2.2.4. Gombe

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Gombe state is comprised of the following 11 LGAs: Akko, Balanga, Billiri, Dukku, Funakaye, Gombe, Kaltungo, Kwami, Nafada, Shongom, and Yamaltu Deba. The capital city is Gombe.[793]

The main ethnic groups include Tangale, Terawa, Waja, Kumo, Fulani, Kanuri, Bolewa, Jukun, Pero/Shonge, Tula, Cham, Lunguda, Dadiya, Banbuka, Hausa and Kamo/Awak.[794]

UNFPA and the US Census Bureau projected the population of Gombe in 2022 at 3 960 122, based on figures from the 2006 census figures.[795]

a) Conflict dynamics and main actors

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

Gombe state authorities described the state as relatively secure in comparison to other states while pointing to several security issues.[796]

In Gombe LGA, there were reports of criminals clashing with police (April 2025)[797] and a deadly attack by Kalare boys (June 2025).[798] Elsewhere, there was a deliberate truck attack on Christians (Billiri LGA, April 2025),[799] violent herder–farmer conflicts (Kwami, Yamaltu Deba[800] and Billiri LGAs[801] in December 2024[802]), and kidnappings linked to cattle rustling. Security was reported to have been negatively affected by an influx of criminal elements from adjacent states.[803]

b) Security incidents and impact on the population

In the period from 1 January 2024 to 31 August 2025, ACLED recorded 12 security incidents in Gombe state that resulted in a total of 10 fatalities. Of these incidents, two were coded as battles, six as riots and four as violence against civilians.[804]

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Figure 15: Evolution of security events coded as battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians in Gombe state, 1 January 2024 – 31 August 2025, based on ACLED data.[805]

Security incidents were recorded by ACLED in six LGAs of the state, with the highest numbers documented in Billiri and Akko LGAs (3 incidents each), followed by Dukku and Gombe LGAs (2 each). No incidents were recorded in five LGAs. According to ACLED, Fulani ethnic militia, the

Kalare Boys gang, and an unidentified armed group (coded as either ‘Actor1’ or ‘Actor2’) were involved in the incidents coded as violence against civilians.806

Nigeria Watch ranked Gombe as Nigeria’s most peaceful state in 2024.807 ACLED reported a similar trend, with Gombe ranking as the state with the lowest number of security incidents overall (defined as battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians, and riots), during the reference period.808

Civilian casualties from reported security incidents, including events not recorded by ACLED, arose from clashes between herders and farmers in Yamaltu Deba LGA (December 2024, one fatality)809 and Billiri LGA (December 2024, two fatalities),810 a truck driver ramming participants of a Christian procession in Billiri LGA in April 2025 (six fatalities and dozens of injuries),811 and an assault by suspected Kalare boys in Gombe city (June 2025, one fatality). 812

Conflict-related infrastructure damage - The December 2024 herder-farmer clashes in Billiri LGA led to the destruction of farm produce,813 burning of houses, and livestock rustling.814

Road security - No information could be found during the reference period.

Displacement, movement and return - As of November 2024, IOM estimated the number of IDPs in Gombe state at 52 202,815 compared to 51 028 as of September 2024. IOM lists insurgency (68 %) and communal clashes (32 %) as the reasons for displacement in the state. 816 No information could be found on returns in Gombe state during the reference period.

c) State response in maintaining law and order

In the aftermath of the herder–farmer clashes in Billiri LGA, local residents complained about what they saw as ‘ineffectiveness of security operatives’, with one source stating that security forces were slow to respond and failed to take decisive action upon their arrival.817 According to the police, a combined team of police and 301 Artillery Regiment personnel were deployed to the scene, but the assailants had fled prior to its arrival.818

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