



Nigeria Violent Conflict Bi-Monthly Report (September - October 2023)

Insights from the Nextier Violent Conflict Database





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Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Regional Overview of Violence in Nigeria (September 2023 and October 2023)...	6
Banditry	7
Violent Conflict Trend.....	7
Key Findings	8
Key Responses	9
Recommendations	9
Farmer-Herder Conflicts	9
Violent Conflict Trend.....	10
Key Findings	11
Key Responses	11
Recommendations	11
Gunmen Attacks	12
Violent Conflict Trend.....	12
Key Findings	13
Key Responses	13
Recommendations	14
Conclusion	14

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

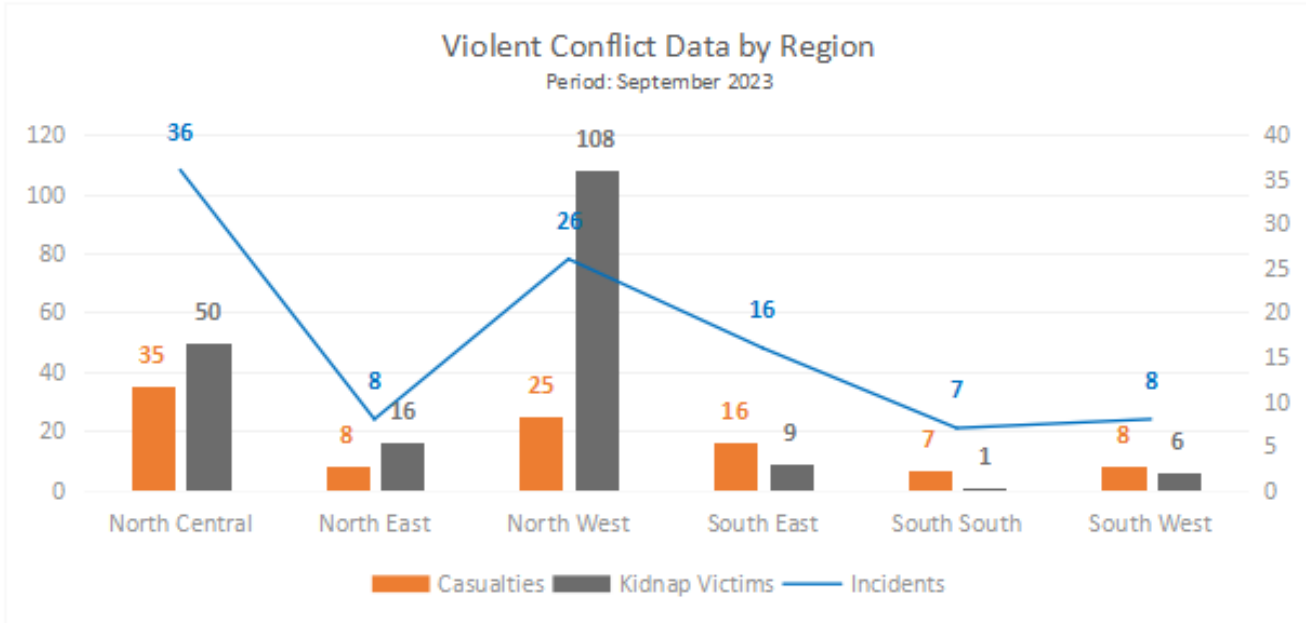


Introduction

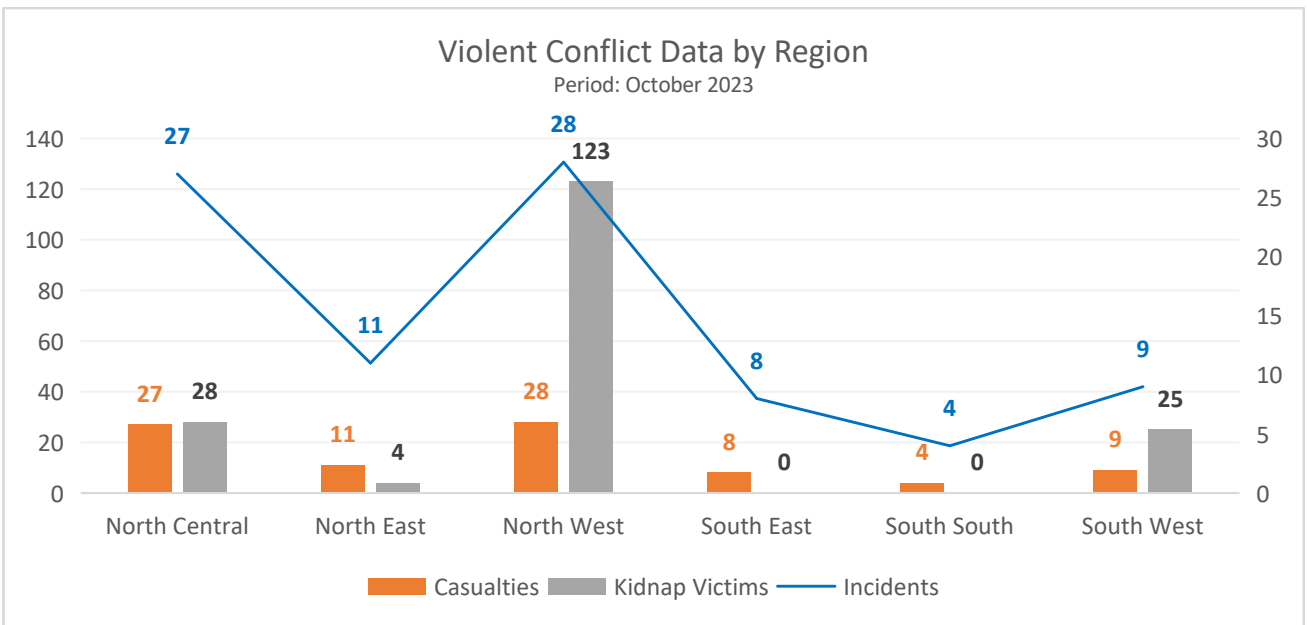
In September and October 2023, the litigation at the Presidential Election Petition Tribunal (PEPT), prompted by opposing political parties against the current administration's accession, dominated Nigeria's social and economic scene. The opposition groups claimed that the 2023 presidential election was marred by fraud and electoral breaches. The dispute, however, has been put to rest by the Supreme Court's [judgement](#), affirming the victory of the incumbent president. In light of this event, it is expected that the administration will concentrate on finding solutions for Nigeria's intricate security issues. These security challenges have resulted in fundamental setbacks. As a result, a more efficient and comprehensive plan is required to secure the country as instability rises. For example, attacks on schools have continued into the months under review, as seen in the attack at the Federal University, Gusau, in Zamfara state.

Notably, security personnel have remained tenacious and engaged in never-ending fights with Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs). In the South East, attempts at rooting out Non-State Armed Groups have made headlines through several [airstrikes](#) and [ground clearance operations](#) in various locations. The dominant conflict types in September and October 2023 include banditry, gunmen attacks and farmer-herder conflict. This edition of the Nigeria Violent Conflict Bi-Monthly report captured the country's security situation between September and October 2023 from the lens of the most prevalent crisis types in the country. Between September and October 2023, banditry was commonplace in North West Nigeria, while farmer-herder conflicts and gunmen attacks dominated North Central and South East.

Regional Overview of Violence in Nigeria (September 2023 and October 2023)



Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database



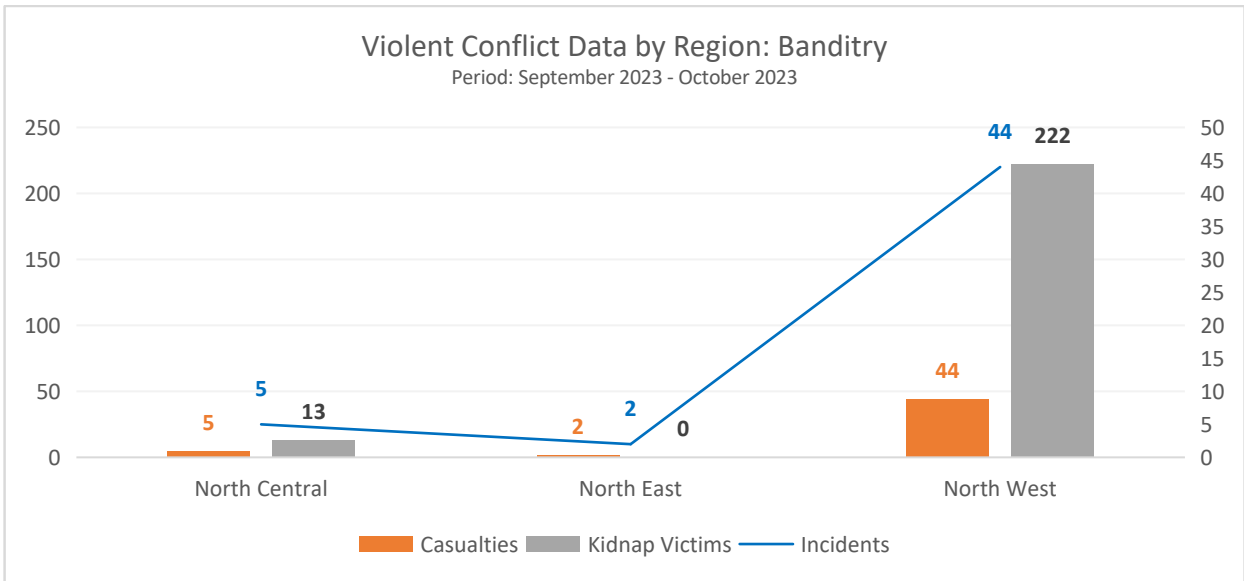
Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database



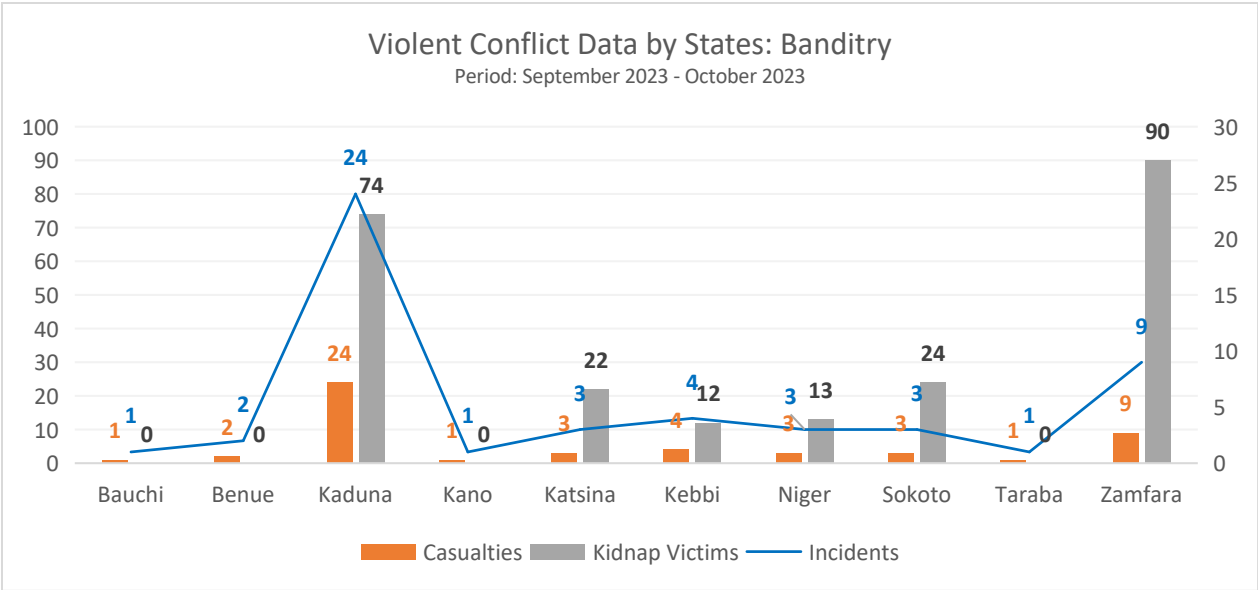
Banditry

Banditry has become a pervasive threat in Nigeria, especially in states such as Zamfara, Kaduna, Kebbi, and Niger. This criminal activity often involves raids on villages and kidnappings for ransom, among others. The perpetrators are typically well-armed and operate with a high degree of impunity, posing a serious challenge to law enforcement and security agencies. These attacks have created an atmosphere of fear and insecurity, leading to significant disruptions in the affected areas. While banditry poses a repetitive occurrence in Nigeria’s conflict theatre, it can be said to be deeply rooted as a [go-to option](#) for a population with high levels of poverty in an increasingly difficult economic environment.

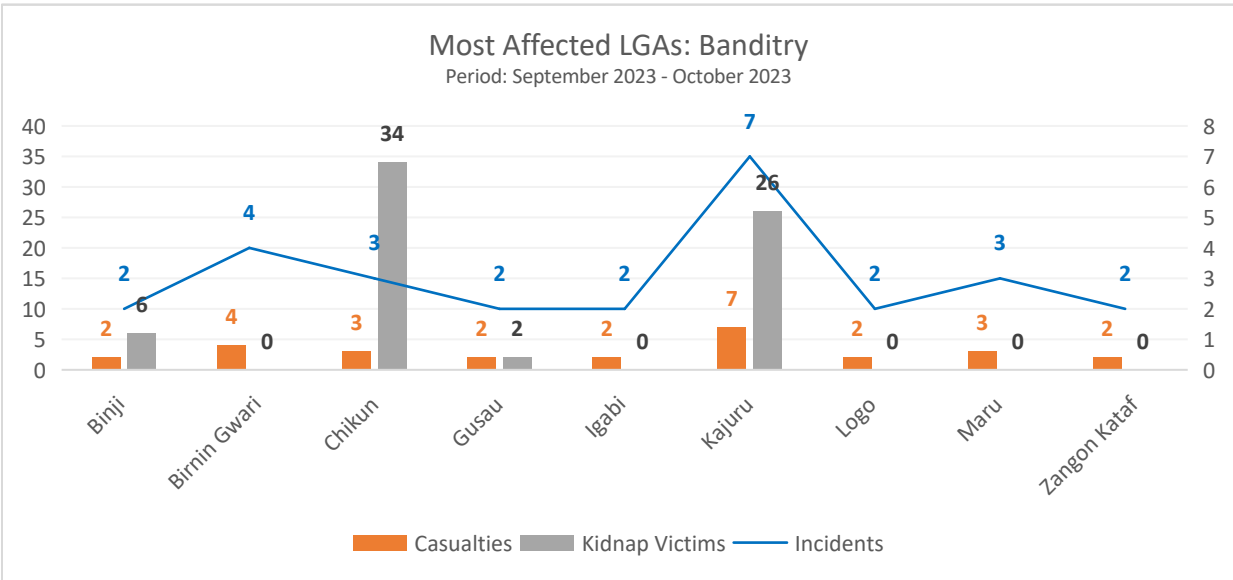
Violent Conflict Trend



Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database



Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database



Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database

Key Findings

Banditry has continued to occur in the Northern region of Nigeria. Compared to the previous [bi-monthly report](#), the three regions of the North (North West, North Central and North East) have remained the regions with the most occurrences of banditry within the period under review. However, the North West has witnessed an increase in incidents from 27 between July and August to 44 between September and October 2023. Kaduna State peaked in incidents at 24 while Zamfara State recorded the highest number of kidnap victims. [An incident](#) in Chikun led to the death of two people and the abduction of eleven others. Security agents have also been victims of these bandit attacks, as seen in the death of two police officers in the [attack](#) in Anka Local Government Area of Zamfara State.

Key Responses

In most incidents, acts of banditry have triggered security responses through personnel deployment for confrontation. However, in the [incident](#) in Chikun Local Government Area, eyewitness reports of the security response to the attack by bandits were poor as their operation occurred unfettered. The [incident](#) in the Kajuru Local Government Area of Kaduna State also witnessed an attack at midnight in which police response was absent, from which an individual was killed and 19 others were abducted.

Recommendations

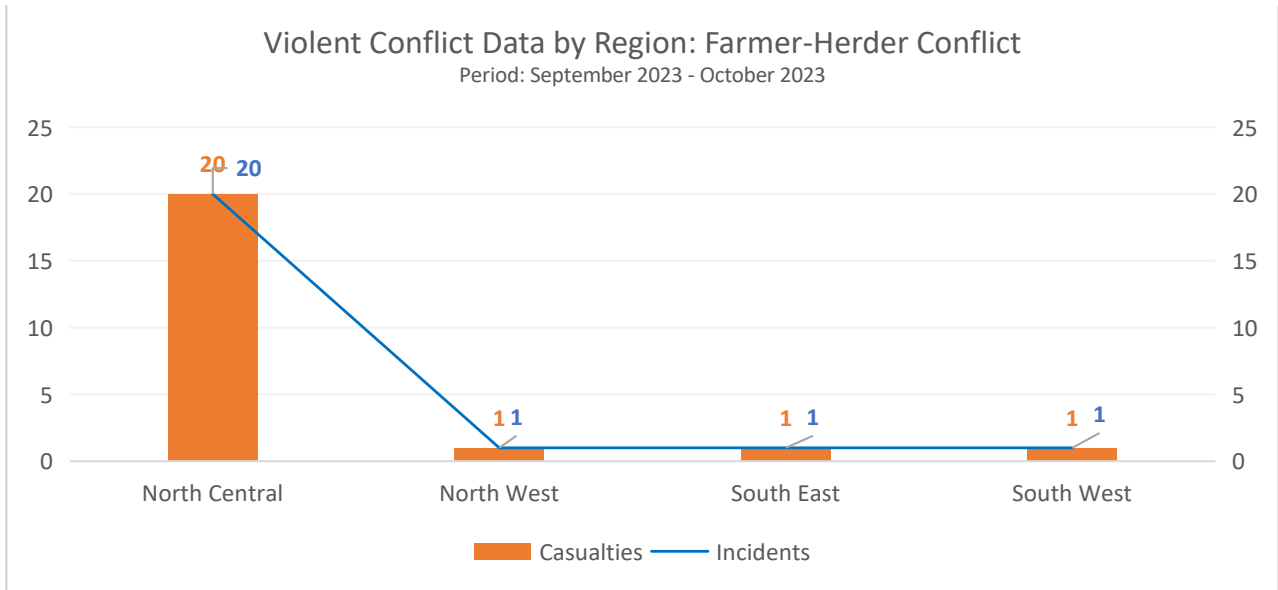
- There is a need to intensify efforts towards providing smooth, rapid security response to bandit attacks.
- With most bandit activities occurring in areas with low policing and limited government presence, there is a need to increase policing in these areas.
- There is a need for state and federal 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.
- Government and development agencies should improve and sustain non-combative efforts in the affected communities.

Farmer-Herder Conflicts

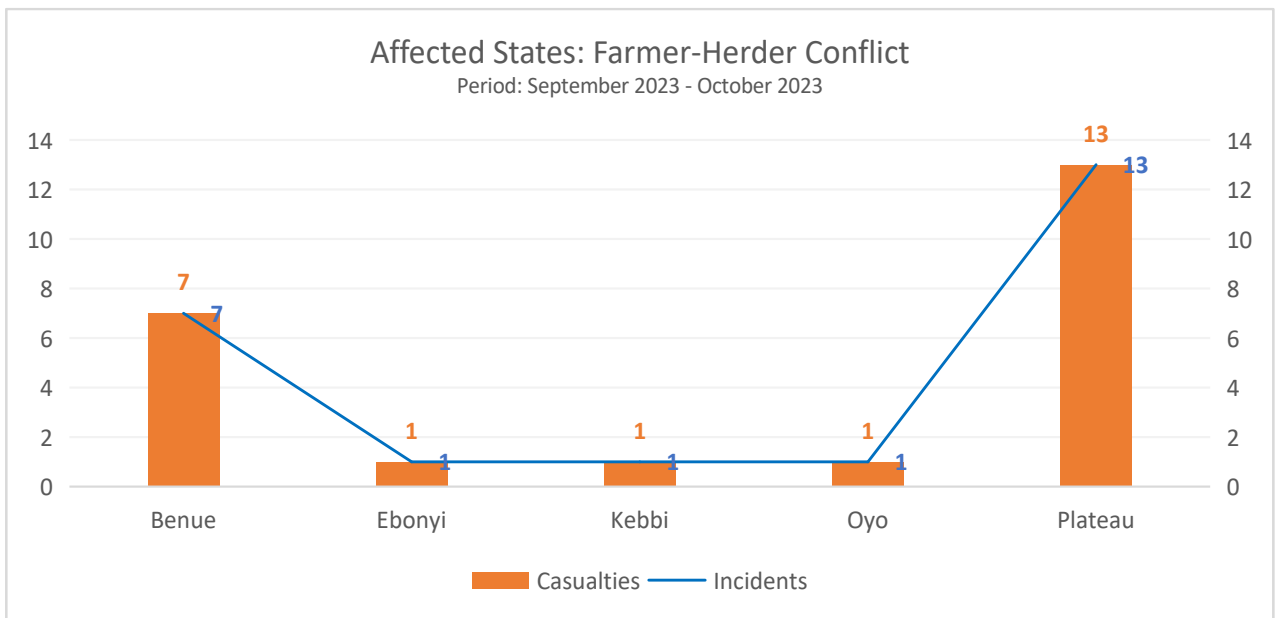


Farmers and herders in Nigeria have been at loggerheads within the months under review. The farmer-herder conflict has a long history and is driven by land scarcity, resource competitiveness, and ethno-religious conflicts. Disputes over grazing routes and farmlands frequently spark this conflict, leading to violent fights between farmers and herders. Small arms and light weapons proliferation have heightened these conflicts' severity, making them even more difficult to manage and resolve. The conflict between farmers and herders has presented serious security issues and [claimed](#) as many lives as the Boko Haram insurgency.

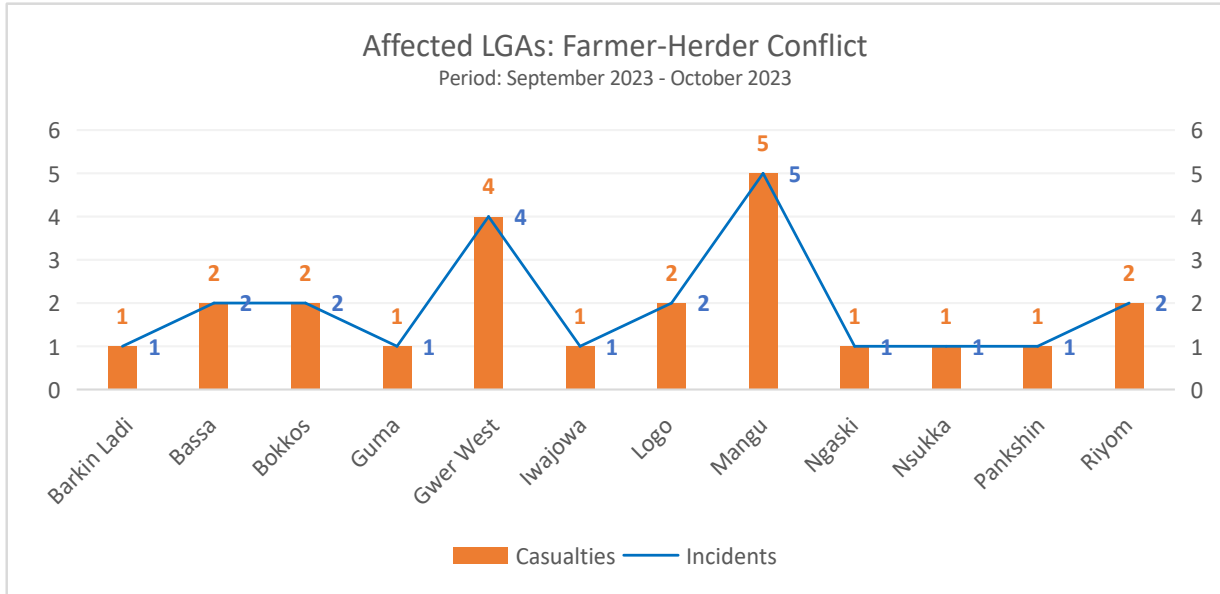
Violent Conflict Trend



Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database



Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database



Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database

Key Findings

Statistics reveal the North Central region of Nigeria as a hotbed for farmer-herder conflict. Within the period under review, Plateau State peaked in the incident count at 13 with 13 casualties, followed by Benue State with an incident count of seven with seven casualties. As it was through July and August, the Mangu Local Government Area in Plateau State has continued to be a hotbed for farmer-herder conflict. In Gwer West Local Government Area, gunmen suspected to be Fulani herdsmen [attacked](#) passengers along Naka road. The attack follows a trail of previous attacks by suspected herdsmen in the area.

Key Responses

Following farmer-herder attacks, open condemnation of these attacks has often followed. However, it is insufficient to bring the wanton killings to an end. In one of the most affected states such as Benue, the state government responded by requesting a deployment of infantry soldiers in the worst-hit areas. Furthermore, [the suggestion](#) by the governor for establishing a battalion in Local Government Areas like Guma and Logo could be a much-needed move in establishing a concrete security presence in the worst-hit areas of the state.

Recommendations

- There is a need to increase efforts to promote reconciliation and peacebuilding at the community level to address the deep-seated grievances and mistrust that have fuelled the conflicts between farmers and herders.
- There is a need to increase military presence to arrest the conflict situation.
- 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.

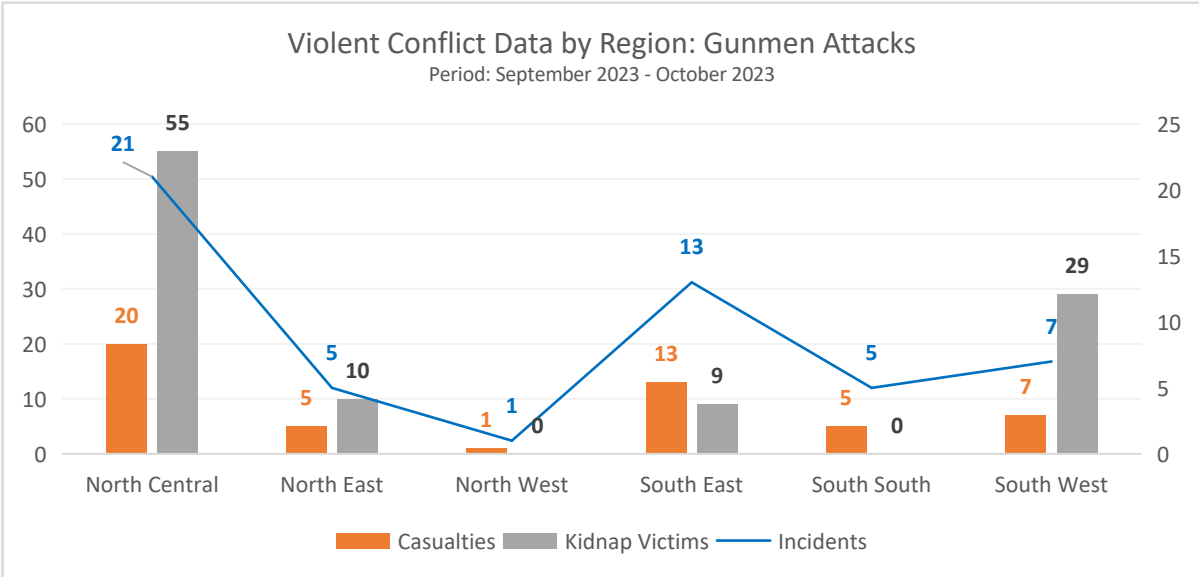
Gunmen Attacks



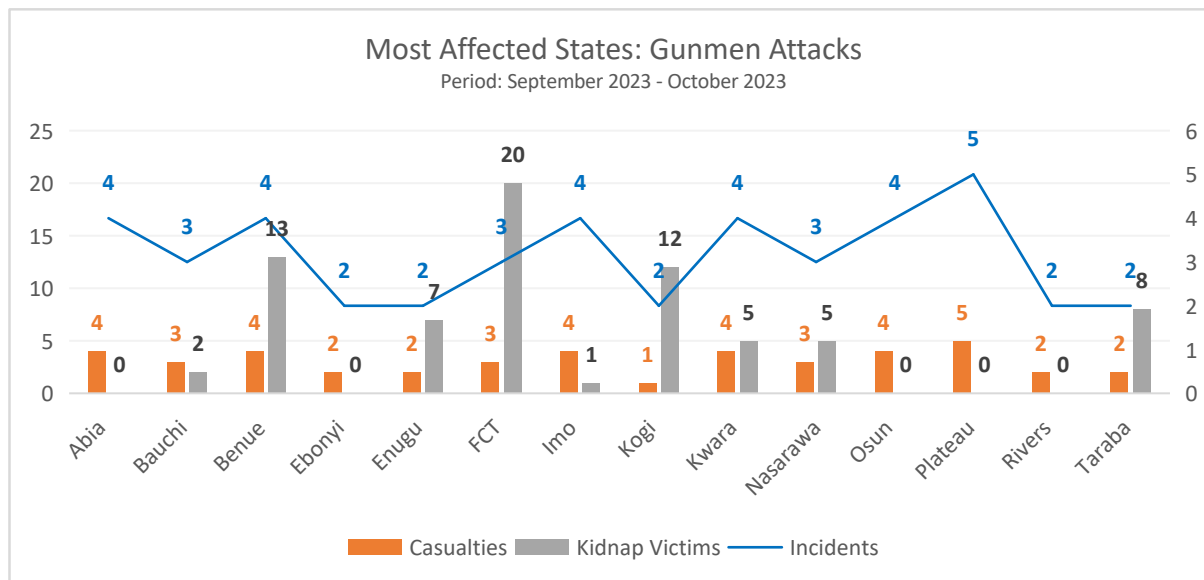
Image by Guardian.ng

Gunmen attacks have continued to appear in Nigeria’s conflict theatre. Between September and October 2023, gunmen attacks have arguably been the most widespread conflict appearing in Nigeria’s six regions, as reflected in the chart below. These attacks, frequently characterised by violence and indiscriminate targeting of civilians, have had far-reaching effects on the afflicted communities as well as the general stability of the nation. The attacks frequently include raids on communities, kidnappings for ransom, property destruction, and the abduction of innocent people. In certain circumstances, religious, ethnic, or social conflicts drive these attacks, hampering efforts to address the core causes of the violence.

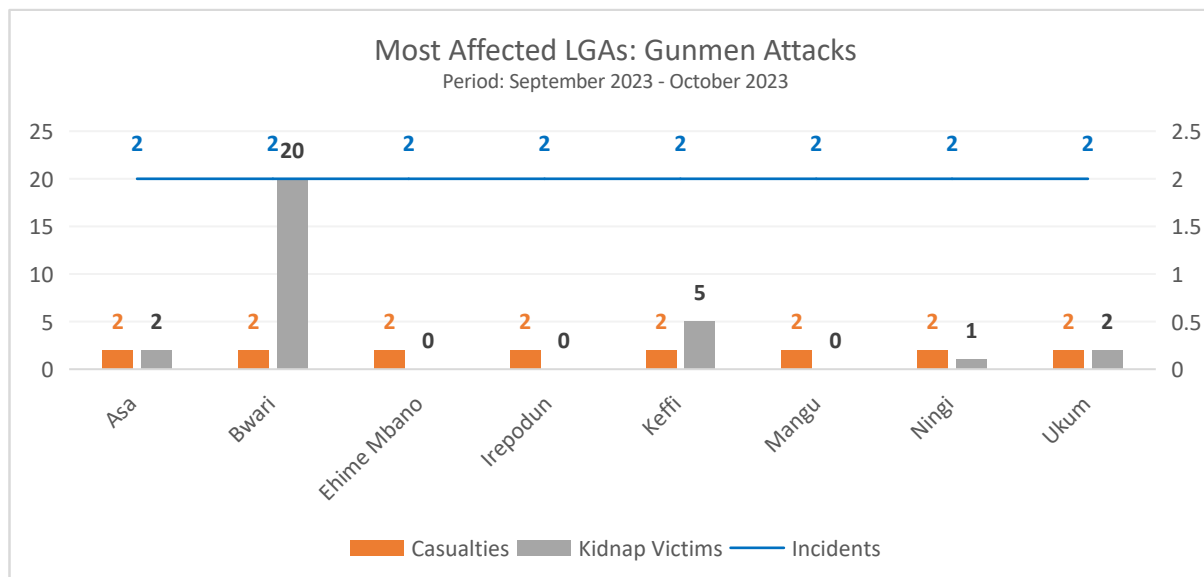
Violent Conflict Trend



Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database



Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database



Source: Nextier Violent Conflict Database

Key Findings

According to the Nextier Violent Conflict Database, the North Central region bore the brunt of gunmen attacks similar to the trend in the previous [bi-monthly report](#). The North Central region recorded 21 incidents and 50 kidnap victims. The worst-hit areas of Bwari Area Council and Keffi Local Government Area recorded a combined 25 kidnap victims from 4 incidents. The [incident](#) in Bwari Area Council culminated in the kidnap of 19 victims. The South East follows with 13 incidents occurring in a region where secessionist tensions remain rife.

Key Responses

The occurrence of gunmen attacks has more often been met with reactionary responses. Following the kidnap of 19 victims in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), the minister [summoned](#) the FCT Director of the Department of State Services as well as the Commissioner of Police to receive adequate briefings on the kidnap and facilitate rescue operations. Nonetheless, the attack in the North Central region, particularly in the Federal Capital Territory, indicates a deteriorating security architecture that warrants a rapid response.

Recommendations

- There is a pressing need for enhanced collaboration between security agencies as attacks indicate a rapidly deteriorating security architecture.
- There is a need to prioritise policing in areas with frequent gunmen attacks as well as identify emerging areas of insecurity.
- The government should address socioeconomic factors like poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy to curb the increasing insecurity.
- 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.
- 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.

Conclusion

The months of September and October 2023 have witnessed violent acts of insecurity through banditry, farmer-herder attacks, and gunmen attacks despite efforts at curtailing them. The Nigerian government's attempt at addressing these challenges through law enforcement, community participation, and condemnation recorded some achievements. However, the continued insecurity still poses a severe challenge. Addressing the identified gaps that have allowed these violent conflicts to persist remains sacrosanct in achieving sustainable peace and stability in the affected regions. Nigeria can make significant progress addressing these pressing security concerns by working collaboratively with local, national, and international stakeholders.



Nextier

Contact

info@thenextier.com
+2349131303903
thenextier.com