

1.2. Conflict drivers and security trends

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1.2.1. Attacks by Islamist groups and counter-insurgency operations

Northern Nigeria was described as a one of the main hotbeds of violence as it continued to be affected by armed attacks, abductions and banditry.[169](#) During the first half of 2024, the UN observed a deterioration of security conditions across the Lake Chad basin as operations of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) [170](#) faced disruptions after the military coup in Niger[171](#) in July 2023,[172](#) prompting a rise in militant and extremist activity in the North-East.[173](#)

Following a period of relative lull in insurgent activity,[174](#) ISWAP, a splinter faction of Boko Haram,[175](#) attacked Nigerian troops in Borno state in January 2025[176](#) and then launched a large-scale offensive across its zone of operation in the North-East, overrunning positions of government forces at multiple instances.[177](#) Amongst others, the group attacked army positions in Yamtage town[178](#) and carried out coordinated attacks on Marte, Dikwa and Rann towns[179](#) (all located in Borno state).[180](#) It also extended its attacks into Yobe and Adamawa states.[181](#) Between February and late June 2025, ISWAP conducted 22 attacks on heavily fortified 'super camps' of the Nigerian armed forces, as recorded by the Jamestown Foundation.[182](#) Dozens of soldiers were killed in these attacks.[183](#) Some of the attacks were repelled by the army[184](#) or followed by counter-offensives that retook at least one base seized by the militants.[185](#)

Besides conducting attacks on military forces, ISWAP perpetrated deadly assaults against communities of Shiites (August 2024)[186](#) and Christians (April[187](#) and May 2025[188](#)). The Boko Haram faction, JAS, likewise intensified its attacks on civilians and perceived government collaborators.[189](#) The Global Protection Cluster (GPC) identified 214 attacks on civilians by armed groups over the year 2024, resulting in more than 300 deaths.[190](#) Dozens of civilians were killed in attacks by Boko Haram factions in the region in September 2024[191](#) and January [192](#) and April 2025.[193](#) A key Boko Haram (JAS) commander and two of his deputies were killed in a targeted security operation in May 2025.[194](#)

In remote areas of the North-West, Lakurawa - a militant group with suspected[195](#) links to ISSP [196](#) and whose existence was only first acknowledged by the Nigerian government in November 2024 - launched attacks on local villages in late 2024/early 2025, killing dozens of residents. In response, armed forces launched air and ground operations against Lakurawa in late 2024[197](#) and arrested 174 suspected members of the group at the Nigeria-Niger border in January 2025.[198](#) According to Nigeria Watch, Lakurawa's raids on local communities and government operations against the group in 2024 resulted in 48 fatalities in Zamfara, Kebbi and Sokoto states.[199](#)

Military and security campaigns against insurgents further intensified in mid-2025, involving clearance operations, airstrikes and ambushes mainly in Borno, Adamawa, Kebbi and Zamfara states, resulting in the killing of dozens of armed militants.[200](#)

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