

2.1.4. Kwara

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Kwara state is comprised of the following 16 LGAs: Asa, Baruten, Edu, Ekiti, Ifelodun, Ilorin East, Ilorin West, Ilorin South, Irepodun, Kaiama, Moro, Offa, Oyun, Isin, Oke-Ero and Patigi. The capital city is Ilorin.[418]

The main ethnic groups residing in Kwara State are the Yoruba, Nupe, Bariba and Fulani.[419]

UNFPA and the US Census Bureau projected the population at 3 551 023 in 2022, based on figures from the 2006 census.[420]

a) Conflict dynamics and main actors

For a general overview on actors in Nigeria, please see section 1.1 Main Actors.

In June 2025, Premium Times mentioned that across seven LGAs in the southern part of Kwara state, individuals described as ‘foreign elements’ were reportedly ambushing road users and carrying out kidnappings for ransom, while armed herders were allegedly driving cattle onto farmland and attacking farmers who try to resist.[421] A March 2024 study noted that ‘poor communication, crop destruction, and cattle theft are the primary causes of conflict between the crop farmers and cattle herders in Kwara State.’[422] A December 2024 article mentioned ‘incessant conflicts between herders and farmers’ in Kaiama LGA.[423]

In April 2025, the emergence of a new ‘terrorist group’ named Mahmuda was reported.[424] The group is believed to be a breakaway faction of Boko Haram and is also referred to as the Mallam Group after its leader.[425] It was mostly active in Kainji Lake National Park.[426] The group financed its operations through a combination of kidnapping for ransom, forced labour, and illegal taxation of herders and farmers.[427] According to Sahara Reporters, the group was ‘collecting Zakat (Islamic tax), allocating lands, and enforcing their laws on communities’.[428] Mahmuda carried out several attacks, including in April and June 2025.[429] In August 2025, the group’s leader, Mallam Mamuda, who was also the deputy commander of Ansaru, was reportedly arrested.[430]

Kwara state was affected by kidnappings, for example in August,[431] September 2024,[432] April, [433] May,[434] June,[435] and July 2025.[436] In response to ‘unabated kidnappings’ in Edu LGA, angry youths attacked and set fire to the palace of the local Emir and the local office of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in June 2025.[437]

Killings by gunmen were reported for example in October 2024,438 and in March,439 April,440 and June 2025.441

Deadly violence targeted members of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN),442 an organisation supporting Fulani issues.443

According to a July 2025 report by SBM Intelligence, Kwara recorded 58 youth gang-related deaths between January 2020 and March 2025.444 The report described the state as 'notable hotspot' within the North-Central zone, with violence involving the Black Axe (Aiye) group.445 In June 2024, Daily Trust newspaper reported 'rising cases of cult wars and clashes between rival cult groups in Kwara State'.446

b) Security incidents and impact on the population

In the period between 1 January 2024 and 31 August 2025, ACLED recorded 133 security incidents in Kwara state, which resulted in 144 fatalities. Of these security incidents, 33 were coded as battles, 12 as riots and 88 as incidents of violence against civilians.447

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Figure 8: Evolution of security events coded as battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians in Kwara state, 1 January 2024 – 31 August 2025, based on ACLED data.448

Security incidents were recorded by ACLED in 14 LGAs of the state, with the highest numbers documented in Ifelodun (28 incidents), Ilorin West (20 incidents), Edu (17 incidents), Pategi (17 incidents) and Baruten LGAs (9 incidents). No incidents were recorded in two LGAs. According to ACLED, unidentified armed groups and Kwara communal militias (coded as either 'Actor1' or 'Actor2') were involved in the majority of incidents coded as violence against civilians.449

In June 2025, Mahmuda members reportedly killed three persons in an attack on Duruma village in Baruten LGA.450 In April 2025, youths set fire to huts in a village in Kaiama LGA, accusing 'the inhabitants of the Fulani settlement of colluding with bandits in the kidnapping and killing of locals.'451 Also in April 2025, gunmen killed seven persons in Baruten and Kaiama LGAs.452 In August 2024, 20 travellers were kidnapped in Ekiti LGA and later rescued by police and local vigilante.453

Conflict-related infrastructure damage - Two schools in Ilorin West LGA were temporarily shut in May 2025 due to student clashes, which had also resulted in property damage.454 In July 2025, a media article mentioned that Kwara and the FCT had 'recorded the highest number of attacks on telecom infrastructure' in an 'increasing wave of vandalisation and theft of telecommunications infrastructure across the country.'455

Road security - Kidnappings were reported along various roads in Kwara state in the reference period.456

Displacement, movement and return - No information could be found on conflict-induced displacement or returns in Kwara state during the reference period.

c) State response in maintaining law and order

In July 2025, the Kwara State Government announced a new military campaign ‘to address growing security concerns in isolated settlements, particularly in Ifelodun, Edu, and Patigi Local Government Areas.’ The campaign would be supported by ‘newly trained forest guards.’[457] However, in June 2025, members of the armed group Mahmuda had allegedly taken advantage of security gaps caused by the temporary absence of local hunters, who were ‘undergoing training for the newly approved National Forests Guard’. The attack happened ‘despite the presence of soldiers deployed in flashpoint areas in recent months’.[458] Already in May 2025, the Nigerian army had launched ‘Operation Park Strike Four’ to fight ‘bandits and other criminal elements hiding within the Kainji Lake National Park and surrounding border areas between Kwara and Niger States’[459] and arrested 12 ‘suspected terrorists’.[460] In December 2024, the state government earmarked 1 000 hectares of land in Kaiama LGA for pastoral development, to ‘reduce the conflict between herders and farmers’.[461] In November 2024, the Kwara State Command of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) said that its Agro Rangers had resolved 196 farmer-herder conflicts in the past year and its personnel were trained in Alternative Dispute Resolution to mediate disputes across all 16 LGAs.[462]

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