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The main drivers of insecurity and lethal violence in the Niger Delta region included criminality, violence linked to gangs/cults, mob violence, separatist agitation, communal violence,[235] disputes over land and resources,[236] armed clashes between criminals and security forces.[237] According to the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND), an Abuja-based non-profit organisation working on economic and conflict-related issues in the Niger Delta, in 2024, the region saw a 30 % decline in fatalities linked to violent incidents compared to 2023 (from 1 019 to 713 fatalities), with decreases recorded for fatalities linked to criminal violence (from 647 deaths to 475), communal violence (from 74 to 68) and cult/gang-related clashes (from 177 to 143). However, insecurity still persisted across the Niger Delta, as PIND recorded an 11 % rise in incidents of criminal violence (from 401 to 445 incidents).[238] For the first quarter of 2025, the same source reported a marginal 8.3 % decline in violent incidents compared to the last quarter of 2024, alongside a 27.7 % increase in overall conflict-related fatalities that was attributed to a rise in deaths from communal violence (from eight to 85), criminal violence (from 94 to 104) and mob violence (from 23 to 30).[239] The second quarter of 2025 saw a 24 % decline in overall conflict-related fatalities from the first quarter of 2025, attributed to a decrease in deaths from mob violence (30 to six), criminal violence (126 to 110) and communal conflicts (from 85 to 39).[240]

Nigeria Watch reported 328 fatalities arising from violence related to gangs/cults, with most fatalities recorded in Anambra, Lagos and Rivers states.[241] SBM Intelligence, a consultancy specialising in market and security research in West Africa,[242] stated that between January 2020 and March 2025, 1 686 individuals had been killed in at least 909 violent incidents linked to gangs/cults in Nigeria. Among these years under review, 2024 recorded by far the highest number of incidents (273), and the third-highest number of fatalities (333) (following 377 in 2021 and 350 in 2020).[243] The ‘epicentres’ of gang/cult-related violence were the South-South (accounting for more than 750 gang-related fatalities between January 2020 and March 2025) and the South-West (more than 491 fatalities). The South-East ranked third in terms of fatalities (more than 215 fatalities). By contrast, the North-East and the North-West together saw less than 30 fatalities linked to these traditional gangs,[244] which can all trace their origins to the south.[245] Meanwhile, the South-East also saw 379 deaths arising from violence related to pro-

Biafran agitation in 2024.246

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  PIND, Niger Delta Quarterly Conflict Trends: January – March 2025, 5 June 2025, url, p. 1; PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report, January – December 2024, 25 March 2025, url, p. 1

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  PIND, Niger Delta Quarterly Conflict Trends: April – June 2025, 11 September 2025, url, p. 1

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