



NATIONAL CONFLICT WATCH – MAY 2025

Overview

In May 2025, insecurity and conflict continued to undermine stability across all six geopolitical zones of Nigeria, fueling humanitarian crises, threatening livelihoods, and impeding sustainable development.

In North Central, persistent farmer-pastoralist and communal disputes, driven by competition for scarce resources, climate pressures, and historical tensions, have resulted in significant violence, displacement, and property destruction, particularly in Benue and Plateau states.

The North West was marked by ongoing unrest stemming from a combination of terrorism, banditry, and kidnapping, compounded by weak governance and growing competition over resources, which further contributed to a deteriorating security landscape.

In the North East, violence by Boko Haram (JAS) and ISWAP, alongside ethnic and communal clashes, continued to undermine peace. While Gombe remained a pocket of stability, other states, notably Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa, faced significant attacks and growing humanitarian pressures.

Across the South East, attacks by unknown gunmen, IPOB-related violence, and civil unrest disrupted daily life, fueling a climate of uncertainty and further disquiet. Security operations were intensified in response, reflecting the ongoing struggles for peace and stability in the region.

The South West saw a range of conflict-related disturbances, from farmer-herder disputes in Oyo and Ondo to political unrest and kidnapping in Ekiti and Lagos. These events highlight the growing necessity for a comprehensive, community-informed approach to conflict resolution.

Lastly, in the South-South, pipeline attacks, cult-related violence, and political disputes — alongside a spate of kidnapping kept the region volatile. While some states, notably Cross River and Delta, remained relatively stable, the overall picture underscores the need to address deep-rooted grievances related to resource control, governance, and growing poverty.

Together, these ongoing crises reflect a complex blend of historical disputes, climate-related pressures, weak institutions, and policy gaps. Collaborative intervention — involving federal, state, and community stakeholders is essential to foster peace, stability, and sustainable development across the country.

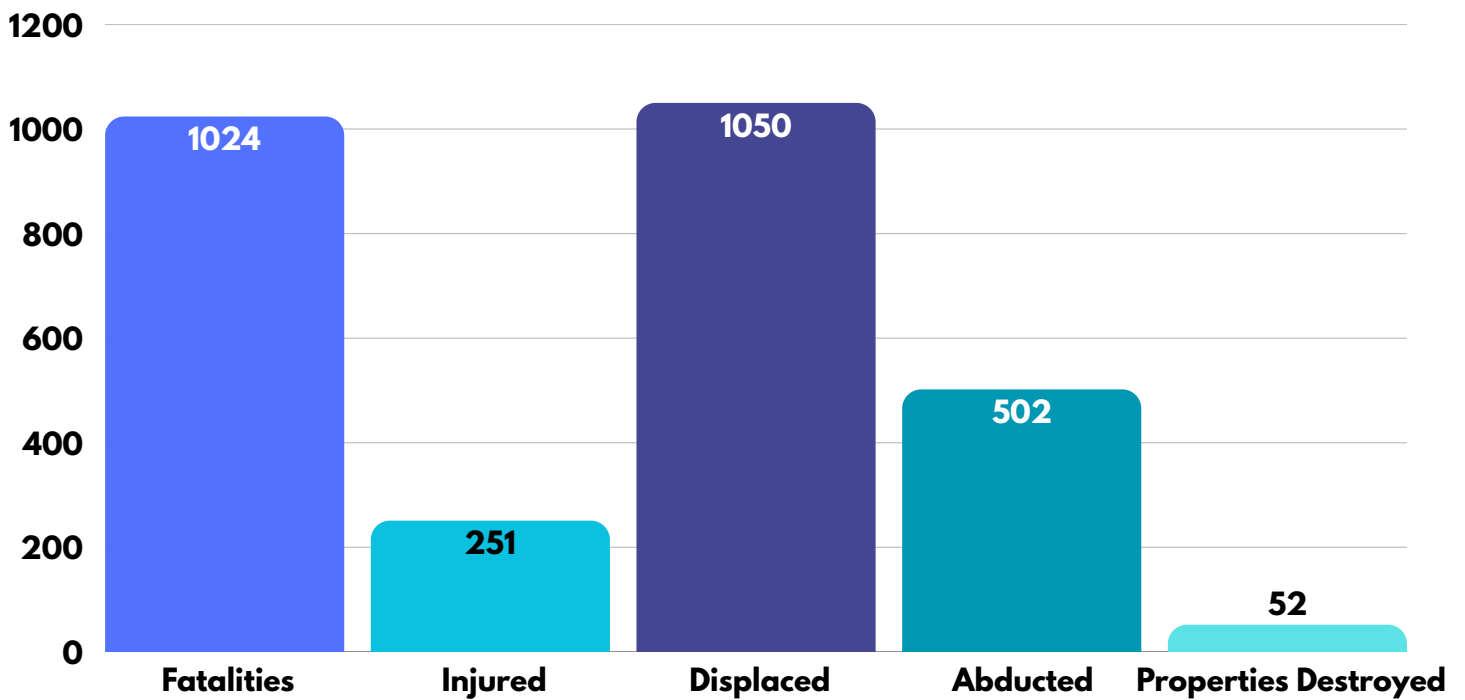
A SUMMARY OF CONFLICT CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS:

North Central

In May 2025, North Central Nigeria, spanning Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, and the Federal Capital Territory, remains embroiled in persistent farmer-pastoralist and communal conflicts, primarily between Fulani herders and farming communities, driven by competition over scarce and limited resources, and climate change. Rooted in ethno-religious tensions and historical socio-structural dynamics, these conflicts, particularly intense in Benue and Plateau states, escalate into periodic deadly violence, causing mass displacement, loss of life, and property destruction. Despite their recurring nature, the region's volatility underscores the urgent need for effective resource management and critical conflict resolution strategy to mitigate further escalation.

North West

In May 2025, North West Nigeria states such as Zamfara, Katsina, and Sokoto experienced significant unrest due to banditry, terrorism, and abductions, a hotspot of insecurity driven jihadist activities, farmer-pastoralist conflict, amongst other emerging conflict situations. The North West zone continues to face a hard-to-resolve conflict complications birthed by resource competition, climate change, and governance inadequacy, resulting in significant loss of lives and properties



NORTH EAST

In May 2025, North-East Nigeria experienced widespread violence fueled by Boko Haram (JAS) and ISWAP insurgencies, ethno-communal clashes, and armed militia activities, resulting in significant fatalities, abductions, property destruction, and displacement across Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Taraba, and Bauchi states. Despite intensified military efforts, the region remained volatile, with Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa as terrorism flashpoints and Taraba and Bauchi showing rising militia activity. Gombe State, however, maintained stability, highlighting the potential of effective local governance and community resilience. The entrenched nature of the violence underscores the urgent need for continued early warning and rapid response interventions to curb further escalation.

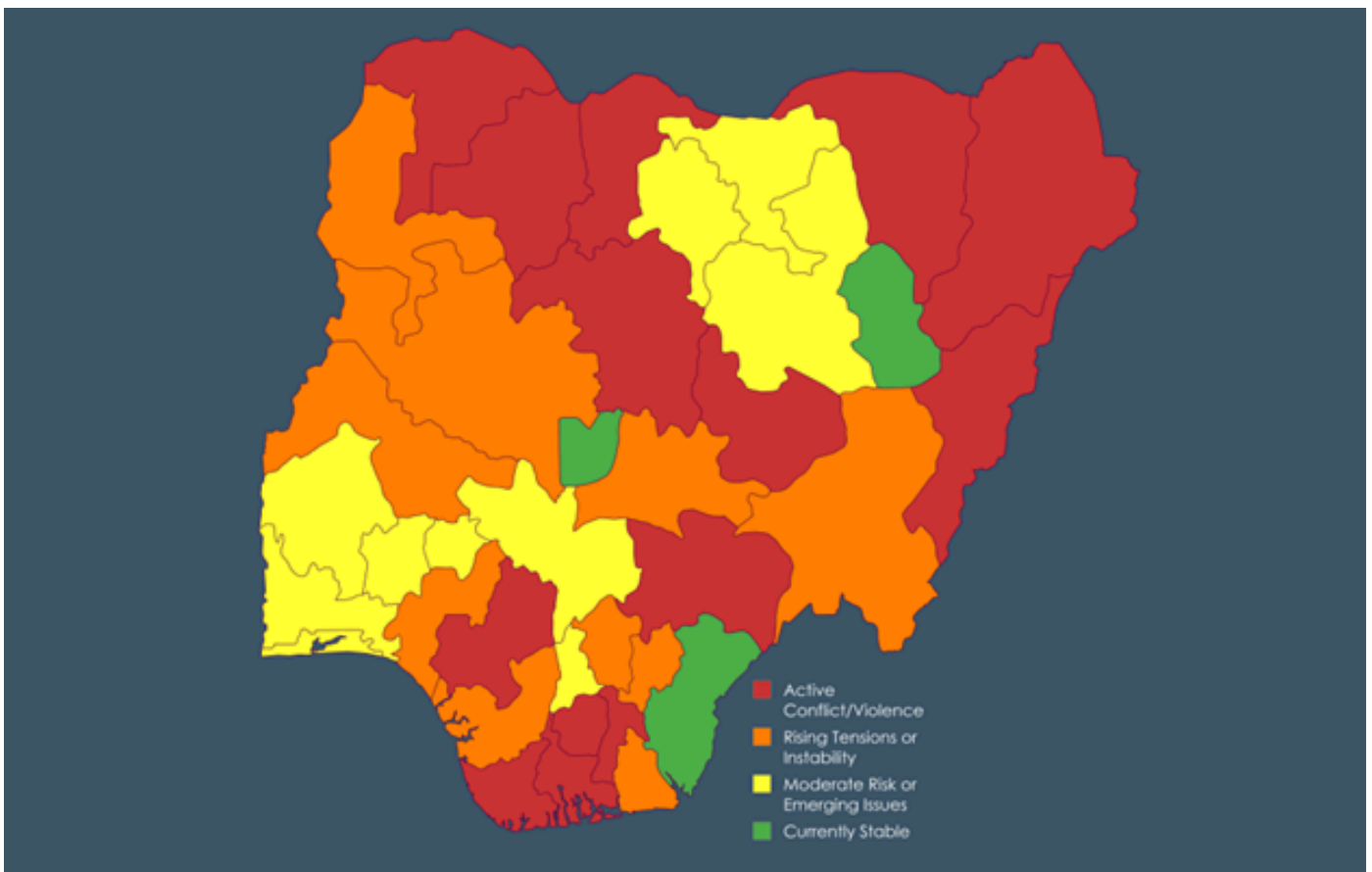
SOUTH EAST

In May 2025, South-East Nigeria, encompassing Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo states, faced diverse conflicts, including attacks by unknown gunmen, kidnappings, hoodlum violence, IPOB-related incidents, and native doctor attacks, affecting communities across various local government areas. Noticeable security interventions aimed to restore order and combat insurgent groups, focusing on civilian safety. The violence, rooted in poverty, youth unemployment, perceived injustice, and weak governance, underscores the need for coordinated efforts among government, traditional rulers, civil society, security agencies, and communities to address these causes, promote justice, and foster a safe, inclusive environment. Restoring peace requires unwavering commitment, strong political will, and stakeholder collaboration to build lasting stability.

SOUTH-EAST

In May 2025, South-East Nigeria, encompassing Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo states, faced diverse conflicts, including attacks by unknown gunmen, kidnappings, hoodlum violence, IPOB-related incidents, and native doctor attacks, affecting communities across various local government areas. Noticeable security interventions aimed to restore order and combat insurgent groups, focusing on civilian safety. The violence, rooted in poverty, youth unemployment, perceived injustice, and weak governance, underscores the need for coordinated efforts among government, traditional rulers, civil society, security agencies, and communities to address these causes, promote justice, and foster a safe, inclusive environment. Restoring peace requires unwavering commitment, strong political will, and stakeholder collaboration to build lasting stability.

CONFLICT HOTSPOTS



SOUTH WEST

In May 2025, South-West Nigeria faced varied conflicts across its states, reflecting ongoing security and socio-economic challenges. In Oyo State, clashes between rival youth groups in Bodija resulted in injuries, and armed Fulani herders in Saki East and Atisbo raised persistent insecurity concerns. Ondo State saw farmer-herder confrontations over land use and grazing rights, leading to property damage and increased security patrols. Lagos State experienced protests driven by socio-economic grievances, escalating into confrontations with law enforcement, resulting in arrests and disruptions, and kidnapping in Ekiti State. While these incidents were contained, they underscore the urgent need for proactive conflict resolution and enhanced security measures to prevent escalation across the region.



SOUTH - SOUTH

In May 2025, South-South Nigeria continues to grapple with a volatile security environment, notably marked by conflicts such as chieftaincy crisis in Cross River's Iko-Esai, a state of emergency in Rivers due to political violence and pipeline vandalism, and a surge in cult-related violence in Bayelsa, Edo, and Akwa Ibom, with significant arrests of cultists linked to murders and attacks on residents. Militant pipeline bombings by groups like the Liberation Army of the Niger Delta and Bakassi in Bayelsa highlighted ongoing resource control grievances, while kidnappings persisted, notably 19 abductions in Rivers and fewer in Edo and Akwa Ibom. Edo saw violent protests against EFCC raids and government inaction on insecurity, alongside mob violence incidents. Cross River remained stable, and Delta reported reduced abductions, but addressing root causes like resource disputes and unemployment is essential to curb instability.

CONCLUSION

The persistent insecurity across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones in May 2025 highlights the urgent need for a coordinated, multi-stakeholder response to address both the immediate triggers and the underlying drivers of conflict. From terrorism in the North East and banditry in the North West to communal tensions in the Middle Belt and socio-political unrest in the South, these challenges underscore systemic governance, resource, and development gaps. A sustainable pathway to national peace and security will require proactive policy implementation, inclusive dialogue, and strengthened institutional frameworks capable of fostering resilience, justice, and long-term stability.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

1. Intensify programs on the establishment of a National Conflict Early Warning and Response System across the six geopolitical zones
2. Implementation of Integrated Resource Management Frameworks as well as monitoring and evaluation 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
4. Scale Up Rural Livelihood, entrepreneurship, and capacity building Programs targeting high-risk zones such as the North East, South East, and South-South, reduce vulnerability to insurgent recruitment and criminal networks.
5. Expand 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. Institutionalize Regional Peace and Security Councils comprising stakeholders such as traditional leaders, CSOs, youth groups, and coordinated artisanal society groups to coordinate conflict resolution, share intelligence, and oversee peace initiatives.

WEAPONS RECOVERED

AK-47 Rifle: 22

Local pistols: 13

Dane guns; 11+

Foreign pistols: 7

Pump action gun: 9+

7.62mm Special Rounds: 39

Magazines: 18

Arrows: 1

Bow: 1

Cutlasses: 7+

Live cartridges: 178 + 38 (80 hp and 60 hp motors)

Rounds of ammunition (7.62mm): 51+

Explosives: EDI (unspecified)

Axe and daggers

Hand grenades: 2

Anti-Aircraft gun: 1

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.