

## 2.5.3. Cross River

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Cross River state is comprised of the following 18 LGAs: Abi, Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Bekwarra, Biase, Boki, Calabar Municipality, Calabar South, Etung, Ikom, Obanliku, Obubra, Obudu, Odukpani, Ogoja, Yakurr, and Yala.[1576](#) The capital city is Calabar.[1577](#)

The main ethnic groups include the Efik, Ejagham and Bekwarra.[1578](#)

UNFPA and the US Census Bureau projected the population at 4 406 204 in 2022, based on figures from the 2006 census.[1579](#)

#### a) Conflict dynamics and main actors

For a general overview on actors in Nigeria, please see section [1.1 Main Actors](#).

Communal conflicts over land were ‘prevalent’ in Cross River state in 2024,[1580](#) and a major driver of violence and insecurity during the reference period.[1581](#) Another source of insecurity was cult/gang-related violence,[1582](#) involving abductions,[1583](#) and killings.[1584](#) Sea pirates were also involved in abductions for ransom, targeting passengers travelling by boat between Cross River and Akwa Ibom states.[1585](#)

#### b) Security incidents and impact on the population

In the period between 1 January 2024 and 31 August 2025, ACLED recorded 45 security incidents in Cross River state, resulting in 56 fatalities. Of these security incidents, 17 were coded as battles, 11 as riots, and 17 as violence against civilians.[1586](#)

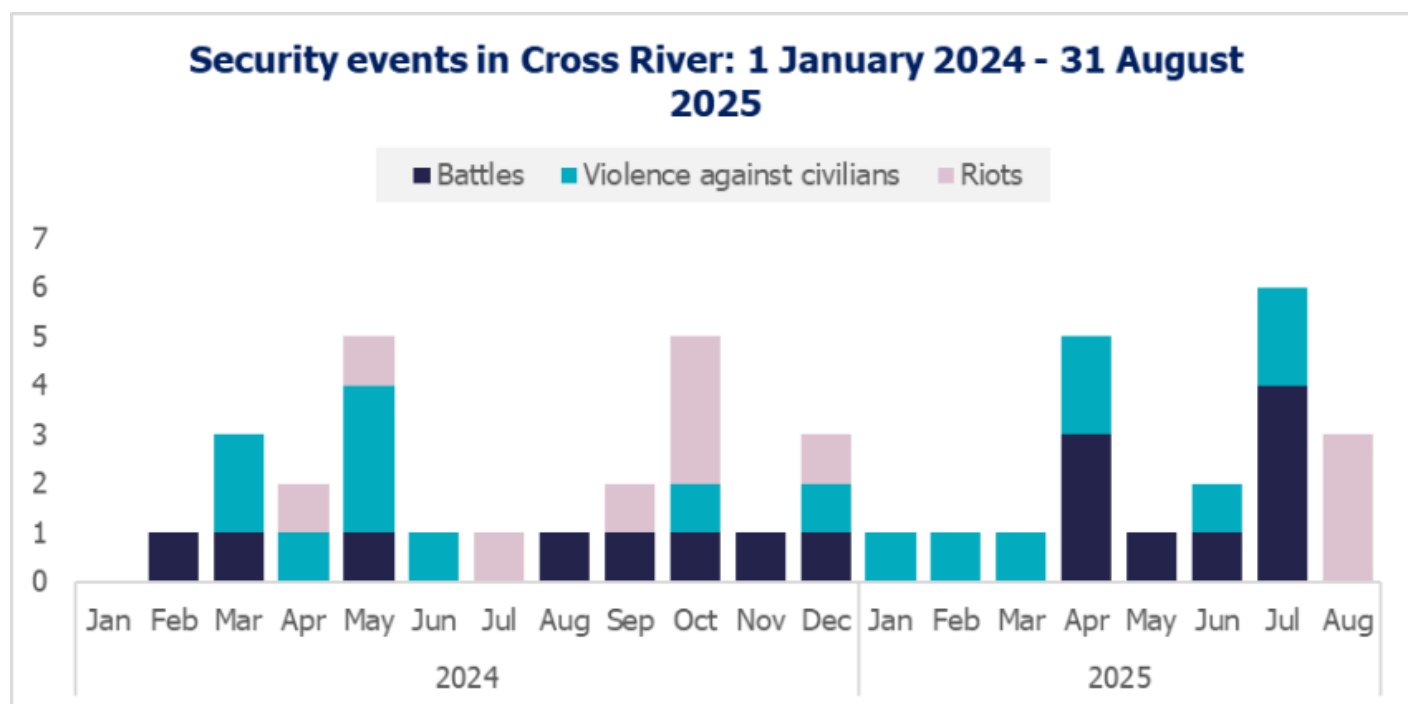


Figure 17: Evolution of security events coded as battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians in Cross River state, 1 January 2024 – 31 August 2025, based on ACLED data.[1587](#)

Security incidents were recorded by ACLED in 10 LGAs of the state, with the highest number documented in Calabar Municipality LGA (13), followed by Biase (7), and Akamkpa and Odukpani (6 each) LGAs. No security incidents were recorded in 8 LGAs. According to ACLED, unidentified armed groups, communal militias and pirates (coded as either ‘Actor 1’ or ‘Actor 2’) were involved in the majority of incidents coded as violence against civilians.[1588](#)

In the period from January to March 2025, the number of reported conflict incidents reportedly halved compared to 2024. However, the number of fatalities remained unchanged, according to PIND. These fatalities resulted mainly from inter- and intracommunal violence, particularly in Akamkpa and Odukpani LGAs, as well as from cult/gang-related violence.[1589](#) In October 2024, Ambazonia Freedom Fighters from Cameroon reportedly attacked communities in Akamkpa LGA; [1590](#) six fighters were later detained by the Cross River police command.[1591](#)

Lethal clashes were recorded between communities in Obubra and Ikom LGAs in 2024,[1592](#) as well as within or between communities in Akamkpa,[1593](#) Odukpani[1594](#) and Biase[1595](#) LGAs in the first half of 2025. Moreover, inter-communal violence in the context of a land and boundary dispute between the Ukwa community (Odukpani LGA, Cross River) and the Isu community (Arochuckwu LGA, Abia) resulted in fatalities in May 2024,[1596](#) and January 2025.[1597](#)

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

**Road/waterway security** - Punch noted in May 2025 that due to ‘rampant’ sea piracy and insecurity, travelling along the Oron-Calabar waterway between Akwa Ibom and Cross River states had become increasingly dangerous.[1598](#)

**Displacement, movement and return** - According to UNHCR, there were 45 978 refugees from abroad residing in Cross River state as of 1 June 2025.<sup>[1599](#)</sup> As of the end of June 2025, Cross River state hosted more than 50 000 refugees, particularly from Cameroon, according to the State Governor quoted by Cross River State News.<sup>[1600](#)</sup> No information could be found on conflict-induced displacement or returns in Cross River state during the reference period.

### **c) State response in maintaining law and order**

Punch noted in May 2025 that pirates seemed to have taken full control of the Calabar-Oron waterway. Boat drivers reportedly complained about ongoing attacks and kidnappings despite paying for security agencies.<sup>[1601](#)</sup> In the context of deadly clashes between Biakpan and Etono communities in Biase LGA, the state's police command announced a major disarmament operation in both communities as earlier interventions by security agencies had been ignored and local leaders refused to cooperate in restoring peace.<sup>[1602](#)</sup>

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