

2.6.6. Lagos

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Lagos state is comprised of the following 20 LGAs: Agege, Alimosho, Ajeromi-Ifelodun, Kosofe, Mushin, Oshodi-Isolo, Ojo, Ikorodu, Surulere, Agege Ifako-Ijaye, Shomolu, Amuwo-Odofin, Lagos Mainland, Ikeja, Eti-Osa, Badagry, Apapa, Lagos Island, Epe, and Ibeju-Lekki.1924 The capital city is Ikeja.1925

The State is predominantly Yoruba-speaking. Lagos is a heterogeneous state, with indigenous inhabitants including the Aworis and Eguns, among other groups.1926

UNFPA and the US Census Bureau projected the population of Lagos state at 13 491 804 in 2022, based on figures from the 2006 census.1927

a) Conflict dynamics and main actors

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

In May 2025, Punch described Lagos state as ‘a hotspot’ for cultism and crime, including armed robbery, drug-related crime, carjacking and abductions.1928 According to government data, Ikeja, Lagos Island, and Lekki were the ‘top three crime locations’ of the state in the period January 2024 - May 2025.1929 Similarly, already in the beginning of the reference period, Vanguard quoted the state commissioner of police describing cultism, traffic robbery and abductions as the ‘prominent crime’ in Lagos state.1930 The Nation pointed to a rise in criminal activities such as kidnappings, robberies, violent clashes and killings, especially in Lagos Island, Lekki and Okota areas.1931 In comparison, of those LGAs mentioned above, ACLED lists only Ikeja as one of the LGAs with the highest number of recorded security incidents (see below). 1932

In terms of cult-related violence, a report of July 2025 by SBM described Lagos as an ‘epicentre of gang warfare’,1933 and a ‘hotspot’1934 for the Black Axe and Eiye cult groups fighting for supremacy and control over crime in the state.1935 Other cult groups operating in Lagos state included the Buccaneers,1936 and ‘street-based gangs’,1937 such as the Kesari and Idi-Araba Boys,1938 and the Awawa Boys. Several sources reported on children and minors being recruited into cult gangs,1939 and being involved in cult-related violence.1940

FIJ reported on an incident of neglect,1941 and various national sources reported on incidents of maltreatment by officers of state security agencies.1942

b) Security incidents and impact on the population

In the period 1 January 2024 - 31 August 2025, ACLED recorded 185 security incidents in Lagos state, resulting in 150 fatalities. Of these security incidents, 98 security incidents were coded as battles (the majority of them involving cult groups), 40 as riots, and 47 incidents were coded as violence against civilians.1943

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Figure 41: Evolution of security events coded as battles, explosions/remote violence, riots, and violence against civilians in Lagos state, 1 January 2024 – 31 August 2025, based on ACLED data.1944

Security incidents were recorded by ACLED in all 20 LGAs of the state. The highest numbers were documented in Alimosho LGA (33 incidents), followed by Ojo (29), Ikorodu (18) and Ikeja and Eti-Osa LGAs (10 incidents each). Unidentified armed groups and cult militias, police and military forces (coded as either 'Actor 1' or 'Actor 2') were involved in the majority of cases coded as violence against civilians.1945

According to Nigeria Watch, Lagos state scored second in terms of deadly cult-related violence in 2024, predominantly due to the Black Axe (Aye) and Eiye confraternities.1946 Cult-related violence was reported during the entire reference period and occurred in various LGAs, for example in Ojo LGA in January 2024,1947 Ajegunle/Ajeromi-Ifelodun LGA in April 2024,1948 Mushin LGA in August 2024,1949 Amuwo-Odofin LGA in January 2025,1950 Ebute-Metta area/Lagos Mainland LGA in April 2025,1951 Ikorodu LGA in May 2025,1952 and Meiran area/Alimosho LGA in July 2025.1953 A 12-year-old boy was reportedly killed by a stray bullet during a clash between rival cult groups in Mushin LGA in July 2025.1954 A vigilante was killed, and his colleague were abducted in an attack by unknown gunmen on Igbe community in Ikorodu LGA in January 2025.1955 In the period December 2024 - April 2025, the community reportedly recorded more than seven kidnapping attacks, and many residents were leaving the community as a result.1956 In June 2024, a 17-year old girl was reportedly raped by a police officer at the police station where she had gone to get help tracking her phone that had been stolen earlier. In February 2025, following claims by the victim's family that they were pressured by the alleged suspect's family, the officer was taken into prison custody.1957

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

Road security - Incidents of kidnapping or attempted kidnapping were reported along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway,1958 and the Lekki-Epe Expressway.1959 As of August 2025, no further information could be found on road security in Lagos state during the reference period.

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

c) State response in maintaining law and order

In February 2024, following incidents of kidnapping and other crimes, Lagos and Ogun state police initiated joint patrols along the Lagos-Ibadan motorway.1960 In March 2025, the police reportedly arrested a robbery syndicate operating 'along Mile 2 to Alakija and Badagry

Expressway',1961 and in August 2025, 68 suspected criminals were arrested, including seven persons suspected of committing armed robberies by posing as security personnel.1962 Several specialised police units reportedly conducted a large-scale security operation ahead of the cultist 7/ 7 Day celebrations in July 2025, and arrested an unspecified number of suspects.1963 One official reportedly noted that 'lawmakers often face pressure to bail out arrested cultists', 1964 and one source reported on investigations on the alleged role of a specialised police unit in the release of six suspected cult members in Ojo LGA.1965

A study by the African Cities Research Consortium (ACRC) quoted by Premium Times, identified state and non-state agencies as among the 'key players' in terms of insecurity in Lagos (alongside with cult groups, land grabbers, and street gangs) due to incidents of abuse of power, human rights violations or the 'aiding and abating of criminal conducts'. The same source noted the security agencies were 'overstretched' with the rapidly growing population and related security issues.1966

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