

# 1.1. Overview: areas of control and/or activity

COMMON ANALYSIS  
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[[Security situation 2021](#), 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.4.1]

In Nigeria, a wide range of different groups and individuals can be considered as actors of persecution or serious harm. Moreover, the distinction or relationship between certain actors is not always clear and may evolve with the changing security context. The motivation of some actors of persecution or serious harm may also be complex and multifaceted and change over time.

The following subsections highlight the main actors of persecution and/or serious harm in Nigeria in a non-exhaustive manner. Their areas of control/activity are outlined below.

- The **Nigerian state forces** control the majority of the territory of Nigeria.
- In the period from January 2017 to December 2019, military operations by the Nigerian security forces against ISWAP and JAS, often viewed together as Boko Haram, reduced the territorial control of these armed groups. However, **Boko Haram** still exercises control in some areas in the North-East region. Boko Haram has further expanded its activities in the North-West and in Niger state in the North-Central region.
- **Herders and farmers** conflicts take place mainly in the Middle Belt zone, encompassing states in the North-West, North-East, and North-Central regions, and increasingly in southern Nigeria.
- **Separatist movements** concentrate their activities in the South-East and South-South regions.
- **Cults** are particularly relevant in the South-West and South-South regions.
- **Criminal gangs** are particularly active in the North-West and in North-Central regions, in particular Niger state, and the Niger Delta.