



## NATIONAL CONFLICT WATCH – APRIL 2025

### Overview

In April 2025, Nigeria's six geopolitical zones were affected by a broad spectrum of security challenges that continued to strain the nation's fragile stability and test the capacity of state and non-state actors to maintain peace and order. These challenges manifested in armed insurgencies, communal clashes, banditry, political violence, separatist agitations, cult violence, and other criminality, such as kidnapping.

The North East remains the epicenter of jihadist insurgency, where Boko Haram and ISWAP sustain coordinated attacks against civilians and security forces, resulting in hundreds of fatalities and large-scale displacement.

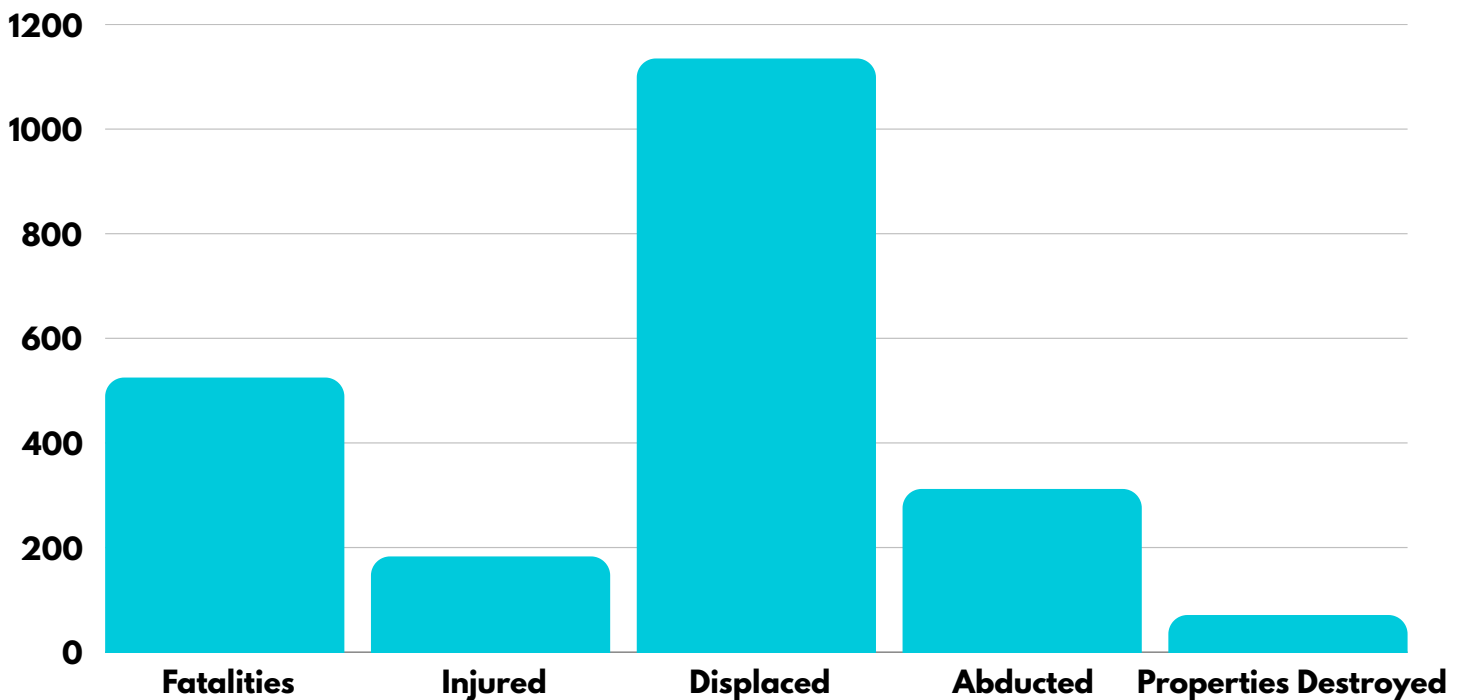
The North West is grappling with armed banditry, mass abductions, and terrorism, especially in Zamfara, Katsina, and Sokoto States, where remote communities suffer the brunt of heightened attacks and poor security response, with many displacements.

In the North Central region, farmer-herder conflicts, intercommunal violence, and the emergence of new armed groups such as the Mahmuda terrorist group in Kwara state, daring attacks in Benue and Plateau States, are affecting social cohesion and food security. Kwara State and the emergence of the Mahmuda group have changed the once peaceful state in the north central into an unstable and violent community. Insecurity in the north central region has become protracted and alarming, leading to numerous deaths, destruction of livelihoods, and the displacement of rural populations.

The South East experienced a surge in separatist-driven violence, targeted killings, Armed attacks on security formations, police stations, and government buildings, which have become increasingly frequent, contributing to an atmosphere of fear and instability.

The South-South zone, rich in oil resources, saw rising tensions marked by ethnic unrest, cult violence, political power struggles, and a spike in kidnappings, especially in Delta, Edo, and Rivers States. Disruptions to economic activities were recorded, with youth protests and the shutdown of strategic facilities due to some grievances and a perception of injustice.

In the South West, although relatively more stable, security threats persisted in the form of armed robbery, cult clashes, and isolated incidents of kidnapping and intercommunal skirmishes, particularly in Lagos, Ogun, and Ondo States.



### A SUMMARY OF CONFLICT CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS:

#### North-Central

The North Central geopolitical zone of Nigeria faced severe and multifaceted security challenges and widespread violence driven by deadly farmer-herder clashes, land-related disputes, and the growing presence of armed non-state actors. The most affected states during the period include Benue, Plateau, and Kwara, where communal tensions and organized attacks resulted in significant loss of life and displacement.

Benue and Plateau states witnessed recurring violence in farming communities by suspected armed herders, a long-standing conflict exacerbated by disputes over grazing routes, farmland access, and environmental degradation. These violence resulted in the deaths of over 150 people. Thousands were forced to flee their homes, seeking safety in overcrowded displacement camps or neighboring towns.

A particularly concerning development in the month under review was the emergence of a new terrorist group identified as 'Mahmuda', which carried out a fresh and coordinated assault on Duruma village in Karonji, located in the Baruten Local Government Area of Kwara State. This attack marked a significant escalation in the threat landscape in Kwara, which had previously been considered relatively stable compared to other North Central states.



## **NORTH WEST**

The North West geopolitical zone continued to grapple with persistent insecurity, primarily driven by armed banditry, terrorism, and mass abductions. The most affected states, Zamfara, Sokoto, Katsina, and Kebbi, experienced repeated conflict incidents largely attributed to inadequate security and limited non-governmental interventions. These security gaps have allowed violent non-state actors to operate with relative impunity, particularly in rural and hard-to-reach areas.

Zamfara and Kebbi States were at the center of several coordinated security operations targeting armed bandit camps. Despite these efforts, the raids often resulted in intense firefights that caused considerable casualties and the destruction of property. In Zamfara State alone, more than 20 civilians were reportedly killed during an attack on Gobirawa Chali village, one of the deadliest single incidents in the region during the month. Katsina and Zamfara also recorded a surge in mass abductions, with over 132 individuals reported kidnapped from various communities, further exacerbating fear and displacement among local populations.

Zamfara and Katsina, in particular, have emerged as the primary conflict flashpoints in the region, reflecting the deep-rooted and expanding nature of insecurity in the North West. These states continue to suffer from cyclical violence that has overwhelmed local capacities and strained national security efforts.

In contrast to the widespread violence in neighbouring states, Jigawa remained relatively calm and peaceful throughout April. The state recorded minimal reports of conflict, positioning it as a notable exception in a region otherwise plagued by escalating insecurity. Jigawa's stability during this period stands in sharp contrast to the volatility of its neighbouring states and may offer a model worth studying for conflict mitigation strategies

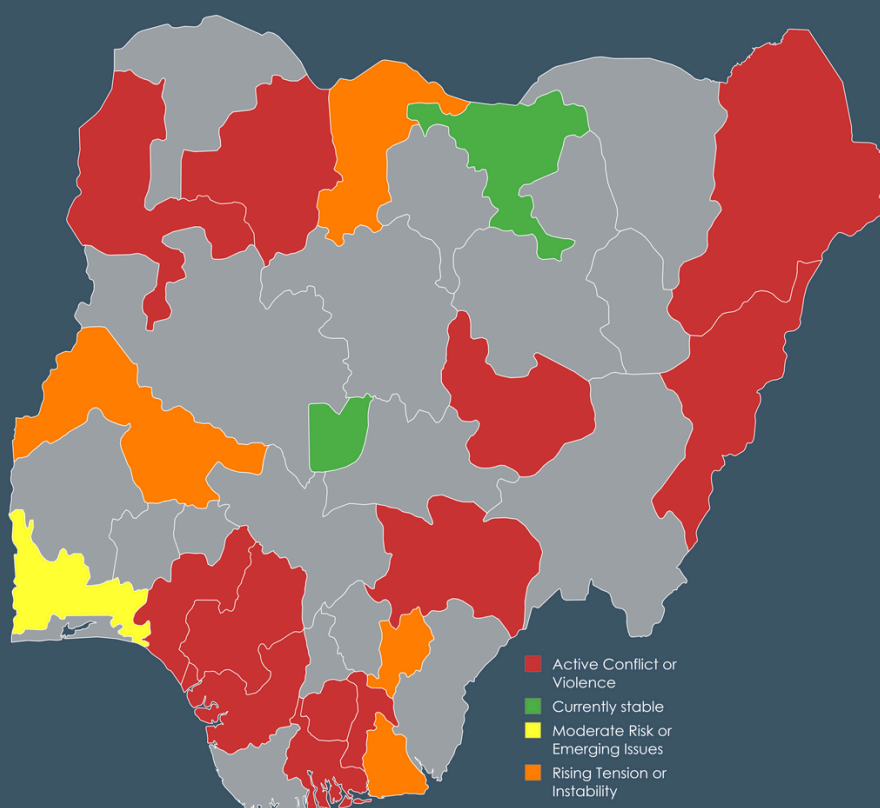
## **NORTH-EAST**

The North East geopolitical region remains the epicenter of violent conflict and insurgency. It registers as the most volatile region in the country. Boko Haram and the Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP)—both of which intensified their campaigns of violence, especially in Borno and Adamawa States. Attacks by these groups resulted in the deaths of over 199 individuals, including civilians, security personnel, and non-combatants.

## SOUTH-WEST

The South West region of Nigeria continued to confront a range of security threats, including abductions, armed attacks, and criminal gang violence. While the overall security situation remained relatively more stable than in other geopolitical zones, the region still experienced several concerning incidents that highlight the evolving nature of its internal security challenges. Ondo, Lagos and Osun are hotspots in the region in the month under review.

### CONFLICT HOTSPOTS



## SOUTH EAST

The South East region is experiencing a range of separatist violence, criminal activities, and targeted attacks that significantly disrupt economic activity and cause insecurity. The region has experienced a resurgence in targeted killings and widespread criminality. The conflict landscape is complex, involving both state and non-state actors, with violence erupting across both urban centers and rural communities in Imo, Anambra, Enugu, Abia, and parts of Ebonyi State.

While government and non-governmental organizations have taken steps to mitigate the violence, including intelligence-gathering, community engagement, and humanitarian relief efforts, the scale and complexity of the conflict in the South East remain deeply concerning. A multi-pronged strategy, combining security action with dialogue, economic support, and conflict resolution mechanisms is essential for long-term stability in the region.



## **SOUTH - SOUTH**

The South-South region witnessed a noticeable escalation in security threats and communal tensions, with increasing incidents of violence, abductions, and politically motivated unrest. Data from the National Conflict Early Warning Early Response (NCEWER) Unit indicates that the South-South experienced higher levels of violence compared to the previous month, with the most serious incidents concentrated in Delta, Edo, and Rivers States.

One of the most disturbing events occurred in Uromi, located in Esan South East Local Government Area of Edo State, where 16 individuals, mostly Hausa hunters, were lynched by a mob following allegations of kidnapping. This tragic incident not only underscores the dangers of misinformation and mob justice but also highlights the deepening ethnic and communal distrust that has become increasingly volatile across many parts of the region.

## **CONCLUSION**

The conflict landscape in Nigeria during April 2025 underscores a persistent and increasingly complex pattern of multidimensional insecurity, fueled by a combination of structural, socio-political, and environmental factors. Across all six geopolitical zones, the escalation of violence and instability reflects deep-rooted governance challenges and systemic security gaps that have yet to be effectively addressed.

**Note:** The figures on displacement and property damage are based on qualitative assessments and may not fully capture the scale due to verification challenges and the fluid security environment.

# **WEAPONS RECOVERED**

**AK-49 Rifle: 19**

**local pistols: 4**

**Pump action gun: 2**

**7.62mm Special Rounds: 30**

**Arrows: 27**

**cutlasses: 7**

**Live cartridges: 9 (80 hp and 60 hp motors)**

**Pistol: 1**

**Rounds of ammunition: 19+**

**Explosives: EDI**

**Axe and dagger: 4**

**hand cuffs: 3**

