(a) Security situation in Nigeria: recent events

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: March 2026

Situation in Nigeria

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: Security 2025, 1., 1.1.1., 1.2.1.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Nigeria continued to face a variety of concurrent security and multifaceted challenges, keeping the country in a state of security crisis. Islamist insurgency led by Boko Haram and other Islamist groups has continued to affect northern Nigeria. Tensions between herders and farmers over livelihoods persisted across the country, in particular the North-Central and North-West. Inter- and intra-communal clashes linked to land and resource disputes also occurred, mainly in the North-Central and North-West, with some incidents also reported the southern states. By early 2024, banditry violence had become increasingly lethal and widespread, particularly in the North-West, North-Central, South-West, and in Lagos. Gang and cult networks dominate violence in the South-South and South-West, while the South-East has also experienced significant unrest. Furthermore, Biafra secessionist activities in the South-East continued to be reported.

Presence, methods and tactics of actors

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: Security 2025, 1.1.1., 1.1.3., 1.2.1., 1.2.2., 1.2.3., 1.2.5., 1.2.6.; COI Update 2026, 1.1.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Nigeria's security landscape remains dominated by a complex array of armed actors.

Nigerian security forces have conducted counter-insurgency and counter-offensive operations against various armed groups, including Islamist groups, criminal gangs/banditry, farmer–herder militias, and separatist movements. Such operations have been conducted through air and ground campaigns, clearance operations, ambushes, and airstrikes often causing civilian casualties.

Boko Haram continued to carry out armed attacks resulting in civilians' killings. During its operations against government forces, ISWAP adapted to the government's 'super camp' strategy, including through the deployment of motorcycle-mounted combat units, rapid assaults with light weaponry but also attacks using rifles and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), nighttime raids, bombings, the use of drones, large-scale offensive, near-simultaneous attacks and diversionary operations, assaults on strategic roads and bridges, as well as attacks to heavily fortified 'super camps'. JAS primarily relied on imposing 'taxes', plundering, kidnapping residents, and attacking military posts. Lakurawa assaulted villages, levied 'taxes', and engaged in armed attacks, abductions, and banditry. Ansaru has been linked to several high-profile attacks and kidnappings in Kaduna state and across Nigeria. Mahmuda was involved in clashes with security forces in Niger and Kwara states and has carried out attacks, kidnapping for ransom, forced labour, and illegal taxation, in order to finance its operations. Reports also mentioned IED attacks, unclaimed suicide attacks, large-scale kidnappings, and militants shooting down military aircraft with anti-aircraft weapons.

ESN, in the context of its campaign against Fulani, dislodged Fulani herder and criminal settlements and carried out guerrilla-style attacks on police and military installations. BRGIE, considered more violent than IPOB, was linked to an increase in violent activities, including attacks against federal security personnel. The BLA has carried out violent attacks in the South-East, including kidnapping, killing, sexual violence, and trafficking in human beings.

Intercommunal and farmer–herder conflicts involved armed attacks, at times mass-casualty attacks, large-scale kidnappings, and killings of abductees.

Farmer and herder groups, inter- and intra-communal groups, and bandits often overlap. For more information on methods and tactics of bandits, see 4.2.2. Criminal violence. For general information on the presence of different armed actors in Nigeria and their main human rights violations, see 2. Actors of persecution or serious harm. For state level information, see 3.4.4.b. Assessment of indiscriminate violence per state

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☐ Security incidents and geographical scope

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: Security 2025, 1.2.7.; COI Update 2026, 2.2.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Data concerning this indicator are based on ACLED reporting from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025. For more information on the methodologies of data collection see Security 2025, Sources.

According to ACLED data, 8 654 security incidents occurred across Nigeria during the reference period. Of these incidents, 3 415 were coded as battles, 410 as explosions/remote violence and 4 829 as violence against civilians. The highest numbers of security incidents were recorded by ACLED in Borno, Katsina and Zamfara states. By contrast, the fewest incidents were recorded in Gombe, Jigawa and Ekiti states.

Figure 3: Breakdown by state of number of security events recorded by ACLED, between 1 January 2024 - 31 December 2025

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☐ Fatalities

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: Security 2025, 1.2.7.; COI Update 2026, 2.2.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Data concerning this indicator are primarily based on ACLED reporting from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025. All ACLED fatality figures provided here are estimates based on ACLED’s methodology. ACLED’s database does not distinguish between

civilian and non-civilian fatalities and only provides figures of direct deaths or fatalities per event, not of injured persons and casualties.

ACLED recorded a total of 21 504 fatalities as having been caused by security incidents coded as ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’, across Nigeria. The highest number of fatalities were recorded in Borno, Zamfara and Katsina states. By contrast, the fewest fatalities were recorded in Gombe, Ekiti and Bayelsa states.

Figure 4: Breakdown by state of number of fatalities recorded by ACLED, between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025

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☐ Conflict-related displacement

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: Security 2025, 1.2.7.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

According to UNHCR, as of August 2025, 3 575 114 IDPs and 23 732 refugee returnees (meaning Nigerian refugees who had fled mostly to Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Sudan and returned) were living in Nigeria. The highest number of people were displaced in the North-East, mainly due to insurgency, followed by the North-West and North-Central, driven by a variety of conflict-related dynamics. At state level, most IDPs were recorded in Borno, Benue, Katsina, Zamfara and Adamawa states.

According to the IDMC, 295 000 people were newly displaced across the country as a result of conflict and violence, including nearly 123 000 due to criminal violence in the North-West (Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara), 57 000 due to conflict in states such as Borno and Yobe, and 43 000 as a result of communal violence in Benue.

☐ Further impact on civilians

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: Security 2025, 2.; Country Focus 2025, 1.2., 2.4.3., 2.10., 3.4., 3.4.1., 3.8.2.; COI Update 2026, 1., 2.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Conflict-related infrastructure damage remained widespread. Such damage includes the destruction of roads, bridges, communication lines, as well as attacks/destruction/burning of schools, hospitals and healthcare centres, religious sites, markets, farms, telecommunications infrastructure and private property such as houses, shops and vehicles. Attacks also resulted in the looting of medical supplies, the occupation of medical facilities, as well as livestock rustling and destruction of farm produce. Insecurity led many farmers to abandon their fields or prevented them from accessing markets to sell their harvests. Road security remained a concern and criminality was widespread in many areas of Nigeria (see also 4.2.2.Criminal violence).

The humanitarian crisis persisted, particularly in the North-East, North-Central and North-West, with an estimated 3 million children suffering from acute malnutrition. Insurgent attacks across Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe have caused infrastructure destruction, resulting in obstruction of humanitarian aid. In Benue and other southern states, insecurity and poor road conditions have similarly constrained the presence of humanitarian actors.

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