1.3.7. Other criminal groups

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: October 2021

[Main COI references: Security situation 2021, 1.3.2.2; Security situation 2018, 3.4]

Human rights violations may also be committed by other non-State actors, such as mobs and criminal groups, etc. Some of these acts are purely criminal activities, separate from the herder-farmer violence in the Middle Belt. However, the lines between the farmer-herder clashes and banditry are becoming increasingly blurred in the North-West. Banditry includes kidnapping, armed robbery, murder, rape, and cattle-rustling. It results in forced displacement, an increase in sexual and gender-based violence, a high number of out-of-school children in the region, and it negatively impacts livelihoods, food security, and wider economic costs. Lawlessness and the lack of policing have been described as the underlying factors for an increase in banditry or criminal violence. Whilst kidnap attempts used to target mainly the rich and important political figures and their relatives, more recent data suggests that less targeted kidnappings are taking place. They focus instead on whole villages or pupils from schools, who may not be able to pay the demanded ransom, which explains the rise in fatalities from kidnapping attempts. Bandits are usually armed with small guns.

In recent years, the violence has spread from Zamfara state to the North-Central region and other states of North-West region, including Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto as well as into Niger state.

Some state governors have launched amnesty programs for gang members to surrender their weapons. However, many who were granted amnesty reportedly returned to criminal activities [Security situation 2021, 2.4.2.1].

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