

2.6.5. Oyo

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Oyo state is comprised of the following 33 LGAs: Afijio, Akinyele, Atiba, Atisbo, Egbeda, Ibadan North, Ibadan North-East, Ibadan North-West, Ibadan South-East, Ibadan South-West, Ibarapa Central, Ibarapa East, Ibarapa North, Ido, Irepo, Iseyin, Itesiwaju, Iwajowa, Kajola, Lagelu, Ogbomoso North, Ogbomoso South, Ogo Oluwa, Olorunsogo, Oluyole, Ona Ara, Orelope, Oriire, Oyo East, Oyo West, Saki East, Saki West and Surulere.1892 The capital city is Ibadan.1893

The population is predominantly Yoruba, and may be divided into five large sub-ethnic groups with distinct dialects: Ibadans, Ibarapas, Oyos, Oke-Oguns and Ogbomosos.1894

UNFPA and the US Census Bureau projected the population of Oyo state at 7 976 081 in 2022, based on figures from the 2006 census.1895

a) Conflict dynamics and main actors

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

In July 2025, Vanguard quoted an official saying that although there was ‘relative peace’ in Oyo state in comparison with other states, banditry and kidnapping were still prevalent in some parts of the state. Security threats were particularly prominent in the state’s ‘vast hinterlands’, mainly due to the ‘influx of bandits’.1896 THISDAY quoted another official speaking in February 2025 about a ‘tide of banditry and criminality’ in some parts of the state, including parts of Oyo Township, Ogbomoso, Oke-Ogun, Ibarapa, and Ibadan.1897

National media reported on incidents involving unidentified armed men during the reference period, mostly in cases of kidnapping,1898 often from the victims’ homes.1899

In December 2024, the Oyo Police Commissioner pointed to an increase in cultism and related criminal activities, motivated by fights for supremacy, particularly in the Ibadan areas of Apete, Abayomi (the Iwo Road axis), Ijokodo, Moniya, Monatan, Ojoo, Samonda, and Sango.1900 Nigerian Tribune reported in June 2025 that the Black Axe (Aye) ‘frequently unleashed terror’ on residents in Saki town and other Oke Ogun areas.1901 FIJ wrote about a cult-related attack inside university premises in Ogbomoso town (Ogbomoso North LGA).1902 The main cult groups mentioned as operating in Oyo state were the Black Axe and the Eiye cult groups.1903

National media also reported on incidents of killings in the context of so-called money rituals. 1904 These are rituals where people are killed, or body parts used in the belief that such rituals will bring wealth to the perpetrators.1905

A secessionist group active in Oyo state reportedly was the Yoruba Nation.[1906] Some sources mentioned an attempted takeover of government buildings in Ibadan by Yoruba Nation agitators in April 2024.[1907]

b) Security incidents and impact on the population

In the period 1 January 2024 to 31 August 2025, ACLED recorded 66 security incidents in Oyo state, resulting in 54 fatalities. Of these security incidents, 31 were coded as battles (most of them between Black Axe and Eiye cult groups), 10 as riots, and 25 incidents were coded as violence against civilians.[1908]

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Figure 40: Evolution of security events coded as battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians in Oyo state, 1 January 2024 – 31 August 2025, based on ACLED data. [1909]

Security incidents were recorded by ACLED in 23 LGAs of the state, with the highest numbers documented in Akinyele LGA (11 incidents), followed by Ibadan North-West LGA (8 incidents), Ibadan North and Egbeda LGAs (6 incidents each), and Lagelu and Ogbomoso North LGAs (4 incidents each). No incidents were recorded in ten LGAs. Unidentified armed groups (coded as either 'Actor 1' or 'Actor 2') were involved in the majority of cases coded as violence against civilians.[1910]

For example, Benedikt Akika, a chieftain of the PDP in Oyo state was abducted by unknown gunmen who forcefully entered his residence in Lagelu LGA in September 2024.[1911] He was reportedly freed some days later following a large-scale police search that also included cross-border forests with neighbouring Ogun, Ondo and Edo states.[1912] A suspected member of the Eiye confraternity was reportedly killed by the rival Black Axe cult group on 7 July 2025, allegedly in the context of the latter group's so-called 7 7 Day celebrations,[1913] which marked the foundation date of the cult group.[1914]

Conflict-related infrastructure damage - The Guardian Nigeria explained that violent conflicts with herders and bandits negatively affected the South-West zone's food production, including in the agrarian suburbs of Oyo state, as farmers were increasingly abandoning their farms due to the rising insecurity.[1915] No further information could be found on infrastructure damages during the reference period.

Road security - Kidnapping 'black spots' included the Ijebu-Ibadan Road, the Igbeti, Igboho and Oke-Ogun axis, as well as the Igbeti-Igboho Road and Ijebu-Ibadan Road. Within the Ibadan area, incidents reportedly occurred near the Obafemi Awolowo Stadium and the Felele area.[1916] Kidnappings were also reported along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway,[1917] and the Lanlate-Eruwa Road.[1918]

Displacement, movement and return - No information could be found during the reference period.

c) State response in maintaining law and order

Government forces conducted rescue operations for kidnapping victims, together with local hunters, as well as vigilantes,1919 and/or Amotekun forces.1920 Amotekun forces were also involved in the surveillance of roads known for kidnapping attacks,1921 and of border areas and 'vulnerable points' together with police and military forces and local vigilante groups.1922

Measures taken by the police forces to fight cult-related crime included intelligence gathering, advocacy campaigns, stakeholder meetings, and intelligence-led raids, according to the state's police commander.1923

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