

2.2.6. Yobe

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Yobe state is comprised of the following 17 LGAs: Bursari, Damaturu, Geidam, Bade, Gujba, Gulani, Fika, Fune, Jakusko, Karasuwa, Machina, Nangere, Nguru, Potiskum, Tarmuwa, Yunusari and Yusufari. The capital city is Damaturu.[862]

The main ethnic groups include Kanuri, Fulani, Hausa, Kare-Kare, Bolewa, Ngizim, Bade, Ngamo and Shuwa.[863]

UNFPA and the US Census Bureau projected the population of Yobe in 2022 at 3 649 607, based on figures from the 2006 census figures.[864]

a) Conflict dynamics and main actors

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

Alongside Borno and Adamawa, Yobe is one of the main bases of Boko Haram and ISWAP in Nigeria. The state's south has been integrated into ISWAP's Faruq *wilaya* ('province').[865] A July 2024 report by the consulting firm Nextier identified three LGAs in Yobe (Damaturu, Gujba and Geidam) as being part of what it called the 'Northeast Belt of Insurgency'.[866]

Deadly attacks by suspected armed groups/insurgents targeted communities in Fika and Potiskum (January 2024),[867] Geidam (January and August 2024),[868] Damaturu (February 2024),[869] Gujba (May 2024),[870] Yunusari (May 2025),[871] and notably in Tarmuwa LGA[872] where insurgents conducted a large-scale attack on Mafa village in September 2024.[873] The latter attack involved around 150 assailants armed with rifles and RPGs and riding motorcycles, with sources variously attributing the incident to either Boko Haram[874] or ISWAP.[875] Apart from communities, insurgents targeted NAF troops in at least two deadly assaults on military sites in the same LGA in April and May 2025[876] and in a suicide car attack in January 2025[877] in Gujba LGA.[878] SBM Intelligence recorded two more bombings in May 2024 and April 2025, attributing both to ISWAP.[879] Yobe also saw several attempted and actual kidnappings.[880]

b) Security incidents and impact on the population

In the period from 1 January 2024 to 31 August 2025, ACLED recorded 128 security incidents in Yobe state that resulted in a total of 225 fatalities. Of these incidents, 58 were coded as battles, 19 as explosion/remote violence, 7 as riots, and 44 as violence against civilians.[881]

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Figure 6: Evolution of security events coded as battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians in Yobe state, 1 January 2024 – 31 August 2025, based on ACLED data. 882

Security incidents were recorded by ACLED in 12 LGAs of the state, with the highest number documented in Gujba LGA (75 incidents), followed by Damaturu (11) and Tarmua LGAs (10). No incidents were recorded in five LGAs. According to ACLED, ISWAP, Boko Haram and unidentified armed groups (coded as either 'Actor1' or 'Actor2') were involved in the majority of incidents coded as violence against civilians.883

According to Nigeria Watch, in 2024 Yobe state recorded the country's second-highest number of fatalities (123) related to attacks by insurgent groups and government counter-operations. 884

While the UN Secretary-General stated that the September 2024 insurgent attack on Mafa caused on unknown number of casualties,885 other sources gave various estimates of the death toll, including at least 81 people (AFP quoting local officials),886 over 100 people (Al Jazeera quoting a resident),887 at least 128 people (the UN Resident Coordinator)888 or even 170 or more villagers, mostly men and boys (the New York Times quoting local sources).889 Moreover, at least 17 fatalities resulted from attacks by suspected armed groups/insurgents on communities in Fika and Potiskum,890 Geidam,891 Damaturu,892 Gujba893 and Yunusari.894

Conflict-related infrastructure damage - The attack on Mafa also resulted in infrastructure damage, with assailants burnt down businesses, shelters, and other property and planted IEDs along roads leading towards the community.895

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 Yobe state at 167 320,896 compared to 155 168 as of September 2024. IOM lists insurgency (94 %) as the main reason for displacement in the state.897 As of August 2024, there were 356 344 returnees in the state, including IDP returnees and returnees from abroad. 898 The IDMC reported that over the year 2024, violence and conflict across several states, including Borno, Yobe and Katsina, had prompted the displacement of 57 000 people.899 The September 2024 attack on Mafa displaced thousands of individuals to Babban Gida town (Tarmuwa LGA's headquarters) and other nearby communities, as well as into Borno state.900 Instances of attack or threat of attack by armed groups in Fika and Potiskum in January 2024, 901 Gujba in May 2024902 and Yunusari in January 2025903 each resulted in the displacement of thousands of people.

c) State response in maintaining law and order

While several security breaches led to insurgent attacks (e.g., in Mafa and Geidam in 2024),904 security operations resulted in the killing or arrest of dozens of insurgents905 (e.g., in Donga, Takum and Tarmuwa LGAs),906 the arrest of suspected members of a gang specialised in kidnapping for ransom,907 and the rescue of kidnapping victims.908

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