

Nextier

Nigeria Violent Conflict Bi-Monthly Report (July - August 2023)

Insights from the Nextier Violent Conflict Database





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Acronyms of Nigerian States

SN	Acronyms	State
1.	AB	Abia
2	AD	Adamawa
3	AK	Akwa Ibom
4	AN	Anambra
5	BA	Bauchi
6	BY	Bayelsa
7	BE	Benue
8	BO	Borno
9	CR	Cross River
10	DE	Delta
11	EB	Ebonyi
12	ED	Edo
13	EK	Ekiti
14	EN	Enugu
15	FCT	Federal Capital Territory
16	GB	Gombe
17	IM	Imo
18	JG	Jigawa
19	KD	Kaduna
20	KN	Kano
21	KT	Katsina
22	KE	Kebbi
23	KO	Kogi
24	KW	Kwara
25	LA	Lagos
26	NA	Nasarawa
27	NI	Niger
28	OG	Ogun
29	ON	Ondo
30	OS	Osun
31	OY	Oyo
32	PL	Plateau
33	RI	Rivers
34	SO	Sokoto
35	TA	Taraba
36	YB	Yobe
37	ZA	Zamfara



Introduction

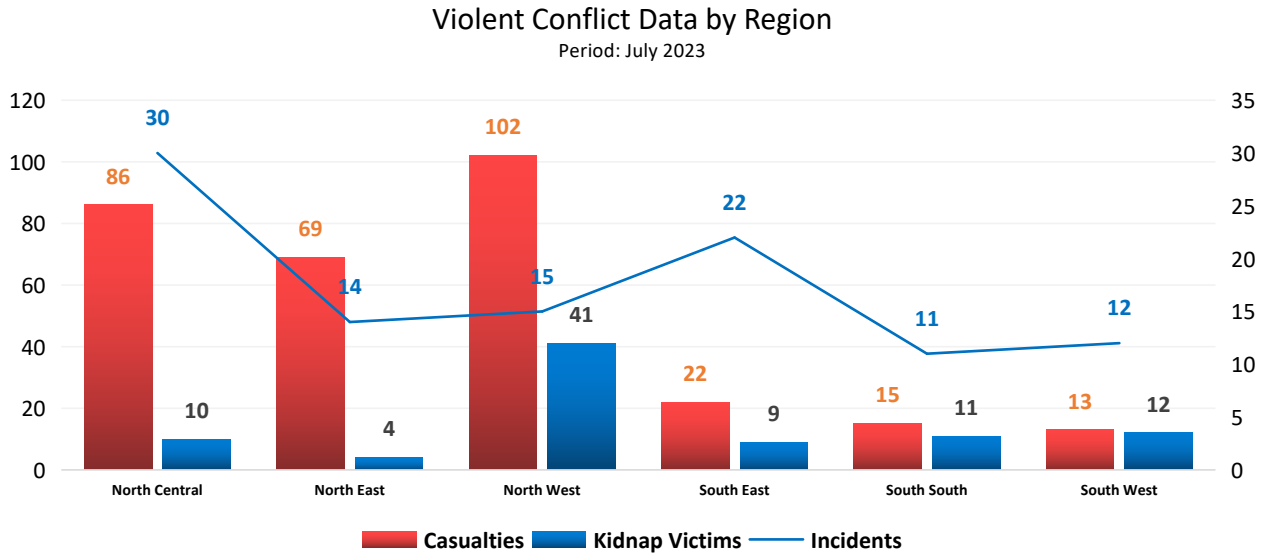
Between June and August 2023, emerging domestic and international events shaped Nigeria's political, social, economic and policy landscape. For example, the new administration is confronted with domestic grievances from the hardship brought about by the [fuel subsidy removal](#) and other reforms, which triggered nationwide upset. The accompanying high cost of living pushed people into opportunistic crimes, as seen in the [looting](#) in Adamawa and fed into already existent crimes. Politically, the disputed presidential elections stoked [tensions](#) from the beginning of the petition by aggrieved parties down to the final verdict.

On the international front, Nigeria is impacted by the wave of [military takeovers](#) in the West African region, as seen with the [putsch](#) in the Republic of Niger and Gabon in central Africa. While this regional issue persists, the ideal strategy for sustaining regional peace as a hegemon while addressing the blazing domestic security challenges remains a source of contention. Against this backdrop, the instability from coups and Nigeria's role as the leader of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) positioned the country to find a balance between curtailing domestic and international security issues. In a bid to prevent the unintended consequences, Nigerian lawmakers vehemently [opposed](#) military actions due to the unintended consequences that could bring. One of which could be seen as a distraction from an increasingly tense domestic security situation, which should take priority.

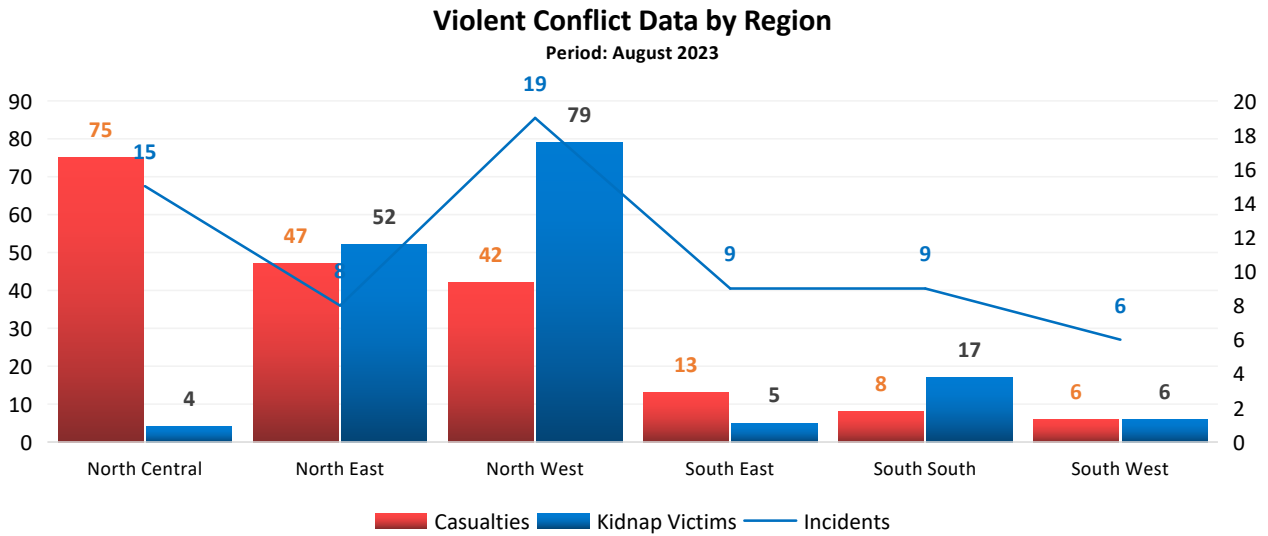
An overview of the country's violent conflict situation justifies the need to prioritise Nigeria's domestic security situation. The dominant conflict types in July and August 2023 include banditry, gunmen attacks and farmer-herder conflict. July recorded a peak in violent conflict in the North Central region, closely followed by the South

East region. However, in August, there was a drop in the North Central region while the North West recorded the highest with a tally of 19 incidents. This edition of the Nigeria Violent Conflict Bi-Monthly report captured the country's security situation between July and August 2023 from the lens of the most prevalent crisis types in the country. Between July and August 2023, banditry was commonplace in North West Nigeria, while farmer-herder conflicts and gunmen attacks dominated Northcentral and Southeast.

Regional Overview of Violence in Nigeria (July 2023 and August 2023)



Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database



Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database



Image by Businessday.ng

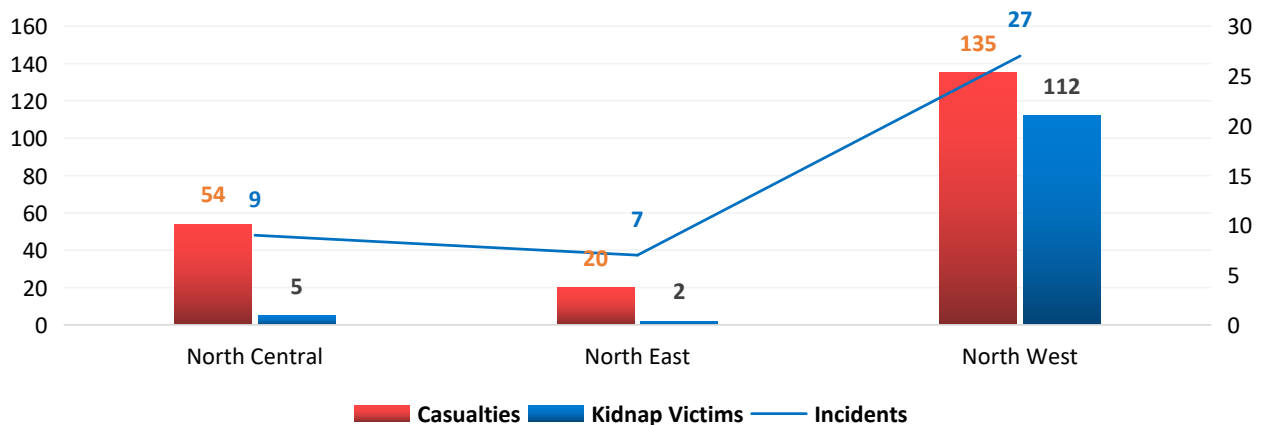
Banditry

Banditry is a violent conflict issue that has [gained prominence](#) in Nigeria. Its prevalence jeopardises economic and security efforts. Banditry is significantly fuelled by the prevalence of [under-governed areas](#) where government presence is low and constrained. The vast expanse of forests in the Northern region serves as ideal hideouts. These hideouts serve as a platform for [illicit activities](#) such as human trafficking, armed robbery, raiding and looting. The [modus operandi](#) often entails attacking the centre and withdrawing to the fringes. Given the recurrence of violence in July and August, security efforts have not resulted in adequate security. Largely, the ability to foster security in ungoverned areas has been hampered by the security agents' [lack of personnel and supplies](#).

The Trend of Violent Conflict

Violent Conflict Data by Region: Banditry

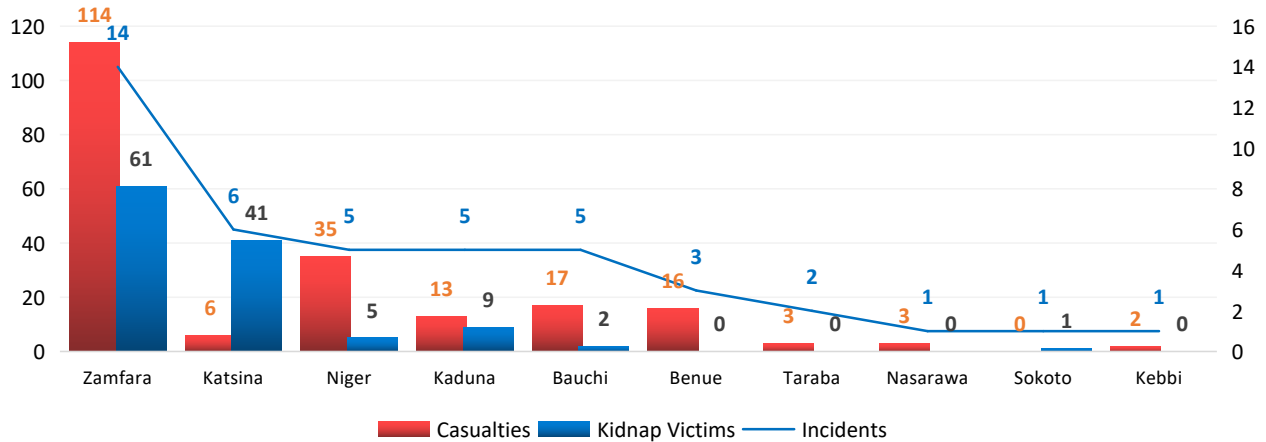
Period: July 2023 - August 2023



Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database

Violent Conflict Data by State: Banditry

Period: July 2023 - August 2023



Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database

Key Findings

Across the three Northern regions, the North West recorded the highest number of violent bandit incidents and casualties. The North West recorded 27 incidents and 135 casualties. This is a slight reduction from the statistics of the [previous bi-monthly](#) record. Kaduna recorded the most incidents at the state level, with 19 occurrences and 42 casualties. Maru local government area (LGA) in Zamfara recorded the highest number of casualties, which stood at 41. On incident count, Bungudu LGA (Zamfara State) recorded the most incidents, with five occurrences and 16 casualties. One of the [incidents](#) culminated in an exchange of fire between bandits and troops of the 223 battalion and the subsequent rescue of 24 kidnap victims. Niger state also recorded an ambush attack on soldiers, which killed 22 and injured seven others.

Key Responses

In most incidents, acts of banditry have triggered security responses through personnel deployment for confrontation. Following the failure of the approach of amnesty for bandits by the affected state governments, banditry is tackled by active security deployment to volatile areas. For example, the police and military [deployed](#) to assault rampaging bandits Kwatorshi in Bugundu, Zamfara State, after they received a tip-off of an attack. Unfortunately, the bandits killed six people and fled before security agents arrived. In Kaduna State, the governor has [requested](#) extra military assistance and intervention to address the continuing security concerns in Southern Kaduna and other troubled areas of the State. This request followed his earlier [commitment](#) to work with the traditional institutions to rid the State of banditry.

Recommendations

- Improved collaboration between park service workers, agro rangers, and the Nigerian Armed Forces is required through personnel combat training, intelligence gathering, and dissemination.
- With most bandit activities occurring in areas with low policing and limited government presence, there is a need to increase policing in these areas.
- There is a need for state and federal institutions to work together to create employment opportunities and solve other socioeconomic issues that drive people to engage in violent conflict.
- Combative operations against bandits can be improved by strengthening communication lines between local vigilantes and security forces. It is important to increase efforts to mop up and seize illegal weapons to curtail the spread of weapons among bandit organisations.
- Government and development agencies should improve and sustain non-combative efforts in the affected communities.

Farmer-Herder Conflicts

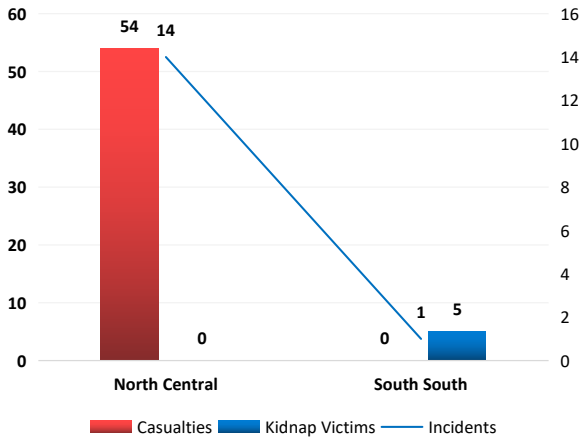


Farmers and herders in Nigeria have been at [odds for many years](#) over land rights. Pastoral land shortage, exacerbated by expanding urbanisation, has driven herders into farmlands and limited areas, such as national parks and preserved forests. This frequently leads to crop loss and escalates into a dispute between herders and local farmers. As previous [bi-monthly](#) reports have shown, the disagreements have reached crisis proportions and are recurring throughout the northcentral region. The conflict between farmers and herders has presented serious security issues and [claimed](#) as many lives as the Boko haram insurgency.

The Trend of Violent Conflict

Violent Conflict Data by Region: Farmer-Herder Conflict

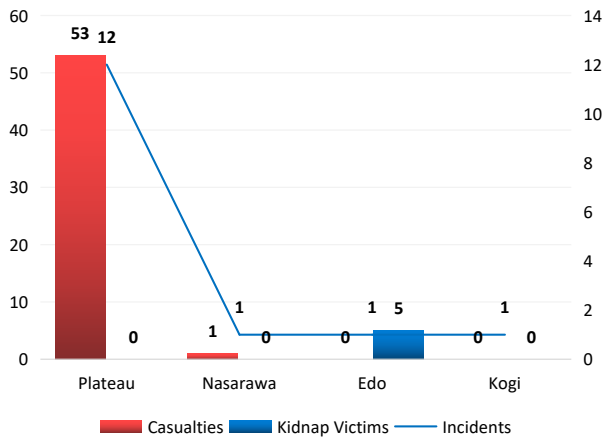
Period: July 2023 - August 2023



Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database

Violent Conflict Data by State: Farmer-Herder Conflict

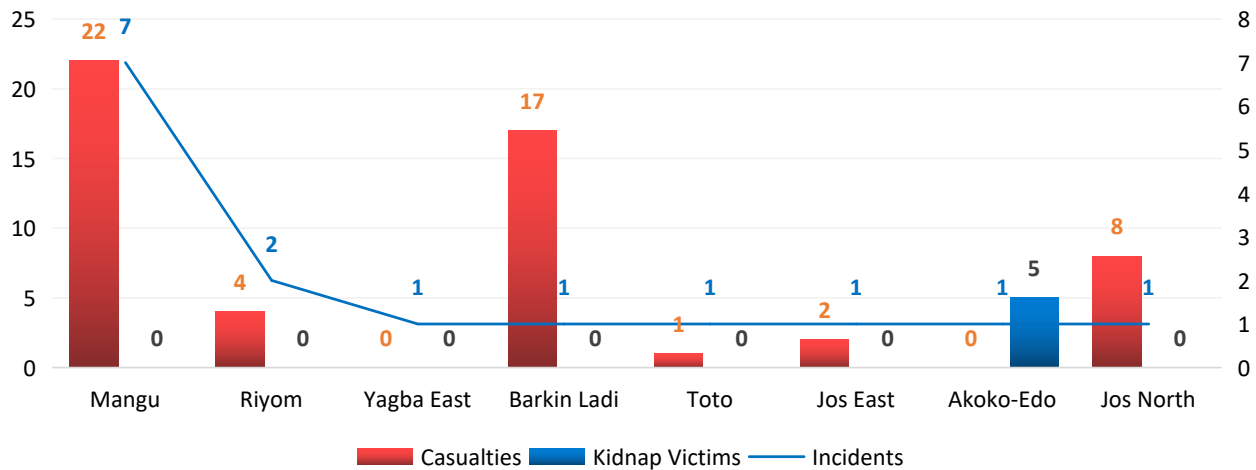
Period: July 2023 - August 2023



Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database

Violent Conflict Ddate by LGAs: Farmer-Herder Conflict

Period: July 2023 - August 2023



Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database

Key Findings

The Northcentral region of Nigeria is the epicentre of the farmer-herder conflict, with Plateau State suffering the most casualties during the review period. The heightened violence in the Plateau was triggered by retaliatory clashes sparked by ethnic and religious divisions. Violent attacks in Mangu, Riyom, and Barkin Ladi local government areas of Plateau state led to 43 casualties. Mangu Local government was the worst hit, peaking in incidents at seven and 22 casualties. The attack in Barkin Ladi claimed 17 lives and occurred shortly after a similar attack in the Heipang area.

Key Responses

The farmer-herder attacks, especially in the worst-hit State of Plateau, have prompted responses such as the inauguration of the Security and Information Centre (SIC) by Plateau State Governor Caleb Mutfwang. This centre aims to facilitate public access to security-related information and enhance rapid response. This effort will solidify previous peace moves and track the root causes of the unending conflict.

Recommendations

- Owing to the complexity of the conflict, a multi-stakeholder intervention is required to uncover the basic drivers and alternative approaches to resolving the farmer-herder dispute which has lingered across Nigeria.
- The government should develop and execute clear land management policies to deal with land disputes between farmers and herders. This might require designating and mapping grazing reserves, farmlands, and other land resources appropriately.
- Both farmers and herders should be encouraged to diversify their livelihood sources. This can be accomplished by offering training, education, and skill development programs.
- Existing and new policies must target inclusive measures to overcome the mistrust between farmers and herdsman. The federal or State governments may support these organisations.
- Law enforcement agencies should prioritise surveillance and monitoring in volatile areas. This may require the creation of specialised teams or new operations.

Gunmen Attacks



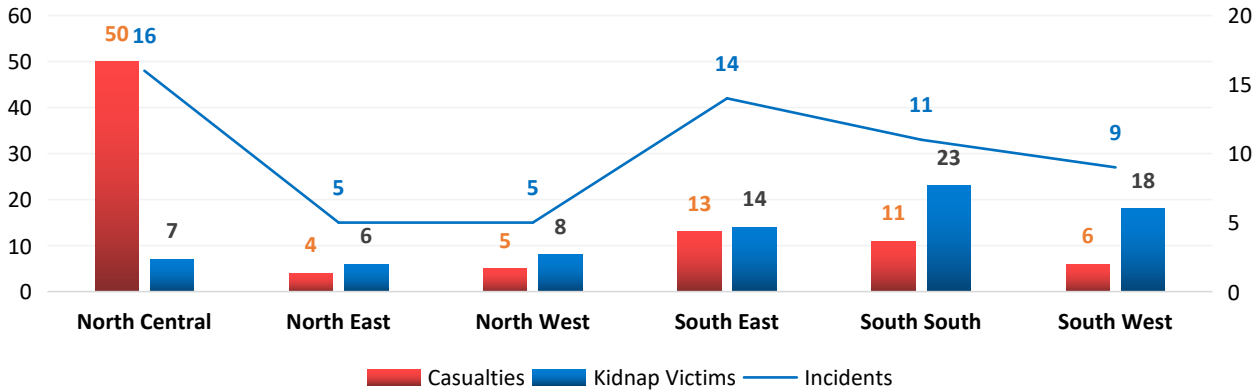
Image by Guardian.ng

Nigeria’s fragility is [worsening](#) as a result of gunmen attacks. While rural areas remain at the mercy of gunmen, violence in urban and suburban areas has increased, with peace and safety becoming increasingly ephemeral. Reoccurring incidents associated with gunmen include raids, indiscriminate killings and kidnappings. Their attack pattern targets road users, farmers, religious worshippers, security agents, the political class, and expatriates. Attacks in relatively peaceful locations re-echo that peace in Nigeria is largely fragile, and attacks can happen almost anywhere. The frequency of incidents demands immediate attention because the recent spate of deaths in the country reveals that gunmen attacks are quickly becoming the norm.

The Trend of Violent Conflict

Violent Conflict Data by Region: Gunmen Attacks

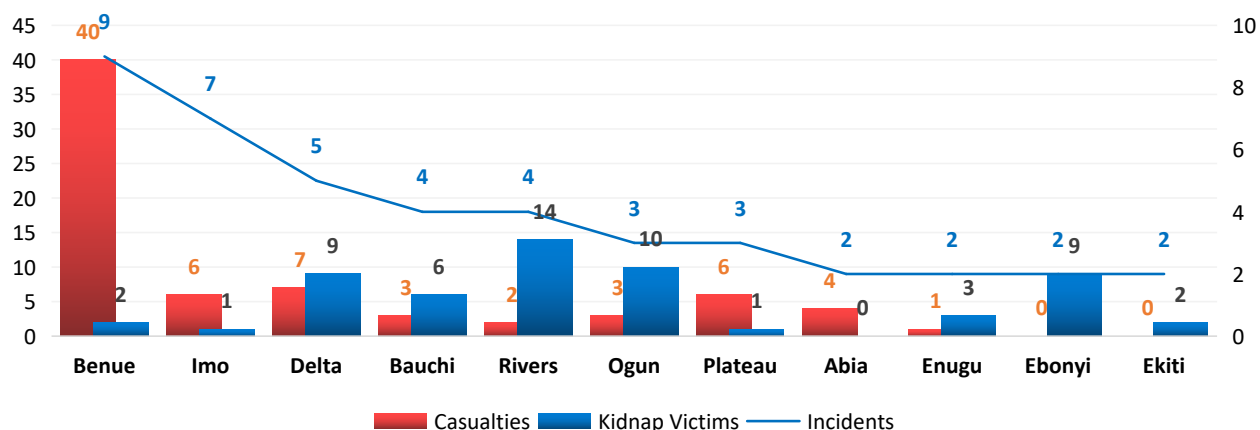
Period: July 2023 - August 2023



Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database

Most Affected States: Gunmen Attacks

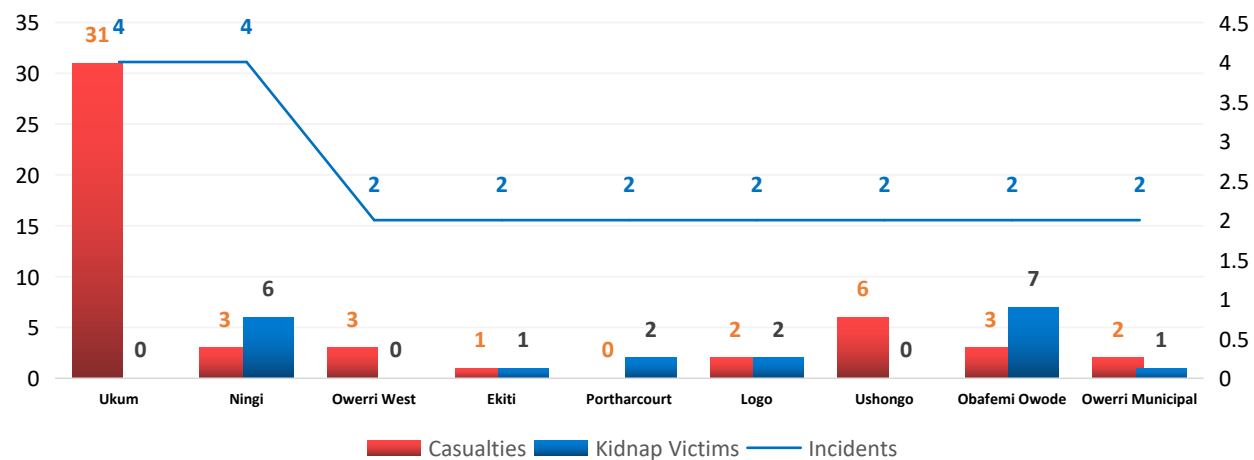
Period: July 2023 - August 2023



Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database

Most Affected LGAs: Gunmen Attacks

Period: July 2023 - August 2023



Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database

Key Findings

Data from the Nextier Violent Conflict Database shows that the North Central region bore the brunt of gunmen attacks, recording 16 incidents and 50 casualties. This data indicates a shift from the previous bimonthly report, in which attacks peaked in the South East region. However, the South East follows closely behind with 14 incidents. The worst-hit Local governments of Ukum and Ningi recorded eight incidents and 34 casualties. The [incident](#) in Ukum Local government of Benue state culminated in the death of 27 people. The attack by gunmen on civilians compounds an already existent area tense with farmer-herder conflict.

Key Responses

The occurrence of gunmen attacks has more often been met with reactionary responses. In some instances, early warning signals have provided intel, yielding positive results, while others have [failed](#). Following the wanton killings in Plateau state, the chief of army Staff launched a [special operation](#) and solidified their activity by deploying troops and equipment.

Recommendations

- The government should address socioeconomic factors like poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy to curb the increasing insecurity.
- There is a need to prioritise policing in areas with frequent gunmen attacks.
- The government should use technology to track down and identify unknown gunmen. For example, dedicated surveillance systems can be widely deployed to monitor, track, and identify these gunmen in public places.
- Existing community policing initiatives should be strengthened and sustained to foster trust and cooperation between security agencies, community leaders and community members. This strategy is relevant for effective intelligence gathering.
- There is a need to curb the local fabrication and smuggling of weapons used to orchestrate gunmen attacks.

Conclusion

Insecurity through acts of banditry, farmer-herder attacks, and gunmen attacks have continued to play out within Nigeria despite efforts at curtailing them. This has continued when Nigeria faces a dilemma of maintaining regional stability while curtailing domestic violent conflicts. Considering those above and the continued prevalence of violent conflicts, there is a need for meticulous application of recommendations tailored to address each conflict type across the various regions.



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