

2.4.1. Abia

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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, Ukwu East, Ukwu 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 2025[1262](#) 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 violence[1265](#) 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 movement[1268](#) 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](#)

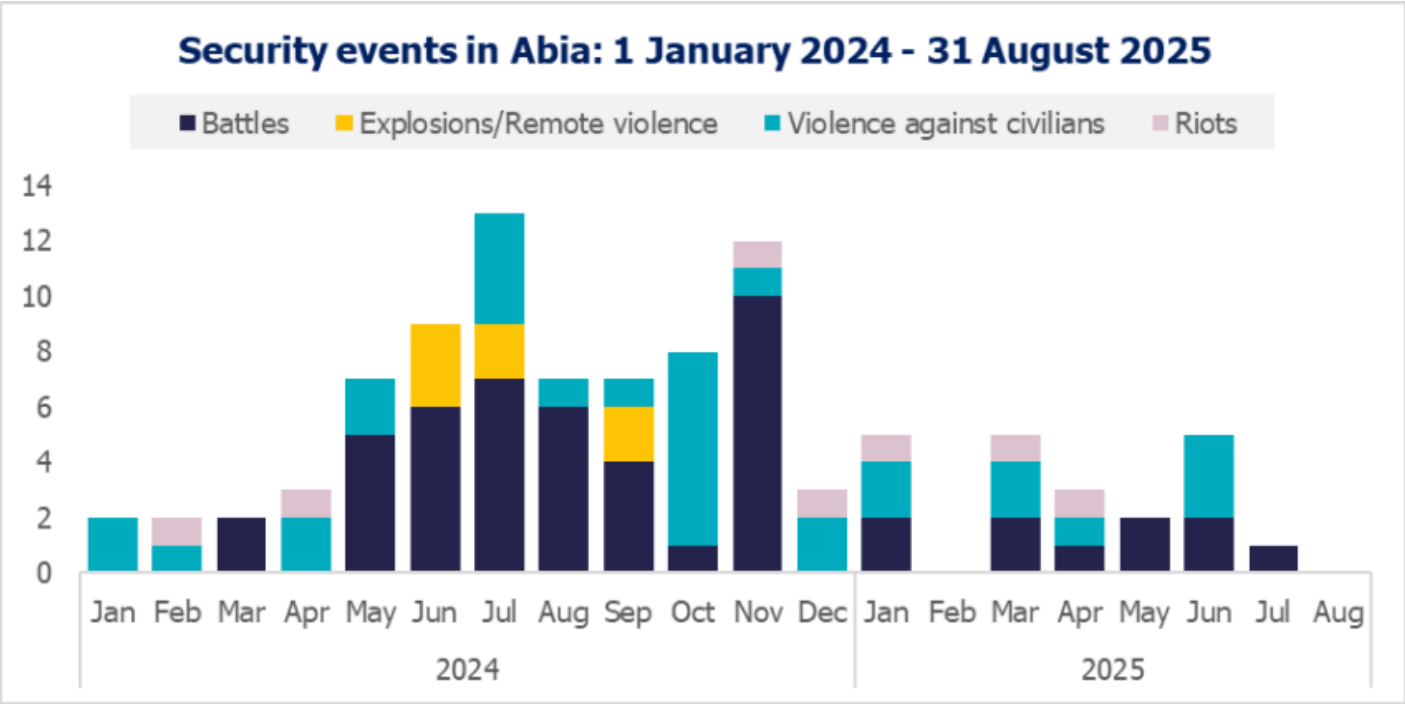


Figure 12: Evolution of security events coded as battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians in Abia state, 1 January 2024 – 31 August 2025, based on ACLED data. [1277](#)

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 2025[1283](#) 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 checkpoint[1286](#) in Aba North LGA,[1287](#) while attacks by unidentified gunmen targeting a police patrol in Aba South LGA killed four civilians in July 2024[1288](#) 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 2024[1291](#) and February, March 2025[1292](#) 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 axis[1295](#) 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 Ugwunagbo[1303](#) and Umuahia North LGAs.[1304](#)

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