

# Sources on security incidents and fatalities

## Sources on security incidents and fatalities

Data of the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED)4 have been used for information on security events and fatalities.

ACLED is a project that collects, analyses and maps information on ‘dates, actors, locations, fatalities, and types of all reported political violence and protest events around the world’.5 The ACLED curated data files on Nigeria used in this report were downloaded by the EUAA on 10 September 2025.

ACLED explains the methodology applied for coding and monitoring the data in a codebook6 where it states that ‘The fundamental unit of observation in ACLED is the event’.7 ACLED records six event types: battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians, protests, riots and strategic developments.8 For the analysis of the security situation in Nigeria in this report, battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians and riots were included as incidents.

ACLED uses the following definitions of these event types:

- **battle:** ‘a violent interaction between two organized armed groups at a particular time and location. ‘Battles’ can occur between armed and organized state, non-state, and external groups, and in any combination therein. There is no fatality minimum necessary for inclusion. Civilians can be harmed in the course of larger ‘Battles’ events if they are caught in the crossfire(…)’;

- **explosions/remote violence:** ‘events as incidents in which one side uses weapon types that, by their nature, are at range and widely destructive. The weapons used in ‘Explosions/Remote violence’ events are explosive devices, including but not limited to: bombs, grenades, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), artillery fire or shelling, missile attacks, air or drone strikes, and other widely destructive heavy weapons or chemical weapons. Suicide attacks using explosives also fall under this category’;

- **violence against civilians:** ‘events where an organized armed group inflicts violence upon unarmed non-combatants. By definition, civilians are unarmed and cannot engage in political violence. (…) The perpetrators of such acts include state forces and their affiliates, rebels, militias, and external/other forces.’;

- **riots:** ‘violent events where demonstrators or mobs of three or more engage in violent or destructive acts, including but not limited to physical fights, rock throwing, property destruction, etc. They may engage individuals, property, businesses, other rioting groups, or armed actors.’[9]

Regarding **fatalities**, ACLED stated on 7 May 2024:

- ‘ACLED does not have a fatality threshold for an event’s inclusion in the dataset. This means that political violence and demonstration events in ACLED do not need to produce any fatalities in order to be included as valid events. No arbitrary number of deaths is used to define a conflict.’;

- ‘ACLED codes fatalities from the most reliable possible sources and/or partners in a given conflict environment. Further, researchers seek out information to triangulate – where and when possible – the fatality numbers from reports.’;

- ‘If source reports differ or a vague estimate is provided, ACLED uses the most conservative estimate available and seeks to note in the ‘Notes’ column when there has been a dispute. When better information becomes available, these totals will be revised and corrected – upward or downward. When sources report estimates such as “tens” or “dozens” or “hundreds,” ACLED codes 10 for “tens,” 12 for “dozens,” 100 for “hundreds,” and so on’;

- ‘When a report does not indicate whether or not any fatalities occurred or notes that it is unknown whether fatalities occurred at all, ACLED defaults to coding 0 as the fatality estimate. ACLED distinguishes between ‘fatalities’ and ‘casualties.’ Fatalities are deaths, whereas casualties are assumed to be injuries *or* fatalities. As such, if a report only indicates “casualties” (or similar ambiguous wording in other languages), the conservative approach that ACLED takes is to assume all casualties are injuries and hence code 0 fatalities.’

- ‘When a report indicates that an event did indeed lead to fatalities, yet there is no additional information on how many fatalities may have occurred, ACLED codes this unspecified number of fatalities as either 3 or 10 fatalities depending on the circumstances of the event. If the information in the event and the general understanding of the conflict context indicates the event has a high death toll (likely over 10), then 10 fatalities are coded.’

- ‘ACLED does not code reported fatalities according to which group suffered fatalities, nor according to the number of people killed by a specific group. For this reason, the data cannot generally be used to estimate the number of deaths caused or suffered by one actor or another in a conflict, as a single event may contain information on fatalities caused or suffered by both parties in a battle. The exception to this is events targeting civilians and protesters, who are by definition not engaging in violence themselves.’

- ‘Fatality numbers are not consistently reliable from any source. All reported fatalities, from all forms of media and partners, are estimates.’10

Qualitative information and data on security incidents and fatalities from the research project Nigeria Watch11 have also been used in the report, alongside ACLED data. The project 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.’12

Qualitative information and data on security incidents and fatalities reported by the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND) have also been used, when available, for the states comprising the Niger Delta region (Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, Rivers).13

It must be noted that ACLED, Nigeria Watch and PIND follow different methodologies and, as such, their data are not directly comparable.

- 4

  ACLED, Data & Tools, n.d., url

- 5

  ACLED, About ACLED, n.d., url

- 6

  ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project Codebook, updated 9 November 2023, url

- 7

  ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project Codebook, updated 9 November 2023, url, p. 9

- 8

  ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project Codebook, updated 9 November 2023, url, p. 13

- 9

ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project Codebook, updated 9 November 2023, url, pp. 11-18

- 10

  ACLED, Fatalities, last update 7 May 2024, url

- 11

  Nigeria Watch, Nigeria Watch, n.d., url

- 12

  Nigeria Watch, About us, Who we are?, n.d., url; IFRA-Nigeria, Nigeria Watch Presentation, n.d., url

- 13

  PIND is an Abuja-based non-profit organisation working on economic and conflict-related issues in the Niger Delta. For more information on the conflict tracker project by PIND see Partners for Peace, n.d., url; PIND, Weekly Conflict Reports, n.d., url

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu