

2.3.6. Sokoto

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Sokoto state is comprised of the following 23 LGAs: Binji, Bodinga, Dange Shuni, Gada, Goronyo, Gudu, Gwadabawa, Illela, Isa, Kebbe, Kware, Rabah, Sabon Birni, Shagari, Silame, Sokoto North, Sokoto South, Tambuwal, Tangaza, Tureta, Wamako, Wurno, Yabo. The capital city is Sokoto.[1143]

The majority of the population are Hausa people,[1144] followed by Fulanis. There are also Zabarmawa, Tuareg and Dakarki minorities in Sokoto state.[1145] Most of the residents are Sunni Muslims, with a Shia minority.[1146]

UNFPA and the US Census Bureau projected the state's population at 6 391 047 in 2022, based on figures from the 2006 census.[1147]

a) Conflict dynamics and main actors

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

As of July 2024, households in Sokoto state had been severely affected by farmer-herder conflict, abductions, and banditry.[1148] Sokoto was considered to be one of the three states in the North-West most affected by banditry,[1149] with bandit groups having established bases in remote areas.[1150]

During the reference period, attacks[1151] and abductions, including mass abductions,[1152] as well as arson and cattle rustling[1153] by armed men and bandit groups[1154] such as Lakurawa were reported in Sokoto state. Some of these attacks led to civilian deaths.[1155] In 2024, abductions in Sokoto state reportedly increased by 108 % compared to the foregoing 4-year average.[1156] Between July 2023 and June 2024, Sokoto state experienced 67 of the country's 1 130 abduction incidents and accounted for 487 of the 7 568 victims.[1157] Armed groups reportedly also pressured individuals into paying taxes by threatening to kill them.[1158]
Lakurawa emerged in north-western Sokoto state in September 2024,[1159] with authorities acknowledging their existence in Nigeria for the first time in November 2024, noting that it has a headquarters in Sokoto state.[1160] However, displaced residents of northern Sokoto state had reported Lakurawa activity there since 2018.[1161] Furthermore, the UK FCDO stated that attacks likely associated with 'terrorist groups', such as Boko Haram, had occurred in several Nigerian states, including Sokoto, since 2021.[1162]

A government airstrike in December 2024 in Silame LGA targeting armed groups reportedly killed ten villagers.1163

Vigilante forces reportedly also existed in Sokoto state during the reference period.1164

b) Security incidents and impact on the population

For the period between 1 January 2024 and 31 August 2025, ACLED recorded 299 security incidents (defined as battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians, and riots) in Sokoto state, which resulted in 550 fatalities. Of these incidents, 215 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians, 74 were coded as battles, 5 as explosions/remote violence, and 5 as riots.1165

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Figure 10: Evolution of security events coded as battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians in Sokoto state, 1 January 2024 – 31 August 2025, based on ACLED data.1166

Security incidents were recorded by ACLED in 21 LGAs of the state, with the highest number documented in Sabon Birni (102), followed by Isa (39), Tangaza (23), Goronyo (20 incidents), and Rabah (19). No incidents were recorded in two LGAs. According to ACLED, Sokoto communal militia (coded as either ‘Actor 1’ or ‘Actor 2’) were involved in the majority of incidents coded as violence against civilians.1167

On 2 July 2025, an incident of armed banditry and abduction in Tangaza LGA affected over 500 persons and led to 50 casualties.1168 Between 2 and 3 June 2025, several bandit attacks involving abductions occurred in a number of locations in Isa LGA affecting around 18 500 persons.1169 In March 2024, at least 15 pupils were abducted by bandits from a boarding school in Gidan Bakuso hamlet while they were asleep.1170

Conflict-related infrastructure damage - Reports indicated that schools in Sokoto state had been closed or temporarily closed due to banditry.1171

Road security - Criminal groups in Sokoto state were reportedly engaging in grand larceny along major highways.1172 FEWS NET reported in July 2024 that bandits had intensified attacks along the Sokoto-Gusau road by mounting illegal checkpoints and abducting travellers.1173

Displacement, movement and return - IOM noted that the crisis in north-western Nigeria has accelerated in recent years, resulting in widespread displacement across the region.1174 As of February 2025, IOM estimated the number of IDPs in Sokoto state at 99 7291175 compared to 96 232 as of November 2024. IOM lists armed banditry/kidnapping (81 %), insurgency (10 %), disaster (8 %), and communal clashes (1 %) as the main reasons for displacement in the state. 1176 The IMDC reported 295 000 cases of internal displacements resulting from conflict and violence in Nigeria in 2024, of which almost 123 000 occurred in three north-western states, including Sokoto.1177 The Africa Center for Strategic Studies in October 2024 attributed 87 % of displacements in Sokoto state to criminal group activity.1178 Mass displacement in Sokoto state as a result of bandit attacks was reported for example in several locations of Isa LGA,1179 as

well as in Shagari,1180 Rabah,1181 and Tangaza LGAs.1182

No information could be found on returns in Sokoto state during the reference period.

c) State response in maintaining law and order

Government operations against armed groups, such as operations targeting Lakurawa,1183 including an airstrike in December 2024 in Silame LGA,1184 were reported in Sokoto state during the reference period.1185 In early September 2025, security forces reportedly rescued nine abduction victims in an operation in Sokoto state.1186

In October 2024, it was reported that some villages in Sokoto had lost confidence in the government's ability to protect them and were paying criminal groups for protection, otherwise facing attacks1187 and abductions.1188 In July 2024, residents of the Lambar-Tureta area protested against the withdrawal of army officers protecting the area, fearing that the withdrawal at a time of intensified terrorist attacks would make them a lot more vulnerable.1189

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