

NATIONAL CONFLICT WATCH – JUNE 2025

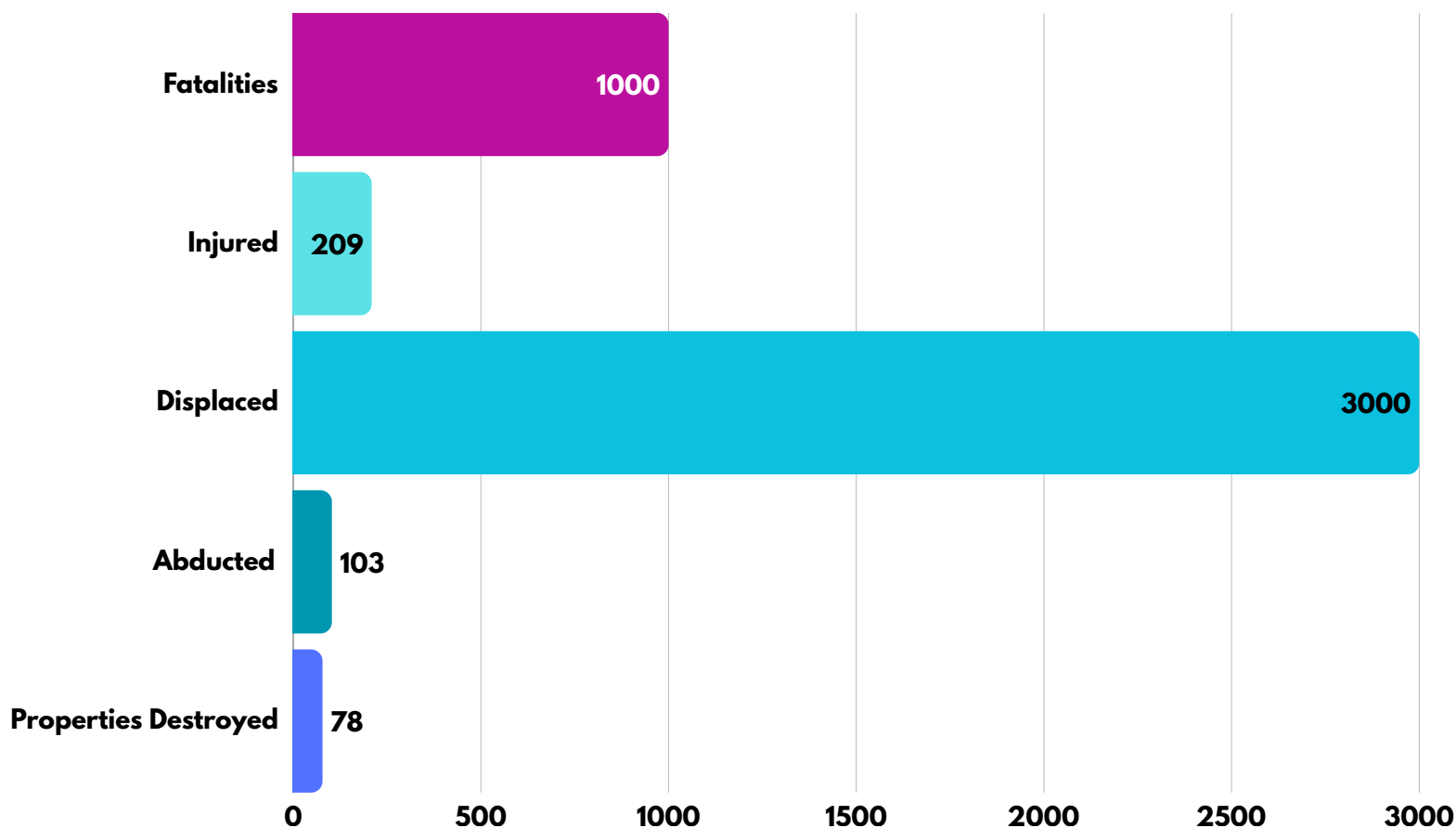
Overview

In June 2025, Nigeria's security landscape was marred by exacerbated violent conflicts and heightened civil unrest. The impacts of conflicts tracked within the six geopolitical zones ranged from targeted ambushes, raids, and killings to extreme civilian displacements by armed herders, pastoralists, cultists, bandits, terrorists, and insurgents. Most intense was the massacre of hundreds (including security agents) and the displacement of at least 3000 persons in a single attack by armed Fulani militia assailants in Benue state of North Central Nigeria.

Despite being the least impacted region, South West remains a flashpoint due to threats from farmer-herder tensions and confrontations over land use and grazing rights, and conflict spillovers from Northern regions. While certain isolated incidents emerged in some states (such as Enugu state of South East Nigeria, which witnessed mob violence and extrajudicial killing of 5 civilians), kidnapping remained the prevalent conflict across the country, closely followed by cult/gang violence and rivalries in South South, and bandit attacks in North West and North Central.

In spite of intensified efforts by security agents, government and other stakeholders to address insecurity in various localities, most conflicts have continued unabated and unresolved due to underlying root causes such as poverty, inequality, discrimination, weak social support system, and lack of access to resources like education and healthcare. Curbing these structural drivers of violence requires socio-economic interventions, enhanced inclusive community engagement, well coordinated counter offensives by joint security forces, to manage emerging threats and prevent escalations.

JUNE 2025 CONFLICT IMPACT CHART





A SUMMARY OF CONFLICT CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS

North Central

In June 2025, North-Central Nigeria experienced a significant escalation in violence. Criminal gangs, often mischaracterized as herdsmen, executed coordinated attacks, resulting in over 332 fatalities, 55 injuries, and 65 kidnappings. A key incident was the massacre in Yelwata, Benue, that killed 200–300 civilians in an act of what was suggested to be ethnic cleansing. Casualties were also recorded among security agents; upto 20 soldiers lost their lives in Niger as bandits attacked their military bases. These attacks exploited systemic weaknesses in governance and security, and led to widespread displacement of over 3,000 individuals in Benue, and significant disruptions to agriculture and humanitarian operations. The number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) recorded in North-Central Nigeria signals a potential humanitarian crisis which if left unchecked may unravel new patterns of conflicts that will ultimately worsen socio-economic stressors.

North West

North West Nigeria remained a hotspot for bandit attacks and terrorism particularly in Zamfara, Kebbi and Sokoto states; one incident killed 15 and left 6 injured. In Jigawa and Katsina states, civilians experienced significant unrest from gunmen attacks. Meanwhile, Kaduna witnessed a re-emergence of cattle rustling which resulted in 3 fatalities in one event. The persistent assault and killing of residents in their homes by terrorists groups is indicative of the unbridled impunity of insurgents in the region, and the vulnerability of security forces despite responding with air and ground offensives, drone surveillance and joint operations. The escalating and seemingly intractable cyclical violence in the region calls for a multi-dimensional strategy to identify and resolve security gaps, mitigate underlying drivers of conflict and restore the security of lives and property.

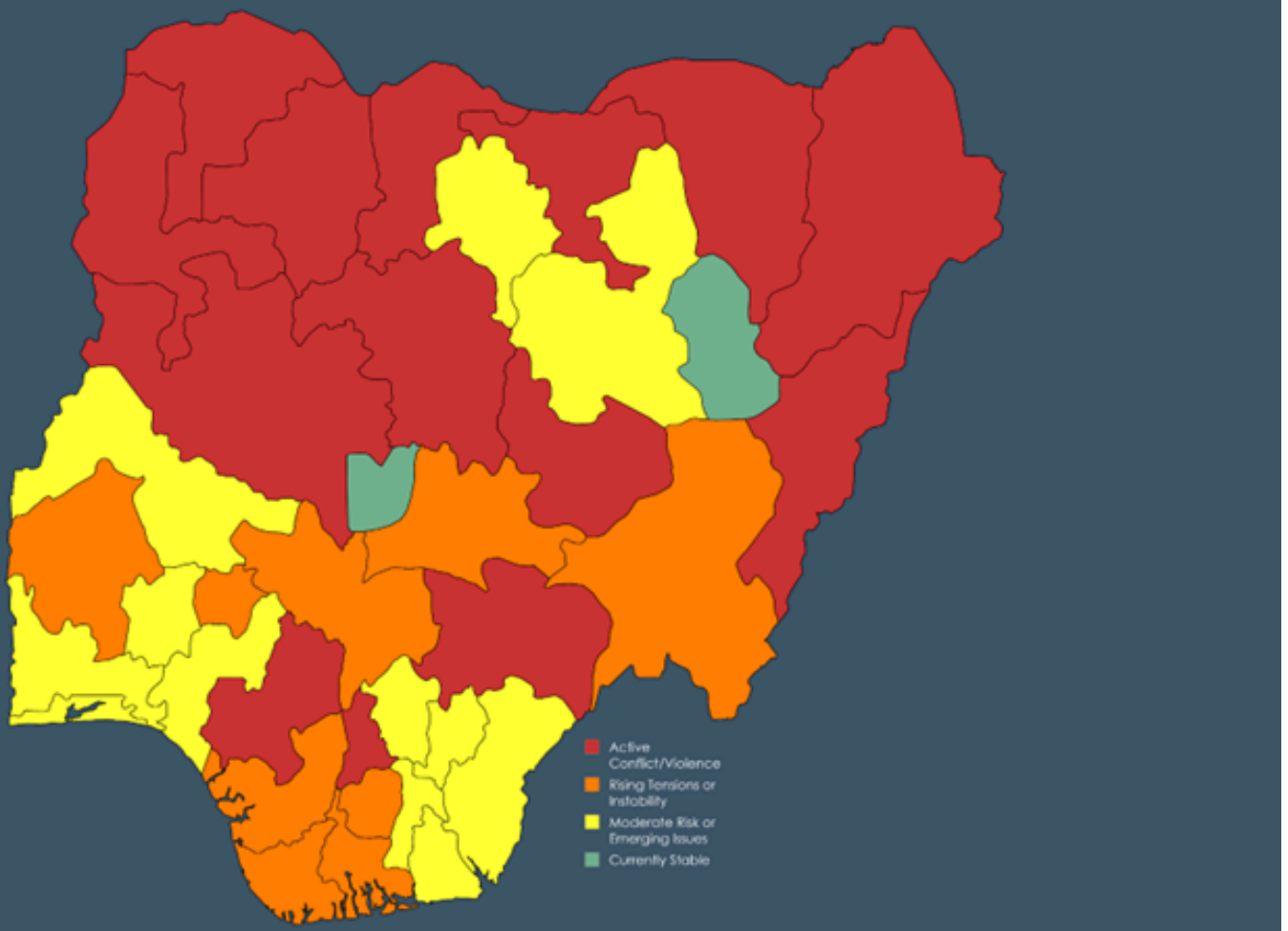
North East

In North-East Nigeria, Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa remained epicenters of insurgent violence. The region experienced widespread insecurity, as ISWAP and Boko Haram (JAS) attacks intensified with IEDs, coordinated assaults, abductions, and looting. The Nigerian military responded with multiple ground and air offensives, leading to numerous militant casualties and the recovery of arms. Ethno-communal tensions also flared in Taraba, while Gombe, despite isolated incidents, remained relatively stable. The high number of fatalities and injuries recorded reaffirms the entrenched nature of violent conflict in the region, and necessitates not only military interventions but also sustained early warning systems, community resilience programming, and peacebuilding initiatives that address root causes.

South West

While Southwest Nigeria remained relatively stable in June 2025, a number of localized security incidents especially related to land use, herder migration, socioeconomic pressures and underlying tensions, were observed across the region. Though the region did not witness large-scale violence, recent developments reflect both ongoing structural issues and the spillover of conflicts from the North Central and Middle Belt zones into the southern regions. The increasing volume of farmer-herder cases resolved in Oyo for instance is a strong indicator of emerging threats to the resilience and long term stability of the region.

CONFLICT HOTSPOTS



South East

In June 2025, the South Eastern states of Nigeria experienced various forms of conflict, ranging from extrajudicial killings and mob attack in Enugu, unknown armed men attacks and cult clash in Anambra, and Fulani herdsmen attack in Imo and Enugu. Response mechanisms by police and DSS center on combating insurgent groups and ensuring the safety of civilians, however, deep rooted challenges in achieving lasting peace and stability continue to undermine their efforts. Addressing these conflicts require a strategic combination of enhanced security, intelligence-led operations, active community involvement, targeted socio-economic development, as well as the coordinated efforts of government authorities, traditional rulers, civil society organizations, security agencies, and local communities to tackle the root causes and foundations of violence and instability in the region.

South South

June 2025 depicted a complex conflict landscape in South South Nigeria as boundary disputes and leadership conflicts flared up in Edo state, farmland disputes and communal tension re-emerged in Cross River State resulting in over 50 fatalities, violent protests against kidnapping prompted a joint security operation against suspects in Delta State which further triggered reprisal attacks, gang rivalries and deadly gunmen/cultist attacks on security agents surfaced in Rivers, and political tension and threats of youth violence plagued Bayelsa and Akwa Ibom states. The sharp escalation in cult clashes among rival gangs such as Vikings, Icelanders, Eiye, Aiye, Black Axe, and Greenlanders, prompted heightened gang crackdowns and fatal encounters. Response strategies comprised police raids of suspect hideouts, collaborative security efforts, advocacy and activism efforts by civil society groups and youths, and the deployment of tech security systems and vigilantes.

WEAPONS RECOVERED



Firearms (including AK-47 rifles, machine guns, and locally fabricated weapons): 955

Foreign pistols: 1

One machete: 1

Live cartridges: 1

English single-barrel guns: 221

Rounds of ammunition: 5

Magazines: 3+

7.62mm Special rounds: 1

Explosive devices (IED): Unspecified

Rocket guns: 1



Cross-border Outlook

Lake Chad Basin and Sahel

The region's conflict landscape for June 2025 showcased intensified and widespread insurgent terrorist activities across Lake Chad Basin and Sahel with Niger as the cardinal point of these activities. Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam Wa Al-Muslimin (JNIM), Islamic State for West African Province (ISWAP) and Boko Haram terrorist group executed large scale and deadly attacks across Lake Chad Basin and Sahel. 34 soldiers were killed by ISWAP at Niger's border with Mali and many were injured in an attack on their army base. In Burkina Faso, upto 20 civilians were killed in a terrorist group attack, while those in Mali suffered large scale ambushes as assailants shifted from guerilla warfare to semi conventional assaults. Meanwhile, The Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF) and Civilian JTF (CJTF) military responded with multiple ground and air offensives, leading to numerous militant casualties and the recovery of arms. The incidents in the region resulted in a high number of fatalities and injuries, mostly around Chad, Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso border axis.

CONCLUSION

The comprehensive outlook for Nigeria's security situation and surrounding regions, leaves much to be concerned about. Currently, the country seems to be a boiling convergence of crises with hotspots mostly in the Northern regions. The exponentially deteriorating stability and high risk security environment can be traced to weak governance, unexplained ethnic grievances, contested resource access, and suggests government nonchalance and inaction in the face of mass loss of lives and livelihood, and rising threats to security. The upsurge in violent attacks, the incessant outplay of kidnappings, insurgent attacks and killings, communal conflicts, and cult violence, and the devastating impacts from these trends are symptomatic of increasing challenges in security, governance and economic stability, and it demands urgent intensification of proactive conflict mitigation and resilience building measures through the activation of early warning systems and peacebuilding programmes at community level, to prevent the continuation of violent escalations and its widespread effects.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

1. Intensify programs on the establishment of a National Conflict Early Warning and Response System across the six geopolitical zones
2. Implement Integrated Resource Management Frameworks as well as monitor and evaluate, while executing such region-specific frameworks for land use and grazing routes to address farmer-herder conflicts, particularly in the North Central and South West zones.
3. Strengthen Community-Based Peacebuilding Initiatives for the South South region
4. Scale Up Rural Livelihood, entrepreneurship, and capacity building Programs targeting high-risk zones to reduce vulnerability to insurgent recruitment and criminal networks.
5. Expand Community Policing efforts, coordinated Security Sector Reforms and Civil-Military Relations with local security forces
6. Reinforce Border and Forest Surveillance to monitor forest reserves and border zones in the North West and North East, which serve as safe havens for insurgents, bandits, and kidnappers.
7. Monitor Socioeconomic Pressure Points and Institutionalize Regional Peace and Security Councils to coordinate conflict resolution, share intelligence, and oversee peace initiatives.

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.