



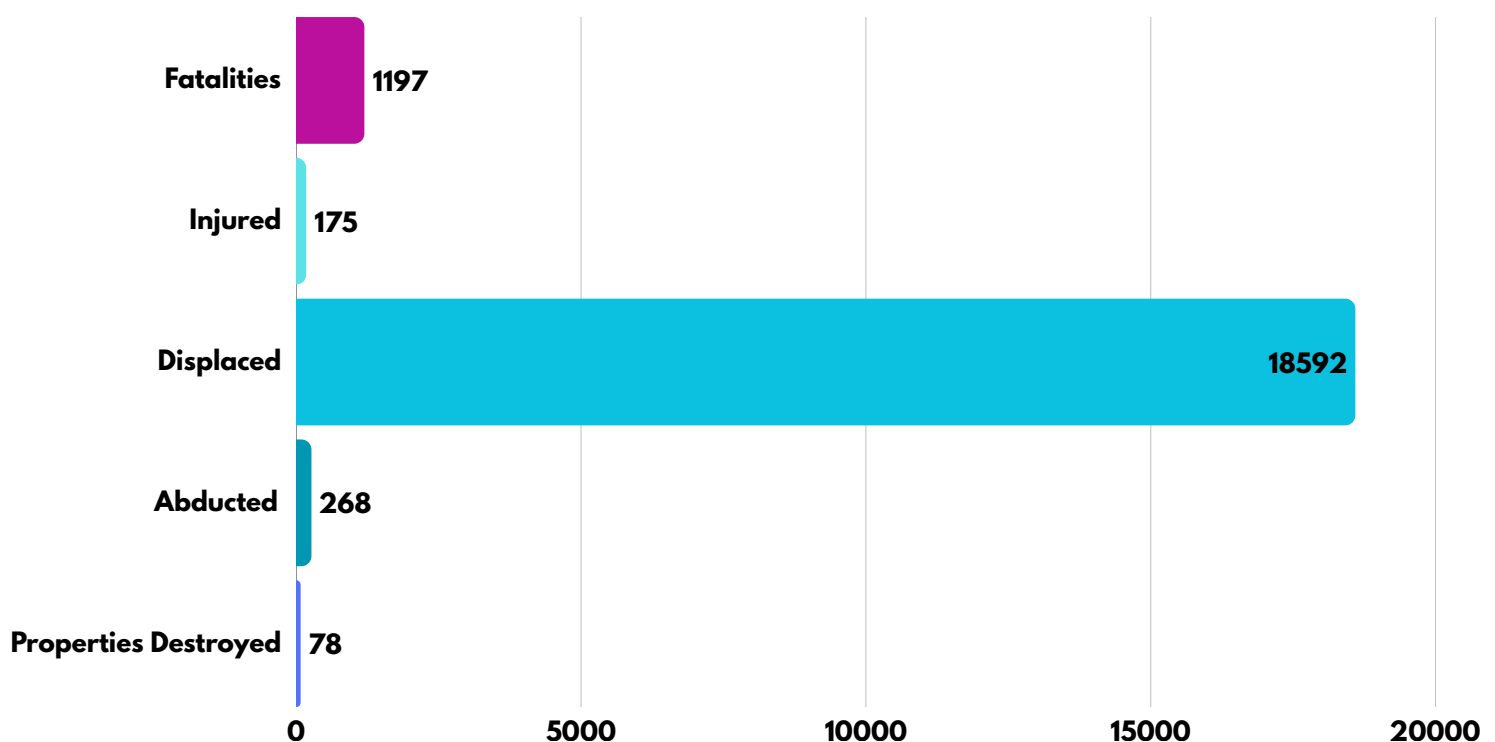
# NATIONAL CONFLICT WATCH – JULY 2025

## Overview

July 2025 was a turbulent month across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones reflecting persistent security challenges particularly emanating from heightened insurgent attacks, mass kidnappings and re-emerging communal violence. While the Northern axis of the country was pervaded with banditry violence, terrorist attacks and farmer-herder conflicts, the southern axis was plagued by communal clashes, cult violence, and targeted kidnappings and killings of civilians, business owners and security agents.

Amidst the array of conflicts tracked across all regions, certain incidents stood out as outliers. Most notably, Benue state in the **North Central** region showed up again as a major hotspot for violent attacks by bandits and terrorist groups which resulted in a sharp surge of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from over 3000 in the previous month to a new set of 13k+ IDPs in July. Insecurity in **North West** Nigeria worsened with mass abductions of over 100 residents by bandits in Zamfara, and killings of at least 130 security agents in Katsina. In the **North East**, the massacre of 40 community defense volunteers in Borno and the recovery of 56 IEDs planted on Dikwa-marte Bridge in Yobe painted the region a flash point for violent escalations. Security in the **South West** deteriorated with the rise in roadside kidnappings (3 reported incidents and over 20 kidnapped in one event in Ogun state), the smuggling of illegal arms, and the expansion of Fulani ethnic militant camps in Ondo. **South South** displayed a plethora of conflicts particularly in Edo state, and more than 2 sets of communal violence across the region resulted in scores of deaths, injuries and displacements. Though the **South East** showed up as the most stable region, one isolated incident of targeted ethnic violence involving the assassination of 10–13 Ebonyi indigenes in Anambra state suggests potential communal escalations. Meanwhile, a look at border **Lake Chad and the Sahel** regions showcased the spread of violence beyond traditional hotspots, impacting local communities in coastal areas, with no significant improvement in security, early responses, humanitarian access and development aid.

## JULY 2025 CONFLICT IMPACT CHART





## A SUMMARY OF CONFLICT CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS

### **North Central**

In July 2025, North Central Nigeria witnessed region-wide escalating instability and an extreme surge in violent attacks primarily from herders and terrorists. Benue, Plateau, Niger, and Kwara states suffered significantly from a series of farmer-herder clashes, bandit attacks, and communal disputes, while FCT, Kogi and Nasarawa remained stable. In Benue, a new set of 18,592 victims were displaced in banditry, while in Plateau, about 41 people including children and 27 farmers were killed, while homes were burned in a suspected Fulani herders attack. Plateau also saw terrorists targeting local security groups—40 vigilantes were killed in one attack, while in Kwara scores were killed and displaced by terrorists. Though in Niger, Nigeria army troops neutralized upto 45 bandits in a shootout and arrested over 20 due to banditry and kidnapping threats. The conflicts in this region reflect deep systemic challenges and the exponentially increasing number of displacements call for commensurate humanitarian relief efforts.

### **North West**

July 2025 reinforced the intractability of conflict in the North West, with Zamfara, Katsina and Kebbi remaining centers of insurgent violence, while Kano and Jigawa states remained peaceful. Insurgent terrorist groups like Lakurawa, Turji Bello and others intensified attacks on residents, killing, injuring, abducting many in their homes, in addition to occasionally rustling their cattles. For instance, in Zamfara state, over 100 residents and 25 women and girls were abducted on July 20 in addition to 38 Hostages who were killed. Bandits also killed over 100 security watch corps operatives, and 30 policemen in Katsina state, while Explosive Lakurawa Terrorists killed 15 in Tangaza LGA of Sokoto state. In Kaduna, bandits again attacked a church meeting in Kajuru LGA killing 5 people and injuring 3. Military response was only reported in Kebbi state, where troops killed 150 bandits through ambush and air strikes. The alarming rate of bandit attacks in the North West calls for urgent security response to deter the violent trend and prevent spillovers to other regions.

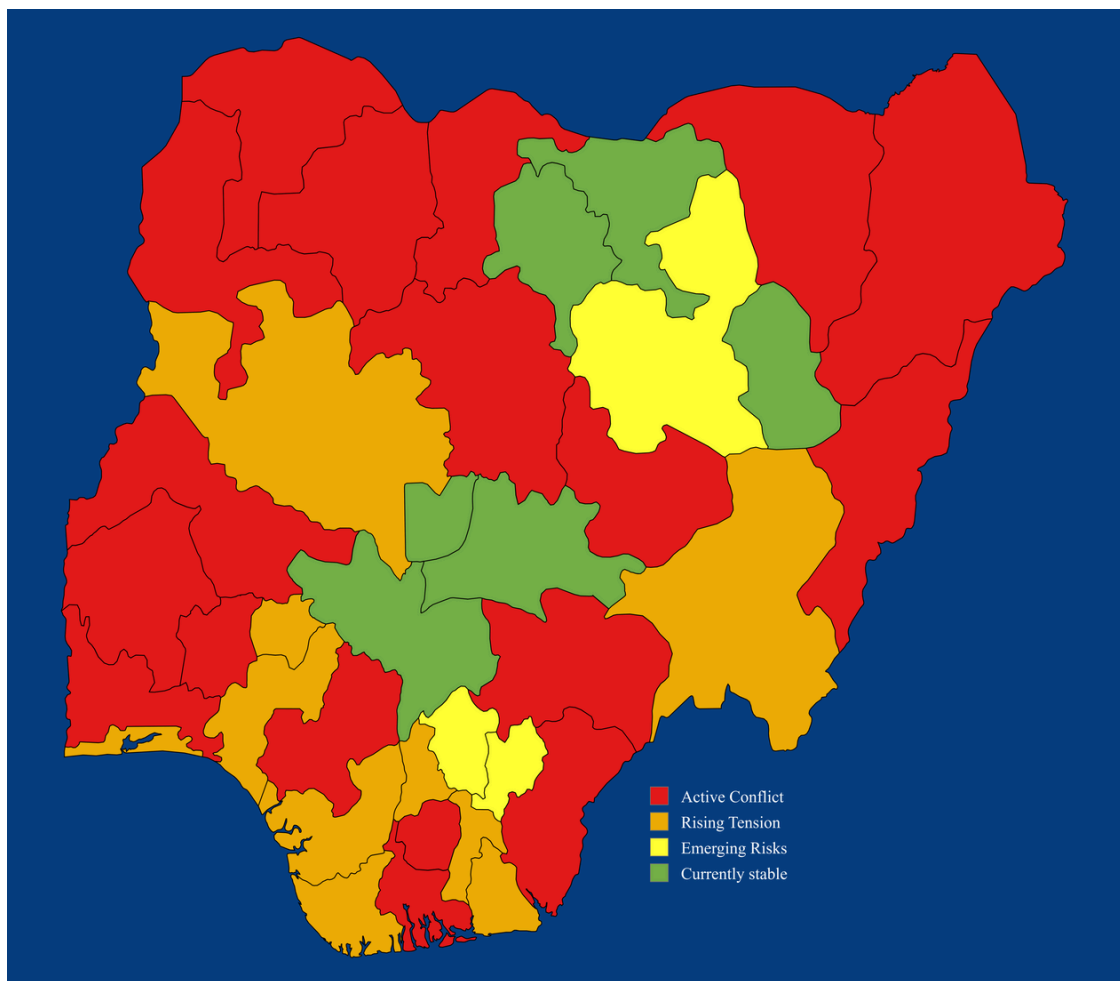
### **North East**

The North-East region continued to grapple with intense insecurity driven by a combination of insurgent activity, banditry, inter-communal violence, and mob justice. Boko Haram (JAS) and ISWAP remained active across Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states, carrying out ambushes, targeted killings, and abductions. Notably, the Kukawa massacre by ISWAP/Boko Haram in Borno claimed the lives of 40 community defense volunteers. Inter-communal clashes in Adamawa and Taraba killed 10 and injured 20, while ethnic tensions flared in Taraba due to militia attacks and communal violence. Other sensitive cases included one incident of mob violence in Bauchi state, and the kidnap of 4 persons by Boko Haram in Yobe. Gombe state stood out as the most stable. Responses included curfews, a series of airstrikes by the Nigerian military, coordinated joint operations, and weapons seizures, resulting in dozens of militant casualties and the recovery of IEDs, rifles, and logistical supplies.

## South South

In July, 2025, South South Nigeria saw an increase in gun violence, mass protests against herder violence, targeted killings of civilians in reprisal attacks by cultists / unknown gunmen in Rivers; the resurgence of communal conflicts in Cross River, Akwa Ibom and Edo states; kidnappings and herdsmen attack in Delta; and violent protest in Bayelsa. Edo state was a hotspot in the region recording the highest number of incidents (16), kidnapped (34), arrested (54), and arms recovered (247), while Cross River witnessed escalated communal violence in Biase LGA, and renewed land dispute between Mbazarem (Benue) vs. Abonkip (Obudu) which resulted in more than 17 fatalities, several injuries, and 10 missing people. A resurgence of cult rivalry between the Maphites and Black Axe groups erupted across Benin City of Edo state claiming 7 lives; also, one student, community leader and 7 others were killed in separate incidents of cultist / gunmen attacks. The state also reported emerging conflict from land grabbers who injured and displaced many. Responses comprised multiple arrests by police commands, deployment of joint security forces and aerial surveillance in Cross River state, as well as the launching of peace committees by a civil society group in Bayelsa state. The intensified boundary disputes and communal violence in the region underscore growing insecurity and suggest threats to food security that may ignite broader effects.

## CONFLICT HOTSPOTS





## South West

South West region's conflict terrain was dominated by highway insecurity due to kidnappings, specifically in Ogun, Ekiti and Oyo states. In Ogun, armed gunmen abducted over 20 travelers along the Sagamu–Ijebu-Ode Expressway, injuring one person, while Osun reported 2 kidnappings targeting students and business owners., as well as ritual killings around Osogbo LGA. In Oyo, At least 3 kidnapping cases were recorded, involving traders and commuters while there was heightened community tension due to land disputes in border areas. Police increased patrols on major highways, leading to a few arrests, however the kidnap incidents demonstrate the vulnerability of major roadways to organized criminal activity. Other cases of insecurity involved gang rivalry between Aye and Eiyé cult groups in Alimosho LGA of Lagos state which led to one fatality, inflow of illegal arms by unidentified arms smugglers, and expansion of Fulani ethnic militants' camps in forested areas in Ondo state, all which infer increasing threats to nearby communities.

## South East

The conflict landscape of South East Nigeria in July 2025, was marked by ethnic grievances, violence perpetrated by rebel militant groups, and a notable increase in incidents involving unknown gunmen, kidnapers, and murder compared to the previous month. In Imo state, a coordinated night attack by suspected IPOB/ESN gunmen hit three communities in Arondizuogu (Umualaoma, Ndiakuwata, Ndi-Ejezie), killing at least 7 people including residents and shop-owners, while in Anambra state, Police confirmed the assassination of about 10–13 Ebonyi indigenes, though no violence was reported from Ebonyi state. These conflict dynamics underscores cross-state targeting and emphasizes the risk of spillover to other states. Police efforts focused on combating insurgent groups and ensuring the safety of civilians. Though the region's conflict was mild compared to other regions in the country, the reported incidents indicate potential flash points for communal violence especially owing to ethnic attacks.

# Cross-border Outlook

## Lake Chad Basin and Sahel

In July 2025, the Lake Chad and the Sahel region saw a resurgence of jihadist activity and increased violence in several areas. Sudan had the highest number of conflicts particularly due to the civil war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces. A spate of attacks blamed on jihadists killed 7 police officers and one soldier in Burkina Faso, long driven by an Islamist insurgency. Sudan's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) killed 48 civilians in an attack on a village in the center of the war-torn country; 8 were killed in the paramilitary attack on shelter, while 3 Sudanese children among 11 civilians were killed in RSF attack in North Kordofan. RSF also killed about 300 people in North Kordofan, while rebel ambushes took place in Mali and Niger. Sustained air and ground offensives were used to repel insurgent forces, particularly in Sambisa Forest, Timbuktu Triangle, and Lake Chad axis, and the use of drone surveillance and joint operations with CJTF increased. The humanitarian and social-economic consequences are severely felt especially in parts of Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, North Eastern Nigeria, and the bordering areas of Chad and Cameroon, and imply supplementary security threats to surrounding regions.



**The Gulf of Guinea: Data unavailable**

## **WEAPONS RECOVERED**

**Firearms including AK-47 rifles, machine guns, and locally fabricated  
weapon: 947**

**AK-47 and LAR rifle magazine: 10+**

**AK-47 rifles: 88+**

**Rounds of 7.62mm special ammunition and AK-47 ammunition: 14**

**Rounds of live ammunition: 1574+**

**Locally made weapons (Dane gun, Pump-action gun, double barrel gun,  
cut-to- size single barrel gun, pistols): 14**

**Pump-action cartridges: 10**

**Live and expended cartridges: 11**

**English-made pistol: 93**

**Barrel guns and Scorpion VZ61 submachine gun: 11**

**Rocket launcher: 1**

**IEDs recovered/defused: 116, 56 (Dikwa) + 60 (Marte)**

**Machete: 1**

**Knife, dagger, and battle axe: 3**

**charms: unspecified**



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## CONCLUSION

July 2025 exhibited a deeply fragmented conflict landscape in Nigeria with several regions flagged as being high risk and prone to violent conflicts. Bloody confrontations resulted in massive fatalities, loss of properties, and devastating displacements of residents which have exacerbated significant local unrest as civilians remain trapped in the cycle of poverty, trauma and violence. Attackers continued to exploit poor intelligence, limited security presence, and delayed response systems, targeting rural areas with minimal protection, while intervention efforts continue to be dwindled and thwarted by root causes of contested resource access, bad governance, ethnic grievances, and socio-economic stressors. The increasing challenges in security across regions underscore the threats to national stability and highlight the demand for enhanced protection, intensified peacebuilding programmes at community level, and accountability. Resolving the widespread violence therefore requires joint proactive response by governments, civil societies, and indigenes whose collective efforts will help mediate prevalent conflicts, prevent avoidable escalations, and restore peace in the country.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATION

1. Strengthen security deployment, expand security sector reforms and increase rapid-response units in high-risk LGAs to deter attacks and improve trust in security forces.
2. Scale-up rural livelihood, entrepreneurship, and capacity building programs targeting high-risk zones to reduce vulnerability to insurgent recruitment and criminal networks.
3. Enhance community dialogue and facilitate mediation between farmers and herders to address land and resource disputes, reducing communal tensions.
4. Intensify reconciliation efforts, community-based peacebuilding initiatives, and programs on the establishment of a National Conflict Early Warning and Response System across board.
5. Implement integrated resource management frameworks, monitor and evaluate, while executing such region-specific frameworks for land use and grazing routes to address herders and communal violence.

**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.