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22

Annual Review of

Nigeria's Violent Conflict Profile

Insights from the Nextier Violent
Conflict Database

April 21, 2023



Insights from the Nextier Violent Conflict Database

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Data from the Nextier Violent Conflict Database is culled from reported violent conflict incidents from major national dailies.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASP	Assistant Superintendent of Police
CJTF	Civilian Joint Task Force
COAS	Chief of Army Staff
DSS	Department of State Services
ESN	Eastern Security Network
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IGP	Inspector General of Police
IPOB	Indigenous People of Biafra
ISWAP	Islamic State West Africa Province
KVA	Kilo Volt Amperes
L-PRES	Livestock Productivity and Resilience Support Project
LGA	Local Government Area
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
NAF	Nigerian Air Force
NAITS	National Animal Identification System and Traceability System
NAPDEP	National Pasture Development Programme
NECO	National Examination Council
NLTP	National Livestock Transformation Plan
NOA	National Orientation Agency
NPTF	Nigeria Police Trust Fund
NSCDC	Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps
OPHK	Operation Hadin Kai
OPSC	Operation Safe Corridor
RRS	Rapid Response Squad
SCID	State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department
UK	United Kingdom
UNSAG	Unknown Non-State Armed Groups

Executive Summary

All efforts to resolve the violent conflicts in Nigeria have not yielded the desired results. Violent conflicts were reported in all regions of the country in 2022. Banditry for example, plagued the Northwest region. Terrorism and banditry were reported in the Northcentral region. Terrorist groups coordinated violent attacks that led to deaths and displacements in the Northeast. The Southwest and South South recorded a mix of communal conflict, farmer-herder conflict, kidnapping, and cult-related violence. Beyond the secessionist-related violent conflict in the Southeast, the region recorded mostly communal clashes and farmer-herder violence.

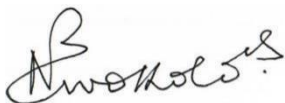
To quell this situation, the government took steps to address the violent conflict across the country. One of the most significant steps taken was the launch of several military operations against the non-state armed groups. This action recorded some successes in reducing criminal capacity to launch spontaneous attacks. Yet, the country's brutal conflict situation has persisted, and numerous citizens have been caught in the re-occurring volley. This trend makes it clear that the government's primary kinetic effort is insufficient to stop the insecurity that is afflicting the nation.

This report examined key trends in conflict and how the government has responded. It identified the challenges, successes, and suggested solutions for resolving the various violent conflicts. The Nextier Violent Conflict Database and secondary data sources were leveraged to create this report.

The database's findings identified frequent conflict types, key actors (state and non-state) and revealed violent patterns. Through the findings and recommendations in this report, we hope to enhance security, peace and sustainable development to achieve stability and prosperity in Nigeria and Africa.

As you may know, Nextier is an international development consulting firm that uses evidence-based research and policy to develop and build knowledge and skills for governing the society. Nextier works with various government institutions, aid agencies, and international development partners. The firm works collaboratively with local communities and stakeholders to explore conflict problems, develop long-term solutions, strengthen cohesion in marginalized communities, and build resilience.

Overall, Nextier supports aid-funded programmes that explore solutions to Nigeria's peace and security problems. Our projects are delivered with significant consideration, given their impacts on the people and society. We rely on our networks and expertise to provide suitable analysis, program project management, practical training and technical assistance to government and international development agencies.



Ndubuisi N Nwokolo, PhD.
Partner, Nextier

Definition of Violent Conflict Types

In this report, the definition of the conflict types is based on a review of violent conflicts' literature, Nigeria's mainstream media reports and a broad understanding of context-specific factors in the violent hotspots.

- 1. Banditry** refers to organised criminal activities committed by “Bandit groups” in Northwest, Northcentral and parts of Northeast Nigeria. The Nigerian government officially declared two bandit groups (Yan Bindiga and Yan Ta'adda) operating in the Northwest region as terrorist organisations. However, reports indicate that there are about a hundred 100 bandit groups.
- 2. Terrorism** refers to the violence caused by “terrorist groups” in the Northeast, Northwest and parts of Northcentral Nigeria.
- 3. Farmer-Herder Conflict:** refers to the armed clashes between “farmers” and “herders” across Nigeria.
- 4. Extra-Judicial Killings** refers to the deliberate killing of a person or people without legal authority across Nigeria. This report categorised unlawful killings by state actors and mob action as extra-judicial killings.
- 5. Secessionism** refers to the violence associated with the calls to withdraw parts of Nigeria from the larger entity. This report captures violent activities in Southwest and Southeast Nigeria, where the calls for secession are pronounced.
- 6. Cultism** refers to violent clashes between rival cult groups. It could also involve security personnel and civilians.
- 7. Kidnapping** refers to kidnapping as the abduction or taking away of a person or group against the, and the confinement of a person in a controlled space for an illegal purpose. Different conflict types, like terrorism and banditry, have records of kidnapping. Note that kidnapping is a conflict type and is also a feature in other conflict types.
- 8. Gunmen** refers to media-reported unknown gangs committing crimes. Although gunmen attacks happen across Nigeria's six regions, they are prevalent and frequently linked to separatist agitators in the Southeast, such as the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

Methodology

Since 2020, Nextier has maintained a database of violent conflicts in Nigeria. It gathers data on violent deaths, injuries, and kidnapping victims from reliable traditional and new media sources in Nigeria, such as newspapers, television, and online sources. The database records violent conflicts like banditry, terrorism, extra-judicial killings, farmer-herder incidents, armed robbery, cultism, piracy, secession agitation, and communal clashes.

The database records violent incidents from the community to regional levels in Nigeria. Nextier triangulates the data sources by leveraging our extensive media contacts across Nigeria. So far, Nextier has recorded violent conflicts in Nigeria for almost three years (June 2020 - April 2023).

The Nextier Violent Conflict Database provides detailed insights into violent conflicts in Nigeria for research, policy advocacy, development and security. As a result, the database is a goldmine for crucial sector players and decision-makers looking to implement evidence-based prevention and mitigation strategies in the face of Nigeria's rising violent conflicts.

This report leveraged insights from the database by analysing trends and identifying key actors and prevalent conflict types. Additionally, the report used important secondary sources previously gathered and accessible to the public. The categories of secondary data sources include published governmental, commercial, and non-profit reports and online sources.

Introduction

Over 60,000 lives were lost to Nigeria's security challenges in the last decade.¹ Violent conflicts such as insurgency, banditry, farmer-herder disputes, gang wars and separatist agitations have continued to afflict the country.² These issues have led to killings, property destruction, worsening poverty, and displacement. According to John Campbell and Robert Rotberg (2021), "if a state's first obligation is to provide security and maintain a monopoly on the use of violence, then Nigeria has failed, even if some other aspects of the state still function." For them, the unchecked violence perpetrated by several criminal groups increasingly threatens the government's grip on power.³

Several socio-economic and political factors predisposed Nigeria to the current violent conflict profile. Some include arms proliferation, high unemployment, poverty rate, the politicisation of security agencies, and the misappropriation of resources.⁴ The culture of impunity among public officers propels a lack of accountability, misgovernance and failed institutions. Although the Nigerian government is implementing numerous measures to address these security concerns, the issues are still prevalent.⁵ As a result of this situation,

stakeholders have frequently demanded that the government address underlying socio-economic challenges and improve intelligence-gathering mechanisms to end insecurity in the country.⁶

During the review period, banditry was Nigeria's leading security challenge, particularly in the Northwest and Northcentral regions. The bandits, usually heavily armed, engage in criminal activities such as robbery, ransom kidnappings, and cattle rustling.⁷ Bandit attacks have harmed rural and urban areas, making it difficult for people to go about their daily lives. In terms of its disruptive impact and intensity of violence, banditry is the gravest security threat that Nigeria currently faces, and it is driving the nation's worst humanitarian crisis in decades.⁸ Other lingering security crises across the country include secessionism, terrorism, cultism, extra-judicial killings, and farmer-herder conflict. Southeast Nigeria, for example, is besieged by secessionist-related violence. Factional terrorist groups have continued to carry out attacks in Northeast Nigeria.

¹Alade, A. (2022) How multiple conflicts claimed 60,000 lives in 10 years, Daily Trust. Available at: <https://dailytrust.com/how-multiple-conflicts-claimed-60000-lives-in-10-years/> (Accessed: March 8, 2023).

²Ibid

³Campbell, J. and Rotberg, R.I. (2021) The Giant of Africa is failing, Foreign Affairs. Available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/africa/2021-05-31/giant-africa-failing> (Accessed: March 13, 2023).

⁴Anuku, W. (2022) Insecurity: Boko Haram killed 33,127 in 10 years - experts, Daily Post Nigeria. Daily Post Nigeria. Available at: <https://dailypost.ng/2022/06/27/insecurity-boko-haram-killed-33127-in-10-years-experts/> (Accessed: March 8, 2023).

⁵Achumba, I.C., Ighomereho, O.S. and Akpor-Robaro, M.O. (2013) Security challenges in Nigeria and the implications for business. Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development. Available at: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/234645825.pdf> (Accessed: March 8, 2023).

⁶Omoniye, T. (2021) ANALYSIS: Intelligence failure compounding insecurity in Nigeria, Premium Times. Available at: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/456057-analysis-intelligence-failure-compounding-insecurity-in-nigeria.html> (Accessed: March 8, 2023).

⁷Bankole, I. (2022) Bandits kidnap 16 in Kaduna Community, Vanguard News. Available at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/12/bandits-kidnap-16-in-kaduna-community-2/> (Accessed: March 8, 2023).

⁸Osasona, T. (2022) The question of definition: Armed banditry in Nigeria's north-west in the context of international humanitarian law: International review of the Red Cross, Cambridge Core. Cambridge University Press. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3T9GyKz> (Accessed: March 8, 2023).

Banditry



Image by Anadolu Agency

Background

Banditry in Nigeria is perpetrated by criminal gangs that rustle cattle, kidnap victims, and extort communities. Banditry has become a local term often used by the Nigerian media to categorise criminal gangs, primarily operational in Nigeria's Northwest and Northcentral regions. Their activities have also been recorded in the Northeast.⁹ Bandits are estimated to be around 30,000 members operating in more than 100 gangs in the northwest.¹⁰ The largest bandit group boasts of about least 2,000 fighters, nearly the size of two Nigerian army battalions.¹¹

The Nextier Violent Conflict Database reveals that Kaduna and Zamfara states are the most hit in scale and frequency of violent attacks.

¹² The situation exacerbates as though the two States are vying to surpass each other in the scale of violence. For example, on 28th March 2022, bandits ambushed a train bound for Kaduna from Abuja, Nigeria's capital city. At least eight passengers were killed, and 168 others were kidnapped.¹³ In another incident on 11th June 2022, bandits abducted about 50 Zamfara phone dealers on their way to the state capital from Sokoto State.¹⁴ Bandit groups possess varying operational and technical capabilities. Their operations are generally covert.¹⁵ They exert their influence and terror on primarily underserved and ungoverned poor communities, further impoverishing the populace.



645
Banditry Incidents



3,324
Casualties



2,432
Kidnap Victims



Northern
Nigeria

The Trend of Banditry in Northwest, Northeast and Northcentral

Banditry: Incidents and Casualties

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

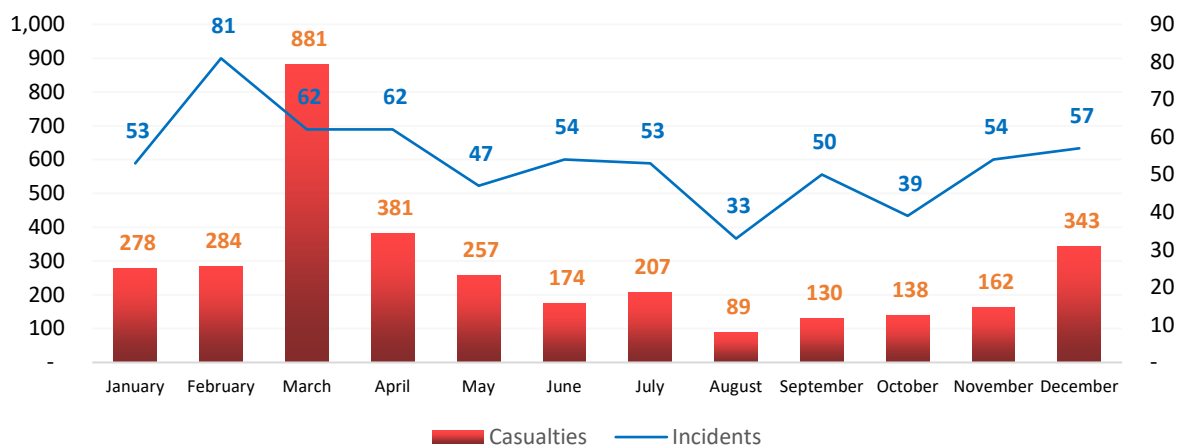


Figure 1: Banditry: Incidents and Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Banditry: Incidents and Kidnap Victims

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

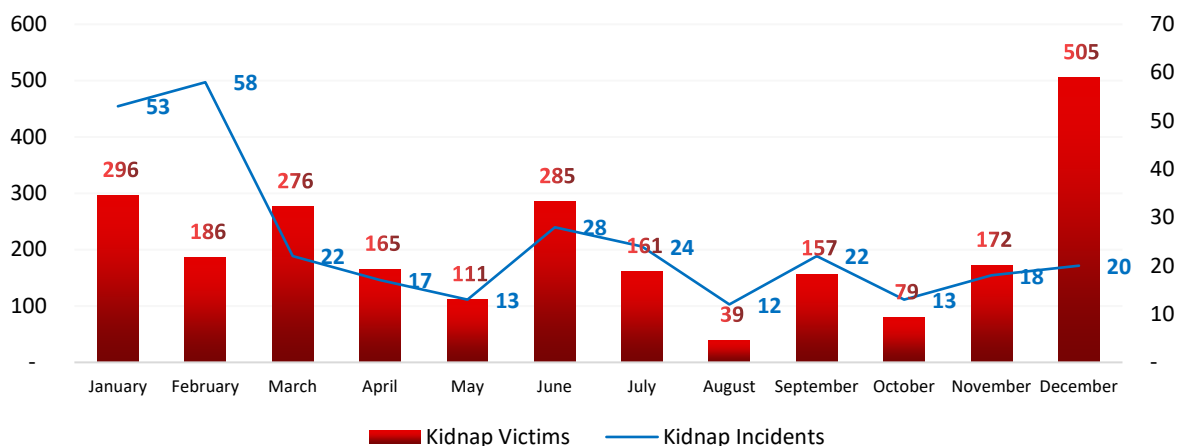


Figure 2: Banditry: Incidents and Kidnap Victims (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

⁹Anyadike, O. (2023) Inside Nigeria's banditry epidemic, The New Humanitarian. Available at: <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2023/01/30/Nigeria-banditry-Zamfara> (Accessed: March 13, 2023).

¹⁰Anyadike, O. (2023) Inside Nigeria's banditry epidemic, The New Humanitarian. Available at: <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2023/01/30/Nigeria-banditry-Zamfara> (Accessed: February 17, 2023).

¹¹Ibid

¹²Nigeria security situation analysis report (2022) The Nextier . Available at: <https://thenextier.com/nigeria-security-situation-analysis-report/> (Accessed: March 16, 2023).

¹³Ayitogo, N. (no date) ANALYSIS: Why insecurity persists in Kaduna despite heavy military, security presenc, Premium Times . Available at: <https://www.premium-timesng.com/news/headlines/524334-analysis-why-insecurity-persists-in-kaduna-despite-heavy-military-security-presence.html> (Accessed: March 8, 2023).

¹⁴Shehu Umar, G. (2022) Bandits abduct 50 GSM dealers in Zamfara, Daily Trust. Available at: <https://dailytrust.com/bandits-abduct-50-gsm-dealers-in-zamfara/> (Accessed: March 8, 2023).

¹⁵Sallek Yaks Musa.(2022) Nigeria's banditry: Why 5 government strategies have failed, The Conversation. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/nigerias-banditry-why-5-government-strategies-have-failed-181208> (Accessed: February 16, 2023).

¹⁶Wuyo, I.H. (2021) Banditry: It's Hausa-Fulani War, Zamfara traces origin of hostilities, Vanguard News. Available at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/04/banditry-its-hausa-fulani-war-zamfara-traces-origin-of-hostilities/> (Accessed: March 9, 2023)

¹⁷Banditry in Nigeria: Insights from Situational Action and situational crime prevention theories (2022) ACCORD. Available at: <https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/banditry-in-nigeria-insights-from-situational-action-and-situational-crime-prevention-theories/#:~:text=Some%20of%20the%20factors%20that,activities%20in%20the%20North%20West.> (Accessed: February 17, 2023).

¹⁸Sadiq, L. (2020) Religious clerics driving Kaduna Violence - el-Rufai, Daily Trust. Available at: <https://dailytrust.com/religious-clerics-driving-kaduna-violence-el-rufai/> (Accessed: March 9, 2023).

¹⁹Tyopuusu, J. (2022) Can condemn video inciting Muslims against Christians in Taraba, Punch Newspapers. Available at: <https://punchng.com/can-condemn-video-inciting-muslims-against-christians-in-taraba/> (Accessed: March 9, 2023).

²⁰Ayandele, O. (2021) Confronting Nigeria's Kaduna crisis, Africa Center for Strategic Studies. Available at: <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/confronting-nigerias-kaduna-crisis/> (Accessed: February 17, 2023).

Banditry: Casualties by Region

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

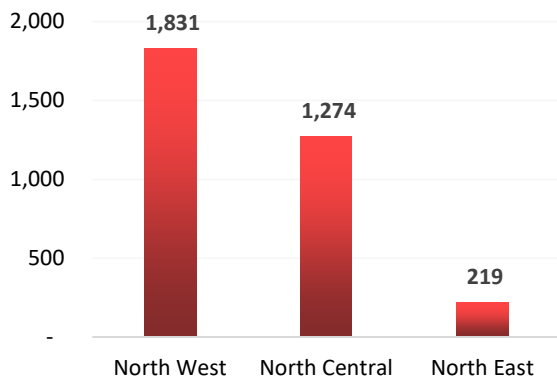


Figure 3: Banditry: Casualties by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Banditry: Incidents by Region

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

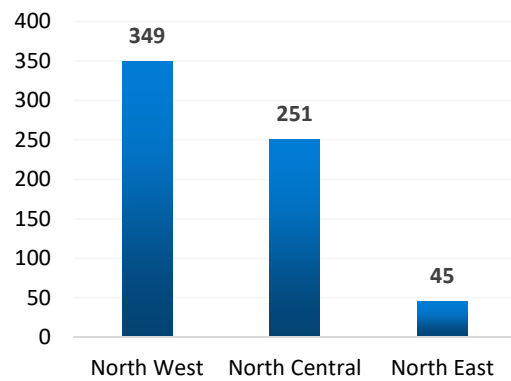


Figure 4: Banditry: Incidents by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Banditry: Kidnap Victims by Region

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

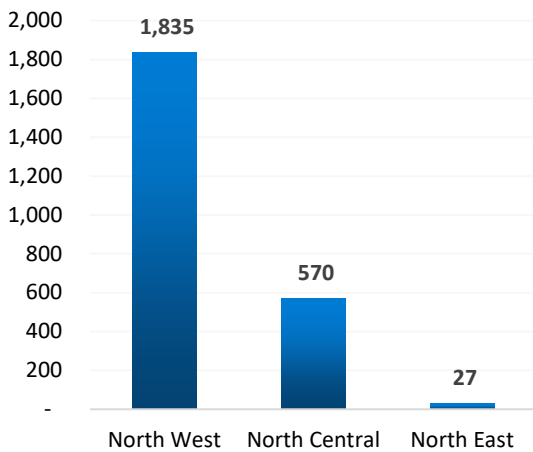


Figure 5: Banditry: Kidnap Victims by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Banditry: Kidnap Incidents by Region

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

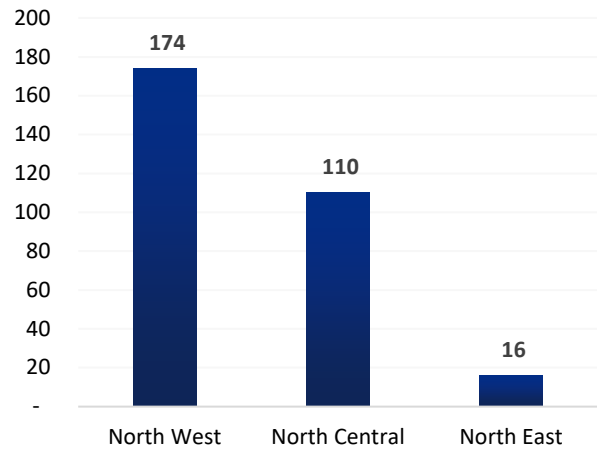


Figure 6: Banditry: Kidnap Incidents by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Banditry: Top 10 States by Casualties

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

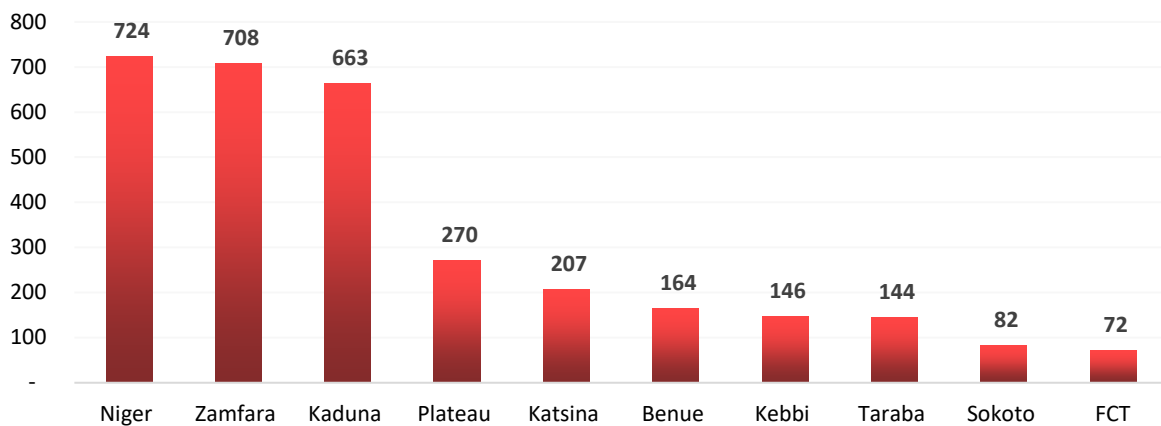


Figure 7: Banditry: Top 10 States by Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Banditry: Top 10 States by Incidents

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

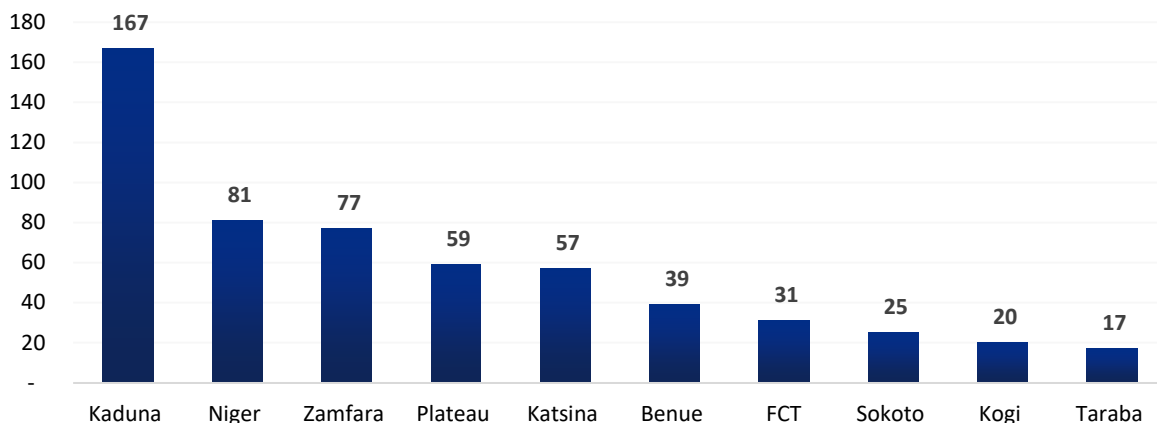


Figure 8: Banditry: Top 10 States by Incidents (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Banditry: Top 10 LGAs by Casualties

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

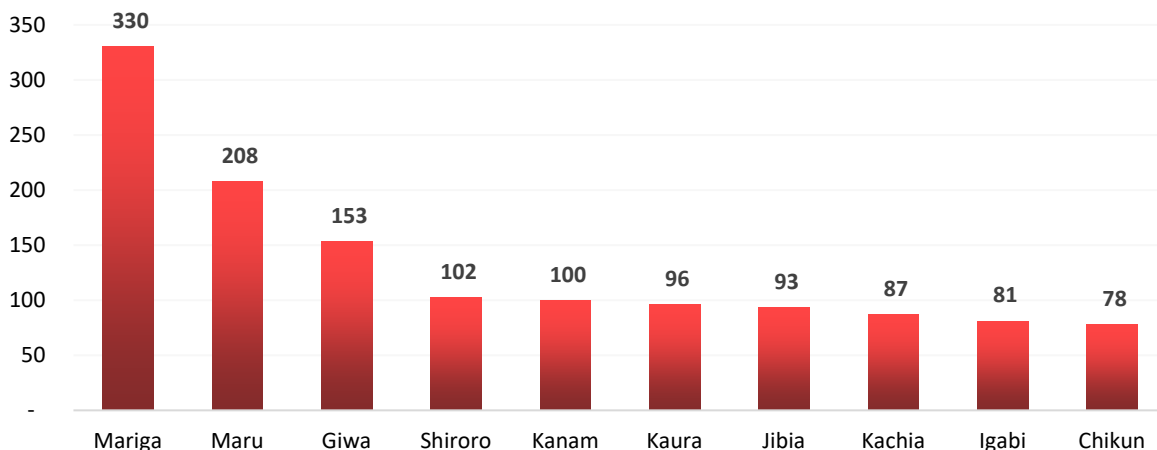


Figure 9: Banditry: Top 10 LGAs by Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Banditry: Top 10 LGAs by Incidents

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

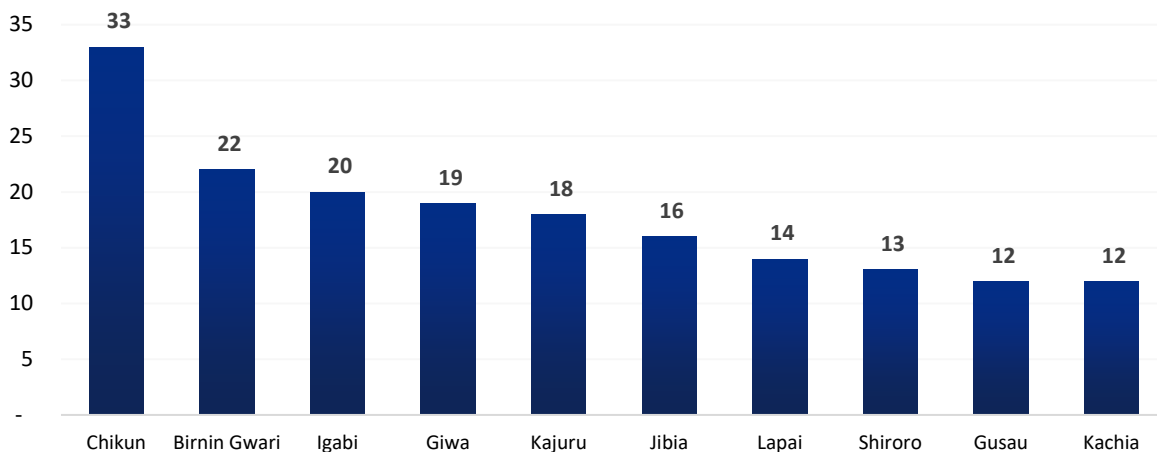


Figure 10: Banditry: Top 10 LGAs by Incidents (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Banditry: Top 10 LGAs by Kidnap Victims

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

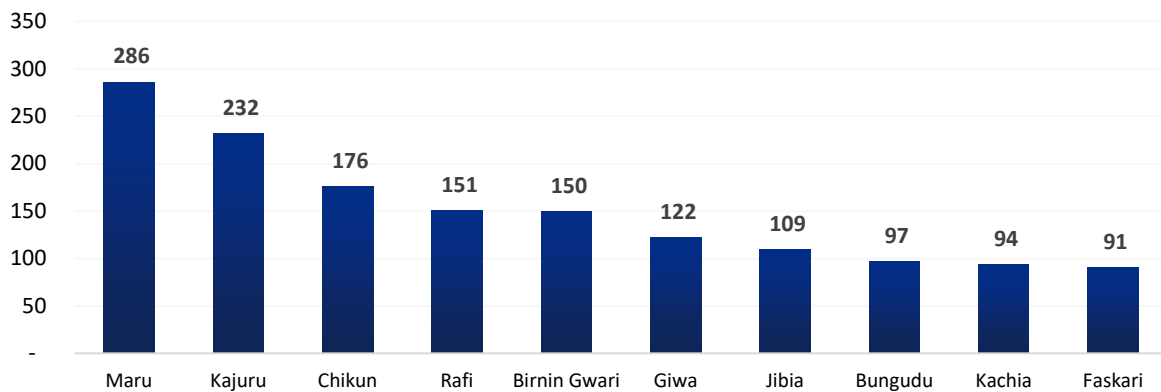


Figure 11: Banditry: Top 10 LGAs by Kidnap Victims (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Banditry: Top 10 LGAs by Kidnap Incidents

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

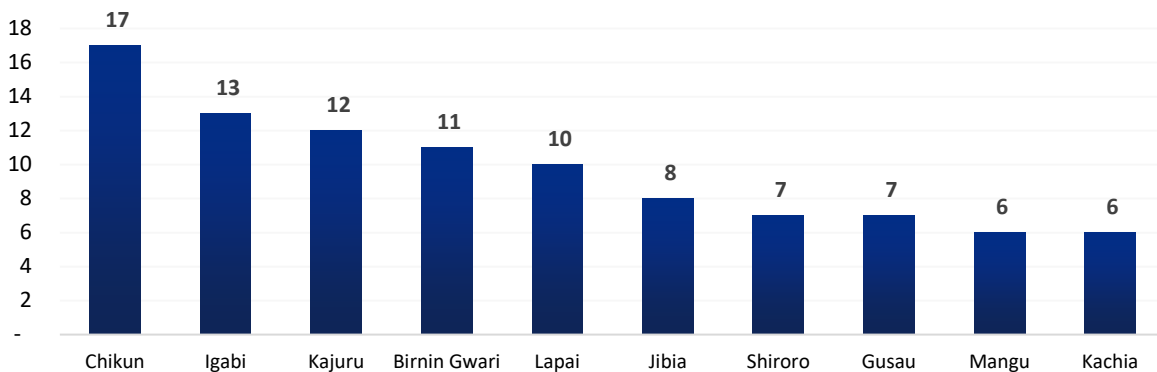


Figure 12: Banditry: Top 10 LGAs by Kidnap Incidents (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Key Drivers of Banditry

Several factors drive banditry in the Northwest and Northcentral. Historically, banditry has been traced to disagreements between Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups. According to Zamfara state's commissioner of information, Hon Ibrahim Magaji Dosara, "the genesis of the [current] conflict in Zamfara began with the killing of a highly respected Fulani leader, Alhaji Ishe, of Chilin village in Kuyambana district of Dansadau Emirate in Maru Local Government Area of the state in April 2013."¹⁶ Besides the hostility between the Hausa and Fulani, some scholars argue that competition for water and land, under-governed spaces, weak security apparatus, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, unemployment, cattle rustling, illegal mining activities and poverty are the leading cause banditry in Nigeria.¹⁷

Also, religious biases play a dominant role

in fuelling banditry. The Governor of Kaduna State, Nasir El-rufai, once alleged that some religious clerics fuel violence in the state.¹⁸ Besides this claim, records have shown that clerics use their influence to instigate violence against persons of different religious backgrounds.¹⁹

Government Responses

In 2022, the federal government depended largely on kinetic strategies. Security operations like the Sahel Sanity, Hadarin Daji and Operation Accord were deployed.²⁰ The troops fiercely engaged bandits by targeting their bases and camps in the region. The affected sub-national governments have also committed to ending the bandit's assault. For example, the Kaduna state government has spent at least ₦16 billion on security without enduring success.²¹ In 2022, the Zamfara state government considered shutting down the

state's mobile communication network for the second time.²² In addition, the state Governor, Mohammed Matawalle, once directed residents, particularly farmers, to obtain weapons to defend themselves against the state's prevalent armed group activities.²³

The Nigerian Army has embarked on social welfare missions to enhance civil-military relations in some rural communities. For instance, in July 2022, the Nigerian Army in Kaduna provided free medical services to 5,000 people in Sabon Gayan, Chikun Local Government Area, Kaduna State.²⁴ As part of the Nigerian Army's non-kinetic approach to strengthening ties with communities across Northcentral Nigeria, the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lt Gen Faruk Yahaya, donated a solar-powered industrial borehole equipped with a 20 KVA generator to Rinze Community in Akwanga West Development Area of Nasarawa State.²⁵

Through dialogues, security agencies and stakeholders have also tried to re-evaluate their security strategies and approaches. In August 2022, the National Orientation Agency (NOA) collaborated with security agencies and other stakeholders to discuss using effective soft-power measures in a coordinated non-kinetic response to insecurity. The security agencies and stakeholders in attendance agreed to collaborate in deploying practical non-kinetic approaches alongside kinetic answers to resolve security challenges in the country.²⁶ Also, in December 2022, directors of the Department of State Services (DSS) and other stakeholders in Northwest states converged in

Zamfara State to review the general security situation and propose solutions to the region's multifaceted security challenges.

Successes and Challenges

The Nigerian military recorded some progress in eliminating bandits. For example, in September 2022, the Nigerian Air Force bombed a bandit warlord's, Bello Turji, hideout in Fakai forest in Shinkafi Local Government Area of Zamfara State, killing scores of criminals.²⁷ Recently, Kachalla Gudau, a notorious bandit leader who controlled swaths of soldiers terrorising Kaduna state's Chikun, Kachia, and Kajuru Local Government Areas, was neutralised by Nigerian Army troops.²⁸

Part of the challenge is that sub-national governments in the affected states lack adequate resources to complement the federal government's efforts. For instance, state-backed vigilante groups lack sufficient manpower, training, equipment, and cooperation to combat bandits. Also, bandits are emboldened by the government's lack of adequate connection,²⁹ particularly with crucial stakeholders, and its exclusionary or slow response to intelligence.³⁰ Additionally, the Nigerian military services are on active deployment in 30 states,³¹ tackling internal security threats that ordinarily should have been left to the police to contain. With security forces stretched, terror groups have operated in the Northwest and Northcentral with little resistance from security forces.

²¹Jeremiah, U. (2020) Kaduna Govt spends N16 BN on security in 5 years – El-rufai, Vanguard News. Available at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/08/kaduna-govt-spends-n16-bn-on-security-in-5-years-el-rufai/> (Accessed: March 9, 2023).

²²Dahiru, A. (2022) Will another network shutdown save Zamfara residents from terror? HumAngle. Available at: <https://humanglemedia.com/will-another-network-shutdown-save-zamfara-residents-from-terror/> (Accessed: March 9, 2023).

²³Terrorism: Zamfara Gov directs residents to acquire guns to defend themselves (2022) THISDAYLIVE . Available at: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2022/06/26/terrorism-zamfara-gov-directs-residents-to-acquire-guns-to-defend-themselves/> (Accessed: March 16, 2023).

²⁴Daniels, A. (2022) Nigerian Army offers free medical services to 5,000 in Kaduna Community, The Sun Nigeria. Available at: <https://sunnewsonline.com/nigerian-army-offers-free-medical-services-to-5000-in-kaduna-community/> (Accessed: March 16, 2023).

²⁵North Central: COAS prioritizes non-kinetic operations in tackling insecurity (2022) ThisNigeria. Available at: <https://thisnigeria.com/north-central-coas-prioritizes-non-kinetic-operations-in-tackling-insecurity/> (Accessed: February 17, 2023).

²⁶Security agencies team up on non-kinetic response to insecurity (2022) National Orientation Agency. Available at: <https://www.noa.gov.ng/noa-security-agencies-team-up-on-non-kinetic-response-to-insecurity/> (Accessed: March 16, 2023).

²⁷Daily Trust (2022) Many bandits feared killed as military bombs Turji's hideout in Zamfara, Daily Trust. Available at: <https://dailytrust.com/breaking-many-bandits-feared-killed-as-military-bombs-turjis-hideout-in-zamfara/> (Accessed: February 17, 2023).

²⁸Shiklam, J. (no date) Nigerian Army neutralises bandits' kingpin in kaduna, THISDAYLIVE Nigerian Army Neutralises Bandits Kingpin in Kaduna Comments. Available at: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2022/11/16/nigerian-army-neutralises-bandits-kingpin-in-kaduna/> (Accessed: February 17, 2023).

²⁹Ayitogo, N. (2022) ANALYSIS: Why insecurity persists in Kaduna despite heavy military, security presence, Premium Times. Available at: <https://www.premium-timesng.com/news/headlines/524334-analysis-why-insecurity-persists-in-kaduna-despite-heavy-military-security-presence.html> (Accessed: March 9, 2023).

³⁰Akinyemi, B.O. (2022) Every intelligence is local: SO is US security report on Nigeria by Bolaji O. Akinyemi, Sahara Reporters. Available at: <https://saharareporters.com/2022/10/31/every-intelligence-local-so-is-us-security-report-nigeria-bolaji-o-akinyemi> (Accessed: March 9, 2023).

Fixing the Problem

- Solving banditry is complex. However, addressing banditry's economic and social causes is likely the most effective way to deal with the issue in Nigeria.
- The government should commence a radical sensitisation programme across the affected states to dissuade young people from joining or enabling bandit activities.
- Local intelligence connections must be strengthened. Local intelligence sources have previously provided state security agencies with information on bandit hideouts, food and fuel supplies, and information networks.³²
- The government must establish transitional justice platforms through which grievances can be heard and true healing can be achieved.

³¹Ibid

³²Iro, A. and Oarhe, O., 2021. COUNTERING BANDITRY IN NIGERIA: EXAMINING THE CONTRADICTIONS OF PROGRESS. [online] Nextierspd.com. Available at: <<https://nextierspd.com/countering-banditry-in-nigeria-examining-the-contradictions-of-progress/>> [Accessed 5 April 2022].

³³Ike, T.J., Antonopoulos, G.A. and Singh, D. (2020) Community perspectives of terrorism and the Nigerian government's counterterrorism strategies: A systematic review. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/17488958221110009> (Accessed: February 17, 2023).

³⁴Ibid

Terrorism



Background

Northeast Nigeria has endured terrorism over the last decade. According to a 2022 report, terrorist attacks in Nigeria exponentially increased between 2020 and 2021. The attacks have contributed to the displacement of two million internally displaced persons in Nigeria and the broader Lake Chad Basin Area. Borno State, for example, has recorded extreme humanitarian challenges. An estimated 800,000 people require humanitarian help in the state. As a result, most of the affected populace lacks food, water, and health care. Internally displaced people seek succour in overburdened displacement camps and often hostile host communities, where essential human services are sparse.

According to the 2022 Global Peace Index, Nigeria is ranked 143 out of 163 independent nations and territories regarding peacefulness. Nigeria moved up three spots on the list, from

146th in 2021 to 143rd in 2022. Before this time, about \$1.35 trillion was estimated as the multiplier effect of direct and indirect violence costs. With a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$448.1 billion in 2019, 30 per cent (\$132.6bn) of the nation's GDP was used in violent conflict containment. The conflict has aggravated health and social issues, especially for children, that may last beyond the cessation of hostilities. According to the 2023 Global Terrorism Index, Nigeria is ranked 8th amongst the countries most impacted by terrorism. Out of ten countries that accounted for 85 per cent of deaths from terrorism, Nigeria accounted for 6 per cent. Despite the impact of terrorism over the years, terror attacks fell considerably to 120 incidents in 2022 compared to 214 in 2021. Nonetheless, Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) remains the deadliest terror group in Nigeria for the third consecutive year.



The Trend of terrorism in the Northeast

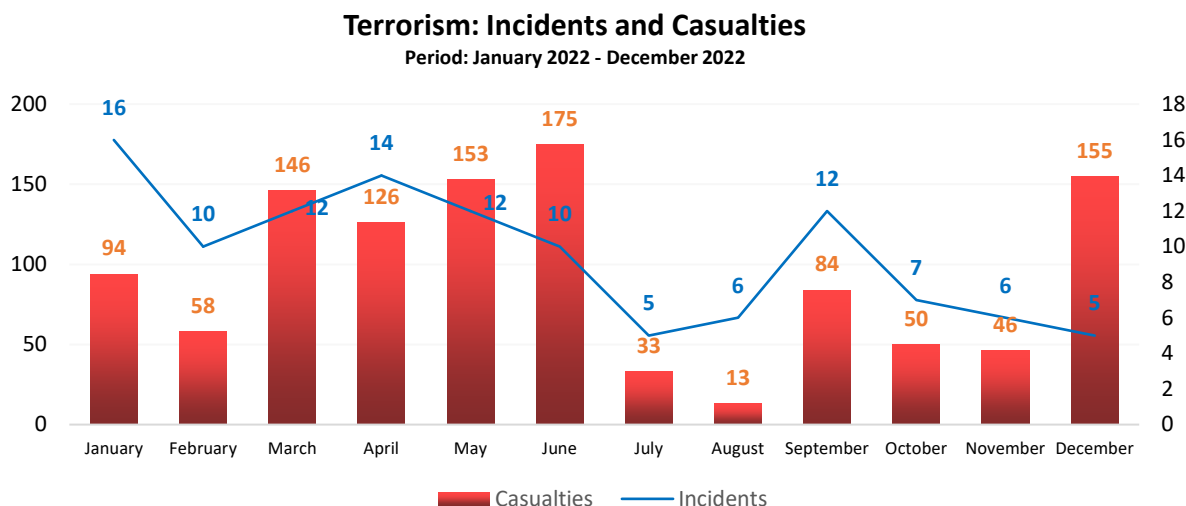


Figure 13: Terrorism: Incidents and Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

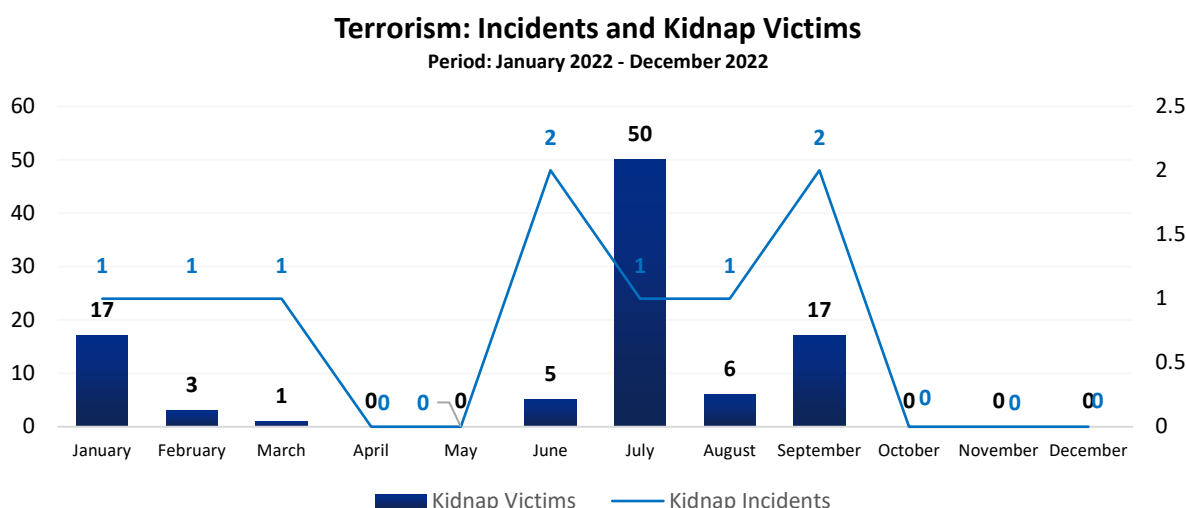


Figure 14: Terrorism: Incidents and Kidnap Victims (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

³⁵Imasuen, E. (1970) Insurgency and Humanitarian Crises in Northern Nigeria: The case of boko haram, Mendeley. Available at: <https://www.mendeley.com/catalogue/20fd812-fbf6-35d5-80fb-d4e3415c215a/> (Accessed: February 17, 2023).

³⁶Conflict and food insecurity in Borno State, Nigeria (no date) Development Initiatives. Available at: <https://devinit.org/resources/conflict-and-food-insecurity-in-borno-state-nigeria/> (Accessed: February 17, 2023).

³⁷Usman, S. (2021) Nigeria: Plans to close IDP camps in Maiduguri could endanger lives - nigeria, International Journal of Sustainable Development. International Journal of Sustainable Development. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/nigeria-plans-close-idp-camps-maiduguri-could-endanger-lives> (Accessed: March 8, 2023).

³⁸Violence costs Nigeria \$1.3trn in 13 years (2021) BusinessDay. Available at: <https://conferences.businessday.ng/graphics/violence-costs-nigeria-1-3trn-in-13-years/> (Accessed: March 8, 2023).

³⁹Ibid

⁴⁰Global Terrorism Index (2023). Institute for Economics & Peace, Sydney. Available from: <http://visionofhumanity.org/resources> (Accessed: March 8, 2023).

⁴¹Zulum calls for urgent security measures to curtail ISWAP (2022) THISDAYLIVE. Available at: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2022/01/13/zulum-calls-for-urgent-security-measures-to-curtail-iswap/> (Accessed: March 9, 2023).

⁴²Adebajo, K. (2022) How are terrorists in Nigeria funding their violent campaigns? HumAngle. Available at: <https://humanglemedia.com/how-are-terrorists-in-nigeria-funding-their-violent-campaigns/> (Accessed: February 20, 2023).

Terrorism: Casualties by Region

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

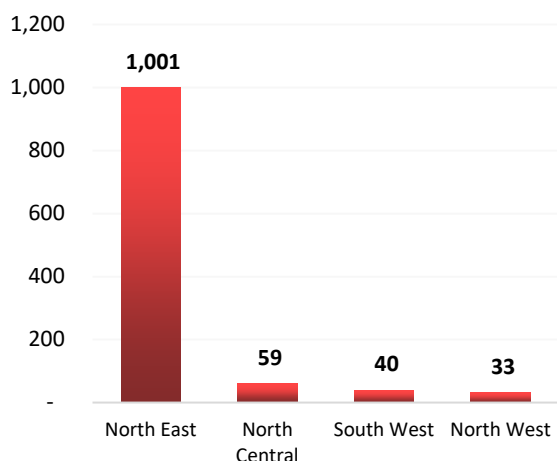


Figure 15: Terrorism: Casualties by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Terrorism: Incidents by Region

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

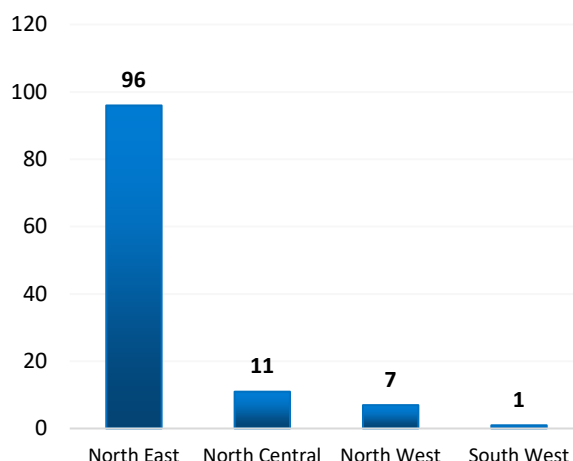


Figure 16: Terrorism: Incidents by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Terrorism: Kidnap Victims by Region

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

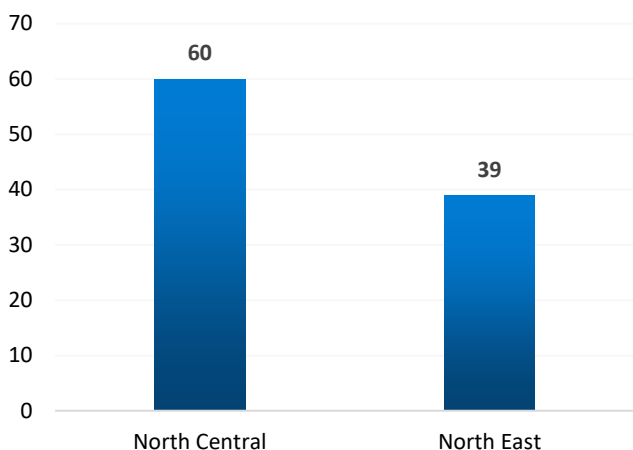


Figure 17: Terrorism: Kidnap Victims by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Terrorism: Kidnap Incidents by Region

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

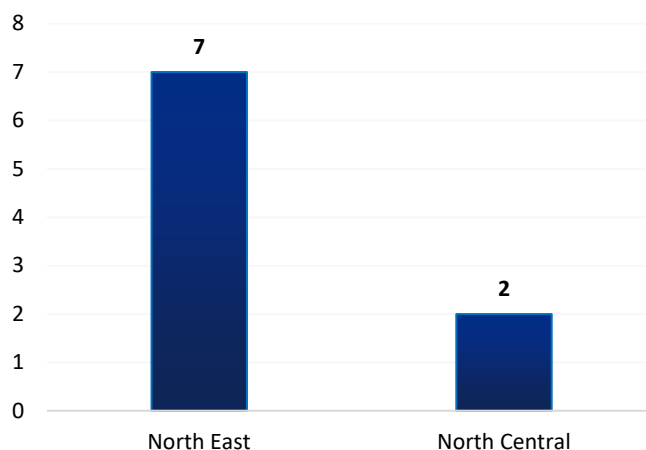


Figure 18: Terrorism: Kidnap Incidents by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Terrorism: Casualties by State

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

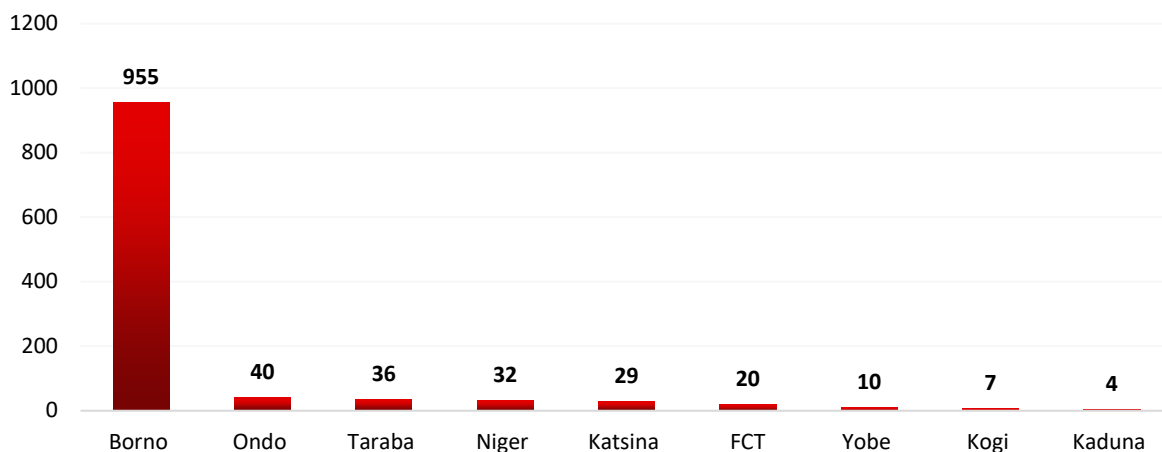


Figure 19: Terrorism: Casualties by State (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Terrorism: Incidents by State

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

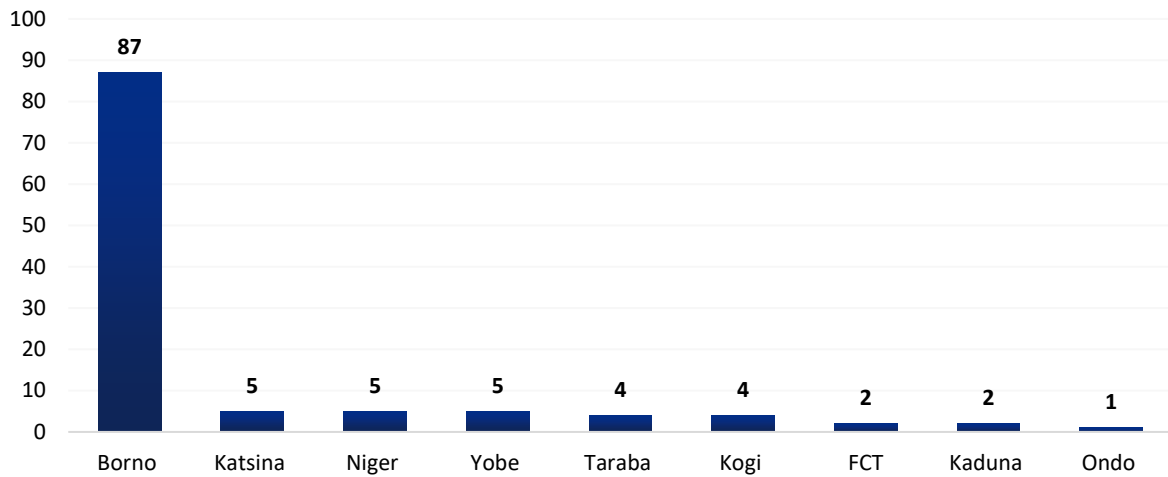


Figure 20: Terrorism: Incidents by State (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Terrorism: Kidnap Victims by State

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

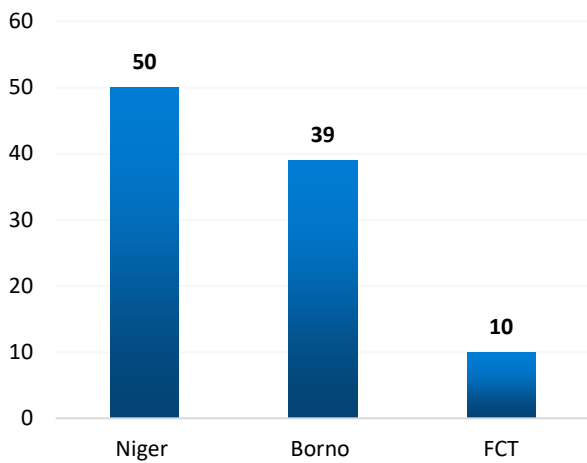


Figure 21: Terrorism: Kidnap Victims by State (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Terrorism: Kidnap Incidents by State

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

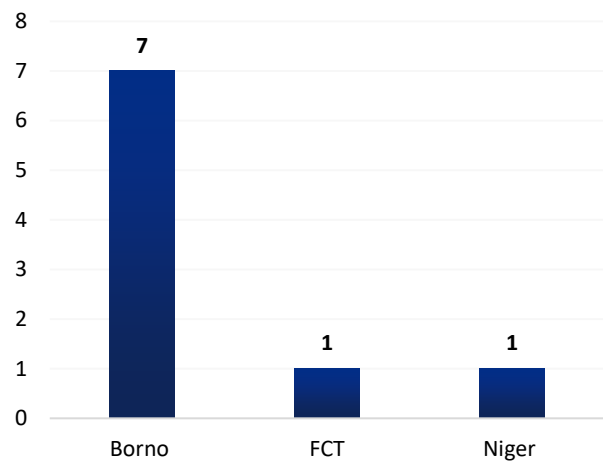


Figure 22: Terrorism: Kidnap Incidents by State (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Top 10 LGAs with Highest Terrorism Casualties

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

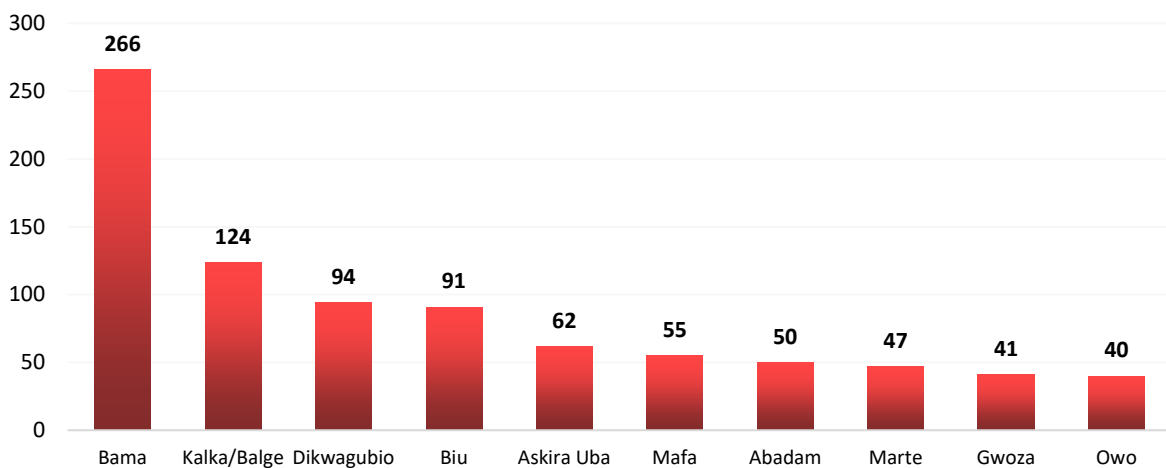


Figure 23: Top 10 LGAs with Highest Terrorism Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Top 10 LGAs with Highest Terrorism Incidents

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

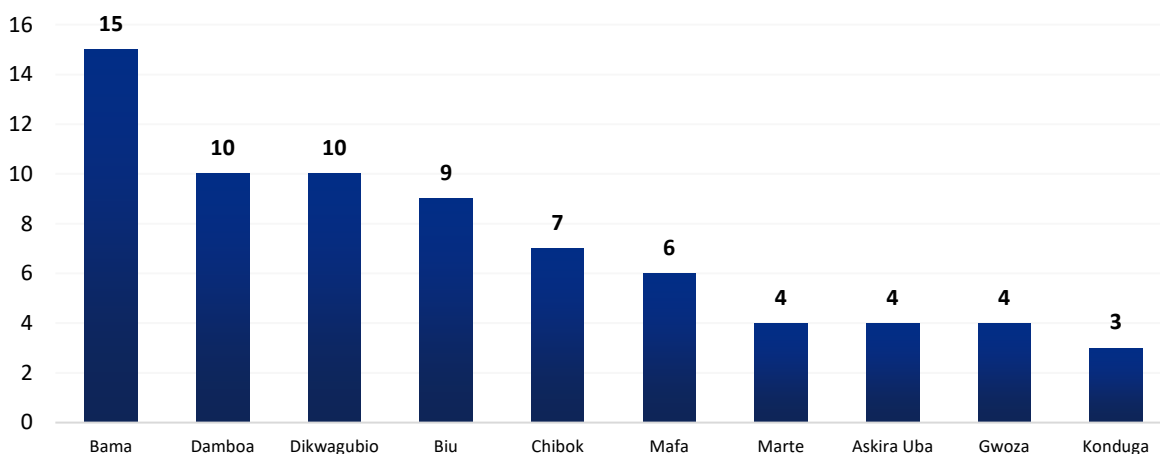


Figure 24: Top 10 LGAs with Highest Terrorism Incidents (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

LGAs with Highest Terrorism Kidnap Victims

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

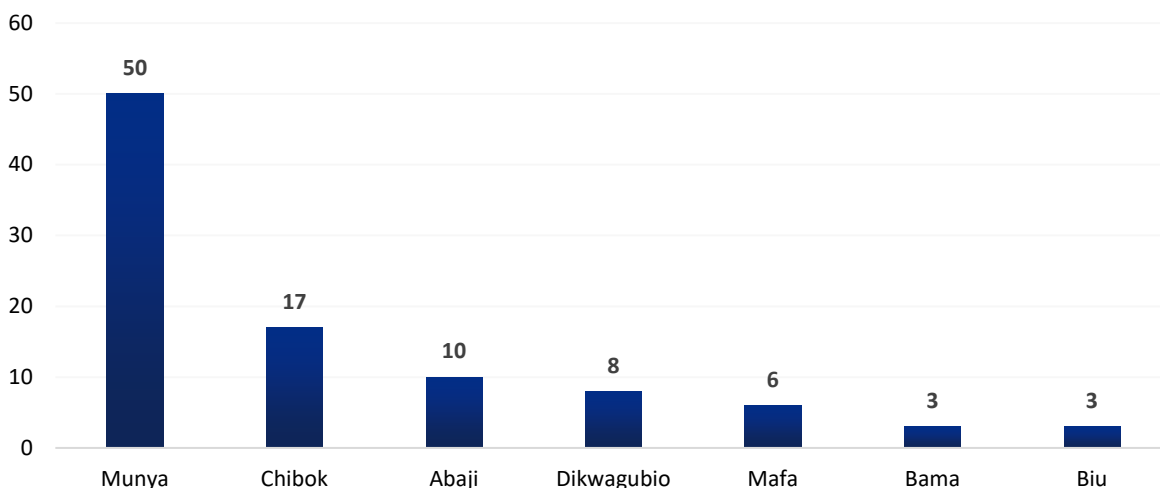


Figure 25: LGAs with Highest Terrorism Kidnap Victims (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

LGAs with Highest Terrorism Kidnap Incidents

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

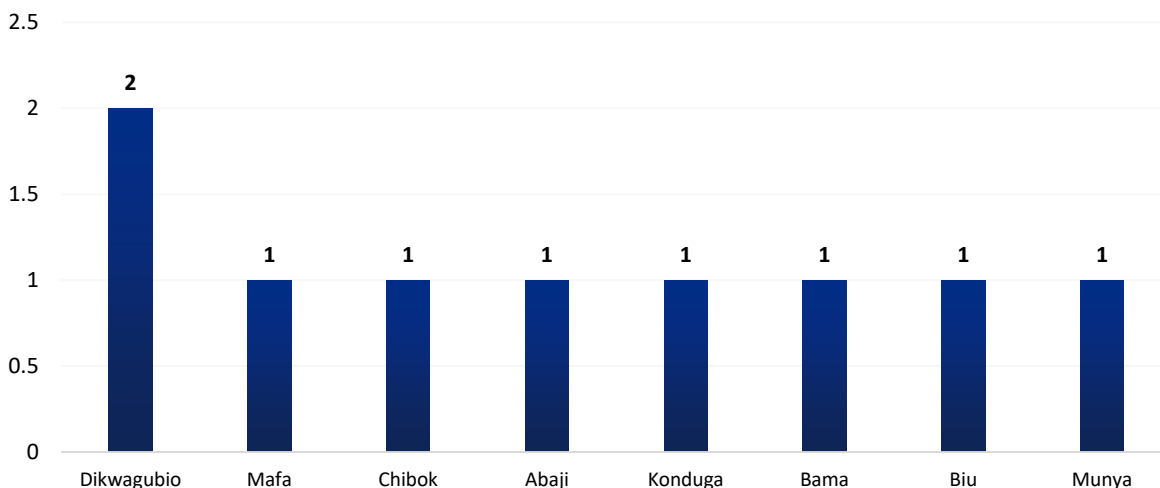


Figure 26: LGAs with Highest Terrorism Kidnap Incidents (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Key Drivers of Terrorism

Terrorists' ability to obtain weapons and intelligence drives violence in the states and regions. Governor Babagana Zulum declared in January 2022 that terrorists control Abadam and Guzamala Local Government Areas in Borno state. He also alleged that 500 Boko Haram/ISWAP members were active in various Biu Local Government Area areas. The governor attributed the terrorists' authority in the affected areas to their sophistry and access to dangerous weapons and intelligence.

Another driving factor is the terrorist's ability to access financial lifelines. In 2021, ISWAP collected nearly \$157,000 in zakat (tax paid by Muslims) in two months. According to the National Risk Assessment Forum, Boko Haram received about \$19 million in ransom payments between 2019 and 2021. There are also accusations of payments from sympathisers and money from involvement in the arms trade. These terrorist groups also engage in car theft, cattle rustling, human and drug trafficking, artisanal mining, and unofficial land leases. These sources of finance sustain their activities in the region.

Government Responses

The government's approach to the crisis in Northeast Nigeria has primarily been military. In addition to the Nigerian army forces, there has been increased collaboration between the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF). As a result, the group has deployed critical strategies and measures to fight terrorism and reclaim lost territories. The Nigerian government is also leveraging other international cooperation efforts in the fight against terrorism. For example, in 2022, the UK-Nigeria Security and Defence Partnership reached several agreements, including:

1. Deploy policing advisors to Nigeria to share experiences and help Nigerian forces respond timely and appropriately to criminal activity across the country
2. Improve civilian security and allow the Nigerian Army to focus its efforts on fighting terrorism
3. Strengthen the role of women in crime prevention and equal treatment of men and women in the police force

4. Deepen direct human rights engagement by sharing UK expertise with the Nigerian military on International Humanitarian Law and preventing sexual exploitation and abuse
5. The UK and Nigeria discussed assistance on reintegration pathways to civilian life for individuals who have left extremist groups
6. Improvement of child protection initiatives in conflict zones
7. Initiate efforts to improve human rights and accountability within the military and Nigeria's role in regional responses to shared insecurity challenges

Nigeria recently increased its weaponry and introduced qualitative training for military personnel. According to Nosa Igbinador (2023), the country's weapon acquisition in 2022 has been the biggest since 1983. On 20th December 2022, Nigeria launched an integrated satellite named DELSAT-1 to improve the operational capacity of the military to curb insecurity. The satellite is designed to link the operations of air, ground and naval forces. Also, the government-run deradicalisation programme Operation Safe Corridor (OPSC) has remained operational. According to a survey, approximately 251 ex-combatants from the first and second cohorts completed and praised the programme. Respondents claimed to have good living conditions, economic empowerment and religious counselling.

Successes and Challenges

Nigeria's collaboration with international partners is yielding results in capacity building. For example, the Nigerian Air Force, in partnership with the British Military Advisory Training Unit, recently trained 150 Advanced Special Forces personnel to be deployed to flashpoints and assist in addressing the country's security concerns.

The tempo of military operations in the Northeast under the Joint Task Force Operation Hadin Kai (OPHK) increased in 2022, resulting in the mass surrender of Boko Haram and ISWAP terrorists. While 82,000 terrorists have surrendered so far, about 60,000 surrendered in 2022, along with their spouses and children. Approximately

900 terrorists have been apprehended and are awaiting prosecution, while thousands of terrorists, including commanders, collaborators, and supply providers, have been killed in land and air operations. For instance, On 20th December 2022, the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) killed more than 100 terrorists, including some of their leaders, in an airstrike carried out by the Air Component of Operation Hadin Kai (OPHK) at Mantari village in Gezuwa general area, Bama Local Government Area of Borno.

Amid these successes, security agencies have suffered fatal blows. Rampaging terrorists attacked approximately 16 military bases between 2021 and 2022. These attacks point to the challenge of an overburdened and exposed military. Nigeria has increased its spending on defence to upgrade military hardware and train personnel in counterterrorism roles. This attempt has become unpopular because it has failed to contain Boko Haram promptly and has made insufficient progress against unabated terror, with human rights costs among the communities. The OPSC's efforts at reintegrating ex-insurgents into communities are facing some opposition. While some affected community members do not believe that the ex-insurgents are genuinely repentant, others see it as an injustice to pardon them for

the killings and destructions they caused.

Fixing the Problem

- The government must work with subnational governments to monitor and prevent the proliferation of small arms and light weapons by strengthening security agencies, particularly those in charge of border control.
- Government should improve community-level involvement in counter-extremism prevention. The government should create platforms for harmonised intelligence sharing and safe spaces for discursive interaction.
- To combat terrorist financing, the government and stakeholders must work with local and international anti-money laundering agencies. Furthermore, the Central Bank of Nigeria's cashless policy can be improved to better monitor and track suspicious transactions.

⁴³Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (2022). Available at: Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit. Available at: <https://www.nfiu.gov.ng/> (Accessed: February 20, 2023).

⁴⁴Ibid

⁴⁵Delgado, C. (2022) Improving the prospects for peace in Nigeria: Spotlight on stabilization. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Available at: https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/wfp_country_report_nigeria_part_i.pdf (Accessed: February 20, 2023).

⁴⁶UK and Nigeria strengthen security and defence partnership to tackle terrorism and Build Regional Security. (2022). GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-nigeria-strengthen-security-and-defence-partnership-to-tackle-terrorism-and-build-regional-security> (Accessed: February 20, 2023).

⁴⁷Igbinadolor, N. (2023) Investment in weapon, training spurs fight against insurgency, Businessday NG. Available at: <https://businessday.ng/big-read/article/investment-in-weapon-training-spurs-fight-against-insurgency/> (Accessed: February 20, 2023).

⁴⁸Abdullahi, M. (2022) 'operation safe corridor is useful for ex-terrorists. but for people like me, it's injustice', HumAngle. Available at: <https://humanglemedia.com/operation-safe-corridor-is-useful-for-ex-terrorists-but-for-people-like-me-its-injustice/> (Accessed: March 16, 2023).

⁴⁹Hassan, I. (2023) Reintegrating Ex-Combatants: An Assessment of Operation Safe Corridor, Taylor & Francis. Available at: <https://thenextier.com/countering-banditry-in-nigeria-examining-the-contradictions-of-progress/> (Accessed: March 16, 2023).

⁵⁰Bakam, A. (2022) Insecurity: NAF partners British military to train 150 special forces, Punch Newspapers. Available at: <https://punchng.com/insecurity-naf-partners-british-military-to-train-150-special-forces/> (Accessed: February 20, 2023).

⁵¹OGBAJE, S.U.M.A.I.L.A. (2023) Appraising operational successes of the military in 2022, Pulse Nigeria. Available at: <https://www.pulse.ng/news/local/appraising-operational-successes-of-the-military-in-2022/4d9r7hb> (Accessed: February 20, 2023).

⁵²Baiyewu, L. (2022) Terrorists attack 16 military bases in 18 months, kill 800, Punch Newspapers. Available at: <https://punchng.com/terrorists-attack-16-military-bases-in-18-months-kill-750/> (Accessed: March 8, 2023).

⁵³Oyewole, S. (2013) "Boko Haram and the challenges of Nigeria's War on Terror," Defense and Security Analysis, 29(3), pp. 253-262. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14751798.2013.820968>.

⁵⁴Krippahl, C. (2022) Nigeria: Reintegrating ex-boko haram fighters – DW – 03/18/2022, dw.com. Deutsche Welle. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/nigeria-ex-boko-haram-fighters-face-tough-path-to-reintegration/a-61169893> (Accessed: March 16, 2023).

⁵⁵Abdullahi, M. (2022) 'operation safe corridor is useful for ex-terrorists. but for people like me, it's injustice', HumAngle. Available at: <https://humanglemedia.com/operation-safe-corridor-is-useful-for-ex-terrorists-but-for-people-like-me-its-injustice/> (Accessed: March 16, 2023).

Secessionism



Image by Foreignpolicy

Background

In 2022, violent conflict related to secessionist agitations occurred mainly in the Southeast and parts of South South Nigeria. Initially, the agitations for self-rule were largely peaceful but have taken a violent turn. The commencement of a military campaign known as “Operation Python Dance” in 2016 aggravated the violence and led to clashes between the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and Nigerian security forces.⁵⁶ IPOB was proscribed as a terrorist organisation by the Nigerian government in 2017, and its leader, Nnamdi Kanu, is now detained and awaiting trial for terrorism and criminal conspiracy.⁵⁷

As a result, endless killings, kidnappings, robberies, and arson attacks have increased in the region.⁵⁸ In one instance, the Nigerian Prisons Service headquarters in Owerri, Imo State, was attacked, and 1,844 inmates were released.⁵⁹ Between 2021 and 2022, the insecurity and sit-at-home protests in the region have led to economic losses estimated at ₦4 trillion.⁶⁰



The Trend of Secessionism in the Southeast and South South

Secessionism: Incidents and Casualties

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

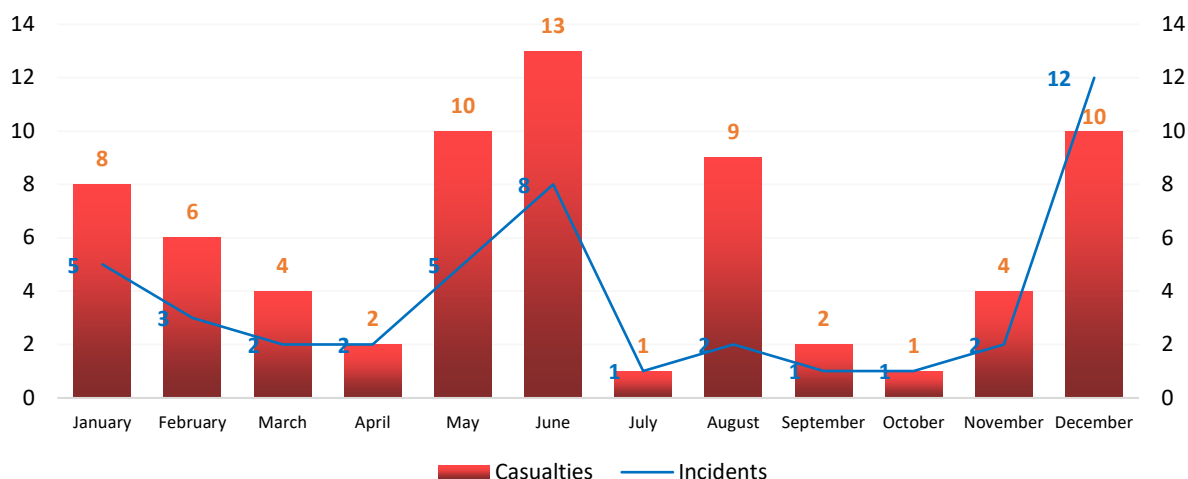


Figure 27: Secessionism: Incidents and Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Secessionism: Casualties by Region

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

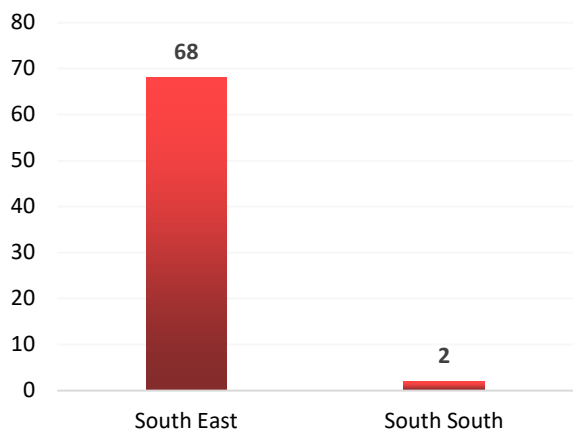


Figure 28: Secessionism: Casualties by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Secessionism: Incidents by Region

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

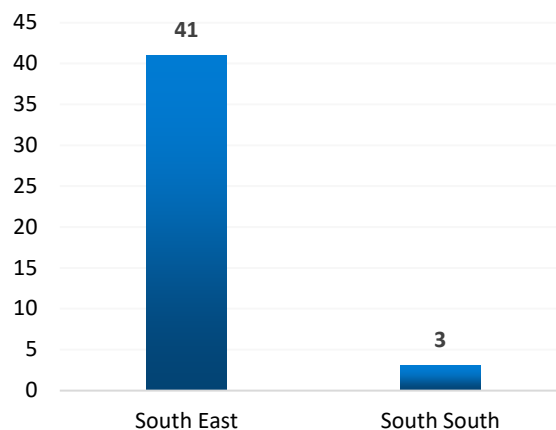


Figure 29: Secessionism: Incidents by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Secessionism: Casualties by State

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

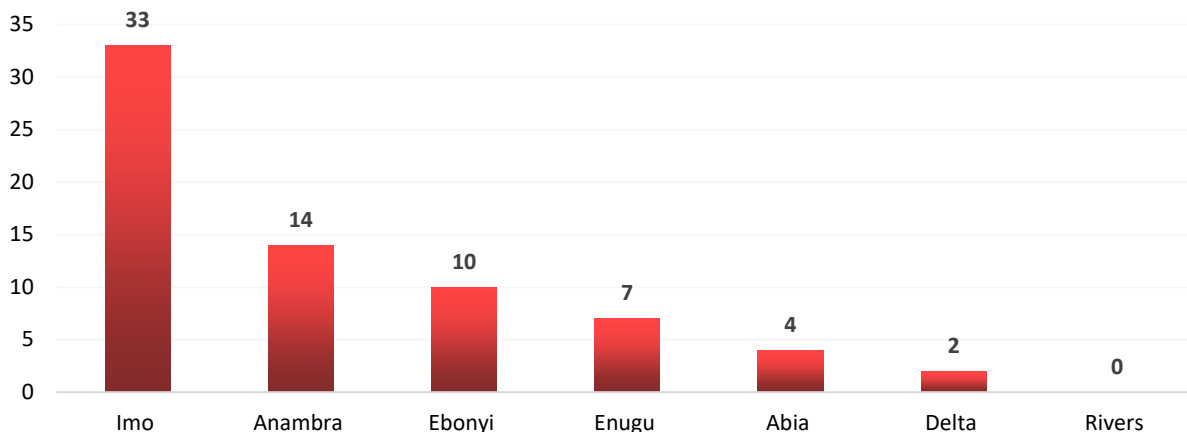


Figure 30: Secessionism: Casualties by State (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Secessionism: Incidents by State

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

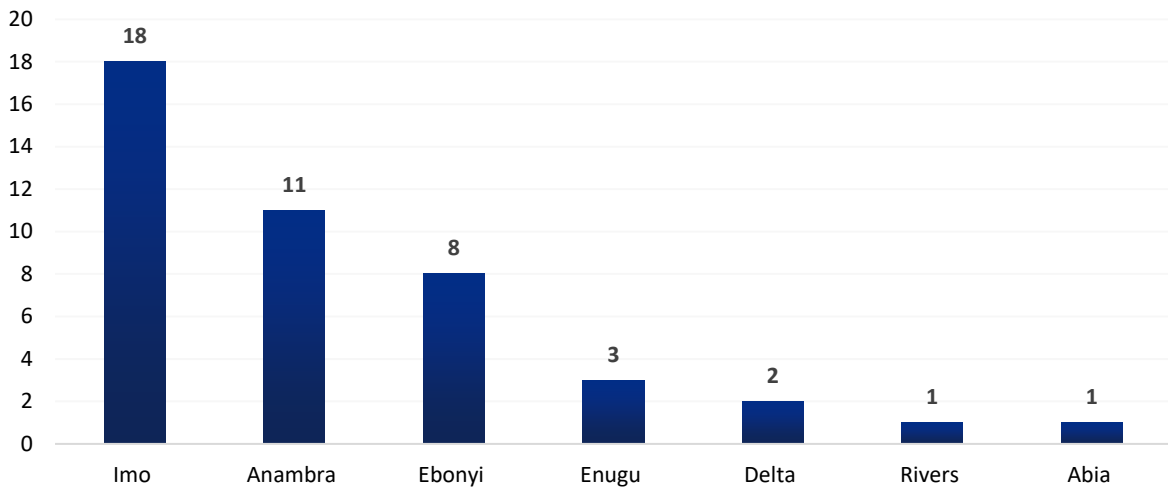


Figure 31: Secessionism: Incidents by State (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Secessionism: Top 10 LGAs by Casualties

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

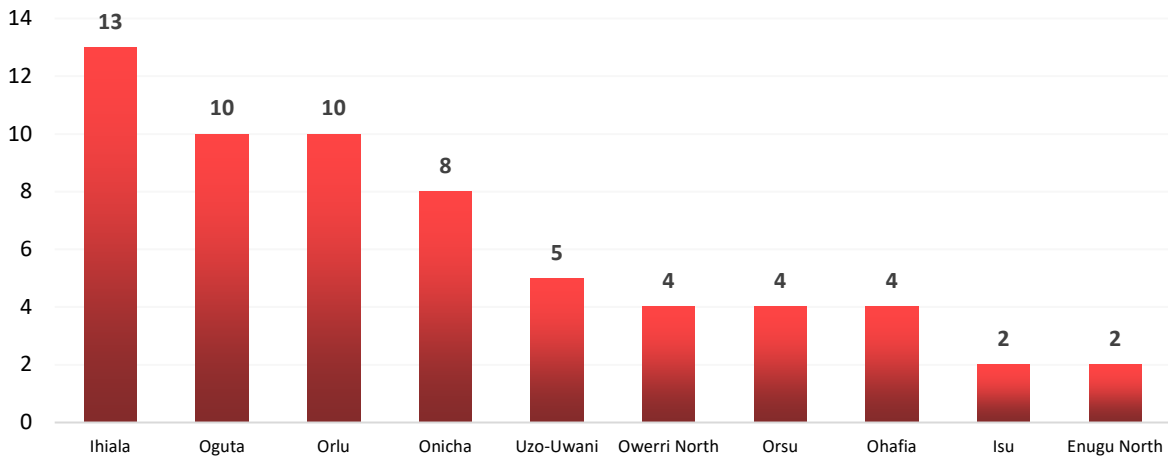


Figure 32: Secessionism: Top 10 LGAs by Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Secessionism: Top 10 LGAs by Incidents

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

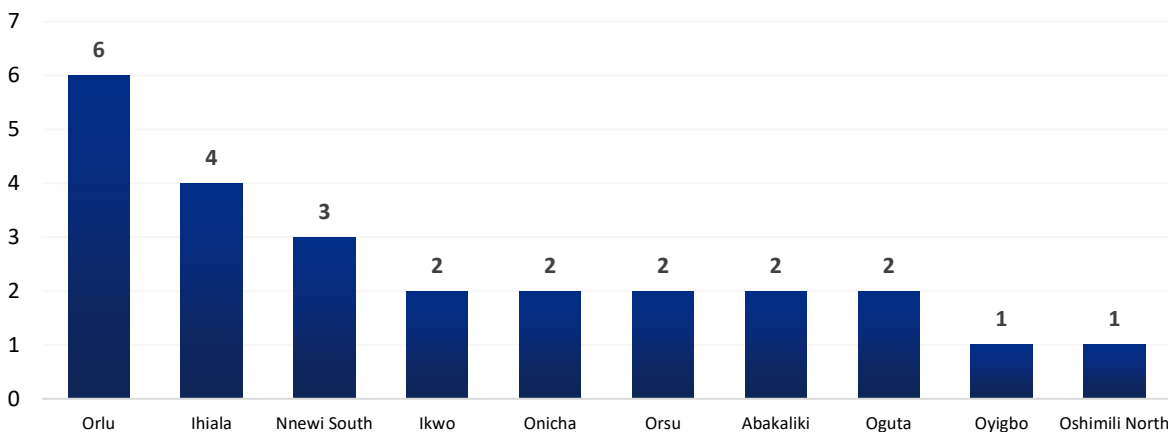


Figure 33: Secessionism: Top 10 LGAs by Incidents (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Key Drivers of Secessionism in 2022

Alleged separatist agitators in the Southeast were more violent in 2022⁶¹ than similar secessionist groups in other parts of Nigeria.⁶² The feeling of marginalisation and alienation from major national provisions such as infrastructure, social amenities, economic possibilities, and political appointments is at the base of secessionist agitations in the Southeast and South South region.⁶³ The call for violence by both domestic and foreign sponsors is a vital driver of the region's bloodshed. For example, Simeon Ekpa, the leader of a faction of the IPOB, has repeatedly advocated for violent repercussions for persons who disobey the sit-at-home order in the region. Other abroad-based agitators openly incite violence on social media.

According to a report, an online agitator was captured saying,

“Go after these mighty saboteurs... Those are the people that need to be beheaded. Those are the people that need to be burnt to ashes.”⁶⁴

These agitators, described as “Media Warriors”, avoid censorship by using their local dialect. Some of them have as many as 100,000 subscribers to their channels. There are also claims that the revenue obtained from members is fuelling the unrest in the region.⁶⁵ Furthermore, state repression has continued to grease the wheels of violence in the region.⁶⁶ The indiscriminate use of force by the Nigeria security agents, which includes harassment, arrests, torture, and mass killings of pro-Biafra agitators, also drives violent conflict in the region.

Government Responses

A political solution between IPOB and the Nigerian federal government appears out of the question. Although Ohanaeze Ndigbo, the foremost Igbo socio-cultural organisation, believes a political solution is the best way to rid the region of violent agitations.⁶⁷ To accomplish this, they proposed the establishment of a platform where genuine Igbo leaders would interact with the government. They also proposed granting full autonomy to all federating units in the country and forming additional states for the Southeast as political measures to end the bloodshed in the region. The Attorney General of the Federation, Abubakar Malami, once suggested that the government is interested in exploring this alternative.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, this

declaration has remained the government's sole attempt at a political settlement.

The government has mainly responded to the separatist agitation by aggressive militarising, cracking down on suspects, and widespread arrests of alleged supporters, especially youths. According to Amnesty International, at least 115 were killed by security forces between March and June 2021, with over 500 imprisoned during police and military raids in response to unrest in the region.⁶⁹

The government has partnered at the national and sub-national levels to equip security personnel and create state-sanctioned non-state security forces to combat violent agitators. For example, the Enugu state government established local security organisations such as the Neighbourhood Watch and Forest Guards. Recently, the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Usman Alkali Baba, inaugurated a Mobile Force Squadron (76 Police) established by the Enugu state government in Ekwegbe in Igbo-Etiti Local Government Area.⁷⁰

Successes and Challenges

Aside from raiding, killing, and arresting violent agitators, the government is angling to regulate online channels used by the media warriors and their supporters. This could be regarded as a practical move. On 20th August 2022, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, Nigeria's Minister of Information and Culture, requested that Google collaborate with the Nigerian government to prevent inflammatory broadcasts by agitators on YouTube, a video-sharing and social media network controlled by Google.⁷¹ He said the government is working on a “Code of Practice for Interactive Computer Service Platforms/Internet Intermediaries.” The code of practice attempts to establish a structure for collectively protecting Nigerian internet platform users.

With the emergence of IPOB splinter groups,⁷² the government and security agencies have had difficulty identifying offenders labelled “unknown gunmen” by the media.⁷³ Alarming, there is a possibility that armed robbers, kidnappers, and other criminals will commit crimes under the cover of ‘unknown gunmen’ or violent separatist agitators.

The isolated militarised approach adopted by the government is a crucial challenge to ending the crisis in the region.⁷⁴ Although the use of force may result in the arrest and

execution of criminals and the disruption of their logistics and facilitators, it does not address the root causes of violence. Other challenges include widespread alienation, youth unemployment, perceived political marginalisation, and state-sanctioned repression.

Fixing the Problem

- The government's oppressive approach to regional violence must give way to dialogue. Repressive actions against pro-secessionists have not halted further

agitation throughout the years. As a result, nonviolent interaction is required to obtain a broadly desired conclusion.

- By committing to a transition from the perceived imbalanced federal political structure to one that represents a genuinely federal character, the government can undermine the reasons for secessionism.
- The international community should show concern and work with the Nigerian government to find nonviolent solutions to secession struggles.

⁵⁶Adebayo, T.-H. (no date) Nigerian gov't's actions fuelled IPOB violence in Southeast. Premium Times. Available at: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/521567-nigerian-govts-actions-fuelled-ipob-violence-in-southeast-report.html> (Accessed: February 21, 2023).

⁵⁷Busari, S. and Princewill, N. (2021) Nigerian separatist leader brought back to Nigeria to face trial, CNN. Cable News Network. Available at: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/06/29/africa/nnamdi-kanu-arrested-nigeria-intl/index.html> (Accessed: March 17, 2023).

⁵⁸Board, P.E. (2022) Uncontrollable violence in south-east, Punch Newspapers. Available at: <https://punchng.com/uncontrollable-violence-in-south-east/> (Accessed: February 21, 2023).

⁵⁹Ayitogo, N. (2021) How gunmen attacked Owerri prison, freed 1,844 inmates, Premium Times . Available at: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/453335-how-gunmen-attacked-owerri-prison-freed-1844-inmates-official.html?tztc=1> (Accessed: February 21, 2023).

⁶⁰Igbinador, N. (2022) South-East Bleeds N4trn in 2years over insecurity, sit-at-home protests, Businessday NG. Available at: <https://businessday.ng/business-economy/article/south-east-bleeds-n4trn-in-2years-over-insecurity-sit-at-home-protests/> (Accessed: February 21, 2023).

⁶¹Fleeing violence (2022) ReliefWeb. Nextier. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/fleeing-violence-june-22-2022> (Accessed: February 22, 2023).

⁶²Itodo, S.G. (2021) Opinion: Biafra, Oduduwa, Arewa Republics' agitations: Is Nigeria the problem of Nigerians?, The News Chronicle. Available at: <https://www.thenews-chronicle.com/opinion-biafra-oduduwa-arewa-republics-agitations-is-nigeria-the-problem-of-nigerians/> (Accessed: February 22, 2023).

⁶³Ezemenaka, K. and Prouza, J. (2016) Biafra Resurgence: State Failure, Insecurity and Separatist Agitations in Nigeria. Available at: https://cejiss.org/images/is-sue_articles/2016-volume-10-issue-3/article-3.pdf (Accessed: February 22, 2023).

⁶⁴Some IPOB supporters abroad turn 'media warriors', call for killings on social media over Biafra (2022) Sahara Reporters. Available at: <https://saharareporters.com/2022/05/12/some-ipob-supporters-abroad-turn-%E2%80%98media-warriors-call-killings-social-media-over-biafra> (Accessed: February 22, 2023).

⁶⁵Alozie, C. (no date) Kidnappings, killings: Criminals in south-east getting funding, Kidnappings, Killings: Criminals in South-East getting funding — IPOB. Vanguard. Available at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/06/kidnappings-killings-criminals-in-south-east-getting-funding-ipob/> (Accessed: February 23, 2023).

⁶⁶Nwangwu, C. (2022) Neo-Biafra separatist agitations, state repression and insecurity in south-east, Nigeria, Society. U.S. National Library of Medicine. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9667008/> (Accessed: February 23, 2023).

⁶⁷Regional autonomy, additional state best political solutions for Biafra agitation, Ohanaeze tells Fg (2021) Tribune Online. Available at: <https://tribuneonline.ng/regional-autonomy-additional-state-best-political-solutions-for-biafra-agitation-ohanaeze-tells-fg/> (Accessed: February 23, 2023).

⁶⁸Enumah, A. (2021) Malami: FG not ruling out political solution on KANU, Igboho, THISDAYLIVE. Available at: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/11/11/malami-fg-not-ruling-out-political-solution-on-kanu-igboho/> (Accessed: February 23, 2023).

⁶⁹Ojewale, O. and Onuoha, F. (2022) Nigeria: Violence in Nigeria's south-east demands a holistic response, allAfrica.com. allAfrica.com. Available at: <https://allafrica.com/stories/202205040002.html> (Accessed: February 23, 2023).

⁷⁰Security: IGP accedes to Enugu Gov's requests for more personnel, equipment (no date) THISDAYLIVE. Available at: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2022/12/23/security-igp-accedes-to-enugu-govs-requests-for-more-personnel-equipment/> (Accessed: February 23, 2023).

⁷¹Elebeke, E. (2022) Deny IPOB, others access to violence, destabilization activities, Lai Mohammed begs Google, Vanguard. Available at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/08/deny-ipob-others-access-to-violence-destabilization-activities-lai-mohammed-begs-google/> (Accessed: February 23, 2023).

⁷²Olapoju, K. (2016) More woes for Biafra campaign as second IPOB splinter group emerges, TheCable. TheCable. Available at: <https://www.thecable.ng/more-woes-for-biafra-campaign-as-second-ipob-splinter-group-emerges> (Accessed: February 23, 2023).

⁷³Reveal identity of unknown gunmen in South-East - Arewa Coalition tells NPF (2022) The Guardian Nigeria. Available at: <https://guardian.ng/news/reveal-identity-of-unknown-gunmen-in-south-east-arewa-coalition-tells-npf/> (Accessed: February 23, 2023).

⁷⁴Ibid

Extra-Judicial Killings



Image by Hallmarknews

Background

Two years after Nigerians took to the streets to protest police brutality, stories of security agents' brutality and extra-judicial killings have continued to dominate headlines nationwide.⁷⁵ On 26th June 2022, Soldiers raided Nko in Cross Rivers state's Yakurr Local Government Area, killing unarmed indigenes and destroying properties. The attack responded to an earlier clash between Nko youths and the Army. The youths accused the Army of being biased in their dispute with a neighbouring community.⁷⁶ These killings negate the sole responsibility of the state to protect lives and properties. The killings have led many to assume that Nigeria does not value citizens' lives and dignity.⁷⁷

In response, citizens use civil disobedience, violent protests, lawlessness, and vandalism to express dissatisfaction. For example, in January 2022, residents of Lajolo community Ilorin East local government area of Kwara state protested the extra-judicial killing of two teens by police while conducting an operation.⁷⁸ Sadly, some perpetrators of these unlawful killings often go unpunished.⁷⁹



The Trend of Extra-judicial Killings in Nigeria

Extra-Judicial Killings: Incidents and Casualties

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

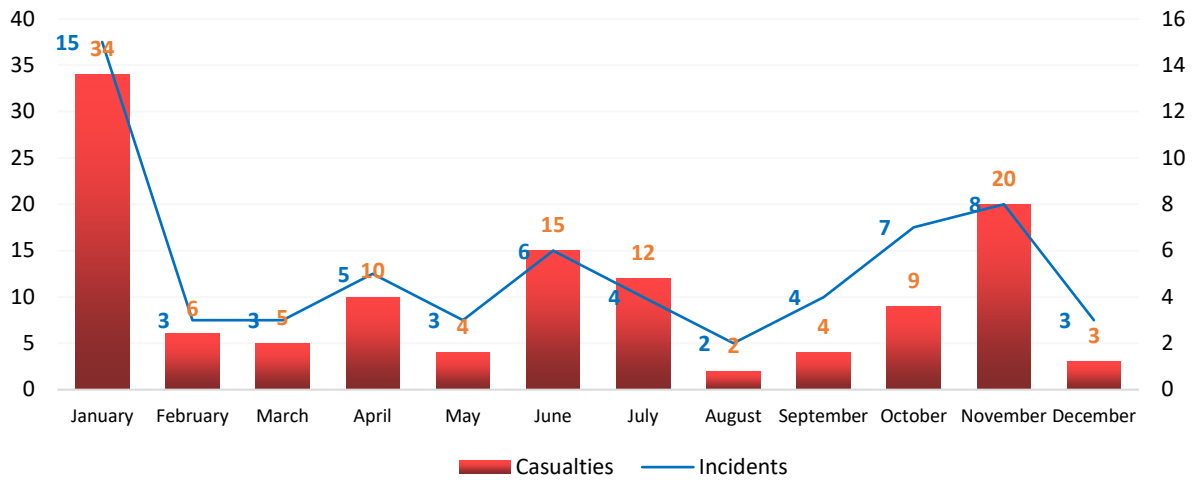


Figure 34: Extra-Judicial Killings: Incidents and Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Extra-Judicial Killings: Casualties by Region

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

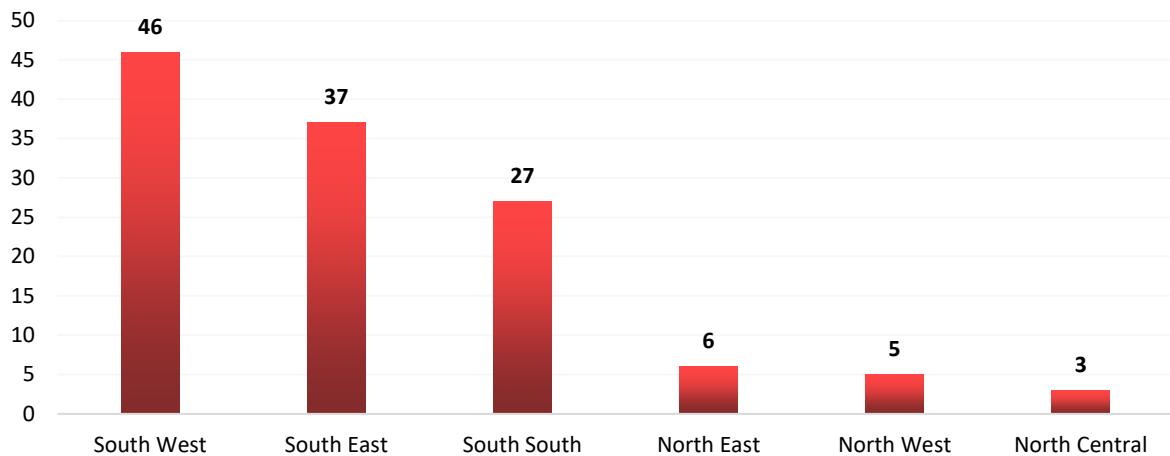


Figure 35: Extra-Judicial Killings: Casualties by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Extra-Judicial Killings: Incidents by Region

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

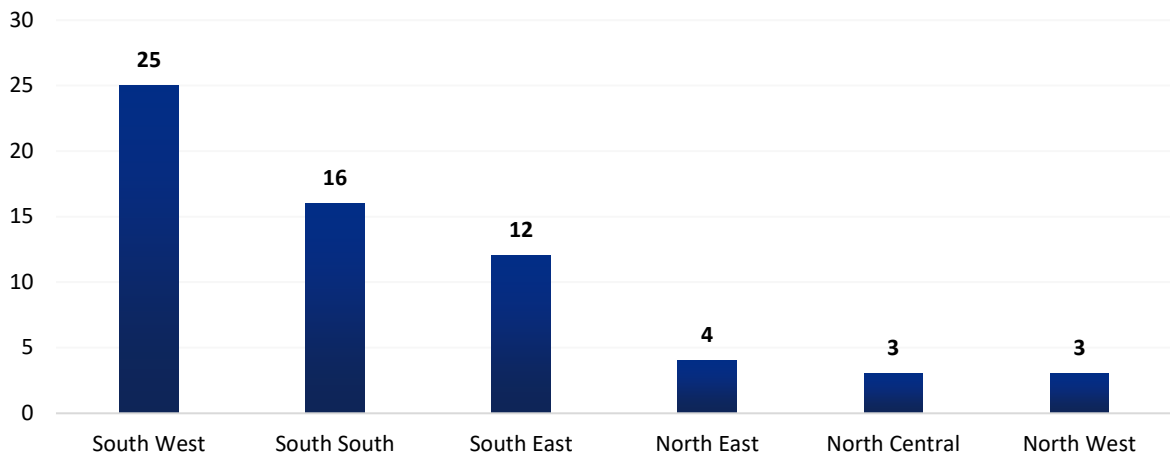


Figure 36: Extra-Judicial Killings: Incidents by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Extra-Judicial Killings: Top 10 States by Casualties

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

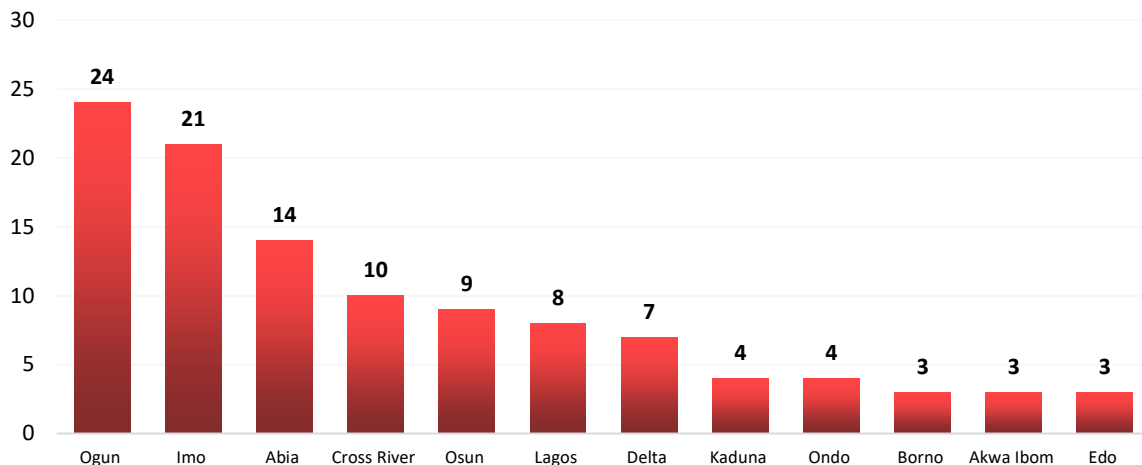


Figure 37: Extra-Judicial Killings: Top 10 States by Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Extra-Judicial Killings: Top 10 States by Incidents

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

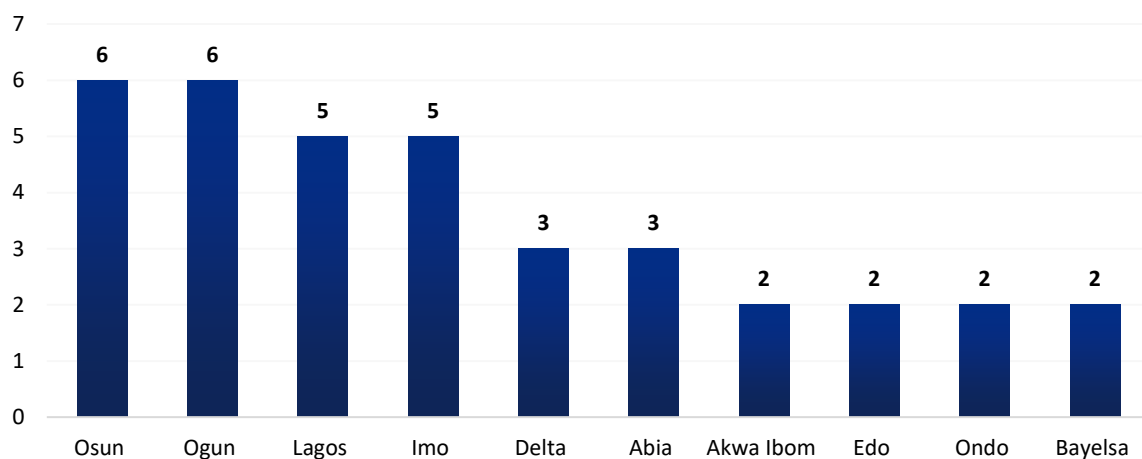


Figure 38: Extra-Judicial Killings: Top 10 States by Incidents (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Extra-Judicial Killings: Top 10 LGAs by Casualties

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

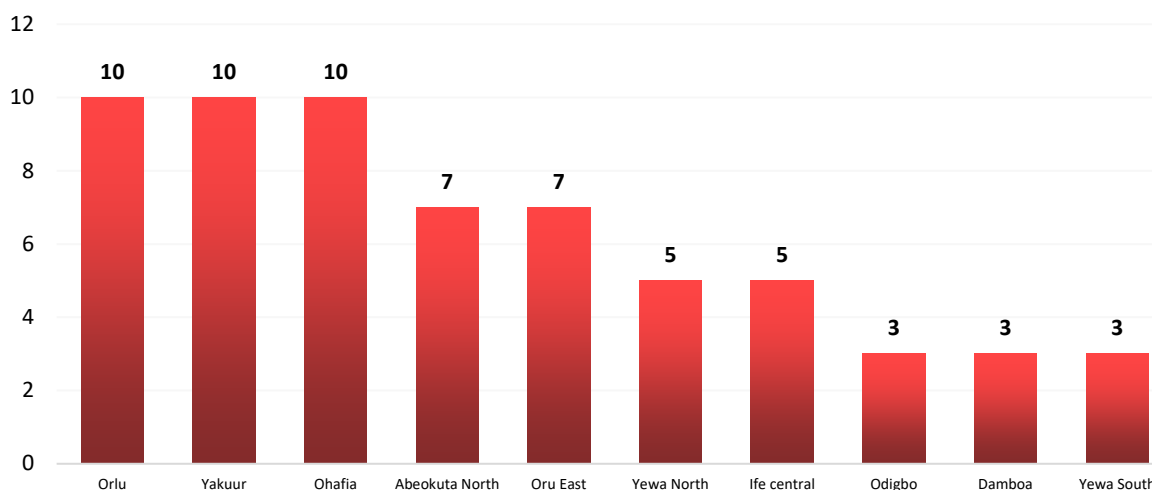


Figure 39: Extra-Judicial Killings: Top 10 LGAs by Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Extra-Judicial Killings: Top 10 LGAs by Incidents

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

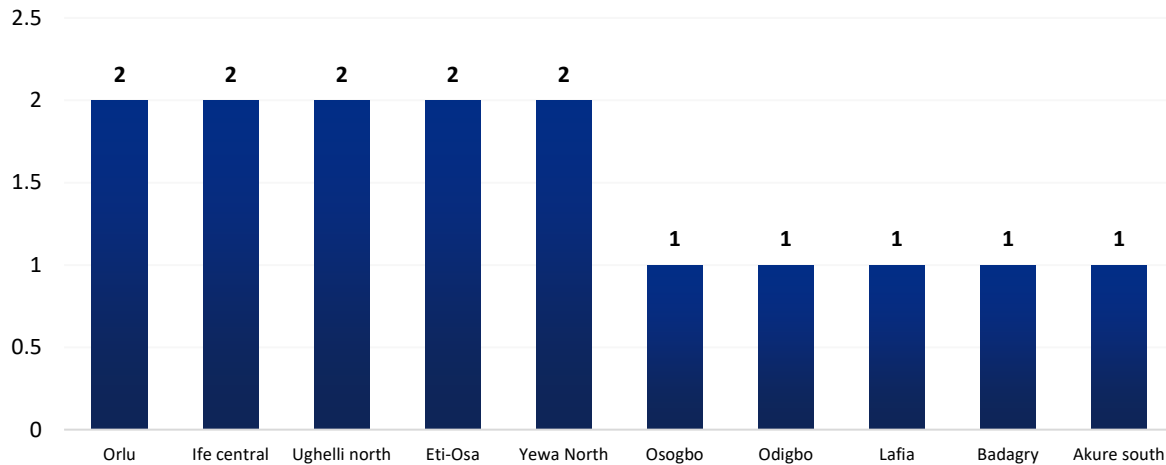


Figure 40: Extra-Judicial Killings: Top 10 LGAs by Incidents (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Key Drivers of Extra-Judicial Killings

Many factors have been attributed to the upsurge in extra-judicial killings. These executions are frequently the result of distrust between the public and security forces.⁸⁰ Several scholars say that the government's wilful violation of citizens' fundamental rights and lack of concern for their protection are the primary reasons for extra-judicial killings. The lack of accountability, inadequate access to due process and the ineffective criminal justice system are some additional causes of extra-judicial killings.⁸¹ In addition, the lack of training on the code of conduct for security personnel and the use of equipment is a significant factor.⁸² According to a report, many police officers never went to the shooting range to hone their marksmanship.⁸³ Most innocent Nigerians were killed due to a lack of focus and hand-eye coordination, which determines the right target.⁸⁴

Government Responses

The government have introduced efforts to mitigate acts of brutality and innocent killings.⁸⁵ For example, in January 2023, the Federal Government organised a one-day emotional intelligence capacity-building session for police officers to end extra-judicial killings. Other security agencies, like the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), have introduced mental tests to meet officers' psycho-social needs and certify that they are mentally fit to perform their duties.⁸⁶ Nigerian Police officials have been mandated to discontinue stop-and-search roadblocks nationwide because some extra-judicial

killings occur at checkpoints.⁸⁷ Yet these efforts have not reduced harassment.

Successes and Challenges

Security agencies are beginning to embrace technology and innovation to improve policing. Social media platforms have become valuable channels for disseminating evidence of brutality and responses from the police. For example, the attention of police authorities was drawn to the killing of a female lawyer in Lagos on 25th December 2023 by a trigger-happy Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) through Twitter, a micro-blogging platform.⁸⁸ The Force Public Relations Officer, Benjamin Hundeyin, swiftly responded with a tweet saying,

*"Unfortunate and avoidable incident that was. The ASP that shot and two others with him have since been taken into custody. They are to be moved to the SCID for further investigation."*⁸⁹

The government has also considered essential measures, such as passing the Nigerian Police Trust Fund Bill to provide a legal foundation for the force's better funding regime.⁹⁰ Nigeria's president, Muhammadu Buhari, signed the Nigeria Police Force Academy Bill to give statutory recognition to the academy's futuristic personnel development programmes.⁹¹ The government has also established a new salary and welfare system and promised to fund the recruitment of 10,000 police constables per year to address the force's massive manpower shortfall.⁹²

Despite efforts at reforming the Nigerian

police, concrete results are yet to be achieved in improving their welfare. In May 2022, Nigerian police officers contemplated a two-week warning strike nationwide.⁹³ The planned strike was to protest official neglect, lack of public trust, and dire living conditions. Many officers live in run-down barracks without basic amenities like bathrooms or drinkable water.⁹⁴

Also, legal and internal tussles faced by the Nigerian police may impede policy implementation. For example, the federal high court in Abuja barred the federal government from funding the Nigeria Police Trust Fund (NPTF) or other non-constitutional organisations.⁹⁵ An internal conflict between the Inspector General and the Police Service Commission plagued the Nigerian Police Force for several months.⁹⁶ The dispute stalled the recruitment of police constables and affected police operations.⁹⁷

Fixing the Problem

- Security officers who engage in

misconduct must answer for their actions. This can be accomplished by establishing an independent body to investigate claims of police brutality. Also, the authorities should create more channels for aggrieved citizens to file complaints against erring police officers easily. The government should introduce more incentives for performing personnel and constantly improve the welfare packages of the police workforce for personnel.

- The government should introduce accountability tools. For example, officers could be required to wear body cameras to record their interactions with members of the public.
- The government should prioritise comprehensive security sector reforms and restructure the criminal justice system
- Police departments should re-examine their use-of-force policies to align with best practices and prioritise de-escalation tactics.

⁷⁵Ojukwu, D. (2023) 10 times policemen killed Nigerians in 2022 - and how their bosses reacted, Foundation for Investigative Journalism. Available at: <https://fij.ng/article/10-times-policemen-killed-nigerians-in-2022-and-how-their-bosses-reacted/> (Accessed: February 23, 2023).

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⁷⁸Akinyemi, D. (2022) Ilorin cult protest: Lajolo Community accuses police of killing its two ... , Vanguard. Available at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/01/ilorin-cult-protest-lajolo-community-accuses-police-of-killing-its-two-teenager-sons/> (Accessed: February 23, 2023).

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⁸⁰Nigeria Security Situation Analysis Report (January 2021 – December 2021) and (January 2022 – June 2022) (2022) ReliefWeb. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/nigeria-security-situation-analysis-report-18-months-report-violent-conflicts-nigeria-nextier-violent-conflict-database-january-2021-december-2021-and-january-2022-june-2022> (Accessed: March 19, 2023).

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⁸²Edo, Z. (2022) The Nigerian Police, extra-judicial killings and the dilemma of human. ResearchGate. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357994597_The_Nigerian_Police_Extra-Judicial_Killings_and_the_Dilemma_of_Human_Security_A_Theoretical_Reflection (Accessed: February 28, 2023).

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⁸⁴Ibid

⁸⁵Sunday, O. (2023) FG moves to end extra-judicial killings by police officers, The Guardian Nigeria News - Nigeria and World News. Available at: <https://guardian.ng/news/fg-moves-to-end-extra-judicial-killings-by-police-officers/> (Accessed: February 23, 2023).

⁸⁶Adepegba, A. (2021) 6,111 NSCDC operatives undergo mental test, treatment, Punch Newspapers. Available at: <https://punchng.com/6111-nscdc-operatives-undergo-mental-test-treatment/> (Accessed: March 19, 2023).

⁸⁷Why police officers defy IGP's order to disband checkpoints (2022) The Guardian Nigeria News - Nigeria and World News. Available at: <https://guardian.ng/saturday-magazine/why-police-officers-defy-igps-order-to-disband-checkpoints/> (Accessed: March 19, 2023).

⁸⁸Oyero, K. (2022) Outrage as policeman kills Lagos Lawyer on Christmas Day, Channels Television. Available at: <https://www.channelstv.com/2022/12/26/outrage-as-policeman-shoot-dead-lagos-lawyer-on-christmas-day/> (Accessed: February 28, 2023).

⁸⁹Ibid

⁹⁰Emmanuel, D. (2021) Buhari writes Senate, seeks approval of 2021 Police Trust Fund, Businessday NG. Available at: <https://businessday.ng/news/article/buhari-writes-senate-seeks-approval-of-2021-police-trust-fund/> (Accessed: February 28, 2023).

⁹¹THISDAYLIVE Prioritizing critical reforms in the Nigeria Police Force (2022). Available at: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2022/11/21/prioritising-critical-reforms-in-the-nigeria-police-force/> (Accessed: February 28, 2023).

⁹²Ibid

⁹³Kabir, A. (2022) Neglect, public perception affecting Nigeria Police Performance, HumAngle. Available at: <https://humanglemedia.com/neglect-public-perception-affecting-nigeria-police-performance/> (Accessed: February 28, 2023).

⁹⁴Akinwale, Y. (2022) The State of Nigeria Police Barracks is a growing security concern, HumAngle. Available at: <https://humanglemedia.com/the-state-of-nigeria-police-barracks-is-a-growing-security-concern/> (Accessed: February 28, 2023).

⁹⁵Ejekwonyilo, A. (2022) Court stops FG from funding police trust fund from federation account, Premium Times. Available at: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/508118-court-stops-fg-from-funding-police-trust-fund-from-federation-account.html> (Accessed: February 28, 2023).

⁹⁶IGP, PSC Tussle and Public Order(2023) THISDAYLIVE IGP PSC TUSSLE AND PUBLIC ORDER Comments. Available at: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index>.

Farmer-Herder Conflict



Image by Theafricareport

Background

Farmer-herder conflict is a dominant challenge across Nigeria.⁹⁸ Sedentary farmers and nomadic herders are trapped in a perpetual struggle for land resources. The conflict has caused indiscriminate and needless loss of lives and property. The Middle Belt region has been the worst hit.⁹⁹ Between 2015 and 2020, the frequency of farmer-herder violence resulted in over 7,000 deaths in Benue alone, while the overall middle belt region recorded 1,800 fatalities.¹⁰⁰ Millions of people have been displaced, and others suffer psychological trauma.¹⁰¹ The resulting violence has jeopardised food production and is brewing famine in some parts of Nigeria.¹⁰²

The conflict has survived government policies.¹⁰³ The conflict has evolved from a purely economic crisis to sociopolitical challenges. While some state governments passed the anti-grazing legislation, initiatives like the Ruga settlement and the National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP) have either not been widely embraced or executed ineffectively.¹⁰⁴ Given the country's sociopolitical posture, efforts to manage the crisis are viewed through the lens of identity and perceptions of group dominance.



The Trend of Farmer-herder Conflict in Nigeria

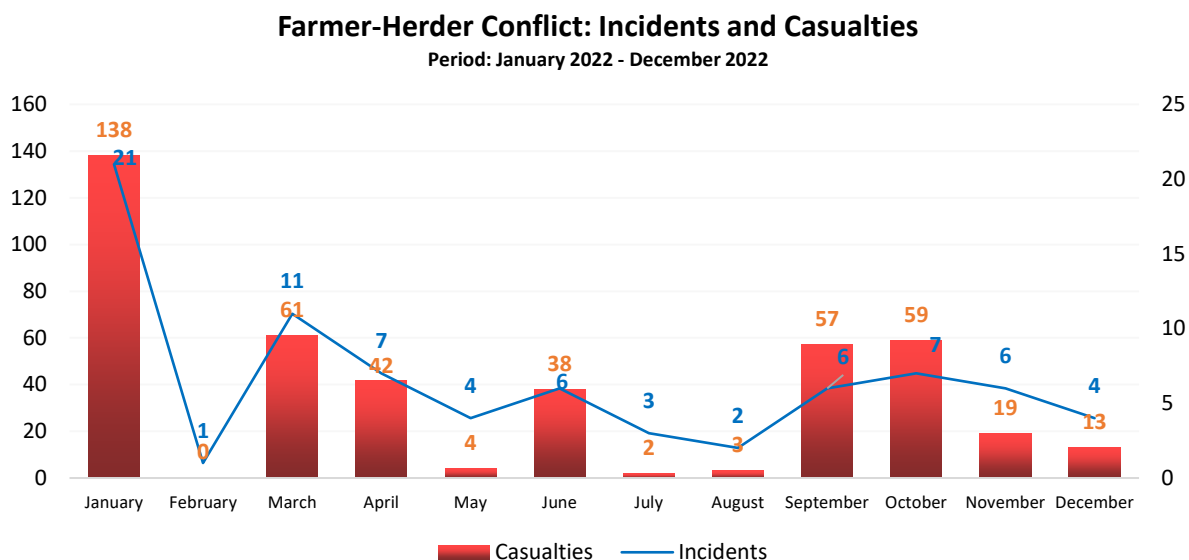


Figure 41: Farmer-Herder Conflict: Incidents and Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

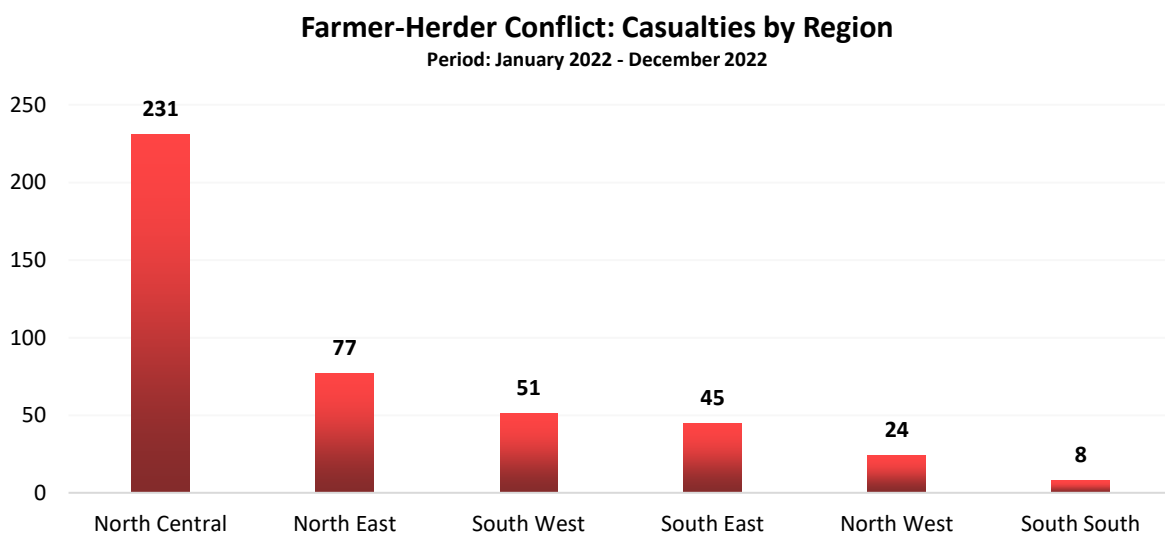


Figure 42: Farmer-Herder Conflict: Casualties by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

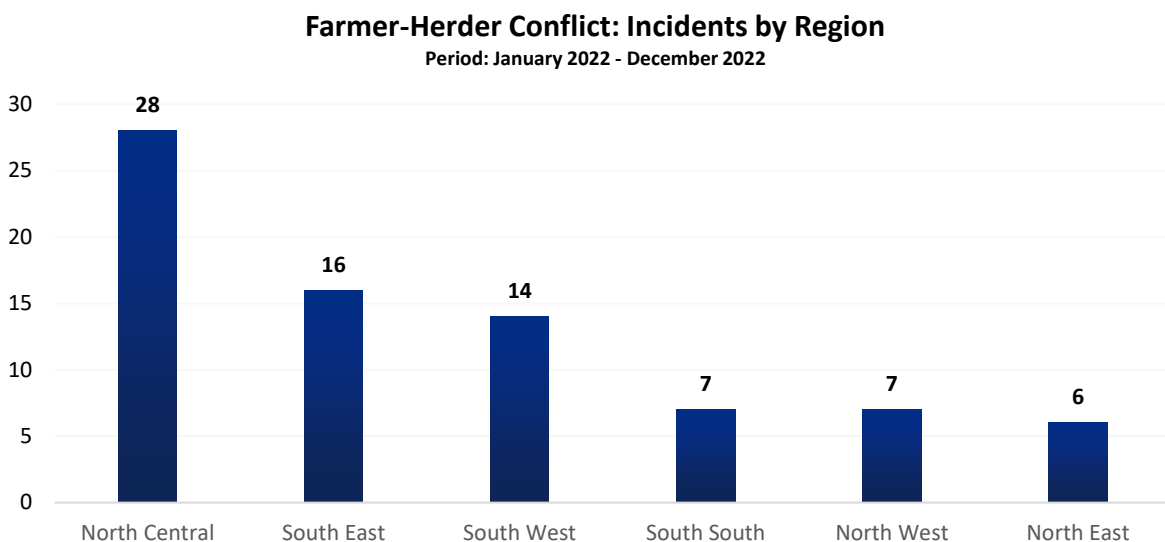


Figure 43: Farmer-Herder Conflict: Incidents by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Farmer-Herder Conflict: Top 10 States by Casualties

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

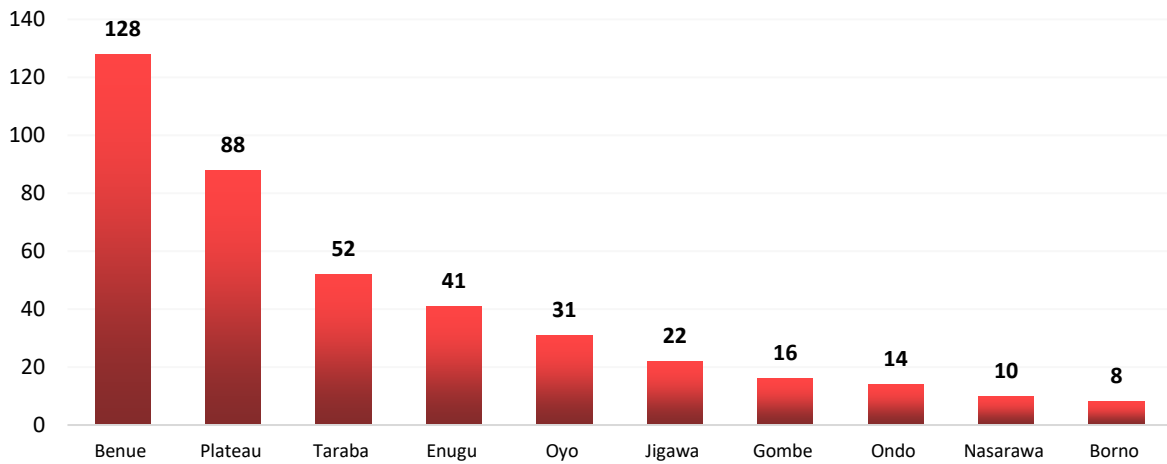


Figure 44: Farmer-Herder Conflict: Top 10 States by Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Farmer-Herder Conflict: Top 10 States by Incidents

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

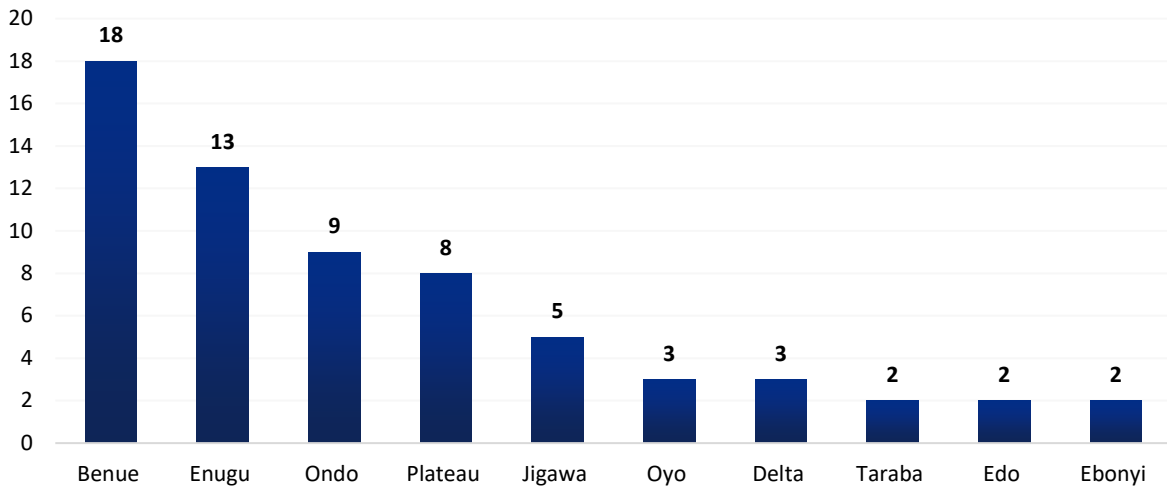


Figure 45: Farmer-Herder Conflict: Top 10 States by Incidents (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Farmer-Herder Conflict: Top 10 LGAs by Casualties

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

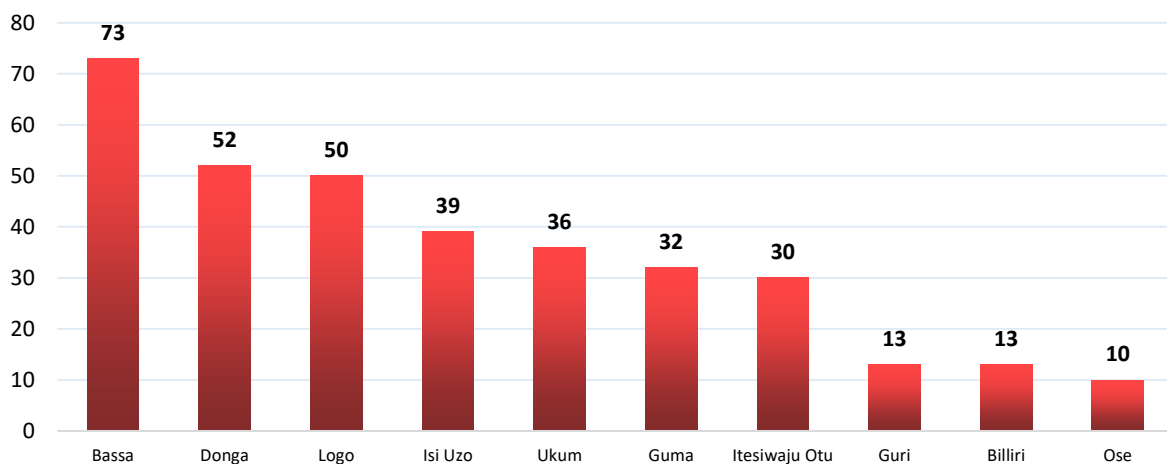


Figure 46: Farmer-Herder Conflict: Top 10 LGAs by Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Farmer-Herder Conflict: Top 10 LGAs by Incidents

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

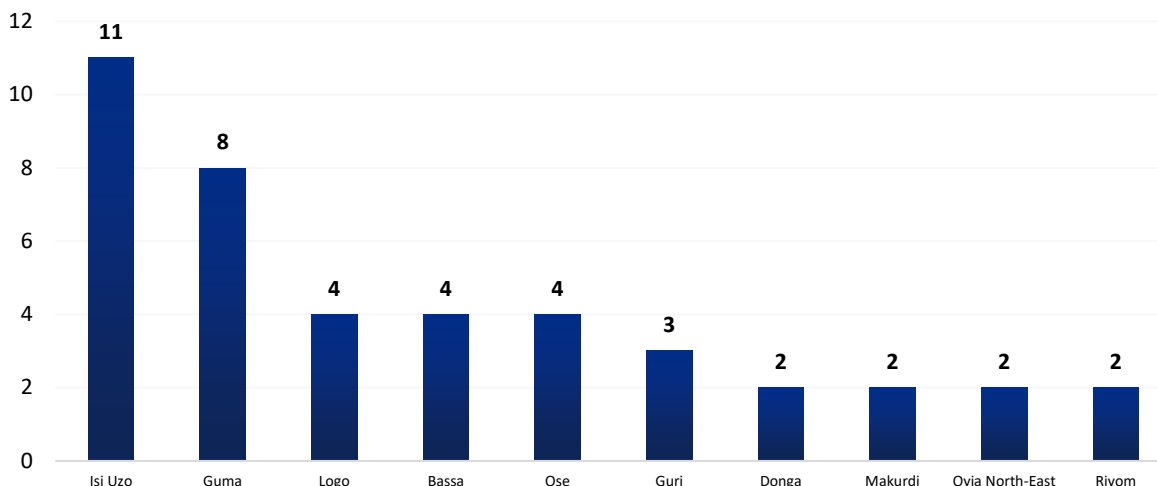


Figure 47: Farmer-Herder Conflict: Top 10 LGAs by Incidents (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Key Drivers of Farmer-Herder Conflict

Conflicts between farmers and herders revolve around contested land usage (grazing versus crop planting) and access to water.¹⁰⁵ The competition for land resources arises due to conflicting interests and environmental shocks. Nigeria's Minister for Agriculture, Mohammad Mahmood Abubakar, affirmed that climate change effects propel farmers and herder conflict.¹⁰⁶ These changes disrupt traditional grazing routes, reduce pasture availability for herders, and affect crop yields for farmers. This situation leads to increased competition for limited resources. Other factors, such as population growth¹⁰⁷ and lack of political will, exacerbate the already tense issue.¹⁰⁸ The crisis has lingered because of the elite class' inability to manage the problem.¹⁰⁹

In June 2022, the government also launched the National Pasture Development Programme (NAPDEP) to lessen the country's conflict between farmers and herders.¹¹¹ The project aims to raise awareness and capacity among local livestock farmers and businesses to engage in commercial pasture production, processing, and marketing. It will provide an enabling environment and support all-year-round pasture creation while encouraging private entrepreneurs to enter commercial pasture/folder production through training and capacity building on better techniques. Also, the government has responded to the challenge by seeking improved collaboration with the international community, development partners, and well-meaning allies to resolve the farmer-herder conflict and Africa's shrinking lakes.¹¹²

Government Responses

The Nigerian government has continued to deploy more policies to solve the challenge. In November 2022, the government introduced the National Animal Identification System and Traceability System (NAITS) to transform the nation's livestock industry.¹¹⁰ The comprehensive animal information management system is meant to identify and monitor animals across Nigeria by combining forgery-proof ear tags and cow passports with digital technology. The platform, if properly utilised, would address the livestock sector's socio-economic and security challenges and lack of data for proper planning.

Successes and Challenges

Some state governments have agreed to cooperate with the federal government in carrying out some programmes to resolve the farmer-herder issue. For example, the Northern Governors Forum are at the forefront of advocating for implementing the State Level Project Socialisation on Livestock Productivity and Resilience Support Project (L-PRES) in the country's Northern section. They believe the implementation would go a long way towards improving farmers' security and increasing food production.¹¹³

Herders worry that the government is not responding as quickly to their situation as it

does to farmers. This feeling of discontent is a big challenge. Also, the government faces a challenge in implementing policies. For example, the National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP) is facing unsatisfactory political leadership, delays in execution, funding problems, and a lack of expertise that may jeopardise the project.¹¹⁴

Fixing the Problem

- The government and key stakeholders should encourage consistent dialogue and mediation to help farmers and herders find mutually acceptable solutions to their differences. Community-led peacebuilding initiatives or the establishment of local conflict resolution mechanisms can help achieve this.
- Inadequate access to water, grazing land, and other natural resources have

been a significant source of contention. Government agencies must work to improve access to these resources and ensure that they are distributed fairly to all parties.

- The government should strengthen law enforcement in affected areas to prevent criminal elements from exploiting the conflict. Increased police patrols and border controls, as well as the establishment of security checkpoints, can help achieve this.
- The conflict has also been linked to economic hardship in the region. The government should promote regional economic development opportunities. One way may be to provide loans, savings and capacity-building assistance to small-scale farmers and herders to improve their output.

[php/2023/01/24/igp-psc-tussle-and-public-order/](https://www.nextier.com/2023/01/24/igp-psc-tussle-and-public-order/) (Accessed: March 19, 2023).

⁹⁷Enough of IGP, Police Commission Power Tussle. (2022). Daily Trust. Available at: <https://dailytrust.com/enough-of-igp-police-commission-power-tussle/> (Accessed: March 19, 2023).

⁹⁸Resolving farmer – herder conflicts (2021) The Nextier. Available at: <https://thenextier.com/resolving-farmer-herder-conflicts/> (Accessed: March 1, 2023).

⁹⁹Ending the feud (2023) The Nextier. Available at: <https://thenextier.com/ending-the-feud/> (Accessed: March 1, 2023).

¹⁰⁰Ibid

¹⁰¹Lingering farmers-herders crisis, threat to food security - sector players (2022) The Guardian. Available at: <https://guardian.ng/news/lingering-farmers-herders-crisis-threat-to-food-security-sector-players/> (Accessed: March 1, 2023).

¹⁰²Hunger crisis looms in Nigeria amid conflict between farmers, herders (2022) Africanews. Available at: <https://www.africanews.com/2022/02/02/hunger-crisis-looms-in-nigeria-amid-conflict-between-farmers-herders/> (Accessed: March 1, 2023).

¹⁰³Return to farm (2022) The Nextier. Available at: <https://thenextier.com/return-to-farm/> (Accessed: March 19, 2023).

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¹⁰⁵Pastoralist and farmer-herder conflicts in the sahel (2022) Climate Diplomacy. Available at: <https://climate-diplomacy.org/case-studies/pastoralist-and-farmer-herder-conflicts-sahel/> (Accessed: March 1, 2023).

¹⁰⁶Abeka, F. (2022) FG seeks ways to end Farmer-Herder Crisis, The ICIR- Latest News, Politics, Governance, Elections, Investigation, Factcheck, Covid-19. Available at: <https://www.icirnigeria.org/fg-seeks-ways-to-end-farmer-herder-crisis/> (Accessed: March 1, 2023).

¹⁰⁷Nwakanma, E. and Boroh, S. (2019) Demography of Conflict and the Herders-Farmers Crisis in Nigeria, SGOU. Available at: <https://sgou.ac.in/courses/ba-ara-bic/slm/unit-5-population-growth-population-explosion-and-associated-issues/> (Accessed: March 19, 2023).

¹⁰⁸Understanding the herder-farmer conflict in Nigeria (2018) ACCORD. Available at: <https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/understanding-the-herder-farmer-conflict-in-nigeria/> (Accessed: March 19, 2023).

¹⁰⁹Herder-farmer clashes: The new normal (2020). The Nextier. Available at: <https://thenextier.com/herder-farmer-clashes-the-new-normal/> (Accessed: March 1, 2023).

¹¹⁰FG launches NAITS to reduce herder-farmer clashes (2022) Vanguard. Available at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/11/fg-launches-naits-to-reduce-herder-farmer-clashes/> (Accessed: March 1, 2023).

¹¹¹National Pasture Development Programme will Reduce Herder/Farmer Conflicts (2022) Tribune. Available at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/06/natl-pasture-development-programme-will-reduce-herder-farmer-conflicts-fg/> (Accessed: March 1, 2023).

¹¹²Egboboh, C. (2022) FG seek International aid to address Lake Shrinkage, Farmer-Herder Crisis, Businessday NG. Available at: <https://businessday.ng/news/article/fg-seek-interl-aid-to-address-lake-shrinkage-farmer-herder-crisis/> (Accessed: March 1, 2023).

¹¹³Umoru, H. (2022) Implement National Livestock Transformation Plan now, Northern Govs to ..., Vanguard. Available at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/07/implement-national-livestock-transformation-plan-now-northern-govs-to-buhari/> (Accessed: March 1, 2023).

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Cultism



Image by Dailypost

Background

Cult killings are on the rise in Nigeria.¹¹⁵ Criminal gangs are becoming more daring, murdering, maiming, and destroying the property of rival gang members and innocent people. In February 2022, suspected cultists attacked a funeral in Ebenebe, Awka North Local Government Area, Anambra State, killing at least 20 persons. The involvement of children and teenagers is particularly troubling. For example, the Lagos State Police Command and the Agege Local Government Council have been fighting to rid the area of a gang of teenage cultists called “Awawa boys.”¹¹⁶

Cultism is a dominant threat to peace in Southern Nigeria but rapidly expanding to Northern Nigeria. For example, cultism and teen violence are widespread in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State.¹¹⁷ If not adequately contained, this outbreak of unchecked armed violence among young people threatens to become a double tragedy for the state’s ongoing insurgency.¹¹⁸ These youngsters donate money to bail wayward gang members arrested by the police, and any gang member who criticises the organisation risks being killed or seriously injured.¹¹⁹



The Trend of Cultism in Nigeria

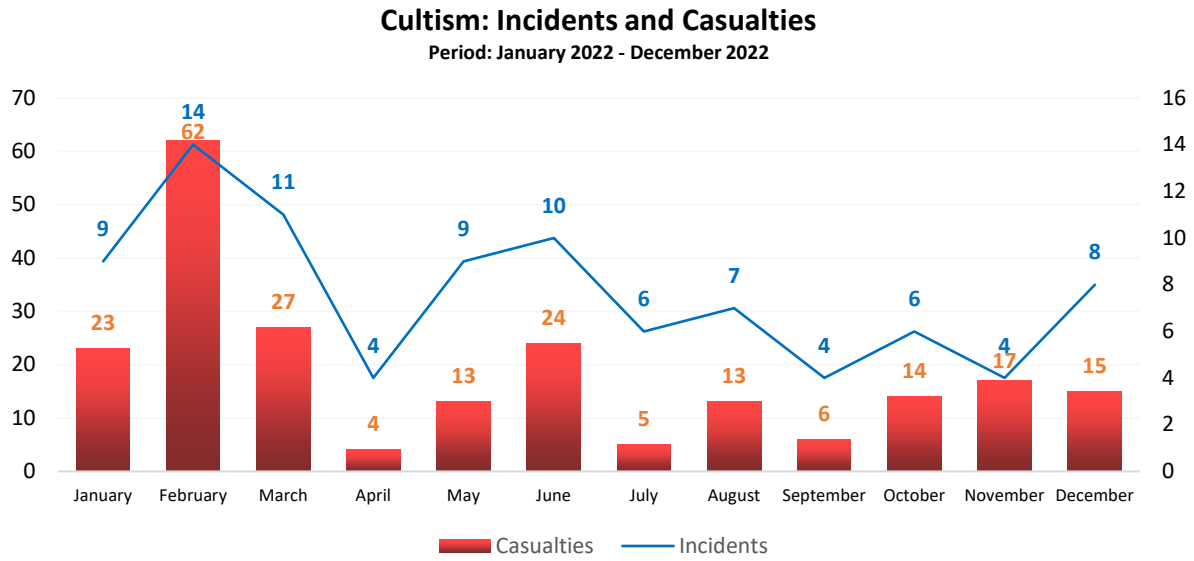


Figure 48: Cultism: Incidents and Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Cultism: Casualties by Region

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

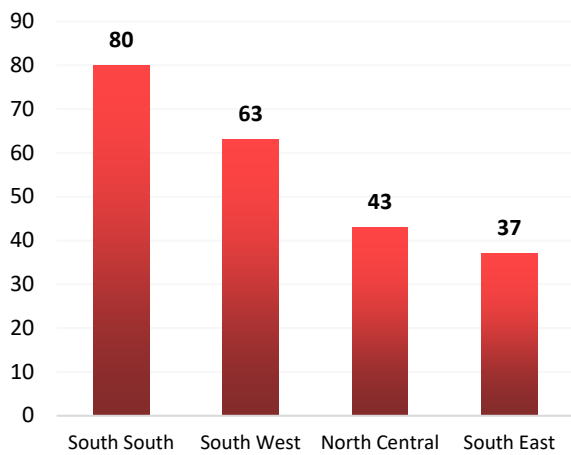


Figure 49: Cultism: Casualties by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Cultism: Incidents by Region

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

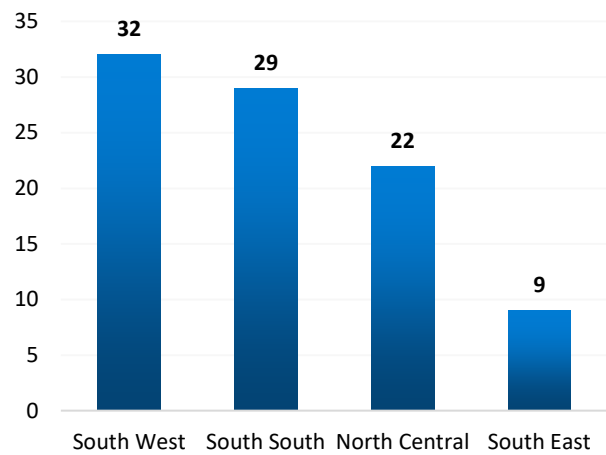


Figure 50: Cultism: Incidents by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Cultism: Top 10 States by Casualties

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

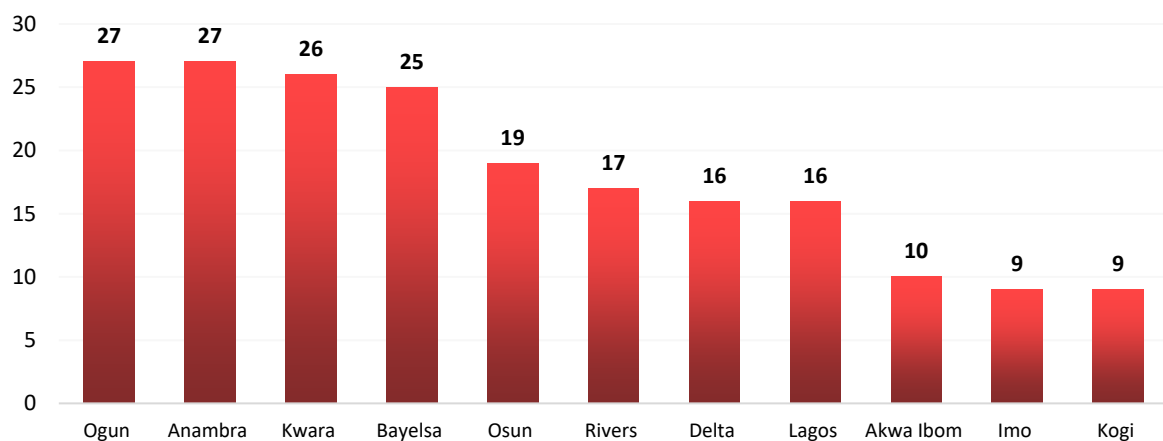


Figure 51: Cultism: Top 10 States by Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Cultism: Top 10 States by Incidents

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

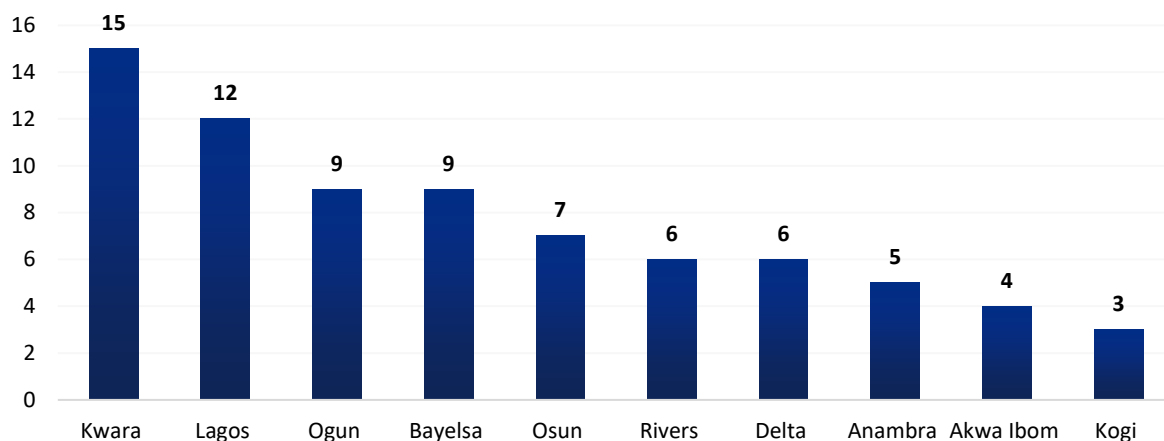


Figure 52: Cultism: Top 10 States by Incidents (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Cultism: Top 10 LGAs by Casualties

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

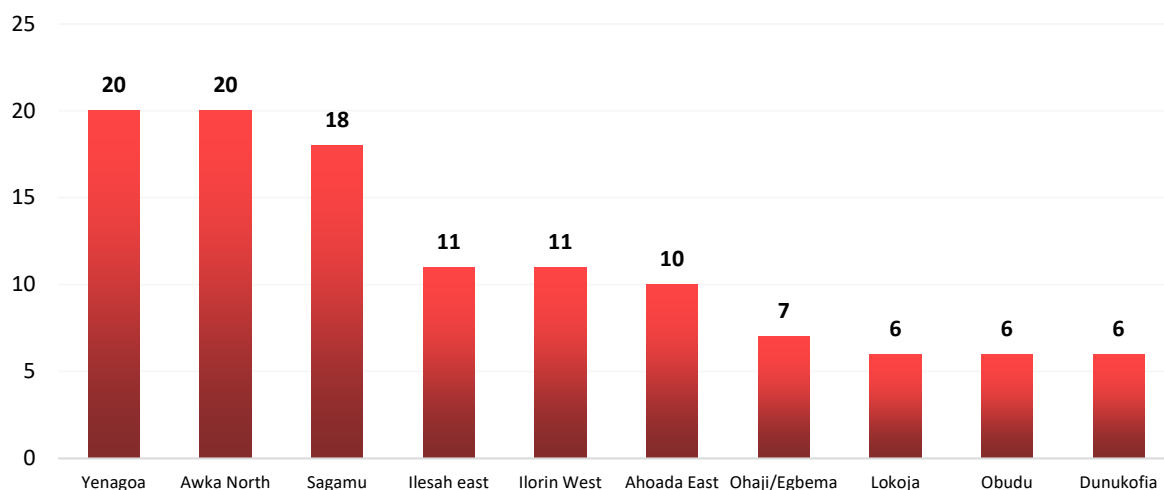


Figure 53: Cultism: Top 10 LGAs by Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Cultism: Top 10 LGAs by Incidents

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

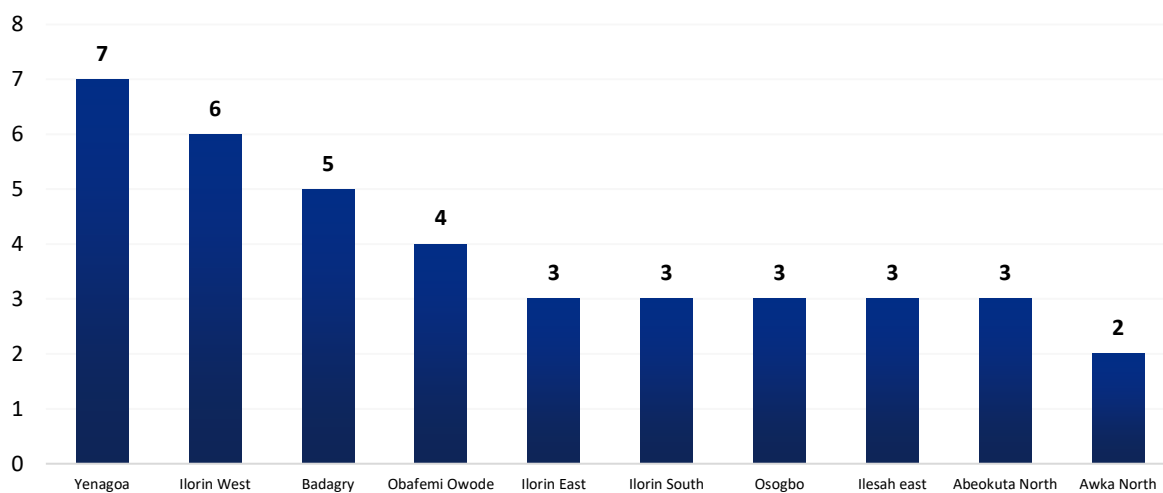


Figure 54: Cultism: Top 10 LGAs by Incidents (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Key Drivers of Cultism

According to a 2022 study, several factors drive Nigeria's cultism.¹²⁰ Some of them include the following:

- **Peer Group Influence:** Peer group influence is like a comprehensive fire, and students, especially adolescents, have more solid social relationships with their peers than any other type of people.
- **Harsh Economic Conditions:** Nigeria's difficult economic position is another element that has pushed some students to join cults. The country's severe financial position, caused by a high rate of corruption and results in a high rate of poverty, is cause for concern.
- **Moral Degeneration:** Society is marked by immoral principles, which have been instilled in the lives of the youth. Society has established an enabling atmosphere for all types of crimes due to corruption, which is the problem of cultism in the university community.
- **Failing Education System:** The country's state of corruption has also degraded educational standards. The university community is a higher institution of learning and a secondary agent of socialisation where morality should be instilled in the student's life, but the opposite is true.
- **Cultists are not Prosecuted:** Most students caught up in cult activities are not prosecuted. Some pupils are encouraged to join cults as a result of this. Students join cults because they believe there must be an escape route if they are cut. This is to demonstrate that they have support. The law exists, yet it is ineffective. Everything is possible in Nigeria as long as you have a political godfather.
- **Elite Manipulation:** The political state of the society, which is characterised by corruption, poverty, violence, and political and communal confrontations, is a factor that contributes to students joining cultism in colleges. Some hardened and ambiguous politicians use the services of cult members for political rivalry against their opponent, manipulate the electoral process, and even assassinate, and then obtain a sizeable financial package, job chance, and even political position as recompense.

Government Responses

The spread of cultism has prompted the government to issue various pronouncements while imposing harsh penalties on violators. On March 2022, President Buhari charged the police and other law enforcement officials to confront and apprehend cult groups aiming to destabilise the country.¹²¹ The president also urged parents and religious leaders to join forces to combat youth radicalisation. Many state governments have introduced anti-cultism legislation and funding for security agencies to combat the plague of cultism. For example, the Lagos state government signed the Prohibition of Illegal Organizations and Cultism Act of 2021, which mandates a 21-year prison sentence for convicted cultists in the state.¹²² The government also reorganised its elite crime-fighting unit, the Rapid Response Squad (RRS), and handed N8.7 billion in security equipment to the State Police Command.

Successes and Challenges

The government has succeeded in raiding cultist hideouts and apprehending gang members. On 20th June 2022, the Delta State Police Command arrested 51 suspected cult members during an initiation of new members and an anniversary celebration at Ogwashi-Uku, Aniocha South Local Government Area.¹²³ Similarly, in January 2023, the Bauchi State Police Command detained six alleged cultists who vandalised a transformer in the Dughah Sabo Area of the Tafawa Balewa local Government Area.¹²⁴

While many states have anti-cultism legislation in place, the laws are not being enforced or are ineffective.¹²⁵ The government sparingly tries to prosecute and convict defaulters. The government's unwillingness to impose harsh sanctions emboldens cultists to continue their operations with impunity. Aside from failing to punish defaulters, the authorities have also failed to protect innocent citizens from attacks and intimidation by violent gangs.¹²⁶

Fixing the Problem

- The government should entirely execute existing laws against cultism and increase the penalties for cult-related crimes.
- The government and stakeholders should intensify campaigns against

cultism. Cultism will be de-marketed and effectively curtailed through seminars, workshops, symposiums, posters, handbills, and public lectures.

- The government should strengthen law enforcement to prevent criminal cult activities. This can be achieved through increased police patrols, border controls, and the establishment of security checkpoints.
- The government should support social services that provide vulnerable people

with the necessary resources to break free from cult-like groups. This can include things like shelter, counselling, and financial assistance. Access to mental health resources to support and treat individuals vulnerable to such behaviours may also be provided as part of the assistance.

¹¹⁵End the menace of cult, gang violence. (2022). Punch Newspapers. Available at: <https://punchng.com/end-the-menace-of-cult-gang-violence/> (Accessed: March 2, 2023).

¹¹⁶Insecurity: RRS, Agege LGA set to check "Awawa boys' menace (2022) The Eagle Online. Available at: <https://theeagleonline.com.ng/insecurity-rrs-agege-lga-set-to-check-awawa-boys-menace/> (Accessed: March 2, 2023).

¹¹⁷Haruna, A. (2022) Maiduguri records increase in teen violence, HumAngle. Available at: <https://humanglemedia.com/maiduguri-records-increase-in-teen-violence/> (Accessed: March 2, 2023).

¹¹⁸Borno Communities Unite to tackle rising menace of youth gang violence (1969) The Humanitarian Times. Available at: <https://humanitarian-times.com/news/bor-no-communities-unite-to-tackle-rising-menace-of-youth-gang-violence/> (Accessed: March 2, 2023).

¹¹⁹Ibid

¹²⁰Chukwurah, G.O., John-Nsa, C.A. and Isimah, M.O. (2022) Addressing the Causes of Cultism in Nigerian Universities: A Case for the Application of Behavioural-Change Communication Strategies, World Journal of Research and Review (WJRR). Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362262862_Addressing_the_Causes_of_Cultism_in_Nigerian_Universities_A_Case_for_the_Application_of_Behavioral-Change_Communication_Strategies (Accessed: March 3, 2023).

¹²¹Agbakwuru, J.J. (2022) Buhari directs police, security agencies to end cult killings in Ogun, Vanguard. Available at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/03/buhari-directs-police-security-agencies-to-end-cult-killings-in-ogun/> (Accessed: March 3, 2023).

¹²²Moronfolu, G.S. (2022) Insecurity challenges in Nigeria: way out of seeming despondency, THISDAYLIVE. Available at: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2022/08/16/insecurity-challenges-in-nigeria-way-out-of-seeming-despondency-7/> (Accessed: March 3, 2023).

¹²³Nathaniel, S. (2022) Police arrest 51 suspected cultists celebrating anniversary, initiation in Delta, Channels Television. Available at: <https://www.channelstv.com/2022/06/19/police-arrest-51-suspected-cultists-celebrating-anniversary-initiation-in-delta/> (Accessed: March 3, 2023).

¹²⁴Tribune Online (2023) Bauchi police arrest 6 suspects for cultism, recover firearms, Tribune Online. Available at: <https://tribuneonlineng.com/bauchi-police-arrest-6-suspects-for-cultism-recover-firearms/> (Accessed: March 3, 2023).

¹²⁵Eavesdropper: Ending reign of cultists in states. (2021). Punch Newspapers. Available at: <https://punchng.com/eavesdropper-ending-reign-of-cultists-in-states/> (Accessed: March 3, 2023).

¹²⁶Rivers Cult-related killings: Government not doing enough to protect communities (2022) Premium Times - Nigeria leading newspaper for News, investigations. Available at: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/371918-rivers-cult-related-killings-government-not-doing-enough-to-protect-communities-am>

Gunmen Attacks



Image by Newarab

Background

Gunmen are unidentified violent armed groups. Gunmen attacks are carried out by 'Unknown Non-State Armed Groups' (UNSAG). In Nigeria, violent occurrences associated with UNSAG are common. The media usually does not define this group's identity, hence the label of unknown gunmen. Other times gunmen assaults may be tied to the activity of a specific criminal organisation or thrive under the guise of repeated insecurity driven by a well-known criminal syndicate, despite having no connection to the famous group. They are known to kill, rob, harass, kidnap, injure, and destroy public and private property for unknown motives. Violent gunmen attacks are widespread in Southeast Nigeria, with isolated reports from other parts of the country. The

violent group known as "Unknown Gunmen" operational in the Southeast region has been linked to the Eastern Security Network (ESN), the militant arm of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), a secessionist group. Notably, Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of the IPOB, has distanced his group from the Unknown Gunmen while warning them to stop their activities or face the consequences.¹²⁷

On December 2022, masked gunmen in a tricycle attacked residents at New Market in Enugu State, Nigeria, killing two innocent people.¹²⁸ On 4th November 2022, unidentified gunmen killed a National Examination Council (NECO) employee during an attack on the University of Ibadan's staff quarters.¹²⁹



The Trend of Gunmen Attacks in Nigeria

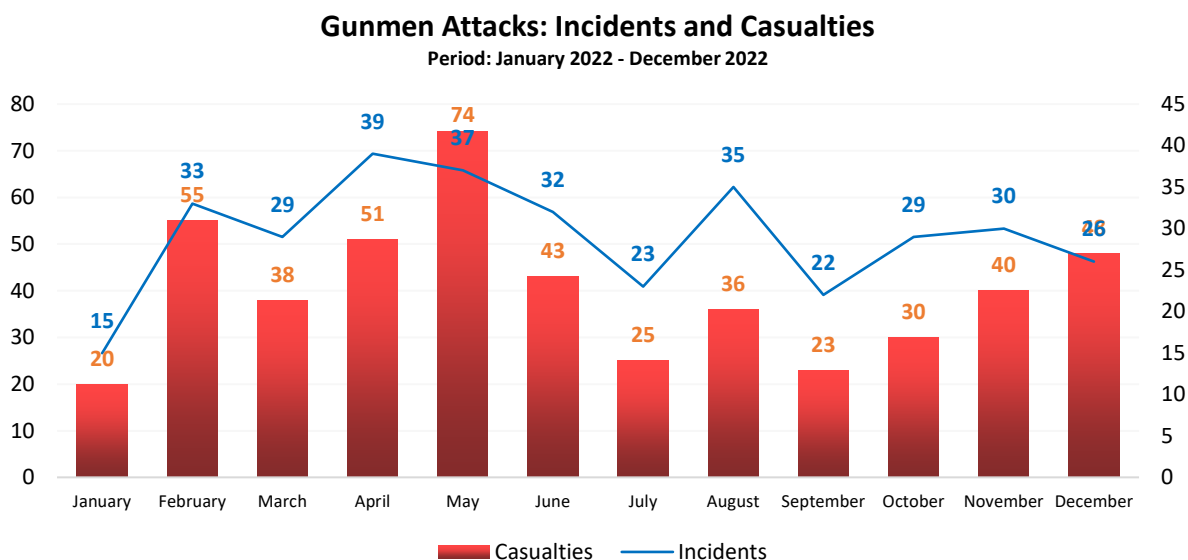


Figure 55: Gunmen Attacks: Incidents and Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

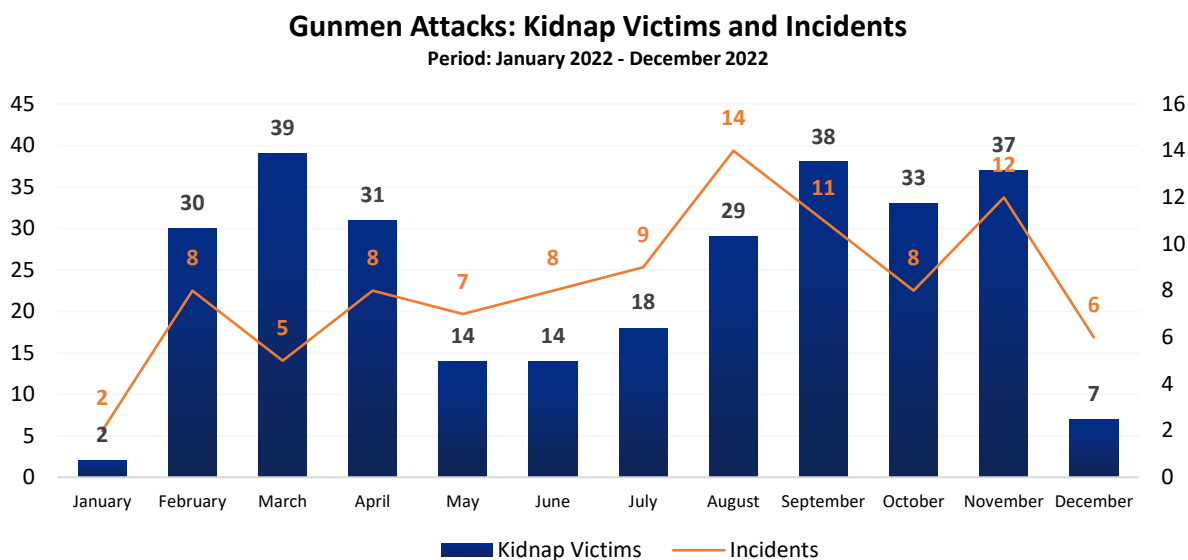


Figure 56: Gunmen Attacks: Incidents and Kidnap Victims (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

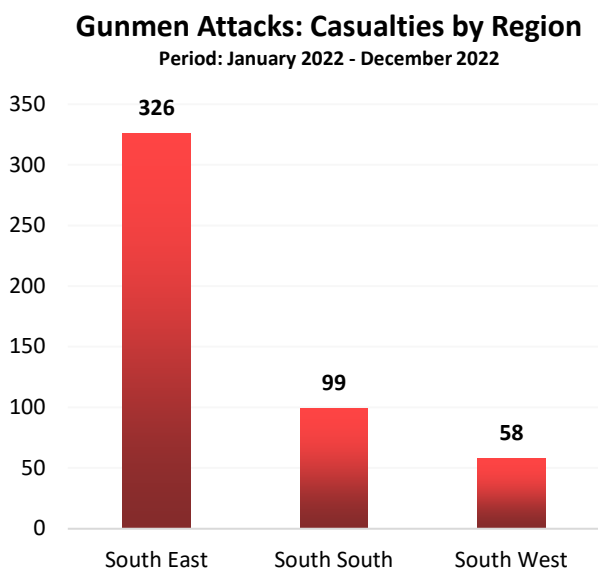


Figure 57: Gunmen Attacks: Casualties by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

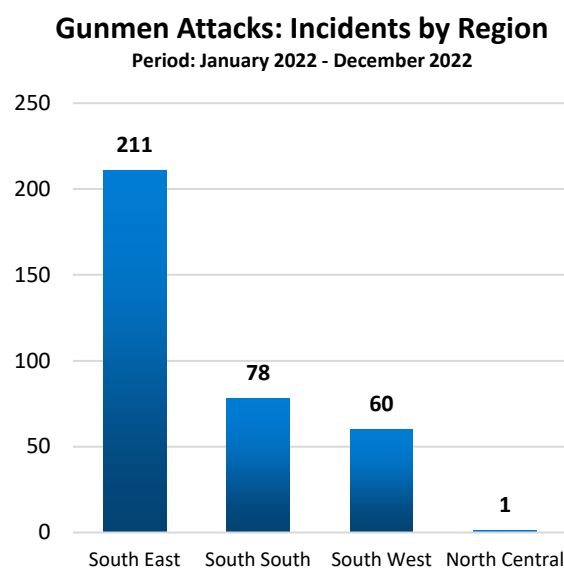


Figure 58: Gunmen Attacks: Incidents by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Gunmen Attacks: Kidnap Victims by Region

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

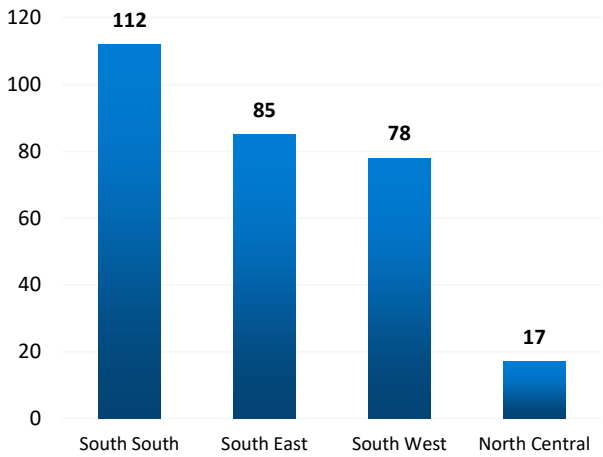


Figure 59: Gunmen Attacks: Kidnap Victims by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Gunmen Attacks: Kidnap Incidents by Region

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

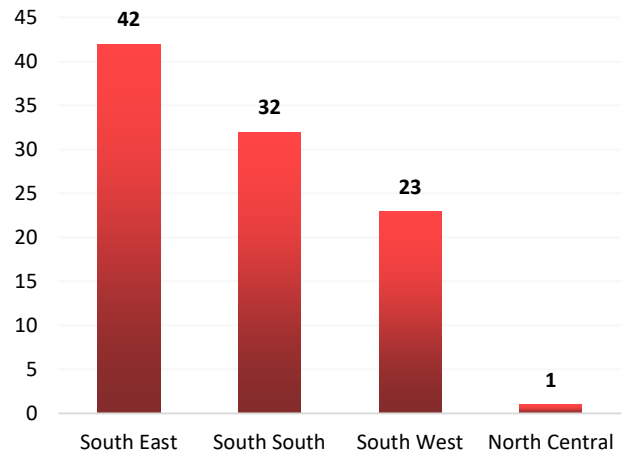


Figure 60: Gunmen Attacks: Kidnap Incidents by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Gunmen Attacks: Top 10 States by Casualties

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

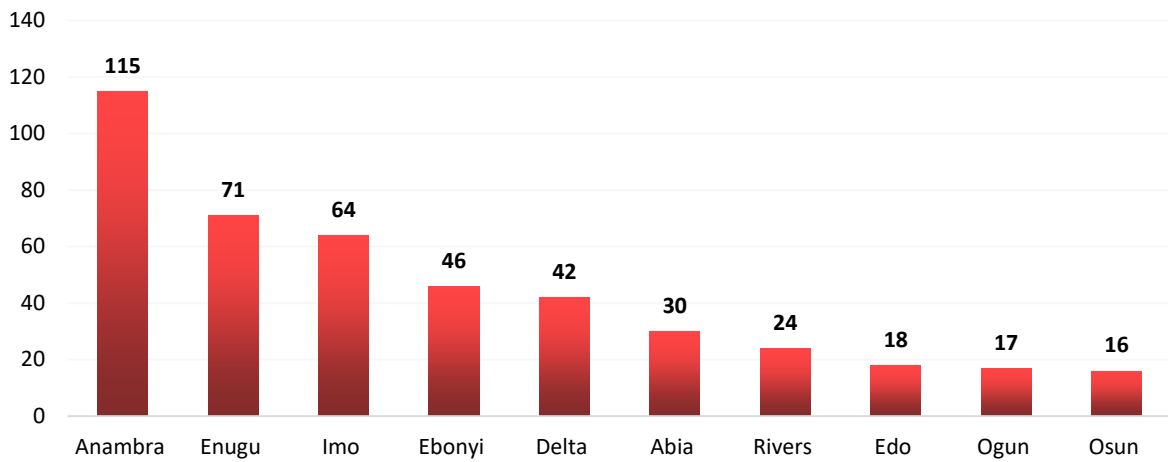


Figure 61: Gunmen Attacks: Top 10 States by Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Gunmen Attacks: Top 10 States by Incidents

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

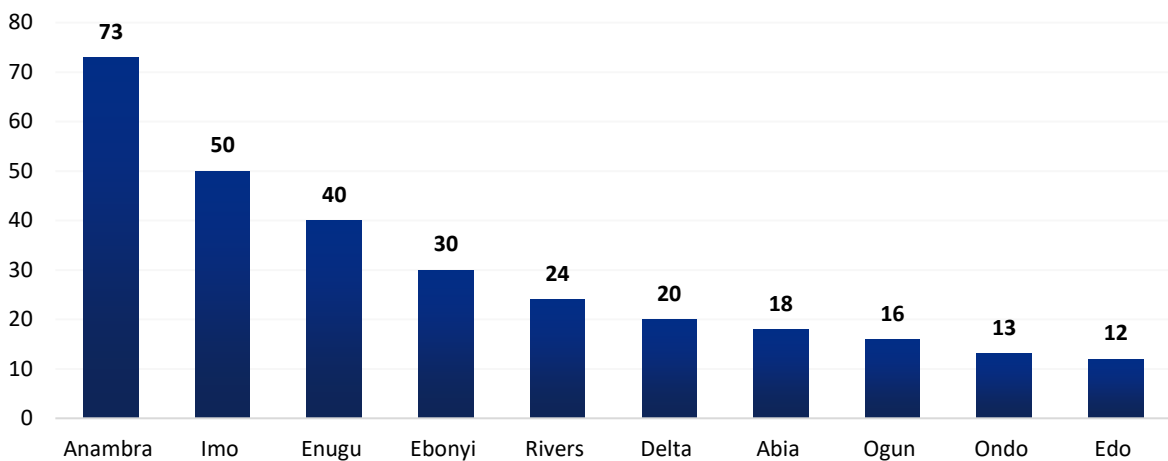


Figure 62: Gunmen Attacks: Top 10 States by Incidents (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Gunmen Attacks: Top 10 States by Kidnap Victims

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

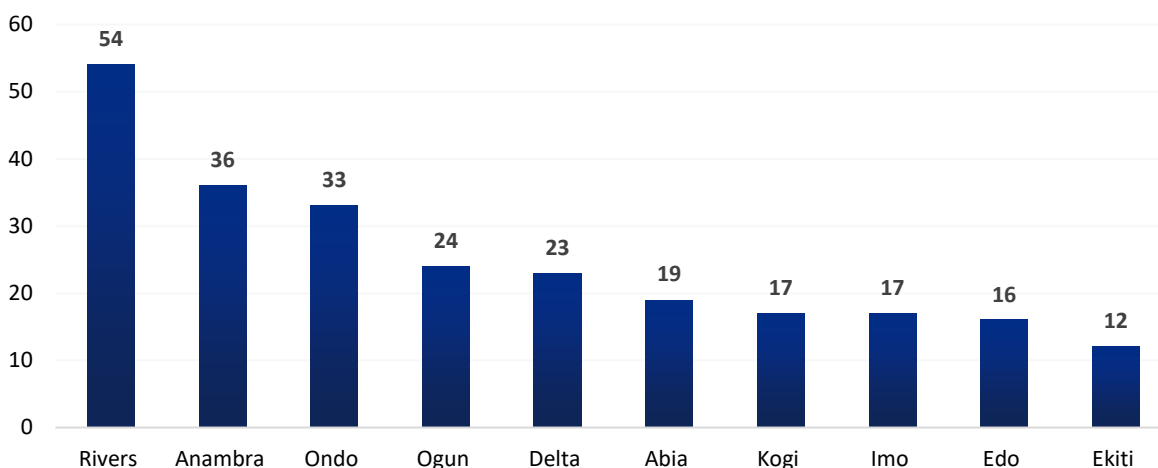


Figure 63: Gunmen Attacks: Top 10 States by Kidnap Victims (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Gunmen Attacks: Top 10 States by Kidnap Incidents

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

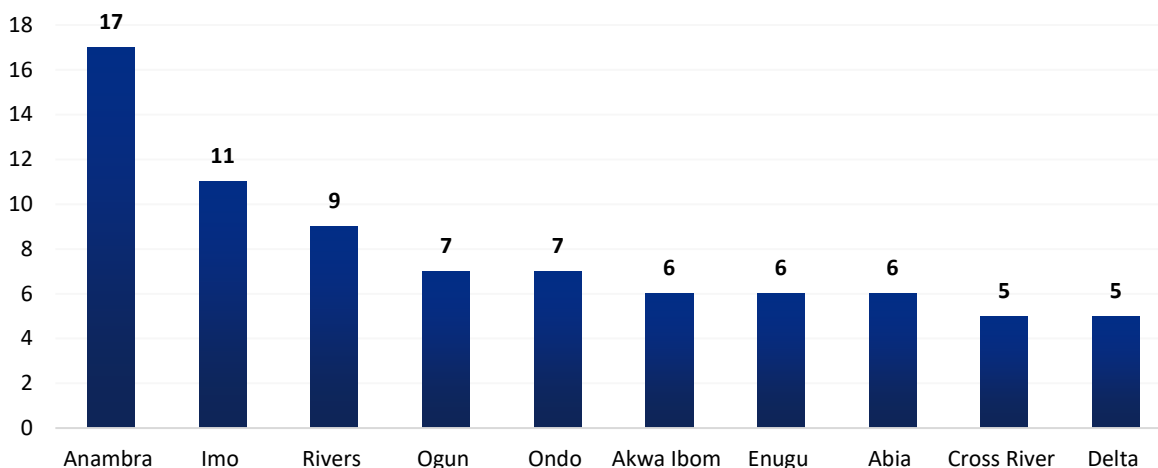


Figure 64: Gunmen Attacks: Top 10 States by Kidnap Incidents (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Gunmen Attacks: Top 10 LGAs by Casualties

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

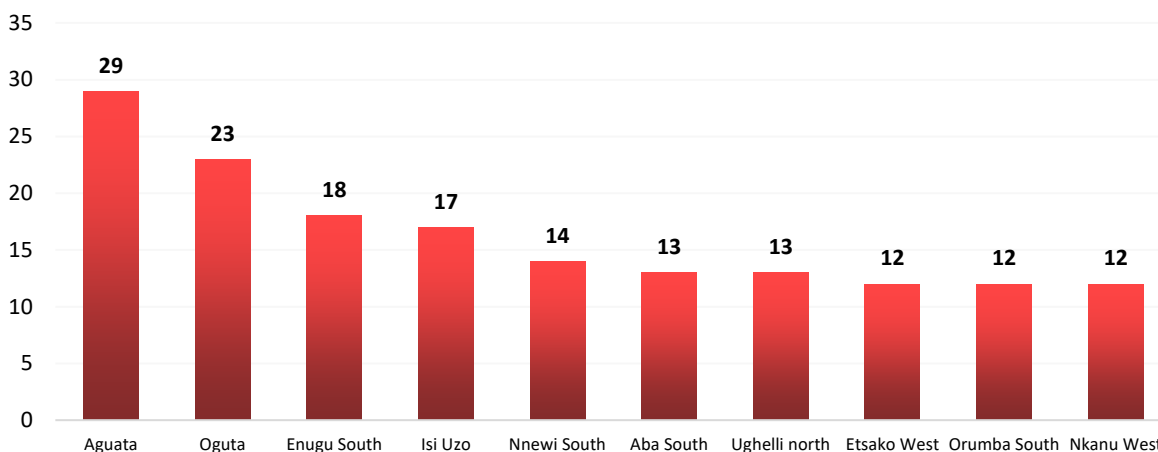


Figure 65: Gunmen Attacks: Top 10 LGAs by Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Gunmen Attacks: Top 10 LGAs by Incidents

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

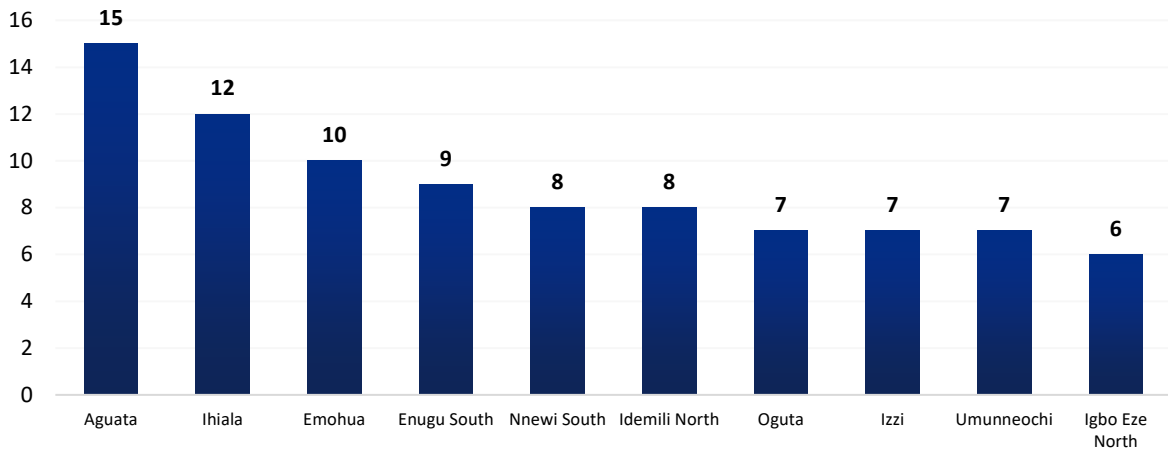


Figure 66: Gunmen Attacks: Top 10 LGAs by Incidents (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Gunmen Attacks: Top 10 LGAs by Kidnap Victims

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

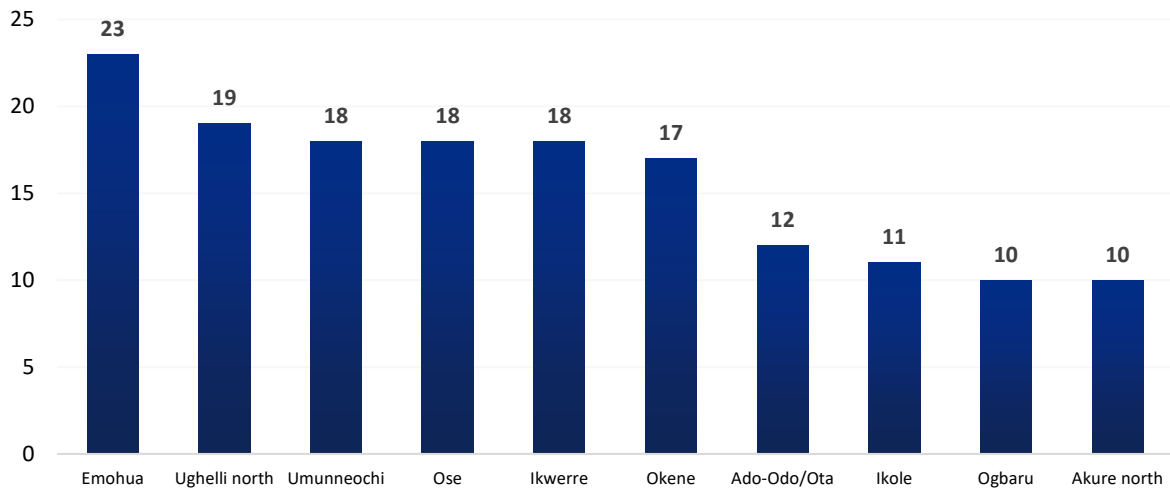


Figure 67: Gunmen Attacks: Top 10 LGAs by Kidnap Victims (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Gunmen Attacks: Top 10 LGAs by Kidnap Incidents

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

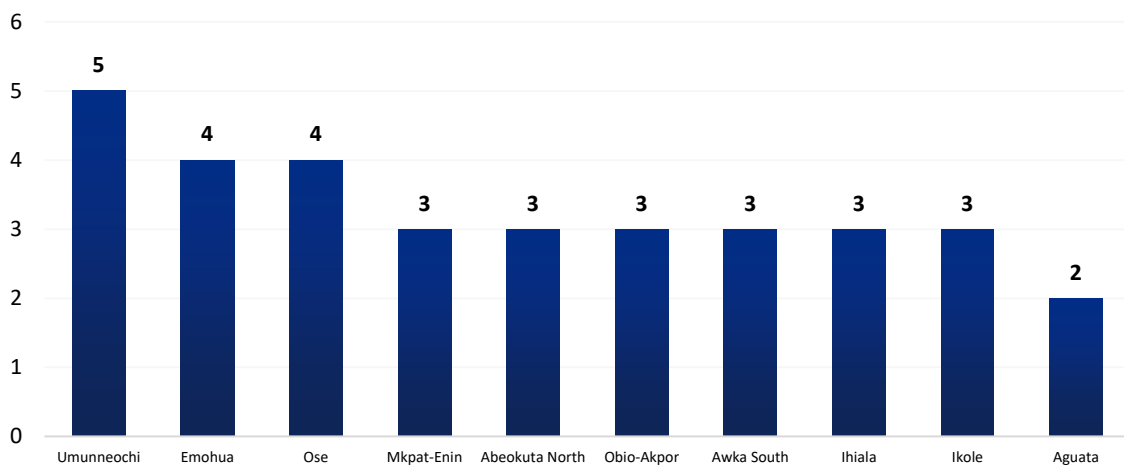


Figure 68: Gunmen Attacks: Top 10 LGAs by Kidnap Incidents (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Key Drivers of Gunmen Attacks

The government's inability to resolve the identified security crisis nationwide is a crucial factor.¹³⁰ Some scholars argue that the government has lost its monopoly of violence to non-state actors. According to them, this has turned the country into a vast insecure enclave where lives are easily lost, and no one is held accountable.¹³¹ Increasing poverty, inequality, and a lack of job prospects, particularly among youth, are at the heart of Nigeria's insecurity crisis.¹³² Therefore, rising insecurity has coupled with increasing poverty levels in Nigeria, with an estimated 83 million people, or 39 per cent of the total population, living in extreme poverty (less than \$2 per day) as of April 2022. This represents an 18 per cent increase from the 70 million persons recorded in 2016.¹³³

Government Responses

Since various government organisations and personnel hold diverse viewpoints, there is no clear path to identifying UNSAG.¹³⁴ Security agencies react in the same manner as violent groups are unknown. The federal government has prioritised counter-attacks to purge the country of criminal activity. Nigerian security authorities have also focused on intercepting criminal hideouts to alter their planning and coordination.

Successes and Challenges

Security agencies have successfully carried out crackdowns on UNSAGs through intelligence and local cooperation leading to

the arrest of many gunmen in some areas.¹³⁵ For example, through operation search and flush in Imo State, security operatives have arrested many unknown gunmen in the region.¹³⁶ However, instances of complicity and fraternity between security agents and criminal elements continue to be a barrier to effective policing against gunmen operations.

Fixing the Problem

- For effective policing, necessary amendments are needed to ensure local government autonomy and the devolution of policing power to sub-national governments. Community policing programmes will also help foster trust and cooperation between the police and the local community, which are necessary for intelligence gathering.
- A dedicated surveillance team can be established with devices and cameras posted in public spaces to monitor activities and identify offenders in the face of a stretched-thin staff and general insecurity.
- The government should leverage technology to identify unknown violent gunmen. Identifying hotspots of criminal gunman attacks and prioritising policing in such areas.
- Addressing the underlying social and economic factors contributing to armed robbery, such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to livelihood opportunities, would also help prevent individuals from resorting to crime.

nesty-international.html (Accessed: March 3, 2023).

¹²⁷Opejobi, S. (2022) Unknown gunmen in southeast not IPOB, their days are numbered - Nnamdi Kanu, Daily Post Nigeria. Daily Post Nigeria. Available at: <https://dailypost.ng/2022/06/17/unknown-gunmen-in-southeast-not-ipob-their-days-are-numbered-nnamdi-kanu/> (Accessed: March 4, 2023).

¹²⁸Ugwu, C. (2022) Gunmen on rampage in South-east, kill two, raze police vehicle, Premium Times - Nigeria leading newspaper for News, investigations. Available at: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/569960-gunmen-on-rampage-in-south-east-kill-two-raze-police-vehicle.html?tztc=1> (Accessed: March 4, 2023).

¹²⁹Gunmen invade UI, kill NECO official. (2022) Vanguard. Available at: <https://www.newsheadlines.com.ng/vanguard-newspaper/2022/11/04/gunmen-in-vade-ui-kill-neco-official/> (Accessed: March 5, 2023).

¹³⁰ABOLADE, L. (2022) Nigeria: CDD report identifies causes of insecurity across regions, The ICIR- Latest News, Politics, Governance, Elections, Investigation, Factcheck, Covid-19. Available at: <https://www.icirigeria.org/nigeria-cdd-report-identifies-causes-of-insecurity-across-regions/> (Accessed: March 5, 2023).

¹³¹Agomuo, Z. (2022) Has government lost its monopoly of violence to terrorists? Businessday NG. Available at: <https://businessday.ng/politics/article/has-gov-ernment-lost-its-monopoly-of-violence-to-terrorists/> (Accessed: March 5, 2023).

¹³²The economics of insecurity: Nigeria's rough patch (2022) Nigeria's First Credit Rating Company. Available at: <https://www.agusto.com/publications/the-economics-of-insecurity-nigerias-rough-patch/> (Accessed: March 5, 2023).

¹³³Ibid

¹³⁴Unknown gunmen (2021) TheCable. Available at: <https://www.thecable.ng/unknown-gunmen> (Accessed: March 19, 2023).

¹³⁵Onuegbu, O. (2022) We've unraveled identities of unknown gunmen in Anambra, Blueprint Newspapers Limited: Breaking news happening now in Nigeria and today's latest newspaper headlines. Available at: <https://www.blueprint.ng/weve-unraveled-identities-of-unknown-gunmen-in-anambra-cp/> (Accessed: March 9, 2023).

¹³⁶Odunsi, W. (2021) Imo attacks: Police target unknown gunmen, begin 'operation search and flush', Daily Post Nigeria. Daily Post Nigeria. Available at: <https://dailypost.ng/2021/05/17/imo-attacks-police-target-unknown-gunmen-begin-operation-search-and-flush/> (Accessed: March 9, 2023).

Kidnapping



Image by Guardian

Background

Kidnapping is the false imprisonment or illegal confinement of an individual against their will by another individual in such that the confined individual's freedom of movement is violated (Turner, 1998). This is frequently done for ransom or to advance another crime (Turner, 1998, Ngwama, 2014).¹³⁷ In Nigeria, kidnapers are on a rampage abducting foreigners and non-foreigners, with little or no pushback from law enforcement agents. According to a report, about ₦653.7 million was paid for ransom in Nigeria between July 2021 and June 2022 to release kidnap victims.¹³⁸

According to a 2022 survey by Afro barometer, Nigerians feel unsafe in their communities and at home.¹³⁹ Most respondents regard abductions and kidnappings as a severe and growing problem in the country, and the majority believe the authorities are failing to address the issue.



109
Incidents



112
Casualties



139
Kidnap Victims



Nigeria

The Trend of Kidnapping in Nigeria

Kidnapping: Incidents and Casualties

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

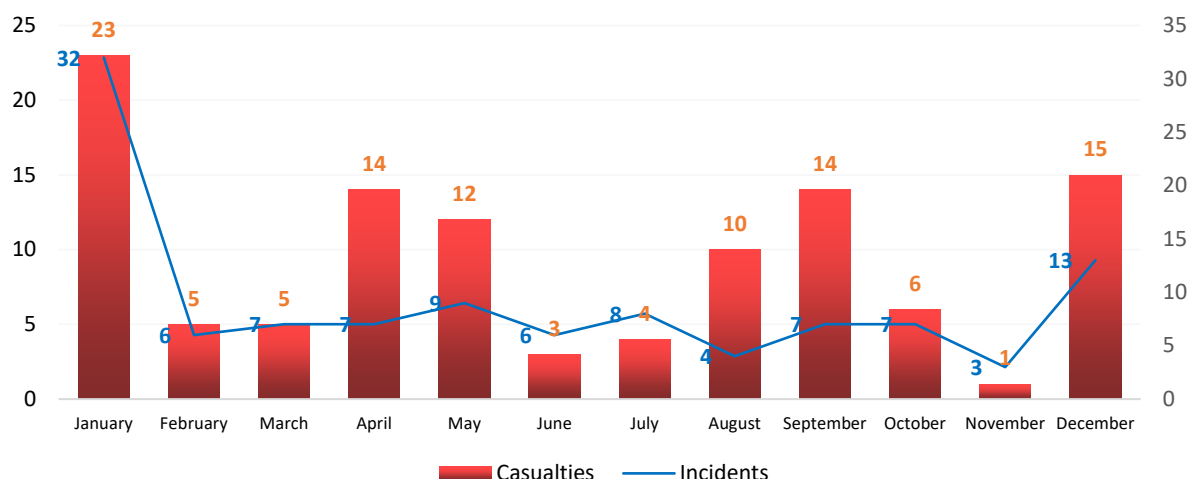


Figure 69: Kidnapping: Incidents and Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Kidnapping: Incidents and Kidnap Victims

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

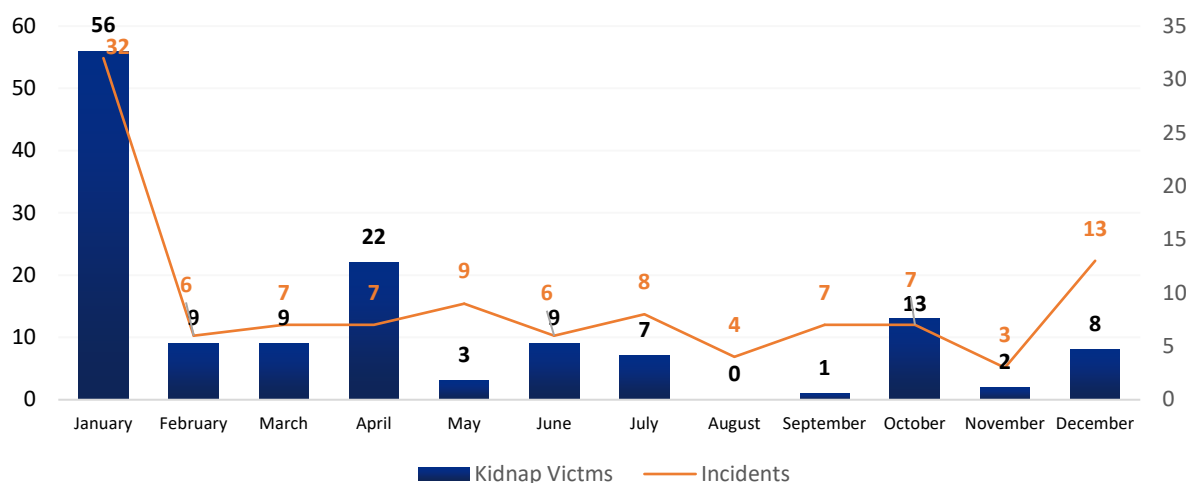


Figure 70: Kidnapping: Incidents and Kidnap Victims (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Kidnapping: Casualties by Region

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

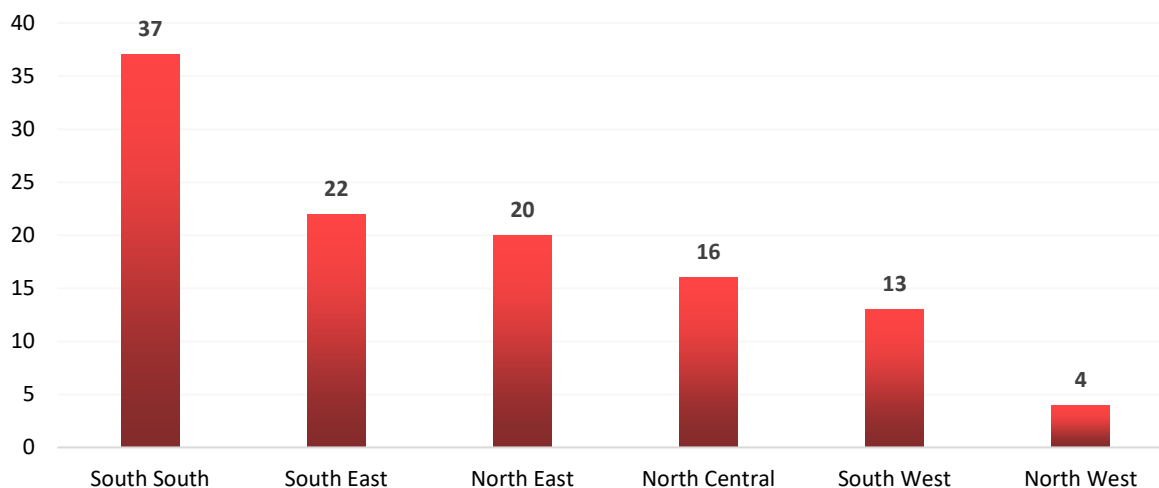


Figure 71: Kidnapping: Casualties by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Kidnapping: Incidents by Region

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

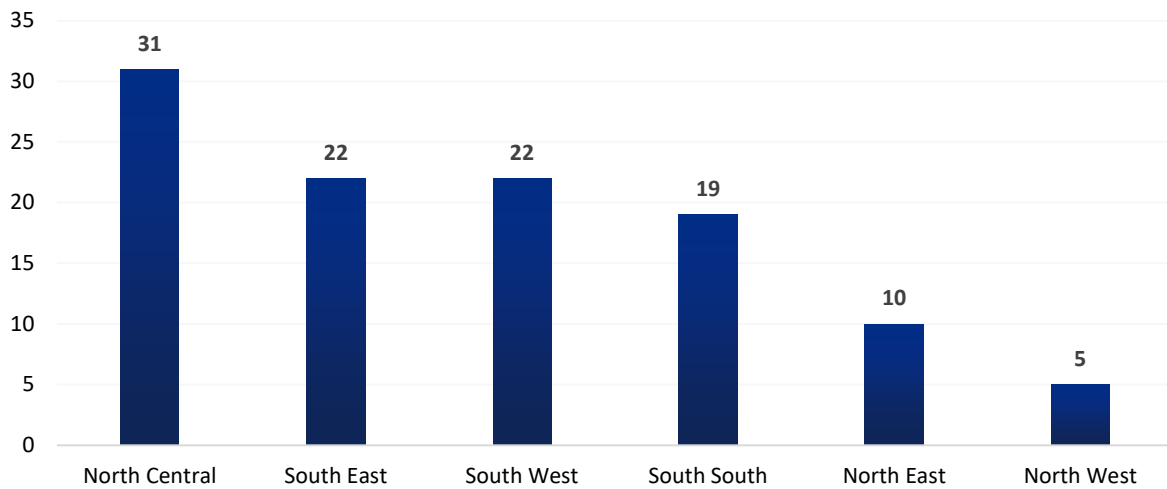


Figure 72: Kidnapping: Incidents by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Kidnapping: Kidnap Victims by Region

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

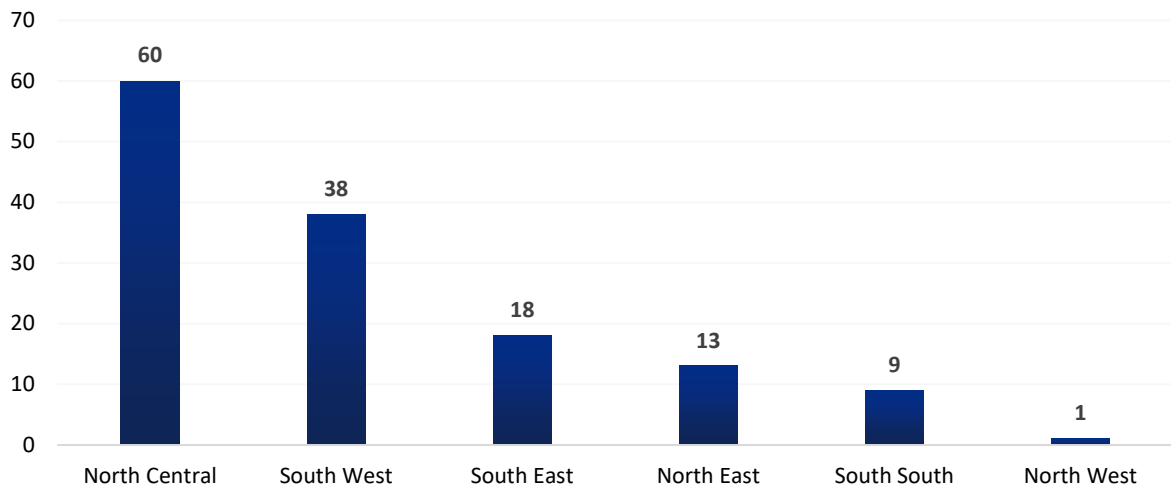


Figure 73: Kidnapping: Kidnap Victims by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Kidnapping: Kidnap Incidents by Region

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

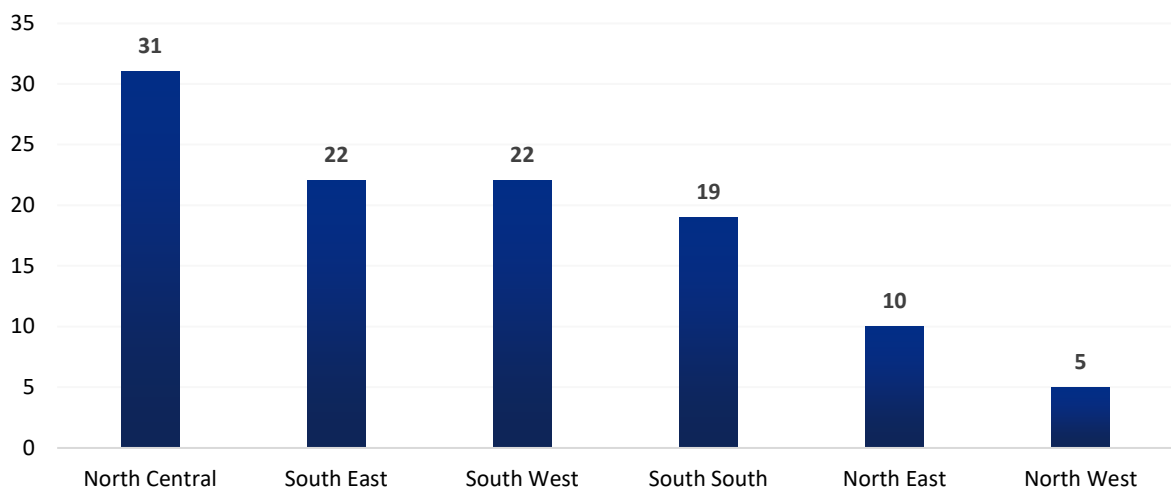


Figure 74: Kidnapping: Kidnap Incidents by Region (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Kidnapping: Top 10 States by Casualties

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

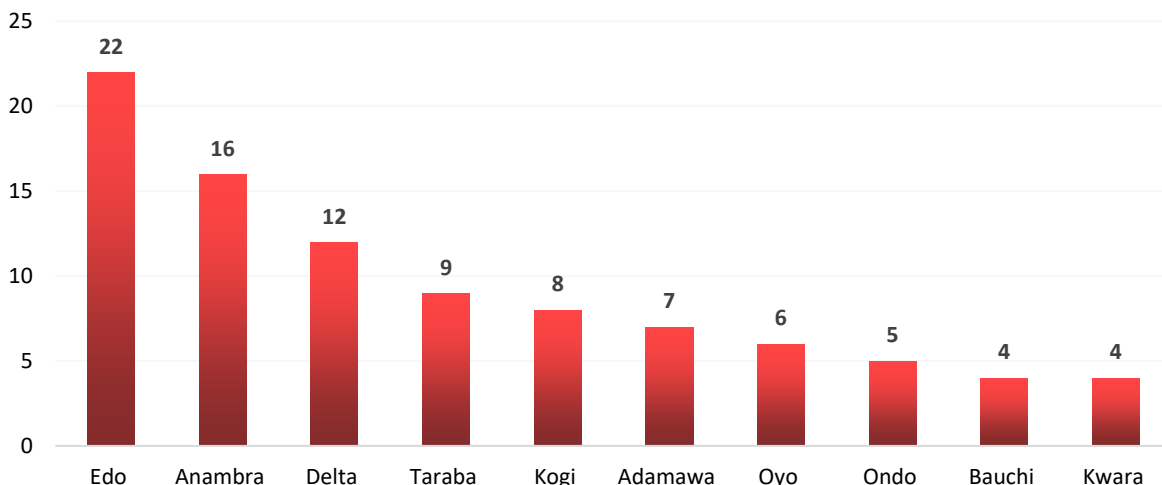


Figure 75: Kidnapping: Top 10 States by Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Kidnapping: Top 10 States by Incidents

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

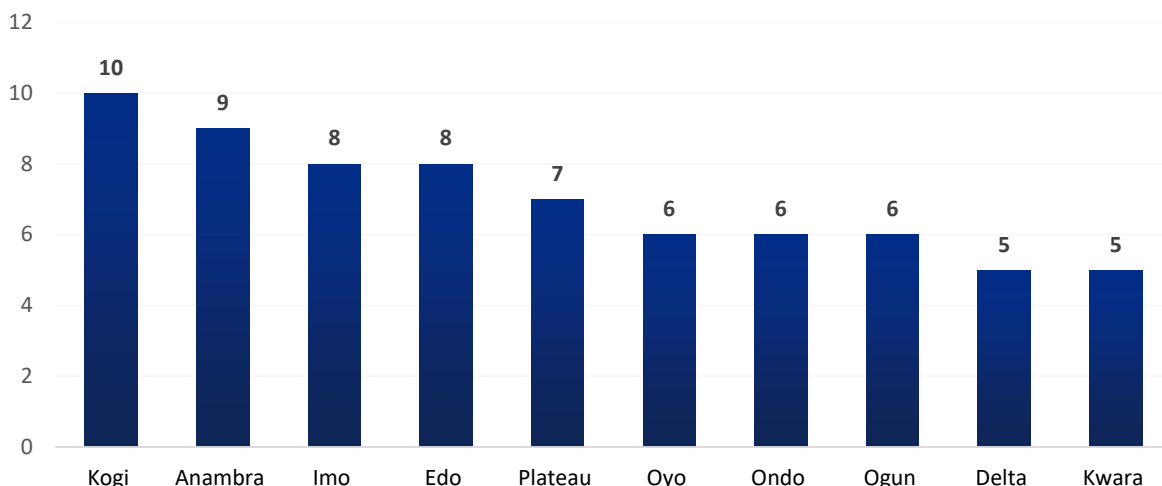


Figure 76: Kidnapping: Top 10 States by Incidents (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Kidnapping: Top 10 States by Kidnap Victims

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

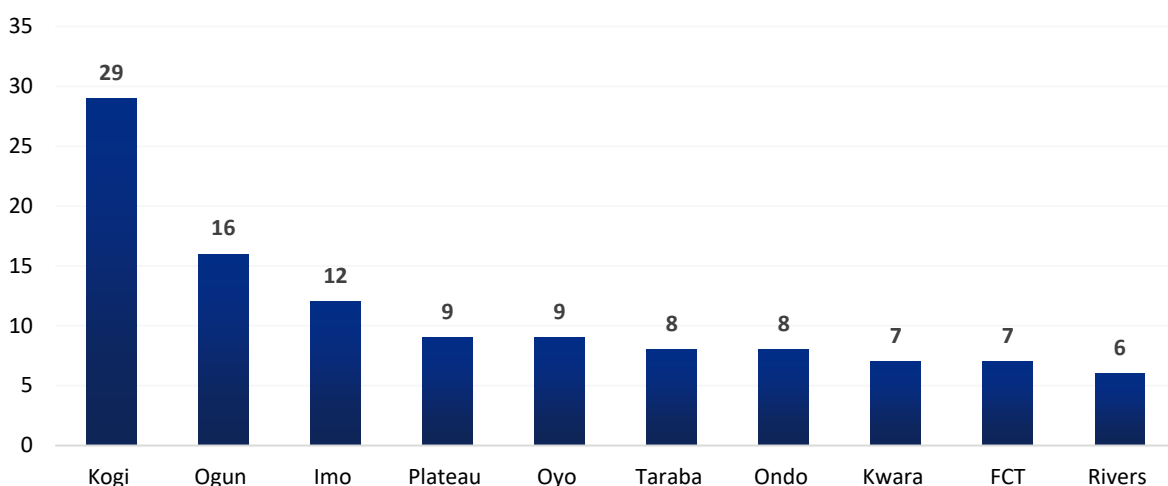


Figure 77: Kidnapping: Top 10 States by Kidnap Victims (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Kidnapping: Top 10 States by Kidnap Incidents

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

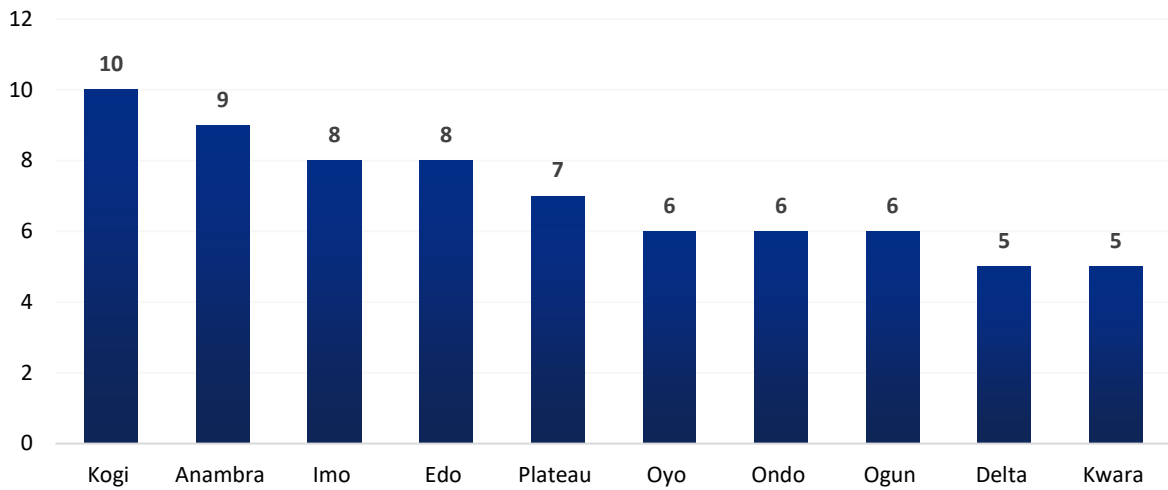


Figure 78: Kidnapping: Top 10 States by Kidnap Incidents (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Kidnapping: Top 10 LGAs by Casualties

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

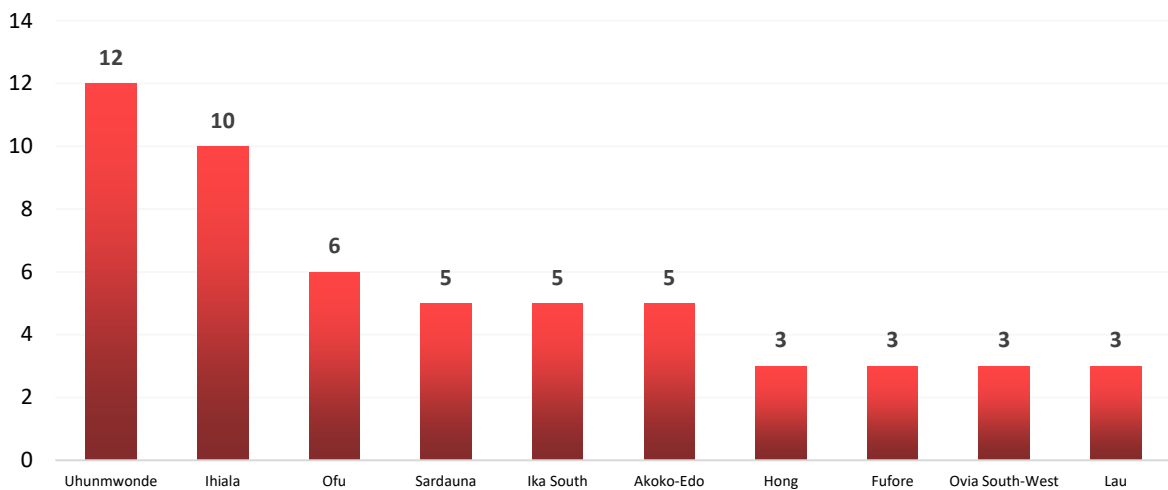


Figure 79: Kidnapping: Top 10 LGAs by Casualties (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Kidnapping: Top 10 LGAs by Incidents

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

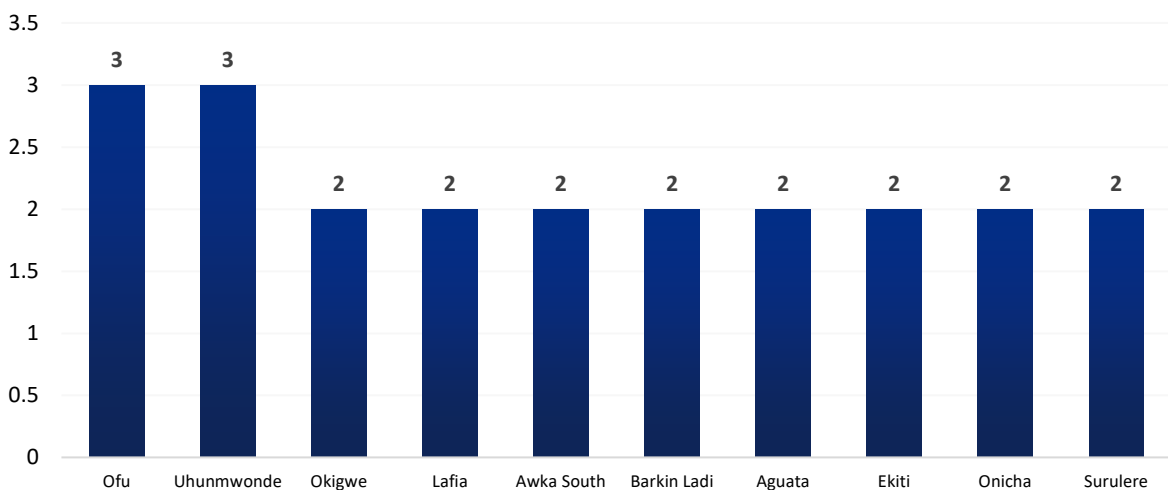


Figure 80: Kidnapping: Top 10 LGAs by Incidents (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Kidnapping: Top 10 States by Kidnap Victims

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

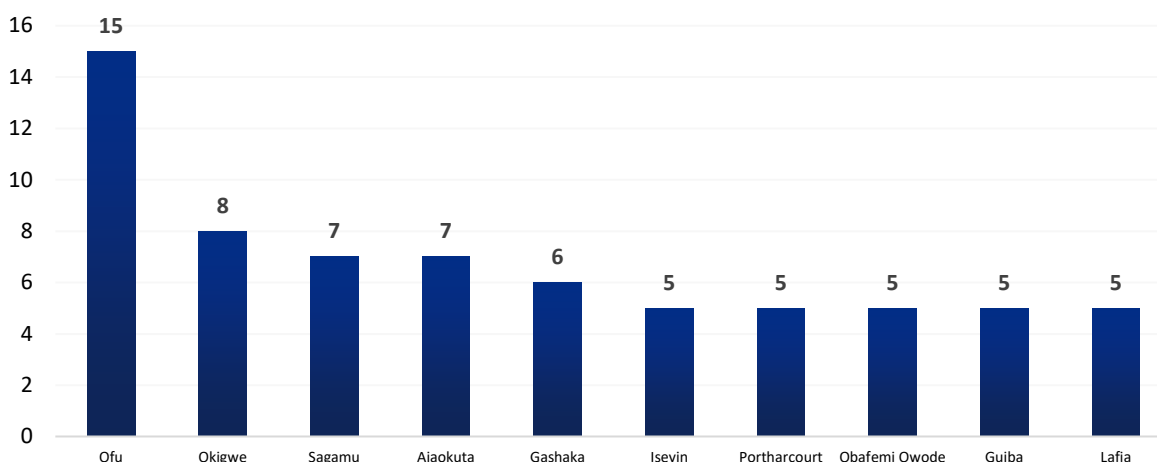


Figure 81: Kidnapping: Top 10 LGAs by Kidnap Victims (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Kidnapping: Top 10 LGAs by Kidnap Incidents

Period: January 2022 - December 2022

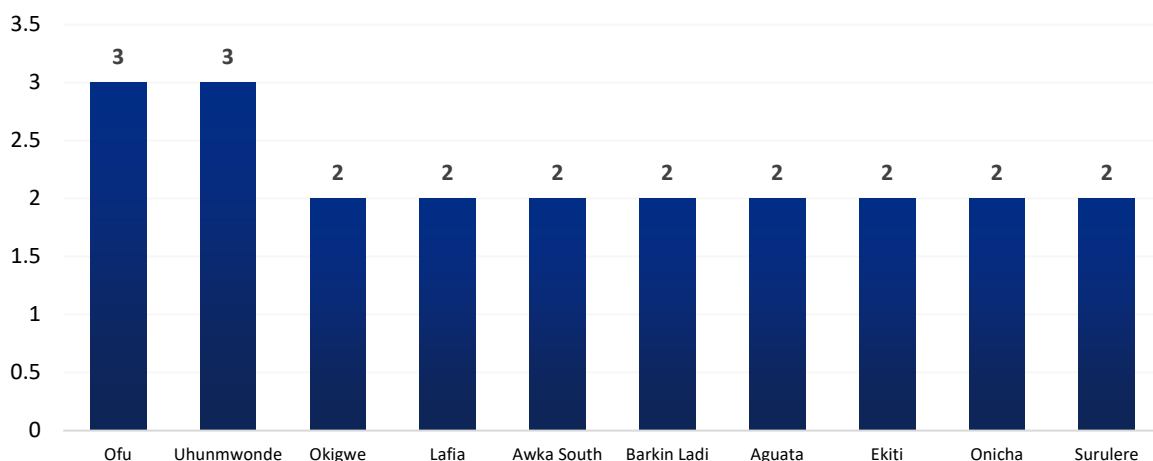


Figure 82: Kidnapping: Top 10 LGAs by Kidnap Incidents (Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database)

Key Drivers of Kidnapping in 2022

According to Hazen and Horner (2007), people commit kidnapping for two clear reasons: political bargaining and economic gain. These two characteristics provide an abduction classification to understand the underlying factors of the threat entirely.¹⁴⁰ Aside from the two broad reasons stated above, many people have been kidnapped and abducted by criminals for a variety of motives and intentions, including rape, the sale of human parts for ritual sacrifice, political vengeance, slavery, ransom-begging, marriage, murder or assassination, and other illegal activities. Given the current spate of kidnappings in Nigeria, it is clear that unemployment is a crucial driver for abduction. Given the limited livelihood

opportunities¹⁴¹ and economic deprivation, some disgruntled graduates resort to this atrocity to survive.

Government Responses

The Nigerian senate has passed legislation imposing jail terms for ransom payments to free a kidnapped person.¹⁴² According to the amendment of Nigeria's Terrorism Prevention Act 2013, families and friends of kidnap victims face up to 15 years in prison if they pay to free their loved ones.¹⁴³ Nigerian lawmakers amended this act, hoping the law would deter kidnapping for ransom. The Act also made abduction a capital offence in cases where the victims die. Other measures already in

place by the government include restricting residents' movement in some states, deploying the military, and shutting down mobile telecom networks to prevent terrorists from communicating.

Also, Nigeria's president, Muhammadu Buhari, has repeatedly made pronouncements about the government's zero tolerance for kidnapping. In a statement released on May 2022, he states,

*"We have zero tolerance for kidnapping, especially of school children, and we shall deal with such outrages decisively. The disruption of our educational system and economic activities will not be tolerated. "I have directed that all cases relating to security breaches, economic sabotage and wanton destruction of lives and property across the nation be immediately addressed."*¹⁴⁴

Successes and Challenges

The government has recorded some landmark convictions for offenders. The Federal High Court in Abuja sentenced a Taraba State to kidnap kingpin Bala Hamisu, known as Wadume, and others to seven years in prison for escaping from lawful custody and unlawfully dealing in prohibited firearms.¹⁴⁵ Also, the Nigerian Police Force has committed to deploying technology-based and tactical operational assets to combat kidnappings. Despite the bill to outlaw ransom payments, the spate of kidnappings has continued

nationwide.¹⁴⁶ As a result, the lengthy prison sentences enacted to discourage kidnapping and ransom payment have fallen short of the intended goal. Also, instances of government agents' complicity in ransom payments further invalidate the bill and complicate the menace.¹⁴⁷

Fixing the Problem

- The government should strengthen security towards kidnapping by deploying more contemporary intelligence techniques and cutting off identified logistics of kidnapers. The government should improve intelligence gathering to identify and pre-empt potential kidnapping operations. This can be achieved through technology, such as surveillance cameras and drones, and better coordination among law enforcement agencies.
- The government should strengthen law enforcement agencies to prevent and respond to kidnappings. This can be accomplished by increasing police patrols and border controls and establishing security checkpoints.
- Kidnapping is frequently associated with poverty, unemployment, and economic inequality. The government should address these underlying causes by creating jobs, reducing poverty, and improving access to education and healthcare.

¹³⁷Olusa, A., Enisan, G. and Olujimi, J. (2022) Implications of child kidnapping and abduction in the face of urban. Researchgate. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/367379700_Implications_of_Child_Kidnapping_and_Abduction_in_the_face_of_Urban_Security_in_South_Western_Nigeria (Accessed: March 5, 2023).

¹³⁸Sanni, K. (2022) Kidnappers collected N650 million as ransom in one year - Report, Premium Times - Nigeria leading newspaper for News, investigations. Available at: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/548525-kidnappers-collected-n650-million-as-ransom-in-one-year-report.html> (Accessed: March 5, 2023).

¹³⁹Nigerians feel less safe, see kidnapping cases on the rise (no date) Afro barometer. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3ZyXrHQ> (Accessed: March 9, 2023).

¹⁴⁰Ekechukwu, P.C. and Osaat, S.D. (2021) Kidnapping in Nigeria: A social threat to educational institutions, British Journal of Education, Learning and Development Psychology. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351134412_Kidnapping_in_Nigeria_A_Social_Threat_to_Educational_Institutions_Human_Existence_and_Unity/fulltext/609d37ea458515c2658aa21a/Kidnapping-in-Nigeria-A-Social-Threat-to-Educational-Institutions-Human-Existence-and-Unity.pdf (Accessed: March 5, 2023).

¹⁴¹Olagunju, D. (2019) Effects of unemployment on kidnapping, Tribune Online. Available at: <https://tribuneonlineng.com/effects-of-unemployment-on-kidnapping/> (Accessed: April 17, 2023).

¹⁴²Al Jazeera (2022) Nigeria Outlaws Ransom Payments, kidnap now punishable by death, News | Al Jazeera. Al Jazeera. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/27/nigeria-outlaws-ransom-payments-abduction-punishable-by-death> (Accessed: March 6, 2023).

¹⁴³Onireti, A. (2023) Why Nigerian kidnap law banning families from paying ransoms may do more harm than good, The Conversation. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/why-nigerian-kidnap-law-banning-families-from-paying-ransoms-may-do-more-harm-than-good-189427> (Accessed: March 6, 2023).

¹⁴⁴Anuku, W. (2022) My administration has zero-tolerance for kidnapping - president Buhari. Daily Post Nigeria. Available at: <https://dailypost.ng/2022/03/01/my-administration-has-zero-tolerance-for-kidnapping-president-buhari/> (Accessed: April 17, 2023).

¹⁴⁵Ejekwonyilo, A. (2022) Nigerian court convicts kidnap Kingpin, wadume of illegal arms possession, escaping from custody, discharges him of terrorism, murder, kidnapping charges, Sahara Reporters. Available at: <https://saharareporters.com/2022/08/15/nigerian-court-convicts-kidnap-kingpin-wadume-illegal-arms-possession-escaping-custody> (Accessed: March 6, 2023).

¹⁴⁶Nigeria Outlaws Ransom Payments, kidnap now punishable by death (2022) Al Jazeera. Al Jazeera. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/27/nigeria-outlaws-ransom-payments-abduction-punishable-by-death> (Accessed: March 19, 2023).

¹⁴⁷Gbadamosi, N. (2022) Can Nigeria ever end its kidnap-for-ransom industry? Foreign Policy. Available at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/05/04/nigeria-kidnap-ping-abduction-law-security/> (Accessed: March 19, 2023).

Conclusion

Nigeria is grappling with critical security threats, including banditry, terrorism, farmer-herder clashes, cultism, kidnapping, secession agitation, and unknown gunmen attacks. These violent conflicts have devastated the country's social, economic, and political fabric, posing significant peace, stability, and development challenges. The root causes of these conflicts are complex and multifaceted, including historical, political, socio-economic, and cultural factors.

Addressing these conflicts requires a holistic and multi-dimensional approach involving the government (federal and state), security forces, communities, and other stakeholders. Efforts should be made to prioritise addressing the root causes of the conflicts, fostering dialogue and reconciliation, and promoting economic and political inclusivity. By addressing these underlying issues, Nigeria can work towards achieving lasting peace and stability.

Ending violent conflicts will require a multifaceted approach that addresses

the underlying causes of the conflict, such as poverty, inequality, and political marginalisation. One crucial step is to facilitate multiple discussions among the country's various ethnic and religious groupings. It may include organising meetings for different groups' leaders to meet and address their differences.

Another critical step is to address the underlying economic and political issues that propel violent conflict. This step could include enacting policies to combat poverty and inequality, such as boosting access to education and job opportunities and promoting good governance and political accountability.

Security measures such as boosting the Nigerian military and police forces, utilising technology and intelligence to detect and apprehend violent groups, and engaging in counter-insurgency operations might also be beneficial.

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