

2.4.2. Anambra

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Anambra state is comprised of the following 21 LGAs: Aguata, Awka North, Awka South, Anambra East, Anambra West, Anaocha, Ayamelum, Dunukofia, Ekwusigo, Idemili North, Idemili South, Ihiala, Njikoka, Nnewi North, Nnewi South, Ogbaru, Onitsha North, Onitsha South, Orumba North, Orumba South and Oyi. The capital city is Awka. 1305

The main ethnic group are the Igbos (98 %) and a small population of Igala (2 %) who live in the Northwestern part of the state.1306

UNFPA and the US Census Bureau projected the population of Anambra in 2022 at 5 953 517, based on figures from the 2006 census.1307

a) Conflict dynamics and main actors

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

Anambra state was described as being marked by 'insecurity'1308 as it faced a number of security issues, including cultism, armed robbery,1309 killings1310 and kidnapping.1311 Gunmen carried out multiple deadly attacks across Anambra targeting security forces1312 and vigilantes,1313 with some of these attacks suspected to have been carried out by separatist elements.1314 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 previous years and appeared not to have been implicated in the majority of recent attacks against federal security personnel. According to this source, these attacks seemed to have been carried out by criminal groups 'masquerading' as Biafra agitators or by elements linked to Simon Ekpa's BRGIE. 1315 For more information on BRGIE, see section on Pro-Biafran separatist groups in 1.1.3 Non-state armed actors.

According to Nigeria Watch, in 2024, Anambra recorded one of the lowest numbers of deaths linked to ethnic and communal violence,1316 although civil society organisations in May 2025 reported of 'escalating attacks' by suspected armed bandits and herdsmen on local communities, with Ayamelum and Orumba North LGAs witnessing continued violence.1317

Lethal attacks by unidentified gunmen targeted local communities in Aguata and Orumba North (July 2025),1318 Njikoka (October 2024)1319 and Orumba South LGAs (June 2025).1320 The reference period also saw gunmen shooting and injuring Jude Ezenwafor, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)'s candidate for the Anambra state election due to be held in November

2025,[1321] and assaulting a female member of the National Youth Service Corps.[1322]

b) Security incidents and impact on the population

In the period from 1 January 2024 to 31 August 2025, ACLED recorded 218 security incidents in Anambra state that resulted in a total of 305 fatalities. Of these incidents, 96 were coded as battles, 1 as explosion/remote violence, 13 as riots, and 108 as violence against civilians.[1323]

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Figure 13: Evolution of security events coded as battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians in Anambra state, 1 January 2024 – 31 August 2025, based on ACLED data.[1324]

Security incidents were recorded by ACLED in 20 LGAs of the state, with the highest number documented in Akwa South LGA (46 incidents), followed by Ihiala (30), Aguata (21), and Idemili South LGAs (20). There was only one LGA where no incidents were recorded. According to ACLED, unidentified armed groups and unidentified cult militias (coded as either 'Actor1' or 'Actor2') were involved in the majority of incidents coded as violence against civilians.[1325]

According to Nigeria Watch, Anambra witnessed 88 fatalities arising from cult-related violence (more than any other state), with the state capital of Awka described as a stronghold of cult activities. Deadly incidents attributed to cults occurred recurrently in Awka city (in March,[1326] October[1327] and November 2024[1328]), as well as in Awka South LGA (October 2024),[1329] Oyi (April 2025)[1330] and Orumba North LGA (June 2025),[1331] often near premises of institutions of higher education.[1332] The clashes in Oyi LGA involved the Black Axe Confraternity and the Eiye Confraternity.[1333] Amongst others, suspected cult clashes killed 13 people in Awka city in March 2024, between 13[1334] and 16 people in Awka South Local Government Area (LGA) in October 2024,[1335] and at least 13 people in attacks on near higher education facilities in Awka city in October[1336] and November 2024[1337] and in Orumba North LGA in June 2025.[1338] Attacks by unknown gunmen resulted in five deaths in Njikoka LGA (October 2024),[1339] between 10 and 13 deaths in Orumba South LGA (June 2025),[1340] and at least three deaths in Aguata and Orumba North LGAs (July 2025).[1341]

Nigeria Watch recorded 114 fatalities related to pro-Biafran agitation in 2024, the second-highest figure among the five states of the South-East zone, with Aguata and Ihiala among the most severely affected LGAs across the zone.[1342]

Conflict-related infrastructure damage - No information could be found during the reference period.

Road security -It was noted that despite dozens of police checkpoints along roads such as the Enugu-Awka-Onitsha Road, the Onitsha-Owerri Road, the Awka Old Road, the Nkpor Old Road and the Umuchu Road, the state witnessed a high incidence of kidnappings.[1343]

Displacement, movement and return - No information could be found on numbers of individuals affected by conflict-induced displacement in Anambra state during the reference period. Continued communal violence in Ayamelum and Orumba North LGAs prompted farmers

to abandon their lands.1344 No information could be found on returns in Anambra state during the reference period.

c) State response in maintaining law and order

Amnesty International noted that activities of gunmen had turned some communities in the South-East, including parts of Ihiala LGA, into 'ungoverned spaces',1345 while cult groups operated 'unchecked' in several towns, including Awka, Obosi, Ogidi, Onitsha and Umuoji.1346 Civil society organisations observed that the security forces demonstrated 'alarming inertia' in responding to attacks by herdsmen on communities across the region.1347

In Nnewi South LGA, IPOB exercised 'fragmented shadow governance' with the ESN operating checkpoints and enforcing lockdowns, while police were near-absent and courts were closed.1348 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 2024.1349

In January 2025, Anambra State House of Assembly adopted a law to strengthen security and order in the state, establishing a new security outfit called the 'Anambra State Agunechemba' to address key security challenges.1350 Moreover, the state governor launched a new security system named Operation Udo ga Achi ('Operation Peace Shall Reign') comprised of military, police and intelligence, NSCDC and Agunechemba personnel.1351 However, in June 2025, the opposition Young Progressive Party (YPP)'s governorship candidate Paul Chukwuma accused the ruling party of 'poor handling' of security measures, pointing to continued killings, kidnappings and other crimes and alleging that the new Agunechemba security outfit was a 'scam'.1352 Security operations during the reference period led to the arrest or killing of several gunmen,1353 ESN members1354 and cultists.1355

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