

1.2. Conflict drivers and security trends

1.2. Conflict drivers and security trends

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](#)

- [169](#)

Al Jazeera, Lakurawa, the new armed group wreaking havoc on the Nigeria-Niger border, 10 January 2025, [url](#)

- [170](#)

For more information on the MNJTF, see 1.3.1.6 Special forces / counter-terrorism in EUAA, COI Report Nigeria - Security Situation, June 2021, [url](#)

- [171](#)

UNSG, Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, S/2024/521, 1 July 2024, [url](#), para. 25

- [172](#)

SWP, Came to Stay: Niger's Military Junta Consolidates its Power, 5 August 2024, [url](#)

- [173](#)

UNSG, Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, S/2024/521, 1 July 2024, [url](#), para. 25

- [174](#)

BBC News, Nigerian governor warns of Boko Haram comeback, 9 April 2025, [url](#)

- [175](#)

AP, Boko Haram's resurgence: Why Nigeria's military is struggling to hold the line, 26 May 2025, [url](#)

- [176](#)

BBC News, Nigerian governor warns of Boko Haram comeback, 9 April 2025, [url](#)

- [177](#)

ISW and CTP, JNIM Seizes Burkinabe Provincial Capital in Latest Blow to Traoré; IS West Africa Regains the Advantage in Lake Chad; IS Sahel Operationalizes Support Networks in Nigeria; Tripoli Clashes, 15 May 2025, [url](#)

- [178](#)

Reuters, ISWAP claims responsibility for deadly attacks in Nigeria, 21 April 2025, [url](#)

- [179](#)

HumAngle, ISWAP Overruns Key Borno Sites in Coordinated Assault, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

- [180](#)

Reuters, ISWAP claims responsibility for deadly attacks in Nigeria, 21 April 2025, [url](#); HumAngle, ISWAP Overruns Key Borno Sites in Coordinated Assault, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

- [181](#)

ICIR, Back to the trenches: Ex-Boko Haram commanders, others reveal terrorists brutal comeback in North-East, 3 June 2025, [url](#)

- [182](#)

Jamestown Foundation (The), Brief: ISWAP Raids in Northeastern Nigeria Upset Regional Status Quo, 25 June 2025, [url](#)

- [183](#)

ICIR, Back to the trenches: Ex-Boko Haram commanders, others reveal terrorists brutal comeback in North-East, 3 June 2025, [url](#)

- [184](#)

AA, Nigerian army kills 60 Boko Haram terrorists after repelling attack on military base, 30 May 2025, [url](#)

- [185](#)

Reuters, Militants attack Nigerian army base, troops missing, sources say, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

- [186](#)

Jamestown Foundation (The), Brief: Security Services and ISWAP May Be Pushing Nigeria's Shia Minority Toward Iran, 25 March 2025, [url](#)

- [187](#)

Reuters, ISWAP claims responsibility for deadly attacks in Nigeria, 21 April 2025, [url](#)

- [188](#)

ICC, ISWAP Kills 23 Christian Farmers, Abducts 18 in Borno, 22 May 2025, [url](#); Reuters, Militants kill at least 23 in Nigeria attack, security sources say, 17 May 2025, [url](#)

- [189](#)

AP, Boko Haram's resurgence: Why Nigeria's military is struggling to hold the line, 26 May 2025, [url](#)

- [190](#)

GPC, Protection Sector North-East Nigeria (PSNE), Annual Report 2024, 13 March 2025, [url](#), p. 5

- [191](#)

SBM Intelligence, Chart of the week: Boko Haram and civilians, 26 September 2024, [url](#)

- [192](#)

Amnesty International, Nigeria: Boko Haram must end vicious killing spree, 15 January 2025, [url](#)

- [193](#)

Guardian (The) Nigeria, Terrorists kill 10 hunters, 30 others in Adamawa, Borno, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

- [194](#)

Guardian (The) Nigeria, Troops kill Boko Haram top commander Abu Fatima in Borno, 31 May 2025, [url](#)

- [195](#)

Igwe, U., Is Lakurawa the emerging face of terror in the Sahel? [Blog], LSE, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

- [196](#)

ISW and CTP, JNIM Seizes Burkinabe Provincial Capital in Latest Blow to Traoré; IS West Africa Regains the Advantage in Lake Chad; IS Sahel Operationalizes Support Networks in Nigeria; Tripoli Clashes, 15 May 2025, [url](#)

- [197](#)

Al Jazeera, Lakurawa, the new armed group wreaking havoc on the Nigeria-Niger border, 10 January 2025, [url](#)

- [198](#)

UNSG, Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, S/2025/187, 26 March 2025, [url](#), para. 24

- [199](#)

Nigeria Watch, Fourteenth report on violence 2024, 2025, [url](#), p. 12

- [200](#)

SARI Global, Weekly Update: Nigeria (July 4 - 10, 2025), 11 July 2025, [url](#), p. 1