

2.2.3. Borno

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Borno state is comprised of the following 27 LGAs: Maiduguri, Askira/Uba, Abadam, Ngala, Bayo, Gubio, Kala/Balge, Biu, Guzamala, Mafa, Chibok, Kaga, Konduga, Damboa, Kukawa, Bama, Gwoza, Magumeri, Jere, Hawul, Marte, Dikwa, Kwaya Kusar, Mobbar, Shani, Monguno, and Nganzai. The capital city is Maiduguri. 710

The Kanuri are the dominant ethnic group in the state, accounting for about three quarters of its population. Other ethnic groups include the Fulani, Hausa, Chibok, Babur, Bura, Shuwa, Marghi, Gamergu, Kanakuru, Ngoshe, Guduf, Mandara and Tera. The Chibok minority group inhabits the newly created Chibok LGA. The Hausa reside mainly in Askira and Maiduguri.711

UNFPA and the US Census Bureau projected the population of Borno in 2022 at 6 111 462, based on figures from the 2006 census figures.712

a) Conflict dynamics and main actors

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

Borno state has been at the centre of the 15-year-long insurgency by Boko Haram.713 ISWAP has assigned parts of the state to its three main *wilaya* (provinces) Buhaira (encompassing the fringes of Lake Chad), Faruq (comprising southern Borno, alongside areas in Yobe and Adamawa states), and Krenowa (covering territories in central and northern Borno).714 A July 2024 report by the consulting firm Nextier identified ten LGAs across Borno (Bama, Baga, Biu, Chibok, Gwoza, Kukawa, Kaga, Marte, Mongonu and Ngala) as being part of what it called the 'Northeast Belt of Insurgency'.715 In ISWAP-controlled villages in the state's north, the group extorted levies from farmers and fishermen. At the same time, insurgent activities were largely limited to rural zones.716

While the NAF were able to push back against Boko Haram in recent years717 and continued to report gains in security operations in 2024, insurgent attacks against security forces and civilians persisted.718 Deadly militant assaults in 2024 and early 2025 targeted the police in Nganzai LGA and the military forces in Marte, Mobbar, Gwoza and Damboa LGAs, as well as killing dozens of civilians in Chibok and Nganzai (January 2024),719 Gwoza (including in January, February720 and September 2024) and Kukawa (May 2024721 and January 2025722).

During the first half of 2025, ISWAP made some territorial gains in the state as it carried out several complex attacks against security installations and civilians.723 ISWAP attacks intensified

in March[724]/April 2025[725] in what was seen as a ‘resurgence’ of militancy,[726] with Borno’s state governor declaring that the authorities were ‘losing ground’ to the insurgents.[727] Between late April and mid-May 2025, ISWAP and Boko Haram conducted at least 12 attacks of various types.[728] In a series of coordinated attacks in May that involved highly mobile tactics and drones, ISWAP overran Marte town[729] (the site of Borno’s largest military base),[730] Dikwa town and Kala-Balge LGA’s Rann town,[731] killing a number of soldiers stationed at military bases.[732] As of late May 2025, all but one of the over 300 towns and villages of Marte LGA were outside government control.[733] Militants also killed dozens of local residents as they assaulted communities in Gwoza,[734] Kukawa,[735] Chibok[736] and Mobbar in April and May,[737] in Abadam in July 2025,[738] and in Bama in September 2025.[739] As of mid-2025, Borno continued to ‘bear the brunt’ of armed activities in Nigeria, which also included IED attacks and mass kidnappings.[740]

Between early 2024 and mid-2025, SBM Intelligence recorded eight bombings in the state, including three in the single month of January 2025 and four more between March and June 2025. The source attributed all but one of the attacks to either ISWAP or Boko Haram.[741] Deadly IED attacks struck travellers in Kukawa and Gamboru (Ngala) (both April 2024), forest workers in Konduga (November 2024), and individuals travelling along the Maiduguri–Damboa highway[742] and between Rann to Gamboru (both April 2025).[743] Four coordinated suicide attacks occurred in Gwoza,[744] targeting a wedding on 29 June 2024,[745] followed by a bombing of a teashop in Konduga (31 July 2024).[746] Another unclaimed deadly suicide attack occurred in Konduga in June 2025.[747] These attacks left dozens of people dead.[748] Boko Haram/ISWAP also conducted multiple abductions targeting IDPs in Ngala (February 2024),[749] villagers in Gwoza (September/October 2024[750] and July 2025),[751] Chibok (April 2025)[752] and Kukawa (May 2025),[753] and travellers (e.g., June 2024[754] and July 2025[755]).

b) Security incidents and impact on the population

In the period from 1 January 2024 to 31 August 2025, ACLED recorded 813 security incidents in Borno state that resulted in a total of 3 995 fatalities. Of these incidents, 416 were coded as battles, 178 as explosion/remote violence, 10 as riots, and 209 as violence against civilians.[756]

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Figure 5: Evolution of security events coded as battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians in Borno state, 1 January 2024 – 31 August 2025, based on ACLED data.[757]

Security incidents were recorded by ACLED in 26 LGAs of the state, with the highest number documented in Gwoza LGA (141 incidents), followed by Bama (109), Damboa (77), Konduga (60) and Kukawa (49) LGAs. There was only one LGA where no incidents were recorded. According to ACLED, ISWAP and Boko Haram (coded as either ‘Actor1’ or ‘Actor2’) were involved in the vast majority of incidents coded as violence against civilians.[758]

According to Nigeria Watch, in 2024, Borno recorded the highest number of fatalities from violent incidents in absolute terms (1 263), followed by Zamfara, Niger, Katsina and Benue. With 16 57 violence-related fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants, Borno, after Zamfara, ranked second

among the country's 'most dangerous' states, with Niger, Katsina and Benue following Borno in third, fourth and fifth place, respectively.759

Amongst others, suspected insurgents killed at least 63 farmers and fishermen in Kukawa in January and May 2025,760 at least 54 civilians between late April and mid-May 2025 in Ngala, Chibok, Mobbar and Kukawa,761 and over 50 further civilians in Bama in early September 2025.762 Coordinated suicide attacks in Gwoza763 (29 June 2024) and a further bombing in Konduga (31 July 2024) resulted in a total of 48 deaths.764 Civilians kidnapped by insurgents included more than 600 IDPs in Ngala (February765 and March 2024766) as well as dozens of villagers across the state.767

Conflict-related infrastructure damage - ISWAP attacks also continued to target critical infrastructure.768 The destruction of infrastructure (roads, bridges, and lines of communication) in insurgent attacks across Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states in 2025,769 including in Borno's Bayo LGA in April 2025,770 led to disruptions in troop movements and obstruction of humanitarian aid.771 In an attack on Wulgo town in May 2025, the insurgents burnt down public structures such as hospitals and schools, as well as several military vehicles,772 while in early September 2025, Boko Haram attack on Darul Jamal village in Bama LGA resulted in the destruction of over 20 houses and 10 buses.773

Road security - IED attacks killed at least 35 travellers along the Maiduguri–Damboa highway and between Rann to Gamboru (April 2025) and multiple travellers along the Maiduguri–Damaturu highway (June 2024)774 and the Maiduguri–Mafa road (July 2025).775 Similarly, the Maiduguri–Monguno road was affected by recurrent kidnappings and continued to see illegal checkpoints set up by suspected non-state armed groups.776

Displacement, movement and return - As of November 2024, IOM estimated the number of IDPs in Borno state at 1 704 175,777 compared to 1 722 263 as of September 2024. IOM lists insurgency as the exclusive reason for displacement in the state.778 As of August 2024, there were 890 960 returnees in the state, including IDP returnees and returnees from abroad.779 The IDMC reported that violence and conflict across several states, including Borno, Yobe and Katsina, had prompted the displacement of 57 000 people in 2024.780 ISWAP's attacks on multiple military bases in Borno in May 2025 resulted in numerous civilians in nearby communities being displaced internally and across the border into Cameroon.781 More than 100 people were newly displaced in the deadly early September 2025 Boko Haram attack on Darul Jamal village (Bama LGA)782 which had only recently seen residents returning from years of displacement.783

c) State response in maintaining law and order

Hundreds of Boko Haram/ISWAP fighters were killed in battles following insurgent attacks on military sites784 or during security operations,785 with military gains against insurgents reported during most months of 2024.786 Meanwhile, in 2025, soldiers saw themselves overpowered as dozens of well-armed ISWAP fighters attacked their base in Marte787 and by Boko Haram militants who stormed Darul Jamal village in September 2025.788

As of mid-April 2025, it was noted that the NAF had intensified its efforts to contain ISWAP and Boko Haram.789 Amongst others, the NAF killed at least 60 insurgents after repelling an assault

on a military camp in Bita (Gwoza LGA).790 A targeted intelligence-based operation in Kukawa involving the NAF, MNJTF and CJTF led to the killing of Boko Haram (JAS) commander Amir Abu Fatima and his key deputies in May 2025.791 As of July 2025, the state remained one of the country's main operational theatres areas for counter-insurgency campaigns.792

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