharba*), Shuwa vigilantes (*kesh kesh*) and the Vigilante Group of Nigeria.²²⁵ See further [1.3.1 State armed forces](#).

1.3.2.2 Farmer-herder conflicts (including vigilante groups and armed criminal bandits)

Despite living for centuries harmoniously, relationships between Fulani herders and settled farmer communities have drastically deteriorated.²²⁶ Raids began escalating in 1999, becoming increasingly deadly since 2017.²²⁷ Between 2015 and 2018, it has been estimated that at least 3 641 people have been killed and an estimated 300 000 have been displaced as a result of the conflicts.²²⁸ As the

²¹² CFR, Military Failures Mount in Borno Against Boko Haram, [Blog], 13 February 2020, [url](#)

²¹³ ACAPS, Humanitarian Perspectives: Highlights from 2019 – Risks in 2020, 2 February 2019, [url](#), p. 9

²¹⁴ AI, Willingly unable: ICC Preliminary Examination and Nigeria's failure to address impunity for international crimes, 2 December 2019, [url](#), p. 10

²¹⁵ CIVIC, Nigerian Community Militias: Toward A Solution, November 2019, [url](#), p. 2

²¹⁶ UN University, Hybrid Conflict, Hybrid Peace How militias and paramilitary groups shape post-conflict transitions, 2020, [url](#), pp. 73-74

²¹⁷ US, USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights - Nigeria, 11 March 2020, [url](#), Section 1f

²¹⁸ US, USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights - Nigeria, 11 March 2020, [url](#), Section 1g

²¹⁹ UN Security Council, Children and armed conflict in Nigeria Report of the Secretary-General, 6 July 2020, [url](#), pp. 1, 7

²²⁰ AI, Nigeria: Children and women face sexual violence in Borno prisons, 29 April 2019, [url](#)

²²¹ AI, "We dried our tears": Addressing the toll on children in Northeast Nigeria's conflict, 27 May 2020, [url](#), p.7

²²² AI, "We dried our tears": Addressing the toll on children in Northeast Nigeria's conflict, 27 May 2020, [url](#), p.7

²²³ Felbab-Brown, V., Militias (and Militancy) in Nigeria's North-East: Not Going Away, 2020, [url, p. 7](#)

²²⁴ ISPI, The Jihadi Proto-State in the Lake Chad Basin, 19 March 2020, [url](#)

²²⁵ Felbab-Brown, V., Militias (and Militancy) in Nigeria's North-East: Not Going Away, 2020, [url](#); Brookings, As conflict intensifies in Nigeria's North East, so too does a reliance on troubled militias, 21 April 2020, [url](#)

²²⁶ UK, All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief, Nigeria: Unfolding Genocide?, June 2020, [url](#), p. 4

²²⁷ AI, Nigeria: Government failures fuel escalating conflict between farmers and herders as death toll nears 4,000, 17 December 2018, [url](#)

²²⁸ AI, Nigeria: Government failures fuel escalating conflict between farmers and herders as death toll nears 4,000, 17 December 2018, [url](#)



conflicts escalate, alongside competing factors and a proliferation of arms, there is a risk of jihadists groups taking root.²²⁹

According to the Global Terrorism Index, ‘Fulani extremists’ were responsible for 26 % of terror-related deaths in Nigeria and 325 fatalities in 2019 – a 72 % decrease from the previous year, while incidents declined by 62 %.²³⁰ However, this categorisation has been criticised for presenting the Fulani as an ethnic-based terrorist group, when much of the perpetrators include criminal gangs of bandits and cattle rustlers.²³¹

Drivers of the conflict include resource competition, the weak state (including anti-grazing laws and land grabs), ethnic and religious prejudice and the breakdown of pastoralist oversight arrangements.²³² Additionally, the weakening of rural governance and regulatory systems has led many young Fulani men into criminality, banditry, and kidnapping.²³³

The Fulani have been in conflict with a number of communities over the years, for example with the Bachama communities in Numan and Demsa in November 2017; with the Tiv group in the 1990s and 2000s.²³⁴ They have also been in combat with JAS, whilst ISWAP has made accommodating arrangements for pasture.²³⁵

The farmer-herder conflicts centre around Nigeria’s Middle Belt²³⁶ and as more grazing land is sought, violence has expanded to the South-West and South-East Regions.²³⁷ The worst affected areas are Benue, Plateau, Taraba, Adamawa, Kaduna, Kwara, Borno and Zamfara.²³⁸

Farmers in conflict areas are predominantly Christian while herders or pastoralists are predominantly Muslim and (for about 90 %²³⁹) Fulani. As the conflict has escalated, ethno-religious tensions have been exacerbated²⁴⁰ and the conflict has been used for political gain.²⁴¹ Fulani groups are described by IISS as highly decentralised with clans and sub-clans, giving individuals great autonomy. Unlike Fulani fighters, farmers mobilise on an ethnic basis, sometimes forming alliances along ethnic lines using Christianity as a tool for mobilisation. Main farming militias, according to IISS, include the

²²⁹ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. i; Higazi, A., Recent research findings from fieldwork in Yobe and Jigawa States, 29 September 2019, p.3, unpublished (copy available via EASO)

²³⁰ IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring the impact of terrorism, November 2020, [url](#), p. 21

²³¹ ISPI, Herders and farmers in Nigeria: Coexistence, Conflict, and Insurgency, [Commentary], 19 March 2020, 19 March 2020, [url](#); IFRA-Nigeria, Pastoralism and Islamic practice in Fulbe communities of northern Nigeria and Niger, 2020, p.2 [copy available via EASO]

²³² IISS, Armed Conflict Survey: Nigeria (Farmer-Pastoralist), 2019, [url](#), p. 322 [paywall]

²³³ IFRA-Nigeria, Pastoralism and Islamic practice in Fulbe communities of northern Nigeria and Niger, 2020, p.28 [copy available via EASO]

²³⁴ IISS, Armed Conflict Survey: Nigeria (Farmer-Pastoralist), 2019, [url](#), p.320

²³⁵ Higazi, A., Recent research findings from fieldwork in Yobe and Jigawa States, 29 September 2019, p.3, unpublished (copy available via EASO)

²³⁶ UK, All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief, Nigeria: Unfolding Genocide?, June 2020, [url](#), p. 4. Note that the term ‘Middle Belt’ usually refers to the following States: Benue, FCT, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau. See Oasdom, List of Middle Belt States in Nigeria, 1 June 2020, [url](#). But some would also add Adamawa and Taraba, as well as ‘the southern parts of Kaduna State, Kebbi State, Bauchi State, Gombe State, Yobe State and Borno State. See Legit, List of Middle Belt States in Nigeria, 2019, [url](#)

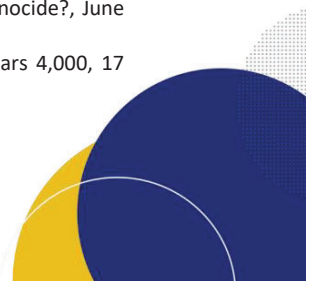
²³⁷ CFR, Nigeria’s Internal Security Problem, [Blog], 26 February 2021, [url](#)

²³⁸ UK, All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief, Nigeria: Unfolding Genocide?, June 2020, [url](#), p.4

²³⁹ ACAPS, Nigeria: Spike in farmer-herder violence in the Middle Belt, Risk Report, 18 December 2018, [url](#)

²⁴⁰ UK, All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief, Nigeria: Unfolding Genocide?, June 2020, [url](#), p. 4

²⁴¹ AI, Nigeria: Government failures fuel escalating conflict between farmers and herders as death toll nears 4,000, 17 December 2018, [url](#)



Mambila and Militant Vigilante Group and main ethnic units include Berom, Irigwe, Eggon, Tarok, Adara, Alago, Tiv, Idoma, Igede and Agatu.²⁴²

Growing insecurity has led to groups of farmers and herders forming militias, which are often backed by political, religious or ethnic leaders.²⁴³ Attacks by Fulani militias are reportedly well planned, increasingly premeditated, deploying tactics including violent killings, burning down villages²⁴⁴, maiming, evictions, sweeping into Hausa villages during organised raids on motorcycles²⁴⁵ and like bandits, are involved in kidnappings and pillaging²⁴⁶, using weaponry including machine guns and AK 47s.²⁴⁷ Herders use less sophisticated weaponry.²⁴⁸

In turn, vigilante groups have developed, with the backing of the state.²⁴⁹ This includes the Eastern Security Network (ESN), the Western Security Network (Amotekun) in the South-West, and several armed groups in the South-South Regions. Clashes between these armed militia groups and the herdsmen are on the rise.²⁵⁰ It is reported that 23 states in Nigeria have similar local security outfits.²⁵¹ Vigilante groups have faced accusations of taking the law into their own hands, acting illegally and participating in extrajudicial killings.²⁵² For example, a vigilante group called *yan sakai* (volunteer guards) have been in combat with bandits across Zamfara state and are accused of provoking wider inter-ethnic conflict between the Fulani and Hausa groups.²⁵³ *Yan sakai* use locally made guns, machetes and clubs, and carry out harsh punishments, including arbitrary violence, burning of villages, extrajudicial killings and torture, against (perceived) perpetrators.²⁵⁴ See further [1.3.1 State armed forces](#).

According to BBC News reporting, 'it is increasingly clear that the lines between the farmer-herder clashes and banditry are becoming more blurred in the north-west.'²⁵⁵ Armed criminal bandits have exploited the tensions between farmers and herders and are most prevalent in North-West Nigeria, particularly in and around Zamfara state.²⁵⁶ In recent years, the violence has spread from Zamfara state to the North-Central Region and other states including Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto as well as into Niger state.²⁵⁷ Bandits are armed with small weapons, attack villages typically on motorcycles, steal cattle, demand ransom money and deploy violent tactics.²⁵⁸ Cattle rustling is a function carried out by armed groups based in the forests in Kaduna, Kano, Katsina and Zamfara states.²⁵⁹ Criminal gangs have also generated revenue through kidnappings. A government-constituted committee found that between 2011 and 2019, over 3 600 people were kidnapped in

²⁴² IISS, Armed Conflict Survey: Nigeria (Farmer-Pastoralist), 27 May 2020, [url](#), p. 340 [paywall]

²⁴³ UK, All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief, Nigeria: Unfolding Genocide?, June 2020, [url](#), p. 20. See also International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#)

²⁴⁴ UK, All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief, Nigeria: Unfolding Genocide?, June 2020, [url](#), pp. 6 & 21. See also AI, Nigeria: The harvest of death – three years of bloody clashes between farmers and herders in Nigeria, 17 December 2018, [url](#)

²⁴⁵ The New Humanitarian, The longshot bid to end rampant banditry in Nigeria's northwest, 19 January 2021, [url](#)

²⁴⁶ BBC, Katsina: The motorcycle bandits terrorising northern Nigeria, 5 July 2020, [url](#)

²⁴⁷ AI, Nigeria: Government failures fuel escalating conflict between farmers and herders as death toll nears 4,000, 17 December 2018, [url](#)

²⁴⁸ AI, Nigeria: The harvest of death – three years of bloody clashes between farmers and herders in Nigeria, 17 December 2018, [url](#), p. 17

²⁴⁹ The New Humanitarian, The longshot bid to end rampant banditry in Nigeria's northwest, 19 January 2021, [url](#)

²⁵⁰ CFR, Nigeria's Internal Security Problem, [Blog], 26 February 2021, [url](#)

²⁵¹ Guardian (The) Nigeria, Operation Amotekun: Metaphor for FG's indecisiveness on insecurity, 18 January 2020, [url](#)

²⁵² Vanguard, Excesses of vigilante groups worry South East communities, 27 January 2021, [url](#)

²⁵³ IISS, Armed Conflict Survey: Nigeria (Farmer-Pastoralist), 2019, [url](#), p. 320 [paywall]

²⁵⁴ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 7

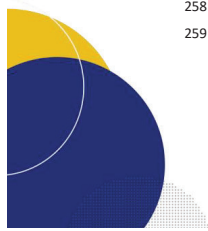
²⁵⁵ BBC, Katsina: The motorcycle bandits terrorising northern Nigeria, 5 July 2020, [url](#)

²⁵⁶ IISS, Armed Conflict Survey: Nigeria (Farmer-Pastoralist), 2019, [url](#), p.321 [paywall]

²⁵⁷ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 3

²⁵⁸ IISS, Armed Conflict Survey: Nigeria (Farmer-Pastoralist), 2019, [url](#), p.321 [paywall]

²⁵⁹ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 10



Zamfara state alone.²⁶⁰ See further [1.4.2.1 Nature of the security incidents](#) and [1.6 Impact of the violence on the civilian population](#).

Federal police and the air force have conducted several ‘anti-banditry’ operations targeting herder-allied armed groups and despite some impact and arrests, violence has continued.²⁶¹ A number of commissions have been set up at federal level but the state response to the conflict has been weak with small numbers of police officers stationed. There has been little attempt to hold perpetrators to account, with reports of direct military harassment or security forces ignoring impending attacks, leading to a climate of impunity and a cycle of retaliatory attacks.²⁶² Some state governments have entered into peace talks (for example, offering amnesties) with herder allied groups and reached agreements.²⁶³ The Governor of Zamfara state recently relaunched an amnesty programme promising cows in return for AK 47s.²⁶⁴ Following the killing of around 70 people in Sokoto state in May 2020, President Buhari announced Operation Accord, an operation to tackle banditry in the North-West and North-Central states.²⁶⁵ See further [1.4.1.2 Major military operations](#) and [1.5 State ability to secure law and order](#).

Following the wave of violence in 2018, the Nigerian authorities launched in 2019 a ten year National Livestock Transformation Plan ‘to curtail the movement of cattle, boost livestock production and quell the country’s lethal herder-farmer conflict.’ However, according to International Crisis Group, implementation of the plan (which is, in its opinion, key to resolving the conflict) is hindered by ‘inadequate political leadership, delays, funding uncertainties and a lack of expertise’. In particular the ‘widespread distrust’ in the Middle Belt and opposition from both herders and farmers should be approached urgently, according to the organisation.²⁶⁶

1.3.2.3 Cults

Cultism has its roots in a confraternity organisation set up in 1952. However, it has strayed far from its original intentions, and secret cults today have spread beyond universities and have led to the violent killings of thousands across Nigeria.²⁶⁷ Cults have proliferated in Nigerian society in wars of attrition to secure social, economic and political control.²⁶⁸

Student societies, such as Vikings, Black Axe, Eiyer or the Buccaneers, are banned in Nigeria.²⁶⁹ There are dozens of regional and local gangs across the country. In the Niger Delta, for example, there are cults such as *Dey Bam*, *Dey Well*, *Highlanders* etc..²⁷⁰ Cults have been associated with serious violence, killings, gang activity, crime and political violence.²⁷¹

Command structures are similar to militia groups; they deploy code words and have insignia.²⁷² Initiations are often brutal and can include displaying codes of loyalty through enacting violence.²⁷³

²⁶⁰ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 10

²⁶¹ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 20

²⁶² Al, Nigeria: The harvest of death – three years of bloody clashes between farmers and herders in Nigeria, 17 December 2018, [url](#), pp.6-7 & 40-41; UK, All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief, Nigeria: Unfolding Genocide?, June 2020, [url](#), p. 9

²⁶³ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 22

²⁶⁴ The New Humanitarian, The longshot bid to end rampant banditry in Nigeria’s northwest, 19 January 2021, [url](#)

²⁶⁵ Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report: Nigeria, 3 December 2020, [url](#), p. 21

²⁶⁶ International Crisis Group, Ending Nigeria’s Herder-Farmer Crisis: The Livestock Reform Plan, 4 May 2021, [url](#)

²⁶⁷ ICWA, Thriving cults are harming young people in Nigeria, 23 July 2018, [url](#)

²⁶⁸ IFRA-Nigeria, Contemporary Nigerian Cultist Groups: Demystifying the ‘Invisibilities’, 2 March 2019, [url](#), p. 3

²⁶⁹ BBC, Nigeria’s campus cults: Buccaneers, Black Axe and other feared groups, 2 June 2020, [url](#)

²⁷⁰ Il Fatto Quotidiano, Mafia nigeriana, "in patria protetta dal governo. E i politici la usano per battere gli avversari alle elezioni", [Nigerian mafia, “at home protected by the government. And politicians use it to beat opponents in elections”] 17 November 2018, [url](#)

²⁷¹ IFRA-Nigeria, Contemporary Nigerian Cultist Groups: Demystifying the ‘Invisibilities’, 2 March 2019, [url](#), p. 14

²⁷² BBC, Nigeria’s campus cults: Buccaneers, Black Axe and other feared groups, 2 June 2020, [url](#)

²⁷³ ICWA, Thriving cults are harming young people in Nigeria, 23 July 2018, [url](#)



Children have been recruited into cults, some forcibly.²⁷⁴ Cults have been linked to criminal activity in Europe and North America, involving human trafficking, sexual exploitation and slavery.²⁷⁵

Membership in an 'unlawful society' is prohibited under the federal criminal code and cults are banned in several states. However, enforcement is weak and high-ranking politicians have been associated with using cults for political gain, for example, paying cults to swing votes²⁷⁶ or to assassinate political opponents.²⁷⁷ The rise in cult gang violence has been attributed to cults becoming instruments of state oppression²⁷⁸, as well as the failure of state authorities to investigate, arrest and prosecute perpetrators of such violence, leading to a culture of impunity.²⁷⁹ Where state authorities have responded, it has reportedly been inadequate.²⁸⁰ See further [1.5 State ability to secure law and order](#).

1.3.2.4 Niger Delta Armed Groups

Since the 1990s, the Niger Delta has seen the emergence of several armed groups²⁸¹, driven by a variety of reasons, including social justice and grievances over the exploitation of their region, and fighting over longstanding ethnic rivalries and competition over resources. Some of these groups, however, have also been involved in criminal activities (such as kidnappings).²⁸²

From 2006 to 2009, armed groups under the umbrella of the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), conducted a series of attacks on Nigeria's oil and gas infrastructure.²⁸³ After 2009, violence in Niger Delta saw a sharp decrease²⁸⁴, following the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) launched by the Federal Government, which granted unconditional amnesty to militants who surrendered their arms. During this programme a total of 26 808 militants surrendered their arms.²⁸⁵

However, armed militancy has re-emerged in Niger Delta²⁸⁶, with a new generation of militants threatening war against the state.²⁸⁷ In 2016, the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) conducted a series of attacks on pipelines and other infrastructures, causing violence and pushing Nigeria into recession, together with low oil prices.²⁸⁸ The NDA continued to be active in 2017 and early 2018.²⁸⁹ Since then, no other major incidents involving the NDA have been found in the consulted sources. Maritime

²⁷⁴ Punch (Nigeria), Cult members forcing schoolchildren to join group, Ikorodu residents cry out, 14 September 2019, [url](#); BBC, Nigeria's campus cults: Buccaneers, Black Axe and other feared groups, 2 June 2020, [url](#); Premium Times, Cultism: A Bomb Awaiting Explosion In Nigeria's Schools, By Olabisi Deji-Folultile, [Opinion], 28 January 2021, [url](#); This Day, Before the Anti-Cultism Bill Becomes Law, 9 February 2021, [url](#)

²⁷⁵ IFRA-Nigeria, Contemporary Nigerian Cultist Groups: Demystifying the 'Invisibilities', 2 March 2019, [url](#), pp. 2-3; Harpers Magazine, The Black Axe : How a pan-African freedom movement lost its way, September 2019, [url](#)

²⁷⁶ Harpers Magazine, The Black Axe : How a pan-African freedom movement lost its way, September 2019, [url](#); Il Fatto Quotidiano, Mafia nigeriana, "in patria protetta dal governo. E i politici la usano per battere gli avversari alle elezioni", [Nigerian mafia, "at home protected by the government. And politicians use it to beat opponents in elections"] 17 November 2018, [url](#)

²⁷⁷ IFRA-Nigeria, Contemporary Nigerian Cultist Groups: Demystifying the 'Invisibilities', 2 March 2019, [url](#), p. 14

²⁷⁸ IFRA-Nigeria, Contemporary Nigerian Cultist Groups: Demystifying the 'Invisibilities', 2 March 2019, [url](#), p. 24

²⁷⁹ AI, Nigeria: Rise in Cult Related killings in Rivers state, 9 January 2020, [url](#)

²⁸⁰ AI, Nigeria: Rise in Cult Related killings in Rivers state, 9 January 2020, [url](#)

²⁸¹ Agbibo D. E., Armed Groups, Arms Proliferations and the Amnesty Program in the Niger Delta, 2013, [url](#), p. 12

²⁸² CFR, Understanding the Armed Groups of the Niger Delta, [Working Paper], September 2009, [url](#), pp. 6-7

²⁸³ CFR, Delegitimizing Armed Agitations in the Niger Delta, [Blog], 4 December 2020, [url](#)

²⁸⁴ USIP, Conflict in the Niger Delta, June 2011, [url](#), p. 2

²⁸⁵ Ajodo-Adebanjoko A., Towards ending conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta region, 2017 [url](#), p. 11

²⁸⁶ Ajodo-Adebanjoko A., Towards ending conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta region, 2017 [url](#), p. 24; Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report, Nigeria, 3 December 2020, [url](#), p. 22

²⁸⁷ CFR, Nigeria Security Tracker, last updated 2 February 2021, [url](#); Vanguard, EndSARS: Tension as N'Delta militants roll out 11-point demand, 25 October 2020, [url](#)

²⁸⁸ Reuters, Nigeria 'Delta Avengers' militants vow to cripple economy if Buhari re-elected, 14 February 2019, [url](#)

²⁸⁹ The Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Report Nigeria, 7 December 2017, [url](#), p. 22; Pulse (Nigeria), Why militant group just promised Nigeria a "doomed year", 18 January 2018, [url](#). See for a more detailed overview of groups active in the Niger Delta, EASO COI report Nigeria, Targeting of individuals, November 2018, [url](#)



kidnappings have also become common in the Niger Delta, as militants have turned to piracy as a way to support themselves.²⁹⁰ Incidents of maritime piracy and kidnappings have been reported throughout 2019 and 2020.²⁹¹ In October 2020, a coalition of former militants belonging to the Reformed Niger Delta Avengers (RNDA) declared their support for the #EndSARS movement and threatened to resume attacks on oil installations if the Federal Government failed to meet the demands of the #EndSARS protesters across the country.²⁹² In a statement, the RNDA militants threatened to attack some gas distribution pipelines, most of them running from Delta state to other states across the country.²⁹³

1.3.2.5 Biafran Separatists

The former Biafra State constituted the former Eastern Region of Nigeria, which declared unilaterally its independence from Nigeria in May 1967 and ceased to exist as such in January 1970.²⁹⁴ The South-East Region has a history of fragile security and separatist groups aiming for secession, notably the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).²⁹⁵ These groups largely advocated for peaceful change.²⁹⁶ In September 2017, the federal government declared IPOB a terrorist organisation.²⁹⁷ There are reports of killings, discrimination, arbitrary arrest and harassment of both groups at the hands of state authorities.²⁹⁸ Pro Biafra members and protestors have been arrested in recent years.²⁹⁹

Since August 2020, violence between IPOB and the state police and army has escalated. In December 2020, a new Igbo³⁰⁰ paramilitary wing has created, called the Eastern Security Network, which proclaims to defend against Fulani attacks. Clashes with state forces followed and a ceasefire was declared in January 2021.³⁰¹ See further EASO's [COI report, Nigeria, Targeting of individuals, November 2018](#).

²⁹⁰ Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report, Nigeria, 3 December 2020, [url](#), p. 19

²⁹¹ Dryad Global, The Kidnapping Business That Sustains The Economy In The Niger Delta, 6 August 2020, [url](#) [Translation from original article by Investigative Reporting Project Italy, Pirateria: il business dei rapimenti che sostiene l'economia nel Delta del Niger, 6 August 2020, [url](#)]

²⁹² Vanguard, Meet #EndSARS protesters' demand, or we attack, 20 October 2020, [url](#)

²⁹³ Vanguard, Meet #EndSARS protesters' demand, or we attack, 20 October 2020, [url](#)

²⁹⁴ Encyclopedia Britannica, Biafra, Latest update: 4 March 2015, [url](#)

²⁹⁵ CFR, Security Deteriorating in Nigeria's Former "Biafra", [Blog], 8 February 2021, [url](#). See also AI, 'Nigeria: Bullets were raining everywhere', 24 November 2016, [url](#)

²⁹⁶ AI, 'Nigeria: Bullets were raining everywhere', 24 November 2016, [url](#), pp. 7, 12

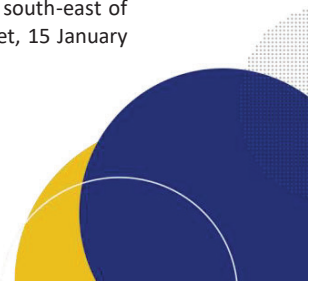
²⁹⁷ Pulse (Nigeria), Tension in Abia as soldiers 'block entrance' of Nnamdi Kanu's residence ahead of his parents' burial, 2 December 2020, [url](#)

²⁹⁸ Australia, DFAT, Country information report: Nigeria, 9 March 2018, [url](#), sections 3.2, 5.7; OHCHR, End of visit statement of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions on her visit to Nigeria, 2 September 2019, 2 September 2019, [url](#), paras. 11, 14, 47, 48

²⁹⁹ Today (Nigeria), IPOB members arrested for selling Biafra newspaper, 24 December 2019, [url](#); Sahara Reporters, Pro-Biafra Anniversary Turns Bloody As Police Open Fire On MASSOB Members, 22 May 2019, [url](#); Vanguard, Police arrest 51 suspected IPOB members in Umuahia, 12 December 2018, [url](#)

³⁰⁰ Note that in 1967, 'following two coups and turmoil which led to about a million Igbos returning to the south-east of Nigeria', before fighting for secession. See BBC, Remembering Nigeria's Biafra war that many prefer to forget, 15 January 2020, [url](#)

³⁰¹ CFR, Security Deteriorating in Nigeria's Former "Biafra", [Blog], 8 February 2021, [url](#)



1.4 Recent security trends and armed confrontations

1.4.1 Armed confrontations since 2018

1.4.1.1 Types of conflict

The security situation in Nigeria is affected by the following long-standing security challenges and major conflicts:

1. The [Boko Haram conflict](#) in the North-East Region and increasingly in the North-West and North-Central Regions;
2. [Criminal violence and banditry](#) in the North-West Region and the Niger Delta;
3. [Inter-communal/ethnic clashes](#);
4. [Farmers and herders](#) (also referred to as pastoralists) conflict in the North-West and North-East Regions, as well as in the so-called Middle Belt zone (North-Central Region), and increasingly in southern Nigeria;
5. [Criminal, gang and oil-related violence](#) in the Niger Delta;
6. [Unrest in the former Biafra state](#) (now South-East and South-South Regions);
7. [Protests that turn violent](#);
8. [Violence due to cults](#) (also referred to as confraternities or secret societies), particularly in the South-West and South-South Regions; and
9. [Election-related violence](#).

These conflicts, which have significant impact on the population in the respective regions, will be discussed in greater detail in the individual state chapters, divided under the following regions as follows:

- [North-West \(Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara states\)](#)
- [North-East \(Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe states\)](#)
- [North-Central \(Benue, FCT, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, and Plateau states\)](#)
- [South-East \(Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo states\)](#)
- [South-West \(Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo states\)](#)
- [South-South \(Akwa, Bayelsa, Cross, Delta, Edo, and Rivers states\)](#)

Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP)

Since 2009 the Nigerian military has fought Boko Haram in north-eastern Nigeria killing tens of thousands of civilians, displacing millions across the Lake Chad region and engaging in massive and widespread human rights abuses against civilians including killings, rape and other sexual violence, child recruitment, burning of homes, pillaging, abduction, deliberate attacks on civilian targets, forced displacement, and the use of explosives.³⁰² In the period January 2017 to December 2019, military operations by the Nigerian security forces against the two Boko Haram factions, Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (JAS) reportedly reduced the territorial control of these armed groups, yet during the same period 'Boko Haram has proven remarkably adaptable in its tactics.'^{303 304} Whilst the number of violent events involving Boko Haram

³⁰² Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Stabilizing Northeast Nigeria after Boko Haram, 3 May 2019, [url](#); UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#), p. 20

³⁰³ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Stabilizing Northeast Nigeria after Boko Haram, 3 May 2019, [url](#)

³⁰⁴ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Stabilizing Northeast Nigeria after Boko Haram, 3 May 2019, [url](#); ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 21 May 2019, [url](#); ISS, Has counter-terrorism become a profitable business in Nigeria?, 4 February



declined to 529 in 2018 compared to 621 in 2017, Boko Haram retained its pattern of violence with 40 % of the group's activities being directed against civilians.³⁰⁵ In 2019, a resurgence and escalation of the Boko Haram crisis was witnessed across north-eastern Nigeria, as was the growing power and influence of ISWAP in the North-East Region, through its military successes and 'filling gaps in governance and service delivery'³⁰⁶ of local communities.³⁰⁷

Boko Haram continued its attacks in 2019 and 2020 in the north-east, in particular in Borno state, resulting in clashes between armed forces and Boko Haram and the use of air strikes targeting training camps and hideouts of the group.³⁰⁸ In October 2019 Boko Haram, however, reported its first offensive against Nigeria's armed forces in the north-western state of Sokoto.³⁰⁹ ACLED reported at the end of 2019 that despite counter-insurgency operations by the Nigerian security forces, conflict in Borno state decreased only by 7 % compared to 2018.³¹⁰ In 2020, violence continued to escalate.³¹¹

The first six months of 2020 saw more violent attacks in Nigeria than during the whole of 2019, much of it attributed to ISWAP and Fulani extremists.³¹² During that time it was reported that Boko Haram continued to be a security threat in north-eastern Nigeria, targeting civilians and so-called 'super camps', where IDPs have been located alongside 'garrison towns' affecting IDPs security and protection outside of these areas.³¹³ For example in February 2020 they launched a deadly ambush at a checkpoint in Borno state killing 30 people.³¹⁴ In March 2020, at least 47 Nigerian soldiers were killed in Gorgi village in Borno state in a co-ordinated attack that a few days later also left 98 Chadian soldiers dead on Boma island, in the Lake Chad basin.³¹⁵ As a result, military operations were increased, killing 1 609 terrorist fighters and 375 security forces between February and April 2020.³¹⁶ Within the same timeframe, Boko Haram factions were responsible for the killing of 240 civilians.³¹⁷ In another example in Borno state, Boko Haram staged multiple large-scale attacks in June 2020, killing in one of them dozens of residents in the Gubio local government area (LGA).³¹⁸ In December 2020 more than 300 schoolboys and 80 students were kidnapped by Boko Haram and later released or rescued in Katsina state.³¹⁹

Boko Haram is reportedly expanding its reach from north-eastern Nigeria to the north-western states of Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara, and north-central state of Niger due to a lack of state

2020, [url](#); UN Security Council, Children and armed conflict in Nigeria, Report of the Secretary-General, 6 July 2020, [url](#), para. 8

³⁰⁵ ACLED, The new normal: Continuity and Boko Haram's violence in north east Nigeria, 11 February 2019, [url](#)

³⁰⁶ International Crisis Group, Facing the Challenge of the Islamic State in West Africa Province, 16 May 2019, [url](#)

³⁰⁷ International Crisis Group, Facing the Challenge of the Islamic State in West Africa Province, 16 May 2019, [url](#); ACAPS, Overview: Boko Haram, 13 March 2020, [url](#)

³⁰⁸ ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 2 October 2019, [url](#); ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 8-14 December 2019, 16 December 2019, [url](#); ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 24-30 November 2019, 3 December 2019, [url](#); UN Security Council, Children and armed conflict in Nigeria, Report of the Secretary-General, 6 July 2020, [url](#), para. 13; International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, Nigeria, filtered 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, n.d., [url](#)

³⁰⁹ ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 20-26 October 2019, 30 October 2019, [url](#)

³¹⁰ ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 8-14 December 2019, 16 December 2019, [url](#)

³¹¹ CFR, After Lake Chad Offensive, April One of Deadliest Months in Boko Haram Conflict, [Blog], 12 May 2020, [url](#)

³¹² IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring the impact of terrorism, November 2020, [url](#), p. 29

³¹³ UN Security Council, Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Report of the Secretary-General, 24 June 2020, [url](#), para. 23; UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#), pp. 6, 19 and 21

³¹⁴ ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 9-15 February 2020, 20 February 2020, [url](#)

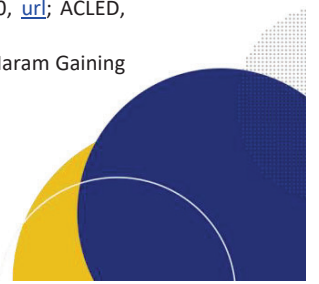
³¹⁵ UN Security Council, Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Report of the Secretary-General, 24 June 2020, [url](#), para. 23; ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 22-28 March 2020, 1 April 2020, [url](#)

³¹⁶ UN Security Council, Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Report of the Secretary-General, 24 June 2020, [url](#), para. 23; ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 29 March-4 April 2020, 8 April 2020, [url](#)

³¹⁷ UN Security Council, Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Report of the Secretary-General, 24 June 2020, [url](#), para. 23

³¹⁸ CFR, Massacre in Northern Nigeria Involves Cattle Rustling, Jihadis, and Vigilantes, [Blog], 10 June 2020, [url](#); ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 7-13 June 2020, 17 June 2020, [url](#)

³¹⁹ VoA, Fresh Kidnapping of 80 Students Shows Worsening Insecurities, 21 December 2020, [url](#); VoA, Boko Haram Gaining Foothold in Nigeria's Northwest?, 31 December 2020, [url](#)



protection in the area against ongoing insecurities stemming from farmer-herder violent clashes, organised crime (e.g. banditry, kidnapping and armed robbery).³²⁰

In 2020 it was further observed that cooperation and collaboration between (motorcycle) bandits and Boko Haram factions continued in several northern states, reportedly resulting for example in the attack on the convoy of Governor Babagana Zulum in Borno state, which killed 15 members of his security entourage.³²¹ In retaliation, the Nigerian defence forces increased its air operations.³²²

In January 2021 it was reported that ISWAP was setting up checkpoints on the road from Damaturu (Yobe) to Maiduguru (Borno) through which it ‘consistently abducted and stole from passengers’. ISWAP was ‘threatening to cut Maiduguri off from the rest of Borno through roadway ambushes’ and even attempting to ‘cut Borno itself off from the rest of Nigeria.’ In reaction to this immediate threat, Operation Tura Takaibango was launched (see [1.4.1.2](#)).³²³

Both ISWAP and JAS dispose of ‘millions of rounds of ammunition, thousands of assault rifles and assorted firearms, and hundreds of military vehicles, including armored tanks and self-propelled artillery’ often acquired via confiscating military materiel after overrunning military camps, convoys, patrols and the like.³²⁴

See further 1.3.2 Non-state armed actors, sub-section on [Boko Haram](#).

Criminal violence and banditry

Criminal violence by so-called ‘bandits’, the wider community and security forces continued in the North-West and North-Central Regions, in particular in Zamfara, Sokoto, Niger, Kaduna and Katsina states throughout 2019 and 2020.³²⁵ Reportedly, many armed bandits are of Fulani origin (as are the victims) and banditry includes armed robbery, murder, rape and cattle-rustling resulting in forced displacement, an increase in sexual and gender-based violence, a high number of out-of-school children in the region, negatively impacting on livelihoods, food security, and wider economic costs.³²⁶ Cross-border armed robberies by gangs have also been reported.³²⁷ Lawlessness and the lack of policing have been described as underlying factors for an increase in banditry or criminal violence.³²⁸ A 2019 amnesty programme enabled by the governors of Katsina and Zamfara states reportedly failed as two of the most powerful banditry groups, Buharin Daji and Dogo Gyedi, as well as others, did not

³²⁰ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. i, 12, 13; ISS, Nigeria’s growing insecurity offers expansion opportunities for Boko Haram, 3 August 2020, [url](#)

³²¹ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. i, 14; UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, 24 December 2020, [url](#), para. 24

³²² UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, 24 December 2020, [url](#), para. 24

³²³ Jamestown Foundation, Target Maiduguri: How Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP)’s Ramadan Offensive Will Counter Operation Tura Takai Bango, 9 April 2021, [url](#); Daily Post (Nigeria), Nigerian Army launches another operation codenamed ‘Tura Takaibango’ against Boko Haram, 7 January 2021, [url](#)

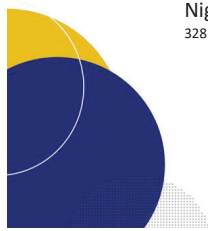
³²⁴ CFR, Boko Haram Arms Stockpiling Indicates Long-Term Threat, 18 September 2020, [url](#)

³²⁵ BBC News, Zamfara: Are banditry killings in Nigeria getting worse?, 14 April 2019, [url](#); ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 30 April 2019, [url](#); ECP, alert 2020! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding, February 2020, [url](#), pp. 96/97; International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 3; ISS, Nigeria’s growing insecurity offers expansion opportunities for Boko Haram, 3 August 2020, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, Nigeria, filtered 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, n.d., [url](#); The New Humanitarian, The longshot bid to end rampant banditry in Nigeria’s northwest, 19 January 2021, [url](#)

³²⁶ WANEP, Nigeria, Addressing Armed banditry in the North-West Region of Nigeria: Exploring the Potentials of a Multi-Dimensional Conflict Management Approach, 18 February 2020, [url](#), pp. 5-7; International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 5,6; IEP, Global Peace Index 2020, June 2020, [url](#), p. 23; CFR, Not All Violent Problems Require Violent Solutions: Banditry in Nigeria’s North-West, [Blog], 23 July 2020, [url](#); The New Humanitarian, The longshot bid to end rampant banditry in Nigeria’s northwest, 19 January 2021, [url](#)

³²⁷ IEP, Global Peace Index 2020, June 2020, [url](#), p. 23; BBC News, Katsina: The motorcycle bandits terrorising northern Nigeria, 5 July 2020, [url](#)

³²⁸ The New Humanitarian, The longshot bid to end rampant banditry in Nigeria’s northwest, 19 January 2021, [url](#)



participate, as the deal appeared to provide more concessions to the Fulanis while overlooking the Hausa, thereby stirring up Hausa/Fulani ethnic conflict and farmer-herder clashes.³²⁹

Kidnapping has also increased in numbers of incidents and geographical reach with three of the top 10 states with a high number of kidnapping incidents over the last decade being reported in the Niger Delta region, in particular in Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers states, though a sharp increase in kidnappings has occurred in Kaduna, Rivers, Katsina, Zamfara and Taraba states.³³⁰ Whilst kidnap attempts used to mainly target rich and important political figures and their families or relatives, more recent data suggests that less targeted kidnappings are taking place focusing instead on whole villages or pupils from schools, who may not be able to pay the demanded ransom, explaining the rise in fatalities from kidnapping attempts.³³¹ Armed forces responded with increased airstrikes and ground operations.³³² Community vigilante, civilian self-defence militias, and youth groups have also started reprisal attacks against armed groups.³³³

According to the West Africa Network of Peacebuilding (WANEP), armed bandits accounted for more than 1 000 civilian deaths between January and December 2019 in north-western Nigeria alone, which, according to the CFR's Nigeria Security Tracker, is 'greater than civilians killed by Boko Haram over the same period'.³³⁴ In February and March 2019 large-scale attacks against civilians and military forces by bandits left nearly 400 people dead.³³⁵ Nigeria Watch documented 4 410 fatalities in 2019 due to 1 313 criminal activities with the highest numbers recorded in Zamfara (1 142 fatalities), Katsina (379), Kaduna (365), Lagos (318) and Rivers (276) states.³³⁶ According to figures by the Council on Foreign Relations, 'more than 1 100 people were killed in 2018' in Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto, Kaduna, Niger and Kebbi due to banditry, 'over 2 200 were killed in 2019, and more than 1 600 fatalities were recorded between January – June 2020'.³³⁷

In 2020 approximately 400 people abducted for ransom by criminal gangs in Kaduna state and more than 200 violent events resulted in around 1 000 fatalities and 50 000 internally displaced.³³⁸ Global Rights recorded in 2020 at least 1 137 fatalities (compared to 974 in 2019) due to banditry related incidents in the North-West Region³³⁹, compared to 2 067 fatalities in 2019 in the North-West and North-Central Regions, according to Nigeria Watch.³⁴⁰ Nigeria Watch recorded that crime was the 'major cause of violent deaths in Nigeria in 2020'.³⁴¹ According to the same source 5 446 fatalities

³²⁹ ACAPS, CrisisInSight, Global Risk Analysis, March 2020, [url](#), p. 20; ACAPS, Nigeria, Banditry violence and displacement in the Northwest, 24 July 2020, [url](#), p. 3

³³⁰ SB Morgen, Nigeria's Kidnap Problem, The Economics of the kidnap industry in Nigeria, May 2020, [url](#), pp. 4 and 7. See also CFR, The Intelligence Response Team: Nigeria's Solution to the Expanding Wave of Kidnappings, [Blog], 3 July 2019, [url](#); CFR, Nigeria's Internal Security Problem, [Blog], 26 February 2021, [url](#)

³³¹ CFR, The Intelligence Response Team: Nigeria's Solution to the Expanding Wave of Kidnappings, [Blog], 3 July 2019, [url](#); ECP, alert 2020! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding, February 2020, [url](#), p. 97; SB Morgen, Nigeria's Kidnap Problem, The Economics of the kidnap industry in Nigeria, May 2020, [url](#), p. 7

³³² ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 23 April 2019, [url](#); ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 30 April 2019, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, Nigeria, filtered 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, n.d., [url](#)

³³³ ECP, alert 2020! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding, February 2020, [url](#), p. 97; ISS, Nigeria's growing insecurity offers expansion opportunities for Boko Haram, 3 August 2020, [url](#)

³³⁴ WANEP, Nigeria, Addressing Armed banditry in the North-West Region of Nigeria: Exploring the Potentials of a Multi-Dimensional Conflict Management Approach, 18 February 2020, [url](#), p. 2; CFR, Not All Violent Problems Require Violent Solutions: Banditry in Nigeria's North-West, [Blog], 23 July 2020, [url](#)

³³⁵ ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 30 April 2019, [url](#)

³³⁶ Nigeria Watch, Ninth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2019), n.d., [url](#), p. 8

³³⁷ Figures by the Council on Foreign Relations as published by ACAPS, Nigeria, Banditry violence and displacement in the Northwest, 24 July 2020, [url](#), p. 1

³³⁸ CFR, Ethnic and Religious Violence Worsen in Kaduna, [Blog], 5 February 2021, [url](#)

³³⁹ Global Rights, Mass Atrocities Casualties Tracking, 2020 Report, 22 February 2021, [url](#), p. 8

³⁴⁰ Nigeria Watch, Ninth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2019), n.d., [url](#), p. 9

³⁴¹ Nigeria Watch, Tenth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2020), [url](#), p. 9



were recorded in 2020 against 3 425 in 2019 and Katsina was the ‘most impacted state’ with 957 fatalities, ‘mainly because of banditry and kidnapping’.³⁴²

Between December 2020 and March 2021, more than 600 abductions have taken place from schools in northern Nigeria, such as: more than 300 students in Kankara, Katsina state in December 2020, 27 school boys and their teachers on 17 February 2021 in Kagara, Niger state and on 26 February 2021 317 school girls in Jangebe, Zamfara state (see also [Chapter 2](#), in individual state sections). The students were released later. The attacks on schools in the North West Region have been carried out, according to the authorities, by so-called ‘bandits’, ‘a loose term for kidnappers, armed robbers, cattle rustlers, Fulani herdsmen and other armed militia operating in the region who are largely motivated by money.’³⁴³ In the first four months of 2021, abductions have taken place throughout Nigeria.³⁴⁴ SB Morgen commented in February 2021: ‘The Kagara school abduction is the latest addition to a growing list of school abductions in Northern Nigeria carried out by terror groups and organised armed militias for both economic and ideological reasons.’³⁴⁵ Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the mass kidnapping of school children in Kankara in December 2020. Jamestown’s analyst Zenn said that, if this is correct, ‘Boko Haram is expanding its sphere of influence’. He reported that many pledges of loyalty to Boko Haram leader Shekau came from North West Nigeria. According to security officials, Boko Haram had recruited local gangs to kidnap the students.³⁴⁶

A Brookings article also noted that ‘northwestern Nigeria has become the safe haven of increasingly active terrorist groups, including the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS); Jama’at Nusrat al Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM); Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb; a splinter of Boko Haram popularly referred to as the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP); and the Fulani herdsmen of West Africa [...]’.³⁴⁷

According to estimates from an International Crisis Group employee, about 500 people were killed due to criminal violence in May 2020 across the north-west of Nigeria.³⁴⁸ In June 2020 armed men on 200 motorcycles killed at least 20 people and stole ‘thousands’ of livestock in an attack against the Kadisau community in Katsina state.³⁴⁹ Reportedly, attacks by these motorcycle bandits were rooted in competition over resources between farmer and herders, but these armed groups are now being accused of resorting to criminality as it is considered more lucrative than herding.³⁵⁰

See further 1.3.2 Non-state armed actors, sub-section on [Farmer-Herder conflicts \(including vigilante groups and armed criminal bandits\)](#).

Inter-communal/ethnic clashes

Long-standing tribal, ethnic, religious and community disputes continued to lead to violence, conflict and unrest.³⁵¹ According to a Search for Common Ground (SfCG) analysis of ACLED data, inter-communal violence represented the ‘most severe threat to civilian lives’ in Nigeria in 2019.³⁵² Nigeria Watch recorded 1 012 fatalities due to inter-communal violence in 2019, due to clashes over land located in ‘boundary areas, grazing spaces, chieftaincy and market issues’, as well as ‘sharing formula

³⁴² Nigeria Watch, Tenth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2020), [url](#), p. 9

³⁴³ BBC, Nigeria's school abductions: Why children are being targeted, 2 March 2021, [url](#)

³⁴⁴ For an example of abductions and other violent incidents in just one day, see Human Rights Watch, Another Day of Violence Across Nigeria, 29 April 2021, [url](#)

³⁴⁵ SB Morgen, Sitrep: What is happening in Niger State?, 18 February 2021, [url](#)

³⁴⁶ BBC, Nigeria school attack: Was it really Boko Haram? 18 December 2020, [url](#)

³⁴⁷ Brookings, Rising insecurity in northwest Nigeria: Terrorism thinly disguised as banditry, 18 February 2021, [url](#)

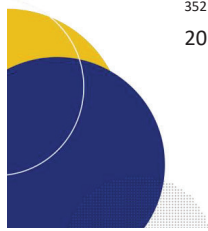
³⁴⁸ CFR, Recent Flare Up in Violence Across Northwestern Nigeria, [Blog], 3 June 2020, [url](#)

³⁴⁹ CFR, Recent Flare Up in Violence Across Northwestern Nigeria, [Blog], 3 June 2020, [url](#); ISS, Nigeria’s growing insecurity offers expansion opportunities for Boko Haram, 3 August 2020, [url](#)

³⁵⁰ BBC News, Katsina: The motorcycle bandits terrorising northern Nigeria, 5 July 2020, [url](#)

³⁵¹ HRW, World Report 2020: Events of 2019 – Nigeria, 14 January 2020, [url](#); Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report: Nigeria, 3 December 2020, [url](#), para. 2.58; HRW, World Report 2021: Events of 2020 – Nigeria, 23 January 2021, [url](#)

³⁵² UK, All Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief, Nigeria: Unfolding genocide?, 15 June 2020, [url](#), p. 4



for royalties paid by oil companies'.³⁵³ Specific inter-state communal clashes in 2019 were 'land disputes between Obubra/Abanwan communities in Cross River State and Izzi/Ikwo communities in Ebonyi State; Ikot Offiong in Cross River and Oku-Iboku in Akwa Ibom; Agila in Benue State and Ngwo in Ebonyi State'.³⁵⁴ Global Rights noted that in 2020 the North-Central Region's 'legacy of communal conflicts' added 'an extra layer of violence – pillage attacks by armed militia', whilst the South-East Region witnessed 'an upsurge in inter-communal crises', especially in Ebonyi state that led to 47 fatalities and the displacement of hundreds of people.³⁵⁵

Since April 2019 a cycle of violence and retaliatory attacks has once again occurred between the Tiv and Jukun in Taraba and Benue states (North-East and North-Central Regions), resulting for example in the killing of 22 civilians in June 2019.³⁵⁶ A variety of reasons are provided for this recurring conflict, such as politics, land ownership, 'indigene/settler syndrome'³⁵⁷, suspicion, and lack of political will to tackle emerging contemporary challenges'.³⁵⁸

In 2020, Nigeria Watch reported 700 fatalities due to inter-communal clashes, with 'access to land and grazing space' remaining 'key issues'.³⁵⁹ At least 19 people were killed and about 100 houses burned in fighting between members of different ethnic groups who were disputing fishing rights in the north-eastern Taraba state in April 2020.³⁶⁰

In August 2020 violent attacks and reprisal attacks between Hausa ethnic group, who are mainly Muslims, of Zango Urban and Christian Atyab occurred in four local government areas (LGAs) of southern Kaduna state, North-West Region, claiming more than 100 lives and rendering thousands homeless, whilst 'reawakening historical ethnic and religious tension and fault lines'.³⁶¹

See further [Farmers and Herders conflict](#) and [Criminal violence and banditry](#) above.

Farmers and herders' conflict³⁶²

Tensions between farmers, who are mainly Christians and from different ethnic backgrounds, and nomadic or semi-nomadic herders, who are reportedly made up of 90 % from the Fulani ethnic group and who are majority Muslim, have increased over the years. This is due to complex and inter-related causes including an increase in population, related resource scarcity and desertification, an increase in extremist ideology and criminality in the region, but also due to internal socio-cultural dynamics within and between farmers and herder groups.³⁶³ Estimates suggest that since 2001, 60 000 people

³⁵³ Nigeria Watch, Ninth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2019), n.d., [url](#), p. 15

³⁵⁴ Nigeria Watch, Ninth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2019), n.d., [url](#), p. 15

³⁵⁵ Global Rights, Mass Atrocities Casualties Tracking, 2020 Report, 22 February 2021, [url](#), p. 9

³⁵⁶ ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 11 June 2019, [url](#); ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 25 June 2019, [url](#); This Day, Ishaku and the crisis in southern Taraba, 11 June 2020, [url](#)

³⁵⁷ Contextual background information on Indigene and Settlers can be found, for example, in the COI compilation by ARC, Nigeria: The situation of Indigenes and Settlers, 19 January 2018, [url](#)

³⁵⁸ Daily Trust, Taraba: Why Tiv/Jukun Crisis Refuses to End, 1 September 2019, [url](#)

³⁵⁹ Nigeria Watch, Tenth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 18

³⁶⁰ Al Jazeera, Nigeria: At least 19 killed in ethnic fighting in Taraba, 15 April 2020, [url](#)

³⁶¹ Daily Trust, In Southern Kaduna IDP Camps, Atyab, Fulani, Hausa Shed Tears, 22 August 2020, [url](#)

³⁶² As highlighted in the UK All Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief report the terms 'farmer' and 'herder' are an oversimplification and it is understood that the farmer-herder conflict and in general inter-communal violence described in this report can be along resource-based, religious or ethnic lines or a combination of some or all of them. These conflicts should be understood within their wider interlinked communalities and differences in a 'complex society divided along tribal, political, linguistic, ethnic, [religious] geographical and class lines'. See ISPI, Herders and farmers in Nigeria: Coexistence, Conflict, and Insurgency, [Commentary], 19 March 2020, [url](#); UK, All Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief, Nigeria: Unfolding genocide?, 15 June 2020, [url](#), p. 11

³⁶³ USAID/Mercy Corps, No tribe in crime, Changing Pastoralism and Conflict in Nigeria's Middle Belt, July 2019, [url](#), p. 4; ISPI, Herders and farmers in Nigeria: Coexistence, Conflict, and Insurgency, [Commentary], 19 March 2020, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 6; UK, All Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief, Nigeria: Unfolding genocide?, 15 June 2020, [url](#), pp. 5-10; IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2020, November 2020, [url](#), p. 98



have been killed.³⁶⁴ The U.S. Congressional Research Service explained that ‘Farmer-herder tensions in Nigeria often overlap with ethnic and religious cleavages, heightening the risk of escalation and complicating attempts at conflict resolution’, which to date ‘have proven ineffective’.³⁶⁵

In 2018 International Crisis Group referred to the violence as ‘spiralling’, ‘Nigeria’s gravest security challenge’, and ‘evolving from spontaneous reactions to provocations and now to deadlier planned attacks’.³⁶⁶ According to Search for Common Ground (SfCG), inter-communal violence represented the ‘most severe threat to civilian lives’ in Nigeria in 2019³⁶⁷ and the International Crisis Group described Nigeria’s North-West Region in 2020 as being ‘beset by violence between herders and farmers’.³⁶⁸ Global Rights noted that the North-Central Region had become ‘a theatre of protracted “farmer-herder conflicts” and that in 2020 there was an “upsurge in nomadic herders” attacks on farmers and their farmlands’ in the South-West Region.³⁶⁹

The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) referred to an ‘increased terror threat from radicalised Fulani’³⁷⁰, which is exacerbated by organised crime, including cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom and village raids, and jihadist groups, in particular in Nigeria’s north-west.³⁷¹ In north-western Nigeria herders have found protection and support in so-called ‘bandits’, whilst farmers are supported by community and state-sponsored vigilantes.³⁷² See further 1.3.2 Non-state armed actors, sub-section on [Farmer-Herder conflicts \(including vigilante groups and armed criminal bandits\)](#).

Whilst up until 2018 the farmer-herder conflict was mainly confined to the north-western, north-eastern and Middle Belt areas, throughout 2019 and 2020 has since expanded towards the South-West and South-East Regions, as herders search for new grazing routes for their cattle, and farmers increasingly encroach upon grazing lands, and land and water resources are increasingly scarce due to population growth and desertification. These tensions are resulting in increased clashes between ‘self-defence’ militias and herdsmen in light of lack of effective state protection, a rise in casualties, displacement and material damage.³⁷³ Delta, Rivers, Cross River, Ondo, Abia and Imo are among the states in southern Nigeria where clashes between herders and farmers are reported to occur with more regularity, intensity and causing more bloodshed.³⁷⁴

It is reported that the farmer-herder conflict in the Middle Belt area has killed more than 10 000 people in the last decade, almost 4 000 individuals between 2016 and 2018, and 2 000 in 2018 alone.³⁷⁵ Nigeria Watch documented 616 fatalities in 2020 (compared to 549 in 2019 and 1 882 in

³⁶⁴ IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2020, November 2020, [url](#), p. 98. For an overview of the recent violent clashes between farmer and herder communities between January 2016 and October 2018, including the Nigerian government’s reported failure to investigate, arrest and prosecute perpetrators of attacks, see International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria’s Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#) and AI, Nigeria, The harvest of death – three years of bloody clashes between farmers and herders in Nigeria, 17 December 2018, [url](#)

³⁶⁵ US, CRS, Nigeria: Current Issues and U.S. Policy, updated 18 September 2020, [url](#), p. 9

³⁶⁶ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria’s Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#)

³⁶⁷ UK, All Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief, Nigeria: Unfolding genocide?, 15 June 2020, [url](#), p. 4

³⁶⁸ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. i

³⁶⁹ Global Rights, Mass Atrocities Casualties Tracking, 2020 Report, 22 February 2021, [url](#), pp. 9 and 10

³⁷⁰ IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2020, November 2020, [url](#), p. 98

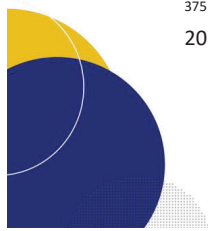
³⁷¹ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. i

³⁷² International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 3

³⁷³ UN Security Council, Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Report of the Secretary-General, 5 July 2019, [url](#), para. 23; ECP, alert 2020! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding, February 2020, [url](#), p. 97; International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 6-9; CFR, Nigeria’s Internal Security Problem, [Blog], 26 February 2021, [url](#); CFR, Security Deteriorating in Nigeria’s Former “Biafra”, [Blog], 8 February 2021, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, Nigeria, filtered 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, n.d., [url](#); IFRA-Nigeria, Pastoralism and Islamic practice in Fulbe communities of northern Nigeria and Niger, 2020, p.28 [copy available via EASO]

³⁷⁴ Onah, E. I. et al., Applying restorative justice in resolving the farmers-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria, January 2020, [url](#)

³⁷⁵ AI, Nigeria: The harvest of death – three years of bloody clashes between farmers and herders in Nigeria, 17 December 2018, [url](#); Ilo, U. et al., The Deadliest Conflict You’ve Never Heard of, 23 January 2019, [url](#)



2018³⁷⁶) due to farmer-herder clashes in ‘no fewer than 23 states’, with ‘Kaduna recording the highest number of fatalities (203), followed by Plateau (106) and Benue (96)’.³⁷⁷ Between 2018 and 2020, ACLED recorded 602 incidents involving violence against civilians by Fulani militias: 307 in 2018, 102 in 2019 and 193 in 2020.³⁷⁸ In 2020 ACLED reported that Fulani ethnic militia committed 232 instances of violence.³⁷⁹

See further [Criminal violence and banditry](#) above and 1.3.2 [Farmer-Herder conflicts](#).

Criminal, gang and oil-related violence in Niger Delta

The Niger Delta comprises of the nine states of Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers.³⁸⁰

Since 1956, when oil was discovered in Bayelsa state³⁸¹, historical tensions and the emergence of armed groups in the Niger Delta³⁸² have been linked with the region’s history of economic exploitation, control of resources, environmental pollution and marginalisation of the local communities hardly benefitting from the region’s resources.³⁸³ After 2009, violence in Niger Delta saw a sharp decrease³⁸⁴, but more recently armed militancy has re-emerged³⁸⁵, with a new generation of militants threatening war against the state.³⁸⁶

Conflict risk and lethal violence increased in the Niger Delta in 2019, compared to 2018, due to organised crime, cult clashes, political tensions, land disputes and communal violence.³⁸⁷ In 2019 most deaths occurred through gang violence, militancy/counter-insurgency operations and communal conflict, with on average at least three fatalities for every reported incident of gang violence and militancy/counter-insurgency and on average 2.5 fatalities for every communal conflict incident.³⁸⁸

In 2020 there was an increase in conflict risk and violence in the Niger Delta, despite a decrease in reported fatalities compared to 2019.³⁸⁹ Similarly to 2019, the most violent states in the Niger Delta in 2020 were Delta, Rivers, Edo, and Cross River, according to open-source data collected and elaborated by the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND).³⁹⁰

Most fatalities occurred in the context of organised crime, gang violence, communal conflict, human rights violations and mob justice, with on average at least two fatalities per every incident of gang violence and militancy/counter-insurgency operation and 1.6 fatalities for every incident of criminality, which included piracy, kidnapping, robbery and killing for ritualistic purposes.³⁹¹ The states

³⁷⁶ Nigeria Watch, Ninth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2019), n.d., [url](#), p. 5

³⁷⁷ Nigeria Watch, Tenth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 10

³⁷⁸ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

³⁷⁹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

³⁸⁰ Ajodo-Adebanjoko A., Towards ending conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta region, 2017, [url](#), p. 11

³⁸¹ Ajodo-Adebanjoko A., Towards ending conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta region, 2017, [url](#), p. 10

³⁸² PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), p. 2

³⁸³ Ebegbulem J. C., Ekpe D., Adejumo T. O., Oil Exploration and Poverty in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria: A Critical Analysis, March 2013, [url](#), pp. 280-281; Ajodo-Adebanjoko A., Towards ending conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta region, 2017 [url](#), pp. 9-10; US, CRS, Nigeria: Current Issues and U.S. Policy, updated 18 September 2020, [url](#); p. 10; PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) p. 2

³⁸⁴ USIP, Conflict in the Niger Delta, June 2011, [url](#)

³⁸⁵ Ajodo-Adebanjoko A., Towards ending conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta region, 2017, [url](#), p. 24; Australia, DFAT, Country Information Report, Nigeria, 3 December 2020, [url](#), p. 22

³⁸⁶ CFR, Nigeria Security Tracker, last updated 2 February 2021, [url](#); Vanguard, EndSARS: Tension as N’Delta militants roll out 11-point demand, 25 October 2020, [url](#)

³⁸⁷ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report, January - December 2019, 4 February 2020, [url](#), p. 1; CFR, Significant Rise of Insecurity in the Niger Delta Through 2019, [Blog], 26 February 2020, [url](#)

³⁸⁸ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report, January - December 2019, 4 February 2020, [url](#), p. 1

³⁸⁹ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report, January - December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), p. 1

³⁹⁰ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), p. 1. See also Global Rights, Mass Atrocities Casualties Tracking, 2020 Report, 22 February 2021, [url](#), p. 10

³⁹¹ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report, January - December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), p. 1



with the most reported conflict fatalities were Delta, Rivers, Edo and Cross River, whilst the most violent local government areas (LGAs) were Oredo (Edo), Ughelli North (Delta), Yenagoa (Bayelsa), Oshimili North (Delta), Port Harcourt (Rivers), Biase (Cross River), Ethiope West (Delta), and Udu (Delta), respectively.³⁹²

See further 1.3.2 [Niger Delta Armed Groups](#).

Unrest in the former Biafra state (now South-East and South-South Regions)

Biafra constituted the former Eastern Region of Nigeria, which declared unilaterally its independence from Nigeria in May 1967 and ceased to exist as such in January 1970.³⁹³ It is mainly inhabited by the Igbo (Ibo), mostly Christian, people.³⁹⁴ Conflict over land and water, which is acquiring ethnic and religious overtones, amongst farmers and herders, as well as criminal activity is prevalent.³⁹⁵ Nigeria Watch documented 21 fatalities in 2019 during security operatives in Imo, Anambra, Delta and Abia states³⁹⁶ and 44 fatalities in 2020.³⁹⁷

In 2020, ACLED recorded five instances of violence by the separatist movement Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), a proscribed terrorist group since September 2017³⁹⁸, and one instance by the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), which took place on 23 July 2020.³⁹⁹ Since August 2020 violence between IPOB and the Nigerian security forces has 'escalated', with reported killings of civilians and retaliatory security incidents.⁴⁰⁰ Global Rights noted that 'it was also clear that the government sought to suppress' the IPOB in 2020 by 'deliberately' targeting persons suspected to be IPOB members, which they substantiated by reports of arbitrary arrests and detention of hundreds of men, as well as the killings of 'a least 21 persons'.⁴⁰¹

In 2021, security forces increased operations against the Eastern Security Network (ESN), such as on 18 February 2021 when helicopters and hundreds of troops were deployed in Orlu and Orsu areas (Imo state), razing several ESN camps. The security situation in South East Nigeria, is rapidly deteriorating, as several incidents in Abia, Imo, Ebonyi, and other southeastern states show.⁴⁰² On 5 April 2021, unknown gunmen stormed the headquarters of the Imo State Police Command and the Owerri Correctional Centre (Imo state) and freed more than 2 000 inmates.⁴⁰³ The attack, allegedly by members of the ESN (the armed wing of IPOB), led The New Humanitarian to comment: 'The Igbo-speaking southeast is Nigeria's new zone of instability.' While IPOB intended to create a 'new Biafra' via a referendum, 'the ESN, formed in December last year, has taken a far more radical position. It fought with security forces in the town of Orlu in late January, after which IPOB declared that the "second Nigeria/Biafra war" had begun.'⁴⁰⁴

See further 1.3.2 Non-state armed actors, sub-section on [Biafran Separatists](#).

³⁹² PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report, January - December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), p. 1

³⁹³ Encyclopedia Britannica, Biafra, Latest update: 4 March 2015, [url](#)

³⁹⁴ Encyclopedia Britannica, Biafra, Latest update: 4 March 2015, [url](#)

³⁹⁵ CFR, Security Deteriorating in Nigeria's Former "Biafra", [Blog], 8 February 2021, [url](#)

³⁹⁶ Nigeria Watch, Ninth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2019), n.d., [url](#), p. 12

³⁹⁷ Nigeria Watch, Tenth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2010), n.d., [url](#), p. 13

³⁹⁸ Pulse NG (Nigeria), Tension in Abia as soldiers 'block entrance' of Nnamdi Kanu's residence ahead of his parents' burial, 12 February 2020, [url](#)

³⁹⁹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁰ CFR, Security Deteriorating in Nigeria's Former "Biafra", [Blog], 8 February 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁰¹ Global Rights, Mass Atrocities Casualties Tracking, 2020 Report, 22 February 2021, [url](#), p. 9

⁴⁰² PLAC, IPOB, ESN Security Clashes Worsen in the South East, 28 April 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁰³ Leadership, UPDATED: Gunmen Attack Imo Police Hqrts, Correctional Centre, Free 2000 Suspects, Inmates, 5 April 2021, [url](#); New Humanitarian (The), Nigeria's unhappy union: How growing insecurity threatens the country's future, 8 April 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁴ New Humanitarian (The), Nigeria's unhappy union: How growing insecurity threatens the country's future, 8 April 2021, [url](#). See also CFR, Security Deteriorating in Nigeria's Former "Biafra", 9 February 2021, [url](#)



Protests that turn violent

According to the Global Peace Index 2020, Nigeria had the most demonstrations and the largest increase in 2018, rising from 6 % to 79 %.⁴⁰⁵

In October 2020 peaceful protests erupted across many cities calling for, and ultimately resulting in, the disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), an elite police unit accused of serious human rights abuses. The protesters were met with intimidation, harassment and attacks by Nigerian security forces, leaving at least 10 protesters dead and hundreds injured.⁴⁰⁶ In November 2020 legal actions were launched against individuals and organisations affiliated with the protests, including seizing travel documents and freezing bank accounts.⁴⁰⁷

Violence due to cults

The term 'cult' in Nigeria is colloquially used for different types of groups, whose motivations or modes operandi are kept secret: traditional secret societies, vigilante groups, ethnic militias, and student confraternities or university cults.⁴⁰⁸ See further 1.3.2 [Cults](#) and EASO's [COI report, Nigeria, Targeting of individuals, November 2018](#).

These groups, such as the Vikings, Black Axe, One Million Boys, Awawa Boys, Eiye and Buccaneers, are banned in Nigeria, and used to only operate on university campuses, accused of serious violence, including killings.⁴⁰⁹ The phenomenon of cultism originated when several rival confraternities emerged in schools, colleges and streets causing violence over supremacy battles. Cultism is considered to be a response to poor living conditions and limited access to resources.⁴¹⁰ Their chain of command is similar to militia groups, they use code language, and each group has insignia bearing their favourite weapon and colour. Hundreds of cult members have been arrested and prosecuted over the years. However, they continue to operate, especially on university campuses.⁴¹¹ Starting from the 2000s, cultist groups have been engaged in criminal activities, including human trafficking, as well as in the battle for the control of social, economic and political resources.⁴¹²

Reportedly these societies continued to operate in 2019 and 2020 by engaging in off-campus violence (including but not limited to attacks, intimidations and murder) and crime (e.g., robberies, drugs and people trafficking), especially in Lagos and Rivers state, particularly Port Harcourt.⁴¹³

For 2019, Nigeria Watch recorded cultism in 21 states in Nigeria resulting in 536 fatalities through '168 lethal cult incidents compared to 446 deaths reported in 153 incidents in 2018'.⁴¹⁴ ACLED's dataset recorded in the whole of Nigeria in 2020, 35 cult-related incidents, resulting in 58 fatalities. Whilst the following cults were specifically mentioned - Black Axe, Eiye confraternity, Supreme Vikings, Only God

⁴⁰⁵ IEP, Global Peace Index 2020, June 2020, [url](#), p. 34

⁴⁰⁶ CFR, Protests, Chaos in Nigeria, [Blog], 21 October 2020, [url](#); Al (UK), Nigeria: attacks on #EndSARS protesters leave 10 dead and hundreds injured, 15 October 2020, [url](#); UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, 24 December 2020, [url](#), para. 24; ACLED Lessons from the #ENDSARS movement, 9 February 2021, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, Nigeria, filtered 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁰⁷ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, Nigeria, filtered 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁰⁸ France, OFPRA, Sociétés secrètes traditionnelles et confraternités étudiantes au Nigeria, 27 February 2015, [url](#), p. 2

⁴⁰⁹ BBC News, Nigeria's campus cults: Buccaneers, Black Axe and other feared groups, 2 June 2020, [url](#)

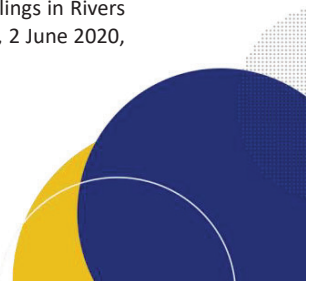
⁴¹⁰ IFRA-Nigeria, Contemporary Nigerian cultist groups demystifying the invisibilities, 2 March 2019, [url](#), p. 9

⁴¹¹ BBC, Nigeria's campus cults: Buccaneers, Black Axe and other feared groups, 2 June 2020, [url](#)

⁴¹² IFRA-Nigeria, Contemporary Nigerian cultist groups demystifying the invisibilities, 2 March 2019, [url](#), pp. 2-3; N. R. Nwaogu, V. E. Welii, M. D. Mbee; Evaluation of Youth Vulnerability to Community Cultism in Selected States in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, 2019, [url](#), pp. 1-3

⁴¹³ Nigeria Watch, Ninth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2019), n.d., [url](#), p. 8; IFRA-Nigeria, Contemporary Nigerian Cultist Groups: Demystifying the 'invisibilities', 2 March 2019, [url](#), pp. 2, 3, 18-23; Al, Nigeria: Rise in Cult Related killings in Rivers state, 9 January 2020, [url](#); BBC News, Nigeria's campus cults: Buccaneers, Black Axe and other feared groups, 2 June 2020, [url](#)

⁴¹⁴ Nigeria Watch, Ninth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2019), n.d., [url](#), p. 8



cult, Body Cult, and Klans cult - the majority of actors involved in cult-related incidents were recorded as Unidentified Cult militia.⁴¹⁵

Election-related violence

See further [Key information](#) on Nigeria.

General elections in February 2019 and regional elections in March 2019 resulted in reported cases of election-related violence and protests, including at least 40 fatalities and dozens of people injured, abduction of staff members of the Independent National Electoral Commission in Katsina and Benue states, as well as the burning of election materials and the intimidation of voters in other areas.⁴¹⁶ In November 2019 election-related violence, including the killing of six people at polling units, was recorded in Kogi and Bayelsa states ahead of governorship elections.⁴¹⁷ In September 2020 election-related violence surrounding the respective gubernatorial elections was reported in Ondo and Edo states.⁴¹⁸

1.4.1.2 Major military operations

In the last five years reportedly over 40 military operations have been launched or re-launched – more than at any other time - by the Nigerian Armed Forces aimed at countering several security challenges such as terrorism, farmer-herder clashes, kidnapping, banditry, militancy, ethnic violence and oil-related thefts.⁴¹⁹

A map by SB Morgen locates a number of these military operations, targeting criminal activities (or 'banditry'), specifically kidnapping, between June 2011 and March 2020.⁴²⁰

In the period January 2017 to December 2019, military operations by the Nigerian security forces against the two Boko Haram factions, Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (JAS) reportedly reduced the territorial control of these armed groups.⁴²¹ To name just a few military operations in 2020: in March 2020, the military conducted an offensive in Ngamdu in Borno, reportedly killing 105 ISWAP members.⁴²² In April 2020, 89 gunmen were killed in an anti-terror operation in the north-western state of Zamfara, which also saw the rescue of five hostages.⁴²³ In May and June 2020, a military operation across the North-West and North-Central Regions, which started in Katsina state, killed up to 392 gunmen who had been involved in criminal activities, including banditry.⁴²⁴

Throughout 2019 and 2020, several security operations were launched, while others already underway continued or were expanded. Below is a non-exhaustive brief overview of some the military

⁴¹⁵ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁴¹⁶ ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 19 February 2019, [url](#); ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 26 February 2019, [url](#); ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 12 March 2019, [url](#); ECP, alert 2020! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding, February 2020, [url](#), p. 96

⁴¹⁷ ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 10-16 November 2020, 19 November 2020, [url](#)

⁴¹⁸ ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 13-19 September 2020, 23 September 2020, [url](#)

⁴¹⁹ UN Security Council, Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Report of the Secretary-General, 5 July 2019, [url](#), para. 23; Daily Trust, Insecurity Persist as Military Launches Over 40 Operations In 5 Years, 29 June 2020, [url](#). See also operations listed in EASO's 2018 security situation report: EASO, COI Report Nigeria, Security Situation, November 2018, [url](#), p. 19

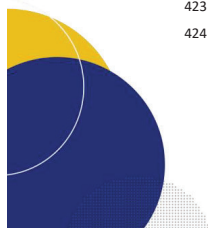
⁴²⁰ SB Morgen, Nigeria's Kidnap Problem, The Economics of the kidnap industry in Nigeria, May 2020, [url](#), p. 3

⁴²¹ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Stabilizing Northeast Nigeria after Boko Haram, 3 May 2019, [url](#); ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa, 21 May 2019, [url](#); UN Security Council, Children and armed conflict in Nigeria, Report of the Secretary-General, 6 July 2020, [url](#), para. 8

⁴²² Jamestown Foundation, Counter-Boko Haram Offensives in Chad, Niger, and Nigeria under the Spectre of Coronavirus: Public Relations or Permanent Destruction?, 1 May 2020, [url](#)

⁴²³ CGTN Africa, 89 gunmen killed, 5 hostages rescued in Nigerian military operation, 26 April 2020, [url](#)

⁴²⁴ CGTN Africa, Nigerian military kills 392 gunmen in major operation, 5 June 2020, [url](#)



operations referred to in sources consulted for this report and whose operations were ongoing within the research timeframe:

Operation Accord

Operation Accord was launched in May 2020 to tackle banditry in the North-West and North-Central Regions.⁴²⁵ In November 2020 it was reported that the operation was successful in arresting illegal miners and ‘eliminating scores of bandits’ in Zamfara and Katsina states.⁴²⁶

Operation Amotekun

In January 2020, Operation Amotekun was launched in the South-West Region to fight insecurity in the region, especially the rise in kidnappings, house invasions, and robbery.⁴²⁷ It has its headquarters in Ibadan, Oyo state and its operational base in Gbongan, Osun state.⁴²⁸ However, it was reported that the Nigerian Government has opposed this operation, ‘branding it as an illegal institution’.⁴²⁹

Operation Atilogwu (also known as ‘Dance for Peace’)

The Operation Dance for Peace was launched in November 2020 in the South-East Region with the aim to maintain security in the region.⁴³⁰ According to news reporting the operation was born out of Operation Python Dance, which faced harsh criticism for its alleged human rights violations in the South-East Region.⁴³¹

Operation Ayem Akpatuma (I, II and III)

Operation Ayem Akpatuma was launched in February 2018 covering the North-West Region (esp. Kaduna state), the North-East Region (esp. Taraba state), and North-Central Region (esp. Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa, and Niger states), to tackle banditry, kidnapping, cattle rustling and armed militia.⁴³² In October 2019 the 2nd phase of the operation was launched and by September 2020 this operation entered its 3rd phase, reportedly killing Benue state’s ‘most wanted criminal’ in the same month.⁴³³

Operation Cat Race

Operation Cat Race was launched in October 2019 in Niger state to deal with increased banditry, cattle rustling and other criminal activities.⁴³⁴ However, in an earlier article published in May 2018 it was reported that Operation Ayem Akpatuma [I] was also known as Operation Cat Race, which ended ‘three months after it commenced in six states across the country’.⁴³⁵

Operation Crocodile Smile

In 2015/2016, the Nigerian Army launched its first so-called Operation Crocodile Smile aimed at fighting widespread criminal activities such as kidnapping, militancy, oil theft and piracy in the Niger

⁴²⁵ Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report: Nigeria, 3 December 2020, [url](#)

⁴²⁶ Guardian (The) Nigeria, Troops arrest 11 illegal miners, eliminate scores of bandits – DHQ, 23 November 2020, [url](#)

⁴²⁷ Guardian (The) Nigeria, Operation Amotekun: Metaphor for FG’s indecisiveness on insecurity, 18 January 2020, [url](#); CFR, Facing Rising Insecurity, Southwest Governors in Nigeria Launch Policing Initiative, [Blog], 24 January 2020, [url](#); UN Security Council, Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Report of the Secretary-General, 24 June 2020, [url](#), para. 23

⁴²⁸ Guardian (The) Nigeria, Operation Amotekun: Metaphor for FG’s indecisiveness on insecurity, 18 January 2020, [url](#); Business Day (Nigeria), Five things you need to know about Operation Amotekun, 4 March 2020, [url](#)

⁴²⁹ Sahara Reporters, Nigerian Government Declares ‘Operation Amotekun’ illegal, 14 January 2020, [url](#)

⁴³⁰ Daily Trust, Insecurity Persist as Military Launches Over 40 Operations In 5 Years, 29 June 2020, [url](#)

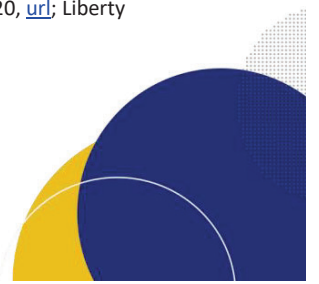
⁴³¹ Pulse (Nigeria), Army says you should no longer call it ‘Operation Python Dance’, 17 October 2019, [url](#); Daily Trust, Army Concludes Plan To Launch Operation “Crocodile Smile” In South East, 17 November 2020, [url](#)

⁴³² Daily Trust, Insecurity Persist as Military Launches Over 40 Operations In 5 Years, 29 June 2020, [url](#)

⁴³³ The Sun (Nigeria), Great expectations as army launches Operation Ayem Akpatema II in Taraba, 10 October 2019, [url](#); Nigerian Tribune, DHQ Adopts Position of Operation Ayem Akpatuma 111 on Gana’s Death, 10 September 2020, [url](#); Liberty TV, Operation Ayem Akpatuma 3: Soldiers Kill Benue’s Most Wanted Criminal – Gana, 10 September 2020, [url](#)

⁴³⁴ Daily Trust, Insecurity Persist as Military Launches Over 40 Operations In 5 Years, 29 June 2020, [url](#)

⁴³⁵ Pule (Nigeria), Army ends Exercise Ayem Akpatuma in Benue, Taraba, Kogi, 15 May 2018, [url](#)



Delta.⁴³⁶ The operation was still functional in the autumn of 2020 and armed forces were part of joint security operations in Niger Delta, as well as reportedly involved in quelling protests against the #EndSARS movement.⁴³⁷

Operation Egwu Eke I, II and III

Operation Egwu Eke I was launched in October 2017 to tackle cultism, militancy, and kidnapping in Niger Delta.⁴³⁸ The second phase was launched in August 2018 to counter kidnappings, robberies, cultism, and secessionism in the south-east.⁴³⁹ The third phase was launched in January 2019 to counter violence before, during and after the 2019 general elections.⁴⁴⁰

Operation Harbin Kunama I, II, III and IV

Launched in 2015 to counter cattle rustling and armed banditry in the Dansadau Forest of Zamfara state.⁴⁴¹ The second part of Operation Harbin Junama was launched in July 2017 to fight cattle rustling, armed banditry and clashed between farmers and herders in North-West and North-Central Regions.⁴⁴² The third phase launched in May 2019 to end banditry in the forest areas of Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara states in the North-West Region.⁴⁴³ In April 2020 a news article referred to Operation Harbin Kunama IV in the North-East Region.⁴⁴⁴

Operation Lafiya Dole

Operation Lafiya Dole started in July 2015 and had as its purpose to professionalise the army and to fight Boko Haram.⁴⁴⁵ Reportedly this operation was still ongoing by March 2021, fighting against Boko Haram and ISWAP.⁴⁴⁶

Operation Positive Identification

Launched in November 2019 in the North-East Region, Operation Positive Identification aimed to counter Boko Haram/ISWAP fighters.⁴⁴⁷ It faced criticism as it foresaw for every Nigerian to carry a valid ID, which the Federal High Court substantiated in July 2020, ultimately shutting down the operative.⁴⁴⁸

Operation Puff Adder I and II

This operation was launched in April 2019 to fight violent criminal activity, especially banditry and kidnapping in Kogi and Niger (North-Central Region), as well as in Katsina and Zamfara states (North-

⁴³⁶ Vanguard, As “operation Crocodile smile” begins, 30 August 2016, [url](#); Daily Trust, Insecurity Persist as Military Launches Over 40 Operations In 5 Years, 29 June 2020, [url](#)

⁴³⁷ Guardian (The) Nigeria, Army’s clarification on Operation Crocodile Smile heartwarming, says HURIWA, 21 October 2020, [url](#); Guardian (The) Nigeria, Delta unveils Operation Crocodile Smile, tasks military on professionalism, 18 November 2020, [url](#)

⁴³⁸ Daily Trust, Insecurity Persist as Military Launches Over 40 Operations In 5 Years, 29 June 2020, [url](#)

⁴³⁹ Vanguard, Nigerian Army rename operation Python Dance to Operation Dance for Peace, 16 October 2019, [url](#); Daily Trust, Insecurity Persist as Military Launches Over 40 Operations In 5 Years, 29 June 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁰ Daily Trust, Insecurity Persist as Military Launches Over 40 Operations In 5 Years, 29 June 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁴¹ Daily Trust, Insecurity Persist as Military Launches Over 40 Operations In 5 Years, 29 June 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁴² Daily Trust, Insecurity Persist as Military Launches Over 40 Operations In 5 Years, 29 June 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁴³ Channels TV (Nigeria), Army Re-Organises Exercise Harbin Kunama III To Tackle Banditry, 3 May 2019, [url](#); Daily Trust, Insecurity Persist as Military Launches Over 40 Operations In 5 Years, 29 June 2020, [url](#)

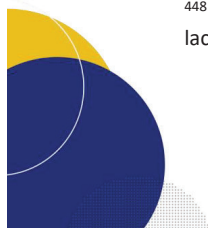
⁴⁴⁴ PR Nigeria, Gen Buratai Assesses Special Forces, Fighting Equipment in North-East, 9 April 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁵ Daily Trust, Insecurity Persist as Military Launches Over 40 Operations In 5 Years, 29 June 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁶ Nigeria, Nigerian Army, How troops obliterated Boko Haram terrorists along fringes of Lake Chad, Tumbus, 14 March 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁷ Daily Trust, Insecurity Persist as Military Launches Over 40 Operations In 5 Years, 29 June 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁸ Guardian (The) [Opinion], The military and ‘Operation Positive Identification’, 4 November 2019, [url](#); ICIR, Court says army lacks power to conduct ‘Operation Positive Identification’, 24 July 2020, [url](#)



West Region).⁴⁴⁹ In February 2021 Operation Puff Adder II was launched to continue to tackle armed bandits in the North-West and North-Central Regions.⁴⁵⁰

Operation A Rattle Snake

This operation was launched at the end of 2019 in the North-East Region to fight Boko Haram and ISWAP.⁴⁵¹ By February 2020 Operation Rattle Snake III was already underway⁴⁵², which appears to be connected to Operation Lafiya Dole.⁴⁵³

Operation Safe Haven (OPSH)

Operation Save Haven was extended in 2017 from its Headquarters in Plateau, North-Central Region, to four local government areas of southern Kaduna state, North-West Region, to ‘maintain law and order’.⁴⁵⁴ The Operation continued in 2020 (and into 2021), with for example Special Forces Teams being deployed in August 2020 to stem the increase in recent inter-communal violence in the North-West Region.⁴⁵⁵

Operation Sharan Daji (also known as ‘clearing the bushes’⁴⁵⁶)

This operation started in July 2015 to counter rustling and armed banditry in the North-West Region.⁴⁵⁷ In August 2018 it was extended to include tackling criminal activities in the state of Niger, North-Central Region.⁴⁵⁸ In April 2019 it was reported that the operation operated in the North-West Region.⁴⁵⁹

Operation Tura Takaibango

Operation Tura Takaibango was launched in the first week of 2021 with the aim to ‘end of all criminal elements within the north-east’, particularly in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states. The operation was an answer to the recent increase in the number of raids and abductions by insurgents along several roads in Borno and neighbouring states.⁴⁶⁰

See further [1.5 State ability to secure law and order](#).

1.4.2 Security trends in 2020

1.4.2.1 Nature of the security incidents

According to the ACLED dataset, extrapolated in [Table 1](#) below, in 2020, there were 2 404 security incidents recorded in Nigeria: 844 were coded as battles, 220 as explosions/remote violence, 297 as riots and 1 043 as violence against civilians. These security incidents resulted in 7 699 fatalities. Most security incidents were recorded in (see also Map 4 below) Borno (582), Kaduna (227), Katsina (210),

⁴⁴⁹ Premium Times, Police launch ‘Operation Puff Adder’ against bandits, kidnapers, 5 April 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁰ This Day, Police Launch Operation Puff Adder II for North-west, North-central, 16 February 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁵¹ Pule (Nigeria), NAF launches Operation Rattle Snake, kills insurgents in Borno, 12 November 2019, [url](#); Daily Trust, Insecurity Persist as Military Launches Over 40 Operations In 5 Years, 29 June 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁵² Vanguard, Rattle Snake 3: Airforce aircraft kills key Boko Haram commanders, 10 February 2020, [url](#); The Nation (Nigeria), NAF destroys ISWAP hideout, neutralises insurgents in Borno, 20 February 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁵³ Guardian (The), NAF launches Operation Rattle Snake III, destroys ISWAP hideout in Borno, 6 February 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁴ Daily Trust, In Southern Kaduna IDP Camps, Atyab, Fulani, Hausa Shed Tears, 22 August 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁵ Guardian (The) Nigeria, Operation Safe Haven: Troops eliminate kidnapers, rescue victims in Plateau – DHQ, 20 June 2020, [url](#); Daily Trust, In Southern Kaduna IDP Camps, Atyab, Fulani, Hausa Shed Tears, 22 August 2020, [url](#); Daily Post (Nigeria), Plateau: Group commends military Operation Safe Haven for not retaliating shooting at soldier, 10 January 2021, [url](#)

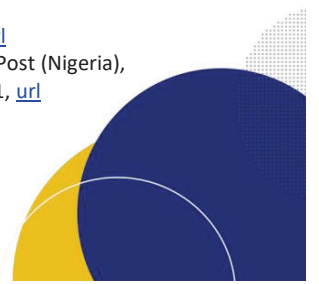
⁴⁵⁶ Daily Trust, Insecurity Persist as Military Launches Over 40 Operations In 5 Years, 29 June 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁷ Daily Trust, Insecurity Persist as Military Launches Over 40 Operations In 5 Years, 29 June 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁸ Business Day (Nigeria), Army extend Operation Sharan Daji to Niger Republic, 2 August 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁹ Guardian (The) Nigeria, Banditry: Military says operation yields results in Zamfara, others, 13 April 2019, [url](#)

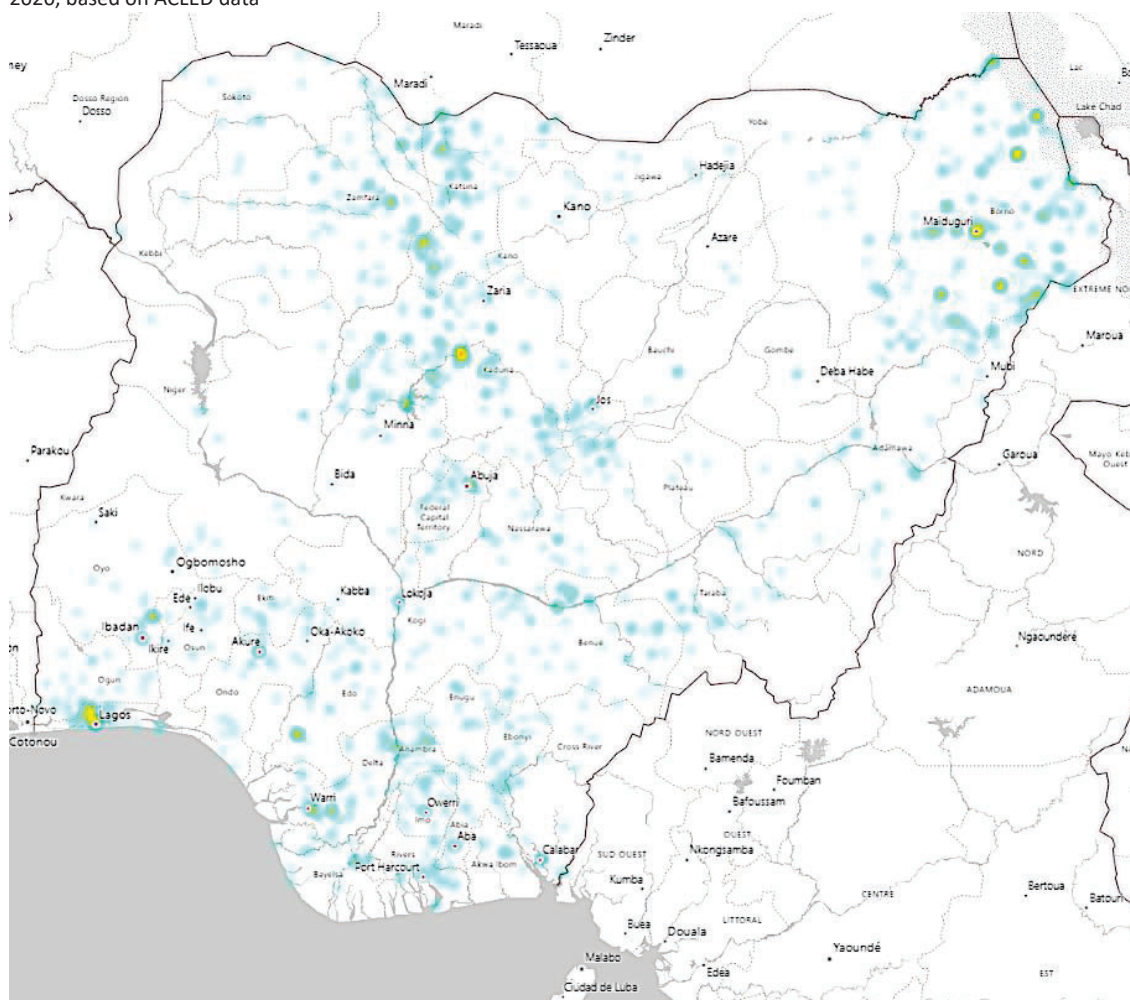
⁴⁶⁰ The National (Nigeria), Nigerian army makes fragile gains against Boko Haram, 25 January 2021, [url](#); Daily Post (Nigeria), Nigerian Army launches another operation codenamed ‘Tura Takaibango’ against Boko Haram, 7 January 2021, [url](#)



and Zamfara States (129). The lowest number of security incidents was recorded in Kwara (8), Kebbi (6), and Gombe States (3).⁴⁶¹

Type of incidents	Number of incidents	Number of fatalities
Battles	844	3 336
Explosions/Remote violence	220	1 900
Riots	297	204
Violence against civilians	1 043	2 259
Total	2 404	7 699

Table 1 Number of incidents and fatalities coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians in 2020, based on ACLED data⁴⁶²



Map 3 Heatmap of security events (coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians) occurrences in 2020. EASO PowerBi, based on ACLED data⁴⁶³

⁴⁶¹ EASO analysis PowerBi based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁴⁶² ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁴⁶³ EASO analysis PowerBi based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



[Annex 1](#) outlines the number of security incidents per federal state coded by ACLED as battles, explosions/remote violence, riots or violence against civilians in 2020, whilst Figure 1 shows the same coded security incidents as graphs next to the 15 of the most affected states. Figure 2 indicates the evolution of the coded security events in 2020. A brief description of these infographics is provided further below.

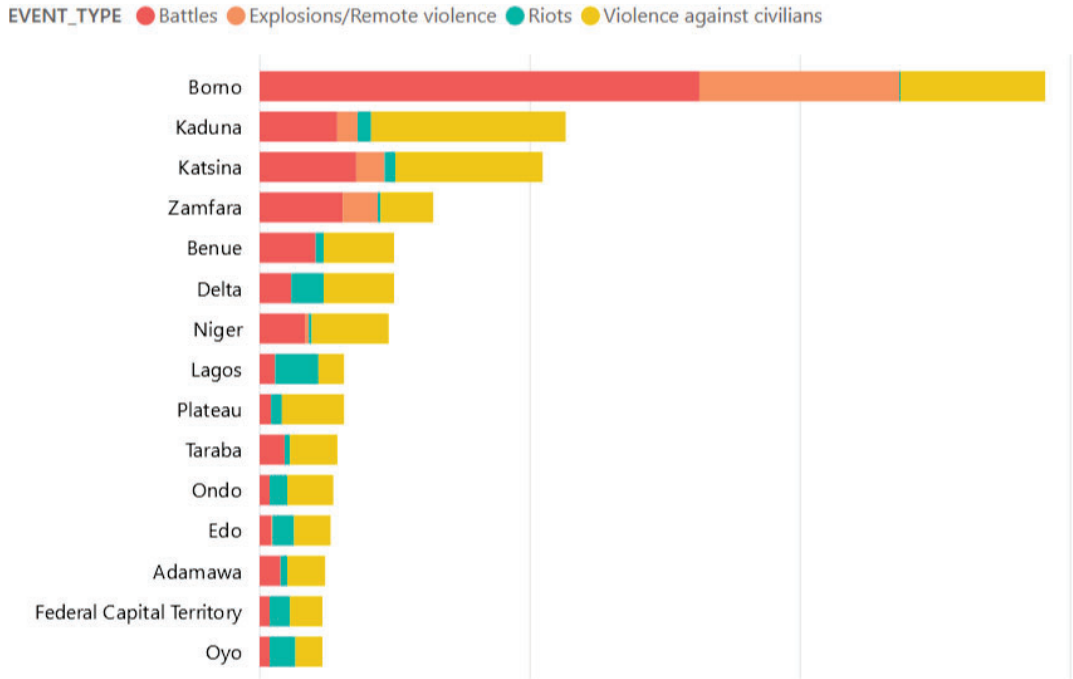


Figure 1 Number of security events (coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians) in 2020 in the 15 most affected federal states, based on ACLED data⁴⁶⁴

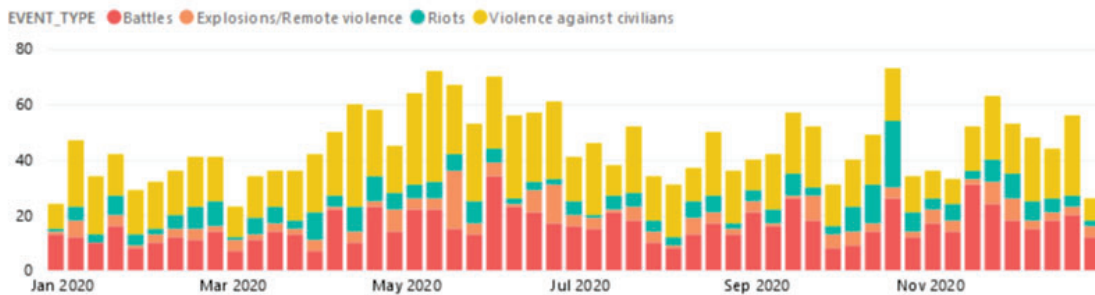


Figure 2 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians, in 2020, based on ACLED data⁴⁶⁵

Battles

As illustrated in [Table 1](#), there were 2 404 security incidents recorded in Nigeria in 2020, with the second highest (after violence against civilians) number (844) coded as battles, leading to 3336 fatalities. The largest number of battles were registered in Borno (326), Katsina (72), Zamfara (62) and

⁴⁶⁴ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁵ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



Kaduna (58) states. The lowest numbers were recorded in Gombe, Kebbi, Bauchi and Enugu (1 each) states. Recorded battles increased from April 2020 onwards reaching peaks in June, end of September, and around November 2020 (see Figure 3 below).⁴⁶⁶

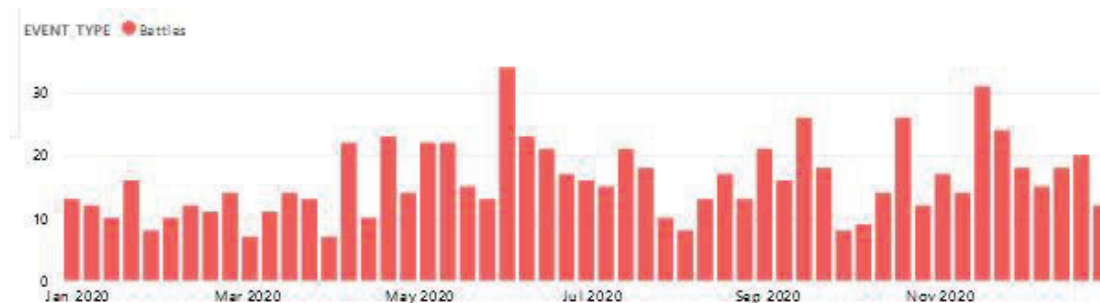


Figure 3 Evolution of security events coded battles, in 2020, based on ACLED data⁴⁶⁷

Explosions/remote violence

As illustrated in [Table 1](#), there were 2 404 security incidents recorded in Nigeria in 2020, with the lowest number (220) coded as explosions/remote violence, resulting in 1 900 fatalities. The largest number of explosions/remote violence was registered in Borno (148) state followed by Zamfara (26), Katsina (21) and Kaduna (15) states. The lowest numbers were recorded in Yobe (5), Niger (3), and Edo and Sokoto (1 each) states. Recorded explosions/remote violence peaked at the end of May and early July 2020 (see Figure 4 below).⁴⁶⁸

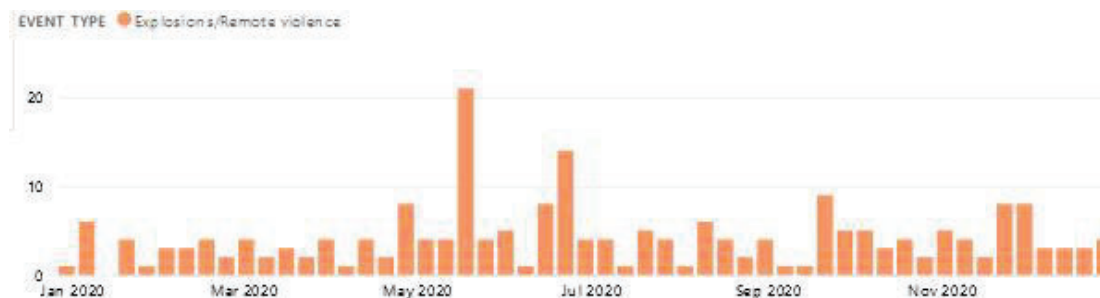


Figure 4 Evolution of security events coded explosions/remote violence, in 2020, based on ACLED data⁴⁶⁹

Riots

As illustrated in [Table 1](#), there were 2 404 security incidents recorded in Nigeria in 2020, with third highest number (297) coded as riots, resulting in 204 fatalities. Most riots were recorded in Lagos (32), Delta (24), Oyo (19) and Imo (16) states. The lowest numbers were registered in Borno, Kebbi, Gombe, Nasarawa and Sokoto (1 each). Recorded riots occurred throughout the year but peaked at the end of October 2020; likely to be associated with the #EndSARS protests (see Figure 5 below).⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁶ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁷ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁸ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁰ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

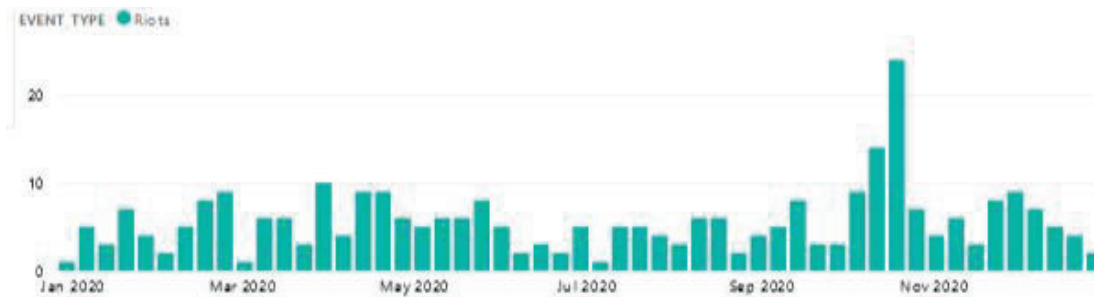


Figure 5 Evolution of security events coded riots, in 2020, based on ACLED data⁴⁷¹

Violence against civilians

As illustrated in [Table 1](#), there were 2 404 security incidents recorded in Nigeria in 2020, with the highest number (1 043) coded as violence against civilians, resulting in 2 259 deaths. The highest number of recorded violence against civilians occurred in Kaduna (144), Katsina (109), Borno (107) and Niger (57). The lowest numbers recorded were in Kwara and Kebbi (4 each), Jigawa and Gombe (1 each) states. Recorded violence against civilians peaked around May 2020, remaining high throughout June and July, and increasing again in December 2020 (see Figure 6 below).

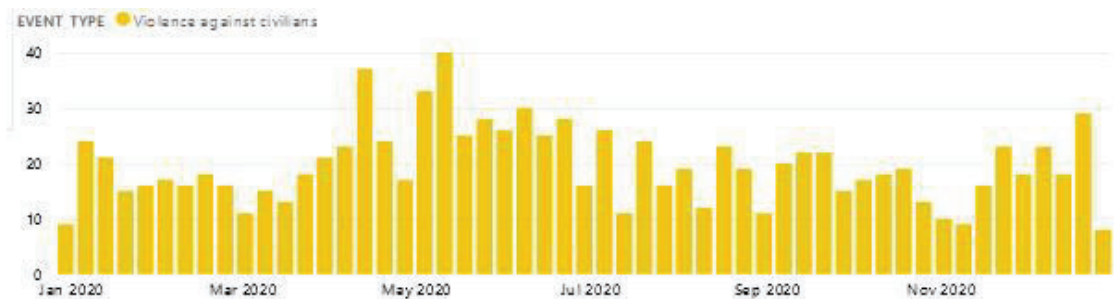


Figure 6 Evolution of security events coded violence against civilians, in 2020, based on ACLED data⁴⁷²

Of the 1 043 incidents of violence against civilians, 1 013 were coded by ACLED as attacks, 210 as abductions, and 10 as sexual violence. It is reported that out of the 100 events recorded in 2020 where violence targeted civilians by state forces, around 75 were classified as ‘attacks’, approximately 20 were classified as ‘excessive force against protesters’ and under 5 as ‘sexual violence’.⁴⁷³ In comparison, in 2019 the figures were just under 60 events, of which almost 40 classified as ‘attacks’ against civilians by state forces, approximately 10 classified as ‘excessive force against protesters’ and under 10 as ‘abduction/forced disappearance’.⁴⁷⁴ See also EASO’s [COI report, Nigeria, Targeting of individuals, November 2018](#).

The UN reported that 431 civilians were killed between January and April 2020 due to high numbers of kidnappings for ransom, communal violence and banditry.⁴⁷⁵ Nigeria Watch recorded that crime

⁴⁷¹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁴⁷² EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁴⁷³ ACLED, Lessons from #ENDSARS movement, 9 February 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁴ ACLED, Lessons from #ENDSARS movement, 9 February 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁵ UN Security Council, Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Report of the Secretary-General, 24 June 2020, [url](#), para. 23

was the ‘major cause of violent deaths in Nigeria in 2020, followed by political clashes and road accidents’.⁴⁷⁶ According to the same source 5 446 fatalities were recorded in 2020 against 3 425 in 2019 and Katsina was the ‘most impacted state’ with 957 fatalities, ‘mainly because of banditry and kidnapping’.⁴⁷⁷ According to reports, the north-western states, in particular Zamfara state, have experienced an increase in organised crime by armed gangs known as ‘bandits’, reportedly a ‘shorthand’ for nomadic Fulani pastoralists, though armed groups consisting of Hausa also exist.⁴⁷⁸ According to the New Humanitarian these armed gangs have been responsible for an increase in criminality and have engaged in serious human rights abuses, including killings, sexual violence, including rapes, kidnapping, recruitment of children, and plundering.⁴⁷⁹ Lawlessness and the lack of policing have been described as underlying factors for this increase.⁴⁸⁰

Protests

As already illustrated in [Table 1](#), 858 security incidents recorded in Nigeria in 2020 were coded as protests with 40 fatalities. Recorded protests occurred throughout the year on a low scale but peaked in mid-October and continued into early November 2020 (see Figure 7 below). In May 2020 ACLED reported that COVID-19-related incidents made up almost 20 % of all political violence and protests in Nigeria.⁴⁸¹ During the month of October 2020, ACLED recorded over 180 demonstrations associated with the #EndSARS movement of which 10 % of peaceful demonstrations were met with excessive force – more than other events classified as ‘demonstrations’ during the same period.⁴⁸²



Figure 7 Evolution of security events coded protests, in 2020, based on ACLED data⁴⁸³

1.4.3 Security trends in January-April 2021

In the first four months of 2021, a total of 997 security incidents took place (378 battles, 102 explosions/remote violence, 423 incidents of violence against civilians, and 94 riots), resulting in 3 490 fatalities (see Table 1b). Most of the security incidents took place, as in 2020, in Borno state (195), followed by Kaduna state (188), Niger (63), Katsina (41), Benue (38), and Oyo (38).⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁷⁶ Nigeria Watch, Tenth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2020), [url](#), p. 9

⁴⁷⁷ Nigeria Watch, Tenth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2020), [url](#), p. 9

⁴⁷⁸ The New Humanitarian, The longshot bid to end rampant banditry in Nigeria’s northwest, 19 January 2021, [url](#). See also ISS, Nigeria’s growing insecurity offers expansion opportunities for Boko Haram, 3 August 2020, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, Nigeria, filtered 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁷⁹ The New Humanitarian, The longshot bid to end rampant banditry in Nigeria’s northwest, 19 January 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁰ The New Humanitarian, The longshot bid to end rampant banditry in Nigeria’s northwest, 19 January 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁸¹ ACLED, States, not Jihadis, exploiting Corona crisis in West Africa, 28 May 2020, [url](#). See also ACLED, CDT Spotlight: targeting civilians and demonstrators in Nigeria, 30 April 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁸² ACLED, Lessons from #ENDSARS movement, 9 February 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁸³ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁴ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

Type of incidents Jan-April 2021	Number of incidents	Number of fatalities
Battles	378	2082
Explosions/Remote violence	102	396
Riots	94	84
Violence against civilians	423	928
Total	997	3 490

Table 1b. Number of incidents and fatalities coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians in January-April 2021, based on ACLED data¹

1.5 State ability to secure law and order

Nigeria is confronted by multiple security challenges: Islamist groups resurgent in the North-East Region; conflict in the North-West Region involving herder-allied groups, vigilantes, criminal gangs and jihadists; ethno-communal violence between nomadic cattle herders and farming communities in the North-West Region and from the Middle Belt southward; long-running discontent and militancy in the Niger Delta; and separatist Biafra agitation in the South-East Region.⁴⁸⁵ The ‘weakened, stretched, and demoralised security services’ are deployed in 35 of Nigeria’s 36 states, and are entering the second decade of their war against Boko Haram.⁴⁸⁶ The police and military have struggled to meet the multiple security missions across the country, including ‘participating in the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), countering terrorism, enforcing maritime security, countering narcotics trafficking and other criminal networks, and peacekeeping’⁴⁸⁷, and the police force in particular has been considered ‘oppressive and ineffective’⁴⁸⁸, underfunded, untrained, susceptible to endemic corruption, increasing the burden on the military to take on internal security operations.⁴⁸⁹

A regional action plan to ‘eradicate terrorism in West Africa’ led by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has made little progress after a year, despite a budget of USD 2.3 billion for its 2020-2024 action plan.⁴⁹⁰

More detailed information on the military and police, as well as other state actors is provided in EASO’s [COI report Nigeria, Actors of Protection, November 2018](#).

1.5.1 North-East Region

Boko Haram and its Islamic State offshoot, Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), have waged a decade-long insurgency in North-East Nigeria, in which violence has displaced about 2 million people and killed more than 30 000.⁴⁹¹ 1.2 million people live in areas controlled by non-state actor groups,

⁴⁶⁰ International Crisis Group, Nigeria, Overview, n.d., [url](#); International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. i-ii; CFR, The Prospect of Local Policing Amid Security Breakdown in Nigeria, [Blog], 14 July 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁶ CFR, Not All Violent Problems Require Violent Solutions: Banditry in Nigeria’s North-West, [Blog], 23 July 2020, [url](#); Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria, 3 December 2020, [url](#) paras. 5.9 and 5.10. See also US, USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 30 March 2021, [url](#)

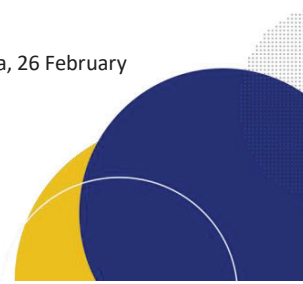
⁴⁸⁷ CSIS, Conduct Is the Key: Improving Civilian Protection in Nigeria, [Commentary], 9 July 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁸ CSIS, Conduct Is the Key: Improving Civilian Protection in Nigeria, [Commentary], 9 July 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁹ CFR, The Intelligence Response Team: Nigeria’s Solution to the Expanding Wave of Kidnappings [Blog], 3 July 2019, [url](#); CSIS, Conduct Is the Key: Improving Civilian Protection in Nigeria, CSIS [Commentary], 9 July 2020, [url](#); CFR, The Prospect of Local Policing Amid Security Breakdown in Nigeria, [Blog], 14 July 2020, [url](#); Chatham House, Police, Protest Power, and Nigeria’s Young Democrats, [Commentary], 16 October 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁰ ISS, Slow progress for West Africa’s latest counter-terrorism plan, 17 February 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁹¹ International Crisis Group, Nigeria, Overview, n.d., [url](#); Reuters, The violence and insecurity affecting Nigeria, 26 February 2021, [url](#)



largely inaccessible to humanitarian assistance.⁴⁹² The armed conflict in this region has been characterised by gross violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.⁴⁹³

Violence has intensified in 2019 and up to mid-2020, including multiple terror attacks ‘in Felo, Monguno, and Nganzai in June 2020 that killed at least 120 people and targeted a UN humanitarian facility’, with state security forces failing to protect civilians.⁴⁹⁴ In November 2020, Boko Haram killed scores of farmers in Borno state, beheading some of them, in one of the region’s deadliest attack in years.⁴⁹⁵ In December 2020 an attack claimed by Boko Haram on an all-boys secondary school in Katsina state, ended with the abduction of 300 boys.⁴⁹⁶

In 2019 the Nigerian army changed military strategy and consolidated its forces into bigger and better equipped so-called ‘super camps’, to improve their defence against insurgents. The aim was to increase the capacity of the army to mobilise quickly, to take the fight to their adversary, and ‘deny terrorists, bandits and kidnappers the freedom of action’.^{497 498} However, sources report that the move to ‘super camps’ instead created space for militants to move more freely, deepen their roots in communities and strengthen their supply chains. It also eroded the protection of civilians in areas from which troops withdrew. Throughout 2020 attacks continued, including against civilians, military patrols and escorts, the Governor of Borno state, and (although unsuccessful) Gajiram and Bitta ‘super camps’.⁴⁹⁹ The army sustained some 800 casualties in 2020 and it is reported that federal security provision is breaking down in large parts of the North-East Region.⁵⁰⁰ In February 2020 the State Governor of Borno reportedly stated that ‘Nigeria would require about 100 000 more soldiers to win the war against Boko Haram.’⁵⁰¹

On 3 January 2021, a military offensive called Operation Tura Takaibango was launched by Nigerian military forces with the aim ‘to wipe out remnants of the Boko Haram and Islamic States of West Africa (ISWAP) terrorists and other criminal groups in the North East.’ The operation covered Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states and was aimed to tackle the insurgents’ strongholds and also to prevent kidnapping on the Maiduguru-Damaturu highway. The operation was intended to prevent ‘the migration of terrorists into southern Borno and Yobe states.’⁵⁰² According to Jamestown’s analyst Zenn, ‘ISWAP was already threatening to cut Maiduguri off from the rest of Borno through roadway ambushes. However, obstructing the Damatru-Maiduguri roadway was additionally strategic for ISWAP because it would essentially cut Borno itself off from the rest of Nigeria.’⁵⁰³

The operation used airstrikes and ground troops and focused on ISWAP hideouts in the Alagarno forest (from Damboa in southwest Borno to Goniri in eastern Yobe) and Boko Haram/JASDJ hideouts in Sambisa forest, near Borno’s border with Cameroon. Zenn reported that ISWAP in March 2021 had

⁴⁹² CSIS, Conduct Is the Key: Improving Civilian Protection in Nigeria, [Commentary], 9 July 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁹³ AI, Nigeria, Open Letter to the OTP Requesting Immediate Action on the Situation in Nigeria, 13 February 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁴ CSIS, Conduct Is the Key: Improving Civilian Protection in Nigeria, [Commentary], 9 July 2020, [url](#)

AI, Nigeria 2019, n.d., [url](#); Counter-Extremism Project, Nigeria and Counter-Extremism, 17 December 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁵ Reuters, The violence and insecurity affecting Nigeria, 26 February 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁶ Reuters, Violence in Nigeria – what and where, 17 December 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁷ ISS, Time to consider talks with Boko Haram?, 18 December 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁸ CFR, Military Failures Mount in Borno Against Boko Haram, [Blog], 13 February 2020, [url](#); AI, Nigeria: “We Dried Our Tears”: Addressing the Toll on Children of Northeast Nigeria’s Conflict, 27 May 2020, [url](#); ISS, Nigeria’s super camps leave civilians exposed to terrorists, ISS, 30 November 2020, [url](#); Nigeria, Nigerian Army, LT Gen TY Burati Commends Zamfara State Governor for Establishing Ruga Settlement, n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁹⁹ CFR, Military Failures Mount in Borno Against Boko Haram, [Blog], 13 February 2020, [url](#); ISS, Nigeria’s super camps leave civilians exposed to terrorists, 30 November 2020, [url](#); Reuters, Violence in Nigeria – what and where, 17 December 2020, [url](#); ISS, Time to consider talks with Boko Haram?, 18 December 2020, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁰ CFR, Nigeria: Atrocity in the Northeast, [Blog], 2 December 2020, [url](#)

⁵⁰¹ This Day, Borno Gov: Nigeria Needs 100,000 More Soldiers to Crush Boko Haram, 20 February 2020, [url](#)

⁵⁰² Sun (The), Insurgency: Operation Tura Takai Bango to wipe out remnant of terrorists, 15 January 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁰³ Jamestown Foundation, Target Maiduguri: How Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP)’s Ramadan Offensive Will Counter Operation Tura Takai Bango, 9 April 2021, [url](#)



launched counter-attacks on the army around Alagarno forest and killed soldiers, captured military vehicles and weapons.⁵⁰⁴

1.5.2 North-West Region

Long running violence between herders and farmers in Nigeria's North-West Region, has been compounded by 'an explosion in criminal activity and infiltration by jihadist groups into the region'.⁵⁰⁵ The region's security crisis, rooted in long running competition for land and water resources between predominately Fulani herders and mainly Hausa farmers, has intensified due to climate change-related environmental degradation and population pressures. The mobilisation of armed groups on both sides – 'bandits' and 'vigilantes' – has led to the proliferation of weapons trading and organised criminal gangs. These have engaged in cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery and pillage of local communities.⁵⁰⁶

Armed 'bandits' are reported to have carried out attacks across the region throughout 2019 and 2020, particularly in the states of Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Niger, and Sokoto.⁵⁰⁷ This has resulted in more than 1 000 civilian deaths in 2019⁵⁰⁸ and more than 1 100 in the first half of 2020.⁵⁰⁹ Amnesty International states that the authorities have left rural communities 'at the mercy of rampaging gunmen', reporting that people live in fear of attacks and abductions as insecurity escalates and security forces fail to provide protection. Farmers, rights groups, and activists have been subjected to intimidation, arrest and torture for speaking out against the attacks or demanding that the government help protect the people.⁵¹⁰

The surge in armed militancy has led to a 'widespread breakdown of security'⁵¹¹, and the latest student abductions in the region reflect 'the growing strength of criminal gangs and the weakness of the federal government and its security services'.⁵¹² Further instability and violence in the region is connected to the growing links between criminal groups and artisanal and small-scale gold mining operations⁵¹³, which has created new centres of power beyond state control – 'a fiefdom of deadly gangs' engaged in banditry and criminality.⁵¹⁴ Reportedly government action and numerous military and police operations in the North-West Region have failed to restore security.⁵¹⁵

Accordingly, Islamist militant groups linked to the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East Region have infiltrated the North-West Region and created 'transactional and opportunistic' ties with aggrieved communities, herder-affiliated armed groups and criminal gangs.⁵¹⁶ Deteriorating security and the spike in jihadist activity is raising concerns that the region could become a land bridge linking

⁵⁰⁴ Jamestown Foundation, Target Maiduguri: How Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP)'s Ramadan Offensive Will Counter Operation Tura Takai Bango, 9 April 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁵ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. i-ii

⁵⁰⁶ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. i-ii

⁵⁰⁷ CFR, Not All Violent Problems Require Violent Solutions: Banditry in Nigeria's North-West, [Blog], 23 July 2020, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁸ CFR, Not All Violent Problems Require Violent Solutions: Banditry in Nigeria's North-West, [Blog], 23 July 2020, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁹ AI (Nigeria), Government failings leave rural communities at the mercy of gunmen, 24 August 2020, [url](#); Reuters, The violence and insecurity affecting Nigeria, 26 February 2021, [url](#)

⁵¹⁰ AI (Nigeria), Government failings leave rural communities at the mercy of gunmen, 24 August 2020, [url](#)

⁵¹¹ Reuters, Four police officers killed, one missing, after bandit attack in northwest Nigeria, 18 January 2021, [url](#); Reuters, The violence and insecurity affecting Nigeria, 26 February 2021, [url](#); Reuters, Kidnappers abduct hundreds of schoolgirls in northwest Nigeria as security deteriorates, 26 February 2021, [url](#)

⁵¹² CFR, What's Behind the Recent Student Abductions in Nigeria?, 30 December 2020, [url](#)

⁵¹³ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 9; CFR, Nigeria's Enduring "Gold Wars", [Blog], 12 February 2021, [url](#)

⁵¹⁴ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 11

⁵¹⁵ CFR, Nigeria's Enduring "Gold Wars", [Blog], 12 February 2021, [url](#)

⁵¹⁶ CFR, What's Behind the Recent Student Abductions in Nigeria?, 30 December 2020, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 11-15



Islamic insurgencies in the Sahel with the decade-long insurgency in the Lake Chad region of the north-east.⁵¹⁷

In November 2020, then Chief of Army Staff Tukur Buratai called on all troops to put themselves in a 'war mode', while the Coalition of Northern Groups (CNG), a civil society organisation focused on the welfare of northern Nigerians, called on local communities to defend themselves against Boko Haram and 'bandits' because the government is failing to protect them. CNG's national coordinator is quoted as saying: 'northern Nigeria has been abandoned at the mercy of various insurgents, bandits, kidnappers, armed robbers, rapists, and an assortment of hardened criminals' with a 'huge vacuum in the political will and capacity of government to challenge' such violent actors.⁵¹⁸

The International Crisis Group reports that violence and the breakdown in security in the North-West Region is 'further stretching already over-burdened security forces' engaged in long-running counter-insurgency operations against jihadists in the North-East Region.⁵¹⁹

The recent surge in abductions in several states in northern Nigeria, (see [1.4.1.1](#)), have raised concerns about the state's ability to deal with this. SB Morgen noted that in January 2021 a peace deal had been initiated by the prominent Islamic cleric Sheikh Ahmad Gumi, with some armed groups operating in Kaduna and Zamfara. However, the source cautioned that non-state armed groups would increasingly use abductions to 'make financial or territorial demands'.⁵²⁰

In this regard, it is believed that 'a weak security infrastructure and governors who have little control over security in their states - the police and army are controlled by the federal government - and have resorted to paying ransoms, have made mass abductions a lucrative source of income.' State governors denied this accusation, although also President Buhari had suggested that state governors were 'fuelling the crisis' by 'rewarding bandits with money and cars. Such a policy has the potential to backfire with disastrous consequences.'⁵²¹ In the December abduction of more than 300 school boys, the gang leader had received amnesty and accommodation after handing over his weapons to the Zamfara authorities. However, by the end of April 2021 he returned to his gang – only to be killed by a rival gang.⁵²²

International Crisis Group gave the following reasons for the recent school abductions: not only are schools usually poorly protected, also mass abductions of school children attract much national and international media coverage and public outrage, pressuring state governments into 'frantic negotiations with the armed groups—and, in all likelihood, into making concessions to them', Although governments deny paying ransoms, 'it seems inconceivable that the kidnappings would recur so frequently while the perpetrators gain nothing in return.'⁵²³

1.5.3 Niger Delta

Turmoil and lack of economic development in the oil-producing Niger Delta region have sparked insecurity on land and at sea. In the Gulf of Guinea where Nigeria's offshore oil wealth is concentrated, piracy is on the rise. Kidnappings are also common on land in the Delta region and last year oil companies increased security for their installations. Reuters reports that as disorder has worsened and the army and police have failed to meet the security needs of the Nigerian people, the military has also attacked civilians. This has drawn condemnation from many countries that have since often

⁵¹⁷ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. i-ii

⁵¹⁸ CFR, Darkness in Northern Nigeria, [Blog], 23 December 2020, [url](#)

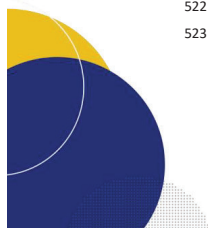
⁵¹⁹ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 17-19

⁵²⁰ SB Morgen, Sitrep: What is happening in Niger State?, 18 February 2021, [url](#)

⁵²¹ BBC, Nigeria's school abductions: Why children are being targeted, 2 March 2021, [url](#)

⁵²² BBC, Nigeria gang leader behind school kidnapping shot by rivals, 1 May 2021, [url](#)

⁵²³ International Crisis Group, How to Halt Nigeria's School Kidnapping Crisis, 9 April 2021, [url](#)



refused to sell weapons and equipment to Nigeria – supplies the government says are needed to neutralise insurgents undermining public security.⁵²⁴

1.5.4 Nationwide protests against police brutality

In October 2020 largely peaceful protests against the brutality of the SARS police unit merged with longstanding calls for police reforms and an overhaul of the wider security sector, including counterterrorism.⁵²⁵ The situation turned violent when police opened fire on demonstrators at the Lekki toll gate in Lagos and developed into a national crisis as rioting, looting and lawlessness broke out across the country. The wave of civil unrest is reported to have been one of the worst since the end of military rule in 1999.⁵²⁶ Although primarily about police brutality and impunity, the demonstrations also reflected ‘unprecedented public discontent over poor governance, insecurity and the extreme income disparities between those who hold political office and the millions of other citizens’.⁵²⁷ In January 2021, Amnesty International reported that the Nigerian authorities had failed to bring to justice those in the security forces suspected to be responsible for the ‘brutal crackdown’, noting that police violence is still widespread across the country despite government promises of change.⁵²⁸

1.6 Impact of the violence on the civilian population

1.6.1 Civilian casualties

No source reports on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians, for all states of Nigeria. The Global Terrorism Index (GTI), covering events in 2019, recorded 1 245 deaths and 419 injuries from 411 terror-related incidents in 2019 (a 39 % decrease from the previous year).⁵²⁹ However, Global Rights recorded at least 3 188 fatalities (compared to 3 428 in 2018), of which 2 707 civilians as a result of violent incidents including gang clashes, extra-judicial killings, resource crises, kidnappings and Boko Haram/ISWAP attacks, with Borno state recording the highest number of fatalities (728), followed by Zamfara state (450).⁵³⁰ Boko Haram was responsible for most terror-related deaths and incidents, mainly targeting civilians, particularly in the northeast of Nigeria, where attacks internally displaced more than 2 million people and forced 240 000 Nigerians to seek safety in neighbouring countries.⁵³¹

Covering January to April 2019, the Nigeria Police Force documented 189 terrorist attacks in the northern states, resulting in 453 deaths and 201 kidnappings⁵³², yet civilians also faced threats from ongoing counterterrorism operations.⁵³³ According to the National Human Rights Commission at least

⁵²⁴ Reuters, Nigeria names new military chiefs amid spreading militant violence, 27 January 2021, [url](#); Reuters, The violence and insecurity affecting Nigeria, 26 February 2021, [url](#)

⁵²⁵ International Crisis Group, Nigeria’s #EndSARS Protest: De-escalate Tensions, Start Deep Police Reform, 26 October 2020, [url](#); ISS, Nigeria’s #EndSARS protests also concern counter-terrorism, 15 October 2020, [url](#)

⁵²⁶ BBC, Nigeria’s Lekki shooting: What has happened so far at Lagos judicial panel, 27 November 2020, [url](#); Reuters, The violence and insecurity affecting Nigeria, 26 February 2021, [url](#)

⁵²⁷ International Crisis Group, Nigeria’s #EndSARS Protest: De-escalate Tensions, Start Deep Police Reform, 26 October 2020, [url](#)

⁵²⁸ AI (Nigeria), Denials and cover up mark 100 days since Lekki shooting, 28 January 2021, [url](#)

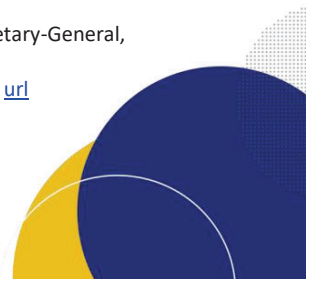
⁵²⁹ IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2020, November 2020, [url](#), p. 21

⁵³⁰ Global Rights, Mass Atrocities Casualties Tracking, 2019 Report, 11 February 2020, [url](#), pp. 3, 4, 13

⁵³¹ UN Security Council, Children and armed conflict in Nigeria, Report of the Secretary-General, 6 July 2020, [url](#), para. 13; IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2020, November 2020, [url](#), p. 21

⁵³² UN Security Council, Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Report of the Secretary-General, 5 July 2019, [url](#), para. 21

⁵³³ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Stabilizing Northeast Nigeria after Boko Haram, 3 May 2019, [url](#)



176 persons had been killed in election-related violence across Nigeria, though other sources documented higher figures.⁵³⁴

As illustrated in [Table 1](#) further above and [Table 2](#) below, in 2020, out of the 2 404 recorded security incidents in Nigeria, ACLED documented 1 043 incidents of violence against civilians, resulting in 2 259 fatalities.⁵³⁵ Almost all fatalities from violence against civilians were victims of attacks (2 257). The highest number of recorded violence against civilians occurred in Kaduna (144), Katsina (109), Borno (107) and Niger (57). The lowest numbers recorded were in Kwara and Kebbi (4 each), Jigawa and Gombe (1 each) states. There were also 210 recorded incidents of abduction/forced disappearance, from which no casualties resulted, and 10 cases of sexual violence with 2 casualties. It should be noted that ACLED's database only provides figures of deaths (fatalities) per event, not of injured persons.⁵³⁶

Incidents Violence against civilians	Number of incidents	Number of fatalities
Attacks	823	2 257
Abductions/forced disappearance	210	0
Sexual violence	10	2
Total	1 043	2 259

Table 2 Number of incidents and fatalities coded violence against civilians in 2020, based on ACLED data⁵³⁷

In comparison, Global Rights recorded at least 4 556 fatalities in 2020 (compared to 3 188 in 2018), of which 3 858 (compared to 2 707 in 2018) were civilians, as a result of 'mass atrocities' defined as violent attacks, clashes, terrorism, kidnappings, and extrajudicial killings, with Borno state continuing to record the highest number of fatalities (1 176), followed by Kaduna state (628).⁵³⁸ Nigeria Watch recorded 2 677 'lethal incidents' in 2020 during which 12 318 people were killed (compared to 11 277 recorded 'violent deaths' in 2019)⁵³⁹, with Borno state recording the highest number of fatalities (3 069 deaths), followed by Kaduna (1 346), Katsina (1 099), Zamfara (831) and Niger (547).⁵⁴⁰

Providing a time-specific frame of recorded civilian fatalities, the UN reported that between 1 February and 15 April 2020, 240 civilians were killed by Boko Haram, and a further 431 civilians were killed between January and April 2020 due to high numbers of kidnappings for ransom, communal violence and banditry.⁵⁴¹ The Institute for Security Studies (ISS) reported that between January and June 2020, at least 608 civilians were killed in 245 incidents in the north-eastern states of Kaduna, Zamfara, Katsina, and Kebbi, as well as the northcentral state of Niger, compared to 251 incidents resulting in 1 028 fatalities for the whole of 2019.⁵⁴² In Borno state alone between January and August 2020, 852 'significant' security-related incidents (of which 486 affected civilians) were documented.⁵⁴³ According to UNOCHA, 'some of the most brutal and direct attacks targeting civilian populations were recorded in November and December [2020], including against internally displaced persons (IDPs) and aid workers or humanitarian assets'. Amongst others, schools and health facilities were targeted,

⁵³⁴ UN Security Council, Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Report of the Secretary-General, 5 July 2019, [url](#), para. 34

⁵³⁵ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁵³⁶ ACLED, Data, n.d., downloaded 31 January 2021, [url](#)

⁵³⁷ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁵³⁸ Global Rights, Mass Atrocities Casualties Tracking, 2020 Report, 22 February 2021, [url](#), pp. 2 and 4

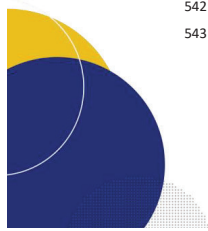
⁵³⁹ Nigeria Watch, Ninth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2019), [url](#), p. 5

⁵⁴⁰ Nigeria Watch, Tenth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2020), [url](#), pp. 6 and 8

⁵⁴¹ UN Security Council, Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Report of the Secretary-General, 24 June 2020, [url](#), para. 23

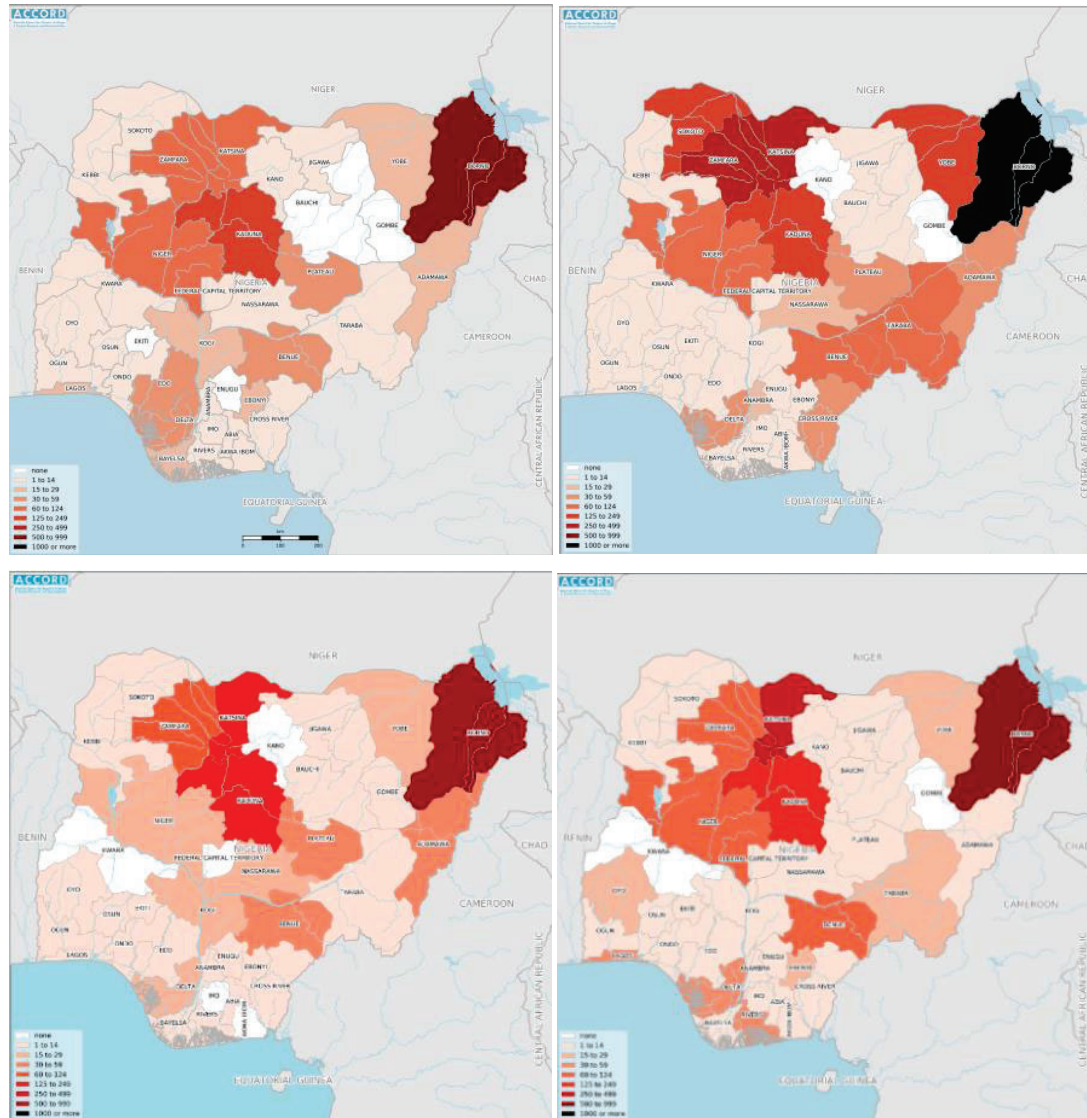
⁵⁴² ISS, Nigeria's growing insecurity offers expansion opportunities for Boko Haram, 3 August 2020, [url](#)

⁵⁴³ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#), p. 18



farms destroyed and farmers killed. This is directly impacting the ‘rapidly deteriorating’ food security situation for 5.1 million people across the BAY (Borno, Adamawa, Yobe) states.⁵⁴⁴

The Austrian Centre for Country of Origin & Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD) published the following four maps showing the number of reported fatalities per state, as documented by ACLED for the four quarters of 2020:⁵⁴⁵



Map 4 © ACCORD (based on ACLED data). Top-left hand corner: Number of reported fatalities per state in Q1 2020; Top-right hand corner: Number of fatalities per state in Q 2 2020; Bottom-left hand corner: Number of reported fatalities per state in Q 3 2020; Bottom-right hand corner: Number of reported fatalities per state in Q 4 2020⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴⁴ UN OCHA, Nigeria, Situation Report, Last updated: 4 February 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁵ See ACCORD, Nigeria, first quarter 2020: Update on incidents according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), 23 June 2020, [url](#), p. 1; ACCORD, Nigeria, second quarter 2020: Update on incidents according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), 30 October 2020, [url](#), p. 1; ACCORD, Nigeria, third quarter 2020: Update on incidents according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), 25 March 2021, [url](#), p. 1; ACCORD, Nigeria, fourth quarter 2020: Update on incidents according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), 25 March 2021, [url](#), p. 1

⁵⁴⁶ ACCORD, Nigeria, first quarter 2020: Update on incidents according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project

1.6.2 Road security

A 2020 study investigating safety challenges in transportation across Nigeria found that the North-West, North-Central, and South-West Regions ‘showed significant risk difference between the exposed and the unexposed groups due to risk factors such as bad roads, road blockage/obstruction, kidnaping, unmaintained vehicles, overloading, over speeding and other forms of reckless use of the roads’, whilst the roads in North-East, North-West- and North-Central Regions were found to be mostly ‘impassable or with low access’ resulting in ‘death and injuries’.⁵⁴⁷ Nigeria Watch reported that in 2020, 1 464 fatalities due to road accidents were recorded across 33 states and the FCT, with Ogun state recording ‘the highest number of fatalities, followed by Anambra and Delta states’.⁵⁴⁸

IOM explained in March 2020 that the multidimensional crisis of Nigeria's North-Central and North-West Regions involved attacks by criminal groups and banditry/*hirabah*⁵⁴⁹ including kidnapping and theft along major highways.⁵⁵⁰ In one incident on 14 January 2020 the security services reported that up to 30 people were killed and a possibly one hundred kidnapped on the Kaduna-Zaria highway in Kaduna state.⁵⁵¹

Non-state armed groups continue to target roads and bridges to disrupt the movements of government forces and to target roads for kidnapping and robbery.⁵⁵² UNOCHA reported that between January to October 2020 non-state armed groups set up ‘over 228 informal checkpoints and 105 ambushes along the main supply routes connecting garrison towns particularly along the Maiduguri-Damaturu, Maiduguri-Monguno and Maiduguri-Damasak roads, entailing robbery, abduction and killing of civilians’.⁵⁵³ In November 2020 UNHCR described illegal vehicle checkpoints on the main supply roads of Maiduguri-Monguno axes and Dikwa-Gamboru/Ngala axes which are affected by robbery and looting passengers of money, personal effects and food.⁵⁵⁴ UNHCR recorded in December 2020 that in the north-east of Nigeria, illegal checkpoints on roads have become a ‘daily practice’ for non-state armed groups, particularly in northern Borno.⁵⁵⁵ In the first week of December 2020 alone, 17 illegal vehicle checkpoints were mounted in four local government areas, with actors robbing vehicles and valuables and abducting nine passengers.⁵⁵⁶

Reportedly, approximately 90 % of those kidnapped by Boko Haram in 2020 were taken from roads that are main supply routes.⁵⁵⁷

(ACLED), 23 June 2020, [url](#), p. 1; ACCORD, Nigeria, second quarter 2020: Update on incidents according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), 30 October 2020, [url](#), p. 1; ACCORD, Nigeria, third quarter 2020: Update on incidents according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), 25 March 2021, [url](#), p. 1; ACCORD, Nigeria, fourth quarter 2020: Update on incidents according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), 25 March 2021, [url](#), p. 1

⁵⁴⁷ Purokayo, S.G., Stephe, J.Z., Safety Challenges in Transportation in Nigeria, A Relative Risk Approach, 25 July 2020, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁸ Nigeria Watch, Tenth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 6

⁵⁴⁹ Oxford Reference describes *Hirabah* as ‘The Arabic term *hirabah*, a derivative of the linguistic root meaning “warfare” or “combat,” is defined in the Qur’ān as the crime of waging war and striving “to cause corruption...”’; see Oxford Reference, *Hirabah*, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁵⁰ IOM, Flash Report# 42: Population Displacement North West/North Central Nigeria 01-07 March, 8 March 2020, [url](#). See also Vanguard, Nigerian roads where kidnappers unleash mayhem, 30 January 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁵¹ CFR, Motorists Killed and Kidnapped on Nigerian Highway, [Blog], 16 January 2020, [url](#)

⁵⁵² UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#), p. 16

⁵⁵³ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#), p. 22

⁵⁵⁴ UNHCR, North-East Situation Update, November 2020, 19 January 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁵⁵⁵ UNHCR, North-East Nigeria Operational Update, December 2020, 24 February 2021 [url](#)

⁵⁵⁶ UNHCR, North-East Nigeria Operational Update, December 2020, 24 February 2021 [url](#)

⁵⁵⁷ iMMAP, Situation Analysis 1 July – 20 October, November 2020, [url](#), p. 8. See also Vanguard, Nigerian roads where kidnappers unleash mayhem, 30 January 2021, [url](#)



1.6.3 Infrastructural damage and explosive remnants of war

According to the Landmine Monitor, Nigeria had the fifth highest total number of casualties in the world in 2019 at 239, due to the ‘indiscriminate use of antipersonnel mines and antivehicle mines, including improvised types, as well as cluster munition remnants and other explosive remnants of war’.⁵⁵⁸ Furthermore, since 2017, there have been reports of casualties involving civilian and military casualties from landmines and a ‘range of other locally produced explosive devices’ planted by Boko Haram in the north-east, particularly in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states.⁵⁵⁹ UNHCR reported that in north-eastern Nigeria, over 300 people were injured by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and 230 killed in 2019.⁵⁶⁰

United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) reported that from January 2020 to 24 September 2020, explosive devices caused 334 fatalities and casualties.⁵⁶¹ Data from the Mine Action Sub-sector recorded ‘23 preventable incidents involving explosive remnants of war from January to October 2020. All the victims, 24 killed and 33 injured, are civilians.’⁵⁶² Research by the Mines Advisory Group revealed that landmines and unexploded bombs caused 1 052 casualties in 697 accidents between January 2016 and August 2020, which they considered an underestimate due to underreporting.⁵⁶³ Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) recorded 11 352 deaths and injuries from explosive violence between 2011-2019, with IEDs causing the most harm.⁵⁶⁴ The same source documented 21 such incidents in 2020 causing 297 casualties.⁵⁶⁵ Reportedly the government has sped up plans to resettle displaced people, including to areas heavily contaminated by Boko Haram-planted improvised landmines.⁵⁶⁶

In 2019 it was noted that in north-eastern Nigeria 45 % of health facilities and around 75 % of water and sanitation infrastructures had been destroyed.⁵⁶⁷ As of January 2021, 1 529 (58.1 %) of health facilities in states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe were reported to be fully functioning, with 268 (10.2 %) non-functioning, 300 (11.4 %) partially functioning and 326 (12.4 %) fully damaged.⁵⁶⁸

The Global Coalition to Prevent Education from Attack recorded at least 10 attacks on schools in north-eastern and in north-central areas of Nigeria between 2017 and 2019, with Boko Haram explicitly targeting Western education.⁵⁶⁹ UNICEF noted in 2020 that 1 400 schools have been damaged by conflict.⁵⁷⁰ UNOCHA noted that non-state armed groups’ activities and deadly attacks have targeted civilian locations in 2020, causing extensive damage to health facilities, schools, markets, roads and communication towers.⁵⁷¹ Boko Haram has been reported to attack electric transmission lines and infrastructure.⁵⁷² Infrastructure damage has been estimated at USD 9.2 billion and losses at USD 8.3 billion.⁵⁷³

⁵⁵⁸ International Campaigns to End Landmines, Landmine Monitor 2020, November 2020, [url](#), p. 2

⁵⁵⁹ International Campaigns to End Landmines, Landmine Monitor 2020, November 2020, [url](#), p. 29

⁵⁶⁰ UNHCR, Landmines, improvised explosive devices pose deadly risks for displaced in Sahel and Lake Chad, 18 July 2020, [url](#)

⁵⁶¹ UNMAS, Nigeria, last updated October 2020, [url](#)

⁵⁶² UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#), p. 21

⁵⁶³ Mines Advisory Group, Hidden Scars - The Landmine Crisis in north-east Nigeria, 14 December 2020, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁴ AOAV, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁶⁵ AOAV, Explosive Violence Monitor 2020, 2021, [url](#), p. 12

⁵⁶⁶ Mines Advisory Group, Covid-19 is hampering efforts to clear the world’s mine fields, 25 January 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁷ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Stabilizing Northeast Nigeria After Boko Haram, 3 May 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁸ Health Sector Nigeria, Northeast Nigeria Humanitarian Response - COVID-19 Response, January 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁹ The Global Coalition to Prevent Education from Attack, Education Under Attack 2020, 9 July 2020, [url](#), p. 184

⁵⁷⁰ UNICEF, Humanitarian Action for Children, Nigeria, 14 December 2020, [url](#)

⁵⁷¹ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#), p. 24

⁵⁷² CFR, Boko Haram Cuts Electricity to Maiduguri in Northern Nigeria, [Blog], 22 January 2020, [url](#)

⁵⁷³ UN Women, UNFPA, Case Study: Nigeria, 2020, [url](#), p. 12



1.6.4 Displacement and return

1.6.4.1 Displacement figures

According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), conflict and violence in 2019 led to 248 000 new displacements across 19 states, of which 105 000 were triggered by the ongoing insurgency in the north-east, 88 000 by criminal violence in the north-west and north-central states, and 55 000 by communal violence in the central region.⁵⁷⁴

Human Rights Watch described the humanitarian crisis in the north-eastern states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe as ‘among the world’s most severe’, with 1.8 million people displaced ‘as a result of the 10 year insurgency by Boko Haram’.⁵⁷⁵ In July 2020 ACAPS described ‘a new humanitarian crisis’ emerging in the north-west states of Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto, Kaduna, and Kebbi, as well as in Niger state (North-Central Region).⁵⁷⁶ It described shooting and killing, cattle rustling, kidnapping, rape, torching of entire villages, and looting of valuables which by June 2020 had internally displaced over 247 000 people and produced around 60 000 refugees.⁵⁷⁷ In September 2020 Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) reported that outside of the North-East Region of Nigeria, the states hosting the highest numbers of IDPs are those found in North-Central (Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa), North-East (Adamawa, Taraba), and North-West (Kaduna) Regions.⁵⁷⁸

IOM-DTM data showed that 87 % of the IDPs in North West and North Central Regions were displaced within their state of origin, 13 % were displaced from a different state.⁵⁷⁹ Of the IDPs in North East Region, 89 % were displaced within their state of origin.⁵⁸⁰

IOM provided the following infographics (see Figure 8 below)⁵⁸¹ depicting the total number of IDPs in the North-East Region of Nigeria using November 2020 figures, recorded at 2 150 243 assessed IDPs in total:

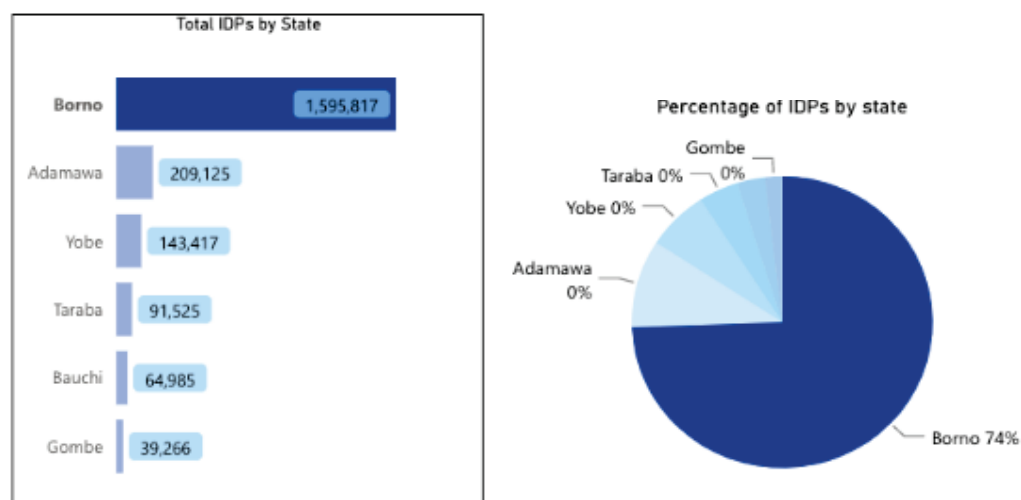


Figure 8 Total number and percentage of IDPs in North-East Nigeria as of November 2020 © IOM-DTM⁵⁸²

⁵⁷⁴ IDMC, Nigeria Country Information, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁷⁵ HRW, Nigeria: Army Restrictions Stifling Aid Efforts, 4 March 2020, [url](#), p. 1

⁵⁷⁶ ACAPS, Nigeria: Banditry violence and displacement in the Northwest, 24 July 2020, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁷ ACAPS, Nigeria: Banditry violence and displacement in the Northwest, 24 July 2020, [url](#), pp. 1-2

⁵⁷⁸ MSF, “When I think about going home, I remind myself that a live dog is better than a dead lion”, 1 September 2020, [url](#)

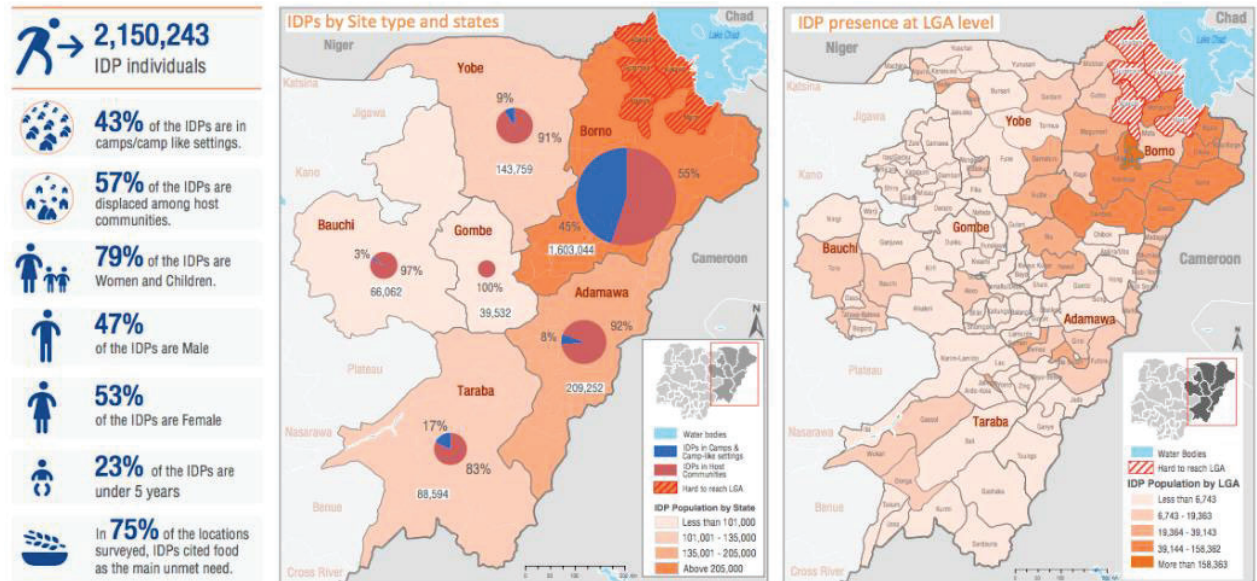
⁵⁷⁹ IOM Nigeria, DTM North Central and North West Zones, Displacement Report 5 (January 2021), 8 March 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁰ IOM-DTM, Baseline Dashboard, North East Round 35 (December 2020), 11 March 2021, [url](#), p. 7

⁵⁸¹ IOM, Nigeria displacement data visualization, Nov 2020, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁸² IOM, Nigeria displacement data visualization, Nov 2020, n.d., [url](#)

IOM provided the following maps (see Map 6 below) indicating IDPs in the North-East Region of Nigeria only, by site type and state as well as location of IDPs by local government area as of December 2020.⁵⁸³



Map 5 IDPs by site type and state and IDP presence at LGA level as of December 2020 © IOM-DTM⁵⁸⁴

According to UNHCR, as of end February 2021, there were 306 400 Nigerian refugees (mostly displaced by the Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon), of whom 56.1 % resided in Niger, 38.6 % in Cameroon and 5.3 % in Chad.⁵⁸⁵ Nigeria was also host to 66 220 refugees as of end February 2021.⁵⁸⁶

As of December 2020, 2 150 243 IDPs were registered in North East Region, of which 1 683 044 in Borno state alone. As of January 2021, 419 457 IDPs were registered in the North West Region while 309 231 were in North Central Region. In the three southern regions are no IDPs registered.⁵⁸⁷

303 963 Nigerian refugees were registered in Cameroon, Chad, and Niger as of March 2021.⁵⁸⁸

Nigeria was also host to 71 529 refugees and asylum seekers as of March 2021.⁵⁸⁹

1.6.4.2 Drivers of displacement

IDMC considers that the drivers of displacement in Nigeria are multi-faceted, complex and often overlap.⁵⁹⁰ Boko Haram has triggered displacement in the North-East Region, tensions between farmers and herders in the Central Region has generated 'significant levels' of violence and displacement and ethnic/inter-communal conflict between Fulani pastoralists and Hausa farmers in north-western Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara states also forces people to flee.⁵⁹¹ Floods across Nigeria also displace thousands every year.⁵⁹²

⁵⁸³ IOM-DTM, Baseline Dashboard, North East Round 35 (December 2020), 11 March 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁴ IOM-DTM, Baseline Dashboard, North East Round 35 (December 2020), 11 March 2021, [url](#), p. 7

⁵⁸⁵ UNHCR Nigeria data, Nigerian refugees in Chad, Cameroon and Niger, last updated 28 February 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁶ UNHCR Nigeria data, All refugees, last updated 28 February 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁷ UNHCR Nigeria: All Population Snapshot March 2021, 14 April 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁸ UNHCR Nigeria: All Population Snapshot March 2021, 14 April 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁹ UNHCR Nigeria: All Population Snapshot March 2021, 14 April 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁰ IDMC, Nigeria Country Information, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁹¹ IDMC, Nigeria Country Information, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁹² IDMC, Nigeria Country Information, n.d., [url](#)

According to the UN Secretary-General reporting in 2019 and 2020, ‘multiple attacks’ by non-state armed groups generated new forced displacement, primarily attributed to Boko Haram’s activities.⁵⁹³

In February 2020 Human Rights Watch documented that the Nigerian military burned and forcibly displaced entire villages in response to Boko Haram activities, arguing that the acts should be investigated as possible war crimes.⁵⁹⁴

In September 2020 MSF reported that the states of Adamawa, Benue, Kaduna, Plateau, Nasarawa and Taraba, host IDPs forced to flee the ‘farmer-herdsmen’ conflict.⁵⁹⁵ For example, in Benue state, intercommunal violence resulting from disputes over land for grazing and farming escalated into ‘shocking violence’, forcibly displacing thousands.⁵⁹⁶

In March 2021 UNHCR expressed alarm at ‘surging violence’ in the North West Region which has fuelled the displacement of over 7 600 refugees into neighbouring Niger’s Maradi region in 2021 thus far, taking the total to 77 000 Nigerian refugees in the region.⁵⁹⁷ The refugees have ‘fled relentless attacks in Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara states’⁵⁹⁸, including ‘atrocities’ and ‘extreme violence’, most of which attributed to armed gangs that ‘rob, loot, rape and kill’.⁵⁹⁹ Furthermore, UNHCR noted that refugees have described ‘gruesome murders, kidnappings for ransom, and looted villages’, with many affected by clashes between farmers and herders as well as vigilantism.⁶⁰⁰

IOM provided the following infographic (see Figure 9 below)⁶⁰¹ depicting the reason for displacement by states in the north-east of Nigeria using November 2020 figures, recorded at 2 144 135 assessed IDPs:

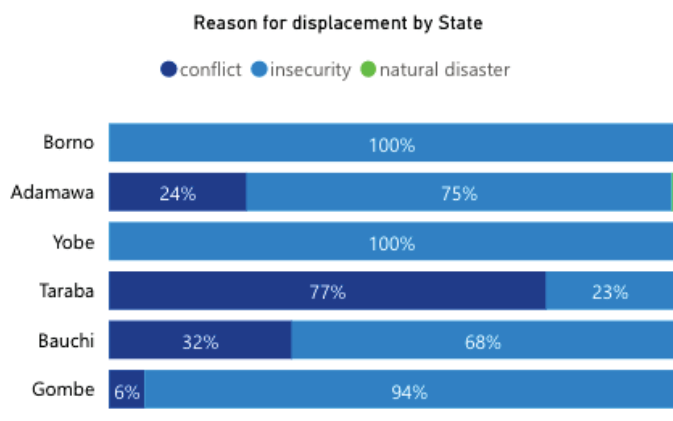


Figure 9 Reasons for displacement by states in the north-east of Nigeria © IOM-DTM⁶⁰²

⁵⁹³ UN Security Council, Conflict-related sexual violence; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2019/280], 29 March 2019 [url](#), para. 118

UN Security Council, Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Report of the Secretary-General, 24 June 2020, [url](#), para. 34; UN Security Council, Children and armed conflict in Nigeria, Report of the Secretary-General, 6 July 2020, [url](#), para. 8

⁵⁹⁴ AI, Nigeria: Military razes villages as Boko Haram attacks escalate, 14 February 2020, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁵ MSF, “When I think about going home, I remind myself that a live dog is better than a dead lion”, 1 September 2020, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁶ MSF, Working with displaced people in Benue state, Nigeria, 16 October 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁷ UNHCR, Surging violence in Nigeria drives displacement to Niger, 2 March 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁸ UNHCR, Surging violence in Nigeria drives displacement to Niger, 2 March 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁹ UNHCR, More than 30,000 refugees flee violence in northwestern Nigeria in last two months alone, 26 June 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁰ UNHCR, Surging violence in Nigeria drives displacement to Niger, 2 March 2021, [url](#)

⁶⁰¹ IOM, Nigeria displacement data visualization, Nov 2020, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁰² IOM, Nigeria displacement data visualization, Nov 2020, n.d., [url](#)

1.6.4.3 Displacement of women and children

According to IOM data collected in November 2020 from six states in the north-east – ‘the most affected by the conflict’ and consisting of the following states: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe, 2 150 243 IDPs were recorded, of which 53 % were women and 57 % under 18 years old.⁶⁰³ In 2020 the UN Secretary-General noted that Boko Haram triggered displacement and a need for humanitarian assistance, noting that ‘in this context, women and girls face a heightened risk of conflict-related sexual violence, including abduction, rape, sexual slavery and forced marriage.’⁶⁰⁴ MSF described female headed-households and accompanied as ‘especially vulnerable’ groups of IDPs who have immediate protection needs when they arrive in camps.⁶⁰⁵

UNOCHA explained ‘Women and girls are under threat of sexual or gender-based violence and abduction, for example when venturing outside the trenches that surround many IDP camps to collect firewood or work agricultural fields, though also within IDP camps.’⁶⁰⁶ Furthermore, UNOCHA considered that displacement and returns ‘impose high risk’ on separated and unaccompanied children.⁶⁰⁷ Boys and, to a lesser extent, girls are at risk of forcible recruitment by armed groups or perceived association with armed groups.⁶⁰⁸

1.6.4.4 Secondary displacement

An August 2019 IDMC report which interviewed 345 Nigerian IDPs and returning refugees noted that many had been displaced more than once.⁶⁰⁹ IOM reported that based on December 2020 data⁶¹⁰, of IDPs living in camps in the North-East Region of Nigeria, 59 % of respondents were displaced once, 32 % were displaced two times, 7 % three times and 2 % were displaced four times. 73 % of IDPs living with host communities said that they were displaced once, 22 % two times, 4 % three times and 1 % said they were displaced four times.⁶¹¹ IDPs living in host communities or on private land risk eviction with reportedly 36 % of IDPs facing land or property challenges.⁶¹² In 2020 around 72 000 IDPs reported that they risked being evicted.⁶¹³

1.6.4.5 Attacks on IDPs

UNOCHA explained that since mid-2019, the Nigerian Armed Forces have had a strategy of concentrating their troops in what are known as ‘super camps’ and IDP camps within ‘garrison towns’ which it considers ‘have affected security and protection for IDPs or other civilians outside of these areas’.⁶¹⁴ This reportedly makes them vulnerable to attacks targeting military forces.⁶¹⁵ According to International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO) data, non-state armed groups perpetrated 33 attacks on IDP camps in Borno from January-October 2020, killing over 20 civilians and injuring a further 31, looted food and property.⁶¹⁶ According to UN OCHA, ‘some of the most brutal and direct attacks targeting civilian populations were recorded in November and December [2020], including against internally displaced persons (IDPs) and aid workers or humanitarian assets.’ Amongst others, schools

⁶⁰³ IOM-DTM, Baseline Dashboard, North East Round 35 (December 2020), 11 March 2021, [url, p. 5](#)

⁶⁰⁴ UN Security Council, Conflict-related sexual violence; Report of the Secretary-General, 2020, [url](#), para. 70

⁶⁰⁵ MSF, Children in displacement camps need immediate protection, 13 August 2019, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁶ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#), p. 21

⁶⁰⁷ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#), p. 21

⁶⁰⁸ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#), p. 21

⁶⁰⁹ IDMC, “ONCE THE ROAD IS SAFE” Displacement and return in north-eastern Nigeria, August 2019, [url](#), p. 5

⁶¹⁰ A sample of 117 998 persons, representing 5.5 % of the recorded IDP population in the six most conflict-affected states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe were interviewed.

⁶¹¹ IOM, Nigeria — Displacement Report 35 (December 2020), 11 March 2021, [url](#), p. 9

⁶¹² UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#), p. 37

⁶¹³ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#), p. 37

⁶¹⁴ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#), p. 6

⁶¹⁵ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#), p. 2

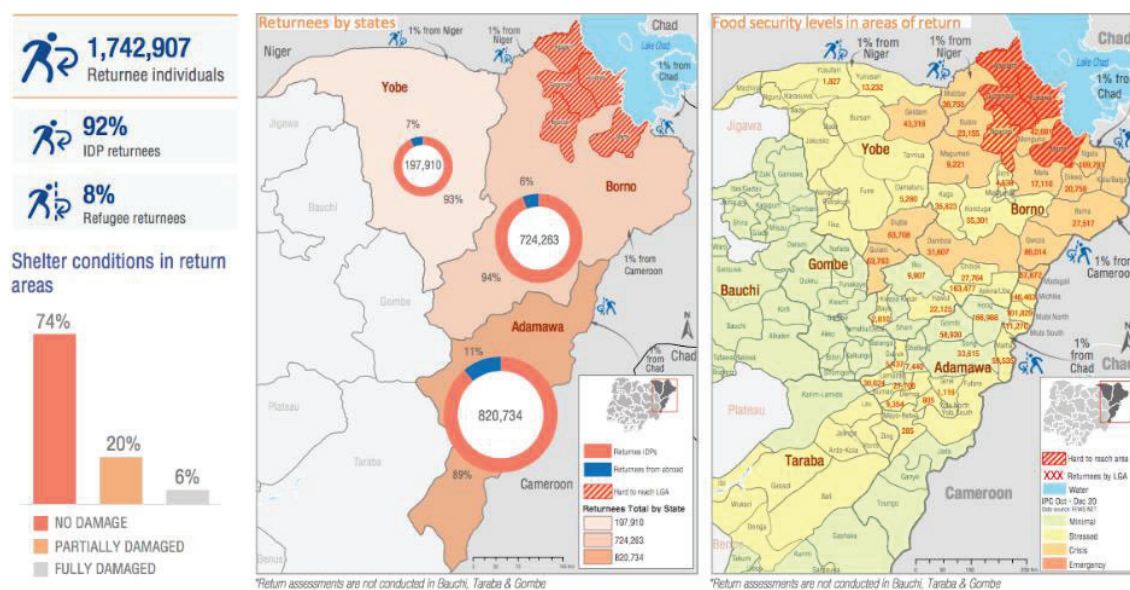
⁶¹⁶ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#), p. 21



and health facilities were targeted, farms destroyed and farmers killed. This is directly impacting the ‘rapidly deteriorating’ food security situation for 5.1 million people across the BAY (Borno, Adamawa, Yobe) states.⁶¹⁷

1.6.4.6 Returnees

IOM detailed that out of the total number of 1 742 907 returnees as of December 2020, 1 596 959 were classified as IDP returnees and 145 948 were classified as returned refugees.⁶¹⁸ IOM indicated that 71 % of the entire return population were women and children (below the age of 12).⁶¹⁹ IOM indicated that 52 % of the returnees in North East Region returned within their states of origin, 40 returned from other states, and 8 fled to neighbouring countries before return.⁶²⁰ IOM provided the following maps (see Map 7 below) indicating returnees by states in the North-East Region as well as food security in site of return as of December 2020.⁶²¹



Map 6 Returnees by state and food security in areas of return (c) IOM-DTM⁶²²

IOM noted that it does not collect any return data in the North-West and North-Central Regions.⁶²³

An August 2019 IDMC report which interviewed 345 Nigerian IDPs and returning refugees noted that ‘due to destruction of homes and ongoing insecurity, many refugees return to live among IDPs.’⁶²⁴

Human Rights Watch (HRW) described that in August 2020 authorities in Borno state announced their intention to return 1 860 000 IDPs and refugees back to their communities ‘despite ongoing safety

⁶¹⁷ UN OCHA, Nigeria, Situation Report, Last updated: 4 February 2021, [url](#)

⁶¹⁸ IOM, Nigeria — Displacement Report 35 (December 2020), 11 March 2021, [url](#), p. 17. Note: DTM Nigeria collects and reports on IDPs who have returned to their place of habitual residence prior to displacement and which have been captured during DTM return assessments. Furthermore, DTM in Nigeria reports only on returns within the BAY states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe as well as spontaneous returns from neighboring countries

⁶¹⁹ IOM, Nigeria — Displacement Report 35 (December 2020), 11 March 2021, [url](#), p. 17

⁶²⁰ IOM-DTM, Baseline Dashboard, North East Round 35 (December 2020), 11 March 2021, [url](#), p. 5

⁶²¹ IOM-DTM, Baseline Dashboard, North East Round 35 (December 2020), 11 March 2021, [url](#)

⁶²² IOM-DTM, Baseline Dashboard, North East Round 35 (December 2020), 11 March 2021, [url](#), p. 5

⁶²³ Regional IOM-DTM officer, exchange with EASO, 23 April 2021. DTM Nigeria collects and reports on IDPs who have returned to their place of habitual residence prior to displacement and which have been captured during DTM return assessments. Furthermore, DTM in Nigeria reports only on returns within the BAY states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe as well as spontaneous returns from neighboring countries.

⁶²⁴ IDMC, “ONCE THE ROAD IS SAFE” Displacement and return in north-eastern Nigeria, August 2019, [url](#), p. 5

concerns'.⁶²⁵ Just over two weeks after IDPs were returned to Kukawa Local Government Area, Boko Haram attacked and abducted at least 100 people.⁶²⁶ HRW noted that 'the government continued to participate in forced returns of Nigerian refugees from Cameroon.'⁶²⁷

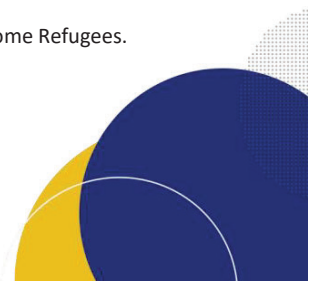
UNOCHA detailed that few 'return-intention' surveys of IDPs were conducted in 2020 but of those completed, whilst IDPs were in theory willing to return to their areas of origin, they were 'very concerned about insecurity, lack of essential services, destroyed or deteriorated housing, and probable hardships in restarting livelihoods'.⁶²⁸

⁶²⁵ HRW, World Report 2021 – Nigeria, 13 January 2021, [url](#)

⁶²⁶ HRW, World Report 2021 – Nigeria, 13 January 2021, [url](#)

⁶²⁷ HRW, World Report 2021 – Nigeria, 13 January 2021, [url](#). See also: Foreign Policy, Cameroon Used to Welcome Refugees. Now It Forcibly Expels Them, 12 February 2019, [url](#).

⁶²⁸ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#), p. 7



2. Description of security situation per state

In the following sections, security trends are explained in greater detail, per state and where needed subdivided into Local Governmental Areas (LGAs). For each state, a general description contains information on the geography and population. A second part describes the conflict background, including the actors in the conflict. A third part describes recent trends in the security situation, including number of security incidents and casualties from such incidents, representative security incidents, the state's ability to secure law and order, and the road security. Finally, a separate part is dedicated to displacements.

Nigeria comprises 36 states plus Abuja Federal territory (FCT), grouped into six regions.⁶²⁹ See [Map 2](#).

North-West Region

The North-West Region comprises Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara states.⁶³⁰

The North-West Region is increasingly affected by 'persistent herder-farmer tensions, rising crime and infiltration by Islamist militants', according to International Crisis Group. The organisation added: 'Starting in late 2015, attacks by herder-allied armed groups, vigilantes and criminally motivated groups spread from Zamfara to other states (primarily Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto and Niger) with varying intensity. Violence in these states has been concentrated in areas near their borders with Zamfara, or close to the forests where all sorts of armed groups have made camp.'⁶³¹

Boko Haram and allied Islamist militant groups are expanding towards the north-west, taking advantage of local conflicts and inadequate state protection to gain a foothold in local communities through extremist violence and alliances with local criminals active in gold and nickel mining in Zamfara, and Kaduna states.⁶³²

The increased violence in the North-West Region states is also linked with illegal gold mining which to a large extent carried out on an artisanal basis by local populations, but is dominated by Nigerian and Chinese illegal criminal organisations. According to ENACT⁶³³, 'Criminal collaboration between some "Nigerians in high positions of authority" and Chinese corporations in the illegal mining of gold drive rural banditry and violent local conflicts in some parts of Nigeria.'⁶³⁴

For more information, see [Section 1.4.1.1](#).

⁶²⁹ Nigeria, States, n.d. [url](#)

⁶³⁰ Nigeria, NIMC (National Identity Management Commission), NIMC Enrolment centres, n.d., [url](#)

⁶³¹ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 5

⁶³² ISS, Nigeria's growing insecurity offers expansion opportunities for Boko Haram, 3 August 2020, [url](#)

⁶³³ ENACT is EU's Pan-African Programme 'to respond more effectively to transnational organised crime'

⁶³⁴ ENACT, Mining and extractives - Illegal mining drives Nigeria's rural banditry and local conflicts, 28 May 2020, [url](#); see also Quartz, Nigeria is also losing control of its troubled northwest region, 24 November 2020, [url](#)



2.1 Jigawa state

2.1.1 General description of the state

Jigawa state shares borders to the west with Kano and Katsina states, to the east with Bauchi and Yobe states and to the north it shares an international border with the Republic of Niger. The capital is Dutse.⁶³⁵

Jigawa state is composed of the following Local Government Areas (LGAs): Auyo, Babura, Biriniwa, Birnin Kudu, Buji, Dutse, Gagarawa, Garki, Gumel, Guri, Gwaram, Gwiwa, Hadejia, Jahun, Kafin Hausa, Kaugama, Kazaure, Kiri Kasama, Kiyawa, Maigatari, Malam Madori, Miga, Ringim, Roni, Sule Tankarkar, Taura and Yankwashi.⁶³⁶

In the 2006 census, the population of state was 4 361 002. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 5 828 163 in 2016.⁶³⁷

The ethnic groups living in Jigawa state include: Hausa, which appears to be the predominant ethnic profile, Fulani, Mangawa, Ngizimawa and Badawa.⁶³⁸

The state's main economic activity is agriculture. More than 80 % of the state's population is involved in subsistence farming and animal husbandry.⁶³⁹

2.1.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.1.2.1 Background of the conflict

Jigawa state experienced several farmer-herder confrontations in 2019 and 2020, according to ACLED and Nigeria Watch data. The number of fatalities resulting from such violence did not exceed three per incident.⁶⁴⁰ The background to these clashes is related to damage to farming or grazing land, water wells and so more.⁶⁴¹ Also, several kidnappings took place in 2019 and 2020.⁶⁴²

In November 2020, hundreds of herders relocated from Zamfara to the forests in Gwaram LGA, to escape violent attacks and kidnappings in the former state. The relocation caused unrest amongst local communities, who fear an increase of criminality. The local police indicated they are monitoring the situation. The area of Gwaram LGA had been secured from kidnappings for three years.⁶⁴³

2.1.2.2 Actors

Actors in Jigawa state's conflicts include local communal militias, unidentified gunmen, kidnappers and robbers, and herders and farmers clashing over access to land, water and other resources.⁶⁴⁴

⁶³⁵ Nigeria, Jigawa State, n.d., [url](#)

⁶³⁶ Nigeria, Jigawa state, n.d., [url](#)

⁶³⁷ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p.2

⁶³⁸ Nigeria, Jigawa state, n.d., [url](#)

⁶³⁹ Nigeria, Jigawa state, n.d., [url](#)

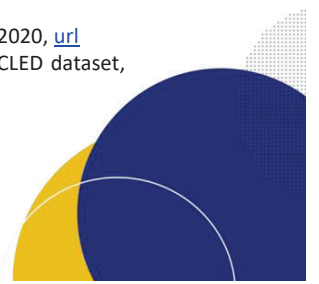
⁶⁴⁰ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Nigeria Watch, The database, 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁴¹ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 5-7

⁶⁴² CFR, Nigeria Security Tracker (NST), 1 January 2019-31 December 2020, [url](#); ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Nigeria Watch, The database, 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁴³ Premium Times, UPDATED: Fear in Jigawa community as herders relocate to nearby forests, 19 November 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁴⁴ Premium Times, Controversy over farmers, herders clash in Jigawa community, 18 January 2020, [url](#); ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



2.1.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

According to Nigeria Watch, Jigawa state had one of the lowest number of fatalities from crime in 2020.⁶⁴⁵ In 2019 it reported that grazing space was a major cause of clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farming communities.⁶⁴⁶

2.1.3.1 Number of security incidents and fatalities

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 15 security incidents (7 battles, 2 cases of violence against civilians, 6 incidents of riots) in Jigawa state, resulting in 15 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Garki and Guri LGAs. The 2 incidents of violence against civilians were attacks.⁶⁴⁷

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period, as well as the highest number of incidents by LGA is shown in Figure 10 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 1 protest was reported in Jigawa state during the reference period.⁶⁴⁸



Figure 10 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians in Jigawa state in 2020, with breakdown by LGA. Based on ACLED data⁶⁴⁹

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Jigawa state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

⁶⁴⁵ Nigeria Watch, Tenth report on Violence (2020), n.d. [url](#), p. 6

⁶⁴⁶ Nigeria Watch, Ninth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2019), n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁴⁷ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁶⁴⁸ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁶⁴⁹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

Jigawa state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	7	10
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	2	0
Riots	6	5
Total	15	15

Table 3 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020⁶⁵⁰

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 3 security incidents (2 cases of violence against civilians, 1 incident of riots) in Jigawa state, resulting in 2 deaths.⁶⁵¹

2.1.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

The most significant incidents referred to clashes between herders and farmers in several localities.⁶⁵²

On 17 January 2020, in Fulata (Taura LGA), reprisal attacks took place between local herders and farmers over land use, resulting in 10 injuries.⁶⁵³

On 21 June 2020, a ‘violent clash’ between farmers and Fulani herdsmen took place in Adiyani (Guri LGA), killing three people.⁶⁵⁴

On 19 September 2020, a clash over land ownership between herdsmen and farmers in Madamuwa (Guri LGA), left about 20 persons injured and one person die from his injuries. Two people were arrested.⁶⁵⁵

On 26 October 2020, unknown gunmen kidnapped the wife of a vigilante deputy commander in Galamawa (Dutse LGA). The police rescued her son; the woman was later freed after payment of a ransom.⁶⁵⁶

2.1.3.3 State’s ability to secure law and order

Jigawa state police were called upon to intervene in the violence incidents and in one instance were able to arrest suspects⁶⁵⁷ or rescued a kidnapped person.⁶⁵⁸ When in January 2020 Fulani herders clashed with farmers in Taura LGA, the police was criticised for not preventing the incident. The police maintained that ‘normalcy had been restored in the community.’⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵⁰ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁶⁵¹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

⁶⁵² ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁶⁵³ Premium Times, Controversy over farmers, herders clash in Jigawa community, 18 January 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁴ Channels TV, Three Confirmed Dead As Farmers And Herders Clash In Jigawa, 21 June 2020, [url](#)

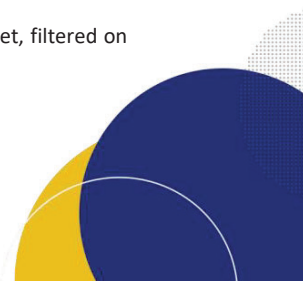
⁶⁵⁵ Premium Times, One dead, 20 injured in fresh herders, farmers clash in Jigawa – Police, 21 September 2020, [url](#); Daily Trust, Farmer/herder clash: One person dies, others injured in Jigawa, 23 September 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁶ Premium Times, Vigilante commander’s wife, son abducted in Jigawa, 26 October 2020, [url](#); ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁷ Premium Times, One dead, 20 injured in fresh herders, farmers clash in Jigawa – Police, 21 September 2020, [url](#); Daily Trust, Farmer/herder clash: One person dies, others injured in Jigawa, 23 September 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁸ Premium Times, Vigilante commander’s wife, son abducted in Jigawa, 26 October 2020, [url](#); ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁹ Premium Times, Controversy over farmers, herders clash in Jigawa community, 18 January 2020, [url](#)



2.1.3.4 Road security

Roads in the north-west are often subject to kidnapping and robbery. In a 2019 article, citing 2017 data, Jigawa was ranked fourth of Nigerian states with highest rates of kidnapping (after Zamfara, Rivers, and Lagos).⁶⁶⁰

Further information on road security specifically for Jigawa state was not found.

2.1.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on major damage in infrastructure or explosives of war in Jigawa state.

2.1.3.6 Displacement and return

For a general overview of the displacement trends in the North-West and North-Central Regions, see [Section 2.2.3.6](#) in Kaduna state.

IDPs

As of December 2020, IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Round 5 assessments identified 728 688 internally displaced persons in North-West and North-Central regions.⁶⁶¹

No information was found on the number of conflict-related IDPs specifically in Jigawa state.

On 2 October 2020, the overflowing river Hadeji caused a flooding that killed about 50 persons and displaced more than 10 000 families, in particular in the eight LGAs of Hadejia emirate.⁶⁶²

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Jigawa state. IOM does not collect any return data in the North-West and North-Central Regions.⁶⁶³

2.2 Kaduna state

2.2.1 General description of the state

Kaduna state shares boundaries with the states of Zamfara, Katsina, Niger, Kano, Bauchi, Nasarawa, Plateau states and the Federal Capital Territory to the south-west. The state's capital is Kaduna.⁶⁶⁴

Kaduna state is composed of the following Local Government Areas (LGAs): Birnin Gwari, Chikun, Giwa, Igabi, Ikara, Jaba, Jema'a, Kachia, Kaduna North, Kaduna South, Kagarko, Kaura, Kauru, Kubau, Kudan, Lere, Makarfi, Sabon Gari, Sanga, Soba, Zangon Kataf and Zaria.⁶⁶⁵

In the 2006 census, the population of Kaduna state was 6 113 503. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 8 252 366 in 2016.⁶⁶⁶

The ethnic groups in Kaduna state include: the Hausa, Gbagyi, Adara, Ham, Gong, Atyap, Bajjuu, Ninkyob, Kurama, Koro, Zango Kataf, Mada and Agworok.⁶⁶⁷

⁶⁶⁰ Chinwokwu, E.C. et al., Militancy and violence as a catalyst to kidnapping in Nigeria, 3 April 2019, [url](#)

⁶⁶¹ IOM Nigeria, DTM North Central and North West Zones, Displacement Report 5 (January 2021), 8 March 2021, [url](#)

⁶⁶² This Day, Flood Kills 50 Persons in Jigawa, Displaces 10,000 Families, 2 October 2020, [url](#)

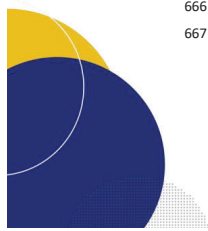
⁶⁶³ Regional IOM-DTM officer, email exchange with EASO, 23 April 2021

⁶⁶⁴ Nigeria, Kaduna state, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁶⁵ Nigeria, Kaduna state, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁶⁶ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p.2

⁶⁶⁷ Nigeria, Kaduna state, n.d., [url](#)



Kaduna state has very extensive fertile land where both food and cash crops are cultivated. The state also has animal husbandry.⁶⁶⁸

2.2.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.2.2.1 Background of the conflict

As in other North-West Region states, violence in Kaduna state is often related to cattle rustling and conflicts over land and resources (see [Section 1.4.1.1](#)). According to the Council of Foreign Relations (CFR), farmer-herder conflicts have intensified in the North-West Region during the COVID-19 lockdown period.⁶⁶⁹

According to CFR, ‘The city of Kaduna has long been the center of political, ethnic and religious violence’, kindled by high levels of unemployment, a large influx of migrants from rural areas, and an explosion of young population. Violence – including election-related violence -escalated along ethnic and religious lines and ethnic ‘cleansing’ occurred. The whole state also experienced increasing levels of violent conflicts and kidnappings (about 400 people were abducted in 2020 for ransom, according to CFR). In the predominantly agricultural state, conflicts over use of land and water are escalating.⁶⁷⁰

2.2.2.2 Actors

The main actors in the security incidents as recorded by ACLED are Fulani ethnic militia and ‘unidentified armed groups’ in clashes with civilians (in 59 out of 60 cases of violence against civilians). In addition, the military forces of Nigeria were actors in 29 incidents of battles and 13 on explosions/remote violence. The Kaduna communal militia was an actor in 15 cases of violence against civilians.⁶⁷¹

Violent cattle rustling is mainly carried out by ‘large and well-armed criminal groups based in the Kamuku forest in Kaduna’, according to Crisis Group.⁶⁷²

In 2020, the armed group Ansaru, an ISWA branch loyal to Al-Qaeda (see [Section 1.3.2](#)), conducted its first attacks in five years.⁶⁷³ During the year 2020, ACLED recorded three bloody battles with Ansaru in Kaduna state: on 5 February, 23 August and 18 November.⁶⁷⁴

After a wave of attacks in Southern Kaduna in July 2020, the state governor declared no more ‘peace money’ to some local leaders, which he accused of having organised the killings as reaction to no longer receiving monthly intakes from the local government.⁶⁷⁵

2.2.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

Kaduna state is reportedly surpassing Borno state as the ‘epicentre of violence’, with approximately 400 people recorded as abducted for ransom by criminal gangs, more than 200 violent incidents resulting in almost 1 000 fatalities, and 50 000 IDPs in 2020. Conflicts over water and land use are escalating, and Ansaru, a less prominent Islamist group, has become active in the state.⁶⁷⁶

⁶⁶⁸ Nigeria, Kaduna state, n.d., [url](#)

⁶⁶⁹ CFR, Recent Flare Up in Violence Across Northwestern Nigeria, 3 June 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁰ CFR, Ethnic and Religious Violence Worsen in Kaduna, 5 February 2021, [url](#)

⁶⁷¹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁶⁷² International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 3

⁶⁷³ CFR, Niger Attack Demonstrates Islamic State in West Africa’s Growing Reach, 25 August 2020, [url](#); Jamestown Foundation, Boko Haram’s Expansionary Project in Northwestern Nigeria, 28 July 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁴ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁵ Vanguard, S-Kaduna leaders want money for peace, says El-Rufai, 18 August 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁶ CFR, Ethnic and Religious Violence Worsen in Kaduna, 5 February 2021, [url](#)



In its August 2020 report, AI noted that ‘violence has been on and off in southern Kaduna since the aftermath of 2011 elections’ and reported on ‘escalating violence in southern Kaduna’. In June 2020, the state governor had announced a 24-hour curfew in several communities. However, this has not stopped attacks. July 2020 saw more than one hundred deaths resulting from ‘coordinated attacks’ on local communities. According to AI, the ‘worst affected are villages in the south of Kaduna state, where armed men killed at least 366 people in multiple attacks between January and July 2020.’⁶⁷⁷

According to International Crisis Group, attacks by ‘herder-allied armed groups, vigilantes and criminally motivated groups’ spread from Zamfara to other states, in border areas or close to the forests which are home to several armed groups.⁶⁷⁸ In Kaduna, most of the violent attacks took place in Birnin-Gwari, Igabi, Giwa, Kajuru and Chikun LGAs.⁶⁷⁹

2.2.3.1 Number of security incidents and fatalities

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 227 security incidents (58 battles, 15 incidents of remote violence/explosions, 144 cases of violence against civilians, 10 incidents of riots) in Kaduna state, resulting in 869 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Chikun LGA, followed by Kaduna North LGA. Of the 144 incidents of violence against civilians, 125 were attacks and 19 kidnappings.⁶⁸⁰

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period, as well as the highest number of incidents by LGA is shown in Figure 12 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 19 protests were reported in Kaduna state during the reference period.⁶⁸¹

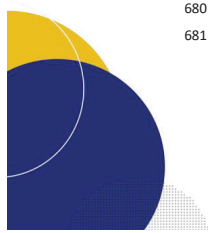
⁶⁷⁷ AI, Nigeria: Government failings leave rural communities at the mercy of gunmen, 24 August 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁸ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 5

⁶⁷⁹ Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 6

⁶⁸⁰ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁶⁸¹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



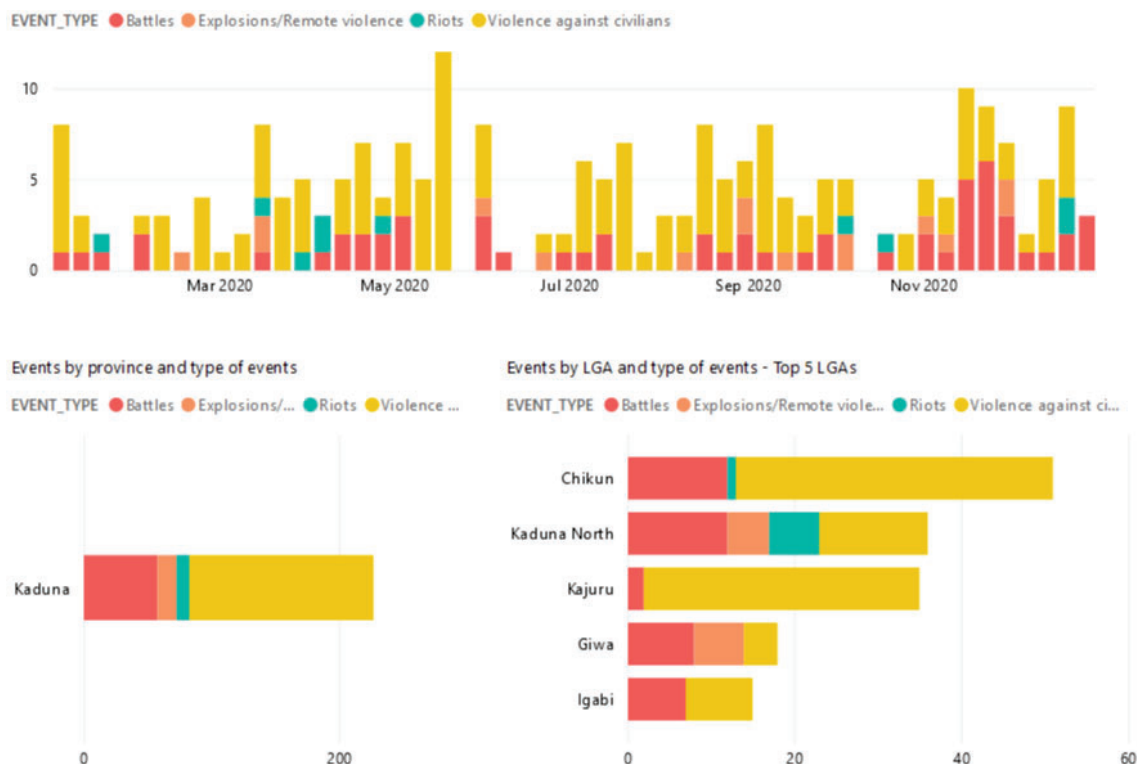


Figure 11 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians in Kaduna state in 2020, with breakdown by LGA. Based on ACLED data⁶⁸²

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Kaduna state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Kaduna state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	58	170
Explosions/remote violence	15	177
Violence against civilians	144	505
Riots	10	17
Total	277	869

Table 4 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020⁶⁸³

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 188 security incidents (51 battles, 33 incidents of remote violence/explosions, 98 cases of violence against civilians, 6 incidents of riots) in Kaduna state, resulting in 500 deaths.⁶⁸⁴

⁶⁸² EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁶⁸³ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁴ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)



2.2.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 15 January 2020, the Emir of Potiskum (Yobe state) was attacked on the Kaduna-Zaria highway, at the outskirts of Kaduna. Four of his aides and two civilians were killed, five people were injured and several abducted.⁶⁸⁵ Ansaru claimed the attack, which, according to Jamestown Terrorist Monitor, was its first attack in five years.⁶⁸⁶

In a combat operation conducted at the Kuduru woodlands, Birnin Gwari area, in February 2020, police claimed to have killed 250 ‘high profile members’ of the Ansaru armed group. The operation was conducted by several police units, such as ‘the Police Mobile Force (PMF), Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU), Special Forces, Intelligence Response Team (IRT), Special Tactical Squad (STS) and Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS)’.⁶⁸⁷ In contrast to the police’s claim, the ACLED database, based on several sources, recorded the killing of two Ansaru militants.⁶⁸⁸

On 1 March 2020, armed men attacked several villages, Kerawa, Rago, Zareyawa, Marina, Hashimawa, and Unguwar Barau, all in the Igabi district, looting and burning homes and killing at least 50 people. The attackers were allegedly members of Boko Haram.⁶⁸⁹

On 12 and 13 May 2020, attacks took place on Gonar Rogo and Unguwan Arha communities in Kajuru LGA, killing 27 civilians. Two weeks later, police warned against fake news mentioning new killings in the same area.⁶⁹⁰

According to AI, more than 100 people were killed in July during ‘11 coordinated attacks’ in Chikun, Kaura, and Zangon-Kataf LGAs.⁶⁹¹ One such attack occurred on 19 July 2020, when armed gunmen (suspected herdsmen) attacked a wedding party in Kukum Daji village (Kaura LGA, Kaduna) and killed 21 people. About 28 people were injured.⁶⁹² Another source mentioned 16 persons feared dead, including a police officer.⁶⁹³

In the night of 6 August 2020, gunmen (suspected Fulani militia) attacked the communities of Apyia’Shyim, A’Piako, Atak’Mawei, and Kibori in Atyap Chiefdom (Zango-Kataf LGA), killing between 21 and 33 residents, burning property and injuring three persons.⁶⁹⁴

On 24 October 2020, Nigerian air force and army troops in Operation Thunder Strike attacked an armed group (‘bandits’) in the Yadi and Kufai Shantu areas of Giwa LGA, killing ‘scores’ of militiamen and the ‘notorious bandits’ leader’, Buhari Halilu.⁶⁹⁵

On 2 January 2021, a group of ‘over 50 motorcycles each carrying three-men wielding AK-47 rifles’, stormed Kaya town (Giwa LGA), killing at least 11 residents and three drivers passing by.⁶⁹⁶ The attack

⁶⁸⁵ This Day, (Updated) Bandits Attack Emir of Potiskum’s Convoy in Kaduna, Kill Six, Abduct Several Others, 15 January 2020, [url](#). Another source, however, quoting ‘top security sources’ mentioned 30 people were feared dead and ‘many’ persons kidnapped. These figures could not be confirmed by other sources. Premium Times, 30 killed, 100 kidnapped as gunmen attack Emir of Potiskum, 15 January 2020, [url](#);

⁶⁸⁶ Jamestown Foundation, Boko Haram’s Expansionary Project in Northwestern Nigeria, 28 July 2020, [url](#); The Cable, Ansaru militant group claims responsibility for attack on Yobe emir, 19 January 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁷ Premium Times, Police kill 250 suspected terrorists in Kaduna, 5 February 2020, [url](#). See also Daily Trust, Police neutralize over 250 terrorists, bandits in Kuduru forest, 5 February 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁸ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#). See also Legit, Locals recount police encounter with bandits in Kaduna, 5 February 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁹ VOA, Over 50 Killed as Armed Men Attack Villages in Northern Nigeria, 2 March 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁰ Guardian (The), Police deny fresh killings in Southern Kaduna, 30 May 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁹¹ AI, Nigeria: Government failings leave rural communities at the mercy of gunmen, 24 August 2020, [url](#)

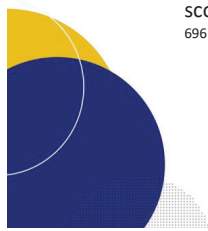
⁶⁹² Vanguard, Gunmen kill 21 at wedding party in Kaduna, 20 July 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁹³ Premium Times, Gunmen kill ‘16’ in fresh Kaduna attack, 20 July 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁴ Punch, Armed Fulani killed 33 in fresh Southern Kaduna attack – SOKAPU, 7 August 2020, [url](#); AI, Nigeria: Government failings leave rural communities at the mercy of gunmen, 24 August 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁵ Punch, NAF bombs bandits’ location in Kaduna, 26 October 2020, [url](#); Nation (The), Troops hit bandits’ camps, eliminate scores in Kaduna, 25 October 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁶ Daily Post, Kaduna govt confirms attack on Kaya community, killing of many, 3 January 2021, [url](#)



was a reprisal attack after ‘bandits’ abducted and killed the leader of the local vigilante group and in reprisal, four herders were killed.⁶⁹⁷

On 1 February 2021, Nigerian military, under the auspices of Operation Safe Haven (OPSH), clashed with about six ‘suspected bandits’ attacking Warsa Piti (Lere LGA, Kaduna) after receiving a distress call from residents. The attackers fled into the forest but two citizens had been killed. On the same day, in a similar attack by ‘bandits’ on Randagi village (Birnin Gwari LGA), one citizen was killed and few others injured, while shops were looted. It was reported that ‘prompt response by the military in the air and on the ground helped immensely in chasing back the bandits.’⁶⁹⁸

On 6 February 2021, Kutemeshi village (Birnin-Gwari LGA) was attacked by unknown gunmen (‘bandits’ according to Daily Trust) during which at least 14 residents were killed and several others injured.⁶⁹⁹

On 11 March 2021, unknown gunmen attacked the Federal College of Forestry Mechanisation in Mando, ‘shooting indiscriminately’ and took hundreds of students. The army managed to rescue 180 people after fighting with the gunmen, but 39 students went missing, mostly 17 years and older.⁷⁰⁰ All students were released by 5 May 2021.⁷⁰¹

On 22 March 2021, Nigerian military troops and local vigilante groups clashed with ‘bandits’ who attempted to barricade the Kwanar Tsintsiya road along the Kaduna-Zaria highway (Igabi LGA). Following the clash, the ‘bandits’ retreated to their camp and attacked Unguwan Lalle village in the same LGA, killing three residents.⁷⁰²

On 20 April 2021, ‘over a dozen’ students and staff were kidnapped at the Greenfield University outside Kaduna city for ransom. A few days later, the bodies of five kidnapped students were found.⁷⁰³

2.2.3.3 State’s ability to secure law and order

International Crisis Group reported that the Federal security forces (army and police) launched several ‘anti-banditry’ operations in the North-West Region, including in Kaduna. On 4 May 2019 the Nigerian Air Forces established its 27th detachment at Birnin Gwari, Kaduna state, ‘to serve as support base and blocking force for troops engaged in Operations Diran Mikiya and Sharan Daji’.⁷⁰⁴

Throughout the past years, hundreds of ‘men suspected of being part of herder-allied groups and criminal gangs’ have been arrested or killed, hundreds of kidnapped persons rescued, weapons and ammunition recovered, according to Crisis Group. However, according to local interlocutors, ‘the army failed to consolidate those gains and hold territory, enabling the groups to soon reorganise and return.’⁷⁰⁵ Crisis Group added that Kaduna state government, contrary to neighbouring states, does not want to engage in peace processes with armed groups, and noted that ‘attacks continue to take a significant toll.’⁷⁰⁶ To reduce local clashes with farmers and increase milk production, the state government launched a dairy farm project in Kubau LGA to assist nomadic herders to settle.⁷⁰⁷

According to AI, ‘authorities have failed to both end the violence or bring the perpetrators to justice.’ Many interlocutors described to AI how security forces arrived many hours after the attack had ended. In one attack in Unguwan Magaji, ‘security forces arrived at the scene but left when they saw the

⁶⁹⁷ HumAngle, Attack On Kaya Village Was A Reprisal By Suspected Kidnappers – Police, 3 January 2021, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁸ Guardian (The), Bandits kill 3 in Kaduna State, 2 February 2021, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁹ Daily Trust, 26 killed in Kaduna, Edo, Osun attacks, 8 February 2021, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁰ Guardian (The), Gunmen kidnap 39 students in Nigeria in raid on college, 12 March 2021, [url](#)

⁷⁰¹ This Day, Breaking: Abducted Kaduna Students Released after 55 Days in Captivity, 5 May 2021, [url](#)

⁷⁰² Channels TV, Bandits Kill Four, Injure Three In Fresh Kaduna Attack, 23 March 2021, [url](#)

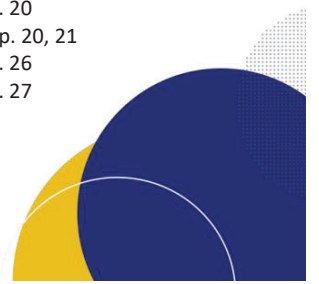
⁷⁰³ Premium Times, Two more kidnapped Kaduna varsity students found dead – Official, 26 April 2021, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁴ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 20

⁷⁰⁵ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 20, 21

⁷⁰⁶ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 26

⁷⁰⁷ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 27



sophisticated ammunition the attackers were using. By the time they returned, at least 17 people had been killed.⁷⁰⁸

In August 2020, the governor of Kaduna state announced a collaboration between the state government and security agencies ‘to stop the cycle of attacks and reprisals’ to ‘strengthen security forces and restore calm’, by installing CCTV cameras, building a command centre and a forensic laboratory.⁷⁰⁹

2.2.3.4 Road security

The Abuja-Kaduna-Kano highway is notorious for violent kidnappings but also for the high number of dangerous accidents (nearly 5 000 between 2017 and 2020). This is mainly due to the very bad state of the road, mainly in the Kaduna stretch, of which armed groups took advantage to attack and kidnap passengers for ransom.⁷¹⁰ ‘At its height in 2017 and 2018, the [...] road had 10 kidnappings per day with 20 different groups operating on the route’, according to a police commander.⁷¹¹

Since 2016, a railway is operating on the stretch. While initially commuters preferred the highway, due to the deteriorating security situation the train has become in high demand, thanks to armed police officers that guard the train.⁷¹²

2.2.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

As a result of the hundreds of violent incidents in Kaduna state and neighbouring states, many houses and properties have been burnt, crops have been destroyed, large numbers of cattle were rustled or killed.⁷¹³

No information was found on explosive remnants of war.

2.2.3.6 Displacement and return

General overview of the North-West and North-Central Regions

As of December 2020, IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Round 5 (conducted between 19 November and 6 December 2020) assessed 728 688 internally displaced persons in North-West and North-Central Regions (specifically Benue, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Plateau, Nasarawa, Sokoto and Zamfara states, see [Table 5](#) below).⁷¹⁴ This was a steep increase by 153 369 individuals (or 27 %) compared to the previous Round 4 of assessments (27 July to 8 August 2020)⁷¹⁵ across the same eight states - which was in turn a slight decrease of less than 1 % compared to the Round 3 assessment (578 119 IDPs in December 2019).⁷¹⁶ According to IOM, the increase in number of IDPs in Round 5 was primarily due to the fact that DTM coverage of IDP locations considerably increased between Rounds 4 and 5 (up by 210 locations).⁷¹⁷

Of the total number of IDPs identified in Round 5, 58 % (or 419 457 individuals) were located in the North-West Region while 42 % (or 309 231 individuals) were located in the North-Central Region.⁷¹⁸

⁷⁰⁸ AI, Nigeria: Government failings leave rural communities at the mercy of gunmen, 24 August 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁹ TopNajia.ng, Gov. El -Rufai; Government installing CCTVs in Southern Kaduna, 18 August 2020, [url](#)

⁷¹⁰ ICIR, Accidents, deaths and kidnappings escalate as FG drags feet on Abuja-Kaduna-Kano road construction, 8 December 2020, [url](#)

⁷¹¹ BBC, Katsina: The motorcycle bandits terrorising northern Nigeria, 5 July 2020, [url](#)

⁷¹² BBC, 'I was kidnapped and now only travel by train', 7 November 2019, [url](#)

⁷¹³ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 7, 9-11, 17

⁷¹⁴ IOM-DTM, North Central and North West Zones, Displacement Report 5 (January 2021), 8 March 2021, [url](#)

⁷¹⁵ IOM-DTM, North Central and North West Zones, Displacement Report 5 (January 2021), 8 March 2021, [url](#)

⁷¹⁶ IOM-DTM, North Central and North West Zones, Displacement Report 4 (August 2020), 25 October 2020, [url](#), p. 6

⁷¹⁷ IOM-DTM, North Central and North West Zones, Displacement Report 4 (August 2020), 25 October 2020, [url](#), p. 5

⁷¹⁸ IOM-DTM, North Central and North West Zones, Displacement Report 5 (January 2021), 8 March 2021, [url](#), p. 6

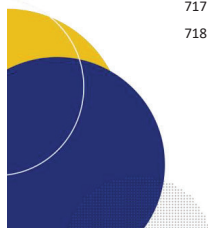


Figure xx shows that the largest share of IDPs (26 %) originated from Benue (down from 34 % since Round 4), followed by Katsina (16 % - up from 14 %), and Zamfara (16 % - up from 12 %) as states of origin of IDPs. Compared to Round 4, Plateau dropped from second to fourth place (12 % - down from 14 %).⁷¹⁹

Reasons for displacement in the two regions given by IOM were communal clashes (45 % of all IDPs), armed banditry and kidnapping (30 %), and natural disasters – mainly floods and sandstorms -(20 %)). Benue, Plateau and Nasarawa had the highest percentages of displaced persons because of communal clashes (respectively 90 %, 89 % and 59 % of IDPs).⁷²⁰

State	Count of LGAs	R4 Total (July 2020)	R5 Total (December 2020)	Status	Population Difference	% change
BENUE	12	197,511	204,193	Increase	6,682	3%
KADUNA	22	67,192	89,629	Increase	22,437	33%
KANO	37	25,233	50,676	Increase	25,443	101%
KATSINA	35	80,115	121,434	Increase	41,319	52%
NASARAWA	12	17,593	20,059	Increase	2,466	14%
PLATEAU	17	80,970	84,979	Increase	4,009	5%
SOKOTO	11	36,595	45,402	Increase	8,807	24%
ZAMFARA	14	70,110	112,316	Increase	42,206	60%
GRAND TOTAL	160	575,319	728,688	Increase	153,369	27%

Table 1: Change in internally displaced population by state

Table 5 Change in IDP population by state (North-West and North-Central Region) © IOM-DTM⁷²¹

IDPs

The total number of IDPs for Kaduna by Round 5, December 2020 was 89 629, an increase of 22 437 individuals (33 %) compared to Round 4, July 2020 (67 192 IDPs). Kaduna hosts 12 % of all IDPs in the North-Central and North-West Regions. Lere LGA hosted the highest number of displaced persons (23 666 persons or 26 % of all IDPs in Kaduna state).⁷²²

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Kaduna state. IOM does not collect any return data in the North-West and North-Central Regions.⁷²³

2.3 Kano state

2.3.1 General description of the state

Kano state shares boundaries with the states of Jigawa, Bauchi, Kaduna and Katsina. To the north it shares an international border with the Republic of Niger.⁷²⁴ The state's capital is Kano.⁷²⁵

Kano state is composed of the following 44 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Ajingi, Albasu, Bagwai, Bebeji, Bichi, Bunkure, Dala, Dambatta, Dawakin-Kudou, Dawakin-Tofa, Doguwa, Fagge, Gabasawa, Garko, Garun-Malam, Gaya, Gezawa, Gwale, Gwarzo, Kabo, Karaye, Kura, Kumbotso, Kiru, Kibiya,

⁷¹⁹ IOM Nigeria, DTM North Central and North West Zones, Displacement Report 5 (January 2021), 8 March 2021, [url](#), p. 9

⁷²⁰ IOM Nigeria, DTM North Central and North West Zones, Displacement Report 5 (January 2021), 8 March 2021, [url](#), p. 10

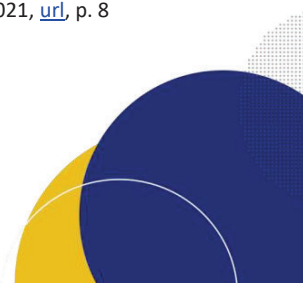
⁷²¹ IOM Nigeria, DTM North Central and North West Zones, Displacement Report 5 (January 2021), 8 March 2021, [url](#), p. 8

⁷²² IOM Nigeria, DTM North Central and North West Zones, Displacement Report 5 (January 2021), 8 March 2021, [url](#), p. 8

⁷²³ Regional IOM-DTM officer, email exchange with EASO, 23 April 2021

⁷²⁴ UN, Nigeria, August 2014, [url](#)

⁷²⁵ Nigeria, Kano state, n.d., [url](#)



Kunchi, Makoda, Madobi, Minjibir, Kano Municipal, Nassarawa, Rano, Rogo, Rimin Gado, Shanono, Sumaila, Takai, Tarauni, Tofa, Tsanyawa, Tudun-Wada, Ungogo, Warawa and Wudil.⁷²⁶

In the 2006 census, the population of Kano state was 9 401 288. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 13 076 892 in 2016.⁷²⁷

Regarding ethnic composition, the population in Kano state mostly comprises of Hausa, mainly Kano (Kanawa) as well as of Abagayawa and Fulani.⁷²⁸ Kano state is a predominantly Muslim state, with the majority being Sunni Muslims and a minority Shia. There are also Christians and followers of other religions, who only constitute a small number of the population of the state.⁷²⁹

Kano state is a major producer of hides and skins, sesame, soybean, cotton, garlic, gum arabic and chili pepper while subsistence and commercial agriculture takes place mostly in the outer districts of the state.⁷³⁰

2.3.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.3.2.1 Background of the conflict

As in other North-West Region states, violence in Kano state is often related to cattle rustling and conflicts over land and resources (see Section [1.4.1.1](#)). According to CFR, farmer-herder conflicts have intensified in the North-West Region during the COVID-19 lockdown period.⁷³¹

2.3.2.2 Actors

The main actors in Kano state's conflicts, as recorded by ACLED, are unidentified armed groups and rioters.⁷³² Cattle rustling is mostly carried out by large, 'well-armed criminal groups' mostly from bases in Falgore forest in Kano.⁷³³

2.3.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

According to International Crisis Group, since 2011 but increasingly since 2014, 'the North West has also suffered a surge of violence between pastoralists and allied armed groups frequently called "bandits", on one hand, and farmers supported by community and state-sponsored vigilantes, on the other.'⁷³⁴

2.3.3.1 Number of security incidents and fatalities

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 12 security incidents (2 battles, 7 cases of violence against civilians, 3 incidents of riots) in Kano state, resulting in 6 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Kano Municipal LGA. Of the 7 incidents of violence against civilians, 3 were attacks and 4 abductions.⁷³⁵

⁷²⁶ Nigeria, Kano state, n.d., [url](#)

⁷²⁷ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 2

⁷²⁸ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Kano, 4 June 2019, [url](#)

⁷²⁹ Nigeria, Kano state, n.d., [url](#)

⁷³⁰ Nigeria, Kano state, n.d., [url](#)

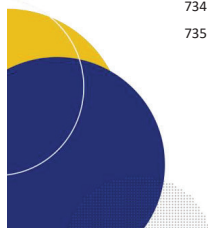
⁷³¹ CFR, Recent Flare Up in Violence Across Northwestern Nigeria, 3 June 2020, [url](#)

⁷³² ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁷³³ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 10

⁷³⁴ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 3

⁷³⁵ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period, as well as the highest number of incidents by LGA is shown in Figure 15 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 12 protests resulting in 2 deaths were reported during the reference period.⁷³⁶



Figure 12 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Kano state in 2020, based on ACLED data⁷³⁷

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Kano state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Kano state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	2	1
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	7	5
Riots	3	0
Total	12	6

Table 6 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020⁷³⁸

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 3 security incidents (1 case of violence against civilians, 2 incidents of riots) in Kano state, resulting in 1 death.⁷³⁹

⁷³⁶ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁷³⁷ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁷³⁸ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁷³⁹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

2.3.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 2 March 2020, unknown armed men attacked shops in the village of Bagwai (Bagwai LGA), killed two people and injured at least one.⁷⁴⁰

On 4 March 2020, unidentified gunmen attacked a house in Sansan (Dambatta LGA) and killed three people.⁷⁴¹

On 20 October 2020, a protest demonstration against police brutality by Special Anti Robbery Squad (SARS) troops (known as #EndSARS movement) in the Sabon-Gari area⁷⁴² of Kano city (Kano Municipal LGA) turned violent when unidentified criminals armed with machetes and daggers attacked demonstrators, killing two and injuring 'many'. They looted and burnt shops, cars, a church, and restaurants.⁷⁴³ The protest took place the day after a 17-year-old girl allegedly having been tortured to death by local police.⁷⁴⁴

2.3.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

Since 2000, 12 northern states amongst which Kano state, have re-introduced Shari'ah criminal law in their legal systems, applicable to Muslims only. Non-Muslims are not subject to Shari'ah Penal Code but they are so by 'some of the statutory agencies such as the Kano State Censorship Board and hisbah' (groups aimed at enforcing Shari'ah rules⁷⁴⁵). Trust in Nigeria's state judicial systems is very low, and even non-Muslims sometimes turn to Shari'ah courts as these are faster, although also sensitive to corruption.⁷⁴⁶

Kano state has seen a proliferation of small arms available to gangs, cattle rustlers, Fulani rangers, which cannot be sufficiently addressed by the state police forces, according to the researchers Jibrin Ubale Yahaya et al. in a 2018 study. They added: 'another issue that disturbs the security agencies role in fighting crime in Kano State is the engagement of political elite of providing arms to be given to various category youth to advocate and protect their political interest.'⁷⁴⁷

The Nigeria army has taken steps to increase its presence in the region and converted the Falgore forest into a 'permanent training ground' with three new operating bases.⁷⁴⁸

Kano state government has taken steps to reduce farmer-herder conflicts, according to Crisis Group. In February 2020 it inaugurated an agro-pastoral project in order to develop pastoral communities, improve farm productivity, and tackle security issues.⁷⁴⁹

2.3.3.4 Road security

The Abuja-Kaduna-Kano road is notorious for kidnappings but also for the high number of dangerous accidents (nearly 5000 between 2017 and 2020). This is mainly due to the very bad state of the road, in particular in the Kaduna stretch, of which armed groups took advantage to attack and kidnap passengers for ransom. 'At its height, the road had 10 kidnappings per day with 20 different groups

⁷⁴⁰ Vanguard, Gunmen kill 2, injure others in Kano village, 3 March 2020, [url](#); Cable (The), Two shot dead in Kano, 3 March 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁴¹ Punch, Three injured in fresh Kano gun attack, 5 March 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁴² The Sabon-Gari (or Foreign Quarter) area is traditionally inhabited by the non-Muslim community. Nigeria, Kano State [webpage], n.d. [url](#)

⁷⁴³ Premium Times, #EndSARS: Protest turns violent as thugs, protesters clash in Kano, 20 October 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁴⁴ Vanguard, Amidst #ENDSARS protests, Police allegedly tortured teenager to death in Kano, 19 October 2020, [url](#)

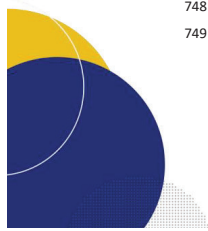
⁷⁴⁵ For more information on the different types of hisbah in northern Nigeria, see EASO COI Report Nigeria, Targeting Individuals, November 2018, [url](#), par. 2.5.3

⁷⁴⁶ USCIRF, Shari'ah Criminal Law in Northern Nigeria, December 2019, [url](#), pp. 31-32, 37

⁷⁴⁷ Yahaya et al., An Assessment of Challenges Faced by Security Agencies in Fighting Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Kano State, Nigeria, July 2018, [url](#), p. 53

⁷⁴⁸ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 20

⁷⁴⁹ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 27



operating on the route', according to a police commander, cited by the International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR).⁷⁵⁰

2.3.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on major damage in infrastructure or explosive remnants of war in Kano state.

2.3.3.6 Displacement and return

For a general overview of the displacement trends in the North-West and North-Central Regions, see [Section 2.2.3.6](#) in Kaduna state.

IDPs

The total estimated number of IDPs for Kano by Round 5, December 2020 was 50 676, an increase of 25 443 individuals (101 %) compared to Round 4, July 2020 (25 233 IDPs). This strong increase was explained by IOM by the fact that 25 more wards were assessed during the Round 5 assessments than in Round 4.⁷⁵¹

For an overview of changes in IDP population by state (North-West and North-Central Region) between Round 4 and 5, see [Table 5](#) in [Section 2.2.3.6](#).

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Kano state.

2.4 Katsina state

2.4.1 General description of the state

Katsina state shares boundaries in the east with the states of Kano and Jigawa, in the south with Kaduna state, in the west with Zamfara state and in the north with the Niger Republic. The state's capital is Katsina.⁷⁵²

Katsina state is composed of the following Local Government Areas (LGAs): Bakori, Batagarawa, Batsari, Baure, Bindawa, Charanchi, Dan-Musa, Dandume, Danja, Daura, Dutsi, Dutsin Ma, Faskari, Funtua, Ingawa, Jibia, Kafur, Kaita, Kankara, Kankia, Katsina, Kurfi, Kusada, Mai'Adua, Malumfashi, Mani, Mashi, Matazu, Musawa, Rimi, Sabuwa, Safana, Sandamu and Zango.⁷⁵³

In the 2006 census, the population of Katsina state was 5 801 584. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 7 831 319 in 2016.⁷⁵⁴

Katsina is mainly inhabited by Hausa and Fulani.⁷⁵⁵ The languages spoken are Hausa and Fulfulde.⁷⁵⁶

⁷⁵⁰ ICIR, Accidents, deaths and kidnappings escalate as FG drags feet on Abuja-Kaduna-Kano road construction, 8 December 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁵¹ IOM Nigeria, DTM North Central and North West Zones, Displacement Report 5 (January 2021), 8 March 2021, [url](#), p. 8

⁷⁵² Nigeria, Katsina state, n.d., [url](#)

⁷⁵³ Nigeria, Katsina state, n.d., [url](#)

⁷⁵⁴ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 2

⁷⁵⁵ Nigeria, Katsina state, n.d., [url](#)

⁷⁵⁶ Nigeria, Katsina State, About Katsina, History, n.d., [url](#)



The majority of Katsina's people are cultivators and traders. There is also a significant number who are nomads.⁷⁵⁷

2.4.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.4.2.1 Background of the conflict

As in other North-West Region states, violence in Katsina state is often related to cattle rustling and conflicts over land and resources (see [Section 1.4.1.1](#)). According to CFR, farmer-herder conflicts have intensified in the North-West Region during the COVID-19 lockdown period.⁷⁵⁸ Herders fleeing violence in the three most affected states (Zamfara, Sokoto and Katsina) are migrating south.⁷⁵⁹

From 2015 on, attacks by armed groups connected to Fulani herders, vigilantes and criminal gangs, initially active in Zamfara, spread to Katsina and other states in the North-West Region. According to Crisis Group, 'violence in these states has been concentrated in areas near their borders with Zamfara, or close to the forests where all sorts of armed groups have made camp.'⁷⁶⁰

In January 2016, the Katsina state government had struck a peace and amnesty deal in Kankara with 'bandit' leader Buharin Daji and other armed group leaders, to lay down weapons. However, in July 2018 the robberies and cattle rustling started again, with kidnapping of civilians as a new addition; allegedly due to the death of the leaders involved in the peace deal.⁷⁶¹

2.4.2.2 Actors

Actors in the violent attacks against civilians as recorded in the ACLED database were mostly local communal militias, Fulani ethnic militia, or 'unidentified armed groups'.⁷⁶² Criminal gangs operate in the large forests bordering to the west with the Zamfara state that have become both their hideout and their operation bases from where they launch their attacks on the rural villages, often on motorcycles.⁷⁶³ According to a spokesman for the state governor, 'there are many groups operating in the north-west, some of whom have declared allegiance to Boko Haram's leadership.'⁷⁶⁴

Boko Haram claimed responsibility for a school attack and kidnapping of school children in December 2020 (See section [Illustrative security incidents](#))⁷⁶⁵

2.4.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

Since July 2018, kidnapping and hostage taking have become 'very worrisome' issues in Katsina state and have led to a high level of insecurity. According to the State Governor there were daily reports on 'kidnapping, armed robbery and banditry', as well as cattle rustling, mainly in the eight 'frontline LGAs' which have large stretches of forests that have become the hideout and operation bases for gangs to launch their attacks: Jibia, Batsari, Safana, Danmusa, Kankara, Faskari, Dandume and Sabua. The

⁷⁵⁷ Nigeria, Katsina state, n.d., [url](#)

⁷⁵⁸ CFR, Recent Flare Up in Violence Across Northwestern Nigeria, 3 June 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁵⁹ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 17

⁷⁶⁰ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 5

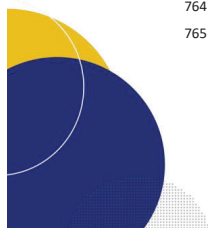
⁷⁶¹ Yahaya, J.U. et al., Kidnapping and Hostage taking, 27 March 2020, [url](#), p. 1158

⁷⁶² ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁷⁶³ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 2; Yahaya, J.U. et al., Kidnapping and Hostage taking, 27 March 2020, [url](#), p. 1159; BBC, Katsina: The motorcycle bandits terrorising northern Nigeria, 5 July 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁴ Africanews, Hundreds of Nigerian schoolboys freed after kidnapping, 18 December 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁵ BBC, Nigeria school attack: Was it really Boko Haram? 18 December 2020, [url](#)



kidnapping attacks have led residents in the affected rural communities to flee to the LGA capitals or even the state capital.⁷⁶⁶

According to International Crisis Group, most attacks have taken place in Batsari, Danmusa, Faskari, Kankara and Safana LGAs.⁷⁶⁷

2.4.3.1 Number of security incidents and fatalities

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 210 security incidents in Katsina state (72 battles, 21 incidents of remote violence/explosions, 109 cases of violence against civilians, 8 incidents of riots), resulting in 995 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Faskari LGA (42 incidents with 194 deaths), followed by Batsari LGA (28 incidents with 181 deaths). Of the 109 incidents of violence against civilians, 76 were attacks, 2 sexual violence, and 31 cases of abduction.⁷⁶⁸

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period, as well as the highest number of incidents by LGA is shown in Figure 16 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 9 protests were reported during the reference period.⁷⁶⁹

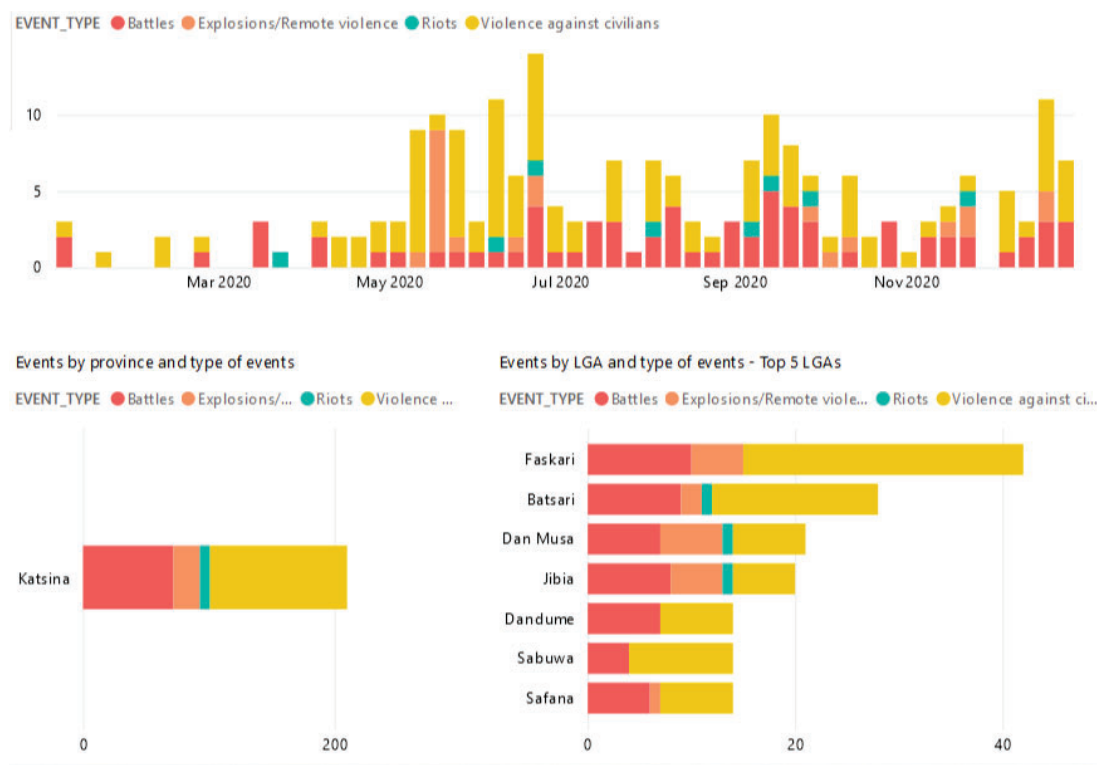


Figure 13 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Katsina state in 2020, based on ACLED data⁷⁷⁰

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Katsina state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

⁷⁶⁶ Yahaya, J.U. et al., Kidnapping and Hostage taking, 27 March 2020, [url](#), pp.1154-1155

⁷⁶⁷ Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 6

⁷⁶⁸ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁰ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



Katsina state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	72	315
Explosions/remote violence	21	393
Violence against civilians	109	276
Riots	8	11
Total	210	995

Table 7 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020⁷⁷¹

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 41 security incidents (18 battles, 22 cases of violence against civilians, 1 incident of riots) in Katsina state, resulting in 160 deaths.⁷⁷²

2.4.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

In May, June 2020 and September 2020, a spike of incidents was recorded by ACLED. However, also in other months large-scale attacks took place with many civilian fatalities.⁷⁷³ Below a selection of large-scale incidents.

On 14 February 2020, unidentified gunmen (about 50 'suspected bandits' on motorcycles) attacked Tsauwa and Dankar villages in in Batsari LGA and killed respectively 21 and 9 persons. They met with fierce resistance from security staff and residents in Dankar but could freely looting houses and shops and rustled cattle in Tsauwa.⁷⁷⁴ The attack was reportedly an avenge to a vigilante attack (by the residents) on the attackers' hideouts.⁷⁷⁵

On 18 April 2020, 'organised and simultaneous attacks by groups of armed bandits'⁷⁷⁶ affected villages in Danmusa, Dutsin and Safa LGAs, killing 47 persons.⁷⁷⁷ The attackers, at least 300 in numbers, reportedly demanded food and other relief aid provided by the government to support the locals during the COVID-19 lockdown. Police, Nigerian army and airforce, Civil Defence and DSS (Department of State Services) were sent to the area.⁷⁷⁸

On 30 and 31 May 2020, large-scale attacks (by allegedly 500 armed men on motorcycles, some with assault rifles) took place on communities in Faskari LGA. Thousands of cattle were taken away, at least 18 persons were killed, thousands of residents fled their homes.⁷⁷⁹

On 9 June 2020, armed men (reportedly on 200 motorcycles) attacked Kadisau (Faskari LGA) for looting and killed 20 residents who resisted. 20 people were injured.⁷⁸⁰

On 6 July 2020, 15 farmers were killed in an attack on their farms by gunmen in Yar Gamji, Batsari LGA. Soldiers were called in but came too late to prevent the killing and catch the perpetrators.⁷⁸¹

⁷⁷¹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁷⁷² EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

⁷⁷³ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁴ ThisDay, Bandits Kill 30 in Fresh Attack on Katsina Communities, 15 February 2020, [url](#); AlArabiya, At least 30 killed by armed gangs attack in northwest Nigeria: Police, 16 February 2020, updated 20 May 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁵ Al-Arabiya, At least 30 killed by armed gangs attack in northwest Nigeria: Police, 16 February 2020, updated 20 May 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁶ Reuters, 'Armed bandits' kill 47 in northwest Nigeria's Katsina state: police, 19 April 2020, [url](#)

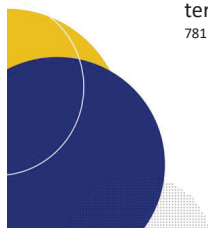
⁷⁷⁷ Reuters, 'Armed bandits' kill 47 in northwest Nigeria's Katsina state: police, 19 April 2020, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Armed bandits kill at least 47 in Nigeria's Katsina state: Police, 19 April 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁸ Al Jazeera, Armed bandits kill at least 47 in Nigeria's Katsina state: Police, 19 April 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁹ Reuters, Armed bandits kill at least 18 in Nigeria's Katsina state, 31 May 2020, [url](#); CFR, Recent Flare Up in Violence Across Northwestern Nigeria, 3 June 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁰ Premium Times, Gunmen kill 20 in fresh Katsina attack – Official, 10 June 2020, [url](#); BBC, Katsina: The motorcycle bandits terrorising northern Nigeria, 5 July 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁸¹ Premium Times, 'Fifteen killed' in fresh attack in Katsina, 7 July 2020, [url](#)



On 24 September 2020, Nigerian troops of Operation Sahal Sanity clashed with gunmen (coded by ACLED as ‘Katsina communal militia’⁷⁸²) who had invaded Doka village (Faskari LGA), killing 21 militiamen and rescuing three kidnapped victims. Three soldiers who ran into an ambush also died.⁷⁸³

On 3 October 2020, ‘armed bandits’ (coded by ACLED as ‘Katsina communal militia’⁷⁸⁴) attacked residents of Tsauwa and Gandu villages in Batsari LGA, killing at least nine residents and abducting ‘numerous’ others. The gunmen fled before security forces arrived.⁷⁸⁵

On 15 October 2020, vigilante members in Kurfi LGA killed 11 Fulani youth accused of banditry. The victims were killed briefly after having been detained in the vigilante’s custody in Kurfi LGA. The police condemned these extrajudicial killings and said the Katsina state government had banned the activities of Yan Sakai (the Hausa local militia) in the state.⁷⁸⁶

On 8 December 2020, armed men attacked and looted a village in Faskari LGA, killing four residents and taking away livestock. On the same day, armed men on foot attacked another neighbouring village and kidnapped between 13 and 25 residents, including the village head. There are no reported casualties.⁷⁸⁷

On 11 December 2020, in a large-scale attack on a secondary school in Kankara, hundreds of school children were abducted by ‘bandits armed with assault rifles’⁷⁸⁸ on motorcycles. There were no fatalities, one officer was injured by the shooting.⁷⁸⁹ After negotiations with the kidnapers, 344 schoolboys returned home a week later, while a few were missing. The abduction was claimed by Boko Haram, but according to the state governor’s spokesman it was perpetrated by local ‘bandits’, herdsmen known to him.⁷⁹⁰ One week after the mass abduction, the boys were released. According to the Nigerian government, no ransom was paid for their release.⁷⁹¹

On 19 December 2020, 80 female students at an Islamic school (Islamiyya) in Dandume LGA were abducted by unidentified armed men, referred to as ‘bandits’⁷⁹² by the police. The students were released five days later after negotiations between the government and the kidnapers.⁷⁹³

In the night of 27 January 2021, ‘gunmen suspected to be bandits’ attacked Unguwar Sarki, Shema Village (Faskari LGA), killing at least nine residents, injuring many others, and looted foodstuffs and money. The reason for the attack is unknown.⁷⁹⁴ The next day, gunmen attacked three other communities in the same LGA and killed seven persons, injured many and carted animals away.⁷⁹⁵

⁷⁸² ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁷⁸³ Guardian (The), Army, bandits’ encounter leaves 24 dead in Katsina, 26 September 2020, [url](#); This Day, Bandits Kill Army Officer, Two Soldiers in Katsina, 25 September 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁴ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁵ Garda, Nigeria: Bandits kill multiple villagers in Batsari LGA (Katsina state) October 3, 5 October 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁶ Premium Times, Vigilante members kill 11 herdsmen after accusations of banditry in Katsina, 15 October 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁷ Sahara Reporters, Bandits Kidnap Traditional Ruler, 20 Others In Fresh Katsina Attack, 9 December 2020, [url](#). ACLED recorded between 13 and 25 kidnapped persons. ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁸ Guardian (The), Nigeria: Hundreds of pupils feared missing after bandit attack on school, 12 December 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁹ Guardian (The), Nigeria: Hundreds of pupils feared missing after bandit attack on school, 12 December 2020, [url](#); BBC, Nigeria school attack: Hundreds missing in Katsina after raid by gunmen, 12 December 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁰ BBC, Nigeria school attack: Hundreds of boys return home after kidnap ordeal, 18 December 2020, [url](#)

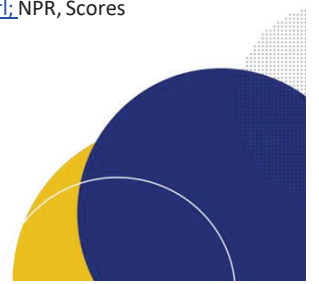
⁷⁹¹ ABC News, Hundreds of Nigerian schoolgirls freed days after being kidnapped, official says, 2 March 2021, [url](#)

⁷⁹² BBC, Nigeria kidnapping: Mahuta children rescued after gun battle, 20 December 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁹³ Premium Times, In fresh Katsina attack, bandits kidnap 80 students; all ‘rescued’ later, 20 December 2020, [url](#); NPR, Scores Of Kidnapped Nigerian Schoolchildren Rescued, 20 December 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁴ Guardian (The), Gunmen kill nine persons in Katsina, 28 January 2021, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁵ Guardian (The), Katsina: Bandits take over communities, kill seven, 30 January 2021, [url](#)



2.4.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

Since July 2018, the violent attacks, kidnappings, and banditry have reached increased in Katsina state.⁷⁹⁶

In 2019, the state government started a dialogue and negotiations with 'predominantly herder-allied armed group leaders, [...] offering amnesties and other incentives to end attacks'. Agreements included the release of militia members in exchange of civilians held hostage, the dismantling of vigilante groups, the establishment of rural grazing areas including settlements with social amenities, and rehabilitation of burnt houses. These agreements have partly been honoured, according to Crisis Group, and many displaced persons had returned home. The source added that other armed groups kept outside the agreements reportedly saw their chance to acquire more power and escalate violence.⁷⁹⁷ In May 2020, the Katsina state parliament faulted the agreement and asked for alternative approaches to deal with the increased banditry in the region.⁷⁹⁸

In responding to the attacks on 18 April 2020 in west Katsina, the state government deployed police, army, air force, Civil Defence and DSS (Department of State Services) to secure the area and find the perpetrators.⁷⁹⁹

Between 20-23 May 2020, the Nigerian Air Force within Operation Hadarin Daji conducted air strikes, supported by ground troops, against camps of militias in Jibia LGA (Katsina) and Zurmi LGA (Zamfara). About 135 or 200 militiamen were killed.⁸⁰⁰ On 7 July 2020, the Nigerian Airforce launched attacks on militia camps in Sokoto and Katsina states, as part of Operation Hadarin Daji. In Katsina, 46 militants were killed.⁸⁰¹

2.4.3.4. Road security

On 6 August 2020, hundreds of angry youths blocked the Dutsin-Ma-Kankara highway with trees, stones and worn out tires in Dustin-Ma LGA to demand a better government response to banditry and insecurity in their communities.⁸⁰²

On 28 or 29 September 2020, the Katsina-Jibla and Dutsinma-Kankara highways were again blocked for hours by youth from Jibia and Dutsinma LGAs, frustrated and angry with the ongoing attacks, killings, and abductions, by 'bandits' (reportedly 'largely Fulani militias') in their communities.⁸⁰³

Around 7 November 2020, 12 police officers were kidnapped by 'suspected bandits' along the Katsina-Zamfara highway.⁸⁰⁴

2.4.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on major damage in infrastructure or explosive remnants of war, apart from earlier mentioned destruction of villages, houses, and farms, in Katsina state.

⁷⁹⁶ Yahaya, J.U. et al., Kidnapping and Hostage taking, 27 March 2020, [url](#), p. 1154

⁷⁹⁷ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 24-25

⁷⁹⁸ Daily Trust, Katsina Assembly faults peace deal with bandits, 5 May 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁹ Al Jazeera, Armed bandits kill at least 47 in Nigeria's Katsina state: Police, 19 April 2020, [url](#)

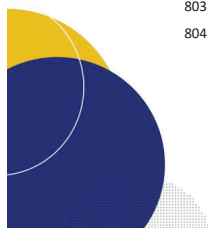
⁸⁰⁰ Security King mentions 'close to 200' deaths, Today.ng 135. SecurityKing, Again, Military Air Strikes Neutralize 200 Armed Bandits in Multiple Offensives on their Camps in Katsina & Zamfara states, 24 May 2020, [url](#); Today.ng, NAF jets bombard bandits' camp, kill 135 in Katsina, Zamfara, 23 May 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁰¹ This Day, Military Kills 50 Bandits in Sokoto, Katsina, 8 July 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁰² Today.ng, Katsina youths protest insecurity, block highway, 6 August 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁰³ This Day, The Fury in Katsina State, 3 October 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁰⁴ Premium Times, 12 Nigerian police officers kidnapped – Report, 17 November 2020, [url](#)



2.4.3.6 Displacement and return

For a general overview of the displacement trends in the North-West and North-Central Regions, see [Section 2.2.3.6](#) in Kaduna state.

Long-standing conflicts between herders and farmers in Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara states triggered around 7 900 new internal displacements in the first half of 2020. In addition, about 23 000 people fled to neighbouring Niger in April 2020 alone.⁸⁰⁵

IDPs

The total estimated number of IDPs for Katsina by December 2020 was 121 434, an increase of 41 319 individuals (52 %) compared to Round 4 (80 115 IDPs⁸⁰⁶). This strong increase was explained by IOM by the increased intensity and frequency of attacks and the increased area of coverage/assessment. Katsina was affected by 'banditry, kidnappings, cattle rustling and herder attacks'. Civilians were often killed and houses were set on fire. Batsari LGA hosted most IDPs (12 693 persons or 10 % of all IDPs in the state).⁸⁰⁷

For an overview of changes in IDP population by state (North-West and North-Central Region) between Round 4 and 5, see [Table 5](#) in [Section 2.2.3.6](#).

Returnees

No information was found on returnees to Katsina state.

2.5 Kebbi state

2.5.1 General description of the state

Kebbi state shares boundaries with the states of Sokoto, Zamfara and Niger, with the Dosso Region in the Republic of Niger and with the Republic of Benin.⁸⁰⁸ The state's capital is Birnin Kebbi.⁸⁰⁹

Kebbi state is composed of the following Local Government Areas (LGAs): Aleiro, Arewa Dandi, Argungu, Augie, Bagudu, Birnin Kebbi, Bunza, Dandi, Fakai, Gwandu, Jega, Kalgo, Koko/Besse, Maiyama, Ngaski, Sakaba, Shanga, Suru, Wasagu/Danko, Yauri and Zuru.⁸¹⁰

In the 2006 census, the population of Kebbi state was 3 256 541. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 4 440 050 in 2016.⁸¹¹

The main ethnic group in Kebbi state are the Hausa people. There are also people of the ethnic groups of Bussawa, Dukawa, Kambari and Kamuku.⁸¹²

The state's main source of occupation is agriculture.⁸¹³

⁸⁰⁵ IDMC, Mid-Year displacement update, n.d. [url](#), p. 14

⁸⁰⁶ IOM Nigeria, Displacement Tracking Matrix North Central and North West Zones Displacement Report 4, August 2020, 25 October 2020, [url](#), p. 6

⁸⁰⁷ IOM Nigeria, DTM North Central and North West Zones, Displacement Report 5 (January 2021), 8 March 2021, [url](#), p. 8

⁸⁰⁸ UN, Nigeria [Map], August 2014, [url](#)

⁸⁰⁹ Nigeria, Kebbi state, n.d., [url](#)

⁸¹⁰ Nigeria, Kebbi state, n.d., [url](#)

⁸¹¹ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 2

⁸¹² Nigeria, Kebbi state, n.d., [url](#)

⁸¹³ Nigeria, Kebbi state, n.d., [url](#)



2.5.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.5.2.1 Background of the conflict

As in other North-West Region states, violence in Kebbi state is often related to cattle rustling and conflicts over land and resources (see Section [1.4.1.1](#)). According to CFR, farmer-herder conflicts have intensified in the North-West Region during the COVID-19 lockdown period.⁸¹⁴

International Crisis Group noted in May 2020 that ‘violence had spread from its epicentre in Zamfara state’ to other states including Kebbi, but it also assessed that security conditions in Kebbi state were ‘relatively more stable’ than in neighbouring Zamfara.⁸¹⁵

2.5.2.2 Actors

According to International Crisis Group, ISWAP is building capacity of several small radical groups in the north-west. In Kebbi these groups are situated around Dankwo and Derin-Deji (Zuru area).⁸¹⁶

The Hausa vigilante groups, commonly known as Yan Sakai (‘volunteer guards’) are mentioned in reports on violence and kidnappings.⁸¹⁷ Created to protect their villages, these armed groups have themselves become a source of insecurity, according to International Crisis Group. They targeted urban Fulani on accusation of complicity with their cattle-herding kinsmen, by arrests, tortures, and extrajudicial killings.⁸¹⁸

At the other side of the conflict are the Fulani militia groups, known as yan-bindiga (gun owners), created to protect themselves and their cattle, and to target the assailants.⁸¹⁹

2.5.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

In October 2019, an influx of ‘bandits’ from neighbouring Zamfara state was noticed, feeding the fear of a spill over of the violence towards Kebbi state.⁸²⁰ The border areas with Zamfara, Zuru and Wasagu/Danko LGAs were affected by two incidents each in 2020.⁸²¹

According to ACLED 2020 data, and in comparison with other North-West Region states, Kebbi was stage of a small number of violent incidents.⁸²² By the end of 2019, Kebbi was considered a relatively peaceful state by a high British diplomat.⁸²³

2.5.3.1 Number of security incidents and fatalities

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 6 security incidents (1 battle, 4 cases of violence against civilians, 1 incidents of riots) in Kebbi state, resulting in 10 deaths. The highest number of security incidents (2 in each LGA) took place in Wasagu/Danko and Zuru LGAs. The 4 incidents of violence against civilians were attacks.⁸²⁴

⁸¹⁴ CFR, Recent Flare Up in Violence Across Northwestern Nigeria, 3 June 2020, [url](#)

⁸¹⁵ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 3, 33

⁸¹⁶ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 13

⁸¹⁷ Pulse, Miyetti Allah calls for investigation on death of 68 herdsman in Kebbi, 13 August 2020, [url](#); Guardian (The), Kebbi: Police arrest nine Yansakai attackers of Government Technical College, Zuru, 5 April 2020, [url](#)

⁸¹⁸ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 7-8. See also The Nation Online, NBA begins three-week boycott of courts in Kebbi, 4 February 2021, [url](#)

⁸¹⁹ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 7-8

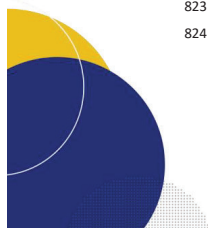
⁸²⁰ Nigerian Tribune, Kebbi govt laments influx of bandits from Zamfara, 12 October 2019, [url](#); Vanguard, IGP seeks community support to tackle banditry in northwest, 22 August 2020, [url](#)

⁸²¹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁸²² ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁸²³ Guardian (The), Kebbi is most peaceful state in Nigeria, says British High Commissioner, 14 December 2019, [url](#)

⁸²⁴ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period, as well as the highest number of incidents by LGA is shown in Figure 18 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 1 protest was reported during the reference period.⁸²⁵



Figure 14 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Kebbi state in 2020, based on ACLED data⁸²⁶

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Kebbi state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Kebbi state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	1	0
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	4	10
Riots	1	0
Total	6	10

Table 8 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020⁸²⁷

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 4 security incidents (2 battles, 2 incidents of riots) in Kebbi state, resulting in 21 deaths.⁸²⁸

⁸²⁵ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁸²⁶ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁸²⁷ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁸²⁸ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

2.5.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 29 March 2020, heavily armed militias of Yan sakai (Hausa vigilante) attacked a technical college site at Zuru LGA in an attempt to rustle cows and sheep, and killed 7 and injured 5 people. On 4 April 2020, nine suspects, *Yan Sakai* members, were arrested.⁸²⁹

On 13 August 2020, the 'extrajudicial killing of 68 herdsmen' in four LGAs in the period between 29 April and 11 August 2020 was reported by the national secretary of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN). He alleged that the victims were killed by 'local vigilantes, known as Dakarkari Yan Sakai' and called for government to investigate the killings.⁸³⁰

2.5.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

In August 2020, Kebbi state authorities, in a townhall meeting on peace and security in Zuru LGA, called on local communities to collaborate with the police 'to tackle banditry in the region', mentioning the Yan Sakai explicitly as the vigilante group disrupting the peace. The authorities encourage the creation of neighbourhood watch vigilante groups, regulated by state laws and supervised by the police, as well as Community Policing Committees in order to 'generate intelligence, identify potential criminals and report suspicious persons, movements and activities'.⁸³¹

2.5.3.4 Road security

The Minna-Birnin Kebbi road was mentioned by Nigerian drivers in December 2020 as one of the most insecure and dangerous roads in Nigeria due to the risk of kidnapping is.⁸³² No other information on road security was found.

2.5.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on major damage in infrastructure or explosive remnants of war in Kebbi state.

2.5.3.6 Displacement and return

For a general overview of the displacement trends in North-West and North-Central Regions, see [Section 2.2.3.6](#) in Kaduna state.

IDPs

No information was found on the number of conflict-related IDPs in Kebbi state.

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Kebbi state.

⁸²⁹ Vanguard, Homicide: Police arrest 9 vigilante members in Kebbi, 4 April 2020, [url](#); Independent, Police Nab 9 Vigilante Members In Kebbi, 4 April 2020, [url](#). According to The Guardian, this incident occurred on 20 March 2020. Guardian (The), Kebbi: Police arrest nine Yansakai attackers of Government Technical College, Zuru, 5 April 2020, [url](#)

⁸³⁰ Pulse, Miyetti Allah calls for investigation on death of 68 herdsmen in Kebbi, 13 August 2020, [url](#)

⁸³¹ Vanguard, IGP seeks community support to tackle banditry in northwest, 22 August 2020, [url](#)

⁸³² Sahara Reporters, Motorists List Nigeria's Most Dangerous Roads, Say Bandits Built Dens Along Them, 15 December 2020, [url](#)



2.6 Sokoto state

2.6.1 General description of the state

Sokoto state shares boundaries with Niger Republic to the North, Katsina State to the East, Zamfara State to the Southeast, Kebbi State to the South and Benin Republic to the West.⁷⁷⁰ The state's capital is Sokoto.⁷⁷¹

Sokoto state is composed of the following 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Binji, Bodinga, Dange Shuni, Gada, Goronyo, Gudu, Gwadabawa, Illela, Isa, Kebbe, Kware, Rabah, Sabon Birni, Shagari, Silame, Sokoto North, Sokoto South, Tambuwal, Tangaza, Tureta, Wamako, Wurno and Yabo.⁷⁷²

In the 2006 census, the population of Sokoto state was 3 702 676. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 4 998 090 in 2016.⁷⁷³

The main ethnic group in Sokoto state are the Hausa. The majority of the state's population are Sunni Muslims and a small minority are Shia.⁷⁷⁴

The main occupation in the state is agriculture.⁷⁷⁵

2.6.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.6.2.1 Background of the conflict

In an overview of the violence in the North-West Region, ACAPS noted: 'Unconnected to the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast, the banditry violence began as a farmer/herder conflict in 2011 and intensified between 2017 to 2018 to include cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, sexual violence and killings.'⁸³³ Since late 2015, attacks by a variety of armed groups (herder-allies, vigilantes and criminals) spread from Zamfara to Sokoto and other states, primarily in areas bordering Zamfara state or near the forests 'where all sorts of armed groups have made camp'.⁸³⁴

2.6.2.2 Actors

The main actors in Sokoto state's conflicts are militias from herders and farmers communities, created to protect their own communities but leading to more violence and retaliation attacks. In addition, 'many incidents in these and other states seem to be the work of criminal groups that have mushroomed as the overall security situation has deteriorated amid a proliferation of small arms in the region.'⁸³⁵

Since late 2019, the Islamist terrorist groups ISWAP and Ansaru are building their capacity and engaging in launching attacks in the region. In October 2019, Boko Haram⁸³⁶ or ISWAP claimed responsibility for an attack on Nigerian troops in Sokoto state.⁸³⁷

2.6.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

According to International Crisis Group, attacks by 'herder-allied armed groups, vigilantes and criminally motivated groups' spread from Zamfara to other states, including Sokoto state 'with varying intensity'. The three states in the North-West Region most affected by the violence are Zamfara,

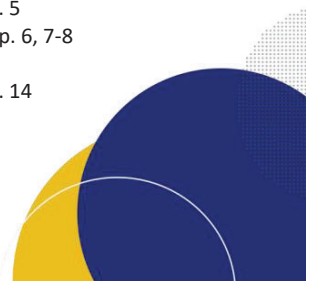
⁸³³ ACAPS, Crisis updates, Nigeria, Northwest banditry, overview, 19 March 2020, [url](#)

⁸³⁴ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 5

⁸³⁵ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 6, 7-8

⁸³⁶ ACLED, Regional Overview: Africa 20-26 October 2019, [url](#)

⁸³⁷ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 14



Sokoto and Katsina. Security sources consulted note that ‘Sahel-based jihadist groups are known to be seeking a foothold in Sokoto and Zamfara states.’⁸³⁸

In Sokoto state, violence was reported in 9 of the 23 local government areas, (particularly in Gada, Sabon Birni, Goronyo and Isa LGAs in the north, and Rabah and Tureta LGAs in the east, according to International Crisis Group.⁸³⁹

2.6.3.1 Number of security incidents and fatalities

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 24 security incidents (6 battles, 1 incident of remote violence/explosions, 16 cases of violence against civilians, 1 incident of riots) in Sokoto state, resulting in 222 deaths. The highest number of security incidents (5 incidents with 199 deaths) took place in Sabon Birni LGA. Of the 16 incidents of violence against civilians, 14 were attacks and 2 abductions.⁸⁴⁰

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period, as well as the highest number of incidents by LGA is shown in Figure 20 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 2 protests were reported during the reference period.⁸⁴¹

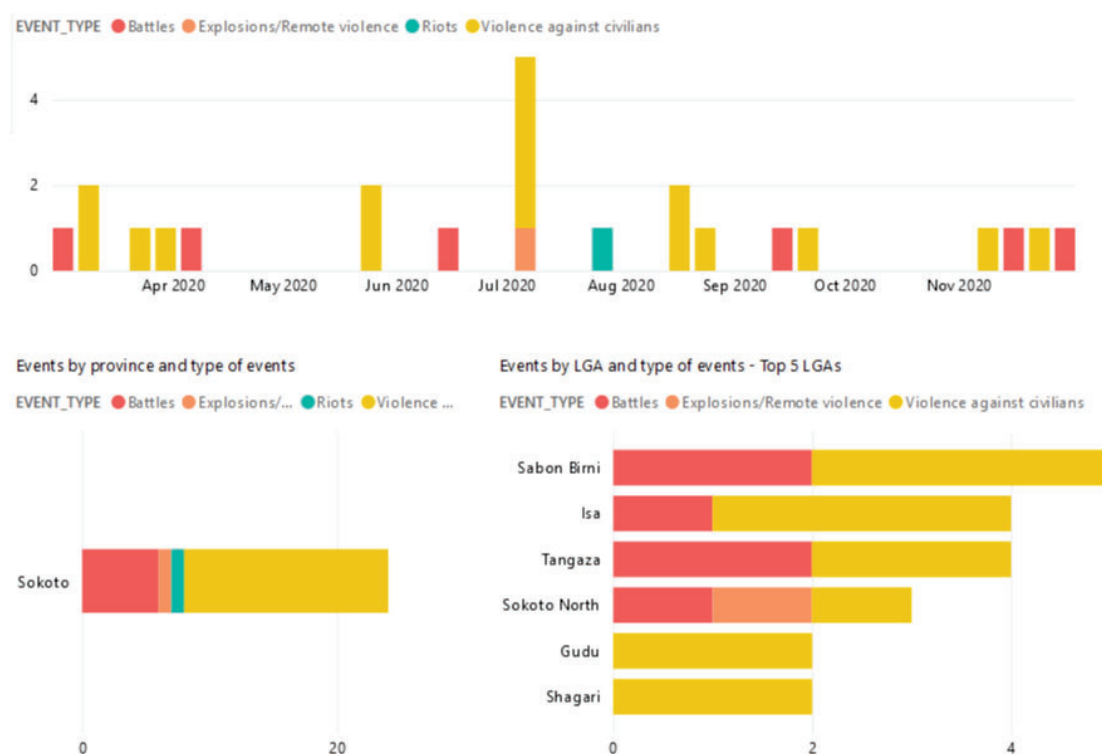


Figure 15 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Sokoto state in 2020, based on ACLED data⁸⁴²

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Sokoto state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

⁸³⁸ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 5, 17

⁸³⁹ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 6

⁸⁴⁰ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁸⁴¹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁸⁴² EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

Sokoto state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	6	106
Explosions/remote violence	1	3
Violence against civilians	16	112
Riots	1	1
Total	24	222

Table 9 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020⁸⁴³

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 15 security incidents (2 battles, 13 cases of violence against civilians) in Sokoto state, resulting in 77 deaths.⁸⁴⁴

2.6.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 9 March 2020, unknown gunmen attacked three communities in Shagari LGA, killed 1 resident and abducted 6.⁸⁴⁵

On 1 April 2020, unidentified gunmen on motorcycles attacked Gangara (Sabon Birni LGA) and killed 22 residents. In a battle with military from the Joint Operation Puff Adder and patrol teams one attacker was killed.⁸⁴⁶

On 26 May 2020, over hundred heavily armed unidentified gunmen on motorcycles, reportedly coming from their camps in Isah forest, attacked five villages around Gobir (Sabon Birni LGA), killing at least 74 people. Alarmed local police did not arrive, according to locals. Underlying causes for the attack are unclear but a retaliation attack seemed apparent.⁸⁴⁷ The previous week, armed forces had launched bombings on camps of suspected bandits in the area.⁸⁴⁸

On 15 June 2020, military forces of Niger Republic attacked a militia camp in a border community Burqusuma (Sabon Birni LGA). More than 100 militiamen were reportedly killed.⁸⁴⁹

On 6 July 2020, Nigerian Airforce launched attacks on militia camps in Sokoto's Kagara forest around Isa and Sabon Birni LGAs, as part of Operation Hadarin Daji. Several militiamen were killed and camps destroyed.⁸⁵⁰ Three days later, in an alleged retaliation attack on seven villages in Isa LGA, six persons were killed, an unknown number of cattle taken away, shops looted, and about 5000 people fled their homes.⁸⁵¹

On 26 November 2020, unknown gunmen attacked the village of Deyeji village (Gudu LGA), killing one person and burning part of the village.⁸⁵²

On 5 March 2021, 'gunmen suspected to be bandits' with sophisticated weapons stormed Tanau village (Sabon Birni LGA) and starting 'shooting indiscriminately'. The attackers, allegedly 'Fulani herdsmen who have been attacking the villages persistently', killed at least 15 residents and abducted over 100, 'including nursing mothers and children'. According to Sahara Reporters, 'Sokoto is one of the most terrorised Northwest states in Nigeria. Its residents have been severely troubled by bandits

⁸⁴³ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁴ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁵ PM News, Gunmen kill one, kidnap six in Sokoto, 9 March 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁶ Vanguard, Armed bandits attack claims 22 lives in Sokoto village, 3 April 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁷ Guardian (The), Waves of 'bandit' massacres rupture rural life in north-west Nigeria, 3 June 2020, [url](#); DW, Gunmen kill dozens in restive northwest Nigeria, 28 May 2020, [url](#)

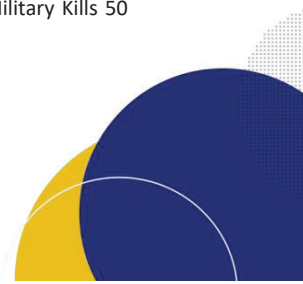
⁸⁴⁸ Africanews, Gunmen kill 60 in northwestern Nigeria, 28 May 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁹ HumAngle, Soldiers From Niger Republic Attack Terrorists In Nigerian Territory, 16 June 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁵⁰ Channels TV, Air Force Launches Fresh Offensive Against Bandits In Sokoto, 7 July 2020, [url](#); This Day, Military Kills 50 Bandits in Sokoto, Katsina, 8 July 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁵¹ Daily Trust, Villagers flee as bandits retaliate military onslaught, 9 July 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁵² This Day, Police Confirm Bandits' Attack on Sokoto Community, 26 November 2020, [url](#)



and kidnapers. The state government in 2019 entered into a peace accord with the bandits. But despite the accord, communities in the state are still being attacked and residents kidnapped and/or killed.⁸⁵³

2.6.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

The Sokoto state authorities, as in other north-west states such as Zamfara and Katsina, try to secure law and order through military responses to attacks, launching battles, air raids to destroy camps and kill or disperse militias. On the other hand, they engaged in dialogues with armed group leaders, predominantly from the herder-allied groups, offering amnesties and other incentives to stop the violence.⁸⁵⁴ The Sokoto government said in November 2019 they had negotiated with about 17 armed groups.⁸⁵⁵ The government has taken more steps to reduce farmer-herder conflicts, by demarcating the state's grazing reserves to secure them properly and prevent encroachment.⁸⁵⁶

The Nigerian security forces have launched several military operations in the North-West Region states to take back control, including Exercise Harbin Kunama III (2 April to 27 June 2019), focusing on forests in Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara states, and Operation Hadarin Daji in 2020.⁸⁵⁷

2.6.3.4 Road security

In 2018 the Gusau-Sokoto highway was reportedly notorious for the many kidnappings and in June 2019 the governor called on security forces to improve the security situation.⁸⁵⁸ No information was found on kidnappings in roads in 2020.

2.6.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on major damage in infrastructure or explosive remnants of war in Sokoto state.

2.6.3.6 Displacement and return

For a general overview of the displacement trends in the North-West and North-Central Regions, see [Section 2.2.3.6](#) in Kaduna state.

Long-standing conflicts between herders and farmers in Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara states triggered around 7 900 new internal displacements in the first half of 2020. In addition, about 23 000 people fled to neighbouring Niger in April 2020 alone.⁸⁵⁹

IDPs

The total number of IDPs for Sokoto by December 2020 was 45 402, an increase of 8 807 individuals (24 %) compared to Round 4 (36 595 IDPs⁸⁶⁰). Sabon Birni LGA hosted most IDPs (12 744 persons or 28 % of all IDPs in the state).⁸⁶¹

For an overview of changes in IDP population by state (North-West and North-Central Region) between Round 4 and 5, see [Table 5](#) in [Section 2.2.3.6](#).

⁸⁵³ Sahara Reporters, BREAKING: Bandits Kill 15 People, Abduct Hundreds In Sokoto, 5 March 2021, [url](#)

⁸⁵⁴ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 20-27

⁸⁵⁵ Daily Trust, No area under bandits' control in Sokoto — Commissioner, 18 November 2019, [url](#)

⁸⁵⁶ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 27

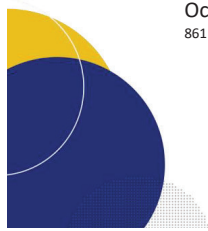
⁸⁵⁷ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 20

⁸⁵⁸ Daily Trust, Kidnapping: More policemen deployed to Sokoto-Gusau road, 18 October 2018, [url](#); Pulse, Gov. Mohammed urges army to deploy more troops on Gusau-Sokoto highway, 4 June 2019, [url](#)

⁸⁵⁹ IDMC, Mid-Year displacement update, [url](#), p. 14

⁸⁶⁰ IOM Nigeria, Displacement Tracking Matrix North Central and North West Zones Displacement Report 4, August 2020, 25 October 2020, [url](#), p. 6

⁸⁶¹ IOM Nigeria, DTM North Central and North West Zones, Displacement Report 5 (January 2021), 8 March 2021, [url](#), p. 8



Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Sokoto state could.

2.7 Zamfara state

2.7.1 General description of the state

Zamfara state shares boundaries in the north with the Republic of Niger, in the south with Kaduna state, in the east with Katsina state and in the west with the states of Sokoto and Niger. The state's capital is Gusau.⁸⁶²

The state is composed of the following 14 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Anka, Bakura, Birnin Magaji/ Kiyaw, Bukkuyum, Bungudu, Chafe, Gummi, Gusau, Kaura Namoda, Maradun, Maru, Shinkafi, Talata Mafara and Zurmi.⁸⁶³

In the 2006 census, the population of Zamfara state was 3 278 873. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 4 515 427 in 2016.⁸⁶⁴

The main ethnic groups in Zamfara state are the Hausa and the Fulani.⁸⁶⁵

The state's main sector is agriculture.⁸⁶⁶

2.7.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.7.2.1 Background of the conflict

According to The New Humanitarian, 'the crisis in resource-rich but developmentally-starved Zamfara has been at least a decade in the making', and the whole north-west as 'under-policed'. The conflict started, as in the other North-West Region states, as competition over natural resources between Hausa farmers and Fulani herders, and escalated rapidly by armed militias from both sides.⁸⁶⁷ The source added:

'What has resulted from the mayhem are two groups of forest-based armed men who both kill. There are Fulani militia that claim to defend their own, but equally intimidate their communities; and then there are hardcore armed criminals that are predominantly Fulani, but include Hausa – and anyone else attracted to making money.'⁸⁶⁸

In Zamfara state, a link between banditry and illegal gold mining was reported (see also the [introduction](#) to the North-West Region in this report).⁸⁶⁹ Mining-related violence was reported in Zamfara state.⁸⁷⁰ In a bid to curb the violence and return peace to the local communities, in April 2019 the Zamfara state government banned the mining of 'gold and other precious stones' in the state. Disregarding the ban, miners and 'bandits' bargained a mutually beneficial agreement (exchanging

⁸⁶² Nigeria, Zamfara state, n.d., [url](#)

⁸⁶³ Nigeria, Zamfara state, n.d., [url](#)

⁸⁶⁴ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url, p. 3](#)

⁸⁶⁵ Amaza, M., Nigeria is also losing control of its troubled northwest region, Quartz Africa, 24 November 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁶⁶ Nigeria, Zamfara state, n.d., [url](#)

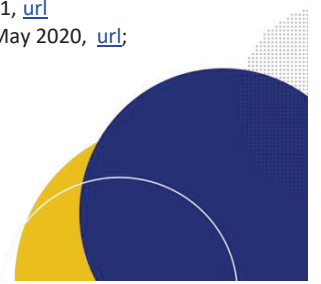
⁸⁶⁷ New Humanitarian (The), The longshot bid to end rampant banditry in Nigeria's northwest, 19 January 2021, [url](#)

⁸⁶⁸ New Humanitarian (The), The longshot bid to end rampant banditry in Nigeria's northwest, 19 January 2021, [url](#)

⁸⁶⁹ ENACT, Mining and extractives - Illegal mining drives Nigeria's rural banditry and local conflicts, 28 May 2020, [url](#);

Quartz, Nigeria is also losing control of its troubled northwest region, 24 November 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁷⁰ Quartz, Nigeria is also losing control of its troubled northwest region, 24 November 2020, [url](#)



information on military movements to the bandits and providing goods to the miners) to continue their respective illegal activities.⁸⁷¹

2.7.2.2 Actors

In Zamfara state, actors are identified as local militia or armed groups from both Fulani herders (locally branded as ‘bandits’ and known as *yan bindiga*) and Hausa farming communities (called ‘vigilantes’, Yan Sakai). Furthermore, gangs of armed criminals are active in robbery and cattle rustling.⁸⁷² Gang violence started in Zamfara state and spilled over to neighbouring states.⁸⁷³

Moreover, since late 2019, the Al-Qaeda-linked Islamist group Ansaru is engaging with and recruiting other splinter groups in Zamfara state. A military commander said in 2019: ‘banditry is now heading toward terrorism’.⁸⁷⁴ The analyst Jacob Zenn also stated that Ansaru has become the driving force behind the rise of militancy in Zamfara and neighbouring states. Its ‘key contribution [...] may not only be expertise in kidnappings, ambushes, and robbery, but also organizing the armed actors into a more coherent politically oriented jihadist project’ by teaching them lessons from recent jihadist experiences.⁸⁷⁵

2.7.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

According to International Crisis Group, 13 out of the 14 LGAs in Zamfara have experienced violence by armed groups in the period 2014 to 2020. The source also noted in May 2020 that ‘recently’ violence has been decreasing in many areas of the state.⁸⁷⁶

According to International Crisis Group, citing several reports, in the North-West Region ‘at least 8 000 people were killed from 2011 to the present, predominantly in Zamfara state and mostly over the last five years.’⁸⁷⁷ In the same period, about 3 600 people had been kidnapped.⁸⁷⁸

2.7.3.1 Number of security incidents

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 129 security incidents (62 battles, 26 incidents of remote violence/explosions, 39 cases of violence against civilians, 2 incidents of riots) in Zamfara state, resulting in 694 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Zurmi LGA, followed by Maru and Gusau LGAs. Of the 39 incidents of violence against civilians, 30 were attacks and 9 abductions.⁸⁷⁹

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period, as well as the highest number of incidents by LGA is shown in Figure 22 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 1 protest was reported during the reference period.⁸⁸⁰

⁸⁷¹ HumAngle, Zamfara: Miners in bed with Bandits amid swelling attacks, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁷² International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p.ii. See also Quartz, Nigeria is also losing control of its troubled northwest region, 24 November 2020, [url](#); New Humanitarian (The), The longshot bid to end rampant banditry in Nigeria’s northwest, 19 January 2021, [url](#)

⁸⁷³ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 3, 5

⁸⁷⁴ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 12

⁸⁷⁵ Jamestown Foundation, The Return of al-Qaeda’s Faction in Nigeria: What’s Going on in Zamfara? 25 March 2019, [url](#)

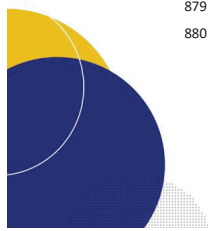
⁸⁷⁶ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 5, 30

⁸⁷⁷ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 3-4

⁸⁷⁸ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 11

⁸⁷⁹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁸⁸⁰ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



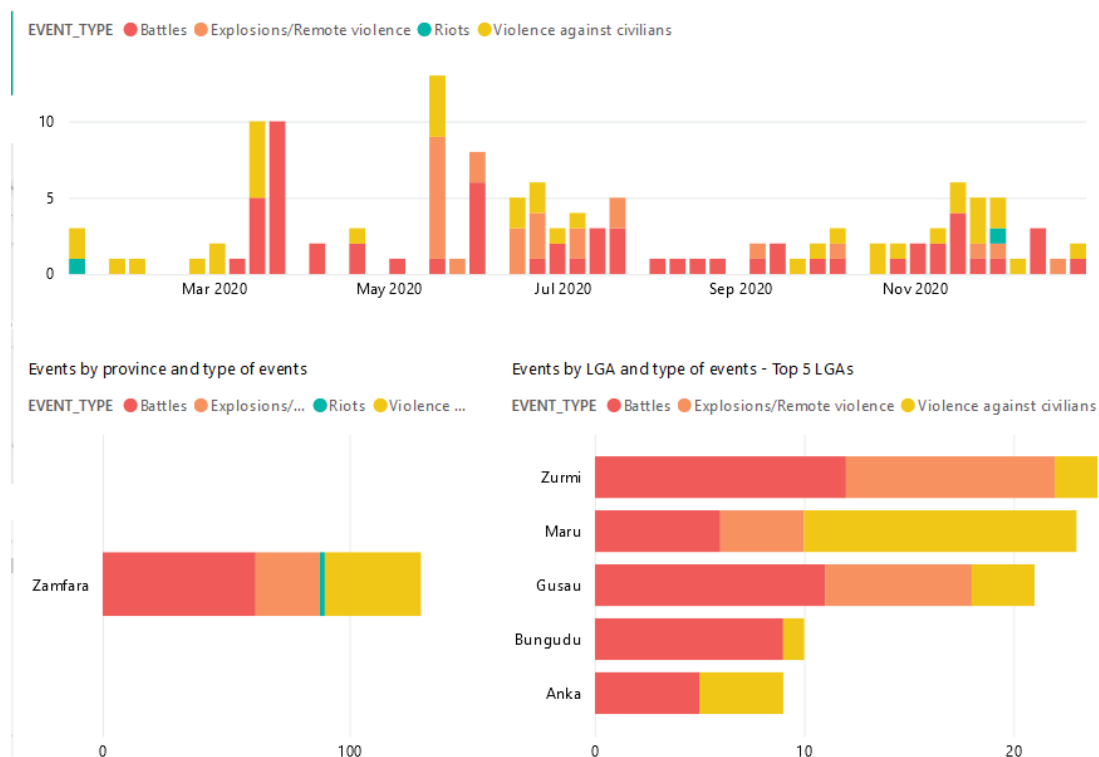


Figure 16 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Zamfara state in 2020, based on ACLED data⁸⁸¹

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Zamfara state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Zamfara state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	62	258
Explosions/remote violence	26	294
Violence against civilians	39	140
Riots	2	2
Total	129	694

Table 10 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020⁸⁸²

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 46 security incidents (20 battles, 2 incidents of remote violence/explosions, 21 cases of violence against civilians, 3 incidents of riots) in Zamfara state, resulting in 384 deaths.⁸⁸³

2.7.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

In 2020, ACLED recorded 88 incidents of battles and explosions, leading to 552 deaths. The battles occurred between the Nigerian military forces and local militia groups, mostly in Zurmi, Maru and

⁸⁸¹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁸⁸² ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁸⁸³ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

Gusau LGAs. The deaths were in large majority militia members.⁸⁸⁴ Below two examples of such battles with large numbers of fatalities.

On 24 April 2020, security forces from Operation Hadarin Daji, backed by Nigerian Air Force, stormed a camp of local militias in Zurmi Forest (Zurmi LGA). Five abducted civilians were rescued, hundreds of cattle, arms and equipment seized and 89 militiamen killed.⁸⁸⁵

Between 20-22 May 2020⁸⁸⁶, or on 22 and 23 May⁸⁸⁷, Nigerian Air Force within Operation Hadarin Daji conducted air strikes, supported by ground troops, against camps of militias in Jibia LGA (Katsina) and Zurmi LGA (Zamfara) and killed many armed bandits. The number of deaths from the two attacks vary according to the source.⁸⁸⁸

Of the 39 incidents of violence against civilians, a limited number of incidents with high numbers of fatalities is presented below.

Around 15 January 2020, gunmen on motorbikes attacked Babban Rafi village (Gummi LGA) and killed at least 14 people (according to the police; locals mentioned 29 deaths).⁸⁸⁹

On 8 March 2020, 'suspected Yan Sakai militias' attacked Yarkatsina community (Bungudu LGA) and killed 8 residents.⁸⁹⁰

On 20 May 2020, suspected Fulani militias attacked five communities in Tsafe LGA and killed 15 residents. According to the police, this was a reprisal for an earlier killing of Fulani herdsmen by the Yan Sakai militia.⁸⁹¹

On 2 and 3 June 2020, at least 21 people were killed and hundreds of cattle stolen, in attacks in several communities in Talata Mafara and Maru LGAs. The attackers reportedly came to rustle cows but when they were confronted by Yan Sakai members, they started to shoot.⁸⁹²

On 20 June 2020, unknown gunmen attacked Ruwan Tofa village (Maru LGA), killing 10⁸⁹³ to 23 residents and injuring a dozen, and rustling cattle. Residents had been warned of the attack in advance and had warned the police in vain.⁸⁹⁴

On 6 July 2020, gunmen attacked Danfasa village (Maru LGA), killing 7 and injuring 13 residents, and abducted 20 women. Kamarawa village was also attacked, and cattle was stolen. The villages were set on fire.⁸⁹⁵

On 21 September 2020, residents of Gobirawar Chali village (Maru LGA) overpowered a 'bandit' intending to kidnap a person. He escaped and returned with a large group of gunmen who retrieved

⁸⁸⁴ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁸⁸⁵ Vanguard, Banditry: Security forces wipe out 89 bandits in Zamfara forest, burn down camps, 25 April 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁸⁶ Today.ng, NAF jets bombard bandits' camp, kill 135 in Katsina, Zamfara, 23 May 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁸⁷ SecurityKing, Again, Military Air Strikes Neutralize 200 Armed Bandits in Multiple Offensives on their Camps in Katsina & Zamfara states, 24 May 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁸⁸ Security King mentions 'neutralized close to 200 armed bandits' in total, Today.ng 135. SecurityKing, Again, Military Air Strikes Neutralize 200 Armed Bandits in Multiple Offensives on their Camps in Katsina & Zamfara states, 24 May 2020, [url](#); Today.ng, NAF jets bombard bandits' camp, kill 135 in Katsina, Zamfara, 23 May 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁸⁹ Vanguard, Bandits kill 29 in Zamfara village, 16 January 2020, [url](#); Premium Times, 14 killed in another attack in Zamfara – Police, 17 January 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁹⁰ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Punch, Bandits gun down eight in Zamfara fresh attack, 10 March 2020, [url](#)

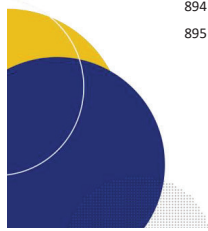
⁸⁹¹ Daily Post, Herdsmen attack Zamfara communities, kill 15, injure many others, 20 May 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁹² Premium Times, Gunmen kill 21 in fresh attacks in Zamfara, 4 June 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁹³ Premium Times, Ten people killed in another attack in Zamfara, 21 June 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁹⁴ Premium Times, Death toll rises in Zamfara attack, residents say 23 buried, 21 June 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁹⁵ Garda, Nigeria: Gunmen raid villages in Zamfara State on July 6, 8 July 2020, [url](#)



the gun and kidnapped 42 persons, including women. Police had been sent to rescue the kidnapped persons.⁸⁹⁶

On 25 October 2020, unknown gunmen attacked residents of Lingyado community (Maru LGA), abducting at least 50 residents, including the village head. On 30 October another village in the same LGA was stormed, one person killed and the wives of the district head abducted. The village is situated in thick forest and is 'one of the most troubled areas of Zamfara state where terror attacks are frequently recorded'. Residents allegedly regularly asked for a protective police unit but in vain.⁸⁹⁷

On 8 November 2020, nine unarmed police officers were kidnapped along the Katsina-Zamfara highway 'by heavily armed men, all dressed in Military Camouflage, but suspected to be bandits'. They were rescued by the police.⁸⁹⁸ A relative of one of them was reportedly asked to pay a ransom to release the person.⁸⁹⁹

On 20 November 2020, gunmen on motorcycles attacked a Muslim congregation at Dutsen Gari community in Maru LGA, killing five and abducting 18 worshippers during the religious service.⁹⁰⁰

On 25 February 2021, armed men 'suspected to be bandits' attacked and looted Sabuwar Tunga village in Dankurmi (Maru LGA, Zamfara), killing at least 35 residents and carting away livestock. The reason for the attack, which was described as 'well-planned and coordinated' is unknown. Sahara Reporters reported: 'Deadly attacks have raged across Zamfara state where bandits have thrived. Farming and herding communities in the state have long been terrorised by gangs who raid villages, stealing cattle and kidnapping residents for ransom.'⁹⁰¹

On 26 February 2021, 317 girls were abducted in an attack on a government girls' secondary boarding school in Jangebe LGA. More than 100 'unknown gunmen' came in the middle of the night with pick-up vehicles and motorcycles and abducted the girls by car and on foot.⁹⁰² Some of the gunmen were dressed as government security forces.⁹⁰³ 279 of the girls were released several days later. It is unknown if the remaining girls remain in captivity or that the initial numbers were not correct.⁹⁰⁴

On 15 and 16 April 2021, in a series of reprisal attacks between a local vigilante group and 'bandits' in Maru LGA, at least 20 persons were killed. The chain of events began when 'bandits' raided Ruwan-Tofa community and killed three people. In reprisal, a vigilante group attacked a Fulani cattle market in Dan Sadau (Maru LGA), killing 16 Fulani and injuring five others. The source added that vigilante groups had been banned in the state 'following complaints by the Fulani community that they were indiscriminately attacking its members.' The next morning, gunmen launched an attack at Mai-Tukunya 'to avenge the event earlier that day at the Dansadau market', killed one person and injured four, and hundreds of cattle were rustled.⁹⁰⁵

2.7.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

The New Humanitarian stated that Zamfara State had 'little to no government presence'. Although several military operations have been launched, these are 'all too limited in scale to secure the state's 40,000 square kilometres' after bombing the hideouts, 'boots on the ground' are needed for a

⁸⁹⁶ Punch, Bandits, on reprisal, kidnap 42 persons in Zamfara, 21 September 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁹⁷ HumAngle, Terrorists Attack Zamfara Village, Abduct Women in Fresh Attack, 30 October 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁹⁸ P Premium Times, UPDATED: Kidnapped police officers regain freedom, 20 November 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁹⁹ Premium Times, 12 Nigerian police officers kidnapped – Report, 17 November 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁰⁰ Vanguard, Armed bandits kidnap Imam, 17 worshippers from mosque in Zamfara, 20 November 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁰¹ Sahara Reporters, BREAKING: Bandits Kill 35 In Fresh Attack On Zamfara Community, 26 February 2021, [url](#)

⁹⁰² Al Jazeera, Gunmen kidnap over 300 girls in Nigeria school raid: Police, 26 February 2021, [url](#); BBC, Nigeria's Zamfara school abduction: More than 300 Nigerian girls missing, 26 February 2021, [url](#)

⁹⁰³ BBC, Nigeria's Zamfara school abduction: More than 300 Nigerian girls missing, 26 February 2021, [url](#)

⁹⁰⁴ ABC News, Hundreds of Nigerian schoolgirls freed days after being kidnapped, official says, 2 March 2021, [url](#)

⁹⁰⁵ Premium Times, How 20 died in reprisal attacks between bandits, vigilante groups in Zamfara, 18 April 2021, [url](#)



permanent presence.⁹⁰⁶ The source further noted that a commission of inquiry in 2019 accused top military officers and traditional rulers for complicity in the violence; ‘laying bare the governance vacuum in Zamfara that is both a consequence and enabler of the chaos’.⁹⁰⁷

Between 2016 and 2019, peace negotiations were held with armed groups, including amnesty and other incentives, in exchange for disarmament. In the last quarter of 2019, hundreds of weapons were laid down, about 500 abducted persons (held by herder-allied groups as well as criminal gangs and Hausa ‘vigilantes’) were freed, and about 25 000 displaced persons had returned in August 2019.⁹⁰⁸ On 23 May 2020, the Zamfara state Governor announced he will continue the peace deal with the ‘bandits’, Fulani armed groups.⁹⁰⁹ The state government has taken measures to provide herder-allied groups designated grazing areas, review allocation of farmland, and launched a social intervention scheme to offer alternative livelihoods to armed groups who are willing to disarm.⁹¹⁰

International Crisis Group concluded in its May 2020 report:

‘The security forces have been unable to subdue the vast array of armed groups. Even with the stepped-up efforts, the available manpower, logistics and equipment are insufficient to respond promptly to armed groups’ attacks. Troops lack the motorcycles they need to travel on roads that are impassable for cars and trucks. The army also lacks sufficient helicopters to deploy troops rapidly to remote locations.’⁹¹¹

In June 2020, Zamfara state authorities deployed a Joint Operation Squad of 80 men to Bindin District (Maru LGA).⁹¹²

In an attempt to tackle the crisis, the Zamfara state governor had initiated a peace initiative ‘rewarding’ repentant and surrendering kidnappers with houses, money and cars. The gang leader of the December 2020 mass school abductions in Katsina state was pardoned in Zamfara state after ‘repenting’ and handing over his weapons to the authorities.⁹¹³ However, end of April 2021 he returned to his gang but was reportedly killed by a rival gang.⁹¹⁴

2.7.3.4 Road security

Roads in the north-west are often subject to kidnapping and robbery. In a 2019 article, citing 2017 data, Zamfara was ranked first of Nigerian states with highest rates of kidnapping (before Rivers, Lagos and Jigawa).⁹¹⁵ More recent information on road security in Zamfara state was not found.

2.7.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

As of April 2019, in Zamfara state more than 10 000 houses, shops and silos were reportedly destroyed, due to violent attacks.⁹¹⁶

No information was found on explosive remnants of war in Zamfara state.

⁹⁰⁶ New Humanitarian (The), The longshot bid to end rampant banditry in Nigeria’s northwest, 19 January 2021, [url](#)

⁹⁰⁷ New Humanitarian (The), The longshot bid to end rampant banditry in Nigeria’s northwest, 19 January 2021, [url](#). See also This Day, 5 Emirs, 33 District Heads, Top Military Officers Complicit in Zamfara Banditry, 13 October 2019, [url](#)

⁹⁰⁸ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 24-25

⁹⁰⁹ Vanguard, Banditry: Governor Matawalle resumes peace deal with bandits, 24 May 2020, [url](#)

⁹¹⁰ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 26

⁹¹¹ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 21

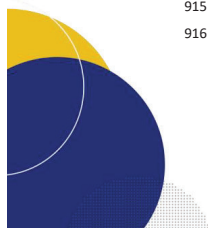
⁹¹² Channels TV, Zamfara Insecurity: Troops Deployed To Maru LGA, 21 June 2020, [url](#)

⁹¹³ BBC, Nigeria’s school abductions: Why children are being targeted, 2 March 2021, [url](#)

⁹¹⁴ BBC, Nigeria gang leader behind school kidnapping shot by rivals, 1 May 2021, [url](#)

⁹¹⁵ Chinwokwu, E.C. et al., Militancy and violence as a catalyst to kidnapping in Nigeria, 3 April 2019, [url](#), p. 34

⁹¹⁶ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 17



2.7.3.6 Displacement and return

For a general overview of the displacement trends in North-West and North-Central regions, see [Section 2.2.3.6](#) in Kaduna state.

Long-standing conflicts between herders and farmers in Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara states triggered around 7 900 new internal displacements in the first half of 2020. In addition, about 23 000 people fled to neighbouring Niger in April 2020 alone.⁹¹⁷

IDPs

The total number of IDPs for Zamfara by December 2020 was 112 316, an increase of 42 206 individuals (60 %) compared to Round 4 (70 110 IDPs⁹¹⁸). Zamfara became the state with the third largest IDP population (after Benue and Katsina) with 15 % of the total number of IDPs in both North-West and North-East Regions. This strong increase was explained by IOM by improved accessibility. Anka LGA hosted most IDPs (28 119 persons or 25 % of all IDPs in the state).⁹¹⁹

For an overview of changes in IDP population by state (North-West and North-Central Region) between Round 4 and 5, see [Table 5](#) in [Section 2.2.3.6](#).

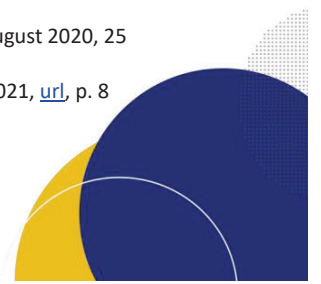
Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Zamfara state.

⁹¹⁷ IDMC, Mid-Year displacement update, [url](#), p. 14

⁹¹⁸ IOM Nigeria, Displacement Tracking Matrix North Central and North West Zones Displacement Report 4, August 2020, 25 October 2020, [url](#), p. 6

⁹¹⁹ IOM Nigeria, DTM North Central and North West Zones, Displacement Report 5 (January 2021), 8 March 2021, [url](#), p. 8



North-East Region

The North-East Region comprises Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe states.⁹²⁰

The North-East Region is the most violent region of Nigeria in terms of number of violent incidents and fatalities, and within that region Borno state has the highest number of violent incidents and fatalities.⁹²¹

USDOS reported in its 2020 report on human rights practices in Nigeria a continuation of the ‘insurgency in the Northeast by the militant terrorist groups Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa’. The source noted ‘numerous attacks on government and civilian targets, resulting in thousands of deaths and injuries, widespread destruction, the internal displacement of more than two million persons, and the external displacement of somewhat more than an estimated 300,000 Nigerian refugees.’

Nigeria Watch also reported over 2020: ‘Nigeria continued to grapple with the Boko Haram crisis in 2020. Fatalities resulting from incidents involving the insurgents, security operatives, hunters, and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) caused the death of 3 295 people, against 2 866 in 2019. Like in previous years, Borno was the most affected state.’⁹²²

In a case study of militias in the North-East Region, the researcher Felbab-Brown stated: ‘Multiple militias and vigilante groups operate in Nigeria’s North-East against Boko Haram and ISWAP. In addition to the main umbrella militia group, known as the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), militias operating in the North-East also include so-called *kesh-kesh* groups, hunters’ groups, and the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN).’ She linked the emergence and persistent activities of these groups to ‘deficiencies in State-provided security, and a long tradition of vigilante groups, going back to the precolonial era’.⁹²³

For more information, see [Section 1.4.1.1](#).

2.8 Adamawa state

2.8.1 General description of the state

Adamawa state shares an international border with the Republic of Cameroon and internal borders with the states of Borno, Gombe and Taraba.⁹²⁴ The state’s capital is Yola.⁹²⁵

Adamawa state is composed of the following 21 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Demsa, Fufore, Ganye, Girei, Gombi, Guyuk, Hong, Jada, Lamurde, Madagali, Maiha, Mayo-Belwa, Michika, Mubi North, Mubi South, Numan, Song, Shelleng, Toungo, Yolla North and Yolla South.⁹²⁶

In the 2006 census, the population of Adamawa state was 3 178 950. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 4 248 436 in 2016.⁹²⁷

⁹²⁰ Nigeria, NIMC (National Identity Management Commission), NIMC Enrolment centres, n.d., [url](#)

⁹²¹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Nigeria Watch, Tenth report on Violence (2020), n.d. [url](#), pp. 11-12

⁹²² Nigeria Watch, Tenth report on Violence (2020), n.d. [url](#), pp. 11-12

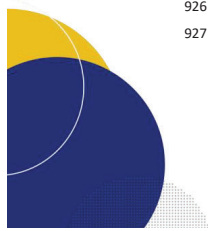
⁹²³ Felbab-Brown, V., Militias (and Militancy) in Nigeria’s North-East not going away, 14 April 2020, [url](#), p. 67

⁹²⁴ UN, Nigeria, August 2014, [url](#)

⁹²⁵ Nigeria, Adamawa State, n.d., [url](#)

⁹²⁶ Nigeria, Adamawa State, n.d., [url](#)

⁹²⁷ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 2



The ethnic groups in Adamawa state include: the Fulani, Verre, Chamba, Mumuye, Dabanci, Dangsa, Higgi, Nyandang, Sukur, Margi, Gudu, Hona, Mboi, Ga'anda, Yungur, Bwatiye, Mbula, Bala, Bille, Sate, Koma, Bura, Lala, Gwaba, Njanyi, Fali, Gude, Holma, Lunguda, Kanakuru, Jen, Matakam, Laka, Wula, Lilba, Kwah, Waja, Tambo, LiboMwama, Kilba, Viengo and others, according to the state's website.⁹²⁸

The main occupation in Adamawa state is farming. Another widespread occupation is cattle rearing and the village communities on the banks of Rivers Gongola and Benue are also involved in fishing.⁹²⁹

2.8.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.8.2.1 Background of the conflict

Adamawa state, neighbouring Borno state, is one of the states most affected by Boko Haram.⁹³⁰ Adamawa state is affected by communal violence as well as by attacks by Boko Haram.⁹³¹ In 2018, the rapid growth of ethnic militias such as the Bachama and Fulani in Adamawa state armed with illegal weapons, led to an escalation of the herder-farmer conflict. The introduction of anti-grazing laws led to the departure of herders from Benue and Taraba states to neighbouring Nasarawa and Adamawa states, which in turn resulted in more clashes with farmers in those states.⁹³²

Adamawa is the home of a large number of Christians, forming the largest minority religion in the predominantly Muslim state. Christian communities have been heavily attacked by Boko Haram and many residents have fled the area.⁹³³

2.8.2.2 Actors

The main actors in Adamawa state, as mentioned in ACLED's database, are the groups coded as Unidentified armed group (in 18 events), followed by Boko Haram/ ISWAP, similar to other states in North-East Region. Other actors are ethnic militia from various ethnic groups such as Hausa, Fulani, Waja, Luggere, Longuda, in one case Civilian Joint task Force (CJTF). From governmental side, the main actors are the police and military forces.⁹³⁴

The largest vigilante group in the region is the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), claiming to have 31 000 members.⁹³⁵ In 2016, the CJTF claimed 10 000 members in Adamawa state.⁹³⁶ Other vigilante groups (which in some cases collaborate with the CJTF and in other cases have more complex relations with them) are the kesh-kesh (nomadic Arab Shewu militia, many of them originally from Cameroon whose members are drawn from hunters' groups), various hunters' associations who 'operate in toughest and most remote terrain' combating the militants, and the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN, 'a nationwide vigilante group and private security company', fighting against Boko Haram and ISWAP mainly in Adamawa and Benue states).⁹³⁷

A new actor is the Shilla boys, a 'radical cult group', which, according to the Adamawa Police Command, disguise as tricycle operators in Jimeta, Yola and environs, but are involved in robbery of civilians. A special police taskforce was created to curb this 'radical and dangerous' group.⁹³⁸

⁹²⁸ Nigeria, Adamawa State, n.d., [url](#)

⁹²⁹ Nigeria, Adamawa State, n.d., [url](#)

⁹³⁰ Jamestown Foundation, Boko Haram's Expansionary Project in Northwestern Nigeria, 28 July 2020, [url](#), p. 7

⁹³¹ International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch - Nigeria [database], May 2020, [url](#)

⁹³² International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiraling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), p. i

⁹³³ WorldWatch Monitor, Adamawa state, n.d., [url](#)

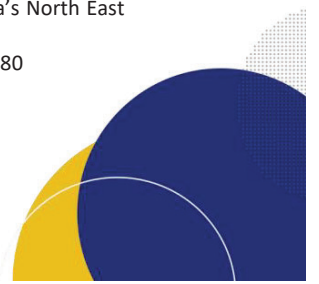
⁹³⁴ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁹³⁵ Brookings, As conflict intensifies in Nigeria's North East, so does a reliance on troubled militias, 21 April 2020, [url](#), p. 2

⁹³⁶ Nathaniel, D.D.et al., The Civilian Joint Task Force and the management of Boko Haram conflict in Nigeria's North East Region, June 2020, [url](#), pp. 231-234

⁹³⁷ Felbab-Brown, V., Militias (and Militancy) in Nigeria's North-East not going away, 14 April 2020, [url](#), pp. 77-80

⁹³⁸ Vanguard, Radical Shilla boys: Police set up taskforce in Adamawa, 11 May 2020, [url](#)



2.8.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

In 2019, Boko Haram conducted 'limited' attacks in Adamawa.⁹³⁹ However, according to the Adamawa state governor in the beginning of 2020, the number of Boko Haram attacks in Adamawa was rising and worrying.⁹⁴⁰ Also UN OCHA noted 'a significant increase in the threats of attacks on both civilian and military locations and convoys across the state. Cases of abduction/kidnapping are becoming rampant in the state, especially within Yola metropolis.⁹⁴¹ The state also experienced violence from the ongoing herder-farmer conflicts and communal violence.⁹⁴²

UN OCHA noted that 'Adamawa State continues to witness different forms of conflict, including NSAG [non-state armed groups] attacks and clashes with Government Forces, particularly in Michika and Madagali LGAs, and communal clashes across Numan, Demsa, Guyuk, and Lamurde LGAs.' The source described the security situation in these LGAs during January-August 2020 as 'unpredictable and volatile'.⁹⁴³

2.8.3.1 Number of security incidents

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 49 security incidents (16 battles, 28 cases of violence against civilians, 5 incidents of riots) in Adamawa state, resulting in 87 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Yola North LGA. Of the 28 incidents of violence against civilians, 20 were attacks, 7 abductions and 1 sexual violence.⁹⁴⁴

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period, as well as the highest number of incidents by LGA is shown in Figure 24 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 12 protests were reported during the reference period.⁹⁴⁵

⁹³⁹ USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁴⁰ This Day, Fintiri Worries about Rising Boko Haram Attacks in Adamawa, 4 January 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁴¹ UN OCHA, Nigeria-Adamawa State Humanitarian Situation Analysis, January to August 2020, 28 September 2020, [url](#), p.2

⁹⁴² International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch - Nigeria [database], May 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁴³ UN OCHA, Nigeria-Adamawa State Humanitarian Situation Analysis, January to August 2020, 28 September 2020, [url](#), p.2

⁹⁴⁴ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁹⁴⁵ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

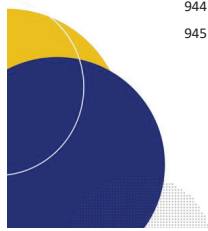




Figure 17 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Adamawa state in 2020, based on ACLED data⁹⁴⁶

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Adamawa state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Adamawa state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	16	60
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	28	22
Riots	5	5
Total	49	87

Table 11 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020⁹⁴⁷

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 6 security incidents (2 battles, 2 cases of violence against civilians, 2 incidents of riots) in Adamawa state, resulting in 23 deaths.⁹⁴⁸

⁹⁴⁶ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁹⁴⁷ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁹⁴⁸ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)



2.8.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 2 January 2020, Boko Haram attacked Kwapale, Kwapale (Kopa) and Baza village, all within Michika LGA, which is 'one of the Christian dominated areas', according to Premium Times. Hundreds of villagers fled to the mountaintop. Boko Haram gunmen clashed with the army and were repelled.⁹⁴⁹ Food was looted and one insurgent was killed.⁹⁵⁰

On 19 February 2020, a large group of suspected armed herdsmen attacked Bang community (Lamurde LGA), killed two residents and destroyed houses. Residents said the village had been attacked five times since 2018.⁹⁵¹

On 21 February 2020, Boko Haram on motorbikes attacked Garkida (Gombi LGA), shot around, looted shops, burnt houses, churches, health centre and military buildings.⁹⁵² Nigerian Armed Forces and vigilantes clashed with the group; three soldiers were killed and one person abducted. The attack reportedly 'coincided with the capture of seven local council government areas all situated in northern part of Adamawa', close to Hawul LGA (Borno state) and Sambisa forest.⁹⁵³

On 6 April 2020, Boko Haram attacked Kircinga (Madagali LGA), at the edge of Sambisa forest, formerly a Boko Haram base. They looted shops and destroyed property. Soldiers stationed in the village repelled the fighters.⁹⁵⁴ No fatalities were recorded.⁹⁵⁵

On 14 May 2020, Hausa and Choba youth clashed in Tigno (Lamurde LGA) over an accident caused by one of the parties to the other. Houses, shops, and filling stations were destroyed.⁹⁵⁶ Six bodies were found by the police, while residents said they had buried 30 victims.⁹⁵⁷

On 9 June 2020, gunmen from Longuda and Waja communities clashed in five villages in Lamurde LGA over the ownership of farmland. 23 people were killed, houses and property were burnt to ashes and 32 people arrested by police forces.⁹⁵⁸

On 24 December 2020, suspected Boko Haram gunmen in five trucks attacked Garkida town (Gombi LGA). They looted food and burnt houses, while inhabitants fled into the mountains.⁹⁵⁹ The fighters were reportedly Boko Haram or ISWAP members who clashed with military and local vigilantes, supported by airstrikes. Between 5 and 11 people were abducted and 5 villagers plus a police officer were killed.⁹⁶⁰ Three churches were burnt.⁹⁶¹ Over the Christmas weekend, coordinated attacks on six communities in Borno and Adamawa states took place.⁹⁶²

On 9 April 2021, Boko Haram and ISWAP surrounded and attacked the village of Kwapre (Hong LGA), close to the Sambisa forest in Borno. Seven people were killed and several women, girls and men,

⁹⁴⁹ Premium Times. Residents flee to mountains as Boko Haram attacks Adamawa villages, 3 January 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁵⁰ This Day, Fintiri Worries about Rising Boko Haram Attacks in Adamawa, 4 January 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁵¹ This Day, Adamawa: 2 killed, 1 injured, as gunmen attack community, 20 February 2020, [url](#); ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁹⁵² Punch, Garkida: Residents of Adamawa community still counting losses after Boko Haram attacks, 7 March 2020, [url](#); Daily Trust, Nigeria: Boko Haram Burns Houses, Churches in Garkida, 23 February 2020, [url](#); Express, Christianity crackdown: Five churches burned as terrorist group open fire in Nigeria, 25 February 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁵³ Punch, Garkida: Residents of Adamawa community still counting losses after Boko Haram attacks, 7 March 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁵⁴ Premium Times, Boko Haram attacks Adamawa village, burns houses, loots shops, 7 April 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁵⁵ Garda, Nigeria: Militants attack village in Adamawa state April 6, 7 April 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁵⁶ Cable (The), 'Many killed' as violence breaks out in Adamawa community, 16 May 2020, [url](#); Adamawa Times, Adamawa Violence; 34 killed, 48 sustained gunshots in Tigno Crisis – Muslim Council, 17 May 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁵⁷ Premium Times, Adamawa Violence: Police recover six bodies; residents say dozens killed, 16 May 2020, [url](#)

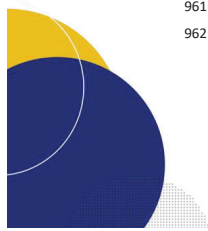
⁹⁵⁸ This Day, 23 Persons Killed, 32 Suspects Arrested in Adamawa Communal Clash, 11 June 2020, [url](#); Premium Times Many feared killed, 32 arrested in another Adamawa communal clash, 10 June 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁵⁹ Vanguard, Boko Haram attacks Adamawa town on Christmas Eve, 25 December 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁶⁰ HumAngle, Garkida Town Grieves Over Missing, Killed Kinsmen, As ISWAP Launches Another Attack, 26 December 2020, [url](#); Daily Post, Boko Haram: 6 killed, 11 abducted in Adamawa, 26 December 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁶¹ Brethern, EYN churches are attacked, at least 12 people are killed, 28 December 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁶² Guardian, (The), 'How we sought refuge from terrorists' attack on Adamawa hill', 28 December 2020, [url](#)



were abducted (8 people escaped later). 50 houses, worship centers, markets and schools were burnt and 5 000 people were reportedly displaced.⁹⁶³

On 12 April 2021, communal clashes between militias from the Waja and Lunguda ethnic groups flared up in several Lunguda communities in Guyuk LGA, along the border with Gombe state where similar clashes had taken place. Three people were killed and several houses were destroyed.⁹⁶⁴

2.8.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

UN OCHA noted in August 2020:

'Government forces continue to carry out offensive/counter-operations and maintain a high level of alertness following NSAG [non-state armed groups] activities and clashes across LGAs. There is a significant increase in the threats of attacks on both civilian and military locations and convoys across the state. Cases of abduction/kidnapping are becoming rampant in the state, especially within Yola metropolis. Youth gangs ("yan shilla") have been blamed for the spike in criminal activities, including armed robbery, rape, ransom kidnapping, and murder.'⁹⁶⁵

After an attack by Boko Haram on Michika LGA, during which a local cleric was abducted and houses and equipment were burnt (see previous section), a parliamentarian representing Adamawa state, pointed out the poor security equipment and called for increasing security power in the area. 'The effort by the Nigeria Army is quite commendable, but they need more trucks because the Boko Haram terrorists also destroyed the only truck they had in Michika.'⁹⁶⁶

State security forces in the North-East Region were reportedly overstretched due to the Boko Haram/ISWAP insurgency. As a result, they heavily relied on local militia and vigilante groups such as the CJTF and others to help secure the area (see [Section 2.8.1 Actors](#)).⁹⁶⁷ The CJTF operates formally under the command of the Nigerian military and under supervision of the Attorneys General in the North-East Region.⁹⁶⁸

The Nigerian military forces relied on these vigilante groups for 'intelligence gathering, defensive operations, holding territory, and even offensive actions'. Many local communities in the region regarded the militias as their main security providers, conflict resolvers and judiciaries. Brookings reported that 'sometimes local communities see the militias as being closer to them than the official police or military.' This heavy dependence on vigilante groups and militia by state security forces posed a challenge with regard to accountability and was in itself a threat to the security in the region, as the Brookings analysis showed.⁹⁶⁹ The CJTF was effective in countering Boko Haram in Adamawa in collaboration with the Nigerian security forces by sharing their knowledge of the local situation and their determination to repel attacks and recapture areas from insurgents, and protected remote communities that were abandoned by police or military forces.⁹⁷⁰

2.8.3.4 Road security

In January 2020, hundreds of youth protested against the 'incessant kidnappings' by blocking the federal highway to the state capital Yola, which leads through Girei LGA where many abductions have

⁹⁶³ This Day, Adamawa Confirms Seven Dead, 5,000 Displaced in Boko Haram Attack, 12 April 2021, [url](#); Vanguard, Boko Haram kills 16 in Borno, Adamawa, razes 50 houses, 12 April 2021, [url](#)

⁹⁶⁴ Daily Post, Communal Clashes: 18 persons allegedly killed in Gombe, Adamawa States, 15 April 2021, [url](#)

⁹⁶⁵ UN OCHA, Nigeria-Adamawa State Humanitarian Situation Analysis, January to August 2020, 28 September 2020, [url](#)

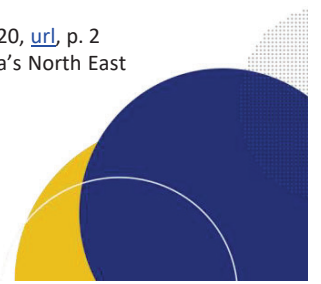
⁹⁶⁶ Business Day, Adamawa Rep calls for security beef-up in Michika, after Boko Haram attacks, 6 January 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁶⁷ Daniel Egiegba Agbibo, Vigilante youths and counterinsurgency in Northeastern Nigeria, 2 November 2020, [url](#), p. 369; Brookings, As conflict intensifies in Nigeria's North East, so does a reliance on troubled militias, 21 April 2020, [url](#), p. 2

⁹⁶⁸ Felbab-Brown, V., Militias (and Militancy) in Nigeria's North-East not going away, 14 April 2020, [url](#), p. 78

⁹⁶⁹ Brookings, As conflict intensifies in Nigeria's North East, so does a reliance on troubled militias, 21 April 2020, [url](#), p. 2

⁹⁷⁰ Nathaniel, D.D. et al., The Civilian Joint Task Force and the management of Boko Haram conflict in Nigeria's North East Region, June 2020, [url](#), pp. 231-234



occurred.⁹⁷¹ On 6 July 2020, a police inspector and another passenger were abducted by unknown gunmen in security uniforms on the Yola-Numan highway, at the Demsa road section in Adamawa.⁹⁷² More information on road security in Adamawa state was not found.

2.8.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

According to the Landmine Monitor 2020, 'since 2017, there have been reports of incidents involving both civilian and military casualties from landmines and a range of other locally produced explosive devices planted by Boko Haram in the north-east of the country, particularly in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states.'⁹⁷³

The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) reported in the first nine months of 2020 that '334 civilian and non-civilian fatalities and casualties have been recorded' in the three states Adamawa, Borno and Yobe (BAY) due to explosive devices.⁹⁷⁴

No information was found on infrastructural damage in Adamawa state.

2.8.3.6 Displacement and return

Throughout the North-East Region, an increase by less than 1 % in the number of IDPs was noted by IOM in November 2020, compared to the previous round (September 2020). The reasons for displacement were similar to those in earlier DTM assessments: the ongoing conflict in the North-East Region, (92 % of IDPs), followed by communal clashes (7 %) and natural disasters (1 % of the cases).⁹⁷⁵

IDPs

The total number of IDPs for Adamawa by November 2020 was 209 252, an increase of 127 (0.1 %) compared to the previous round of assessment (Round 34), see [Table 12](#) below. Adamawa had the second highest number of IDPs after Borno - just under 10 % of the total amount of IDPs in north-eastern Nigeria.⁹⁷⁶

State	Count of LGAs	R34 (September 2020)		R35 (November 2020)		Status	Population difference	Percentage difference
		Total population	Total population (%)	Total population	Total population (%)			
ADAMAWA	21	209,125	10%	209,252	10%	Increase	127	0.1%
BAUCHI	20	64,985	3%	66,062	3%	Increase	1,077	2%
BORNO	22	1,590,943	74%	1,603,044	74%	Increase	12,101	1%
GOMBE	11	39,266	2%	39,532	2%	Increase	266	1%
TARABA	16	91,525	4%	88,594	4%	Decrease	-2,931	-3%
YOBE	17	143,417	7%	143,759	7%	Increase	342	0.2%
GRAND TOTAL	107	2,139,261	100%	2,150,243	100%	Increase	10,982	1%

Table 1: Change in internally displaced population by state

Table 12 Change in IDP population by state (North-East Region) © IOM-DTM⁹⁷⁷

UN OCHA noted that, due to the decreasing numbers of IDPs, the state authorities merged the IDP camps of Malkohi and Fufore, to better enable management of the camps and organise classroom activities.⁹⁷⁸

⁹⁷¹ Punch, Kidnapping: Adamawa youths block highway, protest death of 10 residents, 7 January 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁷² Nation (The), Police inspector, civilian abducted in Adamawa highway attack, 7 July 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁷³ ICBL-CMC, Landmine monitor 2020, November 2020, [url](#) p. 29

⁹⁷⁴ UNMAS, Nigeria n.d., [url](#)

⁹⁷⁵ IOM Nigeria, DTM North East Nigeria, Displacement Report 35, 11 March 2021, [url](#), p. 3

⁹⁷⁶ IOM Nigeria, DTM North East Nigeria, Displacement Report 35, 11 March 2021, [url](#), p. 6

⁹⁷⁷ IOM Nigeria, DTM North East Nigeria, Displacement Report 35, 11 March 2021, [url](#), p. 7

⁹⁷⁸ UN OCHA, Nigeria-Adamawa State Humanitarian Situation Analysis, January-August 2020, 28 September 2020, [url](#), p. 1

Returnees

The total number of returnees to Adamawa state by November 2020 was 820 734, an increase of 1 465 individuals (less than 1 %) compared to the previous round, see [Table 13](#) below. This is the largest caseload of returnees with 47 % of all returnees in the states Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY).⁹⁷⁹

State	R34 Accessed LGA's	R35 Accessed LGA's	R34 Total IND (September 2020)	R35 Total IND (November 2020)	Status	Difference	Return Population In Percentages Per State
Adamawa	16	16	819,269	820,734	Increase	1,465	47%
Borno	18	18	726,454	724,263	Decrease	-2,191	42%
Yobe	6	6	191,126	197,910	Increase	6,058	11%
Grand Total	40	40	1,736,849	1,742,907	Increase	9,934	100%

Table 4: Change in returnee population by State

Table 13 Change in returnee population by state (North-East Region) © IOM-DTM⁹⁸⁰

UNHCR noted that in Michika LGA, in the north of Adamawa towards Borno state, 'kidnappers [...] demanding money under threat of kidnapping' from people who had just returned after having fled the area earlier.⁹⁸¹

2.9 Bauchi state

2.9.1 General description of the state

Bauchi state shares boundaries with the following eight states: Kano, Jigawa and Plateau, to the west; Adamawa, Taraba, Yobe and Gombe to the north-east; Kaduna to the north-west. The state's capital is Bauchi.⁹⁸²

The state is composed of the following 20 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Alkaleri, Bauchi, Bogoro, Dambam, Darazo, Dass, Gamawa, Ganjuwa, Giade, Itas/Gadau, Jama'are, Katagum, Krifi, Misau, Ningi, Shira, Tafawa-Balewa, Toro, Warji and Zaki.⁹⁸³

In the 2006 census, the population of Bauchi state was 4 653 066. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 6 537 314 in 2016.⁹⁸⁴

Bauchi state is not an ethnically homogenous state. There are in total 55 ethnic groups including the Hausa, Fulani, Sayawa, Bulewa, Karekare, Kanuri, Warjawa, Zulawa, Badawa and others.⁹⁸⁵

Hausa and English are the most spoken languages and are 'treated as official', with Fulfulde also being widely spoken. The main religion is Islam with Christianity widely practiced in specific particular areas.⁹⁸⁶

⁹⁷⁹ IOM Nigeria, DTM North East Nigeria, Displacement Report 35, 11 March 2021, [url](#), p. 16

⁹⁸⁰ IOM Nigeria, DTM North East Nigeria, Displacement Report 35, 11 March 2021, [url](#), p. 16

⁹⁸¹ UNHCR, North-East Nigeria Protection Monitoring Report, May – June 2020, June 2020, [url](#), p. 4

⁹⁸² Nigeria, Bauchi State, n.d., [url](#)

⁹⁸³ Nigeria, Bauchi State, n.d., [url](#)

⁹⁸⁴ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 2

⁹⁸⁵ Nigeria, Bauchi State, n.d., [url](#)

⁹⁸⁶ Nigeria, Bauchi State, n.d., [url](#)



The main occupation in Bauchi is farming, with the use of traditional methods and tools.⁹⁸⁷

2.9.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.9.2.1 Background of the conflict

Although Bauchi had experienced several Boko Haram attacks in the past (in particular 2014-2015), the state did not experience the levels of violent extremism noted in other North-East Region states, as an Institute for Security Studies (ISS) report noted.⁹⁸⁸ In 2017-2018, like in the period 2019-2020, very few violent incidents were registered by ACLED.⁹⁸⁹

2.9.2.2 Actors

Actors in the few violent incidents recorded by ACLED in Bauchi are mainly unidentified armed groups and local militia (Fulani and vigilante groups), and national and state security forces.⁹⁹⁰

2.9.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

In November 2020, the state governor reported that Bauchi state was experiencing an increase in 'kidnapping, banditry, rape, cattle rustling, among others' especially around Falgore forest at the border with Kano state.⁹⁹¹

2.9.3.1 Number of security incidents

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 11 security incidents (1 battle, 7 cases of violence against civilians, 3 incidents of riots) in Bauchi state, resulting in 18 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Bauchi LGA. Of the 7 incidents of violence against civilians, 6 were attacks and 1 abduction.⁹⁹²

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period, as well as the highest number of incidents by LGA is shown in Figure 26 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 4 protests were reported during the reference period.⁹⁹³

⁹⁸⁷ Nigeria, Bauchi State, n.d., [url](#)

⁹⁸⁸ ISS, New insights into how communities resist Boko Haram, 15 July 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁸⁹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2017 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁹⁹⁰ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁹⁹¹ Guardian (The), Security agencies move against rising crime rate in Bauchi, 4 November 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁹² ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁹⁹³ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

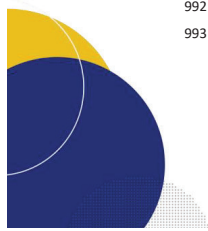




Figure 18 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Bauchi state in 2020, based on ACLED data⁹⁹⁴

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Bauchi state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Bauchi state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	1	9
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	7	8
Riots	3	1
Total	11	18

Table 14 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020⁹⁹⁵

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 6 security incidents (1 battle, 3 cases of violence against civilians, 2 incidents of riots) in Bauchi state, resulting in 3 deaths.⁹⁹⁶

⁹⁹⁴ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁹⁹⁵ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

⁹⁹⁶ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)



2.9.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 29 June 2020, a clash between herders and farmers in Zadawa village, Misau LGA, occurred over ownership of land and the distribution of farming and grazing lands. Nine people were killed and 6 injured.⁹⁹⁷

On 10 October 2020, 10 unidentified armed men attacked Gudum Hausawa, a suburb of Bauchi LGA, killing two persons. The reason for attack was not known and investigation was under way.⁹⁹⁸

On 14 November 2020, an armed criminal group, called Yan sara suka, attacked a local vigilante group, Yan Komiti, in Bauchi city, injured six persons and burnt vehicles.⁹⁹⁹

On 21 December 2020, unknown gunmen invaded a farm and killed two farmers in Tabak village, Zaki LGA. Several suspects were arrested by the police.¹⁰⁰⁰

2.9.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

ISS noted that Bauchi and Gombe did not experience the levels of violent extremism that other states did. Crucial factors contributing to limiting spread of extremism were: specific geographic and ethnic factors, but also a strong community-oriented traditional leadership and involvement of religious leaders and organisations who can 'deconstruct a terror group's ideology'. Also, vigilante groups collaborating with the police and sharing information were essential.¹⁰⁰¹

According to the police commissioner of Bauchi state, speaking in November 2020, security agencies were taking measures to address the insecurity caused by kidnapping, banditry, rape, and cattle rustling. The police was in contact with local youth groups to end the violence and to work on peace in the state.¹⁰⁰²

2.9.3.4 Road security

No information was found on road security.

2.9.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on major damage in infrastructure or explosive remnants of war in Kano state.

2.9.3.6 Displacement and return

Throughout the North-East Region, an increase by less than 1 % in the number of IDPs was noted by IOM in November 2020, compared to the previous round (Round 34, September 2020). The reasons for displacement were similar to those in earlier DTM assessments: the ongoing conflict in the North-East Region, (92 % of IDPs), followed by communal clashes (7 %) and natural disasters (1 % of the cases).¹⁰⁰³

IDPs

The total number of IDPs for Bauchi by November 2020 was 66 062, an increase of 1 077 individuals (2 %) compared to Round 34, September 2020 (see [Table 12](#) in Section [2.8.3.6](#)). Bauchi had one of the lowest numbers of IDPs in the North-East Region.¹⁰⁰⁴

⁹⁹⁷ Neptune Prime, 9 die, 6 injured in farmers, herders clash in Bauchi, 1 July 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁹⁸ This Day, Gunmen Kill Two Persons in Bauchi Community, 12 October 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁹⁹ Vanguard, Thugs attack community security volunteers, injure many in Bauchi, 18 November 2020, [url](#)

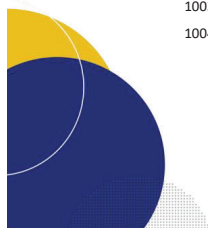
¹⁰⁰⁰ Guardian (The), Bauchi lawmaker decries attack on farmers by killer herders, 31 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰¹ ISS, New insights into how communities resist Boko Haram, 15 July 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰² Guardian (The), Security agencies move against rising crime rate in Bauchi, 4 November 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰³ IOM Nigeria, DTM North East Nigeria, Displacement Report 35, 11 March 2021, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁰⁰⁴ IOM Nigeria, DTM North East Nigeria, Displacement Report 35, 11 March 2021, [url](#), p. 6



Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Bauchi state.

2.10 Borno state

2.10.1 General description of the state

Borno state is the most north-eastern state in Nigeria.¹⁰⁰⁵ It shares international borders with the Republics of Niger, Chad and Cameroon. It also shares internal borders with the states of Yobe, Gombe and Adamawa.¹⁰⁰⁶ The state's capital is Maiduguri.¹⁰⁰⁷

It is composed of the following 27 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Maiduguri, Askira/Uba, Abadam, Ngala, Bayo, Gubio, Kala/Balge, Biu, Guzamala, Mafa, Chibok, Kaga, Konduga, Damboa, Kukawa, Bama, Gwoza, Magumeri, Jere, Hawul, Marte, Dikwa, KwayaKusar, Mobbar, Shani, Monguno, and Nganzai.¹⁰⁰⁸

In the 2006 census, the population of Borno state was 4 171 104. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 5 860 183 in 2016.¹⁰⁰⁹

The Kanuri constitute the state's prevalent ethnic group and account for approximately three quarters of its population. They are spread across different LGAs. There are also other smaller ethnic groups including the Babur, Bura, Shuwa, Marghi, Fulani, Hausa, Gamergu, or Kanakuru, Chibok, Ngoshe, Guduf, Mandara, Tera and several other smaller groups who reside in the LGAs of Biu, Hawul, KwayaKusar, Bayo and Shani. Another group present in the state are the Chibok, who reside in the Chibok LGA. The Hausas are located mainly in Askira and Maiduguri.¹⁰¹⁰

Agriculture constitutes the main occupation and source of income for the state, with most people working as farmers, herdsmen and fishermen.¹⁰¹¹

2.10.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.10.2.1 Background of the conflict

Borno state is the birthplace of Boko Haram in 2002¹⁰¹² and, together with Yobe and Adamawa, the area where BH - and ISWAP after its creation in March 2015 - concentrate its activities.¹⁰¹³

Although the group has been pushed by Nigerian military forces out of several states in the North-East Region, Boko Haram 'retains control over some villages and pockets of territory and continues to launch deadly suicide attacks and abduct civilians, mostly women and children', according to CFR.¹⁰¹⁴ Throughout 2020, Borno state was heavily affected by attacks by Boko Haram and its splinter ISWAP.¹⁰¹⁵

¹⁰⁰⁵ Nigeria, Borno State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁰⁶ UN, Nigeria, August 2014, [url](#); Nigeria, NIPC, Nigerian States. Borno State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁰⁷ Nigeria, Borno State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁰⁸ Nigeria, Borno State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁰⁹ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 2

¹⁰¹⁰ Nigeria, Borno State, n.d., [url](#)

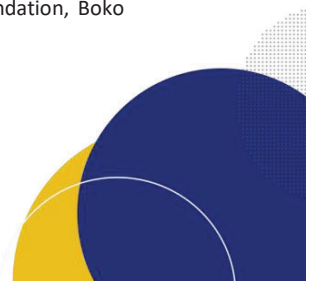
¹⁰¹¹ Nigeria, Borno State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰¹² Counter Extremism Project, Nigeria: Extremism and Terrorism, n.d. [March 2021], [url](#), p. 2

¹⁰¹³ EASO, COI Report Nigeria, Security situation, November 2018, [url](#) par. 2.2 and 2.3.7; Jamestown Foundation, Boko Haram's Expansionary Project in Northwestern Nigeria, 28 July 2020, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁰¹⁴ CFR, Global Conflict Tracker, Boko Haram in Nigeria, last updated 5 March 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰¹⁵ International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch - Nigeria [database], January-December 2020, [url](#)



Borno is also the home of many Christians, mostly living in the southern areas around Chibok, Biu and the zone towards Northern Adamawa.¹⁰¹⁶ According to the Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, Church of the Brethren in Nigeria), 'Boko Haram terrorists carried out over "fifty different attacks on different communities between the end of 2019 to June 2020"'. The EYN reportedly is the largest Christian denomination in North-East Nigeria and as a consequence 'most impacted by terrorist violence'.¹⁰¹⁷

2.10.2.2 Actors

The main actors in the conflict are Boko Haram/JAS and its splinter group ISWAP on the one hand, and Nigerian military, police, air forces in various operatives, sometimes assisted by Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF).¹⁰¹⁸ According to the US Commission on International Freedom (USCIRF), the CJTF 'trains and arms local recruits in Borno state to serve as the first line of defense against attacks by violent Islamist groups'.¹⁰¹⁹

There are also community militia groups active in Borno state, such as the hunters (*kungiyar maharba*), vigilantes (*yan baka*), and Shuwa vigilantes called *kesh kesh*.¹⁰²⁰ While these groups do protect their communities against attacks, abductions, and other types of violence, they also are known to have inflicted harm against civilians.¹⁰²¹ USCIRF noted: 'Community militias have both protected and harmed civilians in northeast Nigeria, and Nigerians face significant barriers in seeking redress for rights abuses perpetrated by informal militia fighters.'¹⁰²²

In 2020 it was observed that cooperation and collaboration between (motorcycle) bandits and Boko Haram factions continued in a number of northern states, resulting for example in the attack of the convoy of Governor Babagana Zulum in Borno state, which killed 15 members of his security entourage.¹⁰²³ In retaliation, the Nigerian defence forces increased its air operations.¹⁰²⁴

2.10.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

While in 2019, ACLED reported a total of 316 security incidents in Borno state, in 2020 this had nearly doubled to 582. The main cause of civilian fatalities is violence by insurgents Boko Haram/JAS and ISWAP and counter activities by the Nigerian security forces.¹⁰²⁵

Nigeria Watch reported over 2020: 'Like in previous years, Borno was the most affected state, with 3,076 deaths reported in 172 incidents, followed by Yobe (150 fatalities in 10 incidents) and Adamawa (65 victims in 8 incidents). In Borno state, only Bayo, Biu, Guzumala, Kala/Balge, and Kwaya Kusar LGAs were spared by the fighting.'¹⁰²⁶

¹⁰¹⁶ GTZ, Civil Society, Religion and the State: Mapping of Borno and Adamawa, November 2017, [url](#), p. 15

¹⁰¹⁷ CSW, Over fifty attacks in six months by Boko Haram go unreported, 3 July 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰¹⁸ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2019 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Counter Extremism Project, Nigeria: Extremism and Terrorism, n.d. [March 2021], [url](#), p. 2; Daniel Egiegba Agbiboa, Vigilante youths and counterinsurgency in Northeastern Nigeria, 2 November 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰¹⁹ US, USCIRF, Factsheet Northern Nigeria, Violent Islamist Groups in Northern Nigeria, February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰²⁰ Felbab-Brown, V., Militias (and Militancy) in Nigeria's North-East not going away, 14 April 2020, [url](#), pp. 77-80

¹⁰²¹ CIVIC, To Defend or Harm?: Community Militias in Borno State, Nigeria, June 2020, [url](#)

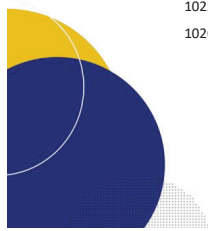
¹⁰²² US, USCIRF, Factsheet Northern Nigeria, Violent Islamist Groups in Northern Nigeria, February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰²³ Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#); UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, 24 December 2020, [url](#), para. 24

¹⁰²⁴ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, 24 December 2020, [url](#), para. 24

¹⁰²⁵ EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2019 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁰²⁶ Nigeria Watch, Tenth report on Violence (2020), n.d. [url](#), pp. 11-12



In 2020, the ‘most violent direct attack against innocent civilians this year’ according to UN, occurred on 28 November 2020 when in total 110 farmers were killed¹⁰²⁷ (see section [Illustrative security incidents](#)).

A mid-year UNHCR report summarised the situation in Borno state as follows: ‘The situation context in the Northeast Nigeria in May and June was characterised by sustained activities of the NSAG [non-state armed group] and counter activities of the Government forces which resulted in the displacement of communities and individual level incidents. Criminal activities and civil unrest were reported in the region.’ Humanitarian agencies and workers were also targeted.¹⁰²⁸

2.10.3.1 Number of security incidents

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 582 security incidents (326 battles, 148 incidents of remote violence/explosions, 107 cases of violence against civilians, 1 incident of riots) in Borno state, resulting in 3 168 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Gwoza LGA, followed by Kukawa and Bama LGAs. Of the 107 incidents of violence against civilians, 86 were attacks, 21 abductions.¹⁰²⁹

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period, as well as the highest number of incidents by LGA is shown in Figure 28 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 4 protests were reported during the reference period.¹⁰³⁰

As mentioned in the [Introduction](#), ACLED codes the incidents with an unknown number of fatalities, but often described as ‘scores’ or ‘large numbers’ as 10 fatalities.¹⁰³¹ In the whole of Nigeria, ACLED coded 79 incidents as such, of which 76 were registered in Borno (46 explosions/remote violence, 29 battles, and 1 violence against civilians).¹⁰³²

¹⁰²⁷ UN News, UN condemns ‘brutal and callous’ attack on civilians in north-east Nigeria, 29 November 2020, [url](#); Guardian (The), Northeast Nigeria attack claimed at least 110 lives: UN, 29 November 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰²⁸ UNHCR, North-East Nigeria Protection Monitoring Report, May – June 2020, June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰²⁹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁰³⁰ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁰³¹ ACLED, ACLED Codebook, 2019, [url](#), pp. 7-14

¹⁰³² E ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



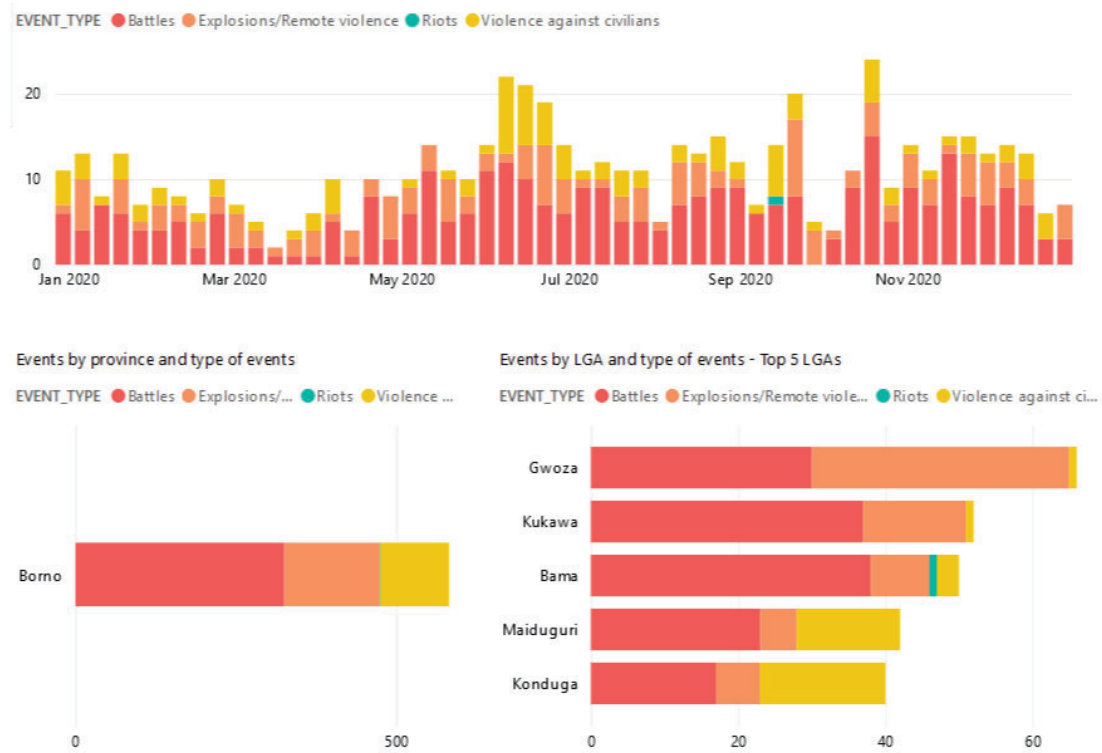
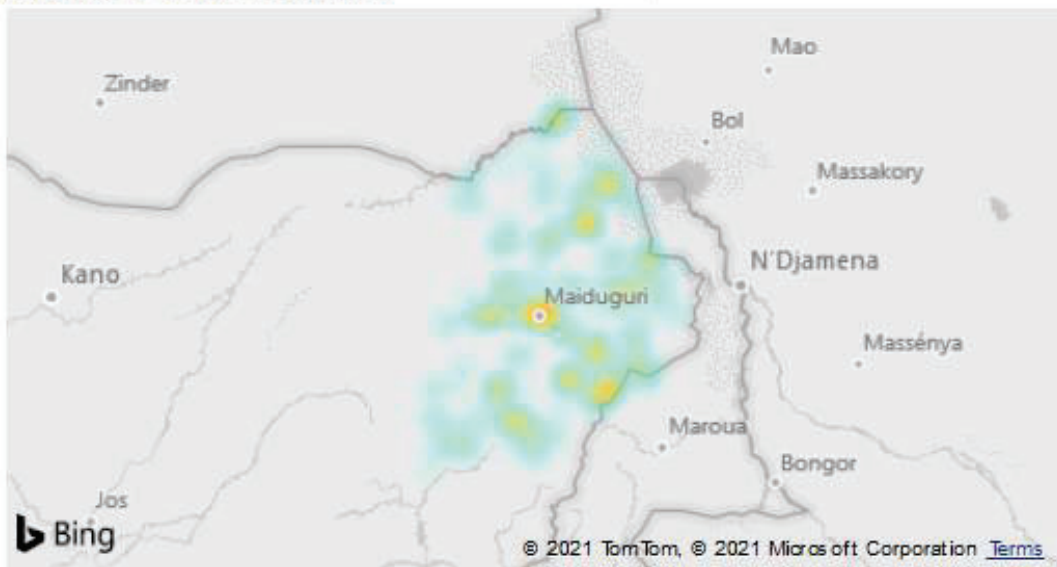


Figure 19 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Borno state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹⁰³³

A heatmap indicates the geographical spread of violent incidents over Borno state.¹⁰³⁴

Heatmap of events occurrences



Map 7 Heatmap of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Borno state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹⁰³⁵

¹⁰³³ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁰³⁴ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁰³⁵ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Borno state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Borno state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	326	1704
Explosions/remote violence	148	1004
Violence against civilians	107	460
Riots	1	0
Total	582	3168

Table 15 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹⁰³⁶

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 195 security incidents (119 battles, 58 incidents of remote violence/explosions, 17 cases of violence against civilians, 1 incident of riots) in Borno state, resulting in 1 304 deaths.¹⁰³⁷

2.10.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

The incidents with the largest number of fatalities were battles between Boko Haram/ISWAP and the Nigerian security forces, sometimes joined by the Civilian Joint Task Force. Fatalities were mostly insurgents or security officers.¹⁰³⁸

The battle with the highest number of fatalities occurred on 26 May 2020, when Nigerian troops of Operation Lafiya Dole clashed with Boko Haram at Banki Junction and Firgi (Bama LGA). A total of 75 Boko Haram insurgents were killed, and large numbers of equipment destroyed.¹⁰³⁹

On 18 January 2020, suspected Boko Haram attacked ‘the main UN humanitarian accommodation’ in Ngala (Ngala LGA) and burnt down a section of the complex, killing at least 20 displaced civilians awaiting assistance. In a battle with the army, four Boko Haram fighters and one soldier were killed.¹⁰⁴⁰

On 9 February 2020, gunmen (‘suspected militant Islamists’¹⁰⁴¹) shot or burned alive 30 people in their cars outside Auno (Konduga LGA). Many of them were travellers on their way to Maiduguri but who were forced to spend the night in their cars outside town, because the military had closed the roads and had returned to their super camp in Maiduguri. An unknown number of women and children were abducted in the attack.¹⁰⁴²

On 29 February 2020, Boko Haram attacked Rumirgo village (Askira Uba LGA), close to the Sambisa forest, shooting indiscriminately and killed 10 residents, looted the village and burnt houses.¹⁰⁴³

On 24 March 2020 Boko Haram killed ‘at least 50 soldiers’ in an ambush near Goniri village in northern Yobe. This occurred on the third day of a military offensive, in Operation Ayiso Tamonuma, against

¹⁰³⁶ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁰³⁷ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

¹⁰³⁸ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

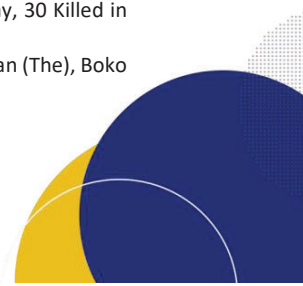
¹⁰³⁹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Guardian (The), Army kills three Boko Haram commanders, others in Borno, 3 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴⁰ UN OCHA/ UN RC/HC, Nigeria: UN Humanitarian Coordinator outraged at attack against major humanitarian facility, 20 January 2020, [url](#); Defense Post (The), Nigeria: Militants attack key aid facility in Ngala near Cameroon border, UN says, 20 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴¹ BBC, Nigeria militants burn to death motorists as they sleep in their cars, 10 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴² BBC, Nigeria militants burn to death motorists as they sleep in their cars, 10 February 2020, [url](#); This Day, 30 Killed in Boko Haram Attack on Maiduguri-Damaturu Highway, 10 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴³ Vanguard, INSURGENCY: 5 dead, 47 sustain gunshot wounds in Damboa attack, 4 March 2020, [url](#); Guardian (The), Boko Haram kill 10 in northeast Nigerian village, 1 March 2020, [url](#)



the Boko Haram fighters.¹⁰⁴⁴ Troops had advanced to Alagarno forest area (Borno state) and overcame an ambush, but ran the next day into a second ambush near Goniri area (Yobe state) and ‘this time were overpowered by the insurgents who “wiped out the entire artillery troop”.’¹⁰⁴⁵ Alagarno forest is an ISWAP base from where the group coordinated attacks into ‘Chibok, Borno and as far as northern Adamawa State’.¹⁰⁴⁶

On 9 April 2020, the Nigerian Airforce in Operation Lafiya Dole conducted air strikes on an ISWAP camp at Shokotoko village (Damboa LGA). The Nigerian Airforce denied claims of having killed civilians and has started an investigation.¹⁰⁴⁷ Sources claimed that about 17 civilians had been killed.¹⁰⁴⁸

On 17 May 2020, Nigerian military ambushed a convoy of Boko Haram outside Baga (Kukawa LGA) and killed at least 20 insurgents. Few hours later, gunmen (supposedly Boko Haram) stormed Gajigana town (Magumeri LGA) where the Nigerian Army Forward Operation Base is located, shot indiscriminately and killed at least 20 civilians and injured 24.¹⁰⁴⁹ On 25 May 2020, Nigerian army claimed to have killed 1 015 insurgents in the north-east since 4 April 2020.¹⁰⁵⁰

On 9 June 2020, one of the largest attacks on civilians occurred in the herding village of Felo in Faduma Kolomdi, Gubio LGA. Heavily armed gunmen (presumably ISWAP) killed 81 people and took away nearly 1 200 cattle.¹⁰⁵¹ The attack was allegedly a retaliation for villagers having earlier killed members of an armed group, or having shared information on the militants to security forces.¹⁰⁵² In addition, the village head and six others had been abducted.¹⁰⁵³

On 13 June 2020, Boko Haram/ISWAP attacked communities in four LGAs in Borno state. They stormed the villages Felo, Zowo and Chingwa villages in Gubio LGA and killed 42 villagers.¹⁰⁵⁴ Also on 13 June 2020, BH/ISWAP fighters attacked Usmanati Goni (Nganzai LGA) and killed about 35 people including women and children, injuring several others, burning houses, and rustling cattle. Two hours later, ISWAP gunmen stormed Monguno (Monguno LGA), burned down the police station and the UN Humanitarian hub and freed inmates.¹⁰⁵⁵ At least 20 soldiers were killed in the last attack.¹⁰⁵⁶

The UN Security Council ‘condemned in the strongest possible terms the multiple terrorist attacks on 9 and 10 June [2020] in Felo, on 13 June in Monguno against a UN humanitarian facility and on 13 June in Nganzai in Borno state, Nigeria, which together resulted in at least 120 killed and others injured’.¹⁰⁵⁷

¹⁰⁴⁴ Premium Times, At least 50 Nigerian soldiers killed in deadly Boko Haram ambush, 24 March 2020, [url](#); see also Vanguard, 50 soldiers killed by Boko Haram in Yobe, 25 March 2020, [url](#); ABC News, 50 Nigerian soldiers killed in deadly Boko Haram ambush, 24 March 2020, [url](#);

¹⁰⁴⁵ Cable (The), Boko Haram kills ‘over 70 soldiers’ in an ambush, 24 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴⁶ Jamestown Foundation, Counter-Boko Haram Offensives in Chad, Niger, and Nigeria, 1 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴⁷ Daily Post, Boko Haram: Nigerian military denies killing over 17 civilians in Borno, 14 April 2020, [url](#); This Day, Military Investigates Alleged Bombing of Civilians in Borno, 15 April 2020, [url](#); see also Guardian (The), Military denies alleged killing of civilians in Borno State, 16 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴⁸ CIVIC, CIVIC Condemns the Harming of Civilians in Damboa Air Strike, 16 April 2020, [url](#); News4Naija, Youngsters, Girls killed as air pressure ‘by accident bombs’ Borno village, 13 April 2020, [url](#); Daily Focus, Boko Haram: Nigeria Airforce Mistakenly Bombs Borno Village, kills innocent People, 13 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴⁹ Sahara Reporters, Boko Haram Attacks Military Base In Borno, 18 May 2020, [url](#); Premium Times, 20 killed as Boko Haram attacks Borno community, 18 May 2020, [url](#); AP, Authorities: Boko Haram attacks Nigerian village, killing 20, 18 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵⁰ Premium Times, Nigerian soldiers kill 1,015 insurgents since April – Buratai, 25 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵¹ Premium Times, Gubio Attack: Death toll now 81; village head, six others abducted, 10 June 2020, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Fighters kill dozens, raze village in Nigeria’s Borno state, 10 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵² BBC, Dozens killed in attack in northern Nigeria, 10 June 2020, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Fighters kill dozens, raze village in Nigeria’s Borno state, 10 June 2020, [url](#)

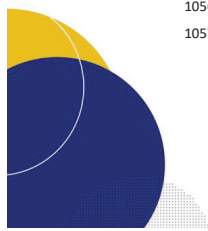
¹⁰⁵³ Premium Times, Gubio Attack: Death toll now 81; village head, six others abducted, 10 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵⁴ Vanguard, BLACK SATURDAY: Boko Haram, ISWAP attacks leave 60 dead in Borno, 15 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵⁵ Daily Trust, Boko Haram kills many, attacks police station, UN hub in Borno, 14 June 2020, [url](#); DW, Nigeria: Islamic militant attacks in Borno kill dozens, 14 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵⁶ Al Jazeera, 20 soldiers, 40 civilians killed in attacks Nigeria’s Borno state, 14 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵⁷ UN Security Council, Security Council Press Statement on Acts of Terrorism in North-East Nigeria, 16 June 2020, [url](#)



On 23 July 2020, BH killed five hostages including four aid workers who had been abducted at a roadblock between Monguno and Maiduguri a month earlier.¹⁰⁵⁸

On 10 August 2020, BK gunmen attacked the twin villages of Puciwa and Koleram (Mugumeri LGA), killed 'scores' (or 'over a dozen') of farmers and herders, injured 16, and rustled hundreds of cattle.¹⁰⁵⁹

On 18 August 2020, ISWAP in 22 trucks attacked Kukawa town (Kukawa LGA) and clashed with Nigerian troops. More than hundred residents were abducted, who had just 16 days earlier returned under military escort after nearly two years in IDP camps. The number of fatalities is unknown.¹⁰⁶⁰

In the week before 27 October 2020, suspected BH militants killed 30 farmers in Njimtilo and Moromti villages (Konduga LGA), despite the presence of agro-rangers tasked with protecting farmers.¹⁰⁶¹

On 28 November 2020, militants tied and killed 110¹⁰⁶² agricultural workers working in the fields in Zabarmari area (Jere LGA).¹⁰⁶³ Fifteen women were abducted. The attack, claimed by Boko Haram¹⁰⁶⁴ was reportedly a reprisal after local militias disarmed and arrested a Boko Haram militant earlier.¹⁰⁶⁵ The UN condemned the attack as the 'most violent direct attack against innocent civilians this year'.¹⁰⁶⁶

On Christmas Eve 24 December 2020, Boko Haram militants attacked the predominantly Christian village of Pemi (Chibok LGA), killed at least 11 people, burned houses and a church and abducted the village priest and several others.¹⁰⁶⁷

On 26 December 2020, ISWAP clashed with Nigerian police/ air forces and CJTF in Hawul LGA. ISWAP also burned houses, cars and churches and abducted five persons. Eleven persons were killed.¹⁰⁶⁸

On 26 December 2020, suspected Boko Haram gunmen abducted 40 loggers and killed three at Wulgo Forest near Gamboru (Ngala LGA).¹⁰⁶⁹

Kidnapped civilians were rescued by the Nigerian forces on several occasions, for example on 3 January 2020 (461 abducted persons of whom 261 children)¹⁰⁷⁰, on 15 January 2020, three aid workers,¹⁰⁷¹ and around 9 May 2020, 34 women and 38 children.¹⁰⁷²

On 23 February 2021, Boko Haram launched a heavy attack against residents in several locations within Maiduguri city, killing 17 civilians and injuring 47 others.¹⁰⁷³ The attack, involving 'an assault team and volleys of mortars and rockets' was claimed by Boko Haram/JAS' leader Shekau. This was the first attack in years which broke the tight security of the city.¹⁰⁷⁴

¹⁰⁵⁸ CNN, Boko Haram militants kill five hostages kidnapped in Nigeria's northeast, UN says, 23 July 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵⁹ Guardian (The), Many feared killed in fresh Borno attacks, 12 August 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Just in: Scores killed, as Boko Haram seizes Borno communities, 10 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶⁰ Al Jazeera, Armed fighters take hundreds hostage in Nigeria's Borno state, 20 August 2020, [url](#). ACLED reported 7 to 11 fatalities. ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶¹ Punch, Boko Haram killed 30 on Borno farms recently – Village head, 27 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶² Guardian (The), Northeast Nigeria attack claimed at least 110 lives: UN, 29 November 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶³ Al Jazeera, Dozens killed in attack on farm workers in Nigeria, 28 November 2020, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Tens of civilians' killed in gruesome Nigeria massacre, UN says, 29 November 2020, [url](#); Reuters, Nigeria buries 43 farmers killed by militants, dozens missing, 29 November 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶⁴ DW, Nigeria: Boko Haram killed 76 farmers in Borno State, 2 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶⁵ BBC, Dozens of farm workers killed in 'insane' Nigeria attack, 29 November 2020, [url](#); DW, Nigeria: Boko Haram killed 76 farmers in Borno State, 2 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶⁶ UN News, UN condemns 'brutal and callous' attack on civilians in north-east Nigeria, 29 November 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶⁷ Garda, Nigeria: Suspected Boko Haram militants kill at least seven persons in Dec. 24 attack on Pemi, Borno State, 25 December 2020, [url](#); BBC, Boko Haram kill villagers in Christmas Eve attack, 23 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶⁸ This Day, Hundreds Flee Borno Villages as Troops Battle ISWAP for Hours, 28 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶⁹ Al Jazeera, At least 40 feared abducted in northeast Nigeria, 27 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷⁰ This Day, Military Rescues 461 Captives after Fierce Battles in Three States, 6 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷¹ UN OCHA, Nigeria: Three abducted aid workers released, 16 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷² Vanguard, Troops of 7 Div eliminate 18 Boko Haram terrorists, rescue 72 Women, children, 12 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷³ HumAngle, Boko Haram Attacks Maiduguri, Kills 17 After Years Of Relative Peace, 24 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷⁴ HumAngle, Shekau Claims Responsibility For Boko Haram Attack On Maiduguri, 25 February 2021, [url](#)



On 1 March 2021, Boko Haram insurgents stormed Dikwa town (Dikwa LGA) with many gun trucks and motorcycles, trying to loot food that was recently distributed to residents. According to a military source, they were driven away by troops and air force of Operation Lafiya Dole, but according to residents they set ablaze a UN humanitarian hub and health facilities, and abducted seven aid workers.¹⁰⁷⁵ According to France24, the insurgents were ISWAP fighters and held 25 staff of the humanitarian hub under siege.¹⁰⁷⁶ Aid groups also reported the death of six civilians in the attack.¹⁰⁷⁷

In three¹⁰⁷⁸ incidents between 10¹⁰⁷⁹ and 14 April 2021, the town of Damasak (Mobbar LGA) was attacked by ISWAP fighters. A military garrison, a UN office and other humanitarian buildings were destroyed or damaged. At least 12¹⁰⁸⁰ residents were killed and 17 injured. About 65 000 residents and IDPs fled to neighbouring towns or crossed the border to Niger.¹⁰⁸¹

2.10.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

Nigerian security forces in several operations frequently launched attacks on the insurgents in Borno state and neighbouring areas, often followed by large-scale retaliation attacks by the insurgents on civilians and military targets. After the attack on 24 March 2020 in which 47 to 70 soldiers were killed¹⁰⁸², the army launched a major offensive on Boko Haram and ISWAP a month later.¹⁰⁸³ On their turn, on 9 and 13 June 2020, ISWAP launched massive attacks on civilians in Gubio and Nganzai LGAs.¹⁰⁸⁴ BBC commented on this attack: 'This was one of the biggest attacks on civilians this year, but the timing is also significant. In recent weeks the Nigerian army has claimed significant success against Boko Haram militants but their assessments in past have been exaggerated.'¹⁰⁸⁵

Writing for the CFR, John Campbell summarised criticism to the state security efforts on its lack of effectivity and low trust levels:

'Military and security service failure is an old song. Though about 20 percent of the national budget goes for security, accountability for how the funds are spent is weak. Security service morale is widely reported to be low. Coordination among the agencies is bad. Trust of the security services among local people is low, and ISWA operatives appear to have better knowledge of the countryside than the security services.'¹⁰⁸⁶

To reduce the numbers of military casualties lost in attacks by insurgents, in 2019 the military introduced the strategy of 'super camps' in which the soldiers were withdrawn from remote communities and retreated in their fortified camps after curfew.¹⁰⁸⁷ After the 9 February 2020 attack outside Auno town on travellers burnt alive in their cars, CFR commented: 'By consolidating their forces in highly fortified "super camps," the Nigerian army reduces their own casualties, but in the

¹⁰⁷⁵ Vanguard, Boko Haram attacks Dikwa, abducts 7 aid workers in Borno, 3 March 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷⁶ France24, Jihadists attack UN base in Nigeria, trapping 25 aid workers, 2 March 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷⁷ DefensePost (The), Six Dead in Jihadist Attacks in Northeast Nigeria: Aid Groups, 3 March 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷⁸ UNHCR, Tens of thousands forced to flee violent attacks in Nigeria's Borno State, 16 April 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷⁹ NRC, International aid facilities attacked again in northeast Nigeria, 11 April 2021, [url](#); Premium Times, Four killed, UN facilities burnt, vehicles stolen as Boko Haram attacks Borno community, 11 April 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸⁰ According to Crisis Watch, 20 residents were killed in total. International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch database, April 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸¹ Al Jazeera, Tens of thousands flee attacks on northeast Nigerian town: UN, 16 April 2021, [url](#); see also Reuters, Islamists kill at least eight in Nigeria's Damasak, hundreds flee to Niger, 14 April 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸² Cable (The), Boko Haram kills 'over 70 soldiers' in an ambush, 24 March 2020, [url](#)

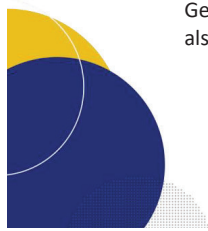
¹⁰⁸³ CFR, ISWA's Recent Attacks Could Signal a New, Deadlier Approach in Nigeria, 19 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸⁴ BBC, Dozens killed in attack in northern Nigeria, 10 June 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, BLACK SATURDAY: Boko Haram, ISWAP attacks leave 60 dead in Borno, 15 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸⁵ BBC, Dozens killed in attack in northern Nigeria, 10 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸⁶ CFR, Military Failures Mount in Borno Against Boko Haram, 13 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸⁷ UN Security Council, Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Report of the Secretary-General, 24 June 2020, [url](#), para. 23; UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Nigeria, March 2021, [url](#), pp. 6, 19, 21. See also [section 1.5](#).



evening, when soldiers withdraw back to these camps, ISWA appears to have close to free rein in the countryside and smaller towns.’¹⁰⁸⁸

The Borno state governor similarly criticised this military strategy of ‘super camps’: ‘The strategy succeeded in reducing military fatalities but the side-effect of that is that the Nigerian military has effectively surrendered control of rural Nigeria to Boko Haram fighters. You have Boko Haram ruling northeastern Nigeria and criminal gangs ruling the rural communities of northwestern Nigeria.’¹⁰⁸⁹

In the fight against the insurgents, the military collaborate with local hunters¹⁰⁹⁰ and Civilian JTF. However, these vigilantes were also criticised for abusive behaviour towards women and girls in IDP camps.¹⁰⁹¹

The Nigerian army has set up a human rights desk where civilians could launch their complaints of human rights violations. The desk coordinates the investigation of complaints with the National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria (NHRC) and the Nigerian Bar Association. In addition, a court martial was set up in Maiduguri, which has convicted soldiers for ‘rape, murder, and abduction of civilians’. However, ‘many credible accusations of abuses remained uninvestigated’, according to USDOS.¹⁰⁹²

The Nigerian security forces announced that it had made ‘tremendous progress resulting in the liberation of many local government areas that were hitherto occupied by the Boko Haram/Islamic State West African Province (BH/ISWAP) terrorists’.¹⁰⁹³ In Borno, around 17 January 2021, the towns of Mongono and Marte near the remote Sambisa forest were retaken from Boko Haram.¹⁰⁹⁴

On 3 January 2021, a military offensive called Operation Tura Takai Bango was launched by Nigerian military forces with the aim ‘to wipe out remnants of the Boko Haram and Islamic States of West Africa (ISWAP) terrorists and other criminal groups in the North East.’ (see also [1.5.1 North East Region](#)).¹⁰⁹⁵ ISWAP was reportedly ‘threatening to cut Maiduguri off from the rest of Borno through roadway ambushes. However, obstructing the Damatru-Maiduguri roadway was additionally strategic for ISWAP because it would essentially cut Borno itself off from the rest of Nigeria.’¹⁰⁹⁶

The operation focused on ISWAP hideouts in the Alagarno forest (from Damboa in southwest Borno to Goniri in eastern Yobe) and Boko Haram/JASDJ hideouts in Sambisa forest, near Borno’s border with Cameroon. The Jamestown analyst Jacob Zenn reported that ISWAP in March 2021 had launched counter-attacks on the army around Alagarno forest and killed soldiers, captured military vehicles and weapons. The result was, according to Zenn, that ‘Operation Tura Takai Bango’s incursion has been mostly halted and resulted in at least a stalemate.’¹⁰⁹⁷

2.10.3.4 Road security

According to UN OCHA, in 2020 the number of security incidents has increased on many roads in Borno state.¹⁰⁹⁸ In January 2020, Boko Haram has been launching attacks on Kano-Maiduguri highway, the ‘only remaining safe route’ connecting Borno state with Damaturu, Yobe’s capital, thus threatening to

¹⁰⁸⁸ CFR, Military Failures Mount in Borno Against Boko Haram, 13 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸⁹ Al Jazeera, Tens of civilians’ killed in gruesome Nigeria massacre, UN says, 29 November 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹⁰ Premium Times, Borno govt in fresh recruitment of traditional hunters to help fight Boko Haram, 8 October 2019, [url](#); CFR, Borno Governor Launches State-Level Initiatives to Fight Boko Haram, 11 October 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹¹ CIVIC, Nigerian Community Militias: Toward A Solution, November 2020, [url](#), p.5

¹⁰⁹² US, USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Nigeria, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹³ Sun (The), Insurgency: Operation Tura Takai Bango to wipe out remnant of terrorists, 15 January 2021, [url](#)

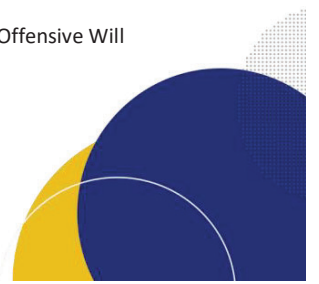
¹⁰⁹⁴ The National (Nigeria), Nigerian army makes fragile gains against Boko Haram, 25 January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹⁵ Sun (The), Insurgency: Operation Tura Takai Bango to wipe out remnant of terrorists, 15 January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹⁶ Jamestown Foundation, Target Maiduguri: How Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP)’s Ramadan Offensive Will Counter Operation Tura Takai Bango, 9 April 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹⁷ Jamestown Foundation, Target Maiduguri: How Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP)’s Ramadan Offensive Will Counter Operation Tura Takai Bango, 9 April 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹⁸ UN OCHA, Nigeria, Situation Report, Last updated: 4 February 2021, [url](#)



cut off Borno from the rest of Nigeria. Travellers were taking large detours via Yobe, Bauchi and Gombe states to travel from the capital to the southern part of Borno state.¹⁰⁹⁹

In 2020, several road attacks or ambushes followed by abductions of civilians were reported. A UNHCR report on May -June 2020 noted the following road attacks:

‘In Borno State, ISWAP elements in the Northern axis intensified its attacks on civilian population and on military targets using various tactics such as mounting of illegal check points along Monguno-Maiduguri Road, [...], abductions and planting of IEDs on the main supply routes linking Mungono and Maiduguri. JAS elements in the Southernmost part of the State [...] launched attacks on motorists on the Maiduguri-Damboia road, with two trucks conveying humanitarian aid caught in the middle, and Maiduguri-Damaturu main supply routes.’¹¹⁰⁰

On 18 December 2020, about 35 passengers were kidnapped by ISWAP militants, dressed in military uniforms, at a fake checkpoint on Kano-Maiduguri road in Garin Kuturu village outside Jakana, 25 kilometres from Maiduguri.¹¹⁰¹ More than 50 of similar attacks have taken place on this highway in 2020, with many travellers killed or abducted. According to the media platform HumAngle:

‘It has become a new norm for travellers to expect an attack by the insurgents who usually dress in full military attire and drive in vehicles painted with colours associated with the military. They no longer ambush but mount roadblocks to carry out stop-and-check operations as though they were government security personnel. Many survivors of such illegal roadblocks have given accounts of how the insurgents watch out for only security personnel, humanitarian workers, or non-Muslims.’¹¹⁰²

By the end of 2020, UNHCR reported that, ‘with the end of the rainy season and relative improvement of road conditions’, humanitarian aid deliveries increased. However, in northern Borno, ‘new waves of NSAG [non-state armed groups] attacks and clashes with government forces along key supply routes’ occurred, challenging aid deliveries to places such as Mobbar, Ngala and Monguno LGAs.¹¹⁰³ In the months of November and December 2020, 8 abductions were recorded by ACLED, in 4 of which humanitarian workers from (I)NGOs were victims.¹¹⁰⁴

2.10.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

According to the Landmine Monitor 2020, ‘since 2017, there have been reports of incidents involving both civilian and military casualties from landmines and a range of other locally produced explosive devices planted by Boko Haram in the northeast of the country, particularly in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states.’¹¹⁰⁵

The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) reported that in the three states Adamawa, Borno and Yobe (BAY), in the first nine months of 2020 ‘334 civilian and non-civilian fatalities and casualties have been recorded’ due to explosive devices.¹¹⁰⁶

In October and November 2020, 34 and 41 incidents with explosive hazards respectively were recorded, injuring 40 people, and killing at least three people. Mine Action activities were supposed

¹⁰⁹⁹ Premium Times, SPECIAL REPORT: Increasing Boko Haram attacks on highways threaten to cut Borno off from Nigeria, 23 January 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁰⁰ UNHCR Nigeria: UNHCR Nigeria_Bi Monthly Protection Monitoring Report May -June 2020, 7 August 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁰¹ Defense Post (The), Nigeria Jihadists Kill Five Soldiers, Kidnap Dozens of Civilians, 21 December 2020, [url](#)

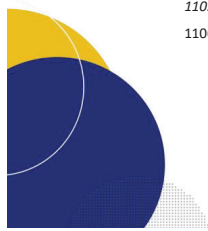
¹¹⁰² HumAngle, Maiduguri: A City Under Siege – Special Report, 26 December 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁰³ UN OCHA, Nigeria, Situation Report, Last updated: 4 February 2021, [url](#); see also ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2017 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁰⁴ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2017 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); UN OCHA, Nigeria, Situation Report, Last updated: 4 February 2021, [url](#)

¹¹⁰⁵ ICBL-CMC, Landmine monitor 2020, November 2020, [url](#), p. 29

¹¹⁰⁶ UNMAS, Nigeria n.d., [url](#)



to step up in view of Borno state government plans to relocate or resettle IDPs within their original LGA. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, these activities and risk awareness training have received lower priority, according to UN OCHA.¹¹⁰⁷

Borno's capital Maiduguri had been attacked by ISWAP on 26 January 2021, cutting off electricity to the city which was only two months later restored. AFP noted that ISWAP and Boko Haram 'often target infrastructure, blowing up telecom and power lines in the northeast'.¹¹⁰⁸

Following the attacks in April 2021 on UN facilities in Damasak (see [2.10.3.2](#)), aid operations were temporarily suspended in the area.¹¹⁰⁹

No information was found on major damage in infrastructure in Borno state.

2.10.3.6 Displacement and return

Throughout the North-East Region, an increase by less than 1 % in the number of IDPs was noted by IOM in November 2020, compared to the previous round (September 2020). The reasons for displacement were similar to those in earlier DTM assessments: the ongoing conflict in the region, (92 % of IDPs), followed by communal clashes (7 %) and natural disasters (1 % of the cases).¹¹¹⁰

IDPs

Borno is the most conflict-affected state in the North-East Region and has the highest number of IDPs 1 603 044, less than 1 % higher than the previous assessment (see [Table 12](#) in Section [2.8.3.6](#)).¹¹¹¹ This amounts to 75 % of all IDPs in North-East Nigeria. According to IOM, the fact that the number of IDPs in Borno has remained relatively at the same high level as before, could be an indicator of continued insecurity and mobility in the region. This is even more notable as Borno's most populous LGAs of Guzamala, Kukawa and Nganzai were not accessible to IOM assessment due to increased hostilities in these districts.¹¹¹²

Returnees

The total number of returnees to Borno state by November 2020 was 724 263¹¹¹³ or 42 % of the total number of returnees in the states Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY). This is the second largest caseload of returnees (after Adamawa) in North-East Nigeria (see [Table 13](#) in Section [2.8.3.6](#)).¹¹¹⁴ When comparing with the assessments in the previous round, Borno was the only state where the numbers of returnees decreased (2 191 individuals or less than 1 %). This decrease can be mainly assigned to a considerable decrease in the presence of returnees in Ngala LGA.¹¹¹⁵

In the period 1 January 2019 to 30 September 2020, 35 692 refugees, originating from Borno state (and very few from Yobe state) who had fled to Cameroon, Chad, Niger, or Mali, spontaneously returned to Nigeria. Most of them originated from Gwozo, Ngala, Mobbar, Abadam, and Bama LGAs in Borno state.¹¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰⁷ UN OCHA, Nigeria, Situation Report, Last updated: 4 February 2021, [url](#)

¹¹⁰⁸ AFP, Electricity restored in Nigerian city two months after jihadist attack, 24 March 2021, available at: [url](#)

¹¹⁰⁹ Al Jazeera, Tens of thousands flee attacks on northeast Nigerian town: UN, 16 April 2021, [url](#)

¹¹¹⁰ IOM Nigeria, DTM North East Nigeria, Displacement Report 35, 11 March 2021, [url](#), p. 3

¹¹¹¹ IOM Nigeria, DTM North East Nigeria, Displacement Report 35, 11 March 2021, [url](#), pp. 3, 6; IOM-DTM, Nigeria, Baseline Dashboard - North East Round 35 (December 2020), 11 March 2021, [url](#)

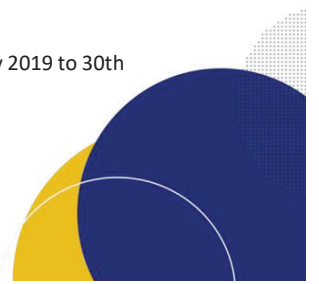
¹¹¹² IOM Nigeria, DTM North East Nigeria, Displacement Report 35, 11 March 2021, [url](#), pp. 3, 6

¹¹¹³ IOM-DTM, Nigeria, Baseline Dashboard - North East Round 35 (December 2020), 11 March 2021, [url](#)

¹¹¹⁴ IOM Nigeria, DTM North East Nigeria, Displacement Report 35, 11 March 2021, [url](#), p. 16

¹¹¹⁵ IOM Nigeria, DTM North East Nigeria, Displacement Report 35, 11 March 2021, [url](#), p. 16

¹¹¹⁶ UNHCR, Nigeria: UNHCR Nigerian Spontaneous Refugee Returnees Situation Dashboard, From 01st January 2019 to 30th September 2020, 12 October 2020, [url](#)



In August 2020, the Borno state governor announced plans to return IDPs and refugees to their ancestral homes, where 'government will ensure that those communities are secured and security of lives and property takes preeminence in these communities.' This would refer to 1.86 million IDPs and refugees who fled the state in the past five years.¹¹¹⁷

On 1 December 2020, Borno state returned 3 000 IDPs to their homes and deserted farms in Marte LGA, six years after they had fled the area due to Boko Haram violence. This occurred in the same weekend that an attack on Koshobe village killed dozens of farm workers.¹¹¹⁸ UN OCHA commented on this occasion: 'The Borno State Government's plan to return IDPs to some LGAs witnessing escalating clashes and attacks raised concerns of safety and continued access of IDPs to critical assistance and services. Many of the areas listed for IDP relocation are still inaccessible to aid agencies due to ongoing insecurity.'¹¹¹⁹

2.11 Gombe state

2.11.1 General description of the state

Gombe state shares boundaries with the states of Borno, Taraba, Adamawa and Bauchi. The state's capital is Gombe.¹¹²⁰

Gombe state is composed of the following 11 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Akko, Balanga, Billiri, Dukku, Funakaye, Gombe, Kaltungo, Kwami, Nafada, Shongom and Yamaltu Deba.¹¹²¹

In the 2006 census, the population of Gombe state was 2 365 040. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 3 256 962 in 2016.¹¹²²

There are different ethnic groups in Gombe state, including the Tangale, Terawa, Waja, Kumo, Fulani, Kanuri, Bolewa, Jukun, Pero/Shonge, Tula, Cham, Lunguda, Dadiya, Banbuka, Hausa and Kamo/Awak.¹¹²³

Approximately 80 % of the state's population is involved in agriculture.¹¹²⁴

2.11.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.11.2.1 Background of the conflict

Although Gombe had experienced several Boko Harm attacks in the past (in particular 2014-2015), the state did not experience the 'levels of violent extremism' noted in other North-East Region states, as an ISS report noted.¹¹²⁵ In 2017-2018, like in the period 2019-2020, very few violent incidents were registered by ACLED.¹¹²⁶

¹¹¹⁷ Daily Post, Boko Haram: Borno to return 1.8 million IDPs, refugees to 19 communities, 4 August 2020, [url](#)

¹¹¹⁸ EWN, In Nigeria, mass return of displaced persons from Boko Haram despite the weekend killings, 1 December 2020, [url](#)

¹¹¹⁹ UN OCHA, Nigeria, Situation Report, Last updated: 4 February 2021, [url](#)

¹¹²⁰ Nigeria, Gombe State, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹²¹ Nigeria, Gombe State, n.d., [url](#)

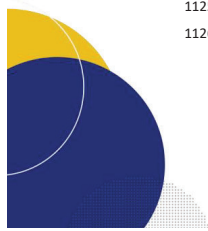
¹¹²² Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 2

¹¹²³ Nigeria, Gombe State, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹²⁴ Nigeria, Gombe State, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹²⁵ ISS, New insights into how communities resist Boko Haram, 15 July 2020, [url](#)

¹¹²⁶ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2017 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



2.11.2.2 Actors

Actors in the few violent incidents recorded by ACLED in Gombe are ISWAP and local militia (Falgori Militia), and national and state security forces.¹¹²⁷

2.11.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

2.11.3.1 Number of security incidents

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 3 security incidents (1 battle, 1 case of violence against civilians, 1 incident of riots) in Gombe state, resulting in 3 deaths. The security incidents took all place in Gombe LGA. The incident of violence against civilians was an attack.¹¹²⁸

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period, as well as the highest number of incidents by LGA is shown in Figure 30 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 4 protests were reported during the reference period.¹¹²⁹

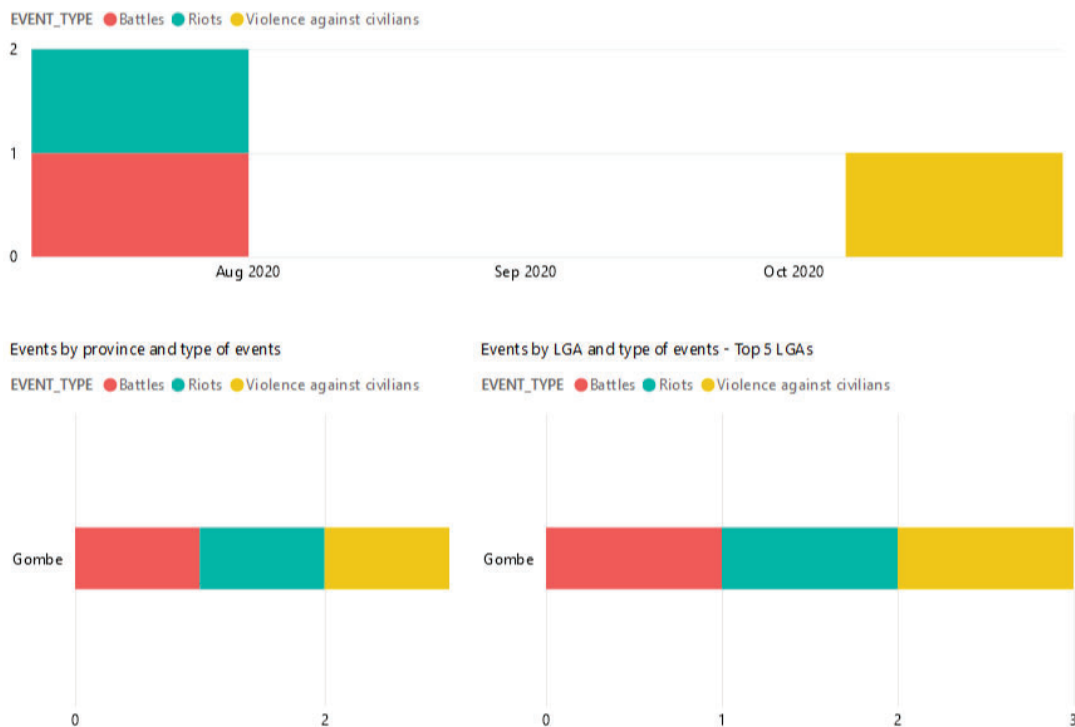


Figure 20 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Gombe state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹¹³⁰

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Gombe state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

¹¹²⁷ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹¹²⁸ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹¹²⁹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹¹³⁰ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



Gombe state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	1	3
Explosions/remote violence		
Violence against civilians	1	0
Riots	1	0
Total	3	3

Table 16 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹¹³¹

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 3 security incidents (2 battles, 1 incident of riots) in Gombe state, resulting in 17 deaths.¹¹³²

2.11.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 24 July 2020, 'ISWAP claimed to have clashed with a local militia in Falgori village in Gombe state. 3 people were killed', according to ACLED (based on undisclosed Twitter sources).¹¹³³

On 12 April 2021, communal clashes between militias from the Waja and Lunguda ethnic groups clashed in several Lunguda communities in Balanga LGA, along the border with Adamawa state where similar clashes had taken place. Fifteen people were killed and several houses were destroyed.¹¹³⁴

2.11.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

An ISS report noted that Bauchi and Gombe did not experience the 'levels of violent extremism' that other states had. Crucial factors contributing to limiting spread of extremism were: specific geographic and ethnic factors, but also a strong community-oriented traditional leadership and involvement of religious leaders and organisations who can 'deconstruct a terror group's ideology. Also, vigilante groups collaborating with the police and sharing information were essential.¹¹³⁵

The ISS report mentioned collaboration between police and vigilante groups in Gombe state such as Yan Banga was effective in resisting Boko Haram, especially at the height of Boko Haram attacks in 2014-2015. The vigilante groups helped identify Boko Haram members; other vigilante groups such as the hunter's group *Yan Baka* defended the residents against attacks from insurgents. Community members reported suspicious persons, shared information and collaborated with security agencies.¹¹³⁶

2.11.3.4 Road security

No information was found on road security in Gombe state.

2.11.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on major damage in infrastructure or explosive remnants of war in Gombe state.

¹¹³¹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

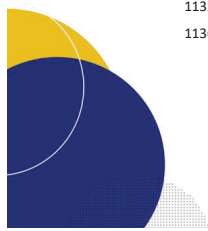
¹¹³² EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

¹¹³³ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹¹³⁴ Daily Post, Communal Clashes: 18 persons allegedly killed in Gombe, Adamawa States, 15 April 2021, [url](#)

¹¹³⁵ ISS, New insights into how communities resist Boko Haram, 15 July 2020, [url](#)

¹¹³⁶ ISS, New insights into how communities resist Boko Haram, 15 July 2020, [url](#)



2.11.3.6 Displacement and return

IDPs

The total number of IDPs for Gombe by November 2020 was 39 532, an increase of 266 individuals (1 %) compared to Round 34 (see [Table 12](#) in Section [2.8.3.6](#)). Gombe had the lowest number of IDPs in the North-East Region.¹¹³⁷

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Gombe state.

2.12 Taraba state

2.12.1 General description of the state

Taraba state shares an international border with the Republic of Cameroon and internal borders with the states Adamawa, Gombe, Bauchi, Plateau, Nasarawa and Benue.¹¹³⁸ The state's capital is Jalingo.¹¹³⁹

The state is composed of the following 16 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Ardo Kola, Bali, Donga, Gashaka, Gassol, Ibi, Jalingo, KarimLamido, Kurmi, Lau, Sardauna, Takum, Ussa, Wukari, Yorro and Zing.¹¹⁴⁰

In the 2006 census, the population of Taraba state was 2 294 800. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 3 066 834 in 2016.¹¹⁴¹

The ethnic groups in Taraba state include: the Fulani, Mumuye, Jukun, Jenjo, Kuteb, Chamba and Mambilla, which constitute some of the state's major ethnic groups. There are some smaller ethnic groups, including the Bollere, Kode and Lo.¹¹⁴² Some of the most widely spoken languages in the state are the Fulfulde, Hausa, Mumuye and Jukunare.¹¹⁴³

Agriculture constitutes the main occupation of the state's people.¹¹⁴⁴

2.12.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.12.2.1 Background of the conflict

Taraba state has been the arena of clashes over ownership of land between ethnic groups, in particular the Tiv and the Ichen/Jukun since the 1990s, without the authorities being able to end the conflict, according to AI.¹¹⁴⁵ Both the Tiv and the Jukun are predominantly farmers. At the background lie the poor economic conditions in the area and a longstanding conflict over 'land, traditional leadership, political authority and fears of domination or marginalisation' in combination with a rapid population

¹¹³⁷ IOM Nigeria, DTM North East Nigeria, Displacement Report 35, 11 March 2021, [url](#), p. 6

¹¹³⁸ UN, Nigeria, August 2014, [url](#)

¹¹³⁹ Nigeria, Taraba State, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁴⁰ Nigeria, Taraba State, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁴¹ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 3

¹¹⁴² Nigeria, Taraba State, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁴³ Nigeria, Taraba State, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁴⁴ Nigeria, Taraba State, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁴⁵ AI, Nigeria: Government failings leave rural communities at the mercy of gunmen, 24 August 2020, [url](#)



growth, especially amongst the Tiv. This situation 'has made the colonization of land the most pressing demand of the Tiv people', leading to clashes with neighbouring land-using groups.¹¹⁴⁶

2.12.2.2 Actors

The main actors in Taraba violence are ethnic militias from Tiv and Ichen/Jukun and from Shomo and Jole communities on the one hand, and state security agencies (police, army) on the other hand.¹¹⁴⁷

2.12.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

In 2020, Taraba state was the arena of ethnic violence between Tiv and Jukun communities and herder-farmer violence (see section [Background of the conflict](#)).¹¹⁴⁸ There were also clashes between the Tiv and the Ichen (in May 2020) and between the Shomo and Jole ethnic groups (in April 2020).¹¹⁴⁹

2.12.3.1 Number of security incidents

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 58 security incidents (19 battles, 35 cases of violence against civilians, 4 incidents of riots) in Taraba state, resulting in 131 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Donga LGA, followed by Wukari, Bali, and Gassol LGAs. Of the 35 incidents of violence against civilians, 30 were attacks and 5 abductions.¹¹⁵⁰

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period, as well as the highest number of incidents by LGA is shown in Figure 32 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 2 protests were reported during the reference period.¹¹⁵¹

¹¹⁴⁶ Garba, M.J. et al., Ethnic Conflicts and Development in North Eastern Nigeria: A Case of Taraba State, January 2017, [url](#)

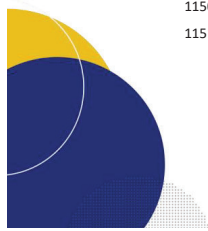
¹¹⁴⁷ International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch - Nigeria [database], June 2020, [url](#); ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁴⁸ International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch - Nigeria [database], June 2020, [url](#); AI, Nigeria: Government failings leave rural communities at the mercy of gunmen, 24 August 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁴⁹ International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch - Nigeria [database], January-December 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁵⁰ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁵¹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



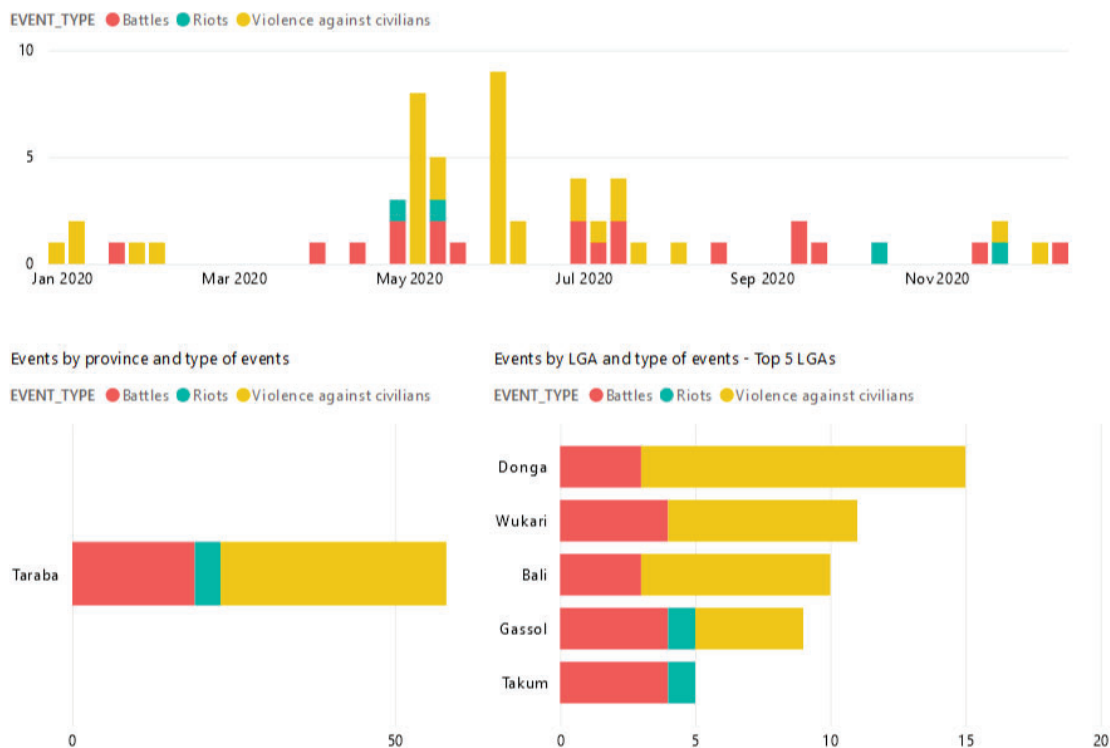


Figure 21 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Taraba state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹¹⁵²

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Taraba state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Taraba state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	19	60
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	35	64
Riots	4	7
Total	58	131

Table 17 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹¹⁵³

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 19 security incidents (6 battles, 13 cases of violence against civilians) in Taraba state, resulting in 25 deaths.¹¹⁵⁴

2.12.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

According to AI, 'at least 77 people have been killed since January 2020 in the ongoing communal clashes between the Jukun and Tiv ethnic groups in Taraba state.'¹¹⁵⁵

¹¹⁵² EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁵³ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁵⁴ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

¹¹⁵⁵ AI, Nigeria: Government failings leave rural communities at the mercy of gunmen, 24 August 2020, [url](#)

The incident with the highest number of fatalities recorded by ACLED (between 15 and 24) was a battle between Shomo and Jole ethnic groups on 12 April 2020, who clashed over the ownership of a fishpond at Shomo Sarki (Lau LGA), a long-standing dispute. Shomo Sarki village was completely burnt down.¹¹⁵⁶ Police confirmed 25 deaths and several injured, and about 100 houses burnt.¹¹⁵⁷

On or around 5 May 2020, Tiv militias attacked the Ichen towns of Ananum, Gidan Adamu, Gankoi Yeba, Zambana, Kwossa and Dadin Kowa (Donga LGA) and Suntai (Bali LGA), as well as Sanso and Baka Koshi (Donga LGA). Militiamen killed 8-10 residents across the villages and burnt down houses. The attacks were reportedly related to the ongoing tense relationship between Tiv and Ichen communities.¹¹⁵⁸ The Ichen leader said 20 people had been killed and accused the Tiv of armed robbery and kidnapping in southern Taraba. The Tiv leader dismissed all accusations and said Ichen militia killed 80 Tiv in Maraban Donga and Anauno and other Tiv villages.¹¹⁵⁹

Clashed between Ichen and Tiv militias continued on 11 May 2020 in Suntai (Bali LGA), claiming eight lives.¹¹⁶⁰ The Nation reported that 'Over 100 persons were reportedly feared killed in the violence between the Tiv and Ichen ethnic groups of Donga local government area of the state last week.'¹¹⁶¹

On 4 June 2020, unidentified gunmen attacked the villages of Tunga (Bali LGA), and Utsua-Daa on the 5 June. In total 11 people were killed and many injured, and houses burnt. Both villages are located along the Bali-Marararba road.¹¹⁶² Around 6 June 2020, unidentified gunmen attacked Wurbo and Bagoni communities (Bali LGA) and killed 5 residents in total, including the village head and imam of Bagoni.¹¹⁶³ Also Maihule and Maigoge communities (Bali LGA) as well as Ananum and Akate (Donga LGA) were attacked and in total six persons killed.¹¹⁶⁴ The attacks were reportedly related to the ongoing Tiv-Jukun/Ichen conflict in the area.¹¹⁶⁵ Local councils deployed more civil defence personnel and asked for more security officers.¹¹⁶⁶

On 2 July 2020, unidentified gunmen attacked the Tiv community of Tse Juku, Donga LGA, and killed 4 residents.¹¹⁶⁷

On 28 November 2020, suspected Jukun Militia attacked Tor lorshaegh village (Wukuri LGA), killing at least four persons who had just returned to their community after the State Governor told them security had been restored and the residents would be protected by state agencies. However, reportedly during the attack no security agencies were present.¹¹⁶⁸

¹¹⁵⁶ Daily Trust, Clash between Shomo, Jole tribes claims lives in Taraba, 12 April 2020, [url](#); ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁵⁷ This Day, Buhari Condemns Killing of 25 People in Taraba Communal Clash, 15 April 2020, [url](#); International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch - Nigeria [database], April 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁵⁸ Daily Trust, 20 killed, 9 towns destroyed in Taraba crisis, 7 May 2020, [url](#); Sun (The), 8 killed as armed men attack Taraba community, 5 May 2020, [url](#); Punch, 43 killed as gunmen, residents clash in Benue, Taraba, Zamfara, Cross River, 6 June 2020, [url](#); International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch - Nigeria [database], May 2020, [url](#); ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁵⁹ Daily Trust, 20 killed, 9 towns destroyed in Taraba crisis, 7 May 2020, [url](#); Guardian (The), Ichen, Tiv trade blame over Taraba killings, destruction, 8 May 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁶⁰ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Nation (The), Death tolls rise in Taraba multi-ethnic violence, 11 May 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁶¹ Nation (The), Death tolls rise in Taraba multi-ethnic violence, 11 May 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁶² Business Day, 11 kill, houses burnt as Taraba attacks escalate, 5 June 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁶³ Daily Trust, Taraba crisis: Village head, Imam 3 others killed in midnight attack, 6 June 2020, [url](#); ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

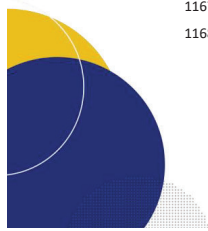
¹¹⁶⁴ Punch, Death toll in Taraba attack rises to 17, 7 June 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁶⁵ Daily Trust, Taraba crisis: Village head, Imam 3 others killed in midnight attack, 6 June 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Nigeria: Taraba Massacre, Arson - 'Friends Turned Their Guns On us, Wiped Out Our Kinsmen', 14 June 2020, [url](#); Nation (The), Jukun/Tiv crisis: Fear in Taraba as death toll hits 17, 7 June 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁶⁶ Nation (The), Jukun/Tiv crisis: Fear in Taraba as death toll hits 17, 7 June 2020, [url](#); Punch, Death toll in Taraba attack rises to 17, 7 June 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁶⁷ Guardian (The), How family of 4 were killed by militias on the wake of Taraba council poll, 3 July 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁶⁸ Sahara Reporters, Residents Flee As Gunmen Invade Taraba Community, Kill Four, 1 December 2020, [url](#)



2.12.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

According to a national newspaper, 'widespread deployment of soldiers for internal security duties has not necessarily reduced the security challenge in our country. Instead, soldiers have become increasingly mired in the vices they were meant to curb. On its part, the police have been weakened and demoralised.' An example was given of an incident in August 2019, when a special police convoy, while arresting and transporting a notorious kidnap chief to Jalingo, was heavily bombed by army soldiers, who killed three police officers and a civilian, injured others, and freed the suspect. The soldiers' version was that they had received a distress call to intervene in an alleged kidnapping. However, despite the police identified themselves being on legitimate duty, they were shot. This has led to accusations of the soldiers colluding with the suspect and raised nation-wide worry about security challenges.¹¹⁶⁹

In view of the ongoing attacks, killings and destruction of properties in early June 2020, the state's governor has announced measures to increase security in Taraba state, especially in communities in south and central Taraba targeted by militias. He ordered the security agencies to 'beef up' security and 'go after' militia members responsible for the recent attacks such as those in Maigoge and Tunga communities, Bali LGA.¹¹⁷⁰

2.12.3.4 Road security

In May 2020, unidentified gunmen ambushed a van on the Wukari-Rafin Kada road (Wukari LGA) and killed 8 (reportedly Fulani) travellers. Local leaders of the two ethnic groups Tiv and Jukun blame each other for the act. Two Jukun travellers were reportedly also killed in the attack.¹¹⁷¹

The State Governor said the high level of insecurity in the area had hindered road construction works on the 30-kilometre road from Wukari to Tsokundi. He announced the deployment of military and police to construction sites in the southern part of the state to provide security.¹¹⁷² Reports show that the bad state of roads enable kidnappers and armed robbers to attack.¹¹⁷³

Jalingo road in Taraba state was mentioned by Nigerian drivers in December 2020 as one of the most insecure and dangerous roads in Nigeria.¹¹⁷⁴ This road, connecting Taraba state with Adamawa state, is the arena of numerous attacks, kidnaps and killings.¹¹⁷⁵

2.12.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

The long-standing ethnic conflicts have led to the destruction of properties and public buildings such as schools and police stations.¹¹⁷⁶ The conflict between the Tiv and the Ichen has reportedly led to destruction of dozens of villages and properties worth millions of naira.¹¹⁷⁷

No information was found on explosive remnants of war in Taraba state.

2.12.3.6 Displacement and return

Taraba hosts 14 501 Cameroonian refugees.¹¹⁷⁸

¹¹⁶⁹ This Day, The Tragedy in Taraba And National Security, 11 August 2019, [url](#)

¹¹⁷⁰ Guardian (The), Ishaku wants tighter security in Taraba communities, 8 June 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁷¹ Daily Trust, Tiv/ Jukun trades blame over killing of 8 Fulani in Wukari, 19 May 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁷² Guardian (The), Insecurity: Security operatives deployed to construction sites in Taraba, 25 September 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁷³ Sahara Reporters, Motorists List Nigeria's Most Dangerous Roads, 15 December 2020, [url](#)

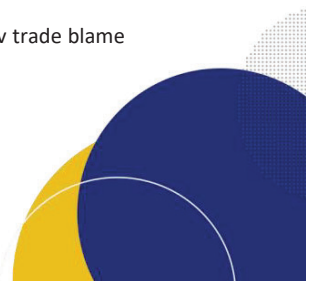
¹¹⁷⁴ Sahara Reporters, Motorists List Nigeria's Most Dangerous Roads, 15 December 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁷⁵ Daily Trust, Deaths on the Numan-Jalingo highway, 29 December 2018, [url](#); Daily Post, Lawmaker cries out over killings along Numan-Jalingo road, 3 November 2019, [url](#)

¹¹⁷⁶ Garba, M.J. et al., Ethnic Conflicts and Development in North Eastern Nigeria, January 2017, [url](#)

¹¹⁷⁷ Nation (The), Death tolls rise in Taraba multi-ethnic violence, 11 May 2020, [url](#); Guardian (The), Ichen, Tiv trade blame over Taraba killings, destruction, 8 May 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁷⁸ UNHCR Nigeria: Population Statistics January 2021, 10 February 2021, [url](#)



IDPs

The total number of IDPs for Taraba by November 2020 was 88 594. Taraba was the only state in this region where IDP number decreased, by 2 931 individuals (13 %) compared to Round 34 (see [Table 12](#) in Section [2.8.3.6](#)). According to IOM, this was the result of 'IDPs moving back to their locations of origin for farming activities'. Taraba had the third lowest number of IDPs in the North-East Region.¹¹⁷⁹

Taraba state showed the highest number of displacements due to communal clashes. According to IOM, 'these [clashes] are often triggered by land and border issues during the farming seasons.'¹¹⁸⁰

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Taraba state.

2.13 Yobe state

2.13.1 General description of the state

Yobe state shares an international border with the Republic of Niger to the north. It also shares borders with the states of Jigawa and Bauchi to the west, Borno to the east and Gombe and Borno to the south. The state's capital is Damaturu.¹¹⁸¹

The state is composed of the following 17 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Bursari, Damaturu, Geidam, Bade, Gujba, Gulani, Fika, Fune, Jakusko, Karasuwa, Machina, Nangere, Nguru, Potiskum, Tarmuwa, Yunusari and Yusufari.¹¹⁸²

In the 2006 census, the population of Yobe state was 2 321 339. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 3 294 137 in 2016.¹¹⁸³

The main ethnic groups in Yobe state include the Kanuri, Fulani, Kare-Kare, Bolewa, Ngizim, Bade, Hausa, Ngamo and Shuwa.¹¹⁸⁴

Yobe is an agricultural state, with rich fishing grounds and mineral deposits of gypsum, kaolin and quartz.¹¹⁸⁵

2.13.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.13.2.1 Background of the conflict

Yobe state is one of the 'worst affected states in northeastern Nigeria' by the insurgency, together with Adamawa and Borno.¹¹⁸⁶ 99 % of all displacements in the state was due to the ongoing violence.¹¹⁸⁷ In addition, increasing tension between herders and farmers flared up in 2020 with several violent incidents.¹¹⁸⁸

¹¹⁷⁹ IOM Nigeria, DTM North East Nigeria, Displacement Report 35, 11 March 2021, [url](#), p. 6

¹¹⁸⁰ IOM Nigeria, DTM North East Nigeria, Displacement Report 35, 11 March 2021, [url](#) p. 8

¹¹⁸¹ Nigeria, Yobe State, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁸² Nigeria, Yobe State, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁸³ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url, p. 3](#)

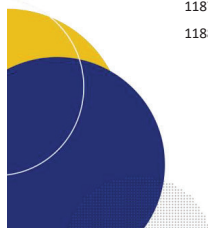
¹¹⁸⁴ Nigeria, Yobe State, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁸⁵ Nigeria, Yobe State, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁸⁶ Daniel Egjigba Agbiboa, Vigilante youths and counterinsurgency in Northeastern Nigeria, 2 November 2020, [url](#), p. 360

¹¹⁸⁷ IOM Nigeria, DTM North East Nigeria, Displacement Report 35, 11 March 2021, [url](#), pp. 6, 18

¹¹⁸⁸ Daily Trust, Tension in Yobe over rising farmers, herders clashes, 23 December 2020, [url](#)



2.13.2.2 Actors

In Yobe state, Boko Haram and/or its splinter group ISWAP are the main actors of violence,¹¹⁸⁹ despite claims from the Nigeria Army that the state is free of terrorists'. In August 2020, ISWAP dropped leaflets in Buni Gari region that showed its presence in Yobe state and threatened to attack security officials.¹¹⁹⁰ CFR noted in June 2020 that 'ISWA has some territorial control in Borno and Yobe states and does tax residents.' The source also noted that ISWA/ISWAP seems to shift its focus towards targeting unarmed civilians rather than governmental, military, and INGO targets, becoming a deadlier faction than the original Boko Haram/JAS.¹¹⁹¹

Other actors who have increasingly become violent in 2020 are herders and farmers having conflicts over access and ownership of land and resources. In December 2020 a mass influx of herders from elsewhere was witnessed, 'perhaps due to the banditry in the northwest'.¹¹⁹²

2.13.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

Violent incidents occurred in Yobe state mainly in Geidam and Gujba LGAs, at the border with Borno state. UN OCHA characterised the security situation in these LGAs in the period April to June 2020 as 'unpredictable and volatile' and pointed at 'a significant increase in the threats of attacks on both civilian and military convoys, abduction/kidnapping (at illegal vehicle checkpoints), and IEDs along these routes'.¹¹⁹³

Clashes between herders and farmers were rare until in December 2020 when several fights resulting in deaths and injuries were reported.¹¹⁹⁴

By December 2020, UNHCR concluded: 'In Yobe state, the ongoing campaign of terror by NSAG [Non-State Armed Groups] mostly around Gujba, Geidam and Gulani axis continued to cause displacement, tensions between herders and farmers and increasingly threatened the fragile social coexistence in the return communities of Goniri, Gotala Gotumba and Kukareta.'¹¹⁹⁵

2.13.3.1 Number of security incidents

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 33 security incidents (21 battles, 5 incidents of remote violence/explosions, 7 cases of violence against civilians) in Yobe state, resulting in 211 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Gujba LGA (11 incidents with 134 deaths), followed by Geidam (7 incidents with 24 deaths) and Damaturu (5 incidents, 8 deaths) LGAs. Of the 7 incidents of violence against civilians, 5 were attacks and 2 abductions.¹¹⁹⁶

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period, as well as the highest number of incidents by LGA is shown in Figure 34 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 3 protests were reported during the reference period.¹¹⁹⁷

¹¹⁸⁹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁹⁰ Guardian (The), ISWAP drops leaflets in Yobe, threatens "war" against government, officials, 21 August 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁹¹ CFR, ISWA's Recent Attacks Could Signal a New, Deadlier Approach in Nigeria, 19 June 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁹² Daily Trust, Tension in Yobe over rising farmers, herders clashes, 23 December 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁹³ UN OCHA, Nigeria, Yobe State Humanitarian Situation Analysis (April to June 2020), 11 Aug 2020, [url](#), p. 2

¹¹⁹⁴ Daily Trust, Tension in Yobe over rising farmers, herders clashes, 23 December 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁹⁵ UNHCR, UNHCR Nigeria: North-East Operational Update December 2020, 24 February 2021, [url](#), p. 1

¹¹⁹⁶ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁹⁷ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



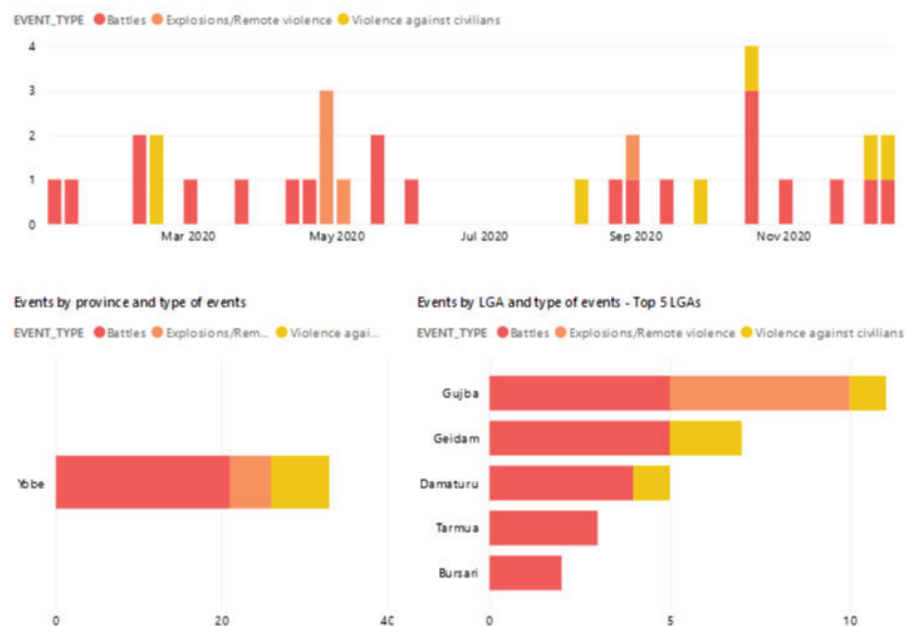


Figure 22 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Yobe state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹¹⁹⁸

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Yobe state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Yobe state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	21	186
Explosions/remote violence	5	20
Violence against civilians	7	5
Riots	0	0
Total	33	211

Table 18 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹¹⁹⁹

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 29 security incidents (20 battles, 6 incidents of remote violence/explosions, 3 cases of violence against civilians) in Yobe state, resulting in 179 deaths.¹²⁰⁰

2.13.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

The incidents with the largest number of fatalities were battles between Boko Haram/ISWAP and the Nigerian security forces, sometimes with the Civilian Joint Task Force. Fatalities were either insurgents or security officers.¹²⁰¹

¹¹⁹⁸ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁹⁹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹²⁰⁰ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

¹²⁰¹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

On 18 April 2020 Boko Haram launched an attack on Buni Gari village (Gujba LGA) and battled with Nigerian army and air forces, during which 105 Boko Haram fighters allegedly were killed.¹²⁰² However, Jamestown analyst Jacob Zenn questioned the figure of 105 deaths, ‘as initial situation reports indicated a much fewer 10 “terrorists” were killed and photos of the battle scene revealed less than 10 slain ISWAP members and an amount of recovered weaponry consistent with use by around several dozen ISWAP members.’¹²⁰³

On 4 March 2020, heavily armed insurgents, Boko Haram or ISWAP, fighters stormed Dapchi town (Busari LGA), and burned houses.¹²⁰⁴ They attacked security formations and the Divisional Police headquarters. In clashes with police, five police officers were killed. No civilian casualties reported.¹²⁰⁵

On 18 May 2020, Boko Haram/ISWAP invaded and attacked Dapchi (Bursari LGA), burnt many houses, including the village head’s residence and looted the community.¹²⁰⁶ Nigerian Armed Forces intervened with a helicopter, destroyed two vehicles and killed five attackers.¹²⁰⁷ This was two and a half month after the previous attack on Dapchi on 4 March (see above). In February 2018, 110 schoolgirls were abducted from this town.¹²⁰⁸

On 30 August 2020, about 15 members of an unidentified armed group (allegedly a ‘kidnapping syndicate’) attacked Kasesa community (Damaturu LGA), abducting one resident. The local vigilante group together with police officers ambushed the kidnappers, killed three and arrested four, and freed the victim.¹²⁰⁹

On 24 October 2020, Boko Haram fighters attacked Babangida village (Tarmuwa LGA). Nigerian military and police forces intervened, one police officer and six insurgents were killed; there are no reports of civilian casualties. Public properties (police/military buildings, vehicles) were destroyed.¹²¹⁰

Between 6 and 23 December 2020, a series of clashes between herders and farmers was reported in several villages. Starting in Garam Mallam (Jakusko LGA), one person was killed and several injured, many properties destroyed. The attack was reportedly a retaliation for an injured herder after his group had destroyed crops of local farmers.¹²¹¹ Subsequently, herder-farmer fights flared up in four LGAs including Gujba, injuring 23 farmers and destroying 78 farmlands.¹²¹²

On 9 January 2021, in a military attack on Boko Haram in Gujba LGA by Operation Tura Takaibango, 28 insurgent fighters and one soldier were killed and a gun truck recovered.¹²¹³

On 23 April 2021, ISWAP fighters in eight trucks with machine guns stormed and attacked Geidam town (Geidam LGA). During the gunfight with Nigerian military troops from a nearby base, a projectile hit two houses and killed 11 civilians. ISWAP fighters also looted the town.¹²¹⁴ Around 2 000 residents

¹²⁰² Premium Times, Nigerian soldiers kill 105 Boko Haram fighters in battle – Official, 19 April 2020, [url](#); This Day, Army Kills 105 Boko Haram Insurgents Yobe, 19 April 2020, [url](#).

¹²⁰³ Jamestown Foundation, Counter-Boko Haram Offensives in Chad, Niger, and Nigeria under the Specter of Coronavirus, 1 May 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁰⁴ Cable (The), Boko Haram hits Dapchi, set houses on fire, 4 March 2020, [url](#); This Day, CDS: 2,000 Boko Haram, ISWAP Fighters Surrendered Since 2015, 6 March 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁰⁵ This Day, CDS: 2,000 Boko Haram, ISWAP Fighters Surrendered Since 2015, 6 March 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁰⁶ Cable (The), ‘Many houses’ on fire as Boko Haram hits Dapchi, 18 May 2020, [url](#); ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹²⁰⁷ The Defense Post, Jihadists Attack Nigeria Town Where Girls Abducted, 19 May 2020, [url](#);

¹²⁰⁸ Cable (The), Boko Haram hits Dapchi, set houses on fire, 4 March 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁰⁹ Open Life, Yobe Police Command bursts kidnapping syndicate, suspects killed, 31 August 2020, [url](#)

¹²¹⁰ Premium Times, One policeman, six terrorists killed in Boko Haram attack on Yobe community, 25 October 2020, [url](#); Premium Times, Police confirms Boko Haram attack on Yobe community, 24 October 2020, [url](#)

¹²¹¹ This Day, Herdsmen, Villagers Fight for Grazing Land in Yobe, 6 December 2020, [url](#)

¹²¹² Daily Trust, Tension in Yobe over rising farmers, herders clashes, 23 December 2020, [url](#)

¹²¹³ Sun (The), Insurgency: Operation Tura Takai Bango to wipe out remnant of terrorists, 15 January 2021, [url](#)

¹²¹⁴ VoA, Jihadists Kill at Least 11 in Northeast Nigeria Attack, 24 April 2021, [url](#)



fled as ISWAP started to kill Christians and those with western education.¹²¹⁵ The Nigerian military killed 21 ISWAP fighters and recovered weapons and ammunition.¹²¹⁶

2.13.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

State security forces were active in 2020 to carry out operations and remained in high alert due to violent attacks by armed groups across border LGAs.¹²¹⁷

In view of the ongoing attacks, killings, abductions and destruction of properties in 2020, the Yobe State's governor announced measures to increase security and also proactive steps to address the conflict. A committee had approached all LGAs and emirates to maintain peace and order. The state police commissioner announced 'a novel way to end the crisis by introducing data capturing', taking details of all incoming herders, including photographs and finger prints to 'easily trace them' when needed. Numerous police personnel had been deployed to maintain peace and prevent escalation. However, according to the Yobe Network for Civil Society Organization, 'there has been no effective and functional government-driven conflict resolution mechanism in the state.'¹²¹⁸

2.13.3.4 Road security

According to OCHA, the security situation in December 2019 was 'fragile' compared to September/October 2019 because of the ongoing attacks by armed groups on Damaturu town, Babangida in Tarmua and Goneri in Gujba LGAs. The source added that the security situation on the Damaturu to Maiduguri road and Damaturu to Gashua road had also deteriorated.¹²¹⁹

In March 2020, increasing attacks by Boko Haram reportedly made travellers from northern Yobe to the capital to abandon the Dapchi-Damaturu road and take a longer route through Potiskum instead.¹²²⁰

Yobe state witnessed several kidnappings, road attacks and ambushes in 2020. UN OCHA noted:

'There is a significant increase in the threats of attacks on both civilian and military convoys, abduction/kidnapping (at illegal vehicle checkpoints), and IEDs along these routes. [...] NSAG [non-state armed group] attacks were targeting civilian communities across Bursari, Geidam, Gujba LGAs, and abductions in Lantewa, Tarmuwa LGA along the Damaturu – Babangida road.'¹²²¹

2.13.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

According to the Landmine Monitor 2020, 'since 2017, there have been reports of incidents involving both civilian and military casualties from landmines and a range of other locally produced explosive devices planted by Boko Haram in the north-east of the country, particularly in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states.'¹²²²

The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) reported that in the three states Adamawa, Borno and Yobe (BAY), in the first nine months of 2020 '334 civilian and non-civilian fatalities and casualties have been recorded' due to explosive devices.¹²²³

¹²¹⁵ Economic Times (The), Nigerian troops suffer heavy losses in drawn-out battles with jihadists, 27 April 2021, [url](#)

¹²¹⁶ Vanguard, Military confirms attack on Geidam town of Yobe, 24 April 2021, [url](#)

¹²¹⁷ UN OCHA, Nigeria-Yobe State Humanitarian Situation Analysis as of 30 June 2020, [url](#), p. 2

¹²¹⁸ Daily Trust, Tension in Yobe over rising farmers, herders clashes, 23 December 2020, [url](#)

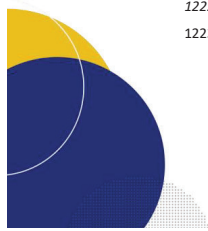
¹²¹⁹ UN OCHA, Humanitarian response, Nigeria North-East: Yobe State, December 2019, 10 January 2020, [url](#)

¹²²⁰ Cable (The), Boko Haram hits Dapchi, set houses on fire, 4 March 2020, [url](#)

¹²²¹ UN OCHA, Nigeria, Yobe State Humanitarian Situation Analysis (April to June 2020), 11 Aug 2020, [url](#)

¹²²² ICBL-CMC, Landmine monitor 2020, November 2020, [url](#), p. 29

¹²²³ UNMAS (United Nations Mine Action Service), Nigeria n.d., [url](#)



The ongoing violence led to the destruction of properties and public buildings such as health centers and police stations. On 8 December 2020, a health facility in Geidam LGA was looted by an unknown armed group and the only ambulance for a community of over 30 000 people was burnt.¹²²⁴

Attacks on health or community centers affected the operational capacity of humanitarian organisations, such as in Buni Gari on 27 April 2020, Gujba LGA, where activity centers of some humanitarian organisations were burned down. Similarly, in Dapchi (Bursari LGA), in an attack on 18 May 2020 houses and public buildings were burned down, and medical supplies were stolen from the health centre. Clashes on the next day in Geidam LGA also temporarily disrupted aid operations.¹²²⁵

2.13.3.6 Displacement and return

IDPs

The total number of IDPs for Yobe by November 2020 was 143 759, an increase of 342 individuals (0.2 %) compared to Round 34 (see [Table 12](#) in Section [2.8.3.6](#)). Yobe had the third highest number of IDPs (7 %) in the North-East Region. 99 % of all displacements in Yobe occurred due to the insurgency.¹²²⁶ IDPs from areas previously deemed inaccessible (including from Borno state) arrived in Damaturu, Nguru, Gashua, and Geidam LGAs. This new influx could, according to UN OCHA, 'be attributed to the relatively calm security situation in Yobe, which in general seems to encourage IDPs in Borno to travel to Yobe'.¹²²⁷

Returnees

The total number of returnees to Yobe state by November 2020 was 197 910, an increase of 6 784¹²²⁸ individuals (4 %) compared to the previous round. This is the third largest caseload of returnees (after Adamawa and Borno) with 11 % of all returnees in North-East Nigeria (see [Table 13](#) in Section [2.8.3.6](#)).¹²²⁹

The increase in returnees by almost 4 % can be explained, according to IOM, by the improved security situation in Yobe state 'allowing IDPs to return to locations of origin and engage in farming activities which coincided with the period of the assessments. Also, the humanitarian interventions and ongoing support in the area facilitated the return movements of many IDPs.'¹²³⁰

¹²²⁴ UN OCHA, Nigeria, Situation Report Last updated: 4 Feb 2021, [url](#)

¹²²⁵ UN OCHA, Nigeria-Yobe State Humanitarian Situation Analysis as of 30 June 2020, [url](#), p. 2

¹²²⁶ IOM Nigeria, DTM North East Nigeria, Displacement Report 35, 11 March 2021, [url](#), pp. 6, 18

¹²²⁷ UN OCHA, Nigeria, Yobe State Humanitarian Situation Analysis (April to June 2020), 11 Aug 2020, [url](#), p. 2

¹²²⁸ It should be noted that the figure in the table of 6,058 increase of returnees for Yobe is not correct.

¹²²⁹ IOM Nigeria, DTM North East Nigeria, Displacement Report 35, 11 March 2021, [url](#), p. 16

¹²³⁰ IOM-DTM,, Nigeria — Displacement Report 35 (December 2020), 11 March 2021, [url](#), p. 16



North-Central Region

The North-Central Region comprises Benue, FCT, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, and Plateau states.¹²³¹

The UN Human Rights Committee reported at the end of August 2019 that it was ‘concerned about the long-standing conflict between nomadic cattle herders, in particular the Fulani herders and associated militia, and farmers, notably in the Middle Belt region¹²³², which has led to thousands of deaths and displaced persons’.¹²³³

Nigeria Watch, in its annual report covering 2020, reported that the number of fatalities due to farmer-herder clashes rose from 549 in 2019 to 616 in 2020.¹²³⁴

Researchers Onah and Olajide on the farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria indicated that ‘the recent armed clashes in Plateau, and in Benue, Anambra, Enugu, Ondo, Ekiti and virtually every other state in Nigeria, show how, almost irretrievably, farmers-herdsmen relations have broken down.’ Factors identified in this conflict are climate change and land shortage, ethnic and religious tensions and regional dimensions. While the farmers-herders crisis started as a Northern and Middle Belt phenomenon, it has spread to the entire country, constituting a ‘national crisis’. All states are affected, however some ‘stand out for the sheer regularity, intensity and carnage of the incidents in their areas’. These states include, in the North-Central/Middle Belt Region, Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa and Niger.¹²³⁵

The National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria reported in 2020 that ‘The clashes between farmers and herders in Nigeria particularly in the middle belt have led to grave human rights and humanitarian crisis. The clashes have resulted in fatalities, injuries, displacements, destruction of livelihoods as well as properties and this has heightened religious and ethnic hostilities within the region.’¹²³⁶

For more information, see [Section 1.4.1.1](#) on Farmers-herders conflicts.

2.14 Benue state

2.14.1 General description of the state

Benue state shares boundaries with Nassarawa state to the north, Taraba state to the east, Cross-River and Ebonyi states to the south, Enugu state to the south-west and Kogi state to the west. At the south-east, Benue shares a common border with the Republic of Cameroon.¹²³⁷ The state’s capital is Makurdi.¹²³⁸

¹²³¹ Nigeria, NIMC (National Identity Management Commission), NIMC Enrolment centres, n.d., [url](#)

¹²³² As is stated in the 2018 [EASO COI Report on the Security Situation in Nigeria](#), p. 47, the Middle Belt is the geographical belt of the South of Northern Nigeria and the North of Southern Nigeria. Besides the six states of the North-Central and FCT, Adamawa, Taraba and the southern parts of Kaduna and Bauchi, are also considered as part of the Middle Belt. The definition of the Middle Belt can vary depending on the source. For more detailed information on the ‘Middle Belt’ see Emmanuel, J.C. & Tari, V.A., ‘The Myth and Reality of Middle Belt Geo-Politics in Nigeria: A Discourse’, 2015, [url](#)

¹²³³ UN, Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on Nigeria in the absence of its second periodic report *, 29 August 2019, [url](#), para. 28

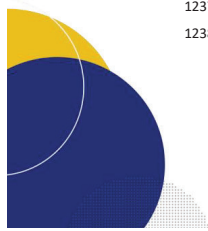
¹²³⁴ Nigeria Watch, Tenth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 10

¹²³⁵ Onah, E. I. et al., Applying restorative justice in resolving the farmers-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria, January 2020, [url](#)

¹²³⁶ Nigeria, NHRC, Integrating Human Rights in UN peacebuilding response to farmer-herder crisis in Middle Belt, Nigeria, September 2020, [url](#)

¹²³⁷ Nigeria, Benue State, n.d., [url](#); UN, Nigeria [Map], August 2014, [url](#)

¹²³⁸ Nigeria, Benue State, n.d., [url](#)



Benue state is comprised of the following 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Ado, Agatu, Apa, Buruku, Gboko, Guma, Gwer East, Gwer West, Katsina-Ala, Konshisha, Kwande, Logo, Makurdi, Obi, Ogbadibo, Ohimini, Oju, Okpokwu, Otukpo, Tarka, Ukum, Ushongo and Vandeikya.¹²³⁹

In the 2006 census, the population of Benue state was 4 253 641. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 5 741 815 in 2016.¹²⁴⁰

The ethnic groups in Benue include: the Tiv, Idoma, Igede, Etulo, Abakpa, Jukun, Hausa, Akweya and Nyifon. According to Benue state's official webpage, the Tiv occupy 14 LGAs, making them the dominant ethnic group, while the Idoma and Igede occupy the remaining 9 LGAs.¹²⁴¹

Benue state produces over 70 % of Nigeria's soya beans, with its main agricultural production including yam, rice, soya beans and other products.¹²⁴²

2.14.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.14.2.1 Background of the conflict

While all of Nigeria is affected by the farmer-herder crisis, Benue is one of the states that 'stand out for the sheer regularity, intensity and carnage of the incidents in their areas'.¹²⁴³ Nigeria Watch stated that, in 2019, Benue was replaced by Kaduna as the state with the highest number of fatalities from pastoral clashes.¹²⁴⁴ The Governor of Benue state reported in 2017 that between 2013 and 2016, 1 878 people were killed due to the clashes between farmers and herdsmen in Benue state.¹²⁴⁵

The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) noted in its 2019 Armed Conflict Survey stated that, particularly after 2016, Benue state was experiencing high levels of violence, with herdsmen attacking many villages and destroying crops and with farmers and militias in some areas killing herdsmen and stealing cattle.¹²⁴⁶

International Crisis Group reported in July 2018 that the violence between Nigerian farmers and herdsmen escalated, resulting in the death of more than 1 300 people since January 2018. The nature of the conflict evolved from more spontaneous to organized attacks, mainly affecting Benue, Plateau and Nasarawa states in the North-Central Region, amongst others. According to the same source, the conflict between farmers and herdsmen became Nigeria's 'gravest security challenge'.¹²⁴⁷

According to Nigeria Watch, in 2019 in the states of Benue and Taraba, Tiv and Jukun ethnic groups clashed over land ownership. Benue was among the states where clashes were mainly due to claims over land in border areas. The source further mentioned as notable in 2019 among the long-lasting intra-state communal clashes in 2019 the land disputes between Agila in Benue state and Ngwo in Ebonyi state.¹²⁴⁸

In Benue state, the attacks by herdsmen have led in intensified anger among farmers and other groups towards the Fulani located at the north.¹²⁴⁹ In 2017, a law was passed that prohibited the long-held practice of herdsmen grazing their animals on any open land. More specifically, Reuters reported that

¹²³⁹ Nigeria, Benue State, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁴⁰ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 2

¹²⁴¹ Nigeria, Benue State, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁴² Nigeria, Benue State, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁴³ Onah, E. I., Olajide, B. E., Applying restorative justice in resolving the farmers-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria, January 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁴⁴ Nigeria Watch, Ninth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2019), 2019, [url](#), p. 10

¹²⁴⁵ Premium Times, Over 1,800 killed in herdsmen, farmers clashes in Benue in three years — Governor, 5 July 2017, [url](#)

¹²⁴⁶ IISS, Armed Conflict Survey: Nigeria (Farmer-Pastoralist), 27 May 2020, [url](#), p. 340 [paywall]

¹²⁴⁷ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), Principal Findings

¹²⁴⁸ Nigeria Watch, Ninth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2019), 2019, [url](#), p. 15

¹²⁴⁹ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), p. i



‘Benue’s anti-grazing law says that cattle caught feeding on farmland can be impounded and their owners required to pay a fine to the government to free each animal: NGN 2 000 (USD 5) for each day a cow is in custody.’¹²⁵⁰ Benue’s Governor signed the Benue state law in May 2017 and it took effect on 1 November 2017. This law is banning the pastoralism practiced by many Fulanis for generations.¹²⁵¹

According to International Crisis Group, the Tiv, Idoma and Igede farmers¹²⁵², who comprise more than 90 % of the Benue population strongly supported the Benue state law, unlike Fulani and other herder organisations, such as the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) and the Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore (MAKH), who were against it.¹²⁵³

2.14.2.2 Actors

Communal militias from farmers and herders’ communities constitute two of the main actors active in Benue state, as recorded in the ACLED and Nigeria Watch databases.¹²⁵⁴

There is an ongoing crisis between the Tiv and the Jukun ethnic groups, due to boundary issues between Benue and Taraba states.¹²⁵⁵ Reasons that affected the relationship between the two ethnic groups included politics, land ownership, suspicion etc. The conflict between the Tiv and the Jukun is recurring with the first incident recorded in 1959 and with others following in 1980, 1990, 2001 and in 2020.¹²⁵⁶

Other actors involved in violent actions in Benue state are the Iyarev and the Krapev, the latter brick moulders also known as settlers.¹²⁵⁷ They are involved in what Vanguard describes as a ‘protracted crisis in Tyo Mu’ community, related to levies imposed on brick moulders in the community.¹²⁵⁸

The military, through the Operation Whirl Stroke, which was set up in 2018 to address insecurity associated with farmer–pastoralist violence in Benue (among other states), continued being active in 2019.¹²⁵⁹

2.14.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

Amnesty International noted in December 2020 a documented ‘alarming escalation’ in attacks and abductions in different states in North-West and North-Central Nigeria since January 2020. More specifically, it noted that the Middle Belt, where Benue state is located, ‘has also been roiled by violent clashes between members of farmer communities and members of herder communities over access to resources such as water, land and pasture’.¹²⁶⁰

¹²⁵⁰ Reuters, Deadly clashes over cattle continue in Nigeria despite grazing ban, 26 June 2019, [url](#)

¹²⁵¹ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria’s Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), p. 8

¹²⁵² These groups consider themselves ‘indigenes’, meaning indigenous, and not settlers. They had been ‘granted preferences’. Herder groups generally are not recognised as indigenes in the Middle Belt. Source: International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria’s Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), p. 9

¹²⁵³ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria’s Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), p. 9

¹²⁵⁴ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Nigeria Watch, The database, 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁵⁵ Business Day, Unresolved border dispute blamed for unending Tiv-Jukun crisis, 26 August 2020, [url](#); Premium Times, Tiv/Jukun crisis: Benue, Taraba sign peace agreement, 14 April 2020, [url](#)

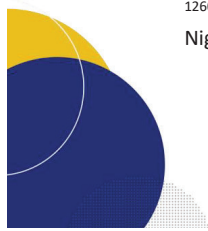
¹²⁵⁶ Guardian (The) Nigeria, FG, states sue for reconciliation to end Tiv/Jukun crisis, 29 April 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁵⁷ Settlers are described as people unable to trace their roots. USIP, Rethinking Nigeria’s Indigene-Settler Conflicts, July 2012, [url](#), p. 2. For more information on indigenes-settlers issues, see EASO COI Report Targeting of Individuals, November 2018 [url](#), para 3.7.1.2

¹²⁵⁸ Vanguard, Nursing mother, nine others killed in Benue clashes, 9 April 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁵⁹ IISS, Armed Conflict Survey 2020. Nigeria (Farmer - Pastoralist), 2020, p. 344

¹²⁶⁰ AI, Amnesty International USA statement for the Tom Lantos human rights commission hearing conflict and killings in Nigeria’s Middle Belt, 18 December 2020, [url](#)



According to Nigeria Watch, Benue was one of the three states that were the most affected by an increase in herdsmen-farmers clashes in 2020, recording 96 fatalities.¹²⁶¹ Since the beginning of 2020, as of May 2020, communal clashes and herdsmen attacks over land ownership reportedly claimed 80 lives in Benue state.¹²⁶²

The ‘protracted crisis in Tyo Mu’ between the Iyarev and the Kparev continued, as the latter continuously resisted the imposition of levies on their work by the community owners, the Iyarev.¹²⁶³

2.14.3.1 Number of security incidents

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 100 security incidents (42 battles, 52 cases of violence against civilians, 6 incidents of riots) in Benue state, resulting in 190 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Guma LGA (21 incidents with 44 deaths), followed by Makurdi (18 incidents with 24 deaths) and Katsina-Ala (11 incidents with 21 deaths) LGAs. Of the 52 incidents of violence against civilians, 46 were attacks and 6 abductions.¹²⁶⁴

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period is shown in Figure 36 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 13 protests were reported during the reference period.¹²⁶⁵

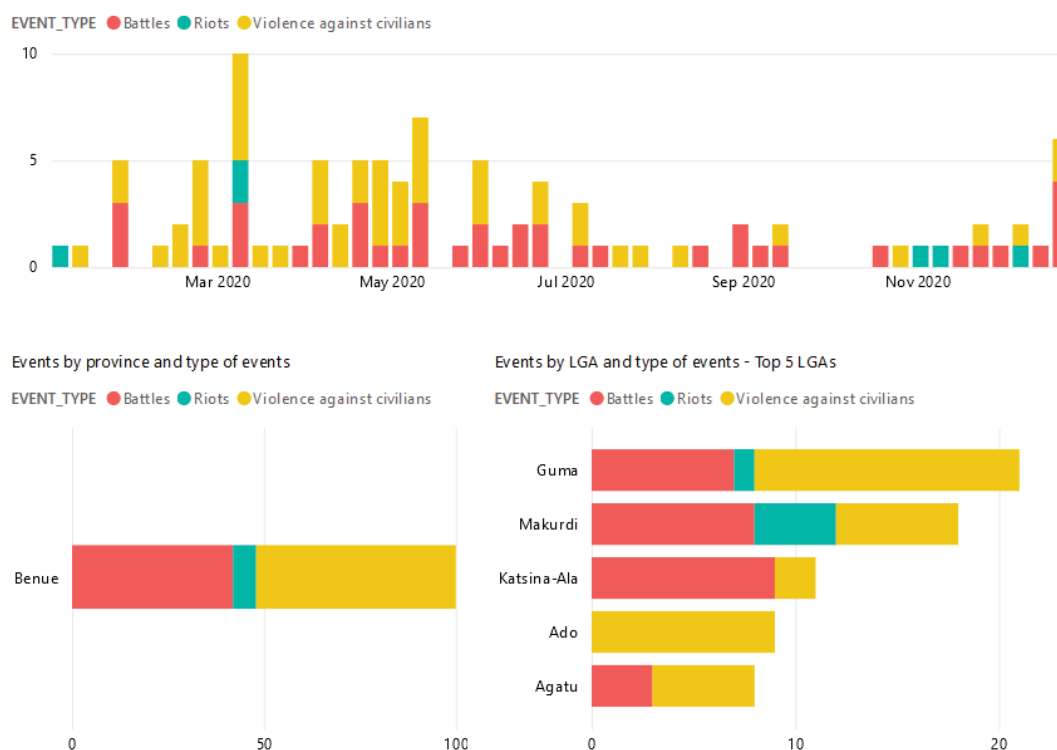


Figure 23 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Benue state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹²⁶⁶

¹²⁶¹ Nigeria Watch, Tenth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 10

¹²⁶² Vanguard, Benue: Communal clashes, herdsmen attacks claim 80 lives in four months, 16 May 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁶³ Vanguard, Nursing mother, nine others killed in Benue clashes, 9 April 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁶⁴ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹²⁶⁵ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹²⁶⁶ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Benue state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Benue state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	42	79
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	52	104
Riots	6	7
Total	100	190

Table 19 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹²⁶⁷

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 38 security incidents (12 battles, 22 cases of violence against civilians, 4 incidents of riots) in Benue state, resulting in 177 deaths.¹²⁶⁸

2.14.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 3 March 2020, four people were reportedly killed and many more injured in Moon district (Kwande LGA). The attackers, gunmen suspected to be herders, invaded Waya community near Jato Aka and fired indiscriminately. Many residents of the community had to flee to neighbouring communities.¹²⁶⁹

On 13 March 2020, during a wake, suspected armed herdsmen killed at least seven people and injured several in an attack on Chongu, Tse Ayev and Tyohembe communities (Guma LGA). The gunmen attacked late on Friday night and continued opening fire sporadically until early Saturday.¹²⁷⁰

On 8 April 2020 in Jootar community (Ukum LGA), a settlement bordering Benue and Taraba states, three persons were killed by suspected Jukun militias.¹²⁷¹ The attackers also set on fire more than 200 houses, yam barns and huts.¹²⁷²

On 8 April 2020, in Mbamena community (Ukum LGA) six individuals were killed reportedly by militias from Tongov area,¹²⁷³ the attackers also set on fire houses and farmland.¹²⁷⁴

On 12 May 2020, early in the morning, four suspected herdsmen shot and killed two people and injured one at the Agasha community (Guma LGA).¹²⁷⁵

On 31 May 2020, suspected armed herdsman attacked Itakpa (Obi LGA), killing a local ward chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and reportedly 12 others. Several others were injured during the attack.¹²⁷⁶

On 4 June 2020, the Chairman of Guma LGA claimed that armed herdsmen invaded Uhur community and killed five farmers, which in turn 'sparked a reprisal by his people', that resulted in further attacks by armed herders.¹²⁷⁷

¹²⁶⁷ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹²⁶⁸ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

¹²⁶⁹ Sun (The), Suspected herders kill 4 persons in Benue, 4 March 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁷⁰ Vanguard, Again, suspected armed herdsmen kill seven mourners in Benue communities, 14 March 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁷¹ Guardian (The) Nigeria, Fresh attacks kill 13 in Benue, Plateau, 9 April 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁷² Vanguard, Nursing mother, nine others killed in Benue clashes, 9 April 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁷³ Guardian (The) Nigeria, Fresh attacks kill 13 in Benue, Plateau, 9 April 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁷⁴ Vanguard, Nursing mother, nine others killed in Benue clashes, 9 April 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁷⁵ Nigerian Tribune, Six Killed As Herdsmen Invade Benue Community Again, 12 May 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁷⁶ Vanguard, PDP Chairman, 12 others killed in fresh herders attack in Benue, 4 June 2020, [url](#); Sahara Reporters, Suspected Herdsmen Attack, Kill Residents Of Benue Community, 2 June 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁷⁷ Vanguard, Benue boils again, 6 June 2020, [url](#)



On 6 June 2020, suspected armed herders attacked the villages of Torkula, Kponko and Kaseyo, in Mbadwem council ward (Guma LGA).¹²⁷⁸ The fatalities reported ranged from three to 12. Troops of the Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS) repelled the attack and engaged with the armed herders.¹²⁷⁹

On 14 June 2020, between 9 and 10 villagers were killed in Adana village (Agatu LGA) and more were injured, when unidentified armed men attacked villagers, in reportedly, a communal clash involving Egba, Adugbe and Adana communities (Agatu LGA).¹²⁸⁰

On 10 August 2020, 13 villagers were killed in Edikwu community (Apa LGA) by 20 unknown armed men. The community had experienced a long-lasting conflict over chieftaincy issues. State intervention recently established peace.¹²⁸¹

On 28 June 2020, at least six people were killed and property burned in a communal clash between Bonta community (Konshisha LGA) and Ukpute community (Oju LGA).¹²⁸²

On 20 September 2020, a farmer was reportedly beheaded and four other people were hacked to death in an attack on Tse-Apera (Guma LGA). The attackers were suspected armed herdsman.¹²⁸³

The governor of Benue state, Samuel Ortom, reported that, on 11 December 2020, four people were killed by suspected herdsman at Tse-Angbande (Makurdi LGA) the state's capital.¹²⁸⁴

On 7 April 2021, gunmen attacked the Nigerian military troops and killed 11 officers. In reaction, the army clashed with gunmen in Konshisha LGA and destroyed their hideout. 12 militiamen were killed, weapons were seized. Residents fled the area for fear of soldiers searching to the perpetrators.¹²⁸⁵ The military were alleged to have attacked and killed over 50 civilians in Gungul and Shangev Tiev communities¹²⁸⁶ but it was denied by the military headquarters.¹²⁸⁷

2.14.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

Foreign Affairs, in a 2019 article, noted that 'The Nigerian government has failed to work with the herders and farmers to resolve disputes or address the root causes of the conflict.' It further noted that 'Members of both groups frequently feel compelled to take justice into their own hands through reprisal killings'. According to the same source, some members of the communities affected by the clashes between farmers and herders had accused the government of bias or even of 'stoking the violence for political gain'.¹²⁸⁸ In Benue specifically, Tiv leaders accused the country's military of covering killers so they could take over Tiv lands.¹²⁸⁹

News agency Punch quoted a source saying that 'the Jukum militia allegedly operated unchallenged for almost three hours despite the presence of special forces in Wukari, about two kilometres away

¹²⁷⁸ Premium Times, Many killed as suspected herders attack Benue communities, 7 June 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁷⁹ Guardian (the) Nigeria, Military repels attack by herders in Benue, kills five, 8 June 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁸⁰ Vanguard, 10 killed in fresh Agatu communal crisis, 20 declared missing, scores injured, 14 June 2020, [url](#); AA, Nigeria: Gunmen kill 10 villagers in Benue state, 15 June 2020, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, Nigeria, [url](#)

¹²⁸¹ Whistler (the), 13 Killed as gunmen attack Benue Community, 10 August 2020, [url](#); ABC, Gunmen kill 22 people in 2 attacks in Nigeria's middle belt, 4 September 2020, [url](#); Premium Times, Gunmen kill 13 villagers in Benue, 10 August 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁸² Today.ng, Six die in Benue communal clash, 29 June 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁸³ Vanguard, Benue: Armed herders invade Ortom's hometown, 22 September 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁸⁴ Vanguard, Suspected herdsman kill four in Benue community — Gov Ortom, 12 December 2020, [url](#)

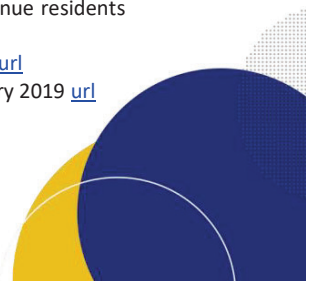
¹²⁸⁵ Guardian (The), Troops neutralise 12 assailants in Benue, 8 April 2021, [url](#); Reuters, Eleven soldiers killed in attack in Nigeria's Benue state, 9 April 2021, [url](#)

¹²⁸⁶ Sahara Reporters, EXCLUSIVE: Nigerian Military Invade Benue Community, Kill Over 30 Villagers, Set Ablaze Monarch Palace, 200 Houses, 8 April 2021, [url](#)

¹²⁸⁷ Premium Times, Nigerian military explains deadly operation, killings in Benue, 9 April 2021, [url](#); ICIR, Benue residents raise alarm over alleged military attack on civilians, 8 April 2021, [url](#)

¹²⁸⁸ Ilo, U. et al., The crisi type You've Never Heard of. Nigeria's Cattle Herders and Farmers, 23 January 2019, [url](#)

¹²⁸⁹ Ilo, U. et al., The Deadliest Conflict You've Never Heard of. Nigeria's Cattle Herders and Farmers, 23 January 2019 [url](#)



from the attacked community.', in relation to the attacks that took place in Jootar (Ukum LGA) on 8 April 2020, where three persons were killed by suspected Jukun militias.¹²⁹⁰

The military Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS) intervened in several clashes between communities. For example, in response to the three separate clashes that took place between 4 and 5 June 2020 between Benue farmers and herders and a bloody communal clash between Benue and Cross River state communities, the military Operation Whirl Stroke (OPWS) intervened, 'took control of the situation and also apprehended one of the mercenaries'.¹²⁹¹ Also on 12 May 2020, troops of Operations Whirl Stroke of the Nigerian Army killed four individuals, suspected herdsmen, who had invaded the Agasha community in Guma LGA.¹²⁹²

The National Economic Council (NEC) of Nigeria approved in 2018 a 10-year National Livestock Plan, estimated to cost approximately NGN 179 billion. This measure was taken in relation to the increasing conflicts and mass killings from the seasonal pastoral movements. The plan involved the establishment of 94 ranches in 10 pilot states, including Benue.¹²⁹³ The reasoning behind the establishment of ranches is to 'mitigat[e] the escalating crisis between settled-farmers and pastoralists that could undermine the entire development of the livestock sector'.¹²⁹⁴ In a bid to end tensions between Tivs and Jukuns, the Benue and Taraba states' governments signed a peace treaty on 14 April 2020.¹²⁹⁵

On 9 October 2020, the state Governor announced the completion of 24 km of road around the capital, Makurdi, to secure farmers living in the forest in the outskirts of the capital from attacks from armed herdsmen.¹²⁹⁶

2.14.3.4 Road security

No information was found on road security.

2.14.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war.

2.14.3.6 Displacement and return

For a general overview of the displacement trends in the North-West and North-Central Regions, see [Section 2.2.3.6](#) in Kaduna state.

Benue state hosts 9 945 Cameroonian refugees.¹²⁹⁷

IDPs

The total number of IDPs for Benue state by December 2020 was 204 193, an increase of 6 682 individuals (3 %) compared to Round 4 (197 511 IDPs¹²⁹⁸). Benue hosts the largest IDP population of the two regions with 28 % of the total number of IDPs in both regions. Agatu LGA hosted most IDPs (79 951 persons or 39 % of all IDPs in the state).¹²⁹⁹

¹²⁹⁰ Punch, Nine killed, two policemen missing in fresh Benue attacks, 9 April 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁹¹ Vanguard, Benue boils again, 6 June 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁹² Nigerian Tribune, Six killed as herdsmen invade Benue Community again, 12 May 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁹³ Nation (the), Fed Govt to build 94 ranches in 10 states, 20 June 2018, [url](#)

¹²⁹⁴ FAO, The future of livestock in Nigeria. Opportunities and challenges in the face of uncertainty, 2019, [url](#), p. 14

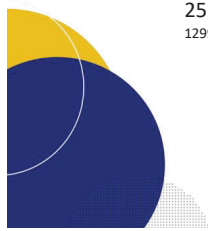
¹²⁹⁵ Nigeria, Taraba State Government, Benue, Taraba Sign a Peace Agreement in Nasarawa State, 15 April 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁹⁶ Vanguard, How new 24-km Benue road saves beneficiaries from attacks, 9 October 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁹⁷ UNHCR Nigeria: Population Statistics January 2021, 10 February 2021, [url](#)

¹²⁹⁸ IOM Nigeria, Displacement Tracking Matrix North Central and North West Zones Displacement Report 4, August 2020, 25 October 2020, [url](#), p. 6

¹²⁹⁹ IOM Nigeria, DTM North Central and North West Zones, Displacement Report 5 (January 2021), 8 March 2021, [url](#), p. 8



For an overview of changes in IDP population by state (North-West and North-Central Region) between Round 4 and 5, see [Table 5](#) in [Section 2.2.3.6](#).

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Benue state. IOM does not collect any return data in the North-West and North-Central Regions.¹³⁰⁰

2.15 Federal Capital Territory (FCT)

2.15.1 General description of the state

Federal Capital Territory (FCT) shares borders with Niger state to the west and north, Kaduna state to the north-east, Nasarawa state to the east and south and Kogi state to the south-west.¹³⁰¹

FCT is composed of the following six Local Government Areas (LGAs): Abaji, Abuja Municipal, Gwagwalada, Kuje, Bwari and Kwali.¹³⁰² Abuja, which is the capital of Nigeria, is located in the Federal Capital Territory.¹³⁰³

In the 2006 census, the population of Federal Capital Territory state was 1 406 239. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 3 564 126 in 2016.¹³⁰⁴

The indigenous inhabitants of Abuja are the Gbagyi (Gwari) Bassa, Gwandara, Gade, Ganagana and Koro. Gbagyi (Gwari) is the major language in the state.¹³⁰⁵

FCT produces yams, millet, maize, sorghum. and beans. It also has mineral resources, such as clay, tin, feldspar, gold, iron ore, lead, marble, and talc.¹³⁰⁶

2.15.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.15.2.1 Background of the conflict

Since 2019, a rise in kidnappings/abductions has been noted in Abuja. BBC reported in 2019 the residents of Abuja were concerned about the increase in kidnappings.¹³⁰⁷

2.15.2.2 Actors

The main actors present in Abuja include unidentified gunmen involved in kidnappings and in other violent acts.¹³⁰⁸ and kidnappers.¹³⁰⁹ In addition, in 2020, significant clashes took place between #ENDSARS movement protesters and police forces in many different cities in Nigeria, including in Abuja.¹³¹⁰ For detailed information on the SARS police, see [Section 1.3.1.2](#).

¹³⁰⁰ Regional IOM-DTM officer, email exchange with EASO, 23 April 2021

¹³⁰¹ Nigeria, FCT, n.d., [url](#)

¹³⁰² Nigeria, FCT, n.d., [url](#)

¹³⁰³ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

¹³⁰⁴ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 3

¹³⁰⁵ Nigeria, FCT, n.d., [url](#)

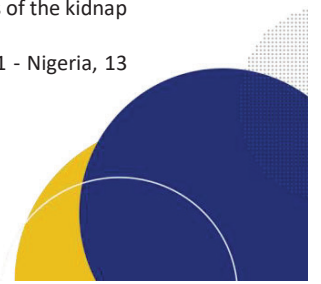
¹³⁰⁶ Nigeria, FCT, n.d., [url](#)

¹³⁰⁷ BBC, Abuja crime: Is Nigeria's capital city 'one of the safest in the world?', 22 September 2019, [url](#)

¹³⁰⁸ Guardian (The) Nigeria, Gunmen kidnap over 30 residents of FCT community, 11 September 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁰⁹ Daily Trust, Abuja, Kastina Rank High In Kidnapping Cases, 17 August 2020, [url](#); SB Morgen, The economics of the kidnap industry in Nigeria, May 2020, [url](#), p. 4

¹³¹⁰ AA, Nigeria: 800 held for violence in #EndSARS protests, 28 October 2020, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2021 - Nigeria, 13 January 2021, [url](#), p. 499



2.15.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

Nigeria Watch, in its annual report covering 2020, noted that, FCT was one of the ‘relatively peaceful states with less than 2 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants’. It also reported clashes between suspected herdsmen and farmers.¹³¹¹

Human Rights Watch reported that, in August 2020, authorities arrested and briefly detained more than 60 people during protests in Abuja, in relation to the ‘Revolution Now’ protests against insecurity and corruption.¹³¹²

in relation to the #EndSARS protests and connected incidents in October 2020, more than 200 individuals were reportedly arrested in Abuja and a few other cities in Nigeria. According to Lagos’ police chief ‘the arrested suspects were not part of the widespread protests against the police’s Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS).’¹³¹³

Human Rights Watch reported that police dispersed protesters on 11 October in Abuja using tear gas and water cannons. A protester claimed to have been beaten repeatedly by police officers.¹³¹⁴ Human Rights Watch reported in its 2021 World report that #ENDSARS protesters were ‘harassed and attacked by security forces and armed thugs in Abuja’.¹³¹⁵

In November 2020, the protests resumed in Abuja against ‘police brutality’ despite the disbandment of the SARS.¹³¹⁶

In its May 2020 report on the Economics of kidnap industry in Nigeria, SB Morgen, an intelligence firm, stated that ‘while it is not in the top 10, Abuja has the 11th highest number of kidnap incidents over the last decade’.¹³¹⁷ CFR noted in May 2020 that Abuja is one of the areas in Nigeria where Nigerians’ main form of insecurity is related to fear of kidnapping and crime in general, further highlighting that ‘for them, kidnapping is far more immediate than the carnage of Boko Haram [...] or the carnage in the middle belt over land and water use between “farmers” and “herders”’.¹³¹⁸

Numbers of kidnappings in FCT over 2020 vary greatly. ACLED database recorded 12 incidents of kidnappings in FCT over the year 2020, five of which were in Abuja city.¹³¹⁹ By contrast, several other sources indicate much higher numbers. The UN Security Council reported that between July and October 2020, approximately 102 incidents of kidnapping took place in the Federal Capital Territory.¹³²⁰

The Daily Trust noted that the FCT and Katsina are the states where most kidnappings took place between January and July 2020, with 22 people being kidnapped in Abuja.¹³²¹ In March 2021, the 21st Century Chronicle reported that, since September 2020, at least 48 people had been kidnapped in FCT and that kidnappings in the state had ‘become routine and mostly unreported’.¹³²²

¹³¹¹ Nigeria Watch, Tenth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 6

¹³¹² HRW, World Report 2021 - Nigeria, 13 January 2021, [url](#), p. 504

¹³¹³ AA, Nigeria: 800 held for violence in #EndSARS protests, 28 October 2020, [url](#)

¹³¹⁴ HRW, Nigeria: Crackdown on police brutality protests, 16 October 2020, [url](#)

¹³¹⁵ HRW, World Report 2021 - Nigeria, 13 January 2021, [url](#), p. 499

¹³¹⁶ AA, Nigeria: SARS protest resumes, 7 November 2020, [url](#); Premium Times, #EndSARS: Protesters return to streets in Abuja, 2 November 2020, [url](#)

¹³¹⁷ SB Morgen, The economics of the kidnap industry in Nigeria, May 2020, [url](#), p. 4

¹³¹⁸ CFR, Kidnapping in Nigeria: A Growth Industry, 29 May 2020, [url](#)

¹³¹⁹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹³²⁰ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, S/2020/1293, 24 December 2020, [url](#), p. 5, para. 24

¹³²¹ Daily Trust, Abuja, Kastina Rank High In Kidnapping Cases, 17 August 2020, [url](#)

¹³²² 21st Century Chronicle, Residents flee Abuja community over rising cases of kidnapping, 29 March 2021, [url](#)



2.15.3.1 Number of security incidents

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 47 security incidents (8 battles, 24 cases of violence against civilians, 15 incidents of riots) in FCT, resulting in 17 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Abuja Municipal LGA. Of the 24 incidents of violence against civilians, 12 were attacks and 12 abductions.¹³²³

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period is shown in Figure 38 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 117 protests with 5 deaths were reported during the reference period.¹³²⁴

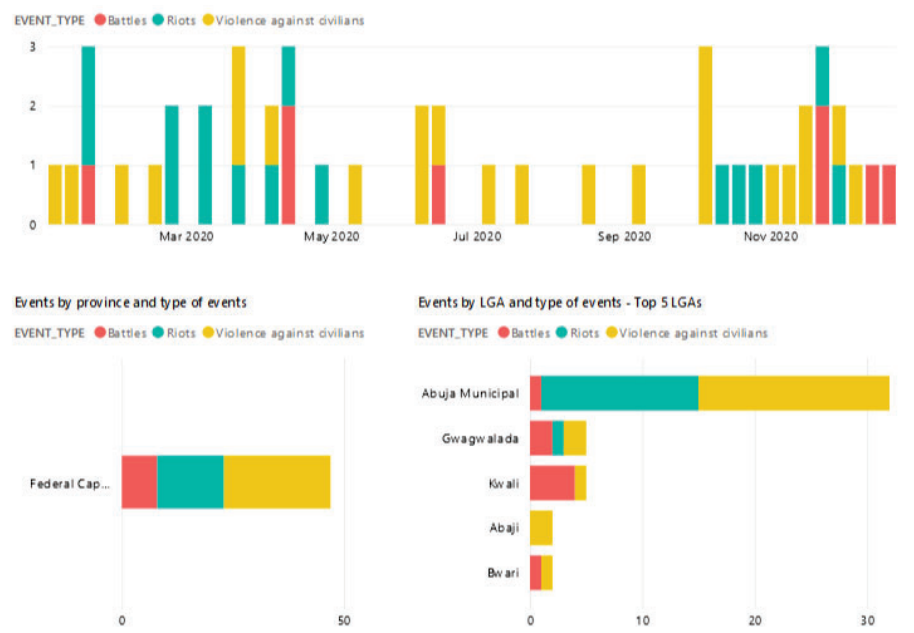


Figure 24 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in FCT in 2020, based on ACLED data¹³²⁵

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for FCT in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

FCT	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	8	8
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	24	3
Riots	15	6
Total	47	17

Table 20 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹³²⁶

¹³²³ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹³²⁴ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹³²⁵ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹³²⁶ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 19 security incidents (6 battles, 10 cases of violence against civilians, 3 incidents of riots) in Federal Capital Territory, resulting in 11 deaths.¹³²⁷

2.15.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 21 January 2020, Alex Ogbu, a reporter and editor of Regent Africa Times, was killed after sustaining head injuries in an Islamic Movement of Nigeria protest in Abuja.¹³²⁸ The Sahara Reporters claimed that Alex Ogbu was a passer-by shot in the head by police officers during the protest.¹³²⁹

On 17 February 2020, Dagan Laetitia Naankang, an Assistant Director of Administration in the State House was killed in her apartment in Abuja LGA, by ‘criminals, ...known as “Yahoo boys”’, according to This Day news.¹³³⁰

On 11 April 2020, news agency Vanguard reported that a man, who went out to get food for his pregnant wife, was shot and killed by the Nigerian Police at Banex Junction, Wuse 2 (Abuja LGA). This report is part of the alleged killings of nine people by security forces in four states and in the FCT, while enforcing lockdown regulations in order to contain the spread of COVID-19.¹³³¹

On 12 May 2020, approximately 50 gunmen attacked the Ukya Tsoho village (Kuje LGA) and kidnapped four people. The gunmen shot sporadically and stole phones and food.¹³³²

On 20 June 2020 at night, more than 20 gunmen kidnapped and subsequently killed three people at Yambabu village (Kwali LGA).¹³³³

On 10 September 2020, gunmen attacked Tunga Maji community (Gwagwalada LGA) and kidnapped more than 30 residents of the community, reportedly after ‘a prolonged gun battle with the community vigilante members’.¹³³⁴ According to another source, the number of residents kidnapped was unspecified, with a resident stating that at least 20 people had been kidnapped.¹³³⁵

On 13 October 2020, hundreds of young people protesting to end police brutality, in relation to the #EndSARS campaign, were attacked by military personnel - allegedly from the Presidential Guard Brigade - in Abuja LGA. According to the source, the protesters were peaceful.¹³³⁶

On 20 October 2020, police allegedly opened fire against #ENDSARS protesters, killing five protesters at Dutse Alhaji area (Bwari LGA).¹³³⁷ According to the Premium Times, the police rejected that report as false, saying that ‘the protesters suddenly went berserk, leaving two persons dead and one injured.’¹³³⁸

On 17 November 2020, two people were killed, one native in the area and one herder, in clashes between farmers and herders near Passo village (Gwagwalada LGA), when herders were grazing their cows in a rice farm in the area.¹³³⁹

¹³²⁷ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

¹³²⁸ CPJ, Nigerian journalist Alex Ogbu dies at protest, 5 February 2020, [url](#)

¹³²⁹ Sahara Reporters, BREAKING: Police Kill Journalist During Shiite Protest In Abuja, 23 January 2020, [url](#)

¹³³⁰ This Day, How State House Director, Naankang, was Murdered, 20 February 2020, [url](#)

¹³³¹ Vanguard, COVID-19 Lockdown: CSO raises alarm over alleged killing of 9 persons by security agents, 11 April 2020, [url](#)

¹³³² Sun (The), Gunmen invade FCT village, abduct 4, 12 May 2020, [url](#)

¹³³³ Sun (The), Kidnappers storm Abuja Vilage, kills 3 in Kwali, 21 June 2020, [url](#)

¹³³⁴ Guardian (The) Nigeria, Gunmen kidnap over 30 residents of FCT community, 11 September 2020, [url](#);

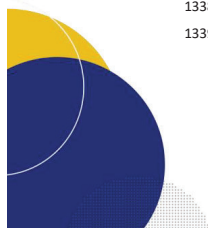
¹³³⁵ Nigerian News Direct, Unknown gunmen attack Tunga Maji, an Abuja community, kidnap residents, 11 September 2020, [url](#)

¹³³⁶ Vanguard, #ENDSARS: Soldiers attack Protesters, Journalists in Abuja, 13 October 2020, [url](#)

¹³³⁷ Daily Trust, Police Shoot 5 #ENDSARS Protesters in Abuja, 20 October 2020, [url](#); Premium Times, #EndSARS: Protesters clash with police in Abuja after reported killing, 20 October 2020, [url](#); Daily Trust, #EndSARS: Dozens Killed As Violence Spreads, 21 October 2020, [url](#)

¹³³⁸ Premium Times, #EndSARS: Protesters clash with police in Abuja after reported killing, 20 October 2020, [url](#)

¹³³⁹ Daily Trust, How 2 died in farmers, herders clash in Gwagwalada, 25 November 2020, [url](#)



2.15.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

In relation to the October 2020 #ENDSARS protests, it was reported that places of worship were set on fire in Apo District in Abuja and that residents had to defend themselves since 'there was no security presence in the area.'¹³⁴⁰

Different sources reported police attacking protesters during #ENDSARS protests, when they refused to disperse¹³⁴¹ or during altercations.¹³⁴² In Abuja, 'some people alleged that the deceased were killed by the police'; however, the FCT Command of the Nigeria Police Force denied these allegations and stated that they only 'restored peace in the area'. Following these deaths, the police post at Dutsen Makaranta was set on fire and a number of vehicles were burnt. The protest was reportedly peaceful, until the police arrived in four trucks.¹³⁴³

The 'SB Morgen, in its 2020 report on kidnapping in Nigeria, noted that Abuja constituted one of the few areas in Nigeria where no military exercise or operation was located.¹³⁴⁴

The Daily Trust reported in August 2020 that 22 kidnappings took place over seven months in FCT, making it the state with the most kidnappings in the reported period.¹³⁴⁵

Following an attack and kidnappings by gunmen on 10 September 2020 at the Tungan Maje village - a community between the FCT and Niger state - the FCT police claimed that they became involved promptly 'and engaged in a fierce gun duel with the hoodlums', rescuing five of the kidnapped villagers.¹³⁴⁶ Media reports between September 2020 and March 2021 revealed that 'abductions within the FCT have become routine and mostly unreported', that residents flee the capital for fear of kidnappings, and that 'even though some kidnap attempts were foiled by the Police and Vigilantes, the kidnappers kept coming back to the community to abduct people for ransom.'¹³⁴⁷

2.15.3.4 Road security

The Abuja-Kaduna highway, a major route out of Abuja to the north-west of Nigeria, is well-known for bandit attacks and kidnappings.¹³⁴⁸

On 29 April 2019, the board chairman of Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and his daughter were kidnapped near Katari village on the Kaduna-Abuja highway. According to the source, many attacks had taken place along that route in the previous months; as a result, travellers started opting not to use it and to use the safer railway route instead.¹³⁴⁹

2.15.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war.

2.15.3.6 Displacement and return IDPs

For a general overview of the displacement trends in the North-West and North-Central Regions, see [Section 2.2.3.6](#) in Kaduna state.

¹³⁴⁰ Daily Trust, Police Shoot 5 #ENDSARS Protesters in Abuja, 20 October 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁴¹ Premium Times, #EndSARS: Protesters clash with police in Abuja after reported killing, 20 October 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁴² Daily Trust, #EndSARS: Dozens Killed As Violence Spreads, 21 October 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁴³ Daily Trust, #EndSARS: Dozens Killed As Violence Spreads, 21 October 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁴⁴ SB Morgen, The economics of the kidnap industry in Nigeria, May 2020, [url](#), pp. 3-4. Information was analysed between June 2011 to the end of March 2020

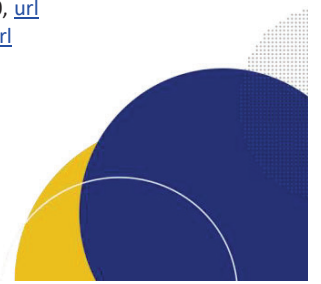
¹³⁴⁵ Daily Trust, 808 Nigerians Kidnapped In Seven Months, 17 August 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁴⁶ Channels Television, Gunmen Attack Abuja Community, Police Rescue Kidnap Victims, 10 September 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁴⁷ 21st Century Chronicle, Residents flee Abuja community over rising cases of kidnapping, 29 March 2021, [url](#)

¹³⁴⁸ HRW, World Report 2020, Nigeria, 14 January 2020, [url](#), p. 434

¹³⁴⁹ Premium Times, UBEC Chairman, daughter kidnapped, 29 April 2019, [url](#)



IDPs

No information was found on the number of conflict-related IDPs in FCT state.

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to FCT.

2.16 Kogi state

2.16.1 General description of the state

Kogi state shares boundaries with the following states: Niger, Nasarawa and the Federal Capital Territory to the north, Benue to the east, Enugu and Edo to the south and Ekiti and Kwara to the west. The state's capital is Lokoja.¹³⁵⁰

The state is composed of the following 21 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Adavi, Ajaokuta, Ankpa, Bassa, Dekina, Ibaji, Idah, Igalamela-Odolu, Ijumu, Kabba/Bunu, Kogi, Lokoja, Mopa-Muro, Ofu, Ogori/Magongo, Okehi, Okene, Olamaboro, Omala, Yagba East, Yagba West, Oju, Okpokwu, Otukpo, Tarka, Ukum, Ushongo and Vandeikya.¹³⁵¹

In the 2006 census, the population of Kogi state was 3 314 043. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 4 473 490 in 2016.¹³⁵²

There are three main ethnic groups and languages in Kogi: the Igala, Epira and Okun (the latter sub-group of the Yoruba). There are also minorities such as the Bassa, a small fraction of Nupe mainly in Lokoja LGA, the Ogugu sub-group of the Igala, Gwari, Kakanda, Oworo people (the latter sub-group of the Yoruba), Ogori Magongo and the Eggan community.¹³⁵³

Farming constitutes the main occupation in Kogi state.¹³⁵⁴

2.16.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.16.2.1 Background of the conflict

While the farmers-herders crisis started as a Northern Middle Belt phenomenon, it has spread to the entire country, constituting a 'national crisis'.¹³⁵⁵ Kogi state is one of the states in Nigeria that are affected by the increasing farmer-herder conflicts. According to a research by Idakwoji and others into the herder-farmer conflicts in Kogi state, in many communities there have been 'incessant herdsmen/farmers conflicts in the recent past. The conflicts have taken new dangerous dimension to the extent that the clashes have become so frequent culminating into killings, maiming, and in some cases burning of houses and invasion of communities.'¹³⁵⁶

¹³⁵⁰ Nigeria, Kogi State, n.d., [url](#)

¹³⁵¹ Nigeria, Kogi State, n.d., [url](#)

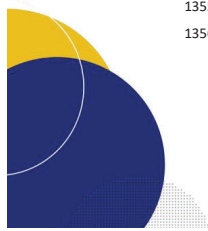
¹³⁵² Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 2

¹³⁵³ Nigeria, Kogi State, n.d., [url](#)

¹³⁵⁴ Nigeria, Kogi State, n.d., [url](#)

¹³⁵⁵ Onah, E. I. et al., Applying restorative justice in resolving the farmers-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria, January 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁵⁶ Idakwoji, S.P. et al., Herdsmen/Farmers Conflicts in Kogi State, December 2018, [url](#)



Kogi state also witnessed cult violence, related to rivalry between different cult groups, often escalating into reprisal attacks.¹³⁵⁷ Cult groups are often related to specific political parties and are used by politicians to attack rival politicians.¹³⁵⁸

2.16.2.2 Actors

Actors in the many attacks, as registered by ACLED, are various local militias, Fulani ethnic militia, unidentified cult militias, farmers, herders, and Nigerian police and security forces.¹³⁵⁹

2.16.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

Violence between farmers and herders increased in Nigeria's central regions, according to IDMC in its mid-2020 update.¹³⁶⁰

In November 2019, Kogi state experienced widespread violence related to the governorship and senatorial election.¹³⁶¹ Ethnic tensions had been built up earlier between the main ethnic groups Igalas and Ebiras each linked to another political party; the latter governor (APC) was in power for four years and was re-elected in 2019. The election was characterised by 'widespread violence, snatching of ballot boxes, voter intimidation, votes buying and voter inducements across local government areas in the state and by the two major parties.' Five persons were killed during the election.¹³⁶² Journalists were harassed and attacked.¹³⁶³

In January 2020, two reprisal attacks were reported between 'suspected' herders and farmers. Kogi state has witnessed several of such attacks in respective communities in the last five years.¹³⁶⁴

2.16.3.1 Number of security incidents

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 37 security incidents (4 battles, 27 cases of violence against civilians, 6 incidents of riots) in Kogi state, resulting in 57 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Lokoja LGA. Of the 27 incidents of violence against civilians, 20 were attacks and 7 abductions.¹³⁶⁵

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period, as well as the highest number of incidents by LGA is shown in Figure 40 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 10 protests were reported during the reference period.¹³⁶⁶

¹³⁵⁷ Punch, Cultists kill 13 students in Kogi varsity, 5 November 2019, [url](#)

¹³⁵⁸ Punch, Nigeria'll be safe when politicians stop using thugs —Yahaya Bello, 23 December 2020, [url](#); Guardian (The), SDP candidate Akpoti accuses Yahaya Bello of disrupting election with thugs, 16 November 2019, [url](#)

¹³⁵⁹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹³⁶⁰ IDMC, Mid-Year displacement update, [url](#), p. 14

¹³⁶¹ Premium Times, Politicians escalating violence in Kogi ahead of elections — CDD, 14 November 2019, [url](#)

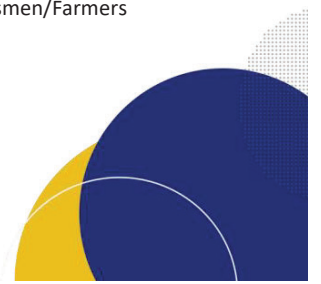
¹³⁶² This Day, Kogi: Relieving a Violent Reputation, 24 November 2019, [url](#)

¹³⁶³ CPJ, Nigerian journalists attacked and threatened while covering Bayelsa, Kogi state elections, 19 November 2019, [url](#)

¹³⁶⁴ Vanguard, Four herdsmen killed in Kogi reprisal attack, 20 January 2020, [url](#); Idakwoji S.P. et al., Herdsmen/Farmers Conflicts in Kogi State, December 2018, [url](#), p. 593

¹³⁶⁵ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹³⁶⁶ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



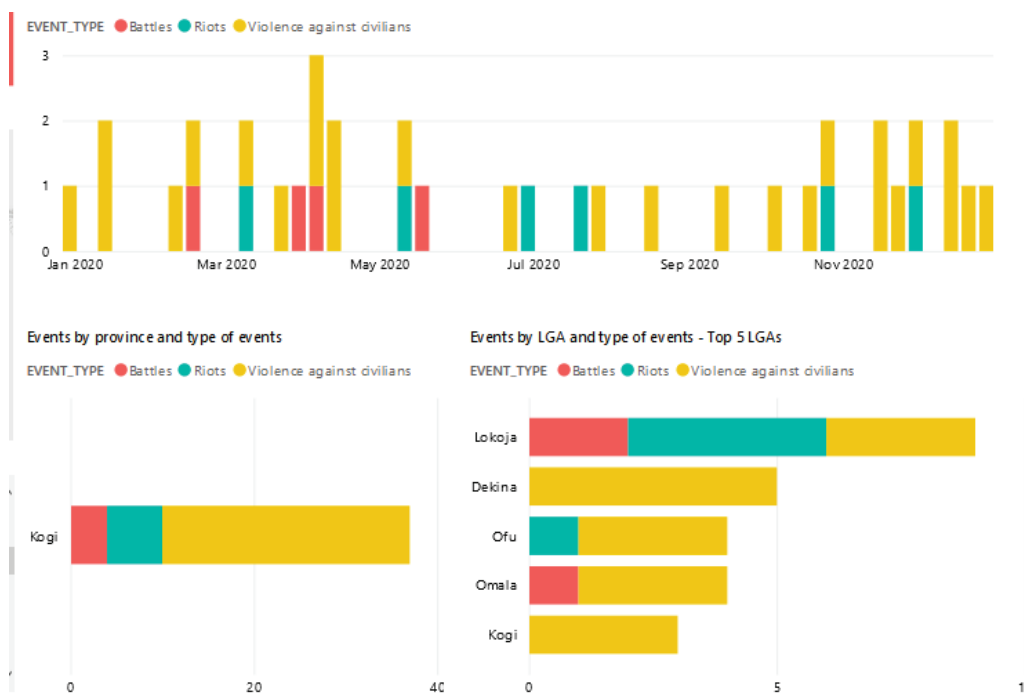


Figure 25 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Kogi state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹³⁶⁷

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Kogi state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Kogi state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	4	6
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	27	50
Riots	6	1
Total	37	57

Table 21 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹³⁶⁸

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 9 security incidents (1 battle, 6 cases of violence against civilians, 2 incidents of riots) in Kogi state, resulting in 2 deaths.¹³⁶⁹

2.16.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

The most significant incidents were cult clashes, farmer-herder conflicts and EndSARS protests. Below a few examples.

¹³⁶⁷ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹³⁶⁸ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹³⁶⁹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

One of the most violent incidents in recent years occurred on 5 November 2019, when 13 students at the Kogi State Polytechnic were hacked to death by a cult group, reportedly in a reprisal attack for the death of one of their members.¹³⁷⁰

On 2 January 2020, about 100 gunmen on motorbikes (suspected Fulani militias) attacked the community of Tawari (Kogi LGA), burnt houses, places of worship and the palace, and killed between 19 and 23 residents. The attack was allegedly a retaliation for the earlier death of four herdsmen.¹³⁷¹

On 17 January 2020, suspected Fulani militias killed a farmer in Oforachi (Igalamela-Odolu LGA) in presence of unarmed police officers. In reprisal, youths from the same community killed four Fulani suspected to be the culprits and dumped their bodies in the Ofu river.¹³⁷²

On 17 February 2020, two rival cult militias clashed in Lokoja (Lokoja LGA). Three people were killed and several injured.¹³⁷³

Around 16 April 2020, within nearly two weeks, suspected Fulani militias attacked several villages in Omala LGA (Agbenema- Ife, Agabifo, Ajichekpa, Opada, Ofejiji, Ajiolo and Ajodoma). Residents have fled their homes due to the wave of attacks.¹³⁷⁴

Fulani settlements were also attacked. On 14 May 2020, gunmen attacked a Fulani community in Ofanwa Elubi (Dekina LGA), shot and killed three members, and nine cows. This was the second attack in two months.¹³⁷⁵ On 25 June 2020, gunmen (suspected 'bandits') attacked a Fulani settlement in Osuku (Kogi LGA), killed two Fulani and stole 103 cows.¹³⁷⁶

On 14 October 2020, hundreds of #EndSARS protesters barricaded the State Government House in Lokoja to protest against police brutality and demanded a reform of the police force.¹³⁷⁷

On 19 October, armed 'thugs suspected to be loyal to the government' attacked protesters with cutlasses and machetes.¹³⁷⁸

On 25-26 October 2020, more than 500 rioters in Lokoja, under the guise of #EndSARS protests, looted private and public shops and warehouses,¹³⁷⁹ amongst which those containing medical equipment for coronavirus treatment. Four people, including a journalist, were shot during 'a bloody clash between #EndSARS protesters and political thugs'.¹³⁸⁰

2.16.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

The state governor warned against politicians using thugs and criminals during elections. He added that, after elections the thugs were 'dumped by politicians [...] metamorphosed into "hydra-headed monster" and criminal elements who now terrorise Nigerians'.¹³⁸¹ However, the governor himself was accused of using thugs to disrupt the governorship election.¹³⁸² In October 2020, violent actions were

¹³⁷⁰ Punch, Cultists kill 13 students in Kogi varsity, 5 November 2019, [url](#)

¹³⁷¹ Guardian (The), 23 killed as suspected militia attack Tawari in Kogi, 3 January 2020, [url](#); Pulse, Tawari Attack: Buhari condemns killing of 19 people by gunmen, 4 January 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁷² Guardian (The), Youths avenge murder of farmer in Kogi, kill four herdsmen, 21 January 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁷³ Vanguard, Three die in Kogi cult clash, speaker warns on cultism, 18 February 2020, [url](#); Nation (The), Kogi: 3 killed in cult clash, 18 February 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁷⁴ Daily Post, Fulani herdsmen allegedly attack Kogi village kill scores of farmers, residents, 16 April 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁷⁵ Guardian (The), Crisis brew in Kogi as gunmen kills three persons, nine cows in Kogi, 16 May 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Unknown gunmen kill three Fulani herdsmen, nine cows in Kogi, 17 May 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁷⁶ Daily Trust, Bandits kill 2 herdsmen, rustle 103 cows in Kogi, 27 June 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁷⁷ PM News, #EndSars protesters barricade government house in Kogi, 14 October 2020, [url](#); Nation (The) #EndSARS protest hits Kogi capital, 14 October 2020, [url](#)

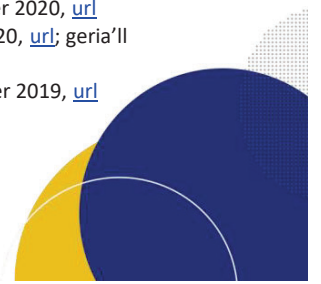
¹³⁷⁸ Sahara Reporters, Armed Thugs Attack Protesters In Kogi State, 19 October 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁷⁹ Premium Times, Journalist, others shot as hoodlums attack protesters in Lokoja, 26 October 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁸⁰ Premium Times, #EndSARS: Police nab suspected looters of N1.2bn medical equipment in Kogi, 27 October 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁸¹ Punch, Ni Premium Times, Journalist, others shot as hoodlums attack protesters in Lokoja, 26 October 2020, [url](#); geria'll be safe when politicians stop using thugs —Yahaya Bello, 23 December 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁸² Guardian (The), SDP candidate Akpoti accuses Yahaya Bello of disrupting election with thugs, 16 November 2019, [url](#)



reported by ‘political thugs’, attacking protesters against police brutality.¹³⁸³ The armed groups were reportedly loyal to the state government and backed by the police (see [Illustrative security incidents](#)).¹³⁸⁴

Kogi state suffers from a ‘spate of kidnapping and armed robbery’ on its highways (particularly Kabba-Obajana road and Abuja-Lokoja). Four security men were kidnapped.¹³⁸⁵ Security measures were stepped up in March¹³⁸⁶ and in April 2020, at least ‘28 kidnapers, bandits and cultists’ were arrested by the Joint Task Force of State Vigilante Service.¹³⁸⁷

At the end of August 2020, military forces, aided by local vigilante groups, destroyed a camp of Darusallam, an insurgents group comprised of ‘over 2,000 kidnapers, bandits and Boko Haram elements’ in the forest between Kogi and Nasarawa states, and allegedly responsible for most of the kidnappings and criminal activities along the Abuja-Lokoja highway for more than 8 years. About 100 kidnapped victims, mostly women and children, were rescued and about 180 insurgents arrested, one killed.¹³⁸⁸

2.16.3.4 Road security

Several highways in Kogi state are frequently mentioned in relation to abductions and robbery, such as Obajana-Kabba road¹³⁸⁹, Ajaokuta Itobe-Anyigba highway and Abuja-Lokoja highway¹³⁹⁰, and Okene-Lokoja road.¹³⁹¹ The state government had initiated a ‘road vegetation clearing project’ in 2017, aimed at removing thick bushes from 40 meters from each side of the roads and providing more visibility for the motorist while avoiding a hiding place for criminals. Several roads have been cleared by November 2019.¹³⁹² After a tanker got an accident on the Felele-Lokoja road, due to the deplorable road, and exploded while claiming many lives, the government has promised to fix the deplorable state of the road infrastructure in Kogi state.¹³⁹³

2.16.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on major damage in infrastructure or explosive remnants of war in Kogi state.

2.16.3.6 Displacement and return

For a general overview of the displacement trends in the North-West and North-Central Regions, see [Section 2.2.3.6](#) in Kaduna state.

IDPs

No information was found on conflict-related IDPs.

¹³⁸³ Sahara Reporters, Armed Thugs Attack Protesters In Kogi State, 19 October 2020, [url](#); Premium Times, Journalist, others shot as hoodlums attack protesters in Lokoja, 26 October 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁸⁴ Sahara Reporters, Armed Thugs Attack Protesters In Kogi State, 19 October 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁸⁵ Vanguard, Kogi Assembly advocates joint security operation to curb spate of kidnapping, 22 February 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁸⁶ Daily Trust, Kogi governor appoints security aides for 21 LGAs, 12 March 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁸⁷ Business Day, Vigilantes arrest 28 kidnapers, bandits, and cultists in Kogi, 14 April 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁸⁸ Nation (The), Military destroys kidnapers’ camp on Kogi boundary, 31 August 2020, [url](#); Sun (The), Military destroys ‘Darusallam’ terror camp on Kogi-Nasarawa border, rescues 100 victims, arrests 180 kidnapers, 31 August 2020, [url](#); Daily Post, Nigerian Army, vigilante destroy Boko Haram camp in Kogi, Nasarawa border, 31 August 2020, [url](#)

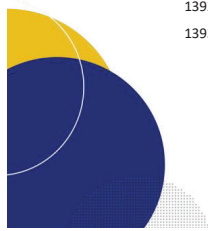
¹³⁸⁹ Vanguard, Kogi Assembly advocates joint security operation to curb spate of kidnapping, 22 February 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Security: Kogi Govt establishes Mopol base along Obajana-Kabba road, 19 February 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁹⁰ Vanguard, Kogi Assembly advocates joint security operation to curb spate of kidnapping, 22 February 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁹¹ Cable (The), Kogi on insecurity: We’ll change the narrative in a couple of days, 10 July 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁹² Guardian (The), Safer roads for people of Kogi, 11 November 2019, [url](#)

¹³⁹³ Guild (The), FG Promises To Fix Kogi Road, Other Infrastructure, 25 September 2020, [url](#)



Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Kogi state.

2.17 Kwara state

2.17.1 General description of the state

Kwara state shares boundaries with the states of Niger in the north, Kogi in the east, Oyo, Ekiti and Osun in the south. It also shares an international border with the Republic of Benin in the west. The state's capital is Ilorin.¹³⁹⁴

The state is composed of the following 16 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Asa, Baruten, Edu, Ekiti, Ifelodun, Ilorin East, Ilorin West, Ilorin South, Irepodun, Kaiama, Moro, Offa, Oyun, Isin, Oke-Ero and Patigi.¹³⁹⁵

In the 2006 census, the population of Kwara state was 2 365 353. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 3 192 893 in 2016.¹³⁹⁶

The ethnic groups in Kwara include: the Yoruba, Nupe, Bariba and Fulani. The main languages are English, which is an official language, and Yoruba.¹³⁹⁷

The main occupation in the state is farming.¹³⁹⁸

2.17.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.17.2.1 Background of the conflict

Kwara state is considered a relatively peaceful state in Nigeria, with few security incidents.¹³⁹⁹

2.17.2.2 Actors

Actors registered by ACLED for Kwara state include local communal militias, Fulani ethnic militia, cult militia, herders, and from the Nigerian security police and military.¹⁴⁰⁰

2.17.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

Several sources refer to Kwara state as being peaceful.¹⁴⁰¹ The state is affected by the increasing farmer-herder conflicts like its neighbouring states.¹⁴⁰² Several cult violence incidents were reported as well (see the section [Illustrative security incidents](#)).

¹³⁹⁴ Nigeria, Kwara State, n.d., [url](#)

¹³⁹⁵ Nigeria, Kwara State, n.d., [url](#)

¹³⁹⁶ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url, p. 2](#)

¹³⁹⁷ Nigeria, Kwara State, n.d., [url](#)

¹³⁹⁸ Nigeria, Kwara State, n.d., [url](#)

¹³⁹⁹ This Day, Kwara Gov Calls for Security Summit in North-central, 14 February 2020, [url](#); Opinion Nigeria, If Kwara State Remains Peaceful, It's From the Youths -By Abdulwaheed Sofiullahi, 26 October 2020, [url](#); Premium Times, #EndSARS: Don't instigate another civil war – Kwara Governor, 21 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰⁰ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰¹ Premium Times, #EndSARS: Don't instigate another civil war – Kwara Governor, 21 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰² Idakwoji, S.P. et al., Herdsmen/Farmers Conflicts in Kogi State, December 2018, [url](#), p. 593



2.17.3.1 Number of security incidents

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 8 security incidents (2 battles, 4 cases of violence against civilians, 2 incidents of riots) in Kwara state, resulting in 3 deaths. The highest number of security incidents (2 incidents) took place in Ilorin East LGA. Of the 4 incidents of violence against civilians, 3 were attacks and 1 abduction.¹⁴⁰³

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period, as well as the highest number of incidents by LGA is shown in Figure 42 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 10 protests were reported during the reference period.¹⁴⁰⁴



Figure 26 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Kwara state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹⁴⁰⁵

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Kwara state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Kwara state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	2	1
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	4	2
Riots	2	0
Total	8	3

¹⁴⁰³ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰⁴ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰⁵ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

Table 22 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹⁴⁰⁶

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 13 security incidents (3 battles, 2 cases of violence against civilians, 8 incidents of riots) in Kwara state, resulting in 10 deaths.¹⁴⁰⁷

2.17.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 19 May 2020, two persons were killed in rivalry clashes between alleged members of two cult groups in Okelele area (Ilorin LGA). The attacks were reportedly reprisal killings for an earlier killing that occurred after one group broke an agreement between the two sides to cease hostilities during the Ramadan month.¹⁴⁰⁸

On 14 June 2020, Fulani herdsmen and local residents clashed in the village of Lata (Pategi LGA) after complaints that the Fulani were riding their motorbikes in a dangerous manner. One person was killed and several injured.¹⁴⁰⁹

Between 9 and 12 October 2020, hundreds of #EndSARS supporters protested in demonstrations in Ilorin against police brutality across the country. On 12 October they sieged the Kwara State Government House.¹⁴¹⁰ On 15 October 2020, the State Governor walked with the protesters towards the police headquarters in Ilorin, urging them to remain peaceful and promising them that their complaints would be addressed.¹⁴¹¹

On 20 October 2020, two persons were killed (of one was beheaded) in an attack by suspected cultists in Kwara state capital Ilorin.¹⁴¹² The attack reportedly was a reaction to an earlier attack against #EndSARS protesters in Ilorin on 18 October 2020.¹⁴¹³

On 23 October 2020, a large crowd looted a warehouse containing COVID-19 palliatives in Ilorin, Security forces opened fire on the looters. Sources differ about the number of victims.¹⁴¹⁴ In addition, the office of the Customs Service¹⁴¹⁵ and a shopping mall was stormed. State authorities declared a 24-hour curfew.¹⁴¹⁶

2.17.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

During the #EndSARS demonstrations, Kwara state government appeared responsive to the grievances and complaints of the protesters. On 15 October 2020, the State Governor approached the protesters and walked with them to the police headquarters in Ilorin, where he promised to address their complaints. He announced that an ombudsman would be set up as a go-between for aggrieved

¹⁴⁰⁶ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰⁷ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰⁸ Business Day, 2 persons killed in Ilorin as Cult groups Clash, 20 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰⁹ News (The), Communal clashes claim life in Kwara, 15 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴¹⁰ Premium Times, #EndSARS: Protesters besiege Kwara Govt House (PHOTOS), 12 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴¹¹ Vanguard, Kwara gov, AbdulRazaq, walks with ENDSARS protesters, urges calm, 15 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴¹² Business Day, 2 people killed in Ilorin as cult groups clash, 20 October 2020, [url](#)

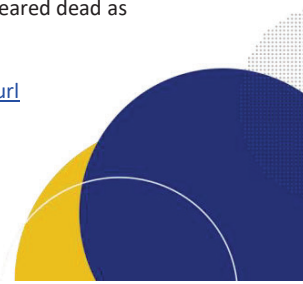
¹⁴¹³ Business Day, 2 people killed in Ilorin as cult groups clash, 20 October 2020, [url](#); Nigerian Tribune, #EndSARS: Suspected cultists attack protesters in Kwara, 18 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴¹⁴ Cable (The), 'Many killed' as security operatives attack residents looting COVID-19 palliative store in Kwara, 23 October 2020, [url](#); Daily Trust, 6 feared killed in shooting on Ilorin palliatives warehouse looters, 23 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴¹⁵ Premium Times, Four injured as mob attacks Customs office in Kwara, 23 October 2020, [url](#); Punch, Two feared dead as Kwara hoodlums attack Customs office, bank, Shoprite, others, 24 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴¹⁶ Premium Times, Four injured as mob attacks Customs office in Kwara, 23 October 2020, [url](#);

Punch, Two feared dead as Kwara hoodlums attack Customs office, bank, Shoprite, others, 24 October 2020, [url](#)



citizens and security agencies through which people can channel their complaints.¹⁴¹⁷ The Kwara state police command also insisted that peaceful protesters were protected by the police.¹⁴¹⁸

2.17.3.4 Road security

On 27 January 2020, an attack, presumably by Fulani herdsmen, on motorists at the Ogbomoso - Ilorin Expressway killed one person, a Nollywood actor. The source does not provide any information as to the motives for this attack.¹⁴¹⁹

According to the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), road safety improvement in Kwara state was under way by introducing several measures to reduce road traffic crashes.¹⁴²⁰

2.17.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on major damage in infrastructure or explosive remnants of war in Kwara state.

2.17.3.6 Displacement and return

For a general overview of the displacement trends in the North-West and North-Central Regions, see [Section 2.2.3.6](#) in Kaduna state.

IDPs

No information was found on conflict-related IDPs.

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Kwara state.

2.18 Nasarawa state

2.18.1 General description of the state

Nasarawa state shares borders in the north with Kaduna state, in the west with the FCT, in the south with Kogi and Benue states and in the east with Taraba and Plateau states. The state's capital is Lafia.¹⁴²¹

Nasarawa state is comprised of the following 13 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Akwanga, Awe, Doma, Karu, Keena, Keffi, Kokona, Lafia, Nasarawa, Nasarawa Egon, Obi, Toto and Wamba.¹⁴²²

In the 2006 census, the population of Nasarawa state was 1 869 377. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 2 523 395 in 2016.¹⁴²³

Ethnic groups in Nasarawa state include the Gwandara, Alago, Eggon, Gbagi, Egbira, Migili, Kantana, Fulani, Hausa, Kanuri, Tiv, Afo, Gade, Nyankpa, Koro, Jukun, Mada, Ninzam, Buh, Basa, Agatu, Arum and Kulere, as well as settler groups such as the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa.¹⁴²⁴

¹⁴¹⁷ Vanguard, Kwara gov, AbdulRazaq, walks with ENDSARS protesters, urges calm, 15 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴¹⁸ Business Day, 2 people killed in Ilorin as cult groups clash, 20 October 2020, [url](#); Nigerian Tribune, #EndSARS: Suspected cultists attack protesters in Kwara, 18 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴¹⁹ Vanguard, Suspected herdsmen allegedly kill Nollywood actor in Ilorin, 29 January 2020, [url](#)

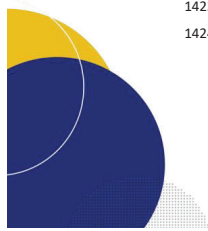
¹⁴²⁰ Vanguard, FRSC reiterates commitment to safety of roads in Kwara, 15 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴²¹ Nigeria, Nasarawa State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁴²² Nigeria, Nasarawa State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁴²³ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url, p. 2](#)

¹⁴²⁴ Nigeria, Nasarawa State, About Nasarawa State, n.d., [url](#)



There are 29 spoken languages as first language, most of which are minority languages. Some of these languages are the Agatu, Basa, Eggon, Gbagyi, Gade, Goemai, Gwandara, Ham, Kofyar, and Lijili. The language of Basa-Gumna is extinct.¹⁴²⁵

The main economic activity in Nasarawa state is agriculture, producing varieties of cash crops throughout the year. The state also has mineral reserves such as salt and bauxite.¹⁴²⁶

2.18.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.18.2.1 Background of the conflict

While all of Nigeria is affected by the farmers-herders crisis, Nasarawa is one of the states that ‘stand out for the sheer regularity, intensity and carnage of the incidents in their areas’.¹⁴²⁷

The anti-grazing law implemented in Benue state (see [Section 2.14.1](#)) aimed at deterring herders from grazing their animals in non-designated areas. However, it resulted in more violent responses towards herders whose livestock would graze in the wrong areas and as a result destroy crops. The implementation of it in Benue state pushed herders into Nasarawa state, where such laws were not in place and with which Benue state shares borders. The increased migration of herders into Nasarawa caused a spill-over effect of violence from Benue to Nasarawa state.¹⁴²⁸

International Crisis Group noted in 2018 that Nasarawa state was experiencing a surge in violence involving herder and farmer militias. Citing entries from its Crisis Watch and media reports, it further stated that in the period between January and June 2018, more than 260 people were killed, mainly in the LGAs of Doma, Awe, Obi and Keana.¹⁴²⁹ Most of these killings were related to the influx of herders into Nasarawa state due to the Benue state anti-grazing law, which began being implemented on 1 November 2017.¹⁴³⁰

2.18.2.2 Actors

One of the actors present in Nasarawa are the militias of the Tiv ethnic group, which according to one source are a majority in Benue state, but a minority in Nasarawa.¹⁴³¹

International Crisis Group reported in 2018 that militias and vigilantes were not a new phenomenon in Middle Belt and that, in the previous decade, indigenous groups - mostly from farming communities - such as the Eggon of Nasarawa state - reportedly formed militias and vigilante groups to repel Fulani herders whose cattle grazed in their fields. These groups on occasion collaborated with the traditional and national authorities; however, in other cases they attacked herders due to alleged damage to their farms or in order to forcefully keep them away from their areas.¹⁴³²

IISS noted in its Armed Conflict Survey 2020 that the military Operation Whirl Stroke, which was set up in 2018 to address insecurity associated with farmer–pastoralist violence in Nasarawa (among other states) continued being active in 2019.¹⁴³³

¹⁴²⁵ Nigeria, Nasarawa State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁴²⁶ Nigeria, Nasarawa State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁴²⁷ Onah, E. I. et al., Applying restorative justice in resolving the farmers-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria, January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴²⁸ ACAPS, Nigeria: Spike in farmer-herder violence in the Middle Belt, 18 December 2018, [url](#), p. 2

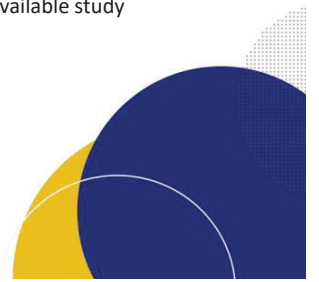
¹⁴²⁹ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria’s Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), p. 2; International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁴³⁰ ACAPS, Nigeria: Spike in farmer-herder violence in the Middle Belt, 18 December 2018, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁴³¹ Conversation (the), What’s triggered new conflict between farmers and herders in Nigeria, 1 September 2020, [url](#). This article refers to, and shares findings from a study titled: Conflict triggers between farming and pastoral communities in Nasarawa State, Nigeria, by Oludayo Tade and Yikwab Peter Yikwabs, dated 4 May 2020. This is not a publicly available study and as a result it was not possible to corroborate the findings.

¹⁴³² International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria’s Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), pp. 4-5

¹⁴³³ IISS, Armed Conflict Survey 2020. Nigeria (Farmer - Pastoralist), 2020, p. 344



2.18.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

In August 2020, the Guardian (Nigeria) highlighted the concerns and insecurity related to the latest killings and kidnappings of citizens by suspected kidnappers across the state. It stated that 'Life has become so cheap as kidnappers murder and abduct people unabated both in rural and urban areas without being challenged by security operatives.' In the four previous months another resurgence of kidnappings and killings by suspected Fulani had taken place in Nasarawa state, with Nasarawa and Toto being the LGAs where most of the kidnapping and armed robberies were taking place. The source further pointed out that kidnappings had spread to the entire state.¹⁴³⁴

Nigeria Watch reported that, in 2020, Nasarawa was among the states with a 'significant number' of fatalities due to farmer-herder clashes. In addition, ethno-communal clashes took place in 2020, due to land ownership claims, destruction of farmlands and what is described as 'indulgence' in criminal activities. The source further noted that, overall, in 2020 the situation in Nasarawa was 'relatively peaceful', since less than 100 fatalities were recorded in 2020.¹⁴³⁵

2.18.3.1 Number of security incidents

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 39 security incidents (15 battles, 23 cases of violence against civilians, 1 incidents of riots) in Nasarawa state, resulting in 66 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Lafia LGA, followed by Nasarawa-Eggon, Nasarawa and Toto LGAs. Of the 23 incidents of violence against civilians, 15 were attacks and 8 abductions.¹⁴³⁶

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period is shown in Figure 44 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 8 protests were reported during the reference period.¹⁴³⁷

¹⁴³⁴ Guardian (The) Nigeria, Rampaging kidnappings, killings in Nasarawa rattle citizens, 14 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴³⁵ Nigeria Watch, Tenth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2020), n.d., [url](#), pp. 10, 18, 8

¹⁴³⁶ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁴³⁷ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

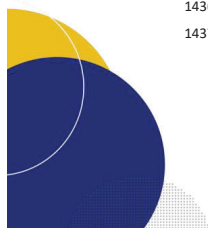




Figure 27 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Nasarawa state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹⁴³⁸

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Nasarawa state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Nasarawa state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	15	24
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	23	41
Riots	1	1
Total	39	66

Table 23 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹⁴³⁹

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 10 security incidents (2 battles, 7 cases of violence against civilians, 1 incident of riots) in Nasarawa state, resulting in 21 deaths.¹⁴⁴⁰

2.18.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 21 January 2020, gunmen, suspected to be Fulani militia, attacked Abebe community (Keana LGA) killing four people, including a Catholic Church leader. They were armed with 'sophisticated' weapons. According to one survivor, the attack was unprovoked.¹⁴⁴¹

¹⁴³⁸ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁴³⁹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴⁰ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴¹ This Day, Gunmen Kill Church Leader, Three Others in Nasarawa, 22 January 2020, [url](#)

On 6 May 2020, gunmen who were suspected to be kidnappers opened fire on a commercial vehicle at Turunku village (Toto LGA). Four travellers were killed and two went missing. According to a witness, there was a large number of gunmen, using what was described as ‘sophisticated’ weapons.¹⁴⁴²

On 10 and 11 May 2020, five people were reported killed and others injured in clashes between Tiv farmers and Fulani herdsmen at the border community of Angwan Ayaba, between Nasarawa and Benue states, in Kadarko District of Giza Development Area (Keana LGA).¹⁴⁴³

On 1 July 2020, approximately 50 bandits kidnapped 30 people and killed two members of the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN) near Onda Hill (Nasarawa LGA). According to the chairman of the LGA, the vigilantes were ambushed when they went after the bandits to rescue the kidnapped people.¹⁴⁴⁴

On 14 July 2020, gunmen invaded a house in Akwanga LGA, killing two people and kidnapping one person. The two people killed were the niece and nephew of the former Minister of Information, Labaran Maku and the kidnapped was the nephew’s wife.¹⁴⁴⁵

On 27 July 2020, suspected militiamen attacked Dawusu village in Umaisha (Toto LGA) leaving five people dead, others missing as a result of the attack and houses on fire.¹⁴⁴⁶ Vanguard reported the village name as Daisy.¹⁴⁴⁷

On 14 September 2020, suspected kidnappers attacked vehicles transporting Federal Road Safety Corps officials at Wudage Junction (Toto LGA). Two officials were killed and 10 others kidnapped.¹⁴⁴⁸

On 25 October 2020, unknown gunmen killed one man and according to eyewitnesses kidnapped his wife and other people, possibly three, in Odu community (Nasarawa LGA).¹⁴⁴⁹

2.18.3.3 State’s ability to secure law and order

The National Economic Council (NEC) of Nigeria approved in 2018 a 10-year National Livestock Plan, estimated to cost approximately NGN 179 billion. This measure was taken in relation to the increasing conflicts and mass killings from the seasonal pastoral movements. The plan involved the establishment of 94 ranches in 10 pilot states, including Nasarawa.¹⁴⁵⁰ The reasoning behind the establishment of ranches is to ‘mitigat[e] the escalating crisis between settled-farmers and pastoralists that could undermine the entire development of the livestock sector.’¹⁴⁵¹

On 17 April 2020 the Nigerian military killed four members suspected to belong to an ‘offshoot’ of Boko Haram in Toto LGA and pursued other fleeing members.¹⁴⁵²

According to the Guardian (Nigeria), the killings and kidnappings across Nasarawa indicate that ‘Life has become so cheap as kidnappers murder and abduct people unabated both in rural and urban areas without being challenged by security operatives.’¹⁴⁵³

¹⁴⁴² Daily Trust, Gunmen Kill 4 Travellers, 2 Others Missing in Nasarawa, 7 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴³ Daily Trust, 5 Killed, Others Injured In Tiv/Fulani Clash In Nasarawa, 11 May 2020, [url](#); Nation (the), Farmers/herdsmen attacks leave five dead, other injured in Nasarawa, 10 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴⁴ Daily Trust, Bandits Abduct 30, Kill 2 Vigilantes in Nasarawa, 2 July 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴⁵ This Day, Gov Sule Vows to Tackle Crimes over Maku’s Nephew, Niece Killings, 18 July 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴⁶ Daily Trust, Militia Attack: Toto LG Boss Seeks Support For Victims, 4 August 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Attacks: 5 killed, 14 missing in Nasarawa village, 3 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴⁷ Vanguard, Nasarawa Attack: 14 missing, 5 killed as police vows to fish out killers, 2 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴⁸ Sahara Reporters, Gunmen Attack FRSC Officials In Nasarawa, Kill Two, Abduct 10 Others, 14 September 2020, [url](#)

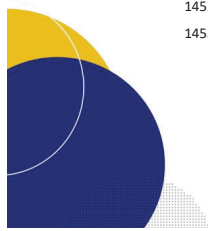
¹⁴⁴⁹ Leadership, Gunmen Kill Man, Abduct Wife, Others In Nasarawa C’tee, [October 2020], [url](#); Headlines.ng, Gunmen Kill Man, Abduct Wife, Others In Nasarawa C’tee, 27 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁵⁰ Nation (the), Fed Govt to build 94 ranches in 10 states, 20 June 2018, [url](#)

¹⁴⁵¹ FAO, The future of livestock in Nigeria. Opportunities and challenges in the face of uncertainty, 2019, [url](#), p. 14

¹⁴⁵² Vanguard, Military Bursts Boko Haram Cell, kill 4 in Nasarawa state, 17 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁵³ Guardian (The) Nigeria, Rampaging kidnappings, killings in Nasarawa rattle citizens, 14 August 2020, [url](#)



2.18.3.4 Road security

Sahara Reporters noted that motorists described the Keffi-Lafia Road in Nasarawa state as very dangerous for travellers due to the presence of armed robbers and kidnappers.¹⁴⁵⁴

2.18.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war.

2.18.3.6 Displacement and return

For a general overview of the displacement trends in the North-West and North-Central Regions, see [Section 2.2.3.6](#) in Kaduna state.

IDPs

The total number of IDPs for Nasarawa by December 2020 was 20 059, an increase of 4 009 individuals (5 %) compared to Round 4 (17 593 IDPs¹⁴⁵⁵). Karu LGA hosted most IDPs in Nasarawa (6 252 persons).¹⁴⁵⁶

For an overview of changes in IDP population by state (North-West and North-Central Region) between Round 4 and 5, see [Table 5](#) in [Section 2.2.3.6](#).

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Nasarawa state.

2.19 Niger state

2.19.1 General description of the state

Niger state shares borders with Kaduna state and FCT at the north-east and south-east respectively, Zamfara state in the north, Kebbi state in the west, Kogi state in the south and Kwara state in the south-west. It also shares an international border with the Republic of Benin at the north-west along Agwara LGA. The state's capital is Minna.¹⁴⁵⁷

Niger state is composed of the following 25 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Agaie, Agwara, Bida, Borgu, Bosso, Chanchaga, Edati, Gbako, Gurara, Katcha, Kontagora, Lapai, Lavun, Magama, Mariga, Mashegu, Mokwa, Munya, Paikoro, Rafi, Rijau, Shiroro, Suleja, Tafa and Wushishi.¹⁴⁵⁸

In the 2006 census, the population of Niger state was 3 954 772. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 5 556 247 in 2016.¹⁴⁵⁹

There are three main ethnic groups in Niger state: the Nupe, Gbagyi and Hausa. Other groups include the Kadara, Koro, Barab, Kakanda, GanaGana, Dibo, Kambari, Kamuku, Pangu, Dukawa, Gwada and Ingwai. Tribes including the Igbo, Yoruba and numerous others are also present in the state.¹⁴⁶⁰

¹⁴⁵⁴ Sahara Reporters, Motorists List Nigeria's Most Dangerous Roads, Say Bandits Built Dens Along Them, 15 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁵⁵ IOM Nigeria, Displacement Tracking Matrix North Central and North West Zones Displacement Report 4, August 2020, 25 October 2020, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁴⁵⁶ IOM Nigeria, DTM North Central and North West Zones, Displacement Report 5 (January 2021), 8 March 2021, [url](#), p. 8

¹⁴⁵⁷ Nigeria, Niger State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁴⁵⁸ Nigeria, Niger State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁴⁵⁹ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 3

¹⁴⁶⁰ Nigeria, Niger State, n.d., [url](#)



The state's main occupation is farming.¹⁴⁶¹

2.19.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.19.2.1 Background of the conflict

While all of Nigeria is affected by the farmers-herders crisis, Niger is one of the states that 'stand out for the sheer regularity, intensity and carnage of the incidents in their areas'.¹⁴⁶² Niger state in recent years 'has become a hotbed of violence, with armed criminals forcing villagers to displacement camps in the state capital, Minna'.¹⁴⁶³

According to Vanguard, Niger state has been 'under siege' from bandits for the past 7 years. Bandits had attacked 18 out of the 25 LGAs of Niger. The LGAs most frequently attacked were Shiroro, Munyan, Rafi, Mashegu and lately Paiko.¹⁴⁶⁴

International Crisis group noted that:

'starting in 2011 and accelerating since 2014, the North West has also suffered a surge of violence between pastoralists and allied armed groups frequently called 'bandits', on one hand, and farmers supported by community and state-sponsored vigilantes, on the other. The situation has been further aggravated by the proliferation of deadly criminal gangs, thriving in a region awash with arms and which state security forces struggle to control. Largely occurring in rural areas, the violence has spread from its epicentre in Zamfara state to [...] into Niger state in North Central Nigeria.'¹⁴⁶⁵

2.19.2.2 Actors

So-called 'bandits' constitute one of the main actors in Niger state. They are involved in kidnappings, murder, robbery, rape and cattle-rustling.¹⁴⁶⁶ According to Vanguard, their modus operandi is to attack mainly in daytime. They use motorcycles and are fully armed. When attacking, they 'move from house to house in search of money, foodstuffs, other handy valuables and also rustle cows and other domestic animals. In some cases, the houses of the residents are completely burnt down thereby rendering them homeless. Besides, many have been maimed while the women, both old and young ended up being raped.'¹⁴⁶⁷ According to the Strife blog, on the contrary, they usually mobilised during the night and on occasion in the afternoon.¹⁴⁶⁸

According to the Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), a humanitarian data and analysis provider, bandits' activities in Niger, among other states, were originally in the form of 'herder-allied armed banditry' but evolved to resemble non-state armed groups (see also [Section 1.4.1.1](#)).¹⁴⁶⁹

2.19.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

In June 2020, ACAPS highlighted that 'a new humanitarian crisis is emerging in Nigeria's northwest with the ongoing activities of armed groups referred to locally as "bandits" in six states', including

¹⁴⁶¹ Nigeria, Niger State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁴⁶² Onah, E. I., Olajide, B. E., Applying restorative justice in resolving the farmers-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria, January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁶³ AP, Gunmen kill 22 people in 2 attacks in Nigeria's middle belt, 4 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁶⁴ Vanguard, Seven years of banditry in Niger State: 380 killed, 71 abducted, N79m paid as ransom, 13 February 2021, [url](#)

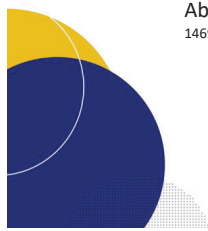
¹⁴⁶⁵ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁴⁶⁶ Ademola, A., The Growing Threat of Armed Banditry in North-West Nigeria, Strife, 8 January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁴⁶⁷ Vanguard, Seven years of banditry in Niger State: 380 killed, 71 abducted, N79m paid as ransom, 13 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁴⁶⁸ Strife is, according to its website, a dual format publication comprised of Strife academic blog and Strife Journal. It is led by doctoral and graduate researchers based in the Department of War Studies, King's College London. Source: Strife Blog, About Strife, n.d., [url](#); Ademola, A., The Growing Threat of Armed Banditry in North-West Nigeria, Strife, 8 January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁴⁶⁹ ACAPS, Nigeria. Banditry violence and displacement in the Northwest, 24 July 2020, [url](#), p. 3



Niger. The bandits' attacks included shooting and killing, cattle rustling, kidnapping, rape, setting villages on fire and looting of valuables, with fatalities and displaced persons continuing to increase.¹⁴⁷⁰

CFR similarly noted in 2020 that Niger was one of the main states in Nigeria that was facing 'devastating attacks from armed bandits' for more than two years. The source cited 'many overlapping factors' to this outcome, such as cattle rustling, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, illicit mining, youth unemployment, poverty, inequality, as well as 'the weakened, stretched, and demoralized security services'.¹⁴⁷¹

Nigeria Watch reported that, in 2020, there were 547 fatalities in Niger, making it one of the states with the highest numbers of fatalities in Nigeria (Borno being the state with the highest number of fatalities) while noting that 'all northern states affected by banditry and the Boko Haram insurgency'.¹⁴⁷²

According to the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), civilians were the ones mainly affected by 'converging criminal and conflict dynamics in the north-west'. In the period between January and June 2020, at least 608 civilians were killed in approximately 245 incidents in five states including Niger; a significant increase compared to the 251 incidents recorded for all of 2019, with 1 028 fatalities.¹⁴⁷³

In January 2021, the Deputy National President of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) stated that in recent months, 20 of the Association's members were killed and burnt beyond recognition by vigilantes in Mashegu LGA.¹⁴⁷⁴

2.19.3.1 Number of security incidents

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 96 security incidents (34 battles, 3 incidents of remote violence/explosions, 57 cases of violence against civilians, 2 incidents of riots) in Niger state, resulting in 211 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Rafi LGA (37 incidents with 54 deaths), followed by Shiroro LGA (27 incidents with 66 deaths) and Marga LGA (8 incidents with 32 deaths). Of the 57 incidents of violence against civilians, 47 were attacks, 9 abductions and 1 sexual violence.¹⁴⁷⁵

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period is shown in Figure 46 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 20 protests were reported during the reference period.¹⁴⁷⁶

¹⁴⁷⁰ ACAPS, Nigeria. Banditry violence and displacement in the Northwest, 24 July 2020, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁴⁷¹ CFR, Not All Violent Problems Require Violent Solutions: Banditry in Nigeria's North-West, 23 July 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁷² Nigeria Watch, Tenth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2020), n.d., [url](#), pp. 6, 8

¹⁴⁷³ Samuel, M., Nigeria's growing insecurity offers expansion opportunities for Boko Haram, 3 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁷⁴ Vanguard, Miyetti Allah cries out, says 20 members killed, burnt in Niger, 19 January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁴⁷⁵ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁷⁶ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



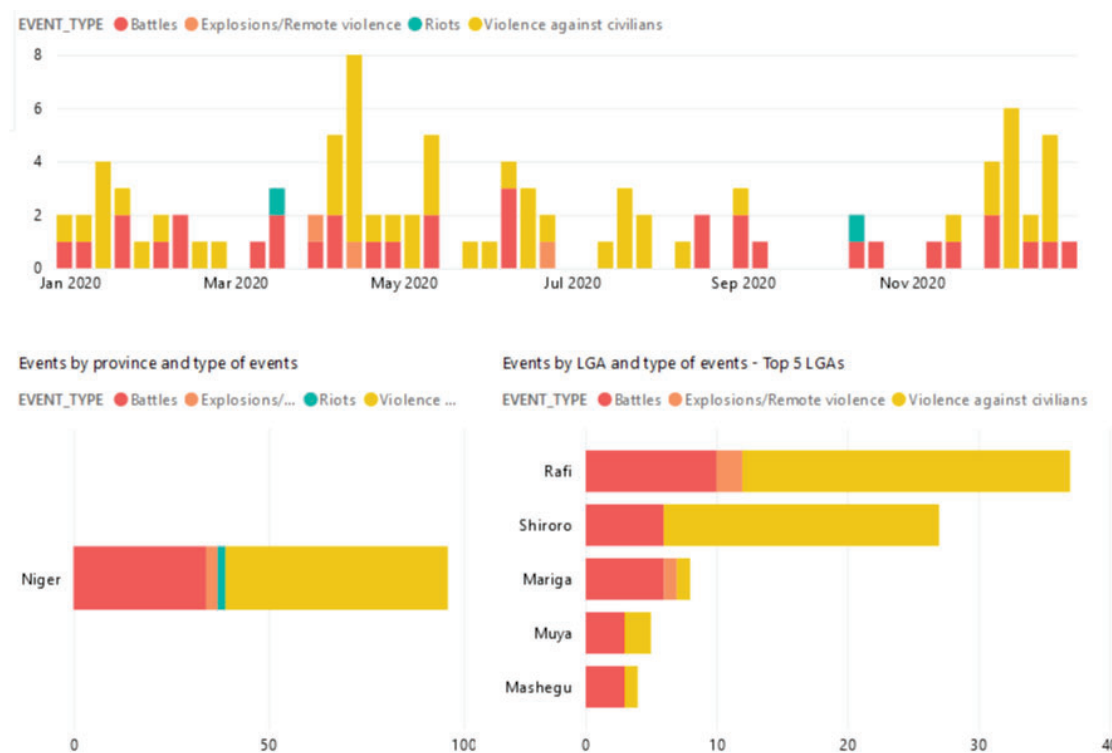


Figure 28 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Niger state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹⁴⁷⁷

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Niger state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Niger state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	34	97
Explosions/remote violence	3	9
Violence against civilians	57	104
Riots	2	1
Total	96	211

Table 24 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹⁴⁷⁸

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 63 security incidents (19 battles, 42 cases of violence against civilians, 2 incidents of riots) in Niger state, resulting in 161 deaths.¹⁴⁷⁹

2.19.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 9 January 2020, bandits kidnapped the son of the District Head of Beni and 32 others from the Beni community (Munya LGA) and demanded NGN 49 million¹⁴⁸⁰ ransom for their release.¹⁴⁸¹

¹⁴⁷⁷ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁷⁸ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁷⁹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

¹⁴⁸⁰ 49 million Naira correspond to approximately 107 461.88 Euros. Xe, Xe Currency Converter, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁴⁸¹ News Express, Bandits demand N49m to free kidnap victims, 10 January 2020, [url](#)

On 17 January 2020, bandits attacked Rumache community in Kukoki Ward (Shiroro LGA), killed the village head, Mallam Ahmad Yakubu Rumache and kidnapped his son and 16 other villagers.¹⁴⁸² The perpetrators were allegedly suspected Fulani armed bandits.¹⁴⁸³

On 25 January 2020, approximately 50 armed bandits killed 11 people, kidnapped others and raped women during an early morning attack at Kudodo, Galapai, Dnakpala, Makera, and Dnalgwa villages (Shiroro LGA). In addition, 16 villagers were injured during the attack.¹⁴⁸⁴

On 12 April 2020, armed bandits raided the communities of Maikujeri, Tasha and Shamuyambu (Rafi LGA), killing three people and kidnapping 16 others. In addition, the source stated that ‘a young schoolgirl was openly raped by the bandits at Maikujeri town’. Three out of the 16 people kidnapped escaped.¹⁴⁸⁵

Between 14 and 15 April 2020, bandits attacked Shiroro and Rafi LGAs. Five people were killed and another five were injured in Shiroro LGA. One person was killed and several others injured in Madaka community (Rafi LGA).¹⁴⁸⁶

On 19 April, two persons were killed by bandits during an attack at Gidigori and adjoining villages (Rafi LGA).¹⁴⁸⁷

On 24 June 2020, at least four people were killed by bandits who attacked the communities of Sunko, Gavva and Marafa (Shiroro LGA).¹⁴⁸⁸ Villagers were reportedly injured and others went missing.¹⁴⁸⁹ The Niger State Police Command’s Public Relations Officer, ASP Wasiu Abiodun, was cited that no attack took place in these communities.¹⁴⁹⁰

On 3 September 2020, at least 20 villagers were abducted in an armed raid, when gunmen on motorcycles raided and opened fire at Adagbi village (Shiroro LGA).¹⁴⁹¹

On 19 October 2020, three people were killed by gunmen suspected to be Fulani herdsmen in Borgu LGA. One of the three victims was Adeniyi Odunlami, a businessman and Chief Executive Officer of Spool and Waterbodies Limited.¹⁴⁹²

On 30 November 2020, armed bandits killed four people in an attack at Daja local market and Mangun village (Mashegu LGA).¹⁴⁹³

On 13 December 2020, armed bandits attacked Chukuba community (Shiroro LGA). They killed the pastor and kidnapped nine other people. On 14 December, they kidnapped 11 other people from the neighbouring community.¹⁴⁹⁴

On 2 February 2021, ‘terrorists’ attacked 10 villages in Shiroro LGA, killed 25 people and abducted 40. The villages were attacked because they refused to participate in a community meeting negotiating about the compensation to be paid to the terrorists to refrain from attacks on farmers harvesting their crops.¹⁴⁹⁵

¹⁴⁸² Today, Bandits kill village head, abduct son, 16 others in sustained onslaught on Niger communities, 17 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁸³ Nigeria Tribune, Suspected Fulani bandits kill village head, kidnap 17 others in Niger, 18 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁸⁴ This Day, Bandits Kill 11, Kidnap Scores, Rape Women in Niger Communities, 26 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁸⁵ Sun (The), Black Easter in Niger as bandits kill 3, abduct 13, 13 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁸⁶ This Day, Again, Bandits Kill Six Persons in Niger, 16 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁸⁷ This Day, Bandits Kill Seven People in Niger LG, 22 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁸⁸ Daily Post, Banditry attacks: Four killed in renewed attacks in Shiroro LG, 25 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁸⁹ Daily Post, Banditry attacks: Four killed in renewed attacks in Shiroro LG, 25 June 2020, [url](#); Daily Trust, Bandits Kill 4 In Fresh Attack On Niger, 25 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁹⁰ Daily Trust, Bandits Kill 4 In Fresh Attack On Niger, 25 June 2020, [url](#)

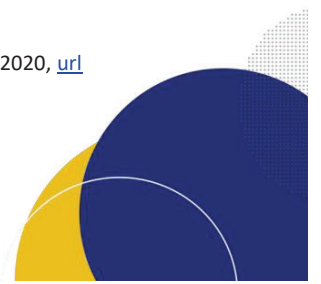
¹⁴⁹¹ AA, Nigeria: 20 villagers kidnapped in armed raid, 4 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁹² Punch, Suspected herdsmen kill FCT contractor, two others in Niger, 27 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁹³ Nation (the), Bandits attack local market, kill Four in Niger, 2 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁹⁴ Nigerian Tribune, How Bandits Hacked 7 Children To Death, Kidnapped 20 Others In My LG, 19 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁴⁹⁵ SB Morgen, Sitrep: What is happening in Niger State?, 18 February 2021, [url](#)



On 17 February 2021, 42 persons, including 27 students from Government Science College in Kagara were abducted by unknown terrorists.¹⁴⁹⁶ They were released after 11 days.¹⁴⁹⁷

On 28 February 2021, ‘bandits’ attacked residents in various communities in Kundu, Gunna, Karako, and Maikunjeri, killing four and kidnapping at least 19 persons. Cattle was also rustled.¹⁴⁹⁸

2.19.3.3 State’s ability to secure law and order

International Crisis group reported in 2020 that the Niger state government was one of the states involved in dialogue primarily with herder-allied armed group leaders. The state authorities offered the armed groups incentives such as amnesty to try and put an end to the attacks. As a result of these talks, Niger reached some agreements with herder-allied groups in 2019.¹⁴⁹⁹

As part of the measures taken by different states to reduce farmer-herder conflicts in the region - mainly through the establishment, reactivation and demarcation of grazing reserves - Niger state in 2018 designated 44 000 hectares of land in order to create 23 grazing reserves in the state.¹⁵⁰⁰

The senator for Niger East Senatorial District, in Niger state reported in January 2020 that ‘ [f]or months now, most local governments in Niger East have been under the menacing grip of bandits with no succour in sight.’¹⁵⁰¹

An attack on 22 March 2020 described as an ‘ambush’ by bandits resulted in the death of 27 security personnel, including military, civil defence and policemen, in Shiroro LGA.¹⁵⁰² Following that attack, the governor of Niger state announced an end to the dialogue between armed bandits and government in Niger state.¹⁵⁰³

According to the Sun, the armed bandits who attacked Shiroro LGA on 25 January 2020 moved ‘from one house to another without any resistance for about hours’.¹⁵⁰⁴

Following the attacks on 15 June 2020 in Kundu village (Rafi LGA) and in Gurmana (Shiroro LGA), which resulted in the death of 5 people, the Rafi and Shiroro senator accused the government of ‘not doing enough to arrest the attacks on the people in the two local government areas which have consequently dislocated their economic and social lives’. According to This Day, the senator further added that his people would take armed action if the government would not take the necessary measures to limit bandit attacks.¹⁵⁰⁵

In February 2021, the Vanguard reported that bandits ‘operate without any challenge from the security agents’ in Niger state.¹⁵⁰⁶

2.19.3.4 Road security

Nigerian motorists, interviewed by Sahara reporters, stated that ‘The situation now in Niger State is terrible. The Birnin-Gwari Road is the most dangerous in the North-West for now, and that is the road

¹⁴⁹⁶ Al Jazeera, Gunmen kidnap over 300 girls in Nigeria school raid: Police, 26 February 2021, [url](#); SB Morgen, Sitrep: What is happening in Niger State?, 18 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁴⁹⁷ Leadership, After Releasing Schoolboys, Bandits Strike Again In Kagara, 28 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁴⁹⁸ Leadership, After Releasing Schoolboys, Bandits Strike Again In Kagara, 28 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁴⁹⁹ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 24

¹⁵⁰⁰ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 27; PR Nigeria, Niger State Earmarks 23 Grazing Reserves for Herders, 8 February 2018, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰¹ This Day, Bandits Kill 11, Kidnap Scores, Rape Women in Niger Communities, 26 January 2020, [url](#)

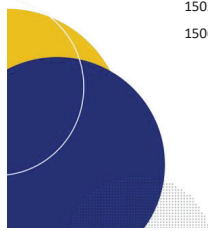
¹⁵⁰² Blueprint, Bandits killed 27 security operatives, civilians in Niger – Shiroro youth, 25 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰³ Blueprint, Niger rules out further dialogue with bandits, 27 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰⁴ Sun (The), Armed bandits raid Niger communities, kill 11, kidnap 4 women, rustle over 300 cattle, 26 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰⁵ This Day, Again, Bandits Attack Two Niger Communities, Kill Five People, 16 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰⁶ Vanguard, Seven years of banditry in Niger State: 380 killed, 71 abducted, N79m paid as ransom, 13 February 2021, [url](#)



that connects from Niger to Kaduna.’ Bandits have a presence in that road, stopping cars and kidnapping people for ransom.¹⁵⁰⁷

According to one driver, the Minna-Birnin Kebbi, Kaduna-Kano and Sokoto-Gusau roads were the most insecure, due to bandits being after travellers to kidnap them. Another driver who was attacked just after Tafa, on the Abuja-Kaduna reported that the attackers were standing at ‘bad portions of the roads’ making a quick escape difficult or even impossible.¹⁵⁰⁸

2.19.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war.

2.19.3.6 Displacement and return

For a general overview of the displacement trends in the North-West and North-Central Regions, see [Section 2.2.3.6](#) in Kaduna state.

IDPs

No information was found on the number of conflict-related IDPs in Niger state.

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Niger state.

2.20 Plateau state

2.20.1 General description of the state

Plateau state shares borders Bauchi to the north-east, with Kaduna to the north-west, with Nasarawa to the south-west and with Taraba to the south-east.¹⁵⁰⁹ The state’s capital is Jos.¹⁵¹⁰

Plateau state is comprised of the following 17 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Barkin Ladi, Bassa, Bokokos, Jos East, Jos North, Jos South, Kanam, Kanke, Langtang North, Langtang South, Mangu, Mikang, Pankshin, Qua’an Pan, Riyom, Shendam and Wase.¹⁵¹¹

In the 2006 census, the population of Plateau state was 3 206 531. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 4 200 442 in 2016.¹⁵¹²

There are more than 40 ethno-linguistic groups in Plateau state. These include the Berom, Afizere, Amo, Anaguta, Aten, Bogghom, Buji, Challa, Chip, Fier, Gashish, Goemai, Irigwe, Jarawa, Jukun, Kofyar (comprising Doemak, Kwalla, and Mernyang), Montol, Mushere, Mupun, Mwaghavul, Ngas, Piapung, Pyem, Ron-Kulere, Bache, Talet, Tarok, Youm and Fulani/Kanuri in Wase.¹⁵¹³

¹⁵⁰⁷ Sahara Reporters, Motorists List Nigeria's Most Dangerous Roads, Say Bandits Built Dens Along Them, 15 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰⁸ Sahara Reporters, Motorists List Nigeria's Most Dangerous Roads, Say Bandits Built Dens Along Them, 15 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰⁹ Nigeria, Plateau State, At a Glance, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁵¹⁰ Nigeria, Plateau State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁵¹¹ Nigeria, Plateau State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁵¹² Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 3

¹⁵¹³ Nigeria, Plateau State, n.d., [url](#)



There also groups that arrived and settled in Plateau, which include the Igbo, Yoruba, Ibibio, Annang, Efik, Ijaw, and Bini. Each ethnic group has their own language. English is the official language in Plateau state, with Hausa being also used.¹⁵¹⁴

Plateau is mainly a farming state.¹⁵¹⁵

2.20.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.20.2.1 Background of the conflict

International Crisis group noted in 2018 that, while Plateau state had been relatively peaceful for approximately 2 years, tensions were resurfacing due to farmer herder conflicts.¹⁵¹⁶

While all of Nigeria is affected by the farmers-herders crisis, Plateau is one of the states that 'stand out for the sheer regularity, intensity and carnage of the incidents in their areas'.¹⁵¹⁷ According to Nigeria Watch, in 2019, Plateau was one of the states where grazing space constituted a crucial cause of clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farming communities.¹⁵¹⁸

2.20.2.2 Actors

Farmers and herders constitute one of the main categories of actors involved in the conflict in Plateau state. For more information, please see [Section 1.4.1.1](#).

Operation Safe Haven is a joint task force that was set up in 2010 and consists of the following actors: Nigerian Army, Navy, Air Force, Police, Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) and Department of State Security (DSS).¹⁵¹⁹ Its main task is to maintain peace in Plateau¹⁵²⁰, focusing primarily on Plateau state and the Plateau-Taraba state boundary.¹⁵²¹ The IISS reported that Operation Safe Haven succeeded in December 2019 to negotiate the surrender of weapons and ammunition by former militias.¹⁵²²

International Crisis Group reported in 2018 that militias and vigilantes were not a new phenomenon in Middle Belt and that, in the previous decade, indigenous groups - mostly from farming communities - such as the Berom and Tarok in Plateau, reportedly formed militias and vigilante groups to repel Fulani herders whose cattle grazed in their fields. These groups on occasion collaborated with the traditional and national authorities; however, in other cases they attacked herders due to alleged damage to their farms or in order to forcefully keep them away from their areas.¹⁵²³

2.20.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

Nigeria Watch reported that, in 2020, Plateau was the state with the second highest number of fatalities (106) due to herders-farmers clashes in the country. It also stated that, while fatalities from clashes, Plateau was the one of the states with the highest fatalities (44) due to ethno-communal

¹⁵¹⁴ Nigeria, Plateau State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁵¹⁵ Nigeria, Plateau State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁵¹⁶ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁵¹⁷ Onah, E. I., Olajide, B. E., Applying restorative justice in resolving the farmers-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria, January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵¹⁸ Nigeria Watch, Ninth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2019), 2019, [url](#), p. 15

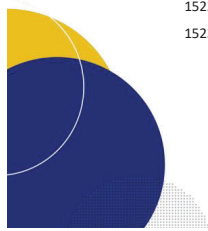
¹⁵¹⁹ Global Security, Plateau State. Operation Safe Haven, n.d., [url](#); Blueprint, STF: Winning the hearts and minds of the people, 17 March 2014, [url](#)

¹⁵²⁰ NNN, Plateau: Operation Safe Haven gets new commander, 6 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵²¹ IISS, Armed Conflict Survey 2020. Nigeria (Farmer - Pastoralist), 2020, p. 344

¹⁵²² IISS, Armed Conflict Survey 2020. Nigeria (Farmer - Pastoralist), 2020, p. 344

¹⁵²³ International Crisis Group, Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence, 26 July 2018, [url](#), pp. 4-5



clashes, although the numbers of fatalities from such clashes decreased in 2020 in comparison to 2019.¹⁵²⁴

In May 2020, a Bassa LGA resident documented the increasing insecurity in the area, noting that a series of attacks by gunmen had taken place in the previous weeks, which resulted in least 15 fatalities and in the destruction of property worth millions of naira.¹⁵²⁵

Sahara Reporters stated that the attack that took place on 6 October 2020 in Ncha Village, Bassa LGA, was the tenth attack by armed Fulani herdsmen in Plateau state in less than two weeks.¹⁵²⁶

2.20.3.1 Number of security incidents

In the year 2020, ACLED reported a total of 63 security incidents (9 battles, 46 cases of violence against civilians, 8 incidents of riots) in Plateau state, resulting in 151 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Barkin Ladi LGA, followed by Bassa and Jos North LGAs. Of the 46 incidents of violence against civilians, 41 were attacks and 5 abductions.¹⁵²⁷

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period is shown in Figure 48 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 12 protests were reported during the reference period.¹⁵²⁸

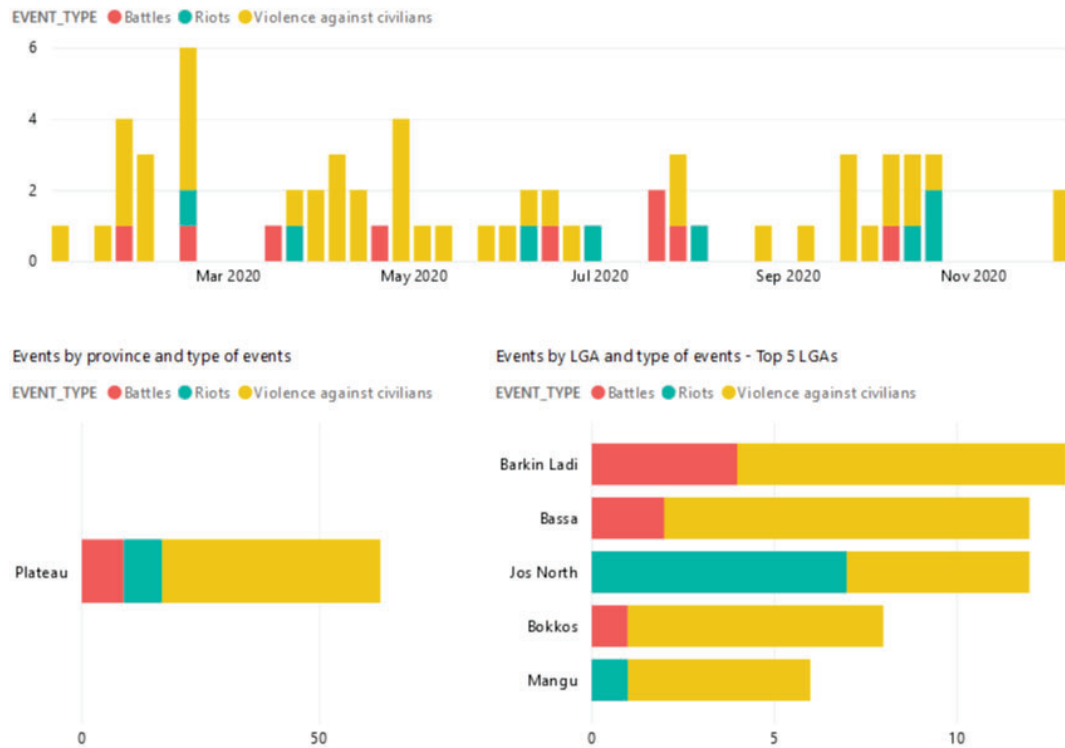


Figure 29 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Plateau state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹⁵²⁹

¹⁵²⁴ Nigeria Watch, Tenth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2020), n.d., [url](#), pp. 10, 18

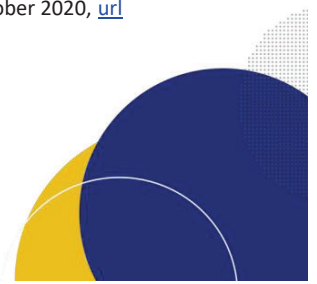
¹⁵²⁵ Punch, Gunmen attack Plateau community, kill four, 4 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵²⁶ Sahara Reporters, Again, Fulani Herdsmen Kill Farmers In Plateau State Hours After Peace Meeting, 7 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵²⁷ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁵²⁸ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁵²⁹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Plateau state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Plateau state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	9	16
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	46	132
Riots	8	3
Total	63	151

Table 25 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹⁵³⁰

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 15 security incidents (3 battles, 11 cases of violence against civilians, 1 incident of riots) in Plateau state, resulting in 45 deaths.¹⁵³¹

2.20.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 8 January 2020, gunmen, suspected to be herdsmen, attacked Kulben community of Kombun District (Mangu LGA). 12 people were killed and one was severely injured.¹⁵³²

On 26 January 2020, gunmen, suspected to be herdsmen, killed 13 people and injured five at Kwatas village (Bokkos LGA).¹⁵³³

On 27 January 2020, Fulani herdsmen attacked the Ruboi community (Bokkos LGA). They killed 17 people, including a pregnant woman, injured five and burned several houses.¹⁵³⁴

On 1 April 2020, suspected herdsmen attacked Ancha community (Bassa LGA) killing three people and destroying property.¹⁵³⁵

On 8 April 2020, gunmen killed four people, injured six others and burnt several homes in Bassa LGA.¹⁵³⁶

On 14 April 2020, gunmen attacked Hura village in Kwall District (Bassa LGA), killing nine people and destroying properties and vehicles.¹⁵³⁷

On 5 May 2020, four gunmen shot at and injured a family of four at their house in Ghana Ropp (Barkin Ladi LGA) in what the source¹⁵³⁸ described as ‘the latest in a series of coordinated assaults on Christian communities in Plateau and Kaduna states by armed assailants of Fulani origin’.¹⁵³⁹

¹⁵³⁰ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁵³¹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

¹⁵³² Guardian (The) Nigeria, Gunmen kill 12 people in Plateau – Police, 9 January 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Bloody January!: Boko Haram, bandits, herdsmen, others kill over 320, 2 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵³³ Vanguard, 13 killed in fresh attack in Plateau village, 27 January 2020, [url](#); Guardian (The) Nigeria, Again, herdsmen kill 14, injure five persons in Plateau fresh attack, 28 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵³⁴ Sahara Reporters, BREAKING: Pregnant Woman, 16 Others Killed In Plateau Community Attack By Fulani Herdsmen, 28 January 2020, [url](#); Guardian (The) Nigeria, Catalogue of woes as Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, Niger become killing fields, 29 January 2020, [url](#)

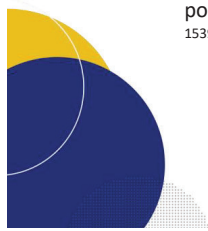
¹⁵³⁵ Daily Post, Plateau community raises alarm over renewed herdsmen attacks, lament killing of 15 people, 3 April 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Plateau: Herdsmen’ll wipe us out before Covid-19 disappears, residents tell Govt, 4 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵³⁶ Guardian (The) Nigeria, Fresh attacks kill 13 in Benue, Plateau, 9 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵³⁷ Daily Post, Plateau Attacks: Police confirm 9 persons killed, 22 houses razed in Hura village, 15 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵³⁸ CSW stands for Christian Solidarity Worldwide. The group claims to ‘protect, defend and restore’ the right to freedom of religion or belief. Source: CSW (Christian Solidarity Worldwide), About CSW, n.d., [url](#). It has to be noted that it was not possible to corroborate the information on this attack

¹⁵³⁹ CSW, Family of four attacked in Plateau state, 7 May 2020, [url](#)



On 24 September 2020, gunmen killed five people in an attack at the K/Vom community in Vwang District (Jos South LGA).¹⁵⁴⁰ The approximately 20 gunmen were suspected to be Fulani herdsmen.¹⁵⁴¹

On 5 October 2020, gunmen attacked Wereng village (Riyom LGA), killing six people and injuring three others. A community leader was among the people killed.¹⁵⁴²

On 6 October 2020, two people were killed in Ncha Village (Bassa LGA) when armed Fulani herdsmen opened fire on them, only hours after a peace meeting to end attacks on farmers by herdsmen in the area had taken place.¹⁵⁴³

On 20 October 2020, three people were killed in Plateau state during clashes in relation to the ongoing #EndSARS protests. Following these events, the state's governor imposed a 24-hour lockdown in Jos North and Jos South LGAs. Vehicles and some properties were destroyed.¹⁵⁴⁴

On 1 December 2020, at least three people were shot and killed by suspected kidnappers at Gwa-Pwana village in Vwang District (Jos South LGA) and one woman was reported missing following the attack.¹⁵⁴⁵

Around 3 February 2021, 'bandits'¹⁵⁴⁶ attacked Dutse village (Bassa LGA) and killed 12 people. On 7 February 2021, suspected 'killer herdsmen'¹⁵⁴⁷ clashed with local Irigwe militia at Dutse, Kishosho and Zirshe communities (Bassa LGA). Six fatalities in total were reported. The incident was reportedly connected to the farmer-pastoralist conflict.¹⁵⁴⁸ On 14 February 2021, Fulani herdsmen reportedly killed three Christians near Ri-Bakwa village and one in Zirshe village (Bassa LGA). The Irigwe in this area are predominantly Christian, as were five of the victims in the 7 February attack.¹⁵⁴⁹

2.20.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

The National Economic Council (NEC) of Nigeria approved in 2018 a 10-year National Livestock Plan, estimated to cost approximately NGN 179 billion. This measure was taken in relation to the increasing conflicts and mass killings from the seasonal pastoral movements. The plan involved the establishment of 94 ranches in 10 pilot states, including Plateau.¹⁵⁵⁰ The reasoning behind the establishment of ranches is to 'mitigat[e] the escalating crisis between settled-farmers and pastoralists that could undermine the entire development of the livestock sector'.¹⁵⁵¹

On 27 January 2020 Fulani herdsmen attacked the Ruboi community in Bokkos LGA, killing 17 people, injuring other and destroying property. An eyewitness interviewed by Sahara Reporters stated that the attack 'went on unhindered despite calling on the military and police for help'.¹⁵⁵²

Vanguard, following the attack on 5 October 2020 at the Wereng village (Riyom LGA), reported that the village had been 'under siege for over 10 years now'. More than 30 people had been killed in

¹⁵⁴⁰ Premium Times, Gunmen kill five in Plateau – Police, 25 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴¹ Sahara Reporters, Again, Suspected Fulani Gunmen Kill Five Persons In Plateau, 25 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴² Vanguard, Plateau: 6 killed 3 injured in fresh attack as Rep blames security officers, 6 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴³ Sahara Reporters, Again, Fulani Herdsmen Kill Farmers In Plateau State Hours After Peace Meeting, 7 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴⁴ Daily Trust, #EndSARS: Dozens Killed As Violence Spreads, 21 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴⁵ Sun (The), Plateau: Suspected Fulani herdsmen kill three in Jos South village, 2 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴⁶ Nation online, Another bandits attack claims two lives in Plateau, 6 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴⁷ Nigerian Tribune, Another six killed by herdsmen in Plateau, 8 February 2021, [url](#)

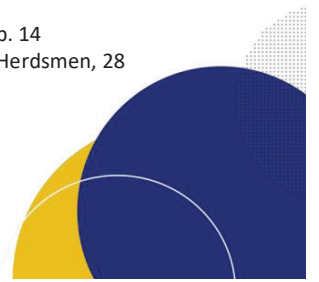
¹⁵⁴⁸ Nation online, Another bandits attack claims two lives in Plateau, 6 February 2021, [url](#); Nigerian Tribune, Another six killed by herdsmen in Plateau, 8 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴⁹ Morning Star News, Muslim Fulani Kill 11 Christians, Wound Two, in Nigeria, 19 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵⁰ Nation (the), Fed Govt to build 94 ranches in 10 states, 20 June 2018, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵¹ FAO, The future of livestock in Nigeria. Opportunities and challenges in the face of uncertainty, 2019, [url](#), p. 14

¹⁵⁵² Sahara Reporters, BREAKING: Pregnant Woman, 16 Others Killed In Plateau Community Attack By Fulani Herdsmen, 28 January 2020, [url](#)



Wereng village and, according to the source, as of 6 October 2020, 'no report shows that anyone has been arrested and prosecuted despite repeated assurances from security personnel.'¹⁵⁵³

On 5 October 2020, Leadership news reported that troops of Operation Safe Haven 'neutralized' a well-known bandit leader in a raid at the bandits' hideout at Tafawa village in Barkin Ladi LGA.¹⁵⁵⁴

2.20.3.4 Road security

Sahara Reporters noted that motorists described the Keffi-Jos Road in Plateau state as very dangerous for travellers, due to the presence of armed robbers and kidnappers.¹⁵⁵⁵

2.20.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war.

2.20.3.6 Displacement and return

For a general overview of the displacement trends in the North-West and North-Central Regions, see [Section 2.2.3.6](#) in Kaduna state.

Compared to Round 4, Plateau dropped from 2nd to 4th place (12 % of all IDPs - down from 14 %).¹⁵⁵⁶ Reasons for displacement in the two regions were communal clashes (45 % of all IDPs), armed banditry and kidnapping (30 %), and natural disasters – mainly floods and sandstorms – (20 %, up from 9 % in the previous round).¹⁵⁵⁷

IDPs

The total number of IDPs for Plateau state by December 2020 was 84 979, an increase of 4 009 individuals (5 %) compared to Round 4 (80 970 IDPs¹⁵⁵⁸). Riyom LGA hosted most IDPs (12 068 persons).¹⁵⁵⁹

For an overview of changes in IDP population by state (North-West and North-Central Region) between Round 4 and 5, see [Table 5](#) in [Section 2.2.3.6](#).

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Plateau state.

¹⁵⁵³ Vanguard, Plateau: 6 killed 3 injured in fresh attack as Rep blames security officers, 6 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵⁴ Leadership, Troops Kill Notorious Bandits' Leader, Fighters In Plateau, [7 October 2020], [url](#)

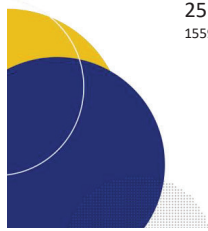
¹⁵⁵⁵ Sahara Reporters, Motorists List Nigeria's Most Dangerous Roads, Say Bandits Built Dens Along Them, 15 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵⁶ IOM Nigeria, DTM North Central and North West Zones, Displacement Report 5 (January 2021), 8 March 2021, [url](#), p. 9

¹⁵⁵⁷ IOM Nigeria, DTM North Central and North West Zones, Displacement Report 5 (January 2021), 8 March 2021, [url](#), p. 10

¹⁵⁵⁸ IOM Nigeria, Displacement Tracking Matrix North Central and North West Zones Displacement Report 4, August 2020, 25 October 2020, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁵⁵⁹ IOM Nigeria, DTM North Central and North West Zones, Displacement Report 5 (January 2021), 8 March 2021, [url](#), p. 8



South-East Region

The South-East Region comprises Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo states.¹⁵⁶⁰

The South-East, just like South-South Region, used to be affected by the violence by ‘dominant militant groups [who] often operated via kidnappings and oil bunkering.’¹⁵⁶¹ In recent years, the regions are increasingly conflicts over scarce natural resources such as land and water for farming and herding communities.¹⁵⁶² The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) explained:

‘Herdsman, who are typically from northern Nigeria, often migrate to the southern parts of the country in search of healthy and greener grazing pastures, which are now of very low quantity in the north. These herdsman are often regarded as strangers in their new settlements, they encroach on the farms of the local people and their animals graze on (and destroy) the farmers’ crops. This has mostly been the source of the crisis between the two groups, resulting in cattle rustling, killings, rapes, abductions and other atrocities.’¹⁵⁶³

The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) reported that ‘conflict over land and water, once largely restricted to the Middle Belt, is spreading to the south, where it frequently acquires ethnic and religious overtones. Many Igbo—mostly Christian—believe they are targeted by the Muslim Fulani herdsman bringing their flocks south in search of better pastures. Criminal activity is widespread and often the Igbo attribute it to the Fulani.’¹⁵⁶⁴

State attempts to resettle herding communities to the southern areas were met with many protests among a mainly Igbo and Christian population, as USDOS noted in its 2019 Report on International Religious Freedom on Nigeria: the ‘news of a government plan to resettle the predominantly Muslim Fulani herdsman in southern parts of the country’ was negatively received, resulting in ‘threatening violence against Fulani communities in South West and South East states’, leading to the plan to be later annulled.¹⁵⁶⁵

For more information, see [Section 1.4.1.1](#).

2.21 Abia state

2.21.1 General description of the state

Abia state shares boundaries in the north with Ebonyi state, in the south and south-west with Rivers state, in the east and south-east with Cross River and Akwa Ibom states, in the west with Imo state and in the north-west with Anambra state. The state’s capital is Umuahia.¹⁵⁶⁶

Abia state is composed of the following 18 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Aba North, Aba South, Arochukwu, Bende, Ikwuano, Isiala, Ngwa North, Isiala Ngwa South, Isiukwuato, Obi Ngwa, Ohafia, Osisioma Ngwa, Ugwunagbo, Ukwa East, Ukwa West, Umuahia North, Umuahia South and Umunneochi.¹⁵⁶⁷

¹⁵⁶⁰ Nigeria, NIMC (National Identity Management Commission), NIMC Enrolment centres, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁵⁶¹ ACCORD, Conflict Trends 2020/3, n.d. [September 2020], [url](#)

¹⁵⁶² ACCORD, Conflict Trends 2020/3, n.d. [September 2020], [url](#)

¹⁵⁶³ ACCORD, Conflict Trends 2020/3, n.d. [September 2020], [url](#)

¹⁵⁶⁴ CFR, Security deteriorating in Nigeria’s former “Biafra”, 8 February 2021, [url](#); See also Vanguard, IPOB using Christianity to wage war against Nigerian state – Presidency, 7 June 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, What we submitted to US Department that rattled Presidency – IPOB, 11 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁶⁵ US Department of State, 2019 Report on International Religious Freedom - Nigeria, 10 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁶⁶ Nigeria, Abia State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁵⁶⁷ Nigeria, Abia State, n.d., [url](#)



In the 2006 census, the population of Abia state was 2 845 380. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 3 727 347 in 2016.¹⁵⁶⁸

Igbos constitute 95 % of the state's population. The official language is English and the local one is Igbo.¹⁵⁶⁹

About 70 % of the population works in agriculture, and in addition there is crude oil and gas production.¹⁵⁷⁰

2.21.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.21.2.1 Background of the conflict

In 2020, Abia state experienced few intercommunal confrontations. The background to these clashes is related to conflicts over land and its resources.¹⁵⁷¹

In 2020, several local communities in Abia voiced their discontent over Fulani herdsmen taking over their farmlands.¹⁵⁷² The Nigeria Voice reported that 'as [of] August 2019, 139 Igbo communities, villages and locations have been occupied by Fulani Herdsmen'. In May 2020, that number had reportedly increased to 350. In Abia 43 villages were reportedly 'occupied by herdsmen'.¹⁵⁷³ These numbers could not be corroborated by other sources.

Over the three quarters of 2020, Abia was ranked by the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND) among the I states with low number of incidents and fatalities in the Niger Delta.¹⁵⁷⁴

2.21.2.2 Actors

In 2020, the main actors in the security situation in Abia state were police services, cults, and unidentified gunmen and communal clashes.¹⁵⁷⁵

2.21.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

Some of the reported incidents with highest numbers of fatalities were inter-state clashes. Kidnappings and cult killings also took place.¹⁵⁷⁶ Several fatalities were also recorded due to police, coronavirus task force and NSCDC violence on checkpoints, during lockdown enforcement check-ups,

¹⁵⁶⁸ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 2

¹⁵⁶⁹ Nigeria, Abia State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁵⁷⁰ Nigeria, Abia State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁵⁷¹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Nigeria Watch, Database, filtered on Abia, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); The Sun, Boundary dispute: 4 killed in 4 Abia communities, 23 June 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Communal clash: Abia communities cry out for Govt intervention over killings of its citizens, 23 June 2020, [url](#)

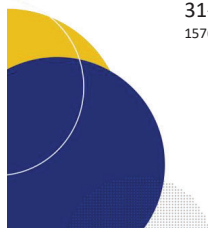
¹⁵⁷² Vanguard, Communities in South-East groan, as herdsmen take over farmlands, 1 July 2020, [url](#); Business Hallmark, Ukwa community accuses Ikpeazu of treachery, 13 July 2020, [url](#); Business Day, Abia community rejects government's proposed cattle market, 16 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁷³ TNV, State backed Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen and Shuwa Arabs now occupy 350 Igbo Communities and villages, 27 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁷⁴ PIND, Niger Delta Quarterly Conflict Tracker – Q1 2020 (January to March), 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 3; PIND, Niger Delta Quarterly Conflict Tracker – Q2 2020 (April to June), 28 July 2020, [url](#), p. 3; PIND, Niger Delta Quarterly Conflict Tracker – Q3 2020 (July to September), 11 November 2020, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁵⁷⁵ Nigeria Watch, Database, filtered on Abia, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁷⁶ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Nigeria Watch, Database, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



and in response to police brutality and extra-judicial killings during #EndSARS protests, or under unknown circumstances.¹⁵⁷⁷

According to the 2020 PIND report, ‘Several incidents of extra-judicial killings by public security forces were reported in Abia state during the year, particularly in Umuahia North, Ohafia, Obi Ngwa, Isiala Ngwa North, Aba North and Aba South LGAs.’¹⁵⁷⁸

In March and April 2020, an increasing number of domestic violence and gender-based violence cases was reported in Abia, mainly during the imposed lockdowns for the prevention of the coronavirus.¹⁵⁷⁹

2.21.3.1 Number of security incidents

In the year 2020, ACLED reported a total of 31 security incidents (8 battles, 14 cases of violence against civilians, 9 incidents of riots) in Abia state, resulting in 23 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Aba South LGA (9 incidents with 4 deaths). Of the 14 incidents of violence against civilians, 9 were attacks and 5 abductions.¹⁵⁸⁰

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period is shown in Figure 50 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 19 protests were reported during the reference period.¹⁵⁸¹

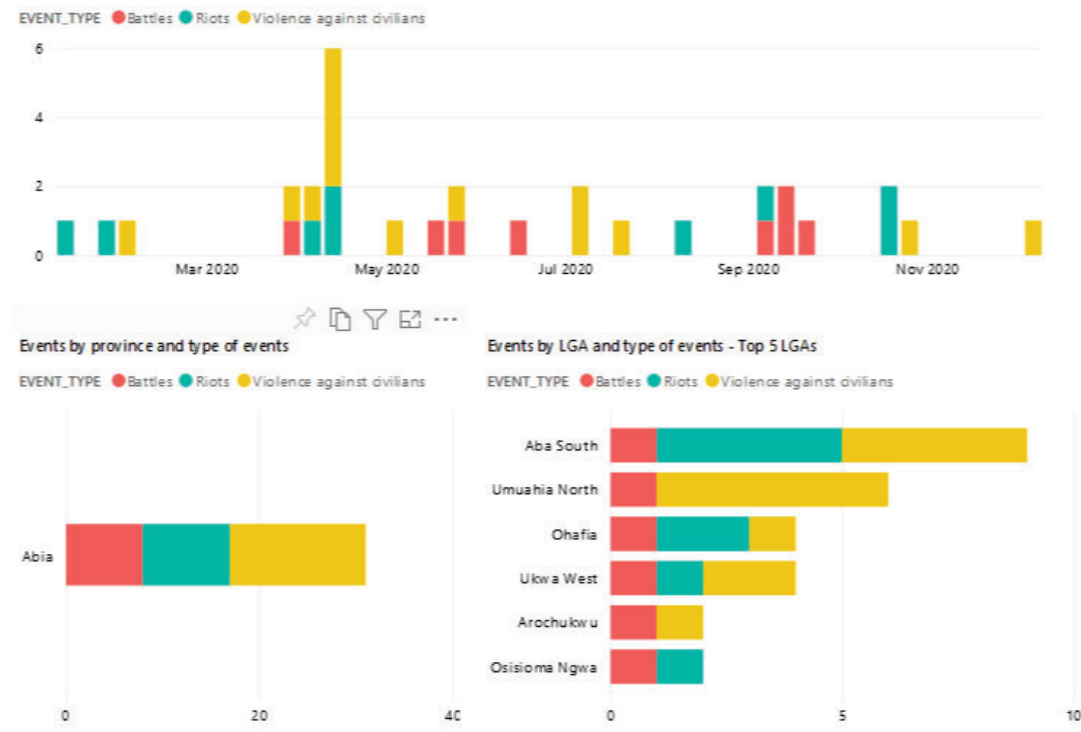


Figure 30 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Abia state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹⁵⁸²

¹⁵⁷⁷ Social Action – Social Development Integrated Centre, Human rights violations during Covid-19 lockdown in Nigeria, 29 April 2020, [url](#); ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Nigeria Watch, Database, filtered on Abia, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), p. 8

¹⁵⁷⁸ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), p. 8

¹⁵⁷⁹ UN, Gender-based violence in Nigeria during the Covid-19 crisis: the shadow pandemic, 4 May 2020, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁵⁸⁰ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁸¹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁸² EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Abia state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Abia state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	8	12
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	14	7
Riots	9	4
Total	31	23

Table 26 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹⁵⁸³

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 8 security incidents (5 battles, 1 incident of remote violence/explosions, 1 case of violence against civilians, 1 incident of riots) in Abia state, resulting in 10 deaths.¹⁵⁸⁴

2.21.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

In February 2020, two members of the Isu community were killed in an IDP camp in Iheosu-Isu (Arochukwu LGA), which was attacked by members from a Utuma community in Cross River state. The attack was allegedly related to a land boundary dispute. Another 10 Isu community members were reported missing.¹⁵⁸⁵ According to the source, over the span of two years and resulting clashes between the Isu and the Utuma communities, over 60 Utuma members were killed, 3 villages have been sacked, and 40 houses have been burned.¹⁵⁸⁶

In June 2020, four persons were killed in an intercommunal violence over a land boundary dispute between Ariam-Usaka community (Ikwuano LGA) and Nkari community (Ini LGA, Akwa-Ibom state).¹⁵⁸⁷ 16 Usaku-Ukwa community members were killed, and 6 were reported missing.¹⁵⁸⁸ Another source reported that between May 2020 and 22 January 2021, the Nkari invaded the Usaka Ukwu farmlands, and killed 16 people.¹⁵⁸⁹

On 9 June 2020, 7 IPOB members were arrested in Aba following the protest of over 100 pro-Biafra activists against the killing of Christians and Biafrans in the country.¹⁵⁹⁰

During 2020, the incidents of cult violence between two rival cult groups in Aba town, Aye and Aro group, resulted in seven fatalities, while three were attributed to unidentified cult groups.¹⁵⁹¹ On 20 October 2020, three persons were killed in an alleged cult clash for superiority over Aba town, Abia state's commercial capital.¹⁵⁹² On 15 November 2020 (Aba town), reportedly 3 persons were killed in

¹⁵⁸³ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁸⁴ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

¹⁵⁸⁵ Vanguard, Land tussle: 2 killed, 10 missing in Abia/Cross Rivers clash, 4 February 2020, [url](#); Daily Trust, 2 dead, 10 missing as hoodlums attack neighbouring community, 7 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁸⁶ Vanguard, Land tussle: 2 killed, 10 missing in Abia/Cross Rivers clash, 4 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁸⁷ The Sun Nigeria, Boundary dispute: 4 killed in 4 Abia communities, 23 June 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Communal clash: Abia communities cry out for Govt intervention over killings of its citizens, 23 June 2020, [url](#); Punch, Abia community laments border crisis with Akwa Ibom, 26 June 2020, [url](#)

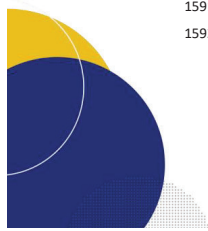
¹⁵⁸⁸ Guardian (The) Nigeria, Akwa Ibom community blames communal clashes on locals, NBC's indifference, 27 January 2021, [url](#); The Sun Nigeria, Abia/Akwa Ibom boundary clash: 1 soldier, 16 others killed, 6 missing, 2 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁵⁸⁹ The Sun Nigeria, Abia/Akwa Ibom boundary clash: 1 soldier, 16 others killed, 6 missing, 2 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁵⁹⁰ Vanguard, Police arrest seven suspected IPOB members in Aba, 9 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁹¹ Nigeria Watch, Database, filtered on Abia, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁹² The Nation, Three killed in Abia rival cults clash, 20 October 2020, [url](#)



allegedly the continuation of the ongoing feud between two rival cult groups, Aye and Aro cults.¹⁵⁹³ Other known cult groups active in Aba town include the Vikings and the Black Axe.¹⁵⁹⁴

In the period between 13 April and 4 May 2020, the NHRC reported four extra-judicial killings in Abia state by the Abia State Task Force on Covid-19 to the police, and NSCDC.¹⁵⁹⁵

2.21.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

During 2020, several kidnappings were successfully resolved by police or SARS.¹⁵⁹⁶ On 29 January 2020, police arrested a five men gang responsible for armed robbery and a murder of a couple in Umuahia, with another 15 suspects arrested for robbery and kidnapping.¹⁵⁹⁷ On 15 February 2020, a 16 men gang was arrested by the operatives of the Inspector General of Police Intelligence Response Team (IRT). The gang was suspected of armed robbery and kidnapping in mainly Enugu, Imo and Abia states. Their camp location was reported to be in Osisioma LGA.¹⁵⁹⁸

On 20 April 2020, the Abia State Government condemned the unwarranted shooting and killing of some Abians by security operatives.¹⁵⁹⁹ In 2020, five people were killed by the police, the coronavirus task force and NSCDC.¹⁶⁰⁰

On 1 July 2020, the Deputy Governor of Abia state called the Nigeria Army to assist in reducing conflicts between farmers and herders, while the government continues to 'engage traditional rules, presidents general of various town unions and other stakeholders in the state on the need to maintain peace and not take the law into their hands even when the herders continue to wreak havoc on farmlands'.¹⁶⁰¹ The Nigerian Army representative reiterated army's commitment to provide security, while emphasizing the need for the government, army and traditional rules at the community level to proactively address the rising land disputes and clashes between farmers and herders.¹⁶⁰²

On 23 October 2020, the Governor of Abia state inaugurated the Judicial Panel of Inquiry to investigate extrajudicial killings and all forms of police brutality, extortion and intimidation from 2015 to date. Furthermore, the panel was tasked to investigate 'examine the root causes of the hijack of the peaceful ENDSARS protest by hoodlums and identify those involved'.¹⁶⁰³

In December 2020, the Abia State Governor emphasized his administration's commitment to security of citizens and their property with the support of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) in fighting street cultism, which allegedly has become a major facilitator of crime among the youth.¹⁶⁰⁴

¹⁵⁹³ The Sun – Nigeria, Cult war: 4 killed in Abia, 18 November 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁹⁴ Vanguard, Stay away from our territory, cultists warned, 26 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁵⁹⁵ Nigeria, NHRC, Report on alleged human rights violations recorded between 13th April to 4th May, 2020 following the extension of the lockdown period by government, 10 May 2020, [url](#), pp. 3, 5

¹⁵⁹⁶ Vanguard, Abia police confirm arrest of 5 kidnap suspects, 7 January 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Police kill 2 kidnap suspects, rescue 3 victims in Abia, 2 February 2020, [url](#); Nigeria Daily News, Police kill 2 kidnapers in Aba, rescue victims (graphic photos + video), 3 February 2020, [url](#); Daily Post, Police arrests 4 kidnap suspects, others in Abia, 25 July 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Police confirm arrest of four kidnap suspects, others in Abia, 25 July 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁹⁷ Guardian (The) Nigeria, Police arrest suspects over couple shot to death on Saturday, 29 January 2020, [url](#); The Sun News, Abia police arrest killers of couple in Umuahia, 15 other robbery, kidnap suspects, 29 January 2020, [url](#); Nigeria, FMIC, Abia Police Command parades notorious armed robbery gangs, 30 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁹⁸ PM News, End of the road for criminal gang operating in Abia, Enugu, Imo, 15 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁹⁹ Vanguard, Abia State Govt condemns shooting of Abians by security operatives, 20 April 2020, [url](#)

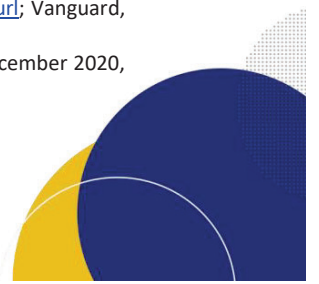
¹⁶⁰⁰ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰¹ Daily Post, Abia State seeks Army's partnership over security, 1 July 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰² Daily Post, Abia State seeks Army's partnership over security, 1 July 2020, [url](#); Nigeria, FMIC, Abia State government to partner Nigeria Army in the enhancement of security network, 4 July 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰³ Nigeria, Abia State, EndSARS protest ... Ikpeazu inaugurates Judicial Panel of Inquiry, 23 October 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, #EndSARS: Ikpeazu inaugurates Judicial Panel of Inquiry, 23 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰⁴ Nigeria, FMIC, We will continue to prioritize security of lives and property in Abia State – Ikpeazu, 10 December 2020, [url](#)



2.21.3.4 Road security

In 2020, ACLED registered two incidents of police violence against civilians at a checkpoint in Aba (Aba South LGA)¹⁶⁰⁵ and by coronavirus task force in Umuahia (Umuahi LGA)¹⁶⁰⁶, resulting in two fatalities.¹⁶⁰⁷ Similarly, NSCDC killed one civilian at a checkpoint in Umuikea (Isialangwa LGA) for allegedly refusing to pay a bribe.¹⁶⁰⁸

In multiple attacks in September 2020, unidentified gunmen attacked police checkpoints in Owaza (Ukwa West LGA) and Aba (Aba South LGA) while and killed at least one soldier and injured others.¹⁶⁰⁹ Two policemen were killed in Aba (Aba South LGA), during #EndSARS street protest, when also two police stations were destroyed, and reportedly 15 protestors sustained injuries from the live ammunition used against them by police.¹⁶¹⁰

2.21.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war.

2.21.3.6 Displacement and return

IDPs

No information was found on the number of conflict-related IDPs in Abia state.

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Abia state.

2.22 Anambra state

2.22.1 General description of the state

Anambra state shares boundaries with the states of Abia, Delta, Enugu, Imo and Kogi. The state's capital is Awka.¹⁶¹¹

Anambra state is composed of the following 21 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Aguata, Awka North, Awka South, Anambra East, Anambra West, Anaocha, Ayamelum, Dunukofia, Ekwusigo, Idemili North, Idemili South, Ihiala, Njikoka, Nnewi North, Nnewi South, Ogbaru, Onitsha North, Onitsha South, Orumba North, Orumba South and Oyi.¹⁶¹²

In the 2006 census, the population of Anambra state was 4 177 828. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 5 527 809 in 2016.¹⁶¹³

¹⁶⁰⁵ Vanguard, COVID-19: Taskforce kills keke operator in Aba, another survives attack, 17 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰⁶ Premium Times, Lockdown: Policeman kills fuel station attendant, 7 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰⁷ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰⁸ Nigeria Watch, 15 April 2020, [url](#); Punch, Bribe-seeking Abia NSCDC officer shoots dead commercial driver, 16 April 2020, [url](#); This Day, NSCDC officer kills driver in Abia, 16 April 2020, [url](#)

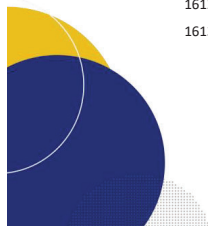
¹⁶⁰⁹ The Sun Nigeria, Gunmen kill soldier, injure another in Abia, 22 September 2020, [url](#); Sahara Reports, Gunmen kill two soldiers, injure others in Abia, 23 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶¹⁰ Premium Times, Updated: Two police officers killed as hoodlums, security agents clash in Abi, 20 October 2020, [url](#); See also BBC, Curfew for EndSARS protests: Nigerian States wey don declare curfew for #EndSARS protests, 20 October 2020, [url](#); EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁶¹¹ Nigeria, Anambra State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁶¹² Nigeria, Anambra State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁶¹³ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 2



The Igbos make up 98 % of the state’s population while the remaining 2 % are Igala; the latter reside in the north-western part of Anambra.¹⁶¹⁴

The state has resources of natural gas, crude oil, bauxite and ceramic. Its soil is highly arable and the main occupations in Anambra are trading and handworks.¹⁶¹⁵

2.22.2 Conflict background and armed actors

For background information on the general security situation in the South-East Region, see the general [introduction](#) to the region.

2.22.2.1 Background of the conflict

In 2020, Anambra state experienced several intercommunal confrontations. The background to these clashes is related to conflicts over land and its resources.¹⁶¹⁶ For example, in Akwa North LGA, following an annulled agreement between the herders and farmers on the creation of new Fulani settlements, it was reported that ‘the herdsmen adopted another method, which was to forcefully enter the farms.’¹⁶¹⁷

In 2020, several local communities in Anambra voiced their discontent over Fulani herdsmen taking over their farmlands.¹⁶¹⁸ The Nigeria Voice reported that ‘as [of] August 2019, 139 Igbo communities, villages and locations have been occupied by Fulani Herdsmen’. In May 2020, that number had reportedly increased to 350. In Anambra 70 villages were reportedly ‘occupied by herdsmen’.¹⁶¹⁹ These numbers could not be corroborated by other sources. According to TNV in May 2020, Anambra state hosted 181 Fulani communities.¹⁶²⁰

CFR reported on the increasing conflicts over natural resources: ‘Many Igbo—mostly Christian—believe they are targeted by the Muslim Fulani herdsmen bringing their flocks south in search of better pastures. Criminal activity is widespread and often the Igbo attribute it to the Fulani’.¹⁶²¹

2.22.2.2 Actors

In 2020, the main actors in the security situation in Anambra state were police services, unidentified gunmen and communal militias, farmer and herder communities clashing over land, and cults.¹⁶²²

¹⁶¹⁴ Nigeria, Anambra State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁶¹⁵ Nigeria, Anambra State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁶¹⁶ Nigeria Watch, Database, filtered on Anambra, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Vanguard, 10 Anambra communities lament as herdsmen destroy farms, 23 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶¹⁷ Vanguard, 10 Anambra communities lament as herdsmen destroy farms, 23 June 2020, [url](#)

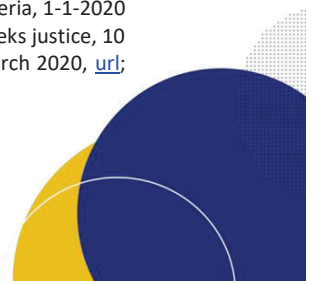
¹⁶¹⁸ Vanguard, 10 Anambra communities lament as herdsmen destroy farms, 23 June 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Communities in South-East groan, as herdsmen take over farmlands, 1 July 2020, [url](#); Business Hallmark, Ukwu community accuses Ikpeazu of treachery, 13 July 2020, [url](#); Business Day, Abia community rejects government’s proposed cattle market, 16 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶¹⁹ TNV, State backed Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen and Shuwa Arabs now occupy 350 Igbo Communities and villages, 27 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶²⁰ TNV, State backed Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen and Shuwa Arabs now occupy 350 Igbo Communities and villages, 27 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶²¹ CFR, Security deteriorating in Nigeria’s former “Biafra”, 8 February 2021, [url](#); See also Vanguard, IPOB using Christianity to wage war against Nigerian state – Presidency, 7 June 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, What we submitted to US Department that rattled Presidency – IPOB, 11 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶²² Nigeria Watch, Database, filtered on Anambra, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); TNV, Fulani vs Anambrarians: Police arrest Ifite Ogwari Elders as Igbo mandate Congress seeks justice, 10 February 2020, [url](#); Guardian (The) Nigeria, Disturbing security trends in Anambra and Southeast zone, 8 March 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Lamentations in Anambra, as herdsmen take over farmlands, 2 July 2020, [url](#)



Operation Kpochapu is the Anambra state regional security outfit tasked with providing security in the land areas contested by the Igbo and the herders.¹⁶²³

In December 2020, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) established a paramilitary wing, the Eastern Security Network (ESN) as a response to ‘the inability of South-East governors to protect the Biafra area ‘against the menace of killer herdsmen and other criminal groups’.¹⁶²⁴ In IPOB’s statement, ESN was compared to the Western Nigeria Security Network (also known as Amotekun in Yorubaland) in the south-west, and the Miyetti Allah security outfit in the north. ESN indicated that the scope of engagement should cover the south-east and south-south. IPOB stated that ESN was neither a Biafran Army nor did it signal a forceful declaration of the Biafran Republic.¹⁶²⁵

2.22.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

2.22.3.1 Number of security incidents

In the year 2020, ACLED reported a total of 42 security incidents (8 battles, 22 cases of violence against civilians, 12 incidents of riots) in Anambra state, resulting in 26 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Awka North LGA, while most fatalities occurred in Ogbaru LGA. Of the 22 incidents of violence against civilians, 18 were attacks and 4 abductions.¹⁶²⁶

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period is shown in Figure 52 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 57 protests were reported during the reference period.¹⁶²⁷

¹⁶²³ Vanguard, 10 Anambra communities lament as herdsmen destroy farms, 23 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶²⁴ Vanguard, IPOB floats eastern security network, says it’s not Biafran army, 14 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶²⁵ Vanguard, IPOB floats eastern security network, says it’s not Biafran army, 14 December 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, No going back on Eastern Security Network – IPOB, 22 December 2020, [url](#); CFR, Security deteriorating in Nigeria’s former “Biafra”, 8 February 2021, [url](#); CFR, Nigeria’s internal security problem, 26 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁶²⁶ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁶²⁷ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

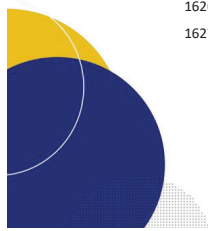




Figure 31 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Anambra state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹⁶²⁸

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Anambra state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Anambra state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	8	10
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	22	13
Riots	12	3
Total	42	26

Table 27 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹⁶²⁹

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 22 security incidents (12 battles, 8 cases of violence against civilians, 2 incidents of riots) in Anambra state, resulting in 41 deaths.¹⁶³⁰

2.22.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 26 January 2020, three Fulani herders were killed and 138 cows disappeared. Allegedly the reported killings, including the killing of one herder in late December 2019, were linked to Anaku and

¹⁶²⁸ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁶²⁹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁶³⁰ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

Ifite-Ogbaru/Ogwari community clashes over the use of land¹⁶³¹, following the alleged ‘invasion of the area by another set of herdsmen’ See [Background of the conflict](#).¹⁶³²

On 2 February 2020, Amnesty International reported that the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) arrested a 22-year-old student and four others in Onitsha for allegedly belonging to a cult group (a campus-based gang). The arrested were forced to confess under torture and were charged for belonging to an unlawful association. Petitions were filed by a legal representative and civil society organisations, requesting investigation into the alleged torture of the four. However, as of May 2020, the police did not provide any evidence that the incident was investigated.¹⁶³³

On 14 April 2020, two persons were killed by police allegedly over an argument about restriction of movement for COVID-19 measures. The killings led to demonstration of angry residents who blocked the Onitsha Enugu Expressway area (Nkpor LGA).¹⁶³⁴

On 20 April 2020, four persons were killed, one was kidnapped, houses and property were destroyed, in an intercommunal clash between Odekpe and Alla communities (Anambra West LGA), over a land boundary and resource dispute.¹⁶³⁵ Another source reported that during this intercommunal clash seven were killed, three policemen abducted and 153 houses were razed.¹⁶³⁶ On 30 August 2020, another clash between Odekpe and Alla/Onugwa communities was reported in a refugee camp in Igbamaka village (Anambra West LGA), where two people were killed, 1 policeman went missing, and four injured.¹⁶³⁷

On 24 April 2020 in an intercommunal clash between the Umumbo and the Omor communities (Ayemelum LGA) over a protracted land dispute, resulting in one fatality, 300 injured farmers, and 50 abducted persons. Reportedly, many houses, shops, rice mills belonging to the Umumbo community were destroyed.¹⁶³⁸

On 27 May 2020 (Awka North LGA), one person was killed in an intercommunal clash between the Urum and the Achalla communities over a protracted land boundary dispute.¹⁶³⁹ The deadly hostilities over the same land continued on 29 May 2020 (Awka North LGA), when allegedly 3 persons were killed, and 15 were injured¹⁶⁴⁰ and on 22 June 2020, when the Achalla community (Umuife LGA) killed two persons and razed 4 houses. In retaliation the Urum were said to have killed one and abducted four people from Achalla.¹⁶⁴¹

¹⁶³¹ See also Daily Trust, 4 killed, 138 cattle missing in Anambra farmer-herder clash, 1 February 2020, [url](#); Nigeria Watch, Community vs Herders, Anambra, 26 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶³² Guardian (The) Nigeria, Disturbing security trends in Anambra and southeast zone, 8 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶³³ Amnesty International, Nigeria: time to end impunity – torture and other violations by Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), p. 20, [url](#)

¹⁶³⁴ Vanguard, Police in Anambra shoots two to death over enforcement movement restriction, 15 April 2020, [url](#); Social Action, Human rights violations during Covid-19 lockdown in Nigeria, 29 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶³⁵ Punch, Four killed, houses burnt in Anambra communal clash, 23 April 2020, [url](#); Daily Post, Four killed in Anambra communal clash, 23 April 2020, [url](#); The Sun Nigeria, Bloods, tears in Anambra, 28 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶³⁶ The Sun Nigeria, Bloods, tears in Anambra, 28 April 2020, [url](#)

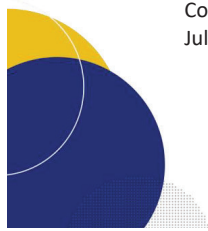
¹⁶³⁷ The Nation, Two feared killed, policeman missing in Anambra, 31 August 2020, [url](#); Daily Post, 2 killed, policeman missing in Anambra communal clash, 1 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶³⁸ Vanguard, Many feared dead, 300 injured, 50 missing as two Anambra communities clash, 8 May 2020, [url](#); Punch, One killed, 300 injured, curfew declared over communal clash, 8 May 2020, [url](#); Tell, Many feared dead in Anambra communal clash, 8 May 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, How land dispute turned Anambra communities into war, IDPs zones, 17 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶³⁹ Vanguard, Communal clash claims one life in Anambra, 27 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴⁰ Nigeria Watch, Communal clash, Anambra, 29 May 2020, [url](#); Sundiata Post, 3 feared killed, 15 injured in Anambra communal clash, 29 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴¹ Vanguard, Two persons missing, others injured after Anambra communal clash, 26 June 2020, [url](#); Nigeria Watch, Communal clash, Anambra, 28 June 2020, [url](#); The Sun – Nigeria, Sorrow, tears, as Anambra communities clash over land, 6 July 2020, [url](#)



On 26 June 2020, one person was killed, five were injured, and 16 were arrested in Ogwuanaocha (Ogbaru LGA) in a clash of youth groups loyal to the community leader and to a contender competing for a kinship position.¹⁶⁴²

In September 2020, four persons were killed¹⁶⁴³, 13 houses were razed in an intracommunal clash in Awba Ofemili community (Awka South LGA) over a land dispute. Allegedly, 80 % of the Awba Ofemili community fled in exile. Residents accused the traditional leader of the area for causing the conflict by claiming the land from people living in the area between Anambra and Enugu states.¹⁶⁴⁴

Between 21 and 22 October, a police officer was beheaded and killed in Anambra, while in total 21 police stations were attacked, out of which seven were burnt.¹⁶⁴⁵ On 29 October 2020, during #EndSARS protests in Anambra state, four policemen were reportedly killed, 17 protestors were arrested for looting and arson, 11 police stations burnt, and six police stations were vandalised.¹⁶⁴⁶

Around 10 November 2020 (Umueleke village, Ogwuikpele, Ogbaru LGA), three persons were killed, and 10 injured by unidentified gunmen that arrived in a speedboat via the River Niger.¹⁶⁴⁷

2.22.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

Operation Kpochapu is the Anambra state regional security outfit tasked with providing security in the land areas contested by farmers and herders' militias.¹⁶⁴⁸

On 5 March 2020, SPACS arrested 122 suspected criminals across the Anambra state, out of them 25 were charged to be prosecuted, 34 were screened and unconditionally released, while 63 were undergoing investigation.¹⁶⁴⁹

The Anambra state directives imposing coronavirus lockdown measures were reportedly 'flagrantly flouted' and that in Awka, the state capital, 'the lockdown has suffered complete collapse.' Several cases of policemen accepting and demanding bribes from commuters were reported. The state government encouraged the public to report cases of police corruption.¹⁶⁵⁰ In April 2020, it was noted that Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo are among 'the States with the highest recorded cases of human rights violations linked to the enforcement of coronavirus directive'.¹⁶⁵¹

Lawyers of the Law Society (Out Oka Iwu) issued a statement condemning police officers enforcing the coronavirus containment orders leading to a loss of life, while noting that Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo are among 'the States with the highest recorded cases of human rights violations linked to the enforcement of coronavirus directive'. In June 2020, Anambra state government setup the Covid-19 Law Monitoring and Enforcement Task Force, to operationalise enforcement of Anambra state Covid-19 law.¹⁶⁵²

On 11 May 2020, the NHRC reported 1 extra-judicial killing in Anambra state, by the police (SARS).¹⁶⁵³

¹⁶⁴² Guardian (The) Nigeria, One killed as youths clash over kingship tussle in Anambra, 26 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴³ CFR Nigeria Security Tracker Weekly Update: September 19-25, 28 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴⁴ Punch, Four killed in Anambra communal clash, 13 houses destroyed, 20 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴⁵ Daily Post, End SARS: 21 police stations attacked, 7 burnt, policeman beheaded in Anambra, 23 October 2020, [url](#); This Day, #EndSARS: 62 confirmed killed, Lagos destruction may surpass N1trn to rebuild, 24 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴⁶ This Day, Police lose 10 officers, 16 stations in Anambra, Oyo, 29 October 2020, [url](#); Guardian (The) Nigeria, Police weep over killing of two DPOs, officer's beheading, burning of 11 stations, 29 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴⁷ HumAngle, Three dead after gunmen attack Town Union meeting in Anambra community, 10 November 2020, [url](#); HumAngle, Anambra communities cry over illegal oil exploration, damaged environment, 8 November 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴⁸ Vanguard, 10 Anambra communities lament as herdsmen destroy farms, 23 June 2020, [url](#)

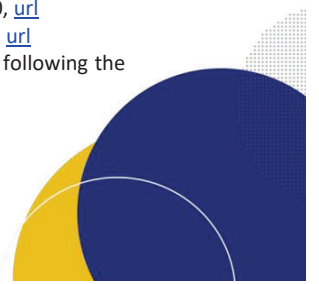
¹⁶⁴⁹ Independent, Police parade 108 suspects arrested cultists, recover arms, ammunition in Anambra, 14 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁵⁰ The Sun Nigeria, Covid-19: lockdown in shambles, 25 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁵¹ Daily Post, Covid-19 lockdown: police already killed 5 in southeast – lawyers demand justice, 21 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁵² Report Circle, Anambra govt sets up Covid-19 Law Monitoring And Enforcement Task Force, 20 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁵³ Nigeria, NHRC, Report on alleged human rights violations recorded between 13th April to 4th May, 2020 following the extension of the lockdown period by government, 10 May 2020, p. 5, [url](#)



Between 1 and 21 September 2020 80 suspected cultists were arrested by SPACS half of whom were further legally processed.¹⁶⁵⁴ On 6 October 2020, IPOB accused SARS of kidnappings and extra-judicial killings of IPOB members in Awkuzu and Enugu Ukwu in Anambra state.¹⁶⁵⁵

In October 2020, a range of attacks on police officers and stations were reported (see [Illustrative security incidents](#)).¹⁶⁵⁶ As part of the #EndSARS campaign (aimed at the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), reportedly 29 out of 36 Nigeria's states 'announced the creation of judicial panels, inviting the public to submit petitions on police brutality and extrajudicial killings. In Anambra State, to date, more than 310 petitions [...] have been submitted to the panel since it opened in mid-October' 2020.¹⁶⁵⁷

2.22.3.4 Road security

No information was found on roads security incidents.

2.22.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war.

2.22.3.6 Displacement and return

IDPs

No information was found on the number of conflict-related IDPs in Anambra state.

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Anambra state.

2.23 Ebonyi state

2.23.1 General description of the state

Ebonyi state shares borders with Benue state to the North, Enugu state to the west, Imo and Abia states to the south and Cross River state to the east.¹⁶⁵⁸ The state's capital is Abakaliki.¹⁶⁵⁹

Ebonyi state is composed of the following 13 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Abakaliki, Afikpo North, Afikpo South, Ebonyi, Ezza North, Ezza South, Ikwo, Ishielu, Ivo, Izzi, Ohaozara, Ohaukwu and Onicha.¹⁶⁶⁰

In the 2006 census, the population of Ebonyi state was 2 176 947. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 2 880 383 in 2016.¹⁶⁶¹

The main ethnic group in Ebonyi are the Igbos; there are also non-Igbo speaking indigenes in the state, that include the Okpotos and the Ntezis in Ishielu LGA.¹⁶⁶² The most spoken language is Igbo in Ebonyi

¹⁶⁵⁴ The Whistler, Anambra police arrest 80 suspected cultists in 15 days, 22 September 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, We'll leave no stone unturned to rid Anambra of cultism — CP, 23 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁵⁵ Vanguard, IPOB accuses SARS, Police anti-kidnapping squad of killings, 6 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁵⁶ Premium Times, Four dead as hoodlums attack police stations in Anambra, 23 October 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, #EndSARS: DPO, one other killed, 5 police stations attacked in Anambra, 23 October 2020, [url](#); Premium Times, Four dead as hoodlums attack police stations in Anambra, 23 October 2020, [url](#);

¹⁶⁵⁷ Aljazeera, Gone: the lost victims of Nigeria's 'most brutal' police station, 20 January 2021, [url](#)

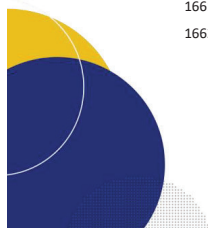
¹⁶⁵⁸ Nigeria, Ebonyi State, Ebonyi State Profile, Land Area, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁶⁵⁹ Nigeria, Ebonyi State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁶⁶⁰ Nigeria, Ebonyi State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁶⁶¹ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 2

¹⁶⁶² Nigeria, Ebonyi State, Ebonyi State Profile, Population, n.d., [url](#)



state and the official language is English.¹⁶⁶³ The following languages are ‘sub-groups’ of the Igbo language and they constitute the primary languages spoken in the state: Afikpo, Mgbo, Izzi, Ezaa, Edda, Ikwo, Kukele, Legbo, Mbembe, Okposi, Uburu and Oring.¹⁶⁶⁴

Agriculture is the main occupation in Ebonyi state. There are also different solid mineral resources, such as lead, as well as crude oil and natural gas.¹⁶⁶⁵

2.23.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.23.2.1 Background of the conflict

In 2020, Ebonyi state experienced many communal confrontations. The background to these clashes is related to conflicts over land and its resources.¹⁶⁶⁶ Some clashes occurred across state boundaries, between the Ebonyi state and Benue state, and the Ebonyi state and Cross River state.¹⁶⁶⁷ In 2020, 23 civilian fatalities were recorded during cult clashes.¹⁶⁶⁸

Another driver of civilian fatalities includes continues Fulani herdsmen and farmers crisis, which resulted in a few casualties.¹⁶⁶⁹ On 27 May 2020, the Nigeria Voice (TNV) reported that, similar to other states in the South-East Region, in Ebonyi state 36 communities were reportedly ‘occupied by herdsmen’.¹⁶⁷⁰ These numbers could not be corroborated by other sources.

2.23.2.2 Actors

In 2020, the main security actors in Ebonyi state were different communities clashing over land, cults, unidentified gunmen and police services.¹⁶⁷¹

Ebonyi State Government has tasked a security outfit, Neighbourhood Watch, with providing security in the areas contested by the herder-farmer conflict.¹⁶⁷²

2.23.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

2.23.3.1 Number of security incidents

In the year 2020, ACLED reported a total of 29 security incidents (10 battles, 14 cases of violence against civilians, 5 incidents of riots) in Ebonyi state, resulting in 37 deaths, all victims of attacks. The highest number of security incidents took place in Ebonyi and Izzi LGAs. Of the 14 incidents of violence against civilians, 12 were attacks, 1 abduction and 1 sexual violence.¹⁶⁷³

¹⁶⁶³ Nigeria, Ebonyi State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁶⁶⁴ Nigeria, Ebonyi State, Ebonyi State Profile, Languages & Festivals, [url](#)

¹⁶⁶⁵ Nigeria, Ebonyi State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁶⁶⁶ EASO analysis PowerBI based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Nigeria Watch, Database, filtered on Ebonyi, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁶⁷ SBMorgen, Report on small arms, mass atrocities and migration in Nigeria, April 2020, [url](#), p. 10

¹⁶⁶⁸ Nigeria Watch, Database, filtered on Ebonyi, text: cult, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

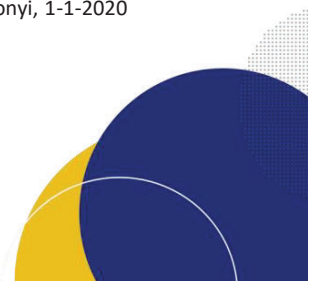
¹⁶⁶⁹ Nigeria Watch, Database, filtered on Ebonyi, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Communities in South-East groan, as herdsmen take over farmlands, 1 July 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷⁰ TNV, State backed Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen and Shuwa Arabs now occupy 350 Igbo Communities and villages, 27 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷¹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Nigeria Watch, Database, filtered on Ebonyi, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷² Vanguard, 10 Anambra communities lament as herdsmen destroy farms, 23 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷³ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period is shown in Figure 54 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 8 protests were reported during the reference period.¹⁶⁷⁴

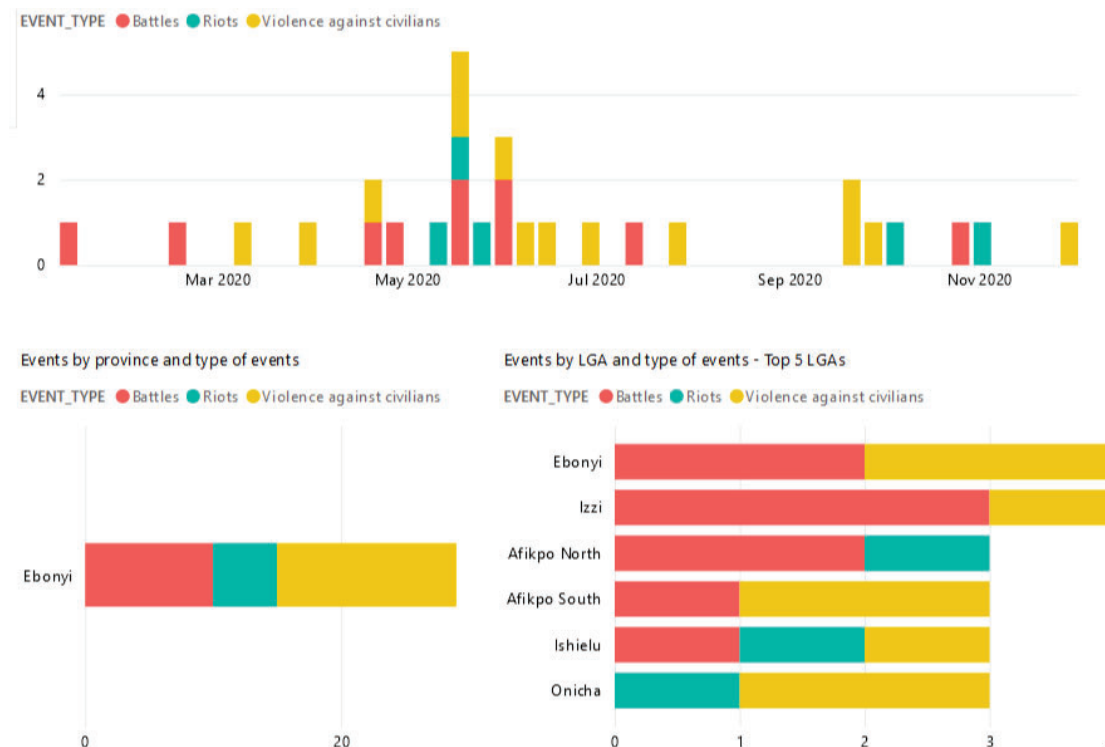


Figure 32 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Ebonyi state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹⁶⁷⁵

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Ebonyi state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Ebonyi state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	10	10
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	14	24
Riots	5	3
Total	29	37

Table 28 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹⁶⁷⁶

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 17 security incidents (9 battles, 7 cases of violence against civilians, 1 incident of riots) in Ebonyi state, resulting in 82 deaths.¹⁶⁷⁷

¹⁶⁷⁴ EASO analysis PowerBI based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷⁵ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷⁶ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷⁷ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

2.23.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 9 January 2020, 6 persons were allegedly ‘accosted, killed and beheaded by gunmen highly suspected to be militia from Ohaukwu’, in a protracted border conflict between Agila community (Ado LGA, Benue state) and Ohaukwu. The aftermath of the attack allegedly followed the ‘massive evacuation of persons from the neighbouring villages of Ijigban, Ulayi, and Ekile which are also border communities with Ebonyi state for fear of being murdered. Houses and properties were equally destroyed in the attack.’¹⁶⁷⁸

On 26 February 2020, it was reported that ‘hundred’ residents of Agila community (Ado LGA, Benue state) were expelled from their homes by an alleged armed militia gang from Ngbo (Ohaukwu LGA, Ebonyi).¹⁶⁷⁹ The boundary dispute is allegedly predating the independence era.¹⁶⁸⁰

On 10 March 2020, between 10 and 14 persons were reportedly killed, when an Agila militia of about 35 people attacked Umuogudu Akpu Ngbo community (Ohaukwu LGA).¹⁶⁸¹ IPOB blamed herdsmen for this incident, while the Ebonyi’s State Police Command denied such claims, clarifying the attack was perpetuated by Agila community.¹⁶⁸²

On 9 June 2020, one person was killed, 10 were injured, and three were abducted in an intercommunal clash when Isinkwo gunmen attacked Abaomege community (Onicha LGA) over a protracted land dispute.¹⁶⁸³

On 30 June 2020, two persons were killed, five were abducted in an attack on Ekoli Edda community (Afikpo South LGA). Preliminary investigation confirmed the attack was the result of ‘resurgence of the longstanding communal feud between the people of Ekoli Edda [...] and Biase L.G.A of Cross River State over the Palm Plantation’.^{1684 1685}

On 18 July 2020, 2 persons were killed in an intercommunal clash between Nguji Ojiegbe Onunwakpu and Ndiegede villages (Igbeagu, Izzi LGA) over disputed land.¹⁶⁸⁶

On 24 September 2020, a decades-long intercommunal boundary clash erupted again between the Obeagu Ibom, Amachi (Izzi LGA) and the Obubara (Cross River state) communities. Two persons were killed and three went missing.¹⁶⁸⁷ Allegedly, the attackers came from three Cross River communities (Obubara LGA) that are in a land boundary dispute with the Izzi community.¹⁶⁸⁸

¹⁶⁷⁸ Daily Post, Ebonyi/Benue border clash: Oche cries out over attacks, killings as FG keeps mute, 13 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷⁹ Vanguard, Insecurity: gunmen go on rampage nationwide, 26 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸⁰ Punch, Age-old boundary dispute: tears, killings as violence festers in Ebonyi-Benue communities, 31 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸¹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Nigeria Watch, Communal clash, Ebonyi, 10 March 2020, [url](#); The Sun Nigeria, Breaking news: 14 killed in renewed Ebonyi/Benue boundary war, 11 March 2020, [url](#); Daily Post, Ebonyi police, IPOB in war of words over killings in Ngbo community, 11 March 2020, [url](#); This Day, 10 killed in Benue, Ebonyi boundary clash, 12 March 2020, [url](#); Punch, Age-old boundary dispute: tears, killings as violence festers in Ebonyi-Benue communities, 31 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸² Daily Post, Ebonyi police, IPOB in war of words over killings in Ngbo community, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸³ EASO analysis PowerBI based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Daily Post, Ebonyi: one killed, 3 abducted, 10 others injured as Abaomege, Isinkwo communities clash over land, 10 June 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Land dispute: one person feared dead, 3 missing, many injured in Ebonyi, 11 June 2020, [url](#)

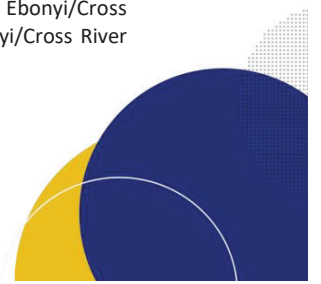
¹⁶⁸⁴ EASO analysis PowerBI based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Blueprint, Communal clashes: 2 killed, 5 abducted on Ebonyi, Cross River boundary, 2 July 2020, [url](#); Premium Times, Two killed, five abducted in Ebonyi, Cross River boundary dispute, 2 July 2020, [url](#); New Telegraph, Ebonyi/C’River crisis: husband, wife murdered, five abducted, 3 July 2020, [url](#); PIND, Niger Delta Weekly: Spotlighting communal conflict in Cross River State (July 19 – 25, 2020), 23 July 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸⁵ The Nation, Two killed, five abducted in resumed Ebonyi, Cross-River boundary dispute, 3 July 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸⁶ EASO analysis PowerBI based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Daily Post, 2 killed, houses, other property destroyed in Ebonyi fresh communal crisis, 18 July 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸⁷ Nigeria Watch, Communal clash, Ebonyi, 24 September 2020, [url](#); Premium Times, Two killed in renewed Ebonyi/Cross River boundary dispute, 25 September 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Two killed, 3 others missing in renewed Ebonyi/Cross River boundary dispute, 25 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸⁸ Premium Times, Two killed in renewed Ebonyi/Cross River boundary dispute, 25 September 2020, [url](#)



On 9 October 2020 (Amuzu Nkpogoro community, Afikpo North LGA), two people were killed, and members of the community suspected Fulani herdsmen as responsible.¹⁶⁸⁹

On 26 October 2020 (Ikwo LGA), 2 policemen were killed, and the Central Police Station in Abakaliki was burned by alleged IPOB members, 'in retaliation for the killing of some of their members by the police during last week's disturbances'.¹⁶⁹⁰

On 21 October 2020 2 policemen were killed, 4 policemen were injured during #EndSARS protest in Abakaliki. Police accused IPOB of attacking and burning 2 police stations. On 22 October 2020, another 2 police stations were burned, 6 suspects were arrested. On 28 October 2020, Ezza North Divisional Headquarters was attacked for the second time, one policeman was wounded. IPOB denied its involvement in these attacks.¹⁶⁹¹

On 26 November 2020 (Ohaukwu LGA and Abakaliki), three persons were killed in a cult clash between Axe confraternity and the Ayez.¹⁶⁹² On 29 November 2020 (Oriuzo, Ezza North LGA and Onueke, Ezza South LGA), four persons were reportedly killed in the cult clash between Ayez and Barga confraternities.¹⁶⁹³

In December 2020 (Abakaliki), nine persons killed in cult clashes between two fraternities, 37 suspects were arrested, and 9 000 pieces of live ammunition was recovered at Building Materials Market in Abakaliki.¹⁶⁹⁴ Reportedly, also members of the Neighbourhood Security Watch, the Ebonyi state security outfit, were arrested.¹⁶⁹⁵

2.23.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

On 6 March 2020, Ebonyi State Governor ordered police, army and other security agencies in the state 'to shoot at sight anyone who tries to kill any Ebonyian within and outside Ebonyi communities'. The order came as the consequence of over 50 years intercommunal clashes between Ohankwu and Amana communities, over contested ownership of a lucrative mining site in the area.¹⁶⁹⁶

On 18 October 2020, the Ebonyi State Government ordered profiling of all herdsmen within the 13 LGAs of the state. This decision was aimed at 'maintaining permanent peace between the farmers and herders in the state' Profiling would entail collecting of herdsmen 'data, their passports, phone numbers, so that if there is anything in that particular locality, we will be able to call and nip it on the board before it escalates'.¹⁶⁹⁷ Also, supervisors would be appointed to monitor herders movements in various localities, and to 'trace an upsurge or entrance of foreigners into their localities'.¹⁶⁹⁸

Neighbourhood Watch is the Ebonyi state security outfit tasked with providing security in the land areas contested by the Igbo and the herders.¹⁶⁹⁹

¹⁶⁸⁹ Nigeria Watch, Herdsmen vs couple, Ebonyi, 9 October 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Alleged Herdsmen Attack: Couple found dead in Ebonyi Community as angry youths besiege Police Division, 9 October 2020, [url](#); The Sun Nigeria, Cow meat banned, 4 November 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁹⁰ Premium Times, Police station in Abakaliki attacked, 26 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁹¹ The Nation, #EndSARS: 'How hoodlums killed 2 Policemen, destroyed 7 Police stations in Ebonyi', 29 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁹² New Telegraph, Three killed, two injured in Ebonyi cult clash, 26 November 2020, [url](#); Blueprint, 2 killed, others struggling for life after cult clash in Ebonyi, 26 November 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁹³ Pulse, 4 killed in renewed cult clash in Ebonyi communities, 30 November 2020, [url](#); Daily Trust, Renewed cult clash in Ebonyi communities claims 4 lives, 1 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁹⁴ The Nation, Nine killed in Ebonyi cult clashes, [url](#)

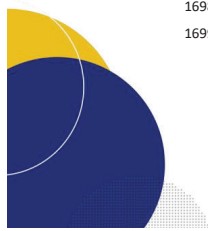
¹⁶⁹⁵ Pulse, Renewed cult clash leaves 9 dead in Ebonyi, 22 December 2020, [url](#); The Sun Nigeria, Ebonyi confirms 9 deaths in renewed cult clash, 22 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁹⁶ Daily Post, Ebonyi communal crisis: Gov. Umahi orders security operatives to shoot at sight, 6 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁹⁷ Vanguard, Conflict resolution: Ebonyi orders profiling of all Fulani herdsmen, 18 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁹⁸ Vanguard, Conflict resolution: Ebonyi orders profiling of all Fulani herdsmen, 18 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁹⁹ Vanguard, 10 Anambra communities lament as herdsmen destroy farms, 23 June 2020, [url](#)



2.23.3.4 Road security

No information was found on road security incidents in Ebonyi state.

2.23.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of.

2.23.3.6 Displacement and return**IDPs**

No information was found on the number of conflict-related IDPs in Ebonyi state.

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Ebonyi state.

2.24 Enugu state**2.24.1 General description of the state**

Enugu state shares borders with Abia and Imo states to the south, with Ebonyi state to the east, with Benue state to the north-east, with Kogi state to the north-west and with Anambra state to the west. The state's capital is Enugu.¹⁷⁰⁰

Enugu state is composed of the following 17 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Aninri, Awgu, Enugu East, Enugu North, Enugu South, Ezeagu, Igbo Etiti, Igboeze North, Igboeze South, Isiuo, Nkanu East, Nkanu West, Nsukka, Oji River, Udenu, Udi and Uzo Uwani.¹⁷⁰¹

In the 2006 census, the population of Enugu state was 3 267 837. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 4 411 119 in 2016.¹⁷⁰²

The majority of the state's people are Igbo-speaking.¹⁷⁰³

The economic areas of the state are agriculture, industries and potential for tourism.¹⁷⁰⁴

2.24.2 Conflict background and armed actors**2.24.2.1 Background of the conflict**

Conflicts in Enugu state are mainly around clashes between communities over land.¹⁷⁰⁵

2.24.2.2 Actors

In 2020, main actors in the security situation in Enugu state were police services, unidentified gunmen, #EndSARS protesters, IPOB and different communities clashing over land.¹⁷⁰⁶

¹⁷⁰⁰ Nigeria, Enugu State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁷⁰¹ Nigeria, Enugu State, n.d., [url](#)

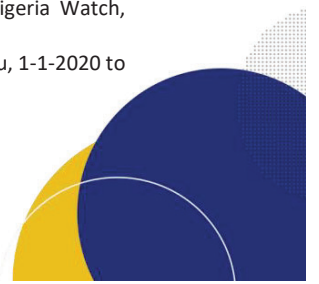
¹⁷⁰² Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 2

¹⁷⁰³ Nigeria, Enugu State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁷⁰⁴ Nigeria, Enugu State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁷⁰⁵ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Nigeria Watch, Database, filtered on Enugu, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰⁶ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Nigeria Watch, Database, filtered on Enugu, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



Enugu state government has tasked a security outfit, Forest Guards, with providing security in the land areas contested in the farmer-herder conflict.¹⁷⁰⁷

2.24.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

2.24.3.1 Number of security incidents

In the year 2020, ACLED reported a total of 18 security incidents (1 battle, 12 cases of violence against civilians, 5 incidents of riots) in Enugu state, resulting in 5 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Nsukka LGA. Of the 12 incidents of violence against civilians, 6 were attacks, 5 abductions and 1 sexual violence.¹⁷⁰⁸

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period is shown in Figure 56 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 20 protests were reported during the reference period.¹⁷⁰⁹



Figure 33 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Enugu state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹⁷¹⁰

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Enugu state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

¹⁷⁰⁷ Vanguard, 10 Anambra communities lament as herdsmen destroy farms, 23 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰⁸ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰⁹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁷¹⁰ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

Enugu state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	1	0
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	12	1
Riots	5	4
Total	18	5

Table 29 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹⁷¹¹

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 6 security incidents (3 battles, 2 cases of violence against civilians, 1 incident of riots) in Enugu state, resulting in 10 deaths.¹⁷¹²

2.24.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

In January 2020, one person was killed in an intercommunal clash between Amaeke and Amagu-Odoma communities over a protracted land dispute.¹⁷¹³

Reportedly on 23 April 2020, one person was killed in police custody, while four were arrested by the Nsukka Anti-Cult Unit (Nsukka LGA).¹⁷¹⁴ In February 2021, 4 policemen of the Nsukka Anti-Cult Unit believed to be responsible for the murder were re-arrested after escaping police custody in Enugu in November 2020.¹⁷¹⁵

On 23 August 2020 in Emene (Enugu LGA), a clash occurred between IPOB and the Department of State Security (DSS), where police allegedly sustained 5 fatalities, out of which 3 were civilians and members of IPOB, 2 were policemen, and allegedly several were injured.¹⁷¹⁶ IPOB leadership countered the police account of killings, claiming that police killed 21 of its members, while arresting 47.¹⁷¹⁷ Another two sources confirmed IPOB's account of 21 fatalities.¹⁷¹⁸

On 21 October 2020, allegedly 2 persons were killed during #EndSARS protest at the Nike lake road by police, and two were wounded. At the time of the event, the police reported not to be aware of any violence.¹⁷¹⁹

2.24.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

In February 2020, Enugu state engaged 1 700 Forest Guard personnel and another 5 200 for Neighbourhood Watch to boost security in the 17 LGAs by providing community policing, fight and prevent crime, and enforce laws.¹⁷²⁰ On 4 September 2020, the Enugu State Governor signed the State

¹⁷¹¹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁷¹² EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

¹⁷¹³ Nigeria Watch, Communal clash, Enugu, 15 January 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Enugu widow laments non-prosecution of husband's killer, 31 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷¹⁴ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Guardian (The) Nigeria, "I don't have a hand in the death of final year law student", says Enugu council chairman, 9 May 2020, [url](#); The Sun Nigeria, Release corpse of my son for burial, father of slain UNIZIK student begs police, 17 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷¹⁵ Punch, Fugitive policemen who allegedly killed UNIZIK student re-arrested, 21 February 2021, [url](#)

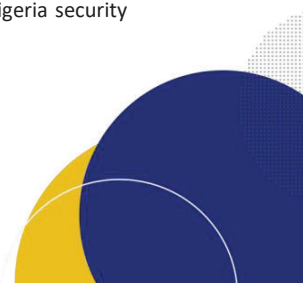
¹⁷¹⁶ Guardian (The) Nigeria, DSS officials, IPOB members reportedly dead after Enugu clash, 23 August 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, IPOB faults police report, says 21 members killed, 47 arrested, 23 August 2020, [url](#); BBC, IPOB, DSS clash in Enugu – see wetin we sabi about di latest palava, 24 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷¹⁷ Vanguard, IPOB faults police report, says 21 members killed, 47 arrested, 23 August 2020, [url](#); BBC, IPOB, DSS clash in Enugu – see wetin we sabi about di latest palava, 24 August 2020, [url](#); France24 The Observer - Nigeria: New clashes after security forces break up meeting of Biafran separatists, 26 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷¹⁸ Reuters, Nigerian security clash with Biafra separatists turns deadly – DSS, 24 August 2020, [url](#); CFR, Nigeria security tracker weekly update: August 22-28, 31 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷¹⁹ Vanguard, 2 feared dead as #EndSARS protest turns violent in Enugu, 21 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷²⁰ The Sun Nigeria, Enugu's Forest Guard and the nascent community police, 24 February 2020, [url](#)



Forest Guard Act, into law to ensure the effective operations in LGAs of the state.¹⁷²¹ This was perceived as a vote of confidence by traditional rulers and presidents-generals of town units for the Enugu State Governor, and how he was discharging his duties in Enugu state as the Chief Security Officer.¹⁷²²

In the aftermath of the clash on 23 August 2020 between IPOB and DSS (see above), the League of Igbo Youth Lawyers (LIYoL) said it was investigating the reported killings of IPOB members by DSS.¹⁷²³ Another citizens group, Citizens' Initiative for Security Awareness (CISA) urged the Federal Government to de-escalate tension in the South-East Region and not to provide a reason for IPOB to create another insurgent group in the South-East Region. CISA stated that 'Nigeria could not afford another insurgent group like Boko Haram or Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) because the battle to rid the country of insurgents had overstretched the military.'¹⁷²⁴ On 1 September 2020, the Enugu State Governor called for an emergency Security Council meeting with all heads of security agencies in the state, to investigate the causes of this clash.¹⁷²⁵

In the period between 13 April and 4 May 2020, the NHRC reported that Enugu state had registered 13 human rights violations related to COVID-19 measures, more than any other state in Nigeria.¹⁷²⁶

2.24.3.4 Road security

As the consequence of #EndSARS protests over police brutality, there were reports of road blockages, such as on 21 October 2020 when protestors in Enugu blocked several roads by setting tyres on fire, and reportedly 'virtually shut down business activities in affected areas of the town'.¹⁷²⁷

2.24.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war.

2.24.3.6 Displacement and return

IDPs

No information was found on the number of conflict-related IDPs in Enugu state.

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Enugu state.

¹⁷²¹ This Day, Ugwuanyi signs State Forest Guard Act into law, 4 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷²² This Day, Ugwuanyi signs State Forest Guard Act into law, 4 September 2020, [url](#)

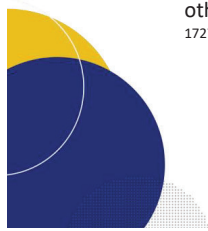
¹⁷²³ Guardian (The) Nigeria, Lawyers probe Enugu killings, 1 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷²⁴ Guardian (The) Nigeria, Don't provide opportunity for insurgency in South East, group advises FG, 2 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷²⁵ This Day, Enugu killings: Ugwuanyi asks suspects to return weapons snatched from security agents, 2 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷²⁶ Nigeria, NHRC, Report on alleged human rights violations recorded between 13th April to 4th May, 2020 following the extension of the lockdown period by government, 10 May 2020, p. 1, [url](#); Premium Times, 11 killed by Nigeria security agents, others during lockdown – Rights Commission, 12 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷²⁷ Premium Times, Enugu protesters shut major roads as soldiers protect vital assets, 22 October 2020, [url](#)



2.25 Imo state

2.25.1 General description of the state

Imo state shares boundaries with the states of Abia to the east, Delta to the west, Anambra to the north and Rivers to the south.¹⁷²⁸ The state's capital is Owerri.¹⁷²⁹

Imo state is composed of the following 27 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Aboh-Imbaise, Ahiazu-Mbaise, Ehime Mbano, Ezinihitte, Ideato North, Ideato South, Ihitte/Uboma, Ikeduru, Isiala Mbano, Isu, Mbaitoli, Ngor-Okpala, Njaba, Nkwere, Nwangele, Obowo, Oguta, Ohaji-Egbema, Okigwe, Onuimo, Orlu, Orsu, Oru East, Oru West, Owerri Municipal, Owerri North and Owerri West.¹⁷³⁰

In the 2006 census, the population of Imo state was 3 927 563. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 5 408 756 in 2016.¹⁷³¹

The majority of the people at Imo state are Igbo (98 %) and Igbo constitutes the main spoken language.¹⁷³²

Imo state has significant natural resources such as crude oil, lead, zinc, white clay, fine sand, limestone and natural gas. It also has agricultural production.¹⁷³³

2.25.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.25.2.1 Background of the conflict

Imo state, as an oil-producing state part of the Niger Delta, shares a history of economic exploitation, environmental pollution and political marginalisation which has made the Niger Delta a rather violent region.¹⁷³⁴ In addition, the main Igbo separatist movements MASSOB and IPOB have severely clashed in 2020 with the police.¹⁷³⁵ Furthermore, cult rivalry has led to several violent clashes between local cults.¹⁷³⁶

2.25.2.2 Actors

Actors in the violence in Imo state identified in ACLED's database include Fulani herdsmen (militia), several local militias, local cult groups, members of the banned separatist movements IPOB/MASSOB, militants from the political parties APC and PDP, and the Nigerian police and security forces.¹⁷³⁷

After several violent clashes with the police during 2020, the IPOB leadership launched on 13 December 2020 its Eastern Security Network (ESN), a 'vigilante group like the Amotekun in the South West and the Miyetti Allah [which] will ensure the safety of our forests and farm lands which

¹⁷²⁸ Nigeria, Imo State, n.d., [url](#); According to Imo state's official website, the state shares a border with Delta state. Nigeria, Imo State, n.d., [url](#); on the contrary, the UN map shows that Imo state does not share a border with Delta state. UN, Nigeria, August 2014, [url](#)

¹⁷²⁹ Nigeria, Imo State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁷³⁰ Nigeria, Imo State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁷³¹ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 2

¹⁷³² Nigeria, Imo State, n.d., [url](#)

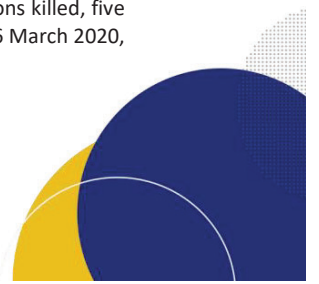
¹⁷³³ Nigeria, Imo State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁷³⁴ PIND Foundation, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), p. 2. See also EASO, EASO COI report Nigeria Security situation, November 2018, [url](#), pp. 56-58

¹⁷³⁵ Nation (The), Police, IPOB, MASSOB in bloody clash in Imo, 24 July 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, 67 IPOB members, native doctor arrested in Imo, 12 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷³⁶ See Daily Trust, 3 Die As Rival Cult Gangs Clash In Imo State, 7 March 2020, [url](#); Nation (The), Three persons killed, five injured in cult war in Imo, 6 March 2020, [url](#); PM News, Uzodinma calms nerves after cult killings in Okigwe, 6 March 2020, [url](#); Punch, Two killed as rival cult groups clash in Imo, 12 November 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷³⁷ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



terrorists have converted into slaughter grounds and raping fields.’ It further stated that ‘the ESN was launched to protect the Southeast from marauding Fulani herdsmen and other criminal elements.’¹⁷³⁸

According to a study by Nwaogu and others on ten years of cult violence in Imo and Rivers states, the most prominent cults in the two states were Deebam, Deewell, Icelander, Greenlanders, and Black Axe. The source did not specify which of these cults were specifically active in Imo state.¹⁷³⁹

2.25.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

In 2020, clashes with Fulani herdsmen occurred, related to conflicts over grazing land. Further, EndSARS protests, sometimes ending in violence, were prevalent in Imo state, just like in other states. Violent killings of female farmers were reported in one LGA in Imo state, as the next section shows.

The NGO Foundation for Partner-ship Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND) in its annual report over 2020 recorded several human rights violations in Imo state such as: sexual violence and abuses by security forces, gang and cult violence, vigilante and mob violence..¹⁷⁴⁰ In comparison with 2019, Imo state ranking on vigilante and mob violence dropped from the third to the fifth place.¹⁷⁴¹

In a study by Nwaogu and others on ten years of cult violence in Imo and Rivers states, the Ohaji/Egbema and Oguta LGAs of Imo state were assessed as high-risk areas because the issue of cult killings is increasingly crossing borders northwards from Rivers state.¹⁷⁴²

2.25.3.1 Number of security incidents

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 38 security incidents (6 battles, 16 cases of violence against civilians, 16 incidents of riots) in Imo state, resulting in 18 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Owerri-Municipal LGA (10 incidents with 3 deaths). Of the 16 incidents of violence against civilians, 11 were attacks and 5 abductions.¹⁷⁴³

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period, as well as the highest number of incidents by LGA is shown in Figure XX below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 32 protests were reported during the reference period.¹⁷⁴⁴

¹⁷³⁸ Daily Post, Nnamdi Kanu launches Eastern Security Network, 13 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷³⁹ Nwaogu, et al., Evaluation of Youth Vulnerability to Community Cultism in Selected States in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, 2019, [url](#), pp. 5-7, 11

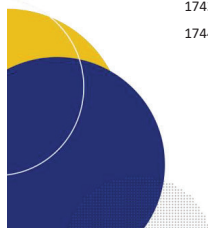
¹⁷⁴⁰ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), pp. 3-4

¹⁷⁴¹ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2019, 4 February 2020, [url](#), p. 9

¹⁷⁴² Nwaogu, et al., Evaluation of Youth Vulnerability to Community Cultism in Selected States in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, 2019, [url](#), p. 11

¹⁷⁴³ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁴⁴ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



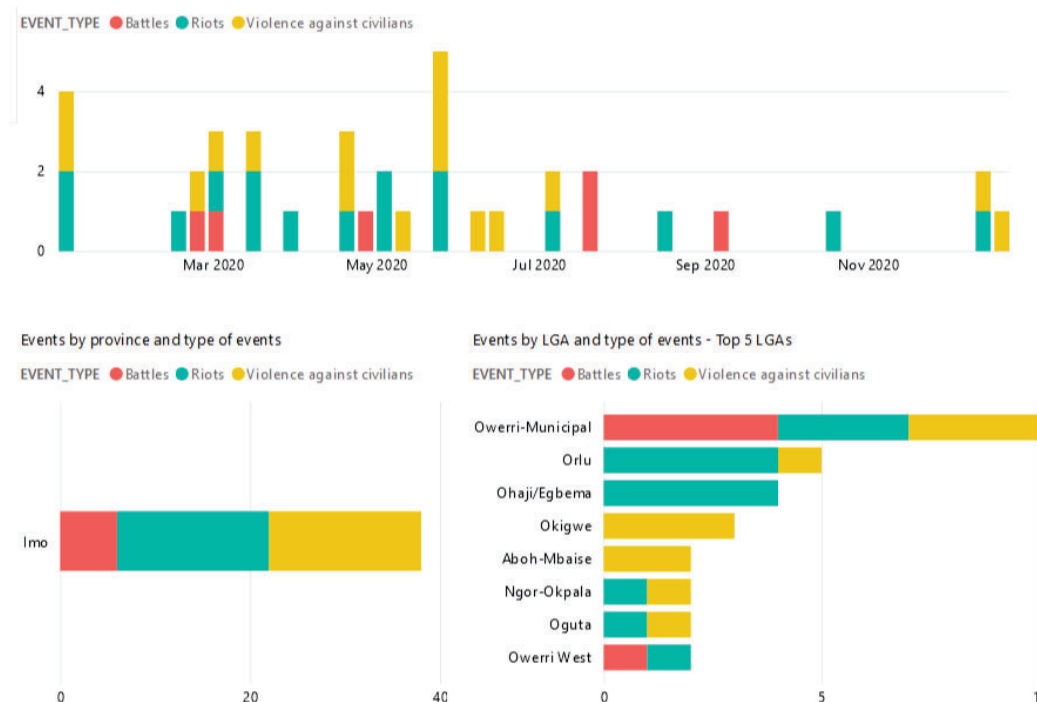


Figure 34 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Imo state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹⁷⁴⁵

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Imo state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Imo state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	6	5
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	16	10
Riots	16	3
Total	38	18

Table 30 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹⁷⁴⁶

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 32 security incidents (14 battles, 1 incident of remote violence/explosions, 13 cases of violence against civilians, 4 incidents of riots) in Imo state, resulting in 59 deaths.¹⁷⁴⁷

¹⁷⁴⁵ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁴⁶ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁴⁷ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)



2.25.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 4 March 2020, unidentified rival cults groups clashed in Okigwe LGA, allegedly in a fight for control over the territory. Three persons were killed, four injured.¹⁷⁴⁸ Another source claimed that the attack was targeted at local vigilante men.¹⁷⁴⁹

On 19 March 2020, a woman was strangled on her farm in Lowa (Ihitte-Uboma LGA). Perpetrators were suspected to be Fulani herdsmen, although a House representative later claimed that this could not be the case 'because the unfortunate incident keeps recurring in the same Lowa community'.¹⁷⁵⁰ A similar killing of a female farmer had happened on 21 April 2019.¹⁷⁵¹ The same happened to women on 3 June 2020¹⁷⁵² and on 6 July 2020, both times in Ihitte-Uboma LGA. Women protested against the killings that had occurred in the same LGA in the past few months.¹⁷⁵³

On 19 April 2020, local villagers from Ezinihite Mbaise LGA clashed with Fulani herders and rustled 127 cows. The governor intervened personally between herders and villagers for amicable solutions and called for the recovery of the cows.¹⁷⁵⁴

On 26 May 2020, Nigerian Navy officers reportedly killed two youths in Ngor (Okpala LGA), who were conveying a corpse in an ambulance to bury in the nearby village. The naval officers refused the youths passage and fired at them with fatal results.¹⁷⁵⁵

On 13 June 2020, suspected Fulani herdsmen killed a farmer in Obudi Agwa (Oguta LGA) who had tried to chase away their cattle grazing on his farmland.¹⁷⁵⁶

On 24 July 2020, members of IPOB and MASSOB, gathered for the funeral of an IPOB member, clashed with the police in Orji (Owerri North LGA). Exchange of gunfire seriously injured several people.¹⁷⁵⁷ On 12 August 2020, 67 members of IPOB were arrested in Owerri, allegedly because the banned group planned attacks on security agencies to collect their guns.¹⁷⁵⁸

On 21 October 2020, in one of the #ENDSARS protests, 'hoodlums' set the police station in Mbaitoli LGA on fire.¹⁷⁵⁹ One source reported that more buildings had been set on fire and four persons might have been killed.¹⁷⁶⁰

On 11 November 2020, two rival cults, Vikings and Black Axe confraternities, fought for supremacy in Umudibia village (Owerri West LGA). The violence killed two cult members and caused panic among residents.¹⁷⁶¹

On 18 February 2021, clashes between the military and members of the ESN flared up in Orlu and Orsu areas. Deploying helicopters and hundreds of troops, security forces (army and air forces) destroyed several ESN camps. Three fatalities were recorded.¹⁷⁶²

¹⁷⁴⁸ Daily Trust, 3 Die As Rival Cult Gangs Clash In Imo State, 7 March 2020, [url](#); Nation (The), Three persons killed, five injured in cult war in Imo, [url](#)

¹⁷⁴⁹ PM News, Uzodinma calms nerves after cult killings in Okigwe, 6 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵⁰ Daily Post, Lawmaker raises alarm over incessant killings in Imo community, 5 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵¹ Sun (The), Widow hacked to death at her farm in Imo, 21 April 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵² Guardian (The), Mother of four sexually violated, murdered in Imo, 16 June 2020, [url](#); Imo Trumpeta, Okigwe LGA Boils Over Bizman's Murder ..As Woman is strangled To Death in Ihitte/Uboma, 5 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵³ Daily Post, Imo community protests incessant killing of farmers, 7 July 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵⁴ Sun, Ezinite/herders' clash under control – Imo govt, 20 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵⁵ Sun (The), Imo: Tension in Ngor Okpala as naval personnel allegedly kill 2 youths, 26 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵⁶ Sun (The), Imo: Tension in community as Fulani herdsmen kill local farmer, 13 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵⁷ Nation (The), Police, IPOB, MASSOB in bloody clash in Imo, 24 July 2020, [url](#)

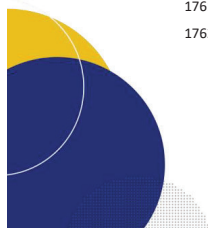
¹⁷⁵⁸ Vanguard, 67 IPOB members, native doctor arrested in Imo, 12 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵⁹ Premium Times, #EndSARS: Hoodlums sets police station on fire in Imo, 21 October 2020, [url](#). See also Vanguard, ENDSARS: Imo gov, Uzodinma, backs protesters, 13 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶⁰ Champion News, #ENDEARS protests: 4 persons feared killed in Imo, 22 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶¹ Punch, Two killed as rival cult groups clash in Imo, 12 November 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶² Guardian (The), Military, ESN clash persists in Imo, 19 February 2021, [url](#)



On 5 April 2021, unknown gunmen (suspected ESN fighters) stormed the headquarters of the Imo State Police Command and the Owerri Correctional Centre and freed more than 1 800 inmates. They also set the premises including numerous vehicles on fire. In addition, the gunmen attacked soldiers at Umuorji on the Owerri-Onitsha expressway.¹⁷⁶³ According to the New Humanitarian, 'Police officials said the attackers were members of the Eastern Security Network (ESN), the armed wing of the secessionist movement the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). That group is demanding independence for the region, although it has denied its involvement.'¹⁷⁶⁴

On 24 April 2021, Nigerian Army, the police and the State Security Service (SSS) raided the ESN headquarters in Oru East LGA and killed at least seven ESN commanders.¹⁷⁶⁵

2.25.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

In reaction to the above mentioned 'unfortunate gruesome killings' in Okigwe on 4 March 2020, the federal House of Representatives launched an investigation. Further, the House 'urged the security agencies to beef up security within Okigwe Zone to avoid future occurrence and resolved the House to invite Imo Security Chiefs for questioning regarding the unfortunate incidences.' According to the lawmaker initiating the motion, 'their target was the leader and members of the Neighborhood Vigilante Group who have been collaborating with the Nigerian Police to stop robberies and crime within the area.'¹⁷⁶⁶

In June 2020, a representative in the Imo House of Assembly expressed concern over three killings in Iowa, Ihitte-Uboma LGA, in the past few months, and asked to intensify security measures.¹⁷⁶⁷

In reaction to the EndSARS protests in October 2020, the governor backed peaceful protesters and agreed with their grievances against SARS brutality. He said the government will organise better training of the police and improve the working relationship between the police and the population.¹⁷⁶⁸

Human rights violations were reported in in the Niger Delta, including sexual violence and abuses by security forces.¹⁷⁶⁹

2.25.3.4 Road security

On 19 October 2020, thousands of #EndSARS supporters, including students and leaders of transport unions demonstrated in the capital Owerri to protest, not only against police brutality, but also against 'the deplorable state of roads in the state', in particular the Naze - Nekede-Ihiagwa road. The bad state of the road, leading to federal polytechnic and university buildings, led to increased cases of armed robberies and theft.¹⁷⁷⁰

2.25.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on major damage in infrastructure or explosive remnants of war in Imo state.

¹⁷⁶³ Leadership, UPDATED: Gunmen Attack Imo Police Hqrts, Correctional Centre, Free 2000 Suspects, Inmates, 5 April 2021, [url](#); New Humanitarian (The), Nigeria's unhappy union: How growing insecurity threatens the country's future, 8 April 2021, [url](#); see also ABC News, Gunmen free nearly 2,000 inmates in attack on Nigerian prison, 6 April 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶⁴ New Humanitarian (The), Nigeria's unhappy union: How growing insecurity threatens the country's future, 8 April 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶⁵ Premium Times, Many killed as security operatives raid ESN headquarters, 24 April 2021, [url](#)

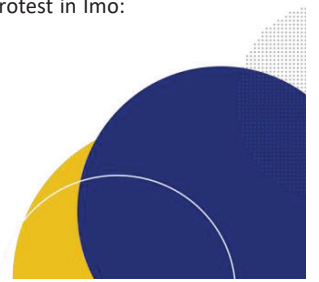
¹⁷⁶⁶ Business Day, Reps launch investigation into Imo killings, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶⁷ Daily Post, Lawmaker raises alarm over incessant killings in Imo community, 5 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶⁸ Vanguard, ENDSARS: Imo gov, Uzodimma, backs protesters, 13 October 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, EndSARS protest in Imo: Officer who cocked gun against protesters indicted by police, 9 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶⁹ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁷⁷⁰ Business Day, End SARS protesters demand fixing of Naze-Nekede-Iheagwa road, 20 October 2020, [url](#)



2.25.3.6 Displacement and return

IDPs

No information was found on the number of conflict-related.

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Imo state.



South-West Region

The South-West Region comprises Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo states.¹⁷⁷¹

International Crisis Group reported:

‘In the South West geopolitical zone, following widespread protests over deadly incidents between Fulani herders and local farmers, along with kidnappings increasingly involving criminals from the North West, governors of all six states – Ekiti, Lagos, Ondo, Oyo, Ogun and Osun – established the Western Nigeria Security Network, also referred to as Operation Amotekun, on 9 January 2020, to protect their communities. This development could set a precedent for the emergence of ethno-regional security arrangements elsewhere in the country, which, while boosting security locally, could also erode national cohesion if it becomes a trend.’¹⁷⁷²

Operation Amotekun was established due to the need of protection against deadly incidents between Fulani herders and local farmers, along with kidnappings increasingly involving criminals from the north-west.¹⁷⁷³ Amotekun Operation’s aim was to complement the efforts of the police and civil defence units.¹⁷⁷⁴

For more information, see [Section 1.4.1.1](#).

2.26 Ekiti state

2.26.1 General description of the state

Ekiti state shares boundaries with the states of Kogi, Kwara, Osun and Ondo.¹⁷⁷⁵ The state’s capital is Ado-Ekiti.¹⁷⁷⁶

Ekiti state is composed of the following 16 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Ado, Aiyekire, Efon, Ekiti West, Ijero, Irepodun/Ifelodun, Ido/Osi, Ikole Ilejemeje, Moba, Oye, Ekiti East, Ekiti South-West, Emure, Gbonyin, Ikere and Ise/Orun.¹⁷⁷⁷

In the 2006 census, the population of Ekiti state was 2 398 957. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 3 270 798 in 2016.¹⁷⁷⁸

The capital of Ekiti state, Ado Ekiti, was founded by the Ekiti people, a Yoruba subgroup.¹⁷⁷⁹ The Ekiti dialect is widely used in the state.¹⁷⁸⁰

The economic activities in Ekiti state include mining of solid minerals (clay, kaolin, columbite, bauxite, granite and others) and the main occupation in the state is agriculture.¹⁷⁸¹

¹⁷⁷¹ Nigeria, NIMC (National Identity Management Commission), NIMC Enrolment centres, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁷⁷² International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#), p. 18

¹⁷⁷³ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling back the mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁷⁴ Africa Report, Nigeria Southwest Governors hired a local militia to fight bandits. Has it worked?, 4 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷⁷⁵ UN, Nigeria, August 2014, [url](#)

¹⁷⁷⁶ Nigeria, Ekiti State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁷⁷⁷ Nigeria, Ekiti State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁷⁷⁸ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p.2

¹⁷⁷⁹ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Ado-Ekiti, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁷⁸⁰ Nigeria, Ekiti State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁷⁸¹ Nigeria, Ekiti State, n.d., [url](#)



2.26.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.26.2.1 Background of the conflict

As in most parts of the South-West Region, conflicts in Ekiti state are related to land, water resources and cattle rusting. The presence of Muslim herders across Christian populations in the south and the west leads to disputes over an ‘Islamisation force’, as the Christian population of the region commented, cited by International Crisis Group.¹⁷⁸² Crisis Group further reported that the incidents between Fulani herders and local farmers had increased.¹⁷⁸³ According to the February 2021 Africa Report ‘the activities of herdsmen in south-west Nigeria has risen once again to alarming levels.’ in recent weeks.¹⁷⁸⁴

2.26.2.2 Actors

According to ACLED, the most frequently mentioned actors in the conflict in Ekiti state are various groups of protesters, different armed groups and the Fulani Ethnic Militia group. The main groups of protesters are the #EndSARS movement, vigilante groups and the Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU).¹⁷⁸⁵

2.26.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

According to Nigeria Watch in its Tenth Report on Violence in Nigeria, Ekiti state is characterized as ‘relatively peaceful’ for 2020 as the number of fatalities during 2020 is less than 100.¹⁷⁸⁶ International Crisis Group reported that:

‘in the South West geopolitical zone, following widespread protests over deadly incidents between Fulani herders and local farmers, along with kidnappings increasingly involving criminals from the North West, governors of all six states – Ekiti, Lagos, Ondo, Oyo, Ogun and Osun – established the Western Nigeria Security Network, also referred to as Operation Amotekun, on 9 January 2020, to protect their communities.’¹⁷⁸⁷

Similar to the majority of Nigeria’s states, the South-West Region faces cases of kidnapping, abduction, killings and ‘other forms of crime’ named as ‘insecurity problems’.¹⁷⁸⁸

The Africa Report cited activists who ‘suspect that this uptick in violence in the south-west is linked to the prospect that the next president of the country could come from this region’.¹⁷⁸⁹

2.26.3.1 Number of security incidents

In the year 2020, ACLED reported a total of 16 security incidents (2 battles, 8 cases of violence against civilians, 6 incidents of riots) in Ekiti state, resulting in 12 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Ado Ekiti LGA. Of the 8 incidents of violence against civilians, 7 were attacks and 1 abduction.¹⁷⁹⁰

¹⁷⁸² International Crisis Group, Herders against Farmers: Nigeria’s Expanding Deadly Conflict, 19 September 2017, [url](#)

¹⁷⁸³ International Crisis Groups, Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁸⁴ Africa Report, Nigeria: Southwest Governors hired a local militia to find bandits. Has it worked?, 4 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷⁸⁵ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

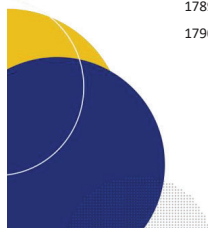
¹⁷⁸⁶ Nigeria Watch, Tenth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2020), n.d., [url](#), pp. 8

¹⁷⁸⁷ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria’s North West: Rolling back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁸⁸ Vanguard, The boiling debate on Operation Amotekun, 22 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁸⁹ Africa Report, Nigeria: PDP Contenders Fight for Power in South-West, 27 January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷⁹⁰ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period is shown in Figure 60 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 12 protests were reported in Ekiti state during the reference period.¹⁷⁹¹

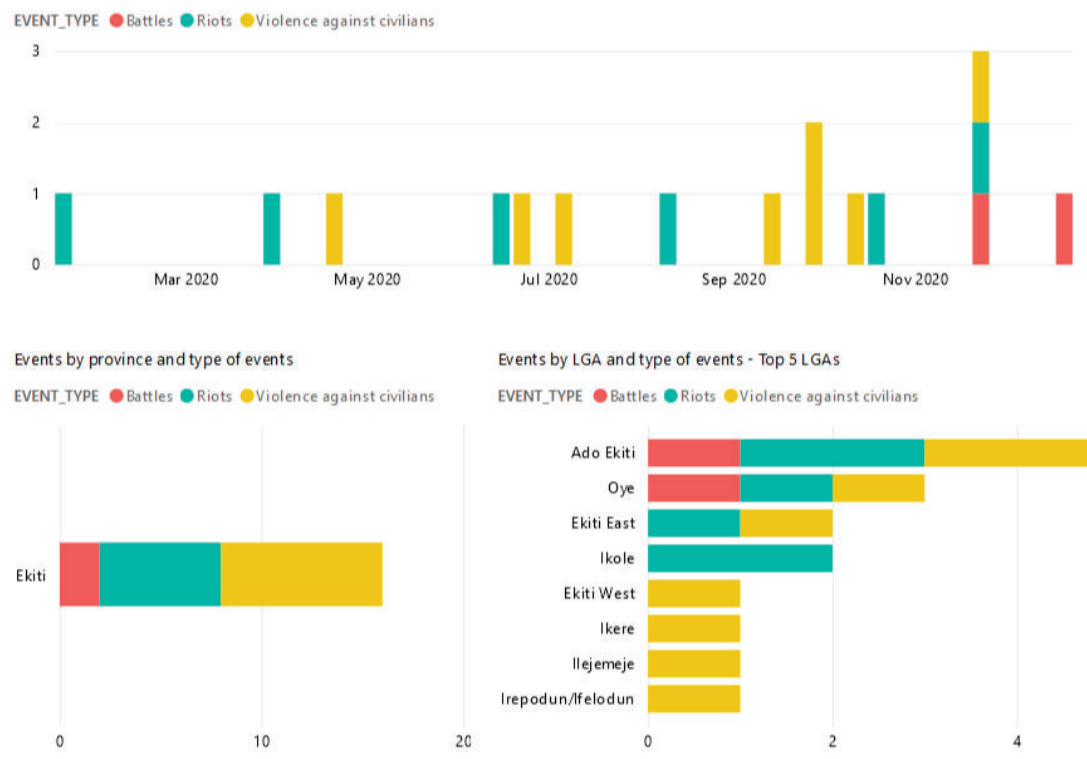


Figure 35 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Ekiti state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹⁷⁹²

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Ekiti state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Ekiti state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	2	1
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	8	5
Riots	6	6
Total	16	12

Table 31 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹⁷⁹³

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 8 security incidents (1 battle, 7 cases of violence against civilians) in Ekiti state, resulting in 4 deaths.¹⁷⁹⁴

¹⁷⁹¹EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁹² EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁹³ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁹⁴ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

2.26.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

According to the Chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC), various attacks of Fulani herdsmen took place at Ekiti state. Chief Bisi Aloba states that the Fulani herdsmen ‘killed people on their farms and raped our women’.¹⁷⁹⁵

On 26 April 2020, unknown gunmen attacked the car with the Commissioner for Agriculture, Folorunso Olabode, in Ekiti state and a councillor. The councillor was killed and the Commissioner was abducted.¹⁷⁹⁶ The Commissioner was released nine days later.¹⁷⁹⁷

On 14 September 2020, in Ado Ekiti, gunmen attacked and killed David Jejelowo, a director in the Ekiti state Local Government Service Commission, at his place.¹⁷⁹⁸

On 27 November 2020, unidentified gunmen attacked and killed a policeman and kidnapped a Chinese expatriate at the new Ado Ekiti-Iyin Ekiti Road which is under construction.¹⁷⁹⁹

2.26.3.3 State’s ability to secure law and order

Similar to the other states of the South-West Region, Operation Amotekun operates at Ekiti state in order to provide security in the area.¹⁸⁰⁰ Operation Amotekun was established on 9 January 2020 by the six South-West governors: Kayode Fayemi (Ekiti), Arakunrin Rotimi Akeredolu (Ondo), Seyi Makinde (Oyo), Dapo Abiodun (Ogun), Isiaka Oyetola (Osun) and Babajide Sanwoolu (Lagos)¹⁸⁰¹ and acts as a regional security network.¹⁸⁰²

Since 20 October 2020, a 24-hour curfew has been imposed to all the Ekiti state giving #EndSARS protests as the main reason.¹⁸⁰³ Specifically, Governor Fayemi stated that ‘some “miscreants” capitalised on the ENDSARS protests to perpetrate criminal acts including robbing, killing, and destruction of public and private properties.’¹⁸⁰⁴ The curfew was lifted on 1 November 2020.¹⁸⁰⁵

2.26.3.4 Road security

During 2020, acts of kidnapping and killing were reported in the roads of Ekiti state. Some cases of kidnapping in Ekiti’s roads are:

On 16 September 2020, at the Ijan Ekiti-Ise Ekiti Road, gunmen attacked and killed one person and kidnapped two others, including a retired US Army Officer.¹⁸⁰⁶

On 27 November 2020, a Chinese engineer working at the construction company for the dualization of the Ado -Iyin Road, was abducted in the same road.¹⁸⁰⁷

On 26 December 2020, a traveller was kidnapped at Isan-Iludun-Ekiti highway in Oye LGA.¹⁸⁰⁸

The Ikere-Akure road and the communities Iyemero, Ayede and Oloje are considered ‘danger zones’.¹⁸⁰⁹

¹⁷⁹⁵ Nigerian Tribune, Invasion Of Ekiti By Fulani Herdsmen Cause For Concern – Aloba, Ekiti APC Chief, 7 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁹⁶ Independent (Th)e, Tension in Ekiti As Gunmen Kill Councillor, Abduct Fayemi’s Commissioner, 26 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁹⁷ Independent (The), CP Confirms Release Of Kidnapped Ekiti Commissioner, 4 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁹⁸ Punch, Gunmen gun down Ekiti director in bedroom, 15 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁹⁹ Punch, Gunmen kill policeman, kidnap Chinese expatriate in Ekiti, 28 November 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰⁰ Africa Report, Nigeria: SouthWest Governors hired a local militia to find bandits. Has it worked?, 4 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰¹ Business Day, Five Things you need to know about Operation Amotekun, 4 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰² Guardian (The), Operation Amotekun: Metaphor for FG’s indecisiveness on insecurity, 18 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰³ BBC, Curfew: EndsSARS protests make Governor Fayemi order 24hr curfew for Ekiti State, 20 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰⁴ Nigeria, Ekiti State, Governor Fayemi Extends Curfew in Ekiti, 22 October 2020, [url](#)

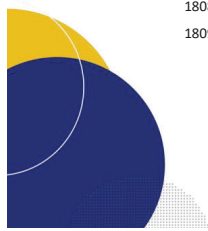
¹⁸⁰⁵ Nigeria, Ekiti State, Ekiti Lifts Curfew on State And Restrictions on Religious Worship, 31 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰⁶ Punch, Ekiti highway raiders kill one, abduct ex-US major, other, 16 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰⁷ Premium Times, Gunmen kill policemen in Ekiti, kidnap Chinese engineer, 27 November 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰⁸ Guardian, Gunmen kidnap traveler in Ekiti State as Amotekun Corps, police rescue, 26 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁰⁹ Vanguard, Nigerian roads where kidnapers unleash mayhem, 30 January 2021, [url](#)



2.26.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

Some general information reports the destruction of a police station¹⁸¹⁰ and the burning of three trucks¹⁸¹¹ after the #EndSARS protests.

No information was found on explosive remnants of war in Ekiti state.

2.1.3.6 Displacement and return

IDPs

No information was found on the number of conflict-related IDPs in Ekiti state.

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Ekiti state.

2.27 Lagos state

2.27.1 General description of the state

Lagos state shares an internal border with Ogun state and an international one with the Republic of Benin.¹⁸¹² The state's capital is Ikeja.¹⁸¹³

Lagos state is composed of the following 19 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Alimosho, Ajeromi-Ifelodun, Kosofe, Mushin, Oshodi-Isolo, Ojo, Ikorodu, Surulere, Agege Ifako-Ijaye, Shomolu, Amuwo-Odofin, Lagos Mainland, Ikeja, Eti-Osa, Badagry, Apapa, Lagos Island, Epe and Ibeju-Lekki.¹⁸¹⁴

In the 2006 census, the population of Lagos state was 9 113 605. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 12 550 598 in 2016.¹⁸¹⁵

Regarding the ethnic composition of Lagos, Aworis and Eguns are living in Ikeja and Badagry LGAs. Other ethnic groups in Lagos state are the Ekos and Ijebus. The latter are native to Ikorodu and Epe LGAs, with clusters of Eko-Awori along the coast and the riverine areas. The main language spoken in Lagos is Yoruba.¹⁸¹⁶

The port of Lagos is Nigeria's main port, according to the website of Lagos state. One exported product is crude oil.¹⁸¹⁷

2.27.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.27.2.1 Background of the conflict

The most commonly reported type of crimes in Lagos state are armed robbery, cult violence, kidnapping and outbreaks of violence.¹⁸¹⁸

¹⁸¹⁰ This Day, Nigeria: #EndSARS Protests – Ekiti CP Condemns Destruction of Police Station, Others, 19 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸¹¹ Vanguard, #EndSARS protest: Police confirm burning of 3 trucks, rape of 3 girls in Ekiti, 20 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸¹² UN, Nigeria, August 2014, [url](#)

¹⁸¹³ Nigeria, Lagos State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸¹⁴ Nigeria, Lagos State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸¹⁵ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 2

¹⁸¹⁶ Nigeria, Lagos State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸¹⁷ Nigeria, Lagos State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸¹⁸ OSAC, Nigeria 2020 Crime & Safety Report: Lagos, 28 April 2020, [url](#)



During the first half of 2020, within the initial lockdown period¹⁸¹⁹, Lagos state reported the highest number of violations of human rights due to the COVID-19 lockdown among all the reported cases in Nigeria.¹⁸²⁰ According to the NHRC, these violations concerned ‘extra-judicial killings, violation of right to freedom of movement, unlawful arrest and detention, seizure/confiscation of properties, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), discrimination, torture, inhumane and degrading treatment and extortion’.¹⁸²¹ Additionally, armed gangs were invading houses and shops.¹⁸²²

The second half of 2020 was mostly known by the protests around the #EndSARS movement. Specifically, according to BBC, on 20 October 2020 soldiers of The Nigeria Armed Forces shoot at the protesters and killed people, at Lekki Toll Gate.¹⁸²³ Nigeria Watch’s Tenth Report for 2020 states that ‘Lagos State recorded the highest number of fatalities during the EndSARS protest, with over about 76 people.’¹⁸²⁴ The Washington Post referred to the day of 20 October 2020 as ‘Black Tuesday for Nigeria’.¹⁸²⁵

2.27.2.2 Actors

According to ACLED, the main actors, during October 2020, in Lagos state’s conflict as described above are the protesters of the #EndSARS movement. Some periodic attacks and clashes were reported by militia groups such as Yoruba Ethnic Militia, Hausa Ethnic Militia, and Area Boys Militia, and the Eiyé Confraternity cult group.¹⁸²⁶

2.27.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

According to Nigeria Watch’s Ninth Report on Violence in Nigeria¹⁸²⁷, and referring to 2019, Lagos state was the fourth most dangerous state in Nigeria with a high number of fatalities from banditry, kidnapping and cult killings, domestic violence, hooliganism and extra-judicial killings.¹⁸²⁸ Lagos state ranked third most impacted by lethal criminal incidents, with 225 fatalities reported in 2019.¹⁸²⁹ During 2020, the most common security incidents in Lagos state were related to the protests against police brutality and to the #EndSARS movement in general.

The 2020 USDOS country report on human rights practices, refers to the movement #RevolutionNow. According to this report, in August 2020 ‘some peaceful protesters’ were arrested during the demonstrations of the ‘one-year anniversary of their inaugural protest calling for more responsive and accountable governance’.¹⁸³⁰

Relating to COVID-19 situation, the Africa News pointed out the high number of cases in Lagos state, which was characterized as the ‘epicentre’ of COVID-19.¹⁸³¹ Human Rights Watch reported that the COVID-19 lockdown had ‘devastating and disproportionate’ results on the lives of the poor people in Lagos state.¹⁸³² In April 2020, the highest number of domestic violence and gender-based violence

¹⁸¹⁹ The initial lockdown period commencing from 30 March, 2020 to 13 April, 2020.

¹⁸²⁰ Nigeria, NHRC, National Human Rights Commission Press Release on COVID-19 Enforcement so far Report on Incidents of Violation of Human Rights, 15 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸²¹ Nigeria, NHRC, National Human Rights Commission Press Release on COVID-19 Enforcement so far Report on Incidents of Violation of Human Rights, 15 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸²² Vanguard, Armed gangs terrorize Lagos, Ogun Communities, 14 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸²³ BBC, End Sars protests: People ‘shot dead’ in Lagos, Nigeria, 21 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸²⁴ Nigeria Watch, Tenth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2020), n.d., [url](#), pp. 14

¹⁸²⁵ Washington Post (The), The roots of the #EndSARS protests in Nigeria, 25 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸²⁶ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁸²⁷ Nigeria Watch, Ninth Report on Violence in Nigeria, 2019, [url](#)

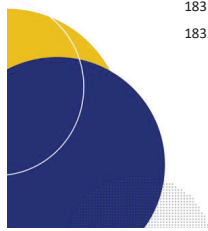
¹⁸²⁸ Nigeria Watch, Ninth Report on Violence in Nigeria, 2019, [url](#)

¹⁸²⁹ Nigeria Watch, Ninth Report on Violence in Nigeria, 2019, [url](#)

¹⁸³⁰ USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 23

¹⁸³¹ Africa News, Lagos coronavirus: 7,461 cases; freeze on reopening churches, mosques, 17 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸³² HRW, Nigeria, Events of 2020, n.d., [url](#)



cases was reported in Lagos state, mainly during the imposed lockdowns for the prevention of the coronavirus.¹⁸³³

2.27.3.1 Number of security incidents

In the year 2020, ACLED reported a total of 63 security incidents (12 battles, 19 cases of violence against civilians, 32 incidents of riots) in Lagos state, resulting in 49 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Ikorodu LGA. Of the 19 incidents of violence against civilians, 18 were attacks and 1 sexual violence.¹⁸³⁴

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period is shown in Figure 62 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 113 protests were reported in Lagos state during the reference period, resulting in 20 deaths.¹⁸³⁵

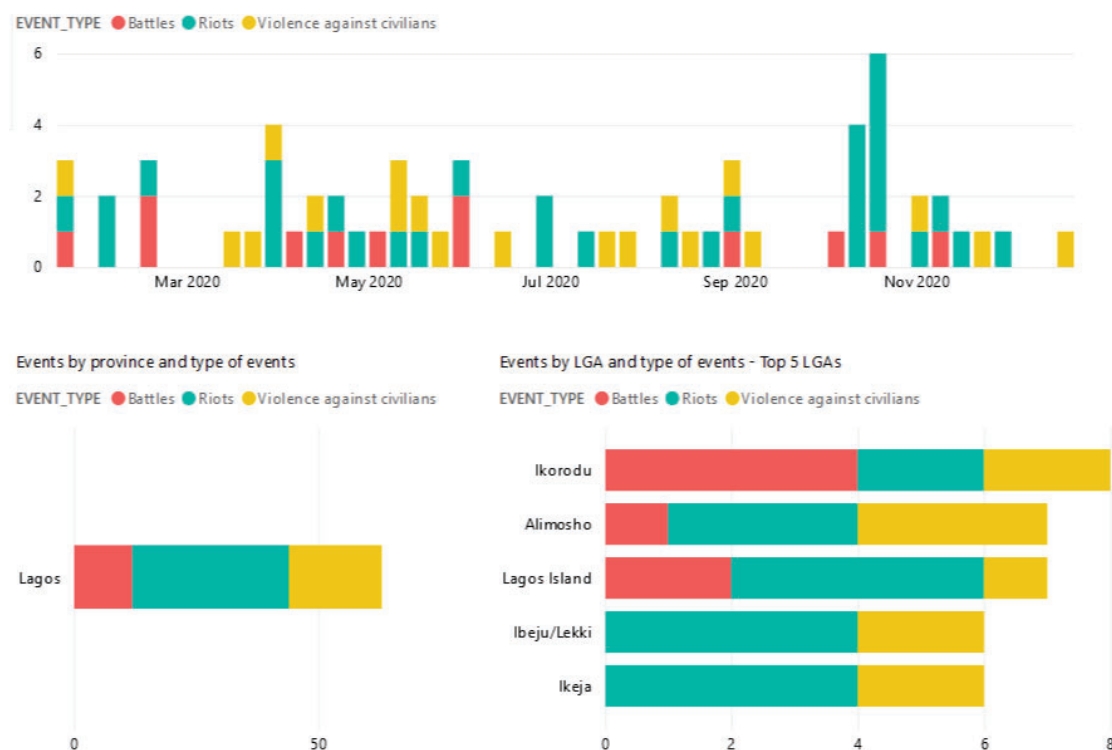


Figure 36 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Lagos state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹⁸³⁶

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Lagos state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Lagos state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	12	20
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	19	10

¹⁸³³ UN, Gender-based violence in Nigeria during the Covid-19 crisis: the shadow pandemic, 4 May 2020, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁸³⁴ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁸³⁵ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁸³⁶ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

Riots	32	19
Total	63	49

Table 32 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹⁸³⁷

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 21 security incidents (5 cases of violence against civilians, 16 incidents of riots) in Lagos state, resulting in 10 deaths.¹⁸³⁸

2.27.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 7 January 2020, seven people were killed in Ikorodu, Lagos state, during an armed clash between the Eiyé Confraternities and the group KK.¹⁸³⁹

On 3 February 2020, three people were killed during a violent demonstration of the tricycle operators against government's ban.¹⁸⁴⁰ The ban¹⁸⁴¹ concerns tricycles and *okada* (motorbike taxis) as a way to release Lagos from traffic.¹⁸⁴²

On 26 March 2020, during a meeting in Whitesand Community, two people were killed after the attack of unidentified gunmen. It is reported that the reason of the attack was land disputes.¹⁸⁴³

On 11 September 2020, a pregnant woman was killed during the cult clash of the Aiye and Eiyé confraternities, in Ikorodu.¹⁸⁴⁴

On 20 October 2020, at least 12 persons were killed during the #EndSARS protest at the Alausa and Lekki Toll of Lagos state.¹⁸⁴⁵ Amnesty International characterizes the incident as a 'massacre'.¹⁸⁴⁶

On 3 November 2020, five people were reportedly killed (a policeman and his family) as the officer was accused of shooting people during the #EndSARS protest on 20 October. The incident took place at their house in Awoyaya.¹⁸⁴⁷

2.27.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

In Lagos state, similar to the other states of the South-West Region, Operation Amotekun, known as Western Nigeria Security Network (WNSN), was established in January 2020 in order to protect the communities.¹⁸⁴⁸

The research for the specific topic did not provide much information on the state's ability to secure law and order in Lagos state, apart from some general reports on the state's actions to reduce the impact of coronavirus¹⁸⁴⁹ and to deal with protests of the #EndSARS movement in October 2020.

After the events of the 20 October 2020, the Lagos state government imposed a 24-hour curfew in order to stop the violence spreading across the state.¹⁸⁵⁰ Following the protests and the incidents of

¹⁸³⁷ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁸³⁸ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

¹⁸³⁹ Punch, Seven killed, one injured in cults clash in Ijede, Ikorodu, 22 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴⁰ Guardian (The), Three feared killed as okada, tricycle operators resist ban in Lagos, 4 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴¹ BBC, Lagos motorbike taxi ban: Chaos as Nigerian City removed okadas, 3 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴² Financial Times, Lagos motorcycle ban forces commuters to walk, 21 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴³ Vanguard, Bloodbath in Lagos community: Two killed, policeman, others injured over land dispute, 29 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴⁴ Punch, Pregnant woman shot dead in Ikorodu cult clash, 11 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴⁵ AI, Nigeria: Killing of #EndSARS protesters by the military must be investigated, 21 October 2020, [url](#)

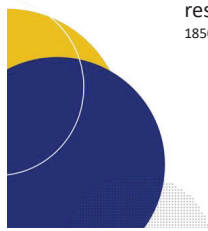
¹⁸⁴⁶ AI, Nigeria: The Lekki Toll Gate massacre- new investigative timeline, 28 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴⁷ Daily Post (Nigeria), End SARS unrest: Policeman, wife, children killed in Lagos, 3 November 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴⁸ International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴⁹ Reuters, Nigeria orders 14-days cessation of movement in Lagos, Abuja to fight coronavirus, 29 March 2020, [url](#); BBC News, New Lockdown in Lagos: Second coronavirus lockdown fit happen for Nigeria as taskforce ready to introduce new restrictions, 19 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵⁰ DW, Curfew in Lagos as riot police deployed across Nigeria, violence ensues, 20 October 2020, [url](#)



that day, the government of Lagos state ‘shared a list of ongoing prosecution against police officers accused of human rights abuses’ as a way to ‘calm[ing] tensions’.¹⁸⁵¹

2.27.3.4.Road security

A source indicated the Benir-Ore-Lagos expressway, the Abeokuta-Lagos road and the Epe forest (where the victims used to be kept) as some dangerous places where kidnappings take place.¹⁸⁵²

2.27.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

A high number of infrastructure damage occurred during and after the protests against police brutality on 20 October 2020.¹⁸⁵³ Damages and looting took place at government warehouses stocked with food, malls, TV stations and retail stores mainly in Lagos commercial area.¹⁸⁵⁴

No information was found on explosive remnants of war in Lagos state.

2.27.3.6 Displacement and return

IDPs

No information was found on the number of conflict-related IDPs in Lagos state.

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Lagos state.

2.28 Ogun state

2.28.1 General description of the state

Ogun state borders the Atlantic Ocean to the south. It shares an internal border with Lagos state to the south, with Oyo and Osun states to the north, with Ondo state to the east and an international border with the Republic of Benin to the west. The state’s capital is Abeokuta.¹⁸⁵⁵

Ogun state is composed of the following 21 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Abeokuta North, Abeokuta South, Ado-Odo/Ota, Ewekoro, Ifo, Ijebu East, Ijebu North, Ijebu North-East, Ijebu Igbo, Ijebu Ode, Ikenne, Imeko Afon, Ipokia, Obafemi Owode, Odogbolu, Odeda, Ogun Waterside, Remo North, Sagamu, Yewa North and Yewa South.¹⁸⁵⁶

In the 2006 census, the population of Ogun state was 3 751 140. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 5 217 716 in 2016.¹⁸⁵⁷

The ethnic groups in Ogun include the Egba, the Ijebu, the Remo, the Egbado, the Awori and the Egun. The majority in Ogun state speak Yoruba, which has many separate dialects.¹⁸⁵⁸

The main occupation in Ogun state is agriculture. Ogun is one of the main producers of kola nut in Nigeria. The state also produces large quantities of timber and rubber. Approximately 20 % of Ogun’s

¹⁸⁵¹ AP News, Nigeria says 51 civilians, 18 security forces dead in unrest, 23 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵² Vanguard, Nigerian roads where kidnappers unleash mayhem, 30 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵³ Bloomberg, Nigeria’s Lagos Boosts Infrastructure Spend After Youth Protests, 14 January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵⁴ New York Times (The), As Lawlessness Roils Nigeria, Police Chief Vows to Take Back Streets, 24 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵⁵ Nigeria, Ogun State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸⁵⁶ Nigeria, Ogun State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸⁵⁷ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url, p. 3](#)

¹⁸⁵⁸ Nigeria, Ogun State, n.d., [url](#)



land is a forest reserve which is appropriate for livestock.¹⁸⁵⁹ The state also has mineral resources, such as limestone, phosphate, granite stone, gypsum, bauxite, bitumen, feldspar, clay, glass sand, kaolin, quartz, tar sand, gemstones and crude oil. Ogun state constitutes the largest producer of cement in Nigeria.¹⁸⁶⁰

2.28.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.28.2.1 Background of the conflict

Ogun state is characterised as the 'Gateway State'¹⁸⁶¹ as it borders with Lagos state, with the commercial capital of Nigeria. This poses various challenges to the economic and security situation of the state as the authorities envisage a safer Ogun to attract investments from locals and foreigners.¹⁸⁶²

As in other states of the South-West Region, and Nigeria in general, during 2020 Ogun state faced conflicts around the herdsmen- farmers issue, the #EndSARS movement, and various cult battles.¹⁸⁶³

2.28.2.2 Actors

According to ACLED database, the main conflict actors for the year 2020 were the Fulani ethnic militia and rioters of the #EndSARS movement.¹⁸⁶⁴

2.28.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

In May 2020, an increasing number of domestic violence and gender-based violence cases was reported in Ogun, mainly during the imposed lockdowns for the prevention of the coronavirus.¹⁸⁶⁵

Furthermore, after the protests against police brutality (#EndSARS) in Lagos state on 20 October 2020, various incidents of the #EndSARS movement took place in Ogun state.¹⁸⁶⁶

2.28.3.1 Number of security incidents

In the year 2020, ACLED reported a total of 29 security incidents (3 battles, 10 cases of violence against civilians, 16 incidents of riots) in Ogun state, leading to 25 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Ado-Oto/Ota LGA. Of the 10 incidents of violence against civilians, 8 were attacks, 1 abduction and 1 sexual violence.¹⁸⁶⁷

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period is shown in Figure 64 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 30 protests were reported during the reference period.¹⁸⁶⁸

¹⁸⁵⁹ Nigeria, Ogun State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸⁶⁰ Nigeria, Ogun State Government Official Website, Natural Resources, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸⁶¹ Guardian (The), How Ogun is tackling insecurity, unemployment, 28 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶² Guardian (The), How Ogun is tackling insecurity, unemployment, 28 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶³ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

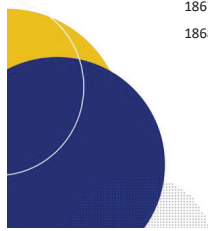
¹⁸⁶⁴ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶⁵ International Growth Centre, The shadow pandemic: Gender-based violence and COVID-19, 19 May 2020, [url](#); UN, Gender-based violence in Nigeria during the Covid-19 crisis: the shadow pandemic, 4 May 2020, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁸⁶⁶ Guardian (The), Movements grounded, commuters stranded in Lagos, Ogun #EndSARS protests, 20 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶⁷ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶⁸ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



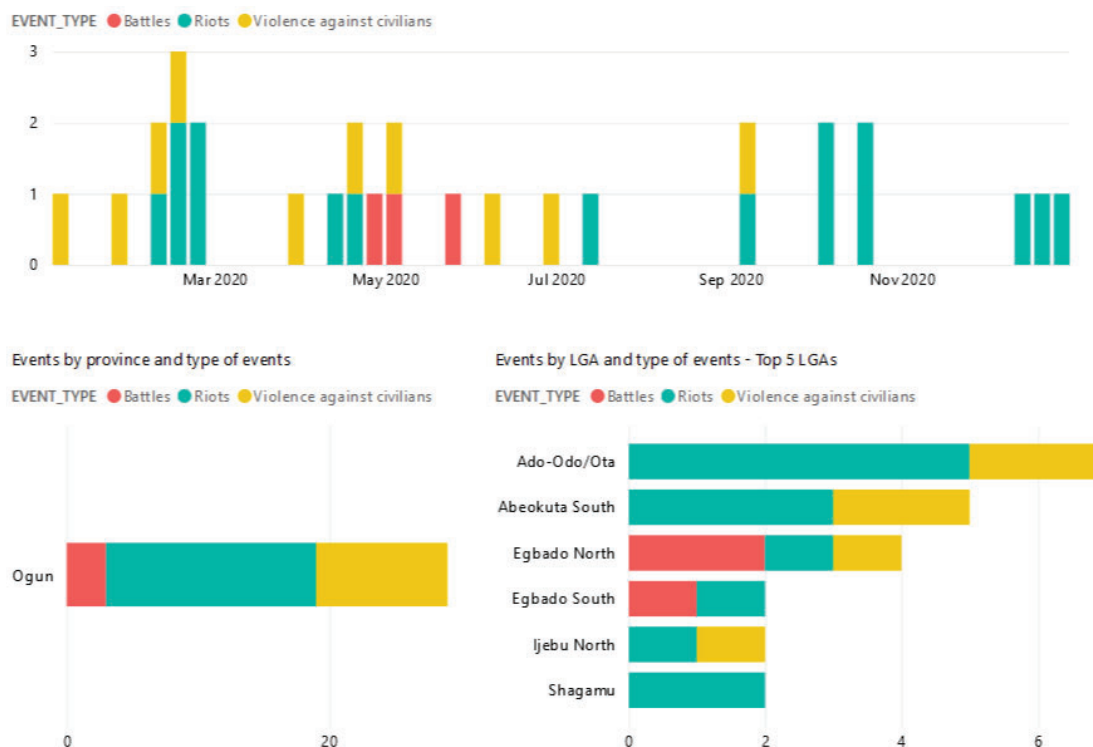


Figure 37 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Ogun state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹⁸⁶⁹

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Ogun state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Ogun state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	3	3
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	10	4
Riots	16	18
Total	29	25

Table 33 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹⁸⁷⁰

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 17 security incidents (4 battles, 11 cases of violence against civilians, 2 incidents of riots) in Ogun state, resulting in 17 deaths.¹⁸⁷¹

2.28.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 24 February 2020, protests took place at Sagamu, in Ogun state after the death of a footballer caused by the officers of the SARS. During the protest a person was killed.¹⁸⁷²

¹⁸⁶⁹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁷⁰ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁷¹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

¹⁸⁷² Vanguard, One fear dead as protest rocks Sagamu over killing of Remo Stars player, 25 February 2020, [url](#)

On 5 May 2020, suspected herdsmen attacked a commercial vehicle at the Abeokuta – Ayetoro road. In separate attacks in Egbado North/ Imeko Afon Federal Constituency by suspected herdsmen, a man was shot dead, a policewoman was abducted and two other persons were heavily injured.¹⁸⁷³

On 20 October 2020, a protester and an officer of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) were killed during an #EndSARS demonstration along the Owode - Idiroko road in Ogun state.¹⁸⁷⁴

Around 26 December 2020, a young boy was killed by a bullet while playing at the primary school during a clash between the officers of the Nigeria Customs Service and rice smugglers at Oke-Ola area of Ilaro, Yewa South LGA.¹⁸⁷⁵

2.28.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

The Western Nigeria Security Network (WNSN)¹⁸⁷⁶ operates at Ogun state as well as in the other states of the South-West Region.¹⁸⁷⁷

Regarding state's ability to provide security in Ogun state, some general information was reported connected to the prevention of the coronavirus and to the protests of the #EndSARS. Specifically, a lockdown was imposed on Ogun state during the month of April as a measure against COVID-19.¹⁸⁷⁸

After the various protests against police brutality and the SARS movement, Nigeria Police Force operating in Ogun deployed their officers in various locations in Ogun state in order to prevent any new protest.¹⁸⁷⁹

2.28.3.4 Road security

The roads of Ogun state are considered dangerous for kidnapping. Some roads where abduction take place are Ogun Siun- Ogere, Odeda- Ogunmakin as well as the forests along Ogun which are used as hideouts.¹⁸⁸⁰

2.28.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

Specific information on major damage in infrastructure was not found, except some general information about vandalism at a police station¹⁸⁸¹ and looting against public and private warehouses and police stations after the #EndSARS protests.¹⁸⁸²

No information was found on explosive remnants of war in Ogun state.

2.28.3.6 Displacement and return

IDPs

No information was found on the number of conflict-related IDPs in Ogun state.

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Ogun state.

¹⁸⁷³Guardian (The), One killed, policewoman abducted in renewed herdsmen attacks, 8 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁷⁴Daily Post (Nigeria), End SARS: Crisis as protesters, custom officers killed in Ogun, 20 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁷⁵New Telegraph (Nigeria), Ogun: Customs Kills Boy While Playing Football, 28 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁷⁶Operation Amotekun, see also

¹⁸⁷⁷International Crisis Group, Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling Back the Mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#)

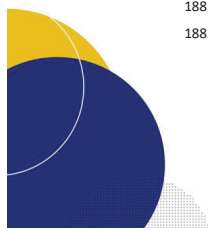
¹⁸⁷⁸HRW, Nigeria: Protect Most Vulnerable in COVID-19 response, 14 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁷⁹Channels TV, #EndSARS Protest: Police Deploy Officers To Strategic Locations In Ogun State, 7 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸⁰Vanguard, Nigerian roads where kidnappers unleash mayhem, 30 January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸¹Vanguard, Video: End SARS protesters vandalise police post in Ogun, 10 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸²Vanguard, #EndSARS protest: Ogun warns against looting and vandalism, 23 October 2020, [url](#)



2.29 Ondo state

2.29.1 General description of the state

Ondo state shares boundaries with the states of Ekiti, Osun, Ogun, Delta, Edo and Kogi.¹⁸⁸³ The state's capital is Akure.¹⁸⁸⁴

Ondo state is composed of the following 18 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Akoko North, Akoko North-West, Akoko South-East, Akoko South-West, Akure North, Akure South, Ese Odo, Idanre, Ifedore, Ilaje, Ile Oluji/Okeigbo, Irele, Odigbo, Okitipupa, Ondo West, Ose, Owo and Ondo East.¹⁸⁸⁵

In the 2006 census, the population of Ondo state was 3 460 877. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 4 671 695 in 2016.¹⁸⁸⁶

The ethnic groups present in the state include the Yoruba sub-ethnic groups of Akoko, Akure, Ikale, Ilaje, Ondo, Owo as well as minorities such as Ijaw and Apoi.¹⁸⁸⁷

Ondo state is mainly an agrarian state. It produces crops such as cocoa and yam and has extensive forest reserves, which produce timber among other materials.¹⁸⁸⁸

2.29.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.29.2.1 Background of the conflict

Historically, Ondo state, in the north-eastern part of the Niger Delta, was affected by the emergence of several armed groups, like the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) and Joint Niger Delta Liberation Force (JNDLF).¹⁸⁸⁹ Since November 2016, militant groups have repeatedly threatened to launch attacks but there has been no major incident by NDA or any other group in the Niger Delta¹⁸⁹⁰, and information on recent action by these militant groups in Ondo state was not found. Conflicts between farmers and herders are generally a problem in the South-West Region.¹⁸⁹¹ In 2018, violence has spread to southern regions including Ondo state, and Fulani attacks were reported in states where they were not previously seen, as Boko Haram forced herding communities from north-eastern states to seek safety in the southern regions.¹⁸⁹²

In Ondo state communal conflicts were prevalent and criminality was widespread in 2019, as well as domestic and sexual violence against women and girls.¹⁸⁹³ Criminal violence and communal conflicts continued to be a prevalent issue and several clashes between herders and farmers occurred in 2020.¹⁸⁹⁴

¹⁸⁸³ UN, Nigeria, August 2014, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸⁴ Nigeria, Ondo State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸⁸⁵ Nigeria, Ondo State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸⁸⁶ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 3

¹⁸⁸⁷ Nigeria, Ondo State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸⁸⁸ Nigeria, Ondo State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸⁸⁹ Premium Times, 18 new armed groups spring up in Nigeria, 18 October 2016, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹⁰ EIU, Niger Delta militants end their ceasefire, 6 November 2017, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹¹ CFR, Nigeria's internal security problem, 26 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹² ACAPS, Nigeria: Spike in farmer-herder violence in the Middle Belt, Risk Report, 18 December 2018, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹³ PIND Foundation, Niger Delta annual conflict report: January – December 2019, 4 February 2020, [url](#), pp. 3-4

¹⁸⁹⁴ PIND Foundation, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), p. 7



2.29.2.2 Actors

Actors in Ondo state's conflicts, as recorded by ACLED, include protestors, rioters and unidentified armed groups in clashes with civilians on the one hand, and All Progressive Congress (APC) and ethnic militias, mostly Fulani and Ude, against civilians on the other.¹⁸⁹⁵

2.29.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

Ondo state in 2020 was mostly affected by communal violence, caused by tensions over land and boundary disputes, which resulted to several fatalities, as well as herder/farmer clashes. Mob violence and violent clashes between protestors and security forces were also frequent.¹⁸⁹⁶ According to ACLED and Nigeria Watch data, the number of fatalities resulting from such violence did not exceed four per incident.¹⁸⁹⁷

2.29.3.1 Number of security incidents

In the year 2020, ACLED reported a total of 55 security incidents (8 battles, 34 cases of violence against civilians, 13 incidents of riots) in Ondo state, resulting in 22 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Akure South LGA. Of the 34 incidents of violence against civilians, 29 were attacks and 5 abductions.¹⁸⁹⁸

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period is shown in Figure 66 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 30 protests were reported during the reference period.¹⁸⁹⁹

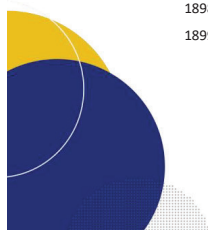
¹⁸⁹⁵ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹⁶ PIND Foundation, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), pp. 3, 4, 7

¹⁸⁹⁷ Nigeria Watch, The database, 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020, [url](#); ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹⁸ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹⁹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



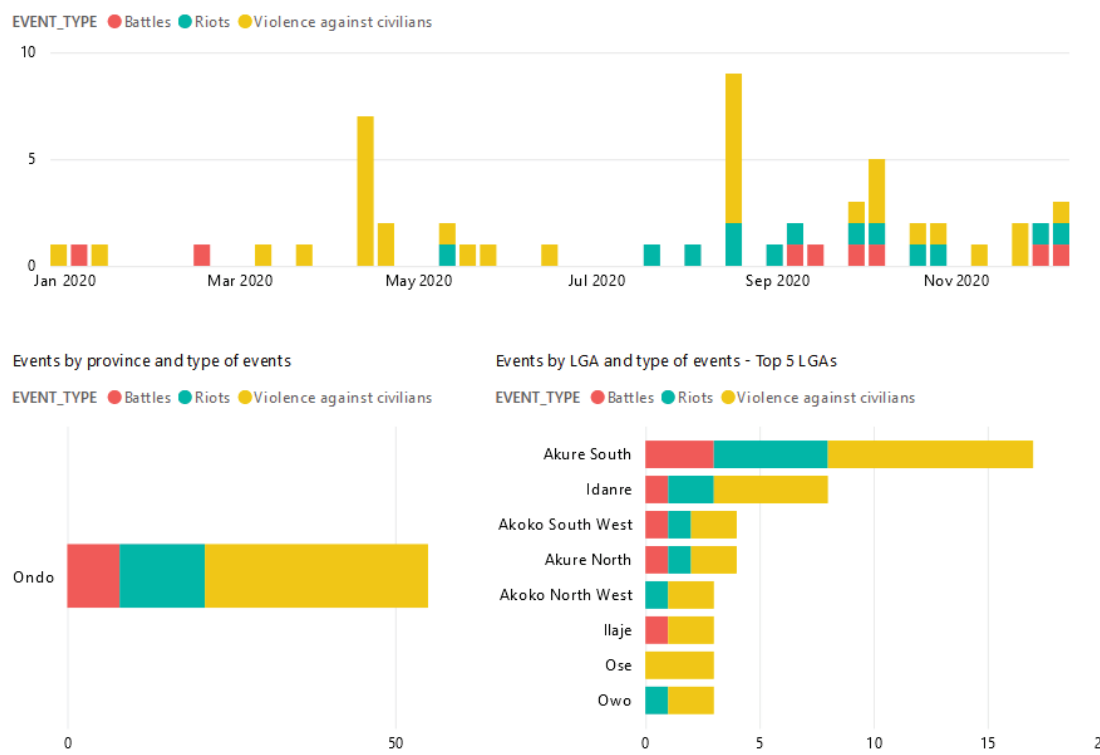


Figure 38 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Ondo state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹⁹⁰⁰

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Ondo state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Ondo state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	8	9
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	34	10
Riots	13	3
Total	55	22

Table 34 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹⁹⁰¹

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 16 security incidents (4 battles, 9 cases of violence against civilians, 3 incidents of riots) in Ondo state, resulting in 12 deaths.¹⁹⁰²

2.29.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 12 January 2020 (or around), four soldiers were killed in a battle between Nigerian Army and pirates at Gbagira in Awoye community in an operation to rescue abducted foreigners.¹⁹⁰³

¹⁹⁰⁰ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁰¹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁰² EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

¹⁹⁰³ Daily Post, Navy imposes curfew in Ondo community over killing of rating missing arms, 13 January 2020, [url](#)

On 17 February 2020, two police officers were killed when unidentified gunman attacked them at a checkpoint on the Ode Irele-Ajagba Road in Irele LGA.¹⁹⁰⁴

On 25 March 2020 (or around), three farmers were killed by suspected Fulani herdsmen in Arimogjia (Ose LGA) and as a result, residents of the area begun to flee in fear of attacks.¹⁹⁰⁵

On 16 April 2020, around 50 unidentified gunmen attacked the residence of the dethroned monarch of Ugboland (Ilaje LGA) and killed 1 child.¹⁹⁰⁶

On 26 November 2020, unidentified gunmen abducted and killed the traditional ruler of Ifon at Elegbeka community on the Owo/Ifon Highway (Ose LGA). The reason for the attack was unknown.¹⁹⁰⁷

On 11 December 2020, communal crisis between Ude and Insigbo communities resulted in an attack of communal militia Ude against Isinigbo community (Akure North LGA), where two persons were killed, and the palace of the traditional ruler was set ablaze.¹⁹⁰⁸ It is believed that the attack was a reprisal after Isinigbo communal militia invaded and razed the palace of the traditional head of Ude and two persons were killed.¹⁹⁰⁹

2.29.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

Citizens of Ondo complained that, despite the violent incidents between herders and farmers in the South-West Region, the authorities of the state did not proceed to arrests and charges.¹⁹¹⁰ In Ondo state, as well as in the other five states of South-West Region, the Western Nigeria Security Network, also referred to as Operation Amotekun, was established due to the need of protection against deadly incidents between Fulani herders and local farmers, along with kidnappings increasingly involving criminals from the North-West Region.¹⁹¹¹ Amoketun Operation's aim was to complement the efforts of the police and civil defence units.¹⁹¹²

2.29.3.4 Road security

The road Ondo – Owena is mentioned as one of the 'notorious' roads in terms of criminality.¹⁹¹³ More than 20 kidnapping incidents occurred in Ondo-Auga road and Ondo-Ore and Ondo-Akure roads are mentioned among the roads where kidnapers act.¹⁹¹⁴ On 26 November 2020 a local politician's wife and other women were abducted at Owena area along Akure-Ondo Road while returning from Lagos state.¹⁹¹⁵

2.29.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war in Ondo state.

2.29.3.6 Displacement and return

IDPs

No information was found on the number of conflict-related IDPs in Ondo state.

¹⁹⁰⁴ Daily Post, Unknown gunmen kill policemen, injure one at Ondo checkpoint, 21 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁰⁵ Punch, Residents flee Ondo community as suspected herdsmen kill three, 4 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁰⁶ Punch, Boy dies as hoodlums attack Ondo ex monarch home, 18 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁰⁷ Sahara Reporters, Breaking: Kidnappers kill monarch in Ondo state, 26 November 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Olugbo condemns killing of Oba Adeusi, commiserates with family, 1 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁰⁸ Punch, Two killed, palace burnt as hoodlums invade Ondo community, 12 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁰⁹ Daily Post, Two feared dead, palace razed over land tussle in Ondo communities, 3 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹¹⁰ Vanguard, Communities in South - East groan, as herdsmen take over farmlands, 1 July 2020, [url](#)

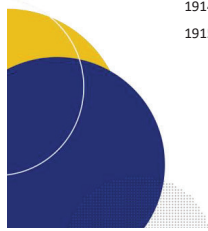
¹⁹¹¹ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling back the mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹¹² Africa Report, Nigeria Southwest Governors hired a local militia to fight bandits. Has it worked?, 4 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁹¹³ Sahara Reporters, Motorists list Nigeria's most dangerous roads, 15 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹¹⁴ Vanguard, Nigerian roads where kidnappers unleash mayhem, 30 January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁹¹⁵ Nation (The), Ondo in serious security crisis, Akeredolu laments, 28 November 2020, [url](#)



Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Ondo state.

2.30 Osun state

2.30.1 General description of the state

Osun state shares boundaries with the states of Ogun to the south, Kwara to the north, Oyo to the west and Ekiti and Ondo to the east.¹⁹¹⁶ The state's capital is Osogbo.¹⁹¹⁷

Osun state is composed of the following 30 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Ayedaade, Ayedire, Atakunmosa East, Atakunmosa West, Boluwaduro, Boripe, Ede North, Ede South, Egbedore, Ejigbo, Ife Central, Ife East, Ife North, Ife South, Ifedayo, Ifelodun, Ila, Ilesa East, Ilesa West, Irepodun, Irewole, Isokan, Iwo, Obokun, Odo Otin, Ola Oluwa, Olorunda, Oriade, Orolu and Osogbo.¹⁹¹⁸

In the 2006 census, the population of Osun state was 3 416 959. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 4 705 589 in 2016.¹⁹¹⁹

The majority of the people are Yoruba. More specifically the state is composed of Osun, Ifes, Ijesas and Igbominas. English is the official language. The state's main spoken language is Yoruba, with variations in intonation and accent across the state.¹⁹²⁰

Osun is an agrarian state, with many prominent markets, cottage industries and a railway that crosses the state.¹⁹²¹

2.30.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.30.2.1 Background of the conflict

The ACLED database did not register many security incidents and fatalities during the previous years in Osun. Between 2017 and 2018 there were 21 incidents recorded of which 4 were violence against civilians without fatalities.¹⁹²²

2.30.2.2 Actors

Actors in Osun state's conflicts, as recorded by ACLED, include rioters and protesters, as well as unidentified armed groups in clashes with civilians, on the one hand, and police forces on the other.¹⁹²³

¹⁹¹⁶ Nigeria, State of Osun, About Osun, Geography, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁹¹⁷ Nigeria, Osun State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁹¹⁸ Nigeria, Osun State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁹¹⁹ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 3

¹⁹²⁰ Nigeria, Osun State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁹²¹ Nigeria, Osun State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁹²² ACLED, Real Time data (1 October 2017- 30 September 2018), [url](#)

¹⁹²³ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



2.30.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

According to ACLED and Nigeria Watch, Osun state experienced mainly events of protests and riots (50 in total of 61 recorded incidents were protests and riots), in only four of which fatalities were recorded.¹⁹²⁴

2.30.3.1 Number of security incidents

In the year 2020, ACLED reported a total of 23 security incidents (5 battles, 5 cases of violence against civilians, 13 incidents of riots) in Osun state, resulting in 18 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Osogbo LGA. All 5 incidents of violence against civilians were attacks.¹⁹²⁵

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period is shown in Figure 68 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 37 protests were reported during the reference period.¹⁹²⁶



Figure 39 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Osun state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹⁹²⁷

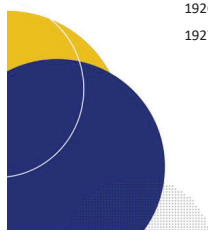
No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Osun state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

¹⁹²⁴ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); Nigeria Watch, The database, 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹²⁵ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁹²⁶ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁹²⁷ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



Osun state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	5	2
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	5	4
Riots	13	12
Total	23	18

Table 35 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹⁹²⁸

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 15 security incidents (6 battles, 7 cases of violence against civilians, 2 incidents of riots) in Osun state, resulting in 11 deaths.¹⁹²⁹

2.30.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 8 January 2020, the local Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chairman was killed by unidentified gunmen in Olomu.¹⁹³⁰

Around 6 September 2020, a local government worker was shot by members of Iloba communal militia along Erin/Egbedi road in Erin-Osun (Irepodun LGA) over a land dispute between Iloba and Erin-Osun villages.¹⁹³¹

On 16 September 2020, unidentified gunmen attacked and killed a hotelier in Ilesa (Ilesha East LGA) and the reason for the attack remains unknown.¹⁹³²

On 26 October 2020, youths attacked the Palace of the Akire of Ikire in Ikire (Irewole LGA) to protest over the illegal installation of the monarch and at least six of them were killed by soldiers.¹⁹³³

On 4 December 2020, an angry mob set two suspected motorcycle thieves ablaze and killed them at the Lagere area in Ile-Ife (Ife Central LGA).¹⁹³⁴

On 10 December 2020, a mob set one male and two suspected female kidnappers ablaze and killed them at Iwo (Iwo LGA) over an attempt to kidnap a child.¹⁹³⁵

Around 16 December 2020 (as reported), two persons were killed, when violence erupted between Hausa miners and Chinese expatriates at Idoko village (Obokun LGA) over access to a mining site.¹⁹³⁶

2.30.3 State's ability to secure law and order

Inaction and ineffectiveness of securities agencies have led in the rise of 'self-defence' militias, members of which clash with herders who attack farmers, according to CFR.¹⁹³⁷ Osun is one of the six states of the South-West Region, where the Western Nigeria Security Network, also referred to as Operation Amotekun, is operational. Amoketun Operation was established to support national forces in protection against deadly incidents between Fulani herders and local farmers.¹⁹³⁸ The Governor of Osun approved a massive recruitment in the specific operation.¹⁹³⁹

¹⁹²⁸ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁹²⁹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

¹⁹³⁰ Vanguard, Breaking: Gunmen kill PDP chairman in Delta, 9 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹³¹ Blueprint, Hoodlums kill man over land dispute in Osun, 6 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹³² Guardian (The), Gunmen kill hotelier in Osun, 18 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹³³ Punch, Soldiers killed protesters demanding Akires removal - Residents, 11 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹³⁴ Daily Trust, Mob lynch suspected motorcycle snatchers in Osun, 5 December 2020, [url](#)

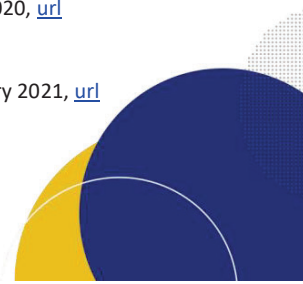
¹⁹³⁵ Nation (The), Mob kill, burn two women suspected kidnappers in Osun, 10 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹³⁶ Blueprint, 2 killed, others injured as Chinese expatriates, Nigerians clash over mining site, 16 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹³⁷ CFR, Nigeria's internal security problem, 26 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁹³⁸ International Crisis Group: Violence in Nigeria's North West: Rolling back the mayhem, 18 May 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹³⁹ Africa Report, Nigeria Southwest Governors hired a local militia to fight bandits. Has it worked?, 4 February 2021, [url](#)



2.30.3.4 Road security

Roads mentioned as affected by kidnappers' action in Osun state, are Esa-Oke, Iwaraja-Efon, Ile-Ife, Iloko, Ipetu-Ile-Ilesha, Ilesha-Ile-Oluji, Ilesha-Osogbo and Ilesha-Akure.¹⁹⁴⁰

2.30.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war in Osun state.

2.30.3.6 Displacement and return

IDPs

No information was found on the number of conflict-related IDPs in Osun state.

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Osun state.

2.31 Oyo state

2.31.1 General description of the state

Oyo shares boundaries with Ogun state to the south, with Kwara state to the north, partially with Ogun state to the west and with Osun state to the east. It also shares an international border with the Republic of Benin to the west.¹⁹⁴¹ The state's capital is Ibadan.¹⁹⁴²

Oyo state is composed of the following 32 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Afijio, Akinyele, Atiba, Atigbo, Egbeda, Ibadan North, Ibadan Central, Ibadan North, Ibadan North-East, Ibadan North-West, Ibadan South-East, Ibadan South-West, Ibarapa Central, Ibarapa East, Ibarapa North, Iddo, Irepo, Iseyin, Itesiwaju, Iwajowa, Kajola, Lagelu, Ogbomoso North, Ogbomoso South, Ogo-Oluwa, Oluyole, Ona-Ara, Orelope, Ori-Ire, Olorunsogo, Oyo East, Oyo West, Saki East, Saki West and Suru-Iere.¹⁹⁴³

In the 2006 census, the population of Oyo state was 5 580 894. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 7 840 864 in 2016.¹⁹⁴⁴

Oyo is an ethnically homogeneous state with the majority of the people being Yoruba. There are also ethnic sub-groups with distinct dialects. The people of Oyo are broadly divided into Ibadans, Ibarapas, Oyos, Oke-Oguns and Ogbomosos.¹⁹⁴⁵

The main occupation in Oyo state is agriculture.¹⁹⁴⁶

¹⁹⁴⁰ Vanguard, Nigerian roads where kidnappers unleash mayhem, 30 January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁹⁴¹ Nigeria, Oyo State, About Oyo, n.d., [url](#)

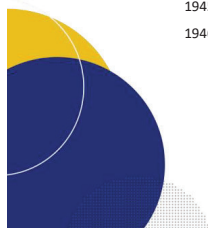
¹⁹⁴² Nigeria, Oyo State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁹⁴³ Nigeria, Oyo State, n.d., [url](#). To be noted that these LGAs are based on the ones indicated at the table in the aforementioned source. The LGAs in text form above the table do not include all the LGAs indicated at the table. Also, in the following source, the LGA Ibadan Central is not included and instead Ibadan North-East is included. Source: Nigeria, Oyo State, Local Government Areas, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁹⁴⁴ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 3

¹⁹⁴⁵ Nigeria, Oyo State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁹⁴⁶ Nigeria, Oyo State, n.d., [url](#)



2.31.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.31.2.1 Background of the conflict

Since 2018 the deadly conflict between herders and farmers started to expand from the Middle Belt to the South-West and South-East Regions, as herders were searching for grazing routes for their cattle.¹⁹⁴⁷

2.31.2.2 Actors

Actors in Oyo state's conflicts, as recorded by ACLED, include protesters and rioters in clashes with civilians and police forces. On the other hand, there were several incidents where the actors were unidentified armed groups and Fulani militias, as well as other communal militias (Idi Arere and Ilorin).¹⁹⁴⁸

2.31.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

According to an article in News Agency Punch, during 2020 'the state has witnessed high-level insecurity', and kidnappings for ransom, highway robberies and herdsman attacks are the main problems that affect residents, expatriates and business.¹⁹⁴⁹ The majority of incidents in Oyo state were protests and riots, according to ACLED and Nigeria Watch, while there were also armed clashes between security forces, communal militias and unidentified armed groups. Violent incidents against civilians included mostly attacks from ethnic militias and unidentified armed groups.¹⁹⁵⁰ In general Ondo is one of the 'relatively peaceful' states according to Nigeria Watch with less than 2 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants.¹⁹⁵¹

2.31.3.1 Number of security incidents

In the year 2020, ACLED reported a total of 47 security incidents (8 battles, 20 cases of violence against civilians, 19 incidents of riots) in Oyo state, resulting in 41 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Akinyele LGA. Of the 20 incidents of violence against civilians, 16 were attacks and 4 abductions.¹⁹⁵²

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period is shown in Figure 70 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 42 protests were reported during the reference period, resulting in 2 deaths.¹⁹⁵³

¹⁹⁴⁷ CFR, Nigeria's internal security problem, 26 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁹⁴⁸ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁴⁹ Punch, Makinde insecurity is getting messier in Oyo state, 25 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵⁰ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#), Nigeria Watch, The database, 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵¹ Nigeria Watch, Tenth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2020), n.d, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵² EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵³ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



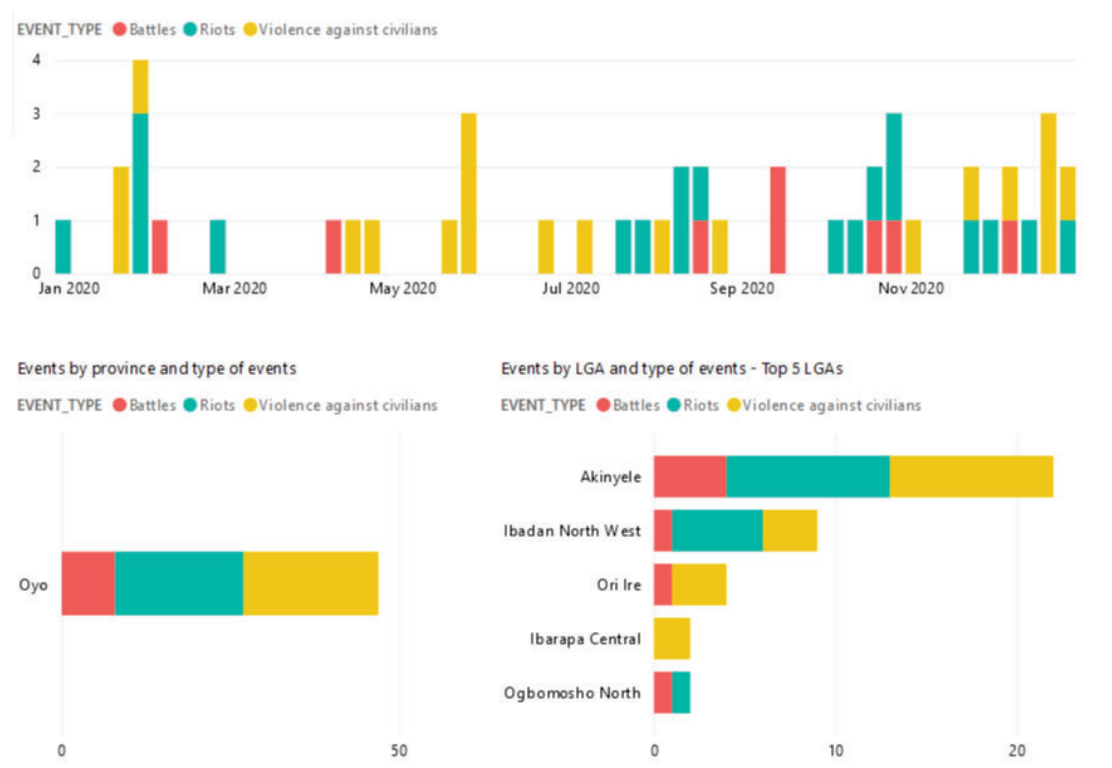


Figure 40 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Oyo state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹⁹⁵⁴

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Oyo state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Oyo state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	8	8
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	20	19
Riots	19	14
Total	47	41

Table 36 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹⁹⁵⁵

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 38 security incidents (5 battles, 23 cases of violence against civilians, 10 incidents of riots) in Oyo state, resulting in 29 deaths.¹⁹⁵⁶

¹⁹⁵⁴ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵⁵ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵⁶ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

2.31.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 5 January 2020, demonstrators attacked the fire station and burnt a fire truck in Akesan over a failure of the firefighters to control a fire in Akesan Market. Security forces answered with gunshots and killed 3 people.¹⁹⁵⁷

On 31 May 2020, suspected Fulani herdsmen attacked Ikereku, Pade, Olanla and Babalola in Akinyele villages in LGA and killed three farmers in Olanla.¹⁹⁵⁸

On 29 July 2020, an angry mob set three robbers ablaze in Oke-ho (Kajola LGA) after a failed bank robbery.¹⁹⁵⁹

Between 20 and 23 October 2020, at least seven police stations and other facilities owned by the police across the state were vandalised and torched by unidentified armed men, who hijacked #EndSARS protests in Ibadan (Akinyele LGA), killing at least three persons including two policemen and injuring six others.¹⁹⁶⁰

On 24 November 2020, unidentified gunmen associated with a political leader of the area attacked residents of Tewure community (Ori Ire LGA) over land and chieftaincy disputes, killing at least eight residents and injuring others.¹⁹⁶¹

On 28 December 2020, two suspected kidnappers were set ablaze and killed by a mob at the Asas Molete and Oke Ado areas in Ibadan (Akinyele LGA).¹⁹⁶²

On 13 February 2021, violent clashes between local Yoruba and Hausa traders erupted and destroyed the Shasha market in Ibadan. The reason was a misunderstanding between a Hausa and a Yoruba market worker and quickly erupted into mass violence between the two communities. At least six people were killed.¹⁹⁶³ Daily Trust reported 20 deaths and 5 000 displaced.¹⁹⁶⁴

2.31.3 State's ability to secure law and order

The lack of response from the authorities regarding the increasing violent conflicts between herders and farmers, which affects the South-West Region, impelled communities to take up arms to protect themselves, according to CFR.¹⁹⁶⁵ In Oyo state, as well as in the other five states of the South-West Region, the Western Nigeria Security Network, also known as Amotekun, is an armed group which was established to complement the efforts of national security units to fight criminal activities of herdsmen in South-West Nigeria. In Oyo state, the Governor deployed 200 officers of Operation Amotekun to criminal hotspots.¹⁹⁶⁶

2.31.3.4 Road security

Ilorin-Ogbomoso road in Atisbo LGA is mentioned as unsafe, due to kidnapping incidents by suspected herdsmen.¹⁹⁶⁷

¹⁹⁵⁷ Premium Times, Updated: security operatives 'kill three' amid raging fire in Oyo, 5 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵⁸ Punch, Gunmen invade Iyo communities, kill three, 2 June 2020, [url](#); Blueprint, Suspected herdsmen kill 3 villagers in Oyo, 1 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵⁹ Independent, Oyo: three suspects lynched in botched bank robbery attempt, 30 July 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁶⁰ Business Day, Hoodlums set police station on fire in Ibadan, 20 October 2020, [url](#); Premium Times, #EndSARS: How hoodlums razed Oyo police stations, stole weapons, 4 November 2020, [url](#); Punch, five feared killed as hoodlums attack Ibadan police station, 20 October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁶¹ Daily Trust, Thugs attack community in land, chieftaincy dispute, 25 November 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, How Oyo LG boss allegedly hired thugs to attack people over land dispute, 28 November 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁶² Independent, Mob sets two ablaze in Ibadan police warn against jungle justice, 29 December 2020, [url](#)

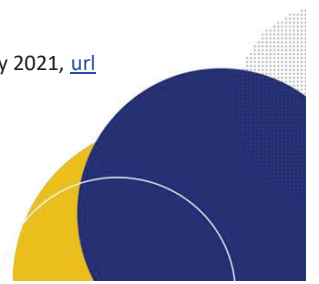
¹⁹⁶³ Premium Times, INSIDE STORY: How artisans' fight led to ethnic violence in Oyo, 14 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁹⁶⁴ Daily Trust, Oyo crisis: 20 Buried In Ibadan, 5,000 Take Refuge, 15 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁹⁶⁵ CFR, Nigeria's internal security problem, 26 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁹⁶⁶ Africa Report, Nigeria Southwest Governors hired a local militia to fight bandits. Has it worked?, 4 February 2021, [url](#)

¹⁹⁶⁷ Vanguard, Nigerian roads where kidnappers unleash mayhem, 30 January 2021, [url](#)



2.31.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

Between 20 and 23 October 2020 several police stations were destroyed by unidentified armed men during #EndSARS protests.¹⁹⁶⁸

No information was found on explosive remnants of war in Oyo state.

2.31.3.6 Displacement and return

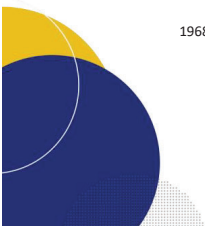
IDPs

No information was found on the number of conflict-related IDPs in Oyo state.

Returnees

No information was found on the number of returnees to Oyo state.

¹⁹⁶⁸ Premium Times, #EndSARS: How hoodlums razed Oyo police stations, stole weapons, 4 November 2020, [url](#)



South-South Region

The South-South Region comprises Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross river, Delta, Edo, and Rivers states.¹⁹⁶⁹

Violent incidents occurring in the Niger Delta include ‘piracy, militancy, kidnapping, gang/cult supremacy clashes, armed robbery, ritual killing, mob violence, sexual violence, human trafficking, communal violence, land disputes, election violence, extra-judicial killings and protests.’¹⁹⁷⁰ For more information, see [Section 1.4.1.1](#).

2.32 Akwa-Ibom state

2.32.1 General description of the state

Akwa Ibom state shares boundaries with Cross River state to the east, with Rivers and Abia states to the west and with the Atlantic Ocean to the south. The state’s capital is Uyo.¹⁹⁷¹

It is composed of the following 31 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Abak, Eastern Obolo, Eket, Esit Eket, Essien Udim, Etim Ekpo, Etinan, Ibeno, Ibesikpo Asutan, Ibiono Ibom, Ika, Ikono, Ikot Abasi, Ikot Ekpene, Ini, Itu, Mbo, Mkpat Enin, Nsit Atai, Nsit Ibom, Nsit Ubium, Obot Akara, Okobo, Onna, Oron, Oruk Anam, Udung Uko, Ukanafun, Uruan, Urue Offong Oruko and Uyo.¹⁹⁷²

In the 2006 census, the population of Akwa-Ibom state was 3 902 051. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 5 482 177 in 2016.¹⁹⁷³

Some major ethnic groups present in Akwa Ibom are Ibibio, Anang and Eket.¹⁹⁷⁴ The three main dialects are Ibibio, Annang and Oron and English is used for administrative purposes.¹⁹⁷⁵

One of the occupations in Akwa Ibom is agriculture, due to the arable land available. The state also has large reserves of oil and gas onshore and offshore. There are also other mineral resources such as limestone, clay, gold, salt, coal, silver nitrate and glass sand available.¹⁹⁷⁶

2.32.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.32.2.1 Background

Akwa Ibom state, as part of the Niger Delta, shares a history of economic exploitation, environmental pollution and political marginalisation which has made the Niger Delta a rather violent region.¹⁹⁷⁷

Violent incidents in Akwa Ibom state, as recorded by PIND, included mob violence which led to ‘many fatalities’ in 2020.¹⁹⁷⁸

¹⁹⁶⁹ Nigeria, NIMC (National Identity Management Commission), NIMC Enrolment centres, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁹⁷⁰ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁹⁷¹ Nigeria, Akwa Ibom State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁹⁷² Nigeria, Akwa Ibom State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁹⁷³ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 2

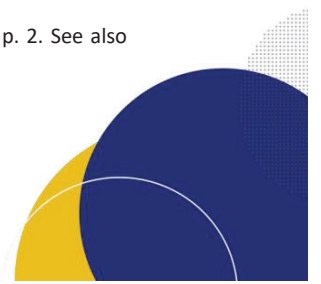
¹⁹⁷⁴ Nigeria, Akwa Ibom State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁹⁷⁵ Nigeria, Government of Akwa Ibom State, About Akwa Ibom, People, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁹⁷⁶ Nigeria, Akwa Ibom State, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁹⁷⁷ PIND Foundation, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), p. 2. See also EASO, EASO COI report Nigeria Security situation, November 2018, [url](#), pp. 56-58

¹⁹⁷⁸ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), p. 9



2.32.2.2 Actors

The two rivalling cult groups Debam/Deebam/De Balm and Icelanders were reported in 2020 fighting for hegemony in Oruk Anam LGA in Akwa Ibom.¹⁹⁷⁹ These and 63 other violent and cult groups were banned and proscribed under a new Cultism and Over Violent Behaviour (Prohibition) Order, 2020.¹⁹⁸⁰

Actors registered by ACLED include local ‘communal’ militias, Fulani militias, various cult armed groups, rioters and protesters, and the Nigerian state security (police and military) forces.¹⁹⁸¹

Along with Cross River state, Akwa Ibom is the Nigerian state considered to be the epicentre of witchcraft-related incidents, particularly affecting children.¹⁹⁸² Children accused of witchcraft may be abandoned, tortured or, in extreme cases, killed by their families.¹⁹⁸³

2.32.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

Akwa Ibom state witnessed several cult clashes in 2020, in Oruk Anam LGA and between the same rivalling cult groups; reportedly due to a rivalry for hegemony in the area. In the clashes, cult members and civilians were killed, in some cases mutilated.¹⁹⁸⁴

Mob violence against suspected robbers was also reported.¹⁹⁸⁵ Other trends reported in 2020, most noticeably in the capital Uyo, were robbery, looting and fighting.¹⁹⁸⁶

2.32.3.1 Number of security incidents

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 14 security incidents (2 battles, 5 cases of violence against civilians, 7 incidents of riots) in Akwa-Ibom state, resulting in 9 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Uyo LGA. Of the 5 incidents of violence against civilians, 2 were attacks and 3 abductions.¹⁹⁸⁷

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period, as well as the highest number of incidents by LGA is shown in Figure 72 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 18 protests were reported during the reference period.¹⁹⁸⁸

¹⁹⁷⁹ Punch, Cult clash claims two, A’lbom community residents flee, 10 June 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, two allegedly killed in renewed cult clash in Akwa Ibom community, 21 July 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Two killed over cult clash in Akwa Ibom Community, 20 September 2020, [url](#); other prominent cults in the region are Deewell, Greenlanders, and Black Axe. See Nwaogu, et al., Evaluation of Youth Vulnerability to Community Cultism in Selected States in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, 2019, [url](#), pp. 1-3

¹⁹⁸⁰ Vanguard, Gov Emmanuel proscribes 65 cult groups in Akwalbom state, 16 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁸¹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁸² Al Jazeera, How Nigeria’s fear of child ‘witchcraft’ ruins young lives, 14 November 2018, [url](#)

¹⁹⁸³ EASO, COI report Nigeria, Targeting of individuals, November 2018, [url](#), section 3.9.2.3

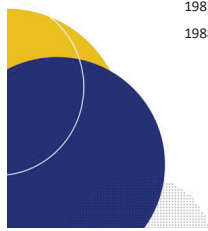
¹⁹⁸⁴ See for example Punch, Cult clash claims two, A’lbom community residents flee, 10 June 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, two allegedly killed in renewed cult clash in Akwa Ibom community, 21 July 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Two killed over cult clash in Akwa Ibom Community, 20 September 2020, [url](#); Nigerian Tribune, Suspected Cultists Kill Two, Abduct School Teacher In Akwa Ibom, 26 November 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁸⁵ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), p. 9

¹⁹⁸⁶ Vanguard, Akwa Ibom govt meets over worsening security situation in Uyo, environs, 10 December 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁸⁷ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁸⁸ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)



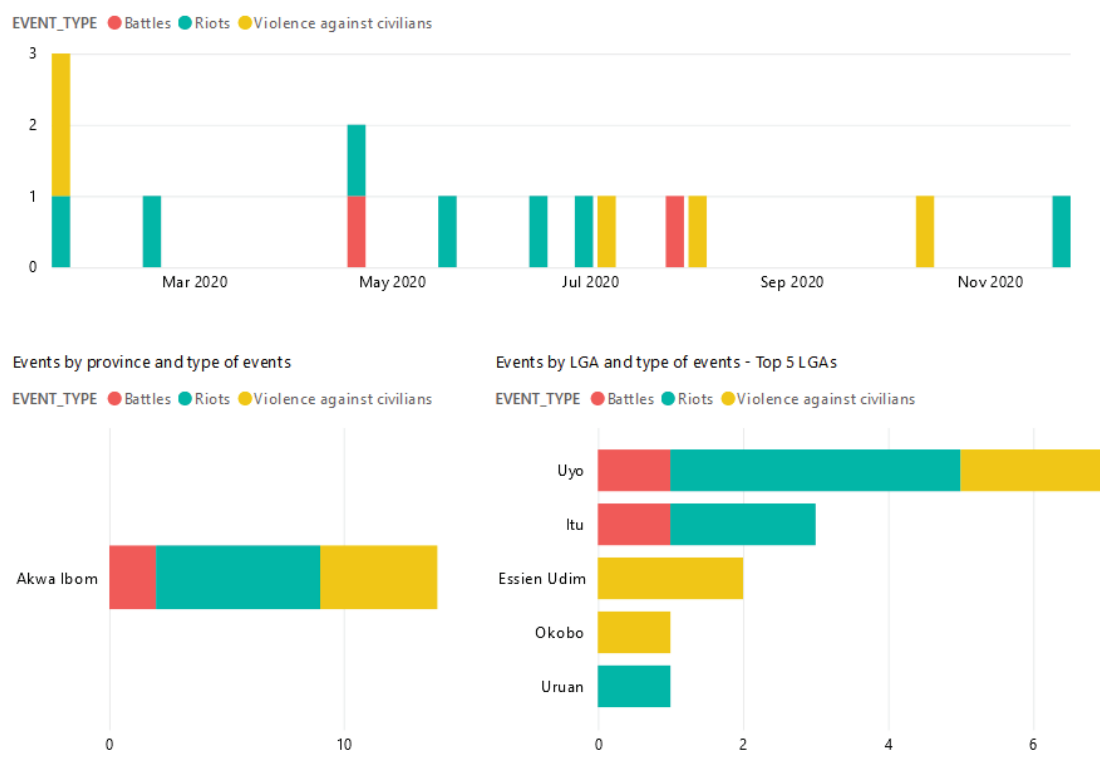


Figure 41 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Akwa Ibom state in 2020, based on ACLED data¹⁹⁸⁹

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Akwa Ibom state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Akwa Ibom state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	2	0
Explosions/remote violence		
Violence against civilians	5	2
Riots	7	7
Total	14	9

Table 37 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020¹⁹⁹⁰

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 6 security incidents (5 battles, 1 incident of remote violence/explosions,) in Akwa-Ibom state, resulting in 15 deaths.¹⁹⁹¹

2.32.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

In 2020, mob violence caused several fatalities in Akwa Ibom state. For example, on 22 January 2020, a mob caught and burnt 2 suspected robbers to death in Uyo, the capital. Police condemned this

¹⁹⁸⁹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁹⁰ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁹¹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

'jungle justice'.¹⁹⁹² In July, two residents, including a village head were reportedly killed by a mob in Nsie community, Okobo LGA.¹⁹⁹³

Several clashes between cult groups took place in 2020, killing civilians and cult members. A few examples:

On 27 April 2020, a clash between two rival cult groups killed three persons in Inen community (Oruk Anam LGA).¹⁹⁹⁴ On 9 June and 20 July 2020, cult clashes between Debam and Icelander confraternities occurred again in the same Oruk Anam LGA. On both incidents, two persons were killed. The clashes were allegedly related to killings two months earlier.¹⁹⁹⁵ On 9 August 2020, cultists invaded a prayer session in Inen community about the cult-related killings, and killed one person.¹⁹⁹⁶ On 19 September 2020, two persons were killed in a cult clash in Inen Ikot Eteye village (Oruk Anam LGA), between the Debam and Icelander cult groups. The village, where several cult clashes have taken place in the past months, was almost deserted as residents fled for their safety.¹⁹⁹⁷ Further attacks on the same community occurred on 29 September 2020¹⁹⁹⁸ and 25 November 2020 during which two persons were killed.¹⁹⁹⁹

On 22 October 2020, an #EndSARS protest turned violent in the capital Uyo, after protesters tried to block a security vehicle to pass and one protester was shot. Angry protesters attacked and burned government and private buildings.²⁰⁰⁰ Two persons were feared dead.²⁰⁰¹

In December 2020, the capital Uyo was plagued by house-to-house robbery, car snatching, looting and fighting.²⁰⁰²

On 30 March 2021, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) clashed with Nigerian security forces at Ikot Akpan community (Essien Udim LGA), and killed three security officers and burned police and military operational vehicles. The number of fatalities is unknown.²⁰⁰³ A week later, on 6 April 2021, Nigerian military forces conducted airstrikes in the same area s and bombarded the Ikot Akpan forest at an ESN camp. The number of fatalities is unknown. This occurred a day after the Imo State Police Command headquarters and the Nigerian Correctional Service at Owerri had been attacked and many inmates freed, allegedly by ESN members.²⁰⁰⁴ See under [Imo state](#).

2.32.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

In March 2020, the state government banned and proscribed 65 cult groups under a new law Cultism and Over Violent Behaviour (Prohibition) Order, 2020. This law enables the state authorities to prosecute cults, secret societies and other violent groups.²⁰⁰⁵

The Akwa Ibom state government, faced with the violence (such as cult clashes, mob violence, anti-SARS protests) in 2020 in the capital and some other LGAs, decided to reactivate the joint security task

¹⁹⁹² This Day, Two Armed Robbery Suspects Burnt to Death in A'lbom, 23 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁹³ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), p. 9

¹⁹⁹⁴ Guardian (The), Police confirm 3 dead in Akwa Ibom cult clash, 26 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁹⁵ Punch, Cult clash claims two, A'lbom community residents flee, 10 June 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, two allegedly killed in renewed cult clash in Akwa Ibom community, 21 July 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁹⁶ Nation, (The), Hoodlums kill one, sack churches in A'lbom, 10 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁹⁷ Vanguard, Two killed over cult clash in Akwa Ibom Community, 20 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁹⁸ Vanguard, Panic in Akwa Ibom community as gunmen attack church, shoot one, 29 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁹⁹ Nigerian Tribune, Suspected Cultists Kill Two, Abduct School Teacher In Akwa Ibom, 26 November 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁰⁰ Business Day, One shot dead as EndSARS protest turns violent in Akwa Ibom, 22 October 2020, [url](#)

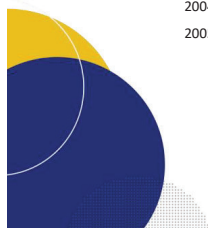
²⁰⁰¹ Business Day, Akwa Ibom counts losses after night of rage by hoodlums, 23 October 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁰² Vanguard, Akwa Ibom govt meets over worsening security situation in Uyo, environs, 10 December 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁰³ Punch, Tension as suspected IPOB, security personnel clash in Akwa Ibom, 31 March 2021, [url](#)

²⁰⁰⁴ Sundiata Post, FG goes after IPOB as military bombards Akwa Ibom forest, 7 April 2021, [url](#)

²⁰⁰⁵ Vanguard, Gov Emmanuel proscribes 65 cult groups in Akwalbom state, 16 March 2020, [url](#)



force and increase police control, amongst others by providing the police with more and better equipment.²⁰⁰⁶

Security agencies were not always able to secure law and order in the Niger Delta, according to Reuters. Protests against police brutality have led to riots and lootings, and in parts of the Niger Delta the police stayed in their barracks because of the anger, according to a source. Instead of the police, groups of local residents patrolled the area.²⁰⁰⁷ Oil companies tightened their security measures in the light of violent anti-SARS brutality protests and also in view of expected cuts in employment in the near future. Akwa Ibom already has one of the highest levels of unemployment in Nigeria (45 %).²⁰⁰⁸

A research study into the management of security challenges in Akwa Ibom pointed at the relationship between politics and insecurity, the lack of communication and intelligence with the public, and the militarisation of the Nigerian security apparatus which had reduced the police force to an onlooker. It suggested that security performance could be improved if security agents are motivated, well paid and well equipped with 21st century technologies to match the technical equipment of criminals.²⁰⁰⁹

2.32.3.4 Road security

No information was found on road security in Akwa Ibom state could not be found within the time constraints of this report.

2.32.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on major damage in infrastructure or explosive remnants of war in Akwa Ibom state.

2.32.3.6 Displacement and return

Akwa Ibom state hosts 1 202 Cameroonian refugees.²⁰¹⁰

IDPs

No information was found on the number of conflict-related IDPs in Akwa Ibom state.

Returnees

No information was found on returnees to Akwa Ibom state.

2.33 Bayelsa state

2.33.1 General description of the state

Bayelsa state shares borders with Delta and Rivers states.²⁰¹¹ The state's capital is Yenagoa.²⁰¹²

²⁰⁰⁶ Premium Times, Akwa Ibom govt tackles insecurity in Uyo, 10 December 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Akwa Ibom govt meets over worsening security situation in Uyo, environs, 10 December 2020, [url](#); Nigeria, Akwa Ibom State, Governor Emmanuel donates 30 patrol trucks...reactivates Joint Security Team, 10 December 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁰⁷ Reuters, Oil companies tighten Nigeria security as protests, job losses stoke tension, 18 November 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁰⁸ Reuters, Oil companies tighten Nigeria security as protests, job losses stoke tension, 18 November 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁰⁹ Abomaye-Nimenibo et al., How to Manage the Security Challenges in Nigeria: A Case Study of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, 23 November 2020, [url](#)

²⁰¹⁰ UNHCR Nigeria: Population Statistics January 2021, 10 February 2021, [url](#)

²⁰¹¹ UN, Nigeria, August 2014, [url](#)

²⁰¹² Nigeria, Bayelsa State, n.d., [url](#)



Bayelsa state is composed of the following eight Local Government Areas (LGAs): Brass, Ekeremor, Kolokuma/Opokuma, Nembe, Ogbia, Sagbama, Southern Ijaw and Yenagoa.²⁰¹³

In the 2006 census, the population of Bayelsa state was 1 704 515. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 2 277 961 in 2016.²⁰¹⁴

The main ethnic groups in Bayelsa are the Ijaw, Kolokunu, Ekpetiama, Igbriran, Atissa and Biseni.²⁰¹⁵ The four main languages spoken are Izon, Nembe, Epie-Atissa and Ogbia. English is the official language.²⁰¹⁶

Bayelsa has a large production of petroleum. The state has one of the largest crude oil and natural gas reserves in Nigeria.²⁰¹⁷

2.33.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.33.2.1 Background of the conflict

Bayelsa is where the first oil was found and still is a major oil producing state.²⁰¹⁸ A history of economic exploitation, environmental pollution and political marginalisation has led to decades of conflicts in the Niger Delta, including Bayelsa state.²⁰¹⁹ Regional underdevelopment, widespread and systemic corruption, poverty and environmental devastation is seen as the background of the feelings of anger leading to violence and criminality in the state.²⁰²⁰

Incidents of violence in Bayelsa state include gang/cult violence and criminality, 'driven primarily by armed robbery, kidnapping, piracy, and killing for ritualistic purposes'.²⁰²¹ In addition, attacks by pirates increased in Bayelsa, mainly attacks on oil tankers, fishing boats, hijacking and robberies of cargo ships for ransom, and many clashes with the military in creeks and rivers.²⁰²²

2.33.2.2 Actors

Most of the actors registered by ACLED were 'unidentified armed groups'; others include local 'communal' militias, vigilantes, Fulani militias, cult militias, pirates, and the Nigerian state security (police and military) forces.²⁰²³

2.33.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

Cult clashes, and communal fights accounted for the most violence incidents in 2019 and 2020 in Bayelsa state as registered by ACLED and Nigeria Watch.²⁰²⁴ Bayelsa's capital Yenagoa was ranked the third most violent LGA in the entire Niger Delta, according to PIND.²⁰²⁵

²⁰¹³ Nigeria, Bayelsa State, n.d., [url](#)

²⁰¹⁴ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 2

²⁰¹⁵ CSDP (Community and Social Development Project) Nigeria, Bayelsa, Who we are, n.d., [url](#)

²⁰¹⁶ Nigeria, Bayelsa State, n.d., [url](#)

²⁰¹⁷ Nigeria, Bayelsa State, n.d., [url](#)

²⁰¹⁸ Ajodo-Adebanjoko A., Towards ending conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta region, 2017, [url](#), p. 10

²⁰¹⁹ PIND Foundation, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), p. 2. See also EASO, EASO COI report Nigeria Security situation, November 2018, [url](#), pp. 56-58

²⁰²⁰ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), p. 2; Titus, U.M., Sabo, Y.A., Causes of Violent Conflicts in Nigeria's Niger Delta Region: The Case of Bayelsa State, July 2020, [url](#)

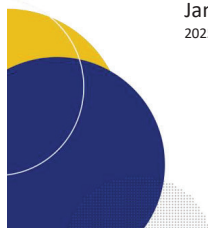
²⁰²¹ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), pp. 4-6

²⁰²² PIND, Niger Delta Weekly Conflict Update: April 12-18, 2020, 17 April 2020, [url](#)

²⁰²³ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

²⁰²⁴ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#); PIND Foundation, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), p. 2

²⁰²⁵ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), p. 3



2.33.3.1 Number of security incidents

In 2020, ACLED reported a total of 25 security incidents (11 battles, 10 cases of violence against civilians, 4 incidents of riots) in Bayelsa state, resulting in 38 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Yenegoa LGA. Of the 10 incidents of violence against civilians, 8 were attacks and 2 abductions.²⁰²⁶

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period, as well as the highest number of incidents by LGA is shown in Figure 74 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 24 protests were reported during the reference period.²⁰²⁷



Figure 42 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Bayelsa state in 2020, based on ACLED data²⁰²⁸

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Bayelsa state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Bayelsa state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	11	25
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	10	10
Riots	4	3
Total	25	38

Table 38 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020²⁰²⁹

²⁰²⁶ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

²⁰²⁷ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

²⁰²⁸ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

²⁰²⁹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 7 security incidents (2 battles, 4 cases of violence against civilians, 1 incident of riots) in Bayelsa state, resulting in 1 death.²⁰³⁰

2.33.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

The most violent incident in 2019 and 2020 occurred on 13 November 2019, three days before the gubernatorial election in Bayelsa, when suspected All Progressive Progress (APC) militias attacked a Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) rally in Nembe Ogbolomabiri (Nembe LGA) and opened fire on PDP supporters.²⁰³¹ A panel of inquiry reported later that 21 people had been killed (10 of whom were beheaded during the poll) and 195 injured.²⁰³²

On 16 February 2020, suspected pirates attacked an oil barge at Letugbene (Ekeremor LGA) and killed 4 soldiers that escorted the transport. 2 civilians were killed in the attack. Troops searched the community and reportedly burned some houses as residents failed to identify the perpetrators.²⁰³³

Cult clashes reportedly occurred in 2020. On 17 March, two persons were killed during ‘a clash of supremacy’ between two unidentified ‘notorious’ rivalling cults in Kpansia area (Yenagoa LGA).²⁰³⁴ On 17 April 2020, youth groups from Agudama and Akenfa communities of Yenagoa (Yenagoa LGA) clashed, allegedly over a land dispute, other locals mentioned a cult group reprisal attack. 3 people were killed.²⁰³⁵ On 11 June 2020, two rival cult groups, Icelanders and Bobos, clashed in Amarata area (Yenagoa LGA), and killed five persons.²⁰³⁶

On 5 August 2020, armed suspected cultists invaded a church and village of Azikoro (Yenagoa LGA), killing four persons and destroying property. The attack was reportedly a retaliatory attack after the police (in Operation Puff Adder) had destroyed their camp on indication by residents.²⁰³⁷ On 28 December 2020, a violent gun battle between two unidentified rival cult groups from Ukubie and Azuzuama communities happened in Lobia Community (Southern Ijaw LGA), killing four cultists and one child.²⁰³⁸

2.33.3.3 State’s ability to secure law and order

In a July 2020 research paper on the violent conflicts in Bayelsa state, it was noted that ‘of all the State responses to the Niger Delta conflict, little success has been recorded except the recent non-violent Amnesty Programme.’ Political and bureaucratic corruption and poor leadership by state and local authorities are rampant. The researchers concluded: ‘The intervention through the Ministry of Niger Delta as part of State responses has not produced any positive result.’²⁰³⁹

In May 2019, the national Police Command Operation Puff Adder was launched in Bayelsa state to fight the violent clashes, kidnappings and robberies in the state.²⁰⁴⁰

²⁰³⁰ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

²⁰³¹ Sahara reporters, Bayelsa: Five Killed, Scores Injured As Suspected APC Thugs Disrupt PDP Campaign Rally, 13 November 2019, [url](#); Premium Times, Dickson says 22 people killed during Bayelsa governorship election, 3 December 2019, [url](#)

²⁰³² Vanguard, Dickson receives panel report on Bayelsa election, 24 January 2020, [url](#)

²⁰³³ PM News, Four soldiers, two civilians gunned down in Bayelsa, 17 February 2020, [url](#)

²⁰³⁴ Daily Post, Two killed in Bayelsa renewed cult war, 18 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁰³⁵ Daily Post, Three killed, several others injured as Bayelsa youths clash over land dispute, 21 April 2020, [url](#)

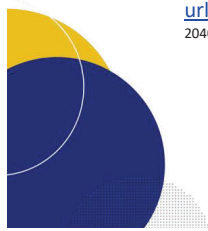
²⁰³⁶ Nation (The), Five killed in Bayelsa cult clash, 11 June 2020, [url](#)

²⁰³⁷ Nation (The), Bayelsa killings: Police arrest cult group gang leader, recover AK 47, 8 August 2020, [url](#); Sahara Reporters, Gunmen Kill Pregnant Woman, Three Others In Bayelsa, 7 August 2020, [url](#)

²⁰³⁸ Nation (The), Five killed as rival cult groups clash in Bayelsa, 28 December 2020, [url](#)

²⁰³⁹ Titus, U.M., Sabo, Y.A., Causes of Violent Conflicts in Nigeria’s Niger Delta Region: The Case of Bayelsa State, July 2020, [url](#), pp. 116, 125

²⁰⁴⁰ Leadership, Police Launch Operation ‘Puff Adder’ In Bayelsa, 23 May 2019, [url](#)



2.33.3.4 Road security

There are no recent reports on road security issues in Bayelsa state.

2.33.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

In several violent incidents, as mentioned above, damage on buildings such as churches, governmental buildings and medical centres were reported. There are no reports on major damage in infrastructure, as a result of explosives.

2.33.3.6 Displacement and return

IDPs

No information was found on the number of conflict-related IDPs in Bayelsa state.

Returnees

No information was found on returnees to Bayelsa state.

2.34 Cross River state

2.34.1 General description of the state

Cross River state shares an international border with the Republic of Cameroon to the east and internal borders with Benue state to the north, Abia and Anambra states to the west, Eboyi state to the north-west and Akwa Ibom state to the south. The state's capital is Calabar.²⁰⁴¹

Cross River state is composed of the following 18 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Abi, Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Bekwarra, Biase, Boki, Calabar Municipal, Calabar South, Etung, Ikom, Obanliku, Obubra, Obudu, Odukpani, Ogoja, Yakurr and Yala.²⁰⁴²

In the 2006 census, the population of Cross River state was 2 892 988. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 3 866 269 in 2016.²⁰⁴³

There are three major ethnic groups in Cross River state: the Efik, Ejagham and Bekwarra.²⁰⁴⁴

Fishing and agriculture constitute some of the major occupations in the state.²⁰⁴⁵

2.34.2 Conflict background and armed actors

2.34.2.1 Background of the conflict

Cross River is one of the nine states comprising the Niger Delta.²⁰⁴⁶ For information on some of the security issues traditionally affecting the Niger Delta, see [Section 1.4.1.1](#). Ethnic or communal conflicts have traditionally been a source of violence in Cross River state, and in recent years have become more frequent and more dangerous for the population.²⁰⁴⁷ Cross River is one of the states in Nigeria

²⁰⁴¹ Nigeria, Cross River State, n.d., [url](#)

²⁰⁴² Nigeria, Cross River State, n.d., [url](#)

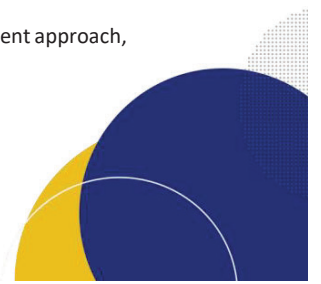
²⁰⁴³ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url, p. 2](#)

²⁰⁴⁴ Nigeria, Cross River State, n.d., [url](#)

²⁰⁴⁵ Nigeria, Cross River State, n.d., [url](#)

²⁰⁴⁶ Ajodo-Adebanjoko A., Towards ending conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta region: A collective non-violent approach, 2017, [url](#), p. 11

²⁰⁴⁷ Bisong, T.L., Trends of ethnic conflicts in Cross River State, Nigeria, November 2018, [url](#) p. 75



where clashes between herders and farmers are reported to occur with more regularity, intensity and causing more bloodshed.²⁰⁴⁸

Cultism is another major source of violence in the Niger Delta²⁰⁴⁹, including in Cross River state.²⁰⁵⁰

Along with Akwa Ibom, Cross River is the Nigerian state considered to be the epicentre of witchcraft-related incidents, particularly affecting children.²⁰⁵¹ Children accused of witchcraft may be abandoned, tortured or, in extreme cases, killed by their families.²⁰⁵²

2.34.2.2 Actors

Some of the main actors in Cross River state's conflicts in 2020 included local communities clashing over land ownership and boundary disputes; rival cult gangs driven by supremacy battles, general criminal gangs and mob violence.²⁰⁵³

Some of the communities involved in violent incidents in 2020 include the Afono against the Ibini²⁰⁵⁴, the Orgubam against the Ipene and Egbo²⁰⁵⁵, the Ugep against the Mbakunu²⁰⁵⁶, the Izzi against the Obubara.²⁰⁵⁷

Some of the cult gangs involved in armed clashes in Cross River state during 2020 include the Black Axe against the KKK.²⁰⁵⁸ For other non-state actors in the Niger Delta see [Section 1.3.2](#).

State actors in Cross River state include the Cross River State Police Command²⁰⁵⁹, which is part of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF)²⁰⁶⁰, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC)²⁰⁶¹, the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS).²⁰⁶²

2.34.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

In 2020, Cross River state was the top fourth state within the Niger Delta most affected by violence, after Delta, Rivers and Edo states. Biase LGA was among the most violent LGAs of the Niger Delta.²⁰⁶³

Compared to 2019, there was a decrease in incidents of communal violence in the state during 2020. However communal violence represented one of the main sources of conflict in the state, along with criminal, cult violence, vigilantism and mob justice²⁰⁶⁴, clashes between gang/militants or protesters and the police.²⁰⁶⁵

²⁰⁴⁸ Onah, E. I. et al., Applying restorative justice in resolving the farmers-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria, January 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁴⁹ Nwaogu N.R. et al. Evaluation of Youth Vulnerability to Community Cultism in Selected States in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, 2019, [url](#), pp. 1-3

²⁰⁵⁰ Vanguard, Cultists on the rampage in Calabar, Sapele, 4 May 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁵¹ Al Jazeera, How Nigeria's fear of child 'witchcraft' ruins young lives, 14 November 2018, [url](#)

²⁰⁵² See EASO, COI report Nigeria, Targeting of individuals, November 2018, [url](#), section 3.9.2.3

²⁰⁵³ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) pp. 1-10

²⁰⁵⁴ Daily Post, Police refute alleged death of 15, as Cross River communities clash, 20 May 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁵⁵ Sun, 3 feared dead in renewed communal clash in Cross River, 14 May 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁵⁶ Daily Post, Three killed, others injured in renewed border crisis between Benue, Cross River communities, 5 June 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁵⁷ Vanguard, Two killed, 3 others missing in renewed Ebonyi/Cross River boundary dispute, 25 September 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁵⁸ Vanguard, Cultists on the rampage in Calabar, Sapele, 4 May 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁵⁹ Vanguard, Over 80 in custody, as police begin arrest of looters in Calabar, 26 October 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁶⁰ Nigeria, Nigeria Police Force, Zone 6, n.d., [url](#); Cross River Watch, Updated: NSCDC Guns Down Two In Bakassi, One Receiving Treatment, 5 June 2020, [url](#)

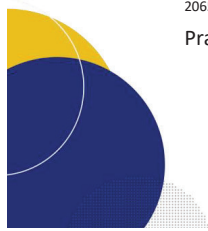
²⁰⁶¹ Nigeria, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Zone G, n.d., [url](#)

²⁰⁶² Vanguard, New #EndSARS: Protesters will be dealt with decisively — Cross River CP warns, 7 October 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁶³ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) pp. 1-10

²⁰⁶⁴ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) pp. 1-10

²⁰⁶⁵ Nigeria Watch, The database, 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020, [url](#); USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Nigeria, 11 March 2020, [url](#)



Kidnapping for ransom has become a major security issue in the state, especially in the capital Calabar²⁰⁶⁶, where people targeted include, according to a Vanguard article, ‘Teachers, medical doctors, pastors, motor mechanics, drivers, journalists, students and anyone who can afford a few thousands are all targets.’²⁰⁶⁷

2.34.3.1 Number of security incidents

In the year 2020, ACLED reported a total of 35 security incidents (11 battles, 14 cases of violence against civilians, 10 incidents of riots) in Cross River state, resulting in 40 fatalities. The highest number of security incidents took place in Calabar LGA. Of the 14 incidents of violence against civilians, resulting in 4 fatalities in Cross River state, 9 were attacks and 5 abductions.²⁰⁶⁸

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period is shown in Figure 76 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 27 protests were reported in Cross River state during the reference period.²⁰⁶⁹

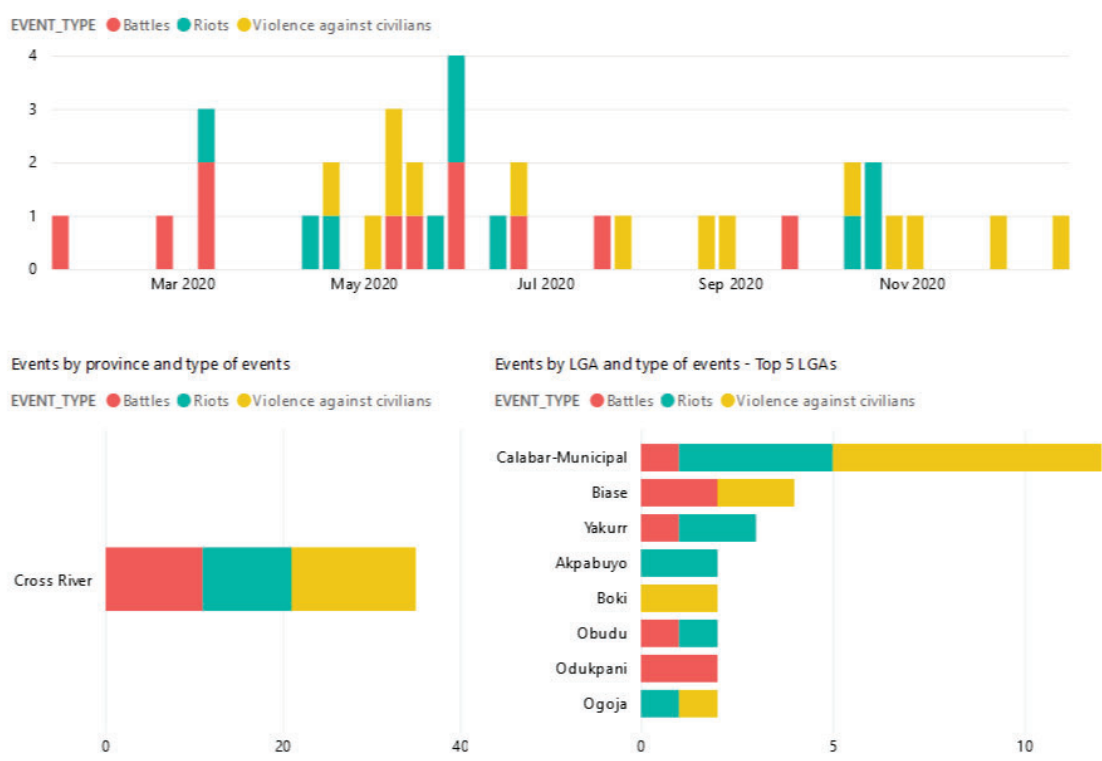


Figure 43 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Cross River state in 2020, based on ACLED data²⁰⁷⁰

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Cross River state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

²⁰⁶⁶ PIND, Niger Delta Weekly Conflict Update for April 26 – May 2, 2020, Spotlighting the threat of kidnappings in Cross River, [url](#)

²⁰⁶⁷ Vanguard, Calabar: From Paradise City to kidnappers’ den, 15 November 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁶⁸ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁶⁹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁷⁰ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

Cross River state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	11	24
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	14	4
Riots	10	12
Total	35	40

Table 39 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020²⁰⁷¹

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 7 security incidents (4 battles, 2 cases of violence against civilians, 1 incident of riots) in Cross River state, resulting in 12 deaths.²⁰⁷²

2.34.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 12 May 2020, three people were killed, in two separate incidents, when Orgubam communal militias attacked Ipene and Egbor communities in Biase LGA, due to an ongoing land dispute.²⁰⁷³

On 19 May 2020, 15 people were killed during clashes between Afono and Ibini communal militias from Biase LGA over a boundary dispute.²⁰⁷⁴

Around 5 June 2020, community members from Ugep (Obanliku LGA) and Mbakunu (Kwande LGA, Benue) engaged in an armed clash over a boundary dispute, resulting in three people killed, 50 wounded and houses burnt.²⁰⁷⁵

On 5 June 2020, two youth were shot dead by NSCDC during clashes between traders and NSCDC officers carrying out the demolition of a black market at Ekpri Ikang (Akpabuyo LGA).²⁰⁷⁶

On 16 June 2020, three people died when a mob set ablaze suspected motorcycle thieves in Ogoja (Ogoja LGA).²⁰⁷⁷

On 24 September 2020, two people were reported dead, three abducted during clashes between policemen and Izzi communal militias at Obeagu Ibom village (Obubra, LGA). The incident was linked to an ongoing border dispute between Izzi and Obubara communities.²⁰⁷⁸

On 17 October 2020, three men suspected to be kidnappers were burnt alive by a mob at Akpabuyo.²⁰⁷⁹

2.34.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

In 2016, the Nigerian Army launched its first so-called Operation Crocodile Smile aimed at fighting widespread criminal activities such as kidnapping, militancy, oil theft and piracy in the Niger Delta.²⁰⁸⁰ During 2020, the Nigerian government continued to deploy armed forces to tackle internal security issues, due to insufficient capacity and staffing of domestic law enforcement agencies.²⁰⁸¹ Operation Crocodile Smile IV was functional in 2020 in Cross River state.²⁰⁸²

²⁰⁷¹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁷² EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

²⁰⁷³ Sun, 3 feared dead in renewed communal clash in Cross River, 14 May 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁷⁴ Daily Post, Police refute alleged death of 15, as Cross River communities clash, 20 May 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁷⁵ Daily Post, Three killed, others injured in renewed border crisis betw Benue, Cross River communities, 5 June 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁷⁶ Cross River Watch, Updated: NSCDC Guns Down Two In Bakassi, One Receiving Treatment, 5 June 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁷⁷ Daily Post, Suspected motorcycle thief set ablaze in Cross River, 17 June 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁷⁸ Vanguard, Two killed, 3 others missing in renewed Ebonyi/Cross River boundary dispute, 25 September 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁷⁹ Daily Trust, Mob Beheads, Burns 3 Suspected Kidnappers In Cross River, 17 October 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁸⁰ Vanguard, As "operation Crocodile smile" begins, 30 August 2016, [url](#)

²⁰⁸¹ USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Nigeria, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁸² Guardian (The) Nigeria, Delta unveils Operation Crocodile Smile, tasks military on professionalism, 18 November 2020, [url](#); SB Morgen, Small arms, mass atrocities and migration in Nigeria, April 2020, [url](#) p. 15



In December 2020, a special operation, called Operation Akpakwu, was launched by Cross River's governor, aiming at fighting robbery and kidnapping in particular. This new operation involved operatives from the army, navy, air force and the NSCDC.²⁰⁸³

Corruption within the authorities is considered as a main challenge for the peacebuilding process in the Niger Delta.²⁰⁸⁴ Nigerian security agencies, especially the JTF deployed in the Niger Delta, have reportedly been complicit in and benefitted from oil theft.²⁰⁸⁵

2.34.3.4 Road security

Robberies were reported along the Calabar-Itu road²⁰⁸⁶, the Ugep-Calabar highway. Criminal activities, such as beating of people and damaging of properties, were also reported along the Murtala Muhammed Highway, in Calabar.²⁰⁸⁷

No further information on road security specifically for Cross River state could be found in the limited time frame of this report.

2.34.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

Between 23 and 26 October 2020, during the #EndSARS protests, looters broke in and destroyed some public hospitals in Calabar, including the Dr Lawrence Henshaw Memorial Hospital and the CRS COVID 19 treatment centre in Tinapa (Adiabo). During the looting, equipment and furniture, some containing patients' samples for Tuberculosis, HIV, and COVID 19, were destroyed.²⁰⁸⁸

No further information on major incidents causing damage to infrastructure in Cross River state was found. No information was found on explosive remnants of war.

2.34.3.6 Displacement and return

Cross River state hosts 37 558 Cameroonian refugees.²⁰⁸⁹

IDPs

No information was found on the number of conflict-related IDPs in Cross River state.

Returnees

No information was found on returnees to Cross River state.

2.35 Delta state

2.35.1 General description of the state

Delta state shares internal borders with the states of Bayelsa, Rivers, Anambra, Edo and Ondo.²⁰⁹⁰ The state's capital is Asaba.²⁰⁹¹ Delta is one of the nine states comprising the Niger Delta region of Nigeria (the other states are Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers).²⁰⁹²

²⁰⁸³ Premium Times, Ayade launches "Operation Akpakwu" to fight kidnapping, robbery in Cross River, 3 December 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁸⁴ Okoi O., How corruption undermines peacebuilding in Nigeria's oil region, The Conversation, 8 September 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁸⁵ TI-DS, Military involvement in Oil theft in the Niger Delta, June 2019, [url](#), pp. 1-5; Igwe U., A political economy perspective on oil and conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta, 16 September 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁸⁶ Vanguard, Police arrest 40 suspected armed robbers, cultists in Cross River, 7 May 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁸⁷ Sun (The), C/River police nab 55 for robbery, kidnapping, cultism, 10 November 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁸⁸ Nation (The), Aftermath of looting: Cross River issues public health warning, 3 November 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁸⁹ UNHCR Nigeria: Population Statistics January 2021, 10 February 2021, [url](#)

²⁰⁹⁰ UN, Nigeria, August 2014, [url](#)

²⁰⁹¹ Nigeria, Delta State, n.d., [url](#)

²⁰⁹² Ajodo-Adebanjoko A., Towards ending conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta region, 2017, [url](#), p. 11



Delta state is composed of the following 25 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Aniocha North, Aniocha South, Bomadi, Burutu, Ethiope East, Ethiope West, Ika North-East, Ika South, Isoko North, Isoko South, Ndokwa East, Ndokwa West, Okpe, Oshimili North, Oshimili South, Patani, Sapele, Udu, Ugheli North, Ugheli South, Ukwuani, Uvwie, Warri North, Warri South and Warri South-West.²⁰⁹³

In the 2006 census, the population of Delta state was 4 112 445. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 5 663 362 in 2016.²⁰⁹⁴

Delta is an 'ethnically diverse State'. Some of the main ethnic groups in Delta state are the Urhobos, Ishekiri, Ijaw and Delta-Igbos.²⁰⁹⁵

Delta state produces agricultural products and oil. The state has very large reserves of crude oil and constitutes one of the largest producers of petroleum products in Nigeria. One of the main drivers of its economy is the sale of petroleum products. The state also has reserves of different solid minerals, such as industrial clay, silica, lignite, kaolin, tar sand, decorative rocks and limestone. These are raw materials used for brick-making or ceramics.²⁰⁹⁶

2.35.2 Conflict background and armed actors in Delta state

2.35.2.1 Background of the conflict

Delta is one of the nine states comprising the Niger Delta.²⁰⁹⁷ For information on some of the security issues traditionally affecting the Niger Delta, see [Section 1.4.1.1](#). In Delta state, armed groups that have proliferated since the 1990s across the Niger Delta²⁰⁹⁸, emerged mostly along ethnic rivalries. The most important group emerging in the state was the Federation of Niger Delta Ijaw Communities (FNDIC), formed in the 1990s by youth from the Ijaw community. Although it is unknown exactly how many people were involved in militant activity in the Niger Delta, a 2007 estimate indicated that there were at least 48 groups operating in Delta state alone, with about 25 000 members.²⁰⁹⁹ In October 2020, a coalition of former militants belonging to the Reformed Niger Delta Avengers (RNDA) declared their support for the #EndSARS movement and threatened to resume attacks on oil installations if the Federal Government failed to meet the demands of the #EndSARS protesters across the country.²¹⁰⁰ In a statement, the RNDA militants threatened to attack some gas distribution pipelines, most of them running from Delta state to other states across the country.²¹⁰¹

Cultism is one of the major sources of violence the Niger Delta, including in Delta state.²¹⁰²

Delta is also reported to be one of the states where clashes between herders and farmers occur with more regularity, intensity and causing more bloodshed.²¹⁰³ Communal tensions over land and boundary disputes and 'leadership tussles', also occurred.²¹⁰⁴

²⁰⁹³ Nigeria, Delta State, n.d., [url](#)

²⁰⁹⁴ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 2

²⁰⁹⁵ Nigeria, Delta State, n.d., [url](#)

²⁰⁹⁶ Nigeria, Delta State, n.d., [url](#)

²⁰⁹⁷ Ajodo-Adebanjoko A., Towards ending conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta region: A collective non-violent approach, 2017, [url](#), p. 11

²⁰⁹⁸ Agbiboa D. E., Armed Groups, Arms Proliferations and the Amnesty Program in the Niger Delta, Nigeria, 2013, [url](#) p. 12

²⁰⁹⁹ CFR, Understanding the Armed Groups of the Niger Delta, September 2009, [url](#) p. 3

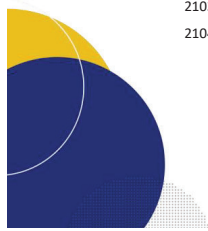
²¹⁰⁰ Nation (The), Avengers issues 21-day ultimatum to FG, threatens attacks on oil facilities, 25 October 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Meet #EndSARS protesters' demand, or we attack - N'Delta militants threaten FG, 20 October 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁰¹ Vanguard, Meet #EndSARS protesters' demand, or we attack - N'Delta militants threaten FG, 20 October 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁰² Nwaogu, N. et al., Evaluation of Youth Vulnerability to Community Cultism in Selected States in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, 2019, [url](#), pp. 1-3

²¹⁰³ Onah, E. I. et al., Applying restorative justice in resolving the farmers-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria, January 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁰⁴ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), pp. 6-7



2.35.2.2 Actors

The main actors in Delta state's conflicts in 2020 included clashing herders and farmers, local communities fighting each other over land ownership and boundary disputes; rival cult gangs driven by supremacy battles, as well as general criminal gangs.²¹⁰⁵

Some of the communities involved in violent incidents in Delta state include the Emede against the Igbide²¹⁰⁶, the Fulani against the Uwherh²¹⁰⁷, the Oleh against the Ozoro.²¹⁰⁸

Some of the cult gangs involved in armed clashes in Delta state during 2020 include Aiye, Arrow Baga, Black Axe, Eiye and Mafia.²¹⁰⁹ The armed group Niger Delta Greenland Justice Mandate (NDGJM) was reported to be active in Delta state between 2016 and 2020.²¹¹⁰

State actors in Delta state include the Delta State Police Command²¹¹¹, which is part of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF)²¹¹², the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC)²¹¹³, the Joint Task Force (JTF)²¹¹⁴, the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS).²¹¹⁵

2.35.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

In 2020, Delta was the state within the Niger Delta area most affected by violence, followed by Rivers, Edo, and Cross River states.²¹¹⁶ Similarly to 2019²¹¹⁷, some of the main drivers of conflict and security issues include organised crimes, cult clashes, clashes between herders and farmer over land disputes.

Criminality was the most prevalent security issue in the Niger Delta in 2020, and particularly prevalent in Delta state with incidents occurring especially in Ughelli North, Oshimili North, Udu and Ethiope East LGAs.²¹¹⁸ Criminal violence in the state involved mainly robbery, kidnapping, armed clashes between gangs and public security and killings for ritualistic purposes.²¹¹⁹

Compared to 2019, there was an increase in incidents of communal violence in Delta state in 2020, with cases reported especially in Ughelli North, Isoko South, Isoko North, Oshimili North, Aniocha South and Ethiope East LGAs.²¹²⁰ Many incidents of criminal violence and communal conflicts had an impact on the safety and livelihoods of women, particularly in Delta and Edo states.²¹²¹

²¹⁰⁵ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#), pp. 6-7

²¹⁰⁶ Sahara Reporters, Five Killed, Houses Set Ablaze As Two Delta Communities Fight Over Land Boundary, 9 December 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁰⁷ Independent, How Ughelli Buried 10 Exhumed Corpses Killed By Fulani Herdsmen, 21 March 2020 [url](#)

²¹⁰⁸ Sahara Reporters, Two Delta Communities Trade Blames Over Killing Of 12 Persons, 23 November 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁰⁹ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) p. 6

²¹¹⁰ Jamestown Foundation, Nigeria Expands Its 'War on Terrorism' to the Niger Delta, 16 September 2016, [url](#); CFR, Delegitimizing Armed Agitations in the Niger Delta, 4 December 2020, [url](#)

²¹¹¹ Vanguard, COVID-19: Basement Africa supports Delta State Police Command, 15 April 2020, [url](#)

²¹¹² Nigeria, Nigeria Police Force, Zone 5, n.d., [url](#)

²¹¹³ Nigeria, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Zone G, n.d., [url](#); Punch, NSCDC arrests 11 oil thieves, impounds trucks in Delta, 2 July 2020, [url](#)

²¹¹⁴ Vanguard, Houses burnt as military invades Delta community in search of kidnappers, 11 December 2020, [url](#); CFR, Delegitimizing Armed Agitations in the Niger Delta, 4 December 2020, [url](#)

²¹¹⁵ ICG, CrisisWatch, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, Nigeria, January 2020 – December 2020, [url](#)

²¹¹⁶ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) pp. 1-2

²¹¹⁷ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2019, 4 February 2020, [url](#), pp. 1-9

²¹¹⁸ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) p. 5

²¹¹⁹ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) p. 5

²¹²⁰ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) p. 7

²¹²¹ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) p. 3



Several incidents of violent protests were also reported in Delta state during 2020.²¹²² The nationwide tests against police brutality started in Delta state in October 2020, when a young man was shot dead by operatives of the police Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) in Ughelli town.²¹²³

2.35.3.1 Number of security incidents

In the year 2020, ACLED reported a total of 100 security incidents (24 battles, 52 cases of violence against civilians, 24 incidents of riots) in Delta state, leading to 120 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Ughelli North LGA. Of the 52 incidents of violence against civilians, 39 were attacks, 12 abductions and 1 sexual violence.²¹²⁴

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period is shown in Figure 78 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 51 protests were reported in Delta state during the reference period.²¹²⁵

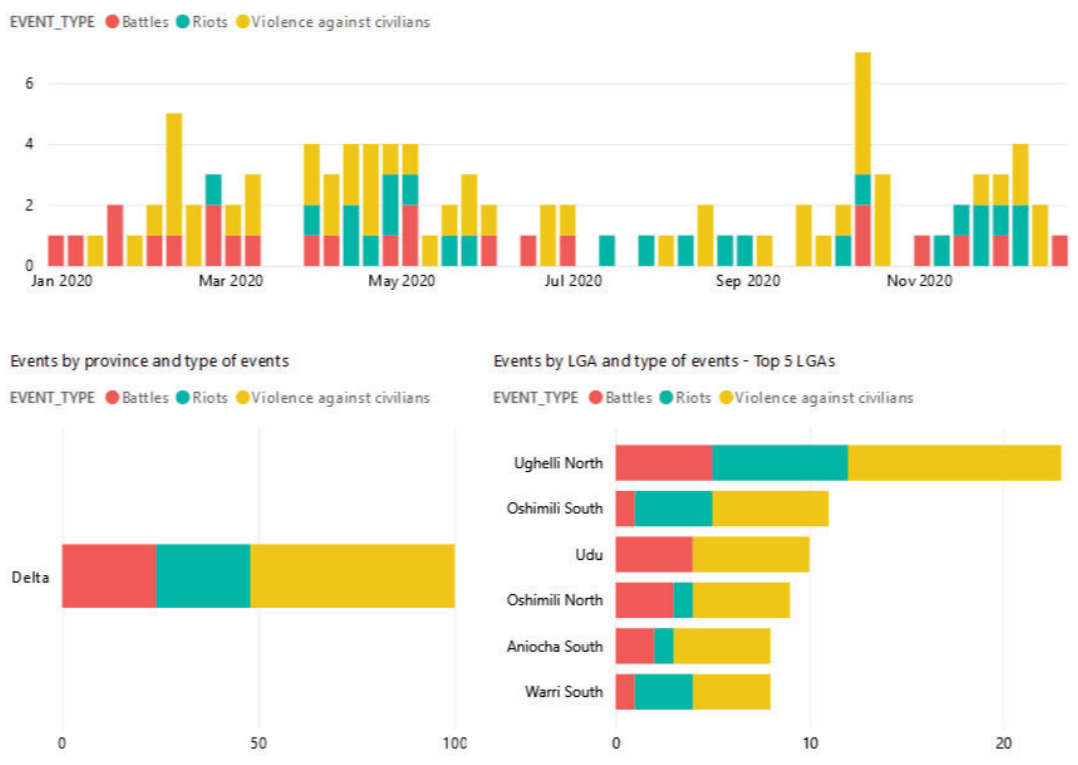


Figure 44 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Delta state in 2020, based on ACLED data²¹²⁶

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Delta state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

²¹²² PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) p. 10

²¹²³ BBC, End Sars: How Nigeria's anti-police brutality protests went global, 17 October 2020, [url](#); Washington Post, The roots of the #EndSARS protests in Nigeria, 25 October 2020, [url](#)

²¹²⁴ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

²¹²⁵ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

²¹²⁶ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

Delta state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	24	45
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	52	62
Riots	24	13
Total	100	120

Table 40 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020²¹²⁷

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 27 security incidents (8 battles, 13 cases of violence against civilians, 6 incidents of riots) in Delta state, resulting in 28 deaths.²¹²⁸

2.35.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

In January 2020, at least eight travellers were killed by armed robbers along the Bomadi-Ohoror road near Odorubu community in Patani council area.²¹²⁹

In February 2020, Fulani herdsmen reportedly killed ten people from the Uwherhu community of Ughelli North (LGA).²¹³⁰

One person was killed in April 2020 in Warri (LGA) during clashes between youth and soldiers enforcing COVID lockdown measures.²¹³¹

Around 17 June 2020, seven police officers were killed by SARS officers in Ughelli North, allegedly for being involved in armed robbery.²¹³²

In August 2020, a boy was shot dead by a policeman of the Ozoro Police division in Isoko North (LGA), during a protest over alleged police brutality in Ozoro town.²¹³³

Over 15 persons were reportedly killed between October and December 2020 in Delta state, in a series of armed clashes involving Aiye, Arrow Baga, Black Axe, Eiye and Mafia cult gangs.²¹³⁴ In October, three persons were killed in two separate violent clashes between rival cult gangs in Abraka, Ethiopie East LGA. The groups involved in the clashes are reportedly the Aiye, also known as Black Axe and Eiye confraternities.²¹³⁵

In October 2020, between nine²¹³⁶ and twelve people from the Oleh community in Isoko South and Isoko North LGAs were killed by an Ozoro communal militia over a lingering boundary dispute.²¹³⁷

On 3 October 2020, a young man was shot dead by SARS operatives in Ughelli town, in Ughelli North. The incident sparked violent protests against police brutality across Nigeria.²¹³⁸

²¹²⁷ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

²¹²⁸ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

²¹²⁹ Independent, Robbers Block Delta Road, Kill Eight Travellers, 19 January 2020, [url](#)

²¹³⁰ Independent, How Ughelli Buried 10 Exhumed Corpses Killed By Fulani Herdsmen, 21 March 2020 [url](#)

²¹³¹ Premium Times, One killed as soldiers clash with residents while enforcing coronavirus lockdown, 20 April 2020, [url](#)

²¹³² PM News, SARS operatives kill seven police officers in robbery attack, 18 June 2020, [url](#)

²¹³³ Nation (The), Police shoot youth in Delta protest, 3 August 2020, [url](#)

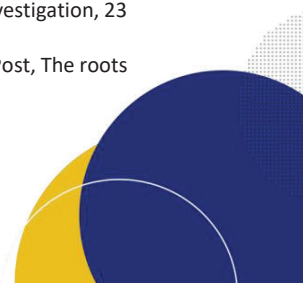
²¹³⁴ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) p. 6

²¹³⁵ Vanguard, 3 dead as cult clash rocks DELSU community, 7 October 2020, [url](#)

²¹³⁶ Premium Times, Nine killed in renewed Delta communal clash, 16 October 2020, [url](#)

²¹³⁷ Sahara Reporters, Two Delta Communities Trade Blames Over Killing Of 12 Persons, Demand Thorough Investigation, 23 November 2020, [url](#)

²¹³⁸ BBC, End Sars: How Nigeria's anti-police brutality protests went global, 17 October 2020, [url](#); Washington Post, The roots of the #EndSARS protests in Nigeria, 25 October 2020, [url](#)



In November 2020, seven people were reportedly killed and several others injured during clashes between Aiye and Bangas rival cult gangs in Ughelli town, Ughelli North (LGA).²¹³⁹

In December 2020, at least five people from the Emede community in the Isoko South LGA were killed and more than ten houses were set ablaze by armed youths of Igvide community following a land dispute between the two communities.²¹⁴⁰

On 8 December 2020, a mob killed three suspected armed robbers by setting them ablaze in Warri South.²¹⁴¹

2.35.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

During 2020, the Nigerian government continued to deploy armed forces to tackle internal security issues in the Niger Delta, due to insufficient capacity and staffing of domestic law enforcement agencies.²¹⁴² Operation Crocodile Smile IV was functional in 2020 in Delta state.²¹⁴³

Corruption within the authorities is considered as a main challenge for the peacebuilding process in the Niger Delta.²¹⁴⁴ Nigerian security agencies, especially the JTF deployed in the Niger Delta, have reportedly been complicit in and benefitted from oil theft.²¹⁴⁵

2.35.3.4 Road security

Armed robberies and killings have been reported on some roads in Delta state during 2020, including along the East-West Road in Ughelli North²¹⁴⁶ and along the Ugbolu-Illah road, in Oshimili North.²¹⁴⁷

No further information on road security specifically for Delta state could be found in the limited time frame of this report.

2.35.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war.

2.35.3.6 Displacement and return

IDPs

No information was found on the number of conflict-related IDPs in Delta state.

Returnees

No information was found on returnees to Delta state.

²¹³⁹ Punch, Seven killed in Delta community cult clashes, 17 November 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁴⁰ Sahara Reporters, Five Killed, Houses Set Ablaze As Two Delta Communities Fight Over Land Boundary, 9 December 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁴¹ Sahara Reporters, Mob Kills Three Armed Robbery Suspects By Fire In Warri, 9 December 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁴² USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Nigeria, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

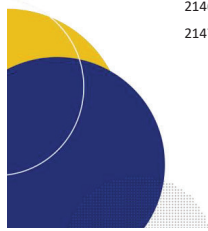
²¹⁴³ Guardian (The) Nigeria, Delta unveils Operation Crocodile Smile, tasks military on professionalism, 18 November 2020, [url](#); SB Morgen, Small arms, mass atrocities and migration in Nigeria, April 2020, [url](#) p. 15

²¹⁴⁴ Okoi O., How corruption undermines peacebuilding in Nigeria's oil region, The Conversation, 8 September 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁴⁵ TI-DS, Military involvement in Oil theft in the Niger Delta, June 2019, [url](#), pp. 1-5; Igwe U., A political economy perspective on oil and conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta, LSE Blog, 16 September 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁴⁶ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) p. 4

²¹⁴⁷ Punch, Suspected Fulani herdsmen kill three policemen in Delta, 6 February 2020, [url](#)



2.36 Edo state

2.36.1 General description of the state

Edo state shares internal borders with Ondo, Kogi, Anambra and Delta states.²¹⁴⁸ The state's capital is Benin City.²¹⁴⁹

Edo state is composed of the following 18 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Akoko-Edo, Egor, Esan Central, Esan North-East, Esan South-East, Esan West, Etsako Central, Etsako East, Etsako West, Igueben, Ikpoba-Okha, Oredo, Orhionmwon, Ovia North-East, Ovia South-West, Owan East, Owan West and Uhunmwonde.²¹⁵⁰

In the 2006 census, the population of Edo state was 3 233 366. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 4 235 595 in 2016.²¹⁵¹

There are different ethnic groups at Edo state, including the Binis, Okpe, Esan, Afemai, Ora, Akoko-Edo, Igbanke, Emai and Ijaw.²¹⁵²

Edo state produces crude oil, rubber, cocoa, cashew nuts and has reserves of precious stones such as quartz, amethyst, mica, dolomite, granite stone and limestone.²¹⁵³

2.36.2 Conflict background and armed actors in Edo state

2.36.2.1 Background of the conflict

Edo is one of the nine states comprising the Niger Delta.²¹⁵⁴ For information on some of the security issues traditionally affecting the Niger Delta, see [Section 1.4.1.1](#).

Cultism is one of the major sources of violence in the Niger Delta.²¹⁵⁵ The so-called Black Axe, one of the most feared cult groups currently operating in the Niger Delta²¹⁵⁶, was founded in the 1970s at the University of Benin in Edo state.²¹⁵⁷

The conflict between herdsmen and farmers has also spread to Edo state²¹⁵⁸, with the first incident of such nature reported in 2015. Since then, clashes between farmers and Fulani herdsmen in the state have resulted in loss of lives and destruction of properties.²¹⁵⁹

²¹⁴⁸ UN, Nigeria, August 2014, [url](#)

²¹⁴⁹ Nigeria, Edo State, n.d., [url](#)

²¹⁵⁰ City Population, Edo, State in Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

²¹⁵¹ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 2

²¹⁵² Nigeria, Edo State, n.d., [url](#)

²¹⁵³ Nigeria, Edo State, n.d., [url](#)

²¹⁵⁴ Ajodo-Adebanjoko A., Towards ending conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta region: A collective non-violent approach, 2017, [url](#), p. 11

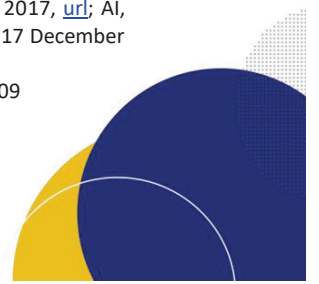
²¹⁵⁵ Nwaogu N.R. et al., Evaluation of Youth Vulnerability to Community Cultism in Selected States in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, 2019, [url](#), pp. 1-3

²¹⁵⁶ BBC, Nigeria's campus cults: Buccaneers, Black Axe and other feared groups, 2 June 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁵⁷ IFRA-Nigeria-Nigeria, Contemporary Nigerian cultist groups demystifying the invisibilities, 2 March 2019, [url](#) pp. 8-11

²¹⁵⁸ International Crisis Group, Herders against Farmers: Nigeria's Expanding Deadly Conflict, 19 September 2017, [url](#); AI, Nigeria: Government failures fuel escalating conflict between farmers and herdsmen as death toll nears 4,000, 17 December 2018, [url](#)

²¹⁵⁹ Omokhoa I.E., et al., Land resource governance and farmers-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria, May 2018, [url](#) p. 109



2.36.2.2 Actors

Some of the main actors in Edo state's conflicts in 2020 included herders and farmers clashing over land ownership and boundary dispute; rival cult groups driven by supremacy battles, general criminal gangs²¹⁶⁰, security forces involved in counter-insurgency operations.²¹⁶¹

The cult gangs mostly involved in armed clashes in Edo state during 2020 include Aye, Eiye²¹⁶², Black Axe and Vikings.²¹⁶³

The communities involved in violent incidents in Edo state include the Odekpe, the Allah-Onugwa²¹⁶⁴, the Itsekiri and Bini.²¹⁶⁵ For other non-state actors in the Niger Delta see [Section 1.3.2.4](#).

State actors in Edo state include the Edo State Police Command²¹⁶⁶, which is part of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF)²¹⁶⁷, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC)²¹⁶⁸, the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS)²¹⁶⁹, the Joint Task Force (JTF).²¹⁷⁰

2.36.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

In 2020, Edo was the third most affected state by violence within the Niger Delta, after Delta and Rivers states. Oredo was the most violent local government area of the Niger Delta.²¹⁷¹

Some of the main drivers of conflict and security issues include criminal violence and gang/cult supremacy clashes, violent clashes between herders and farmers over land disputes, vigilantism and mob justice, violent protests and counter-insurgency operations in relation to the #EndSars protests.²¹⁷² Many incidents of criminal violence and communal conflicts had an impact on the safety and livelihoods of women, particularly in Edo and Delta states.²¹⁷³

Criminality was the most prevalent security issue in the Niger Delta in 2020, including in Edo state, with incidents occurring especially in Oredo, Uhumwonde and Akoko-Edo LGAs. Criminal violence in Edo state involved mainly armed banditry, kidnapping, mob lynching, clashes between criminals and security operatives.²¹⁷⁴

Cult- and gang-related violence was a major security issue in Edo state in 2020, especially in Benin City, in Oredo LGA.²¹⁷⁵

²¹⁶⁰ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) pp. 6-7

²¹⁶¹ Nigerian Tribune, EndSARS: Four Feared Killed As Auchu Protesters Attack Soldier, 19 October 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁶² PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) p. 6; Vanguard, INSECURITY: 10 feared dead in Edo cult killings, 21 February 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁶³ Nation (The), Cultists display severed head of victim in Edo, 29 February 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁶⁴ Daily Trust, 2 Killed, Policeman Missing In Anambra Communal Clash, 1 September 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁶⁵ Vanguard, Two die, Edo community deserted as Itsekiri/Benins clash over development levy, 6 March 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁶⁶ Cable (The), Police area commander shot in Edo, 13 November 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁶⁷ Nigeria, Nigeria Police Force, Zone 5, n.d., [url](#)

²¹⁶⁸ Nigeria, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Zone G, n.d., [url](#); Guardian (The), NSCDC deploys 13,311 officers, 60 dogs, 18 September 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁶⁹ Guardian (The), Uproar as youths protest against SARS in Edo State, 7 October 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁷⁰ Nigerian Tribune, Ikpoba-Okha Vigilante, JTF Foil Robbery Operation, Arrest Robbery Gang 3 January 2021, [url](#)

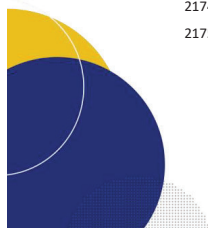
²¹⁷¹ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) pp. 1-2

²¹⁷² PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) pp. 1-10; International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, Nigeria, January 2020 – December 2020, [url](#); Nigeria Watch, The database, 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁷³ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) p. 3

²¹⁷⁴ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) pp. 5-10

²¹⁷⁵ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) p. 6



2.36.3.1 Number of security incidents

In the year 2020, ACLED reported a total of 53 security incidents (9 battles, 1 explosion, 27 cases of violence against civilians, 16 incidents of riots) in Edo state, resulting in 51 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Oredo LGA. Of the 27 incidents of violence against civilians, 25 were attacks and 2 abductions.²¹⁷⁶

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period is shown in Figure 80 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 44 protests were reported during the reference period.²¹⁷⁷



Figure 45 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Edo state in 2020, based on ACLED data²¹⁷⁸

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Edo state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Edo state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	9	23
Explosions/remote violence	1	0
Violence against civilians	27	17
Riots	16	11
Total	53	51

Table 41 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020²¹⁷⁹

²¹⁷⁶ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

²¹⁷⁷ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

²¹⁷⁸ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

²¹⁷⁹ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 13 security incidents (3 battles, 8 cases of violence against civilians, 2 incidents of riots) in Edo state, resulting in 12 deaths.²¹⁸⁰

2.36.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 13 February 2020, four people died during clashes between security agents and tipper drivers protesting over the death of a colleague, allegedly shot by a policeman. The incident happened on the Benin – Auchi expressway in Benin-City (Oredo LGA), where protestors blocked the road, also destroying some vehicles trying to drive through the barricades.²¹⁸¹

Between 17 and 20 February 2020, at least 15 people were killed in separate incidents in Benin City, in Oredo (LGA), during clashes between the rival gangs of Aye and Eiye.²¹⁸² The clashes spread fear among residents, forcing people to hide in order to avoid stray bullets being shot erratically by the gangs.²¹⁸³

On 23 or 24 February 2020, four people, allegedly involved in the kidnapping and killing of a girl ‘for ritual purpose’, were burnt to death by a youth mob in Otuo (Owan East LGA).²¹⁸⁴

On 7 March 2020, two people were killed during fighting among armed Itsekiri and Bini youth militias in Ologbo (Ikpoba-Okha LGA), clashing over the collection of a development fee by the youth.²¹⁸⁵

On 15 April 2020, suspected Fulani herdsmen killed two farmers in Odighi, Ovia North-East LGA.²¹⁸⁶

Between August and September 2020, a communal militia from Odekpe community attacked displaced locals of Allah-Onugwa communities in Anambra West LGA of Anambra state. The attack took place in a refugee camp in Igbamaka village in Ilushi community (Esan South-East LGA in Edo state) because of a reprisal for the earlier killing of Odekpe locals. During the incidents, two people were killed and a policeman was abducted.²¹⁸⁷

Throughout October 2020, #EndSARS protestors took to the streets in Edo state, including in Benin City and other major towns. During the protests, five police stations were burned²¹⁸⁸, and at least four people were killed in Auchi town (Etsako West, Edo), when soldiers used force to disperse the demonstrators.²¹⁸⁹ Taking advantage of the protests, on 19 October, armed men broke into three Nigerian Correctional Service facilities, including the Nigerian Correctional Service Operatives at Oko Prison and Benin Prison in Benin (Oredo LGA) and set inmates free.²¹⁹⁰ Several prison officers were said to have suffered gunshot wounds, however the exact figure on casualties was unknown.²¹⁹¹

In an escalation of violence between the Aye and Eiye gangs, 18 people were reportedly killed during a week of clashes in November 2020 in Benin city and other neighbouring towns, forcing residents to flee for their lives. Soldiers were deployed following these incidents in some areas of Upper Sakponba, Idogbo, Three House Junction and other adjacent locations.²¹⁹²

²¹⁸⁰ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

²¹⁸¹ Vanguard, Tension in Edo as four feared killed in riot of tipper driver’s death, 13 February 2020, [url](#); Daily Post, Protesters block Benin/Abuja expressway, as policeman shoots tipper driver, 13 February 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁸² Nation (The), 15 killed in Edo cult war, 20 February 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁸³ Vanguard, Insecurity: 10 feared dead in Edo cult killings, 21 February 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁸⁴ Vanguard, 4 burnt to death for kidnapping SS III student for rituals in Edo, 24 February 2020, [url](#); Pulse, Mob burns 4 ritualists alive in front of Edo police station, 25 February 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁸⁵ Vanguard, Two die, Edo community deserted as Itsekiri/Benins clash over development levy, 6 March 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁸⁶ Sun, Herdsmen, cultists murder 6 in Edo, 16 April 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁸⁷ Daily Trust, 2 Killed, Policeman Missing In Anambra Communal Clash, 1 September 2020, [url](#)

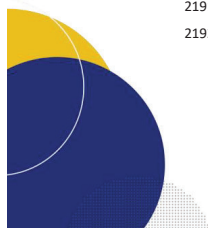
²¹⁸⁸ Premium Times, Protests: Normalcy gradually returns to Edo, 23 October 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁸⁹ Nigerian Tribune, EndSARS: Four Feared Killed As Auchi Protesters Attack Soldier, 19 October 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁹⁰ Premium Times, Week of Jailbreaks: Over 2,000 inmates escape from three Nigerian prisons, 25 October 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁹¹ Premium Times, How Benin jailbreaks happened – Prison officials, 23 October 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁹² Vanguard, Tension in Benin as bloody clash between rival cult groups claim 18 lives, 15 November 2020, [url](#)



On 3 November 2020 in Benin City, a mob lynched and burned to death two people suspected of being involved in armed robbery.²¹⁹³

In December 2020, gunmen attacked motorists on the Benin-Ekpoma-Auchi Road (Uhunmwonde LGA), killing two people and abducting at least ten passengers.²¹⁹⁴

2.36.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

During 2020, the Nigerian government continued to deploy armed forces to tackle internal security issues, due to insufficient capacity and staffing of domestic law enforcement agencies.²¹⁹⁵ Operation Crocodile Smile IV was functional in 2020 in Edo state.²¹⁹⁶

In 2000, Edo state approved the Edo State Government of Nigeria Secret Cult (Prevention) Law 2000, prohibiting cultism within its jurisdiction.²¹⁹⁷

In 2017, Edo state established Multi-Door Courthouses (MDCs) as an alternative mediation and dispute resolution mechanism.²¹⁹⁸

Corruption within the authorities is considered as a main challenge for the peacebuilding process in the Niger Delta.²¹⁹⁹ Nigerian security agencies, especially the JTF deployed in the Niger Delta, have reportedly been complicit in and benefitted from oil theft.²²⁰⁰ There are reports of government officials also involved in cult groups in Edo state.²²⁰¹

2.36.3.4 Road security

Robbery and kidnapping have occurred over the years on some roads in the state, including Urhokosa, Obagie, Ogbemudia Farm, and Okpella which is the boundary between Edo and Kogi state. Kidnapping of passengers were reported in 2020 on the Benin-Ekpoma-Auchi road and the Urhokosa/Obagie.²²⁰²

No further information on road security specifically for Edo state was found.

2.36.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

No information was found on infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war.

2.36.3.6 Displacement and return

IDPs

No information was found on the number of conflict-related IDPs in Edo state.

Returnees

No information was found on returnees to Edo state.

²¹⁹³ Premium Times, Mob lynches two suspected armed robbers, 3 November 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁹⁴ Daily Trust, Two Feared Dead As Gunmen Kidnap 10 In Edo, 3 December 2020, [url](#); Vanguard, Anxiety in Edo as gunmen block road, abduct scores, 4 December 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁹⁵ USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Nigeria, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁹⁶ Guardian (The) Nigeria, Delta unveils Operation Crocodile Smile, tasks military on professionalism, 18 November 2020, [url](#); SB Morgen, Small arms, mass atrocities and migration in Nigeria, April 2020, [url](#) p. 15

²¹⁹⁷ IFRA-Nigeria-Nigeria, Contemporary Nigerian cultist groups demystifying the invisibilities, 2 March 2019, [url](#) p. 11

²¹⁹⁸ Vanguard, Gov. Obaseki inaugurates Multi-Door Courthouse in Benin, 20 January 2017, [url](#); Nigeria, Edo State Judiciary, Edo State Multi-Doors Court House (ESMDC). The ADR Centre, 2018 [url](#)

²¹⁹⁹ Okoi O., How corruption undermines peacebuilding in Nigeria's oil region, The Conversation, 8 September 2020, [url](#)

²²⁰⁰ TI-DS, Military involvement in Oil theft in the Niger Delta, June 2019, [url](#), pp. 1-5; Igwe U., A political economy perspective on oil and conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta, LSE Blog, 16 September 2020, [url](#)

²²⁰¹ Vanguard, Four Edo govt officials arrested over cult activities, 14 May 2015, [url](#)

²²⁰² EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

²²⁰² Vanguard, Anxiety in Edo as gunmen block road, abduct scores, 4 December 2020, [url](#)



2.37 Rivers state

2.37.1 General description of the state

Rivers state shares internal borders with Imo, Abia and Anambra states in the north, Akwa Ibom state in the east and Bayelsa and Delta states in the west. The state's capital is Port-Harcourt.²²⁰³

Rivers state is composed of the following 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs): Abua–Odual, Ahoada East, Ahoada West, Akuku-Toru, Andoni, Asari-Toru, Bonny, Degema, Eleme, Emohua, Etche, Gokana, Ikwerre, Khana, Obio-Akpor, Ogba–Egbema–Ndoni, Ogu–Bolo, Okrika, Omuma, Opobo–Nkoro, Oyigbo, Port Harcourt and Tai.²²⁰⁴

In the 2006 census, the population of Rivers state was 5 198 716. Based on this census, the population was estimated at 7 303 924 in 2016.²²⁰⁵

There are numerous ethnic groups in Rivers state, including the Ikwerre, Ibani, Opobo, Eleme, Okrika, and Kalabari, Etche, Ogba, Ogoni and Engenni.²²⁰⁶

The state produces oil and gas. The main occupations are agriculture and fishing.²²⁰⁷

2.37.2 Conflict background and armed actors in Rivers state

2.37.2.1 Background of the conflict

Rivers is one of the nine states comprising the Niger Delta.²²⁰⁸ Being the hub of Nigeria's oil and gas industry, Rivers' capital city, Port Harcourt, was part of the independent Republic of Biafra²²⁰⁹ following the 1966 coup led by the Igbo ethnic group. A civil war erupted between 1967 and 1970 causing the death of about a million people. Port Harcourt was recaptured by the Nigerian army in 1968.²²¹⁰ The pro-separatist group Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) was proscribed as a terrorist organisation by Nigeria's federal government in 2017²²¹¹ and by Rivers state governor in 2020²²¹², following violent incidents in the state attributed to the group.²²¹³ See also [Section 1.4.1.1](#).

Communal violence in Rivers state has historically been triggered by battle over control of oil and gas facilities as well as by disputed borders. Interethnic conflict in the state involved communities such as the Ijaw Okrikan and the Eleme (who are related to the Ogoni).²²¹⁴ Rivers is one of the states in Nigeria where incidents of clashes between herders and farmers are reported to occur with more regularity, intensity and causing more bloodshed.²²¹⁵

Cultism is one of the major sources of violence the Niger Delta, including in Rivers state.²²¹⁶ Cult groups have been active in Rivers state since their emergence between the 1980s and 1990s, with the main

²²⁰³ Nigeria, Rivers State, n.d., [url](#)

²²⁰⁴ Nigeria, Rivers State, n.d., [url](#)

²²⁰⁵ Nigeria, National Bureau of Statistics, National Population Estimates, n.d., [url](#), p. 3

²²⁰⁶ Nigeria, Rivers State, n.d., [url](#)

²²⁰⁷ Nigeria, Rivers State, n.d., [url](#)

²²⁰⁸ Ajodo-Adebanjoko A., Towards ending conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta region: A collective non-violent approach, 2017, [url](#), p. 11

²²⁰⁹ AFP, Discontent in 'Biafraland', 18 May 2016, [url](#)

²²¹⁰ BBC, Remembering Nigeria's Biafra war that many prefer to forget, 15 January 2020, [url](#)

²²¹¹ BBC, Oyigbo clashes: 'Nigerian security agents shot dead my fiancée', 3 November 2020, [url](#)

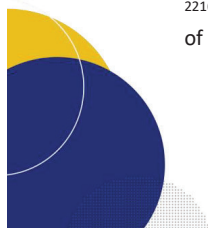
²²¹² Premium Times, Wike signs Executive Order proscribing IPOB in Rivers, 29 October 2020, [url](#)

²²¹³ Premium Times, Police accuse IPOB members of killing three officers in Rivers, 26 October 2020, [url](#)

²²¹⁴ CFR, Understanding the Armed Groups of the Niger Delta, September 2009, [url](#) pp. 5-6

²²¹⁵ Onah, E. I. et al., Applying restorative justice in resolving the farmers-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria, January 2020, [url](#)

²²¹⁶ Nwaogu N.R., et al., Evaluation of Youth Vulnerability to Community Cultism in Selected States in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, 2019, [url](#), pp. 5-6



rival gangs of Vikings and KKK causing violence especially on the streets of Port Harcourt.²²¹⁷ Since then, various cult groups have sprung up in different parts of the state; starting from 1999, violence has seen a ‘gradual but steady increase’ in the state.²²¹⁸ According to a 2019 research which studied 18 of the 23 LGAs in Rivers state, the areas most affected by cult related violence between 2009 and 2018 were Emouha, Andoni, Ahoada East, Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni, Ikwerre, and Port Harcourt City LGAs.²²¹⁹

2.37.2.2 Actors

The main actors in Rivers state in 2020 included rival cult gangs driven by supremacy battles, general criminal gangs and vigilante groups²²²⁰, and IPOB activists.²²²¹

More than 100 cult groups are said to operate in Rivers state, as of 2020, with the most prominent ones being the Deewell, Deebam, Icelanders, Greenlanders, Gberesaako Boys, and the Outlaws;²²²² the Ogbakiri were also involved in armed clashes in the state during 2020.²²²³ For other non-state actors in the Niger Delta see [Section 1.3.2](#).

State actors in Rivers state include the Rivers State Police Command²²²⁴, which is part of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF)²²²⁵, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC)²²²⁶, the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS).²²²⁷

2.37.3 Recent security trends and impact on the population

AI reported on an increase of cult related violence in Rivers state during 2019, noting that loss of lives and rising impunity were making life precarious for some communities in the state. According to AI, at least 60 people were killed during violent gang attacks in Rivers in 2019, especially in Khana and Gokana LGAs.²²²⁸ In 2019, gang-related violence in Port Harcourt was also the cause of various degrees of internal displacement within the state, unemployment rise and the movement of businesses outside the state.²²²⁹

In 2020, Rivers was the second state within the Niger Delta most affected by violence (after Delta state), with Port Harcourt among the most violent LGAs of the Niger Delta.²²³⁰ Cult and gang related incidents in the state decreased in 2020, compared to the previous year, however it continued to be one of the main drivers of conflict in Rivers, along with criminality, communal violence and violent protests involving, *inter alia*, #EndSARS supporters and IPOB members.²²³¹

²²¹⁷ CFR, Understanding the Armed Groups of the Niger Delta, September 2009, [url](#) p. 9

²²¹⁸ SB Morgen, Rivers of blood: Gang violence in Nigeria’s garden state, June 2020, [url](#), p. 3

²²¹⁹ Nwaogu N.R., et al., Evaluation of Youth Vulnerability to Community Cultism in Selected States in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, 2019, [url](#)

²²²⁰ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) p. 5

²²²¹ Premium Times, Police accuse IPOB members of killing three officers in Rivers, 26 October 2020, [url](#)

²²²² SB Morgen, Rivers of blood: Gang violence in Nigeria’s garden state, June 2020, [url](#), p. 3

²²²³ Vanguard, Eight killed as cultists clash in Rivers community, 16 February 2020, [url](#)

²²²⁴ Premium Times, Police begin community policing in Rivers – Commissioner, 21 May 2020, [url](#)

²²²⁵ Nigeria, Nigeria Police Force, Zone 6, n.d., [url](#)

²²²⁶ Nigeria, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Zone E, n.d., [url](#); Guardian (The), Civil Defence parades 10 for illegal oil deals in Rivers, 28 July 2020, [url](#)

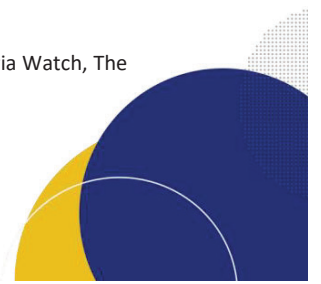
²²²⁷ Al Jazeera, Nigeria’s SARS: A brief history of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, 22 October 2020, [url](#)

²²²⁸ AI, Nigeria: Rise in Cult Related killings in Rivers state, 9 January 2020, [url](#)

²²²⁹ SB Morgen, Rivers of blood: Gang violence in Nigeria’s garden state, June 2020, [url](#), p. 16

²²³⁰ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) pp. 1-2

²²³¹ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) pp. 2-10; Nigeria Watch, The database, 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020, [url](#)



In a 2019 article, citing 2017 data, Rivers state was ranked second of Nigerian states with highest rates of kidnapping (after Zamfara, and before Lagos and Jigawa).²²³² In 2020, kidnappings, piracy, robbery, clashes between gang members and security operatives were reported as the main crime-related incidents, occurring mostly in Port Harcourt, Obio/Akpor, Khana and Oyigbo LGAs.²²³³

There were reports of deteriorating security situation in former Biafra during 2020, with incidents of fighting between government forces and an Igbo separatist paramilitary group²²³⁴, including in Rivers state.²²³⁵ Clashes were reported in Oyigbo town, which is considered as an IPOB stronghold.²²³⁶

2.37.3.1 Number of security incidents

In the year 2020, ACLED reported a total of 37 security incidents (10 battles, 22 cases of violence against civilians, 5 incidents of riots) in Rivers state, leading to 41 deaths. The highest number of security incidents took place in Port-Harcourt LGA. Of the 22 incidents of violence against civilians, 17 were attacks, 4 abductions and 1 sexual violence.²²³⁷

The evolution of the types of security events through the reference period is shown in Figure 82 below. Other than the above-mentioned types of security incidents, 30 protests were reported in Rivers state during the reference period.²²³⁸



Figure 46 Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians according to LGAs in Rivers state in 2020, based on ACLED data²²³⁹

²²³² Chinwokwu, E.C. et al., Militancy and violence as a catalyst to kidnapping in Nigeria, 3 April 2019, [url, p.34](#)

²²³³ PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report: January – December 2020, 9 February 2021, [url](#) p. 5

²²³⁴ CFR, Security Deteriorating in Nigeria’s Former “Biafra”, [Blog], 8 February 2021, [url](#)

²²³⁵ Premium Times, Police accuse IPOB members of killing three officers in Rivers, 26 October 2020, [url](#)

²²³⁶ BBC, Oyigbo clashes: 'Nigerian security agents shot dead my fiancée', 3 November 2020, [url](#)

²²³⁷ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

²²³⁸ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

²²³⁹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

No source was found reporting on civilian casualties, including deaths and injuries of civilians. The identified sources report solely on the number of fatalities and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their reporting. The table below shows the number of violent incidents and fatalities, according to type of incident for Rivers state in 2020, as recorded by ACLED.

Rivers state	Nr of incidents	Nr of fatalities
Battles	10	26
Explosions/remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	22	14
Riots	5	1
Total	37	41

Table 42 Number of violent incidents and fatalities by type of incident in 2020²²⁴⁰

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 12 security incidents (4 battles, 8 cases of violence against civilians) in Rivers state, resulting in 14 deaths.²²⁴¹

2.37.3.2 Illustrative security incidents

On 6 January 2020, in Rumuodogo community (Emohua LGA), gunmen killed three members of a local vigilante group called Onelga Security Planning and Advisory Committee (OSPAC).²²⁴²

Around 16 February 2020, between four²²⁴³ and eight people were killed during clashes between two groups of the Ogbakiri clan in Okporowo (Emohua LGA).²²⁴⁴

In mid-June 2020, four militiamen were killed and weapons seized by the Nigerian Armed Forces during an operation to clear camps of suspected pirates at Ibokiri and New Jerusalem in Degema LGA.²²⁴⁵

Around 23 October 2020, IPOB members clashed with Nigerian military troops in Oyigbo LGA, resulting in five soldiers and four IPOB members killed.²²⁴⁶

Between 22 October and 3 November 2020, Nigerian military army launched an attack on Oyigbo town (Oyigbo LGA), killing at least 19 residents and injuring others.²²⁴⁷ According to government sources, military troops were deployed to arrest IPOB members and recover stolen weapons and ammunition. On the other hand, community sources referred that this was a reprisal attack over the community for allegedly harbouring IPOB members.²²⁴⁸

2.37.3.3 State's ability to secure law and order

Operation Crocodile Smile IV was functional in 2020 in Rivers state.²²⁴⁹ A 2020 report by Amnesty International found that the response of the Rivers state government to protect communities from attacks of gangs operating across the state was inadequate. The report stated: 'The killers are literally getting away with murder, while no one is being arrested or punished for these crimes. The authorities

²²⁴⁰ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

²²⁴¹ EASO analysis PowerBI based on ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2021 to 30-04-2021, [url](#)

²²⁴² Al, Nigeria: Rise in Cult Related killings in Rivers state, 9 January 2020, [url](#)

²²⁴³ Sun, Cult war: Security takes over Rivers community after clashes, 4 dead, 16 February 2020, [url](#)

²²⁴⁴ Vanguard, Eight killed as cultists clash in Rivers community, 16 February 2020, [url](#)

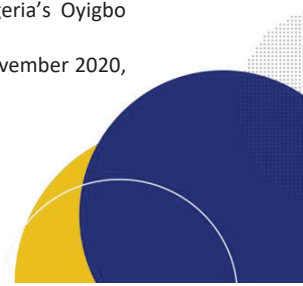
²²⁴⁵ National daily, Troops kill 45 Terrorists, Bandit in one week – DHQ, 20 June 2020, [url](#)

²²⁴⁶ Punch, Nine feared dead as soldiers, IPOB members clash in Rivers, 25 October 2020, [url](#)

²²⁴⁷ ACLED dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

²²⁴⁸ Premium Times, Investigation: Inside the horrific bloodshed and massive extrajudicial killings in Nigeria's Oyigbo community, 23 November 2020, [url](#)

²²⁴⁹ Guardian (The) Nigeria, Delta unveils Operation Crocodile Smile, tasks military on professionalism, 18 November 2020, [url](#); SB Morgen, Small arms, mass atrocities and migration in Nigeria, April 2020, [url](#) p. 15



have failed to bring those responsible for these horrific crimes to justice and have allowed a climate of impunity to fuel further violence.²²⁵⁰

Politicians in Rivers state are said to have requested the support of cult groups during elections²²⁵¹, and to seek power, by funding and arming some of these groups to unleash violence against opponents. In 2016, the Rivers state governor launched an amnesty for gang members in the state willing to surrender their weapons. The amnesty was stopped in June 2019 since many who were granted amnesty had returned to criminal activities.²²⁵²

In response to clashes between IPOB activists and police officers in Oyigbo town in October 2020, Rivers state Governor imposed a 24-hour curfew on 23 October. During these clashes, local residents accused Nigerian security forces of carrying out extrajudicial killings in Oyigbo.²²⁵³ Amnesty International, cited by BBC, also stated that they received reports about soldiers allegedly invading homes and reports by residents 'seeing dead bodies on the street, allegedly shot by soldiers'.²²⁵⁴

2.37.3.4 Road security

Travellers in Rivers state are reported to face rising insecurity, as robbery, kidnapping and rape have been reported on some roads of the state. Some of the highways affected by insecurity in Rivers state include the Port Harcourt-Owerri road, the Ahoada Ndele-Rumuji Emohua axis of the East-West road, the Mbiama, Nkpolu, and the Ogoni and Akwa Ibom areas of the East-West road.²²⁵⁵

No further information on road security specifically for Rivers state could be found in the limited time frame of this report.

2.37.3.5 Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

In November 2020, the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) stated that three hospitals in Oyigbo (LGA) were vandalised and destroyed by IPOB members.²²⁵⁶ No further information on major incidents causing damage to infrastructure in Rivers state was found.

No information was found on explosive remnants of war could.

2.37.3.6 Displacement and return

IDPs

No information was found on the number of conflict-related IDPs in Rivers state.

Returnees

No information was found on returnees to Rivers state.

²²⁵⁰ AI, Nigeria: Rise in Cult Related killings in Rivers state, 9 January 2020, [url](#)

²²⁵¹ AI, Nigeria: Rise in Cult Related killings in Rivers state, 9 January 2020, [url](#)

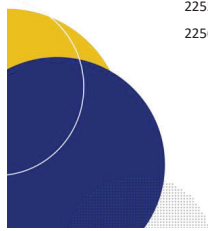
²²⁵² SB Morgen, Rivers of blood: Gang violence in Nigeria's garden state, June 2020, [url](#) pp. 5-14

²²⁵³ Premium Times, Investigation: Inside the horrific bloodshed and massive extrajudicial killings in Nigeria's Oyigbo community, 23 November 2020, [url](#)

²²⁵⁴ BBC, Oyigbo clashes: 'Nigerian security agents shot dead my fiancée', 3 November 2020, [url](#)

²²⁵⁵ Guardian (The), Saturday Magazine, Tackling insecurity on highways, 20 July 2019, [url](#)

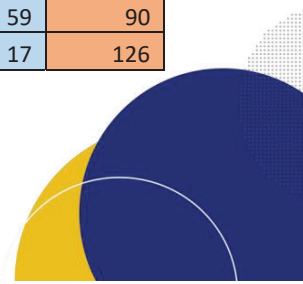
²²⁵⁶ Nation (The), IPOB destroyed three hospitals of our members in Rivers, says NMA, 6 November 2020, [url](#)



Annex 1 Incidents and fatalities by state

In this Annex, the numbers of incidents and fatalities per state in 2020 are presented from both ACLED and Nigeria Watch. As explained in the [Introduction](#), a direct comparison between both databases is not possible because the methodologies used to collect data are different.

State/ Incidents	ACLED						Nigeria Watch	
	Incidents				Total incidents	Total fatalities	Total incidents	Total fatalities
	Battles	Explosions	Riots	Violence against civilians				
Abia	8		9	14	31	23	23	25
Adamawa	16		5	28	49	87	37	130
Akwa Ibom	2		7	5	14	9	18	30
Anambra	8		12	22	42	26	33	53
Bauchi	1		3	7	11	18	6	15
Bayelsa	11		4	10	25	38	31	55
Benue	42		6	52	100	190	76	219
Borno	326	148	1	107	582	3168	246	3005
Cross river	11		10	14	35	40	32	60
Delta	24		24	52	100	120	105	156
Ebonyi	10		5	14	29	37	30	53
Edo	9	1	16	27	53	51	58	106
Ekiti	2		6	8	16	12	24	19
Enugu	1		5	12	18	5	11	36
FCT	8		15	24	47	17	55	42
Gomb	1		1	1	3	3	2	1
Imo	6		16	16	38	18	28	27
Jigawa	7		6	2	15	15	19	14
Kaduna	58	15	10	144	227	869	162	1026
Kano	2		3	7	12	6	16	29
Katsina	72	21	8	109	210	995	135	879
Kebbi	1		1	4	6	10	3	3
Kogi	4		6	27	37	57	46	104
Kwara	2		2	4	8	3	15	14
Lagos	12		32	19	63	49	70	127
NASarawa	15		1	23	39	66	37	49
Niger	34	3	2	57	96	211	65	236
Ogun	3		16	10	29	25	38	62
Ondo	8		13	34	55	22	63	52
Osun	5		13	5	23	18	24	28
Oyo	8		19	20	47	41	57	80
Plateau	9		8	46	63	151	54	155
Rivers	10		5	22	37	41	59	90
Sokoto	6	1	1	16	24	222	17	126



Taraba	19		4	35	58	131	51	160
Yobe	21	5		7	33	211	15	169
Zamfara	62	26	2	39	129	694	78	845
Totals	844	220	297	1043	2404	7699	1839	8280

Table 43A Number of incidents coded battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians per state in 2020, based on ACLED data. ²²⁵⁷

Table 43B. Number of incidents and fatalities per state in 2020, based on Nigeria Watch. ²²⁵⁸

²²⁵⁷ ACLED Dataset, filtered on Nigeria, 1-1-2020 to 31-12-2020, [url](#)

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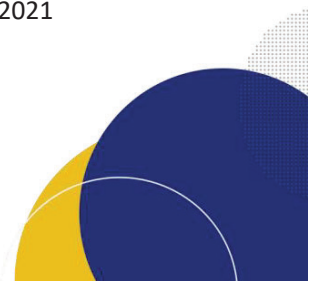
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ABC News, Gunmen kill 22 people in 2 attacks in Nigeria's middle belt, 4 September 2020, <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/gunmen-kill-22-people-attacks-nigerias-middle-belt-72818427>, accessed 12 March 2021

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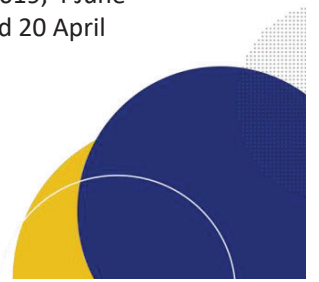
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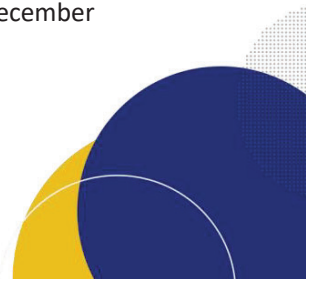
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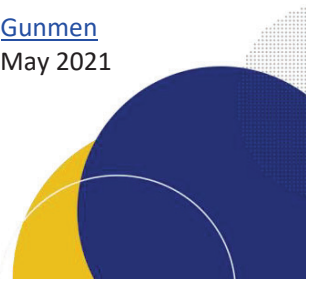
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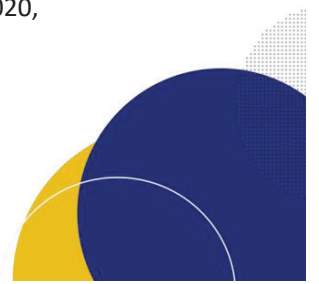
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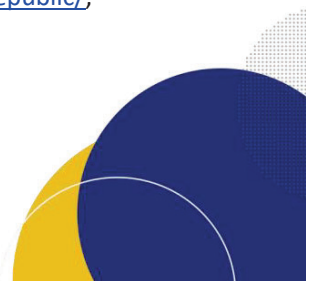
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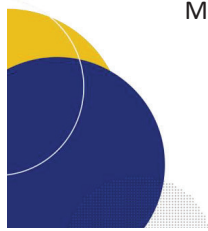
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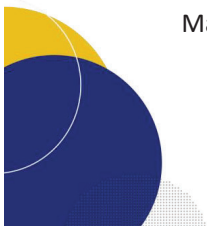
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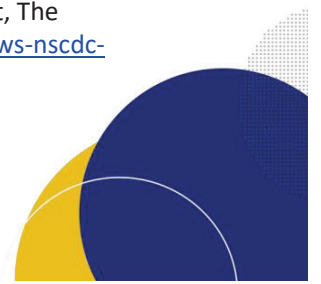
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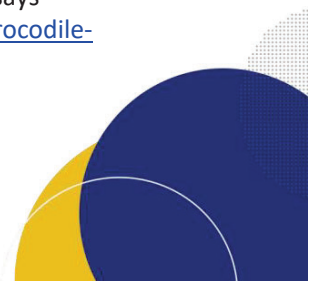
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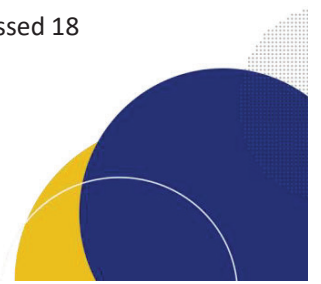
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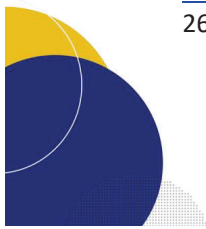
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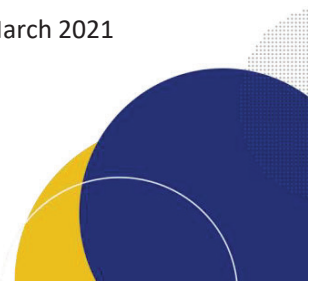
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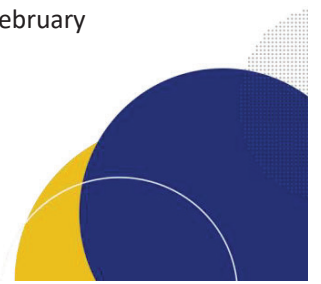
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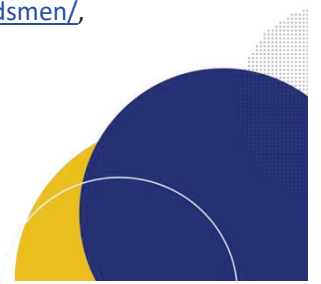
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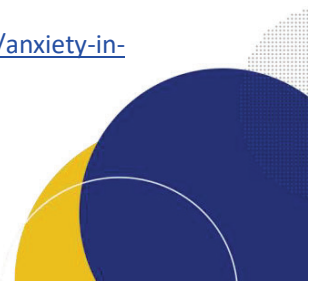
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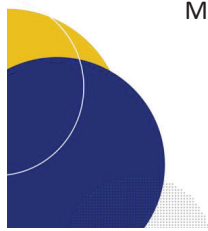
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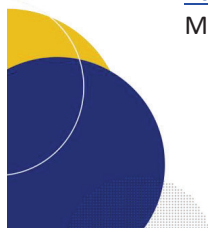
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Annex 3: Terms of Reference

Regional coverage: all 37 states

1. General description of the security situation in Nigeria

- 1.1 General introduction to Nigeria
- 1.2 Brief overview of recent conflicts
- 1.3 Armed actors
 - 1.3.1 State armed forces
 - 1.3.2 Non-state armed actors
- 1.4 Recent security trends and armed confrontations
- 1.5 State ability to secure law and order
- 1.6 Impact of the violence on the civilian population
 - 1.6.1 Civilian casualties
 - 1.6.2 Road security
 - 1.6.3 Infrastructural damage and explosive remnants of war
- 1.7 Displacement and return

2. Regional description: per state

- 2.1 State [...]
 - 2.1.1 Population nrs/%
Conflict background and armed actors
 - 2.1.2 Recent security trends and impact on the civilian population
 - Number of civilian casualties
 - Number of Incidents
 - Description of major/significant incidents
 - Infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war
 - Road security
 - 2.1.3 State's ability to secure law and order
 - 2.1.4 Displacement and return





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