

2.4.1. Abia

2.4.1. Abia

Abia state is comprised of the following 17 LGAs: Aba North, Aba South, Arochukwu, Bende, Ikwuano, Isiala Ngwa North, Isiala Ngwa South, Isuikwuato, Obi Ngwa, Ohafia, Osisioma Ngwa, Ugwunagbo, Ukwa East, Ukwa West, Umuahia North, Umuahia South and Umunneochi. The capital city is Umuahia.1257

Igbos comprise 95 % of the population.1258

UNFPA and the US Census Bureau projected the population of Abia in 2022 at 4 143 093, based on figures from the 2006 census.1259

a) Conflict dynamics and main actors

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

Sources ranked Abia state among the country's five safest states during the period from 2011 to 2024 (KDI)1260 and among the least violent within the Niger Delta in terms of conflict-related fatalities,1261 which decreased from 26 in the fourth quarter of 2024 to 11 in the first quarter of 20251262 before marginally rising to 13 in the following quarter (PIND).1263 Drivers of insecurity were incidents linked to separatist militias,1264 criminality (including kidnappings), communal violence1265 and cult/gang-related clashes.1266

In 2024, Abia was reportedly one of the Niger Delta states most affected by violence linked to separatist militias,1267 which included incidents that the authorities attributed to the banned IPOB movement1268 and its armed wing, the ESN.1269

Referring to the South-East in general, a Nigerian senior security advisor interviewed by EUAA in July 2025 stated that IPOB was now generally viewed as 'less combative' than in the past and appeared not to have been implicated in most of the recent attacks against federal security personnel. According to this source, these attacks seemed to have been carried out either by criminal organisations 'masquerading' as Biafran agitators (using Biafran symbols and flags) or by elements linked to the so-called Biafran Republic Government In Exile (BRGIE) of the Finland-based Biafran agitator Simon Ekpa.1270 For more information on BRGIE, see section 1.1.3 Non-state armed actors.

In May 2024, deadly disputes over land and boundaries erupted as communities in Arochukwu LGA clashed with communities in Odukpani LGA (Cross River state)1271/Eket LGA (Akwa Ibom state).1272 Further deadly clashes over land-related issues were reported during the first

quarter of 2025 in what PIND described as a ‘resurgence of communal violence’, involving communities in Ikwuano, Isuikwuato and Obi Ngwa LGAs.1273

Civil society organisations reported of ‘escalating attacks’ by suspected Fulani armed bandits and herdsmen on local communities, including in Isuikwuato, Umunneochi, and Obi Ngwa LGAs, also noting the occurrence of kidnappings and farm destruction.1274 March 2025 witnessed the kidnapping of four individuals by gunmen in Obi Ngwa LGA.1275

b) Security incidents and impact on the population

In the period from 1 January 2024 to 31 August 2025, ACLED recorded 96 security incidents in Abia state that resulted in a total of 118 fatalities. Of these incidents, 51 were coded as battles, 7 as explosion/remote violence, 7 as riots, and 31 as violence against civilians.1276

Imported image pandoc_image_24.png

Figure 12: Evolution of security events coded as battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians in Abia state, 1 January 2024 – 31 August 2025, based on ACLED data. 1277

Security incidents were recorded by ACLED in all 17 LGAs of the state, with the highest number documented in Aba South LGA (22 incidents), followed by Umuahia North (12) and Umunneochi (also spelled Nneochi) LGAs (8 incidents). According to ACLED, unidentified armed groups, IPOB, unidentified cult militias, and military and police forces (coded as either ‘Actor1’ or ‘Actor2’) were involved in the vast majority of incidents coded as violence against civilians.1278

Over the year 2024, PIND recorded 13 incidents attributed to separatist militants that resulted in more than 40 fatalities,1279 while Nigeria Watch recorded 34 such deaths, the fourth-highest figure among all states.1280 These incidents included deadly clashes during (suspected) separatist militant attacks targeting the security forces,1281 some of which also resulted in civilian casualties.1282

Several fatalities resulted from ‘security breaches’ in Umunneochi LGA in June 20251283 and a July 2025 attack on a Chinese-operated construction site in Isuikwuato LGA by suspected kidnappers wearing military camouflage and armed with assault rifles.1284 Moreover, several fatalities arose from violence linked to rivalries between cults/gangs in various locations across Aba North LGA.1285

In May 2024, six civilians were among those killed in a surprise attack by alleged IPOB members targeting a security checkpoint1286 in Aba North LGA,1287 while attacks by unidentified gunmen targeting a police patrol in Aba South LGA killed four civilians in July 20241288 and June 2025.1289 Suspected kidnappers killed a driver working for a Chinese company in Isuikwuato LGA in July 2025.1290 At least seven people died in communal clashes in May 20241291 and February, March 20251292 and June 2025.1293

Conflict-related infrastructure damage - Civil society organisations reported of farm destruction by suspected armed herdsmen.1294

Road security -The reference period saw activities of criminal elements on the Abia stretches of the Ikigew (Imo state)–Umunneochi axis1295 and the Enugu-Aba-Port Harcourt Expressway. 1296

Displacement, movement and return - No information could be found on numbers of individuals affected by conflict-induced displacement in Abia state during the reference period. Following a deadly November 2024 attack by gunmen on an army checkpoint in Umuahia South LGA, youths of the Ekenobizi community deserted the area due to fears of a retaliatory military attack on the community.1297 No information could be found on returns in Abia state during the reference period.

c) State response in maintaining law and order

Civil society organisations highlighted that the security forces demonstrated 'alarming inertia' in responding to attacks by herdsmen on communities across the South-East.1298 While the state government officially denied having engaged the ESN to fight insecurity,1299 ESN launched a campaign against the Fulanis in the forests of the South-East, reportedly dislodging over 70 Fulani herder and criminal settlements in forests across the South-East zone in 2024.1300 Meanwhile, sources noted that security forces launched at least two raids on IPOB/ESN camps 1301 and reportedly killed an IPOB leader,1302 while the reference period also saw several suspected criminals being arrested during raids on their hideouts in Ugwunagbo1303 and Umuahia North LGAs.1304

- 1257

  Nigeria, Federal Government of Nigeria, States, Abia, n.d., url

- 1258

  Nigeria, Federal Government of Nigeria, States, Abia, n.d., url

- 1259

  UNFPA and US Census Bureau, Nigeria – Subnational Population Statistics, 2022, modified 11 September 2024, url

- 1260

  KDI, Protecting the civic space. Trends, challenges, and future outlook in Nigeria, 28 February 2025, url, p. 28

- 1261

  PIND, Niger Delta Quarterly Conflict Trends: April – June 2025, 11 September 2025, url, p. 3; PIND, Niger Delta Quarterly Conflict Trends: January – March 2025, 5 June 2025, url, p. 3

- 1262

  PIND, Niger Delta Quarterly Conflict Trends: January – March 2025, 5 June 2025, url, p. 3

- 1263

  PIND, Niger Delta Quarterly Conflict Trends: April – June 2025, 11 September 2025, url, p. 3

- 1264

  PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report, January – December 2024, 25 March 2025, url, pp. 4, 8

- 1265

  PIND, Niger Delta Quarterly Conflict Trends: April – June 2025, 11 September 2025, url, p. 3; PIND, Niger Delta Quarterly Conflict Trends: January – March 2025, 5 June 2025, url, p. 3

- 1266

  PIND, Niger Delta Quarterly Conflict Trends: January – March 2025, 5 June 2025, url, p. 3

- 1267

  PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report, January – December 2024, 25 March 2025, url, p. 4

- 1268

  Reuters, Gunmen kill 11 in attack in Nigeria's southeast, army says, 31 May 2024, url; Punch, Gunmen attack army checkpoint in Abia, kill two soldiers, 13 November 2024, url

- 1269

  PIND, Niger Delta Quarterly Conflict Trends: April – June 2025, 11 September 2025, url, p. 3; Punch, Gunmen attack army checkpoint in Abia, kill two soldiers, 13 November 2024, url

- 1270

  Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025

- 1271

  PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report, January – December 2024, 25 March 2025, url, p. 10

- 1272

  Nigeria Watch, Fourteenth report on violence in Nigeria 2024, 2025, url, p. 15

- 1273

  PIND, Niger Delta Quarterly Conflict Trends: January – March 2025, 5 June 2025, url, p. 3

- 1274

  Vanguard, CSOs decry herdsmen attacks in Southeast, demand justice, 11 May 2025, url

- 1275

  PIND, Niger Delta Quarterly Conflict Trends: January – March 2025, 5 June 2025, url, p. 3

- 1276

  EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa, data covering 1 January 2024 to 31 August 2025, as of 10 September 2025, url

- 1277

  EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa, data covering 1 January 2024 to 31 August 2025, as of 10 September 2025, url

- 1278

  EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa, data covering 1 January 2024 to 31 August 2025, as of 10 September 2025, url

- 1279

  PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report, January – December 2024, 25 March 2025, url, p. 8

- 1280

  Nigeria Watch, Fourteenth report on violence in Nigeria 2024, 2025, url, p. 13

- 1281

  PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report, January – December 2024, 25 March 2025, url, p. 8; THISDAY, Two Soldiers Killed as Gunmen Attack Troops in Abia, 14 November 2024, url; Nigerian Tribune, Gunmen kill Police inspector, three others in Abia, 21 July 2024, url; Al Jazeera, Separatists kill at least 11 people in southeast Nigeria, army says, 31 May 2024, url

- 1282

  International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Nigeria: January 2024 – August 2025, n.d., url

- 1283

  Daily Champion, Many reported dead as herdsmen attack Enugu, Abia communities, 18 June 2025, url

- 1284

  Punch, Many feared killed in Abia gunmen attack, 14 July 2025, url; Daily Post, Gunmen in Army uniform kill soldier, driver in Abia construction site attack, 13 July 2025, url

- 1285

PIND, Niger Delta Quarterly Conflict Trends: January – March 2025, 5 June 2025, url, p. 3

- 1286

  Al Jazeera, Separatists kill at least 11 people in southeast Nigeria, army says, 31 May 2024, url

- 1287

  PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report, January – December 2024, 25 March 2025, url, p. 8

- 1288

  PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report, January – December 2024, 25 March 2025, url, p. 8; Nigerian Tribune, Gunmen kill Police inspector, three others in Abia, 21 July 2024, url

- 1289

  PIND, Niger Delta Quarterly Conflict Trends: April – June 2025, 11 September 2025, url, p. 3

- 1290

  Daily Post, Gunmen in Army uniform kill soldier, driver in Abia construction site attack, 13 July 2025, url

- 1291

  PIND, Niger Delta Annual Conflict Report, January – December 2024, 25 March 2025, url, p. 10

- 1292

  PIND, Niger Delta Quarterly Conflict Trends: January – March 2025, 5 June 2025, url, p. 3

- 1293

  PIND, Niger Delta Quarterly Conflict Trends: April – June 2025, 11 September 2025, url, p. 3

- 1294

  Vanguard, CSOs decry herdsmen attacks in Southeast, demand justice, 11 May 2025, url

- 1295

  Vanguard, Otti threatens crackdown over rising insecurity in Abia North, 20 June 2025, url

- 1296

  Nigerian Tribune, Abia govt confirms gunmen attack in Aba, 31 July 2024, url

- 1297

Daily Post, Abia community deserted after unknown gunmen attack on military checkpoint, 18 November 2024, url

- 1298

  Vanguard, CSOs decry herdsmen attacks in Southeast, demand justice, 11 May 2025, url

- 1299

  Vanguard, Abia Govt denies engaging ESN to combat herdsmen, 6 April 2025, url

- 1300

  Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025

- 1301

  THISDAY, Police Officer, Two Gunmen, Three Civilians Killed in Aba Attack, 22 July 2024, url ; Channels TV, Soldiers Killing: Army Raids IPOB Camp In Abia, Neutralises Six, 9 June 2024, url

- 1302

  International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Nigeria: January 2024 – August 2025, n.d., url

- 1303

  Vanguard, Otti threatens crackdown over rising insecurity in Abia North, 20 June 2025, url

- 1304

  Daily Post, Gunmen in Army uniform kill soldier, driver in Abia construction site attack, 13 July 2025, url

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu