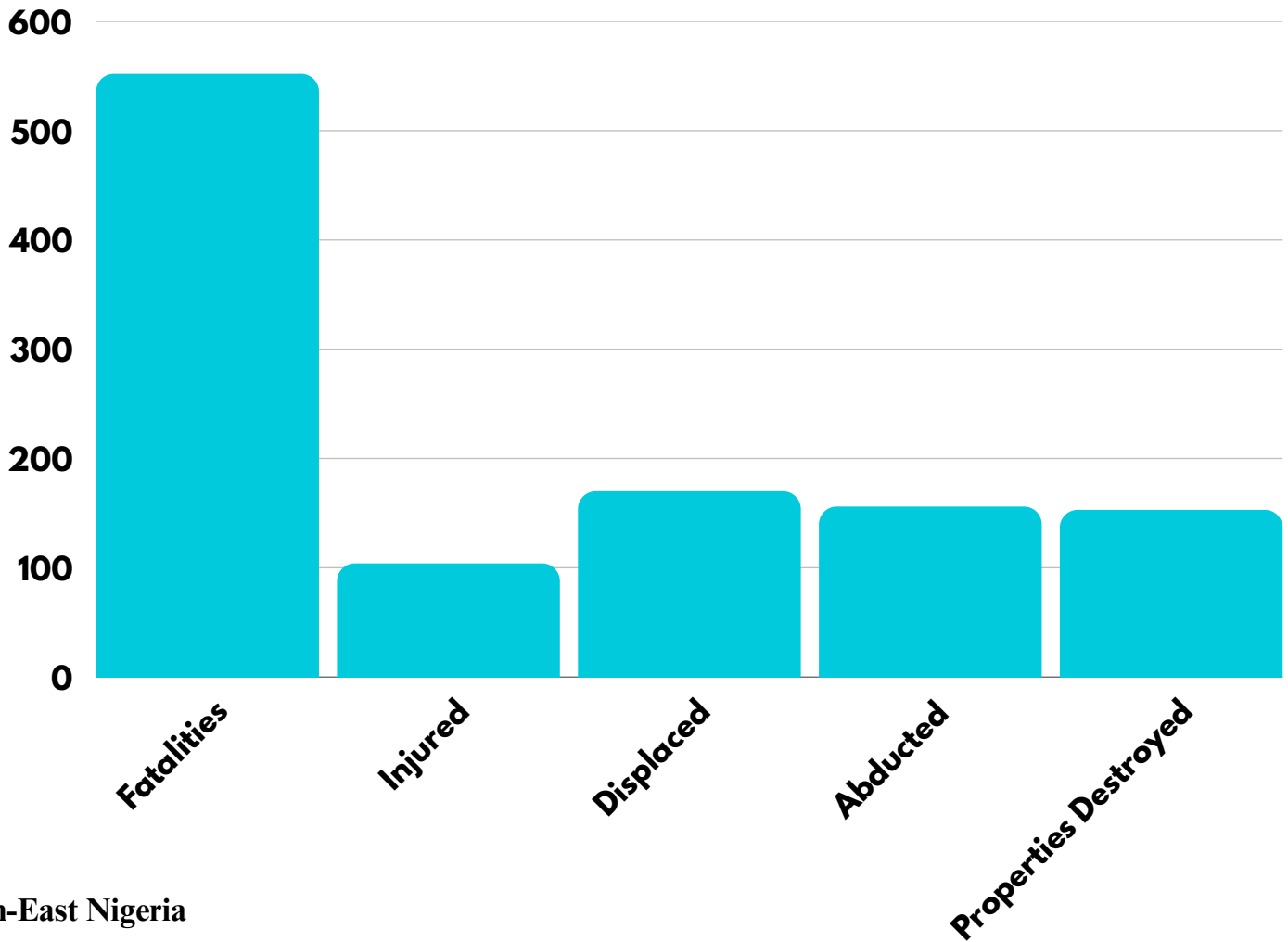


NATIONAL CONFLICT WATCH – MARCH 2025

Introduction

Nigeria’s security challenges in March 2025 reflect a deeply fragmented and multi-dimensional conflict landscape. From insurgency in the North-East and banditry in the North-West, to communal violence in the North-Central, political instability in the South-South, urban criminality in the South-West, and separatist agitation in the South-East, Nigeria faces a convergence of crises fueled by weak governance, contested resource access, socio-economic marginalization, and historical grievances. Below are the six geopolitical region’s conflict analysis for the month of March, 2025.



North-East Nigeria

Nigeria’s North-East zone remained a hotspot of insurgent activity, primarily driven by Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), with operations concentrated in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa States. The insurgents continued to employ asymmetric warfare tactics, including ambushes, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and raids targeting vulnerable locations such as internally displaced persons (IDP) camps and remote rural communities. This sustained violence inflicted heavy human tolls and severely disrupted humanitarian efforts, compounding the region’s longstanding displacement crisis. While military offensives achieved some tactical gains like neutralizing insurgents and seizing weapons caches, the insurgents' ability to disperse and regroup highlights the persistent challenges of counterinsurgency in a region plagued by difficult terrain, weak governance, and limited state presence. The ongoing insecurity continues to undermine civilian confidence in government protection mechanisms, exacerbating humanitarian vulnerabilities and further complicating stabilization and recovery efforts.



IPCR

North-West Nigeria

Nigeria's North-West region experienced sustained criminal violence, largely driven by armed banditry across Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi, and Zamfara States. Bandits demonstrated continued operational mobility, launching raids, engaging in cattle rustling, perpetrating kidnappings, and attacking transportation corridors and local vigilante forces. Despite intensified aerial and ground military operations, the government's response remains largely reactive, struggling to dismantle deeply entrenched bandit networks. Meanwhile, cycles of retaliatory violence by vigilante groups against suspected collaborators perpetuate a pattern of revenge, further destabilizing local communities and obstructing paths to lasting peace. The ongoing insecurity has led to widespread displacement and the disruption of agricultural livelihoods, affecting food security and significantly escalating humanitarian needs and exposing the fragile grip of state authority in remote rural areas.

North-Central Nigeria

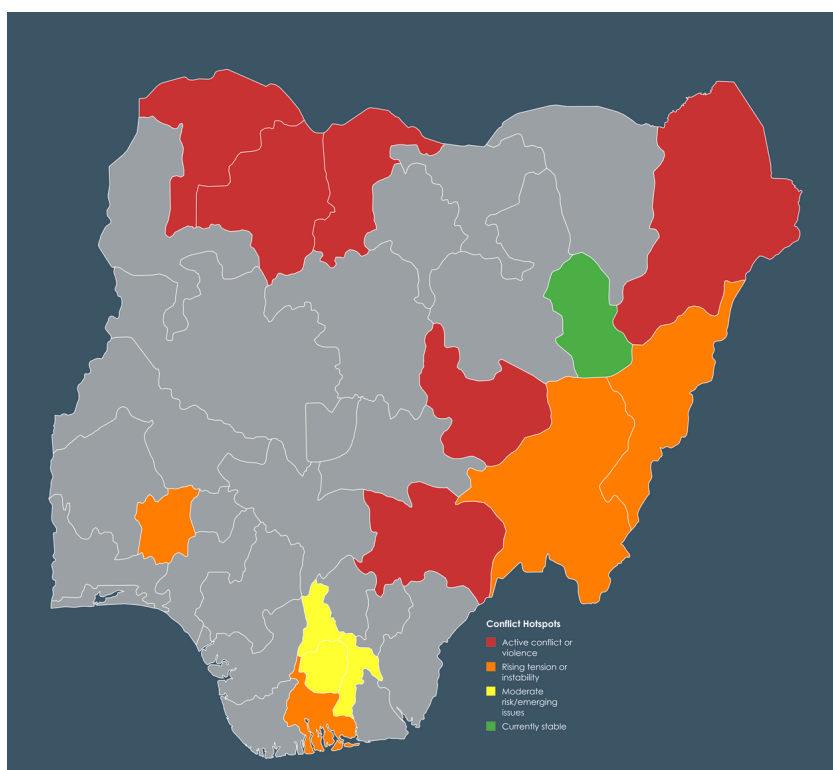
March 2025 saw a sharp escalation in farmer-herder clashes and intercommunal violence across Nigeria's North-Central region, particularly in Plateau, Benue, and Nasarawa States. In Plateau's Mangu and Bokkos Local Government Areas (LGAs), retaliatory attacks reportedly by herders, resulted in significant civilian casualties and mass displacement, underscoring longstanding tensions over land use and resource access. In Benue State, renewed violence in Guma and Logo LGAs further highlighted the fragile nature of intergroup relations, while in Niger State, criminal gangs continued to exploit security gaps through highway kidnappings and raids on rural communities. Though Kwara and Kogi States recorded fewer incidents during the period, their proximity to volatile regions leaves them susceptible to spillover violence. The growing insecurity throughout the zone reinforces the urgent need for integrated security coordination between state and federal actors, alongside conflict-sensitive approaches to land and resource governance aimed at addressing the structural drivers of violence.

South-South Nigeria

The security situation in Nigeria's South-South region deteriorated markedly, with Rivers State emerging as a flashpoint following President Bola Tinubu's declaration of a state of emergency. This drastic measure was prompted by a surge in political violence, targeted assassinations, and a collapse of local law enforcement attributed to deepening factional rivalries among political elites. While the deployment of security forces helped to temporarily stabilize certain areas, it also raised concerns about potential human rights abuses and the suppression of civil liberties. Meanwhile, Delta and Edo States continued to grapple with cult-related violence and communal clashes, driven by youth restiveness, socioeconomic marginalization, and widespread illicit activities, including oil theft and pipeline vandalism. Despite sporadic arrests, the proliferation of small arms and ongoing environmental degradation have perpetuated a volatile security climate, posing significant obstacles to peacebuilding and sustainable development in the region.

South-West Nigeria

The South-West zone grappled with a complex security landscape marked by criminal activity, communal unrest, and cult-related violence. Osun State witnessed a major communal clash rooted in longstanding land disputes, resulting in casualties, property destruction, and displacement, reflecting deep-seated grievances and governance shortfalls at the local level. In Ogun and Lagos States, urban insecurity persisted with kidnapping attempts and cult violence, including a foiled kidnapping along the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway and violent clashes in Sagamu. Although interventions by police and local vigilante groups helped contain some threats, the heavy reliance on informal security actors underscores institutional gaps. Compounding these challenges are socioeconomic stressors such as youth unemployment and urban overcrowding, which continue to fuel insecurity and the appeal of criminal networks. Addressing these issues requires a holistic strategy that combines robust community engagement and economic empowerment with coordinated security responses.



South-East Nigeria

Tensions remained high in the South-East zone throughout March 2025, driven by ongoing separatist agitation and associated violence. The Eastern Security Network (ESN) was linked to coordinated attacks targeting security personnel and public infrastructure across Imo, Anambra, and Abia States. These actions were often coupled with enforced sit-at-home orders, severely disrupting economic activities and public life. Government security crackdowns—including raids and mass arrests—produced some tactical successes but were overshadowed by credible allegations of extrajudicial killings and abuses, further eroding public trust in state institutions. The persistence of separatist sentiment is deeply rooted in longstanding grievances, including perceptions of political marginalization, economic exclusion, and unaddressed calls for self-determination. The ongoing cycle of violence and distrust underscores the urgent need for political dialogue, reconciliation efforts, and inclusive governance reforms that address the structural drivers of instability in the region.

WEAPONS RECOVERED

AK-49 Rifle: 4

RPG Bombs: 4

RPG Tubes: 2

7.62mm Special Rounds: 30

7.62mm Rounds: 715

5.6mm Rounds: 14

NATO Rounds: 51

Pistol: 1

Rounds of ammunition: 10+

Explosives: Unspecified

Camouflage uniforms and assorted local charms also recovered

Conclusion

Addressing the challenges of banditry, kidnapping, farmer and herder clashes, separatist agitations, etc, requires more than kinetic responses. A sustainable path forward demands coordinated security operations, conflict-sensitive development planning, and inclusive political solutions tailored to the distinct dynamics of each region. Holistic engagement, combining local dialogue, governance reform, and strategic investment is critical to breaking the cycles of violence and laying the groundwork for long-term stability.

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.