

# 1.1.1. State armed actors

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### Nigerian Police Force (NPF)

The Nigerian Police Force (NPF) acts under the jurisdiction of both federal and state institutions [47](#) and is commanded by an Inspector-General of Police. Reflecting other existing administrative structures in the country, the police force consists of the following entities: the force headquarters, zonal headquarters, headquarters of the state command, divisional police headquarters, police stations, police posts, and village police posts.[48](#) Both recent sources and sources dating back as far as 2007 claimed that the NPF had an estimated strength of 371 800, [49](#) serving a total population estimated in 2024 at 236 747 130.[50](#) The resulting shortage in police personnel was compounded by the fact that more than 100 000 police officers were assigned to the protection of politicians and VIPs,[51](#) rather than to tasks serving the general population.[52](#) This shortage in manpower, as well as corruption and insufficient resources have resulted in delayed responses to crimes and numerous communities being left without protection.[53](#) With reliable accountability mechanisms lacking, there were reports of police officers engaging in misconduct, including arbitrary arrests, extortion of money[54](#) and excessive use of violence.[55](#)

### Nigerian Armed Forces (NAF)

The Nigerian Armed Forces (NAF) are comprised of three branches: the army, the air force, and the navy.[56](#) Information on numbers of personnel numbers varied among sources. While Global Firepower estimated the total strength of the armed forces at 280 000 (including 230 000 active personnel),[57](#) another recent estimate put the number of active service personnel at 140 000.[58](#) The army, estimated to be 65 000 strong,[59](#) was deployed in all 36 states. It was engaged in counterinsurgency operations in the North-East and combating criminal gangs/banditry in the North-West, farmer-herder violence, military and criminal activity targeting the oil industry in the Niger Delta, and separatist agitation in Biafra state.[60](#)

The armed forces are equipped with a variety of weapons systems of Chinese, Russian, Middle Eastern, European and US origin and have been undergoing modernisation.[61](#) In mid-2024, NAF launched its new aviation wing to provide aerial support for its ground operations.[62](#) However, while the military budget has been consistently increased over the past years, criticism had been voiced over the volume and quality of the weaponry available.[63](#) Multiple security breaches allowed large-scale kidnappings to unfold and military aircraft to be shot down by militants using anti-aircraft weaponry.[64](#) A government airstrike targeting a site of the insurgent group Lakurawa in Sokoto State mistakenly killed 10 civilians in late 2024.[65](#)

## Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC)

State actors also comprise the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), a paramilitary organisation under the federal government tasked with combating threats to the country and its citizens<sup>66</sup> and protecting ‘critical national assets and infrastructure’,<sup>67</sup> including oil pipelines. The reference period witnessed disputes between the NSCDC and the police over their respective roles,<sup>68</sup> and at least one instance of violent altercation between members of the two institutions.<sup>69</sup>

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