

2.4.3. Ebonyi

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Ebonyi state is comprised of the following 13 LGAs: Abakaliki, Afikpo North, Afikpo South, Ebonyi, Ezza North, Ezza South, Ikwo, Ishielu, Ivo, Izzi, Ohaozara, Ohaukwu and Onicha. The capital city is Abakaliki.1356

The majority of the population is Igbo.1357

UNFPA and the US Census Bureau projected the population of Ebonyi in 2022 at 3 242 518, based on figures from the 2006 census.1358

a) Conflict dynamics and main actors

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

The situation in Ebonyi state has been described as being marked by insecurity.1359 Conflicts between farmers and herders have led to fatalities, property destruction, and displacement. 1360 According to a Nigerian senior security adviser interviewed by EUAA in July 2025, the ESN has reduced, if not dislodged, the Fulani presence in the forests of the South-East with considerable success, apparently contributing to a reduction in incidents of kidnappings by Fulani elements across the South-East. However, parts of Ebonyi state still experienced incidents involving forest-based criminal groups.1361 Civil society organisations cited by the Punch newspaper in May 2025 pointed to ‘escalating attacks’ by suspected armed bandits and herdsmen on local communities.1362

The reference period also witnessed a number of deadly clashes linked to long-standing land disputes, including between two communities in Ohaukwu LGA (Ebonyi) and in Ado LGA (Benue) (December 2024)1363 and two further communities1364 in Afikpo North and Afikpo South LGAs. 1365 In Ivo LGA, a decades-long land dispute between two communities in Ogwor and Omobor (Umuobor) villages repeatedly erupted into deadly clashes in late 2024 and early 2025.1366 As of March 2025, it was noted that a more than century-old land dispute between the Abaomege and Ishinkwo communities of Onicha LGA had caused over 100 deaths over the past five years. 1367 Moreover, a number of abductions of rural residents were reported.1368 Deadly cult clashes occurred in Ezza North LGA in January 2024.1369

b) Security incidents and impact on the population

In the period from 1 January 2024 to 31 August 2025, ACLED recorded 71 security incidents in Ebonyi state that resulted in a total of 135 fatalities. Of these incidents, 25 were coded as

battles, 9 as riots, and 37 as violence against civilians, while no incidents were coded as explosions/remote violence.1370

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Figure 14: Evolution of security events coded as battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians in Ebonyi state, 1 January 2024 – 31 August 2025, based on ACLED data.1371

Security incidents were recorded by ACLED in 12 LGAs of the state, with the highest number documented in Ivo LGA (14 incidents), followed by Ohaukwu (12), and Afikpo South LGA (8). There was only one LGA where no incidents were recorded. According to ACLED, unidentified armed groups (16), communal militias and police forces (coded as either 'Actor1' or 'Actor2') were involved in the majority of incidents coded as violence against civilians.1372

According to Nigeria Watch, in 2024, Ebonyi recorded nearly 30 deaths linked to ethnic and communal violence, more than any other state.1373 Amongst others, civilian fatalities resulted from clashes linked to land disputes in Ohaukwu LGA of Ebonyi and Ado LGA of Benue (four deaths),1374 Afikpo North and Afikpo South LGAs (between four1375 and six deaths),1376 and Ivo LGA (at least 13 deaths).1377 Dozens of fatalities resulted from attacks on communities some of which attributed to armed herdsmen, including in Ivo LGA (November 2024)1378 and Ishielu LGA (February 2025),1379 and from attacks by unknown gunmen on communities in Ohaukwu (May 2025),1380 Ishielu (July 2025)1381 and Ivo LGAs (August 2025).1382 Attacks on three villages in Ishielu LGA in February 2025 left 15 people dead,1383 while around 14 deaths resulted from attacks on communities in Ohaukwu LGA in May1384 and Ivo LGA in August 2025. 1385 Three people died in cult clashes in Ezza North LGA in January 2024.1386

According to Nigeria Watch, the state recorded seven fatalities linked to pro-Biafran agitation in 2024, the lowest figure among the five states of the South-East zone.1387 Several deaths resulted from attacks on police forces by suspected IPOB/ESN operatives in the Abakaliki outskirts (March 2024)1388 and by unidentified gunmen along the Abakaliki–Enugu road (April 2024).1389

Conflict-related infrastructure damage - Conflicts between farmers and herders resulted in property destruction.1390 Clashes and armed attacks resulted in damage to buildings and property in Afikpo North/Afikpo South,1391 Ohaukwu,1392 and Ivo LGAs.1393

Road security - No information could be found during the reference period.

Displacement, movement and return - No information could be found on numbers of individuals affected by conflict-induced displacement in Ebonyi state during the reference period. An intra-communal conflict in Ohaukwu LGA was reported to have displaced thousands of residents during the past four years,1394 while many other were displaced as gunmen attacked a community in Ishielu LGA.1395 No information could be found on returns in Ebonyi state during the reference period.

c) State response in maintaining law and order

Civil society organisations observed that the security forces demonstrated ‘alarming inertia’ in responding to attacks by herdsmen on communities across the South-East.1396 Despite a campaign launched by the ESN against Fulani criminal elements in the forests of the South-East, parts of Ebonyi state still experience incidents linked to forest-based criminal groups, a Nigerian senior security advisor told EUAA in July 2025.1397 Meanwhile, security forces raided a camp run by IPOB and ESN in Izzi LGA in March 2024.1398 In July 2025, the Ebonyi State Police Command announced that security operations conducted across all of the state’s 13 LGAs during the first half of 2025 had led to the arrest of 939 individuals suspected of various crimes such as murder, robbery, child abduction and cultism.1399

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