



IPCR

NATIONAL CONFLICT WATCH

February, 2026



NATIONAL CONFLICT WATCH – FEBRUARY 2026

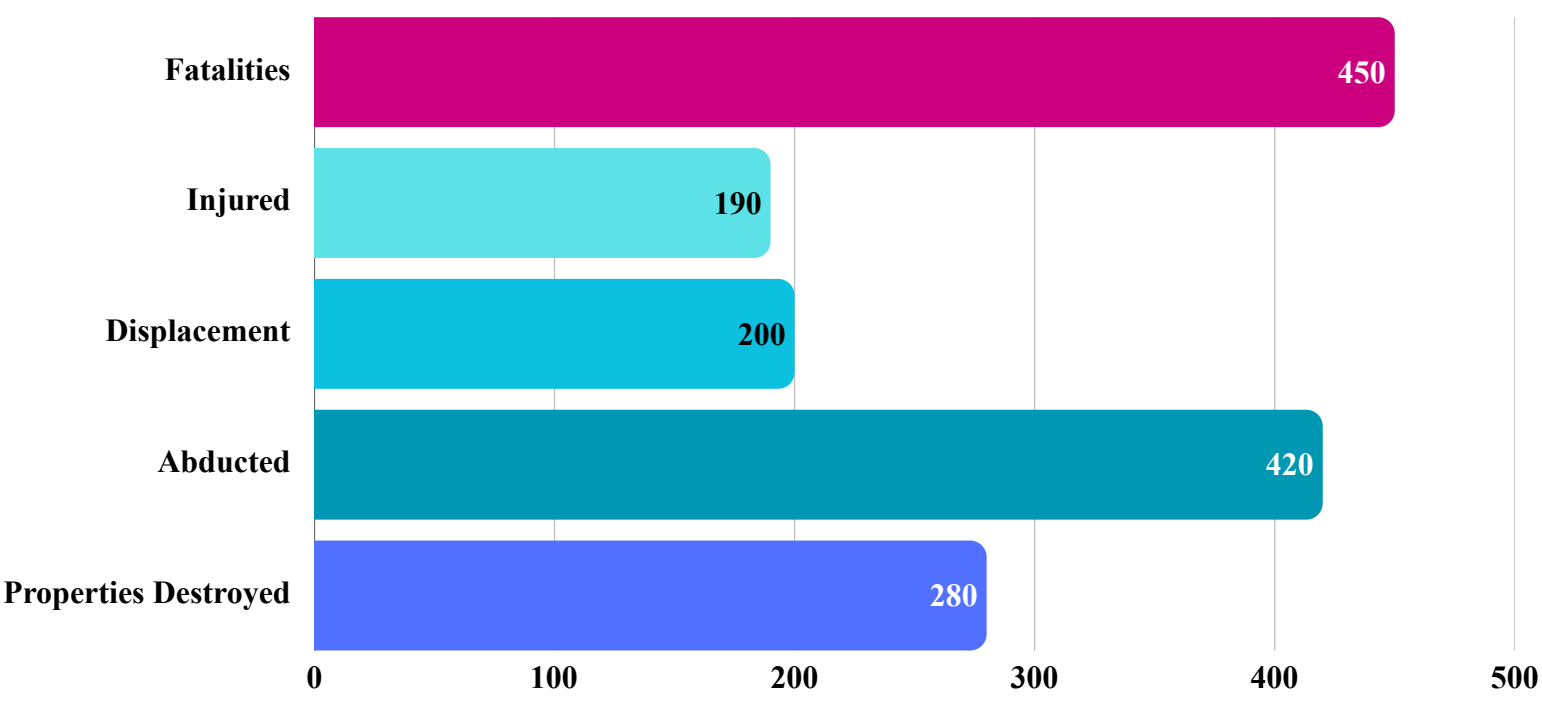
A SUMMARY OF CONFLICT CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS

Overview

Nigeria’s security landscape in February 2026 remained highly volatile and complex, with varying conflict dynamics across regions. The North-West region remained highly volatile, with intensified banditry, mass-casualty attacks and widespread kidnappings with Zamfara, Kebbi, and Katsina recorded increased coordinated assaults, highlighting the resilience of armed groups despite ongoing military operations. However, the North-East zones experienced persisted insurgency with Borno as the epicenter of violence driven by JAS and ISWAP activities. Military offensives continued but insurgents maintained attacks using ambushes and IEDs. The North-Central security situation was mixed but unstable, marked by communal clashes, armed group activity, and rising criminality. Plateau and Kwara faced active violence while Kogi and Niger showed increasing risks and Abuja remained relatively stable.

The South-South was persistent by criminal violence dominated, including cult clashes, kidnappings and organized crime. Edo, Rivers, and Bayelsa recorded frequent incidents with security efforts largely limiting but not eliminating threats. Meanwhile the South-East security situation remained fragile, with continued armed attacks and militant activity in Imo and Anambra. The South-West zone maintained relative stability, though affected by criminal activities such as kidnapping, armed robbery, and cultism. The security situation across the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel remained fragile and complex, marked by active conflicts, rising tensions, and persistent insurgent activities. Over 450 fatalities were recorded across various incidents, with approximately 190 persons injured. More than 420 individuals were abducted, while displacement ranged from localized cases to over 20,000 families in severely affected areas. Additionally, at least 55 security personnel were killed.

FEBRUARY 2026 CONFLICT IMPACT CHART



CONFLICT ANALYSIS OF GEOPOLITICAL REGIONS

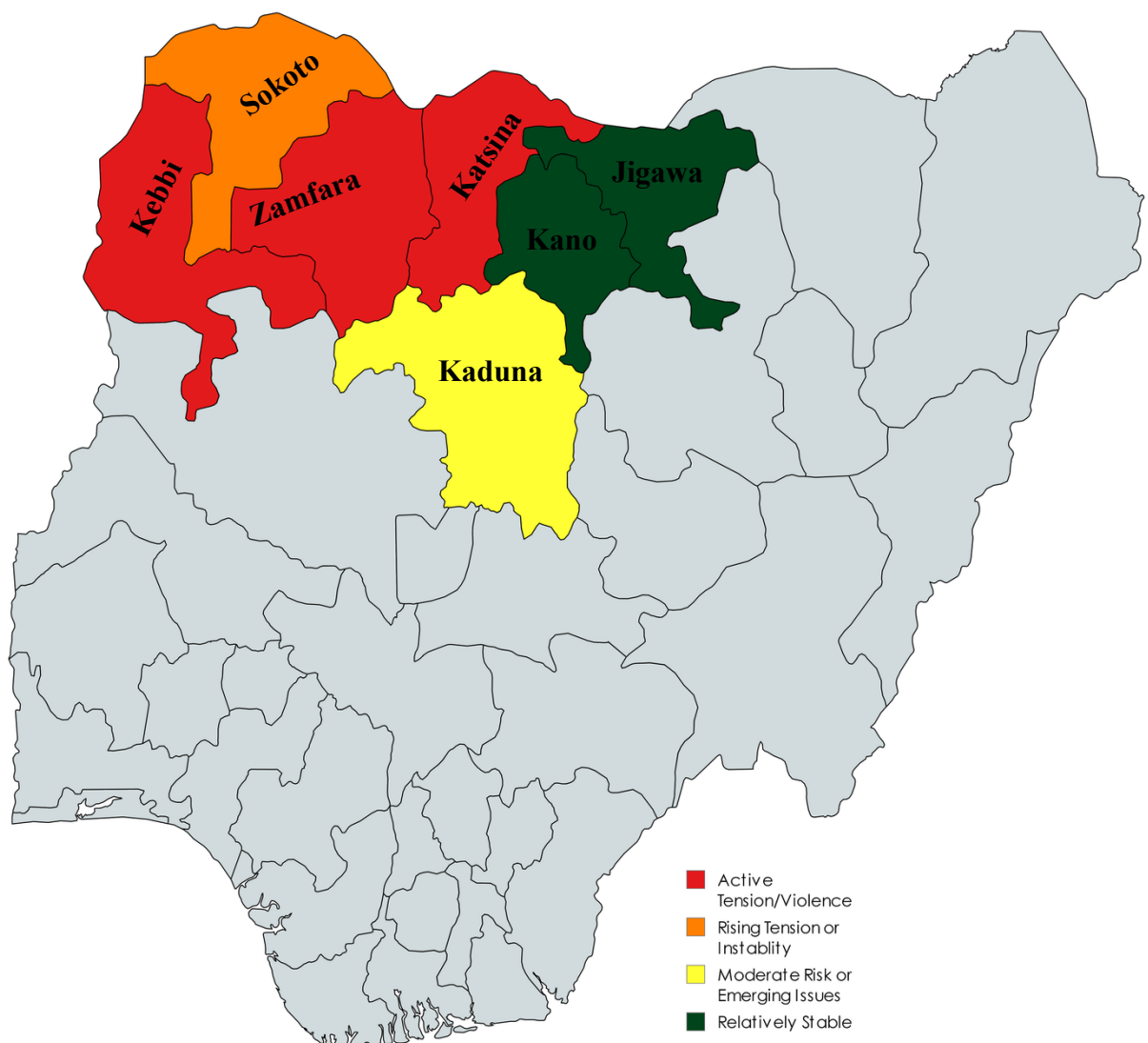
NORTH-WEST

The security environment across Nigeria's North-West in February 2026 remained highly volatile, characterized by persistent banditry, mass casualty attacks, kidnapping-for-ransom, and emerging extremist activities. Armed groups continued to exploit forested terrain and porous interstate and international borders to conduct raids on rural communities and highways.

Unlike January, February witnessed several high-fatality attacks, particularly in Zamfara, Kebbi, and Katsina States, indicating a resurgence of coordinated assaults against vulnerable communities. Armed bandits and insurgent-linked groups conducted night raids, cattle rustling, kidnappings, and arson attacks that displaced residents and destroyed property.

Security forces intensified counter-banditry operations, including troop deployments and intelligence-led operations targeting bandit camps and smuggling networks. Despite these interventions, rural communities remain vulnerable due to limited security presence, difficult terrain, and poor road access.

North-West Conflict Hotspots



NORTH-EAST

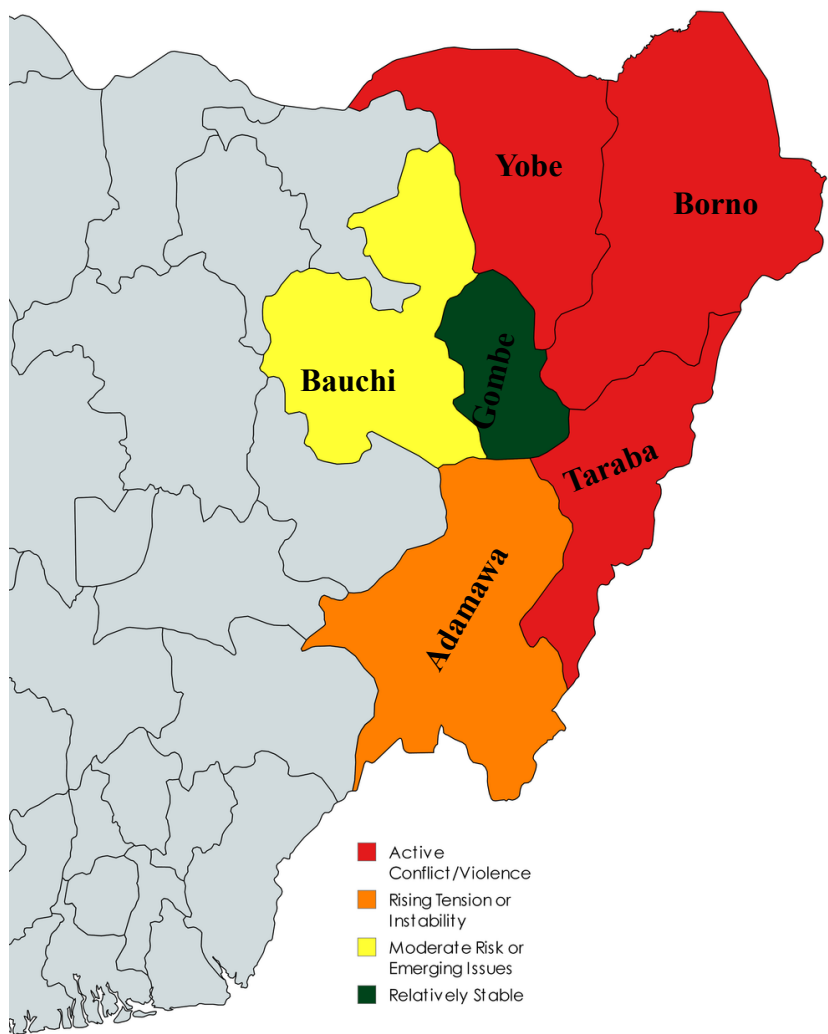
February 2026 witnessed continued insurgent activity across North-East Nigeria, with security dynamics reflecting both persistent militant operations and intensified counter-insurgency responses by Nigerian security forces. Borno State remained the epicenter of violence, as insurgent factions linked to Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS) and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) maintained operational activities through ambushes, improvised explosive device (IED) attacks, raids on rural communities, and attacks on military formations.

Military operations during the month focused heavily on clearing insurgent hideouts within the Sambisa Forest corridor, Mandara Mountains axis, and Lake Chad basin. These operations reportedly resulted in the neutralization of several insurgents, the destruction of logistics infrastructure, and the recovery of arms and ammunition.

Yobe and Adamawa States experienced intermittent insurgent incursions, particularly in communities bordering Borno State. The persistence of IED threats along transportation routes continued to disrupt civilian mobility and humanitarian access.

Taraba State recorded localized tensions linked to farmer-herder disputes and communal grievances, while Bauchi experienced isolated criminal activity, including kidnapping incidents in rural LGAs. Gombe State remained comparatively stable, with minimal conflict-related incidents reported during the month.

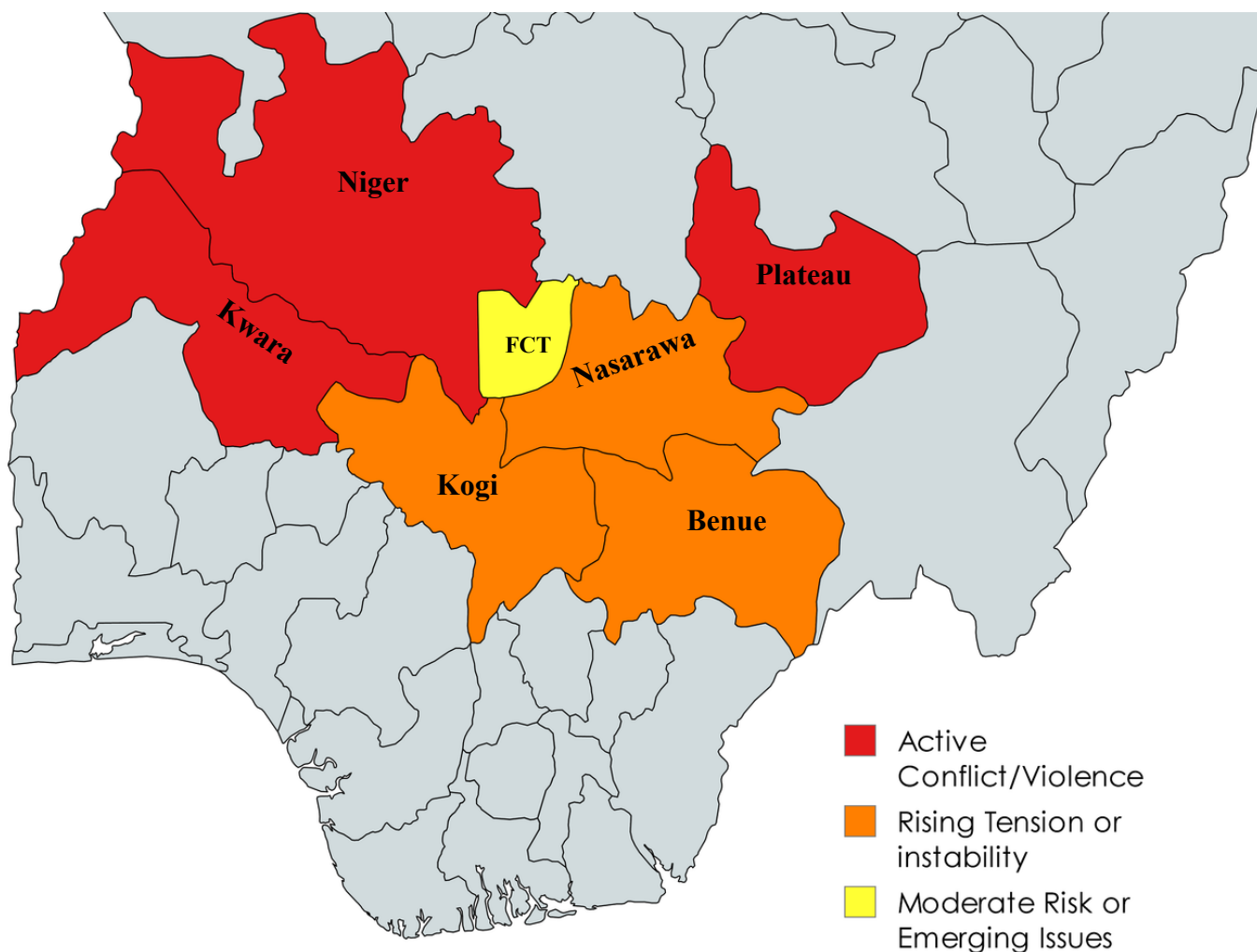
North-East Conflict Hot Spots



NORTH-CENTRAL

The North-Central region of Nigeria is grappling with heightened insecurity and violence, primarily due to extremist groups, communal clashes, and criminal activities. The situation, especially in January and February 2026, presents a mix of severe conflict in some states, rising tensions in others, and emerging threats in others. The region faces a volatile and unpredictable security environment, with some states like Kwara and Plateau in active conflict, while others like Kogi and Niger are seeing rising risks. Though Abuja remains more stable, the broader North-Central zone is under pressure, with significant casualties and ongoing threats from both. Extremist militants attacked the villages of Woro and Nuku in early February 2026, killing good number residents, burning homes, and abducting villagers. This incident was widely reported as one of the deadliest northcentral attacks in Nigeria for the year.

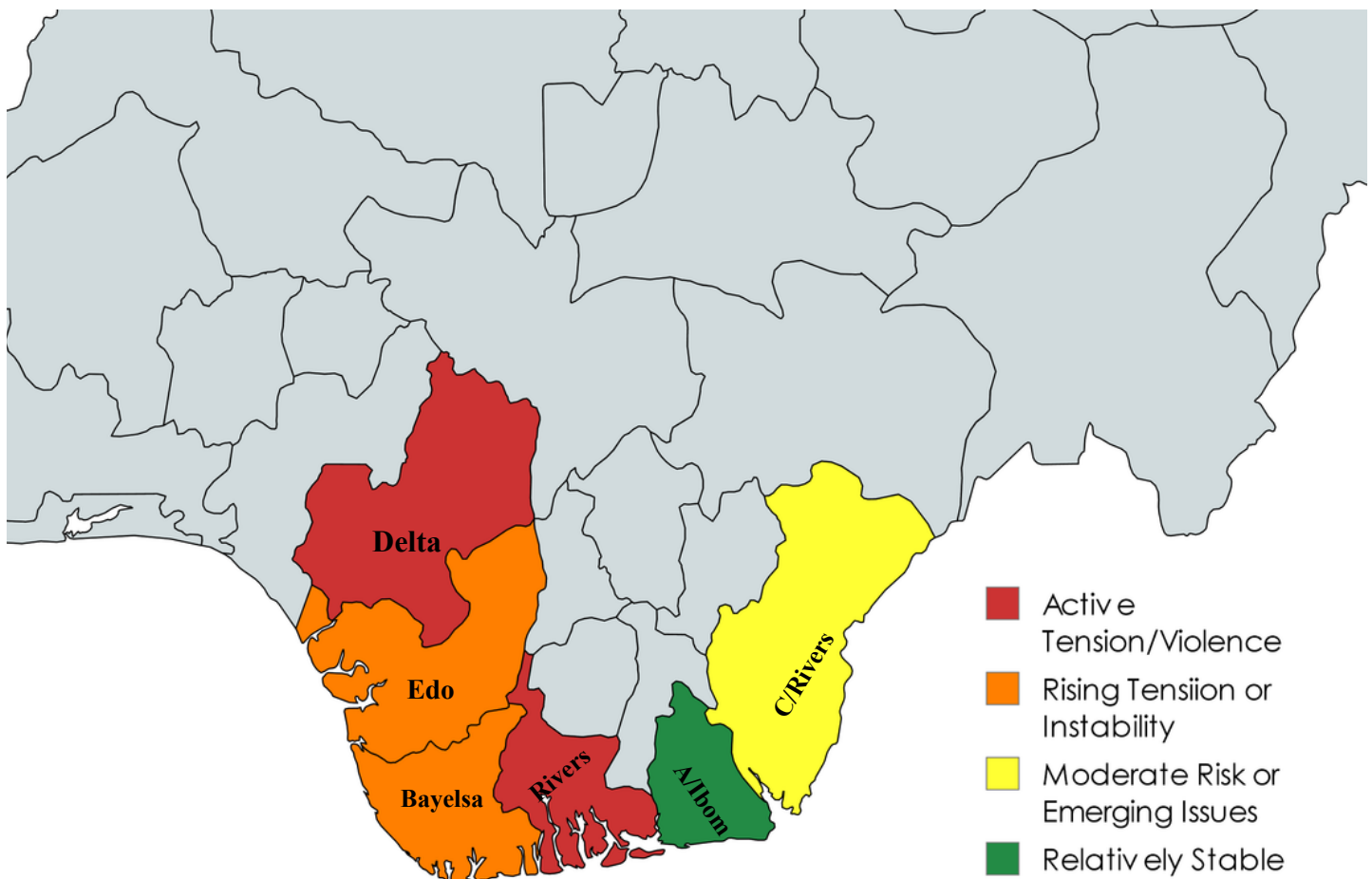
North-Central Conflict Hotspots



SOUTH-SOUTH

February 2026 in South-South Nigeria was marked by persistent criminal insecurity driven by cult violence, kidnapping, organised crime, and domestic-related killings. Several states, particularly Edo, Rivers, and Bayelsa recorded incidents involving targeted killings, abductions, mob justice, and clashes linked to criminal networks. While security agencies conducted intelligence-led operations resulting in arrests and weapons recoveries, these interventions largely disrupted individual incidents rather than addressing the broader drivers of violence. Overall, the month reflected a continuation of decentralized criminal activity and localized insecurity rather than large-scale armed conflict across the region.

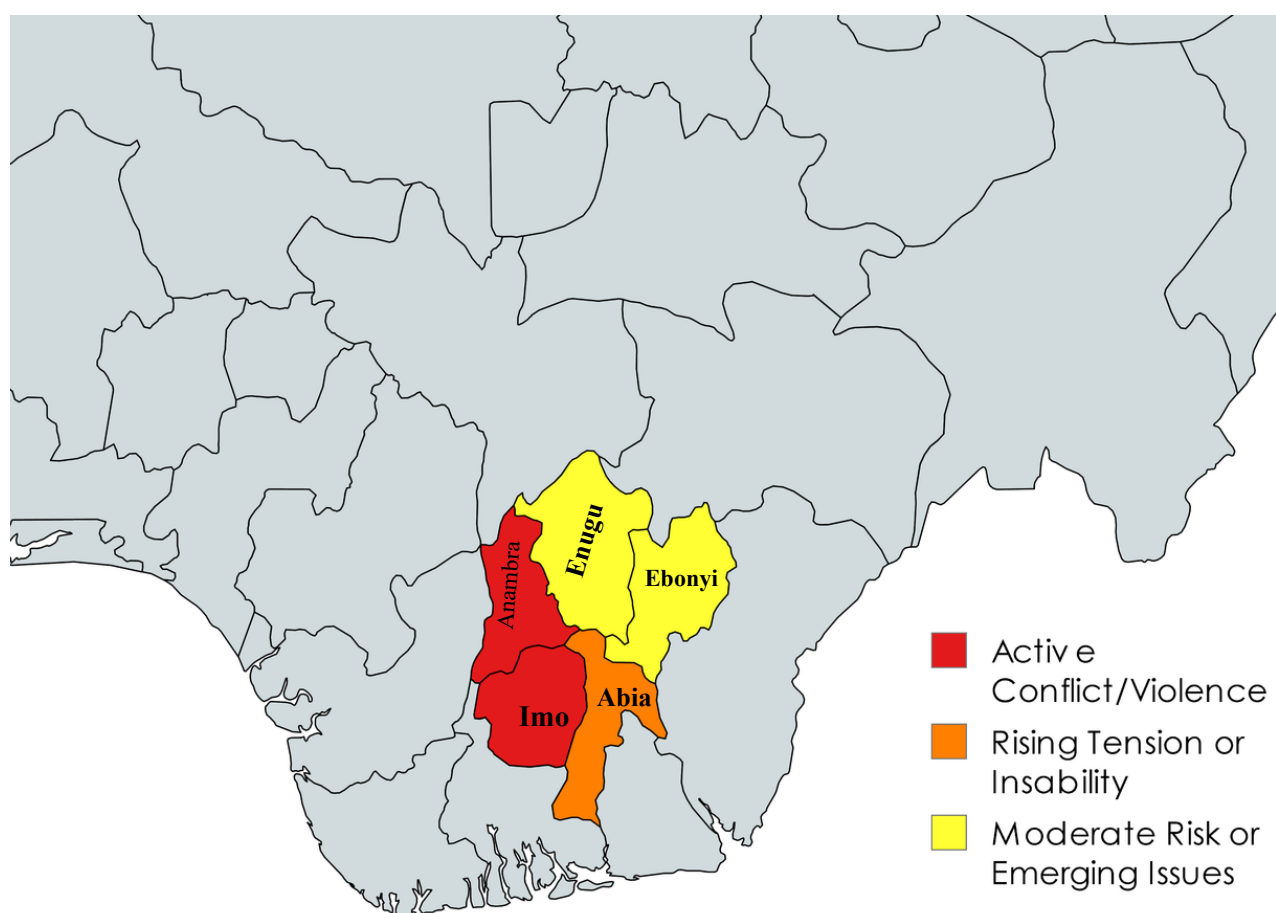
South-South Conflict Hotspots



SOUTH-EAST

The South East Zone experienced a mixed but fragile security environment, with incidents ranging from active armed violence to emerging criminal threats. Imo and Anambra remained the most volatile states, recording armed attacks on travelers and continued militant activity, indicating sustained conflict dynamics in these areas. Abia showed rising instability, driven by localized criminal incidents such as assaults and arrests, reflecting the broader pattern of insecurity affecting parts of the region. Enugu and Ebonyi were categorized under moderate risk, with reported cases of kidnapping and targeted attacks. While these incidents are not widespread, they signal growing security concerns and localized tensions. Overall, the region recorded fatalities, injuries, and abductions, alongside the recovery of arms and ammunition, highlighting the ongoing presence and operations of armed groups across the South East.

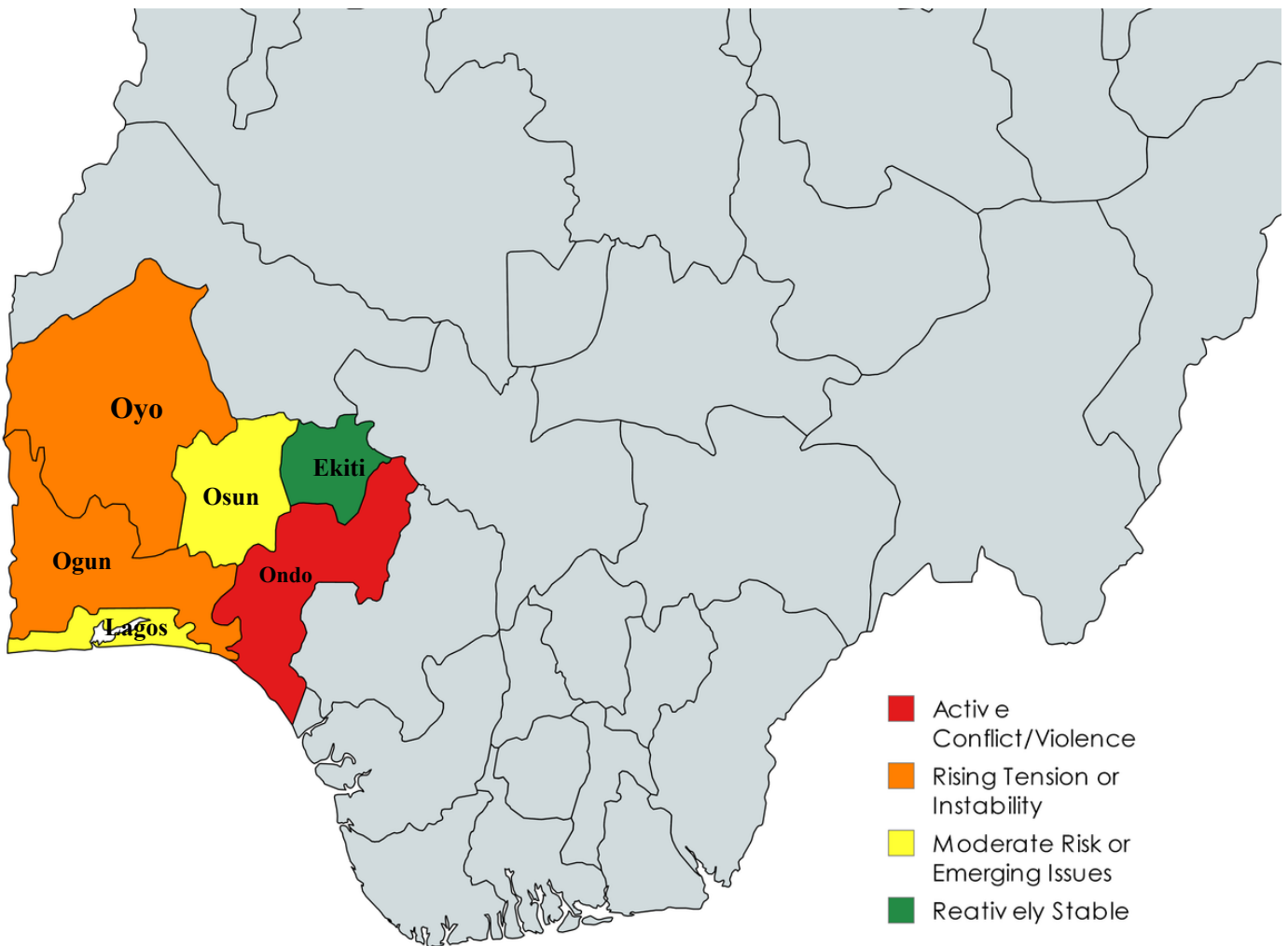
South-East Conflict Hotspots



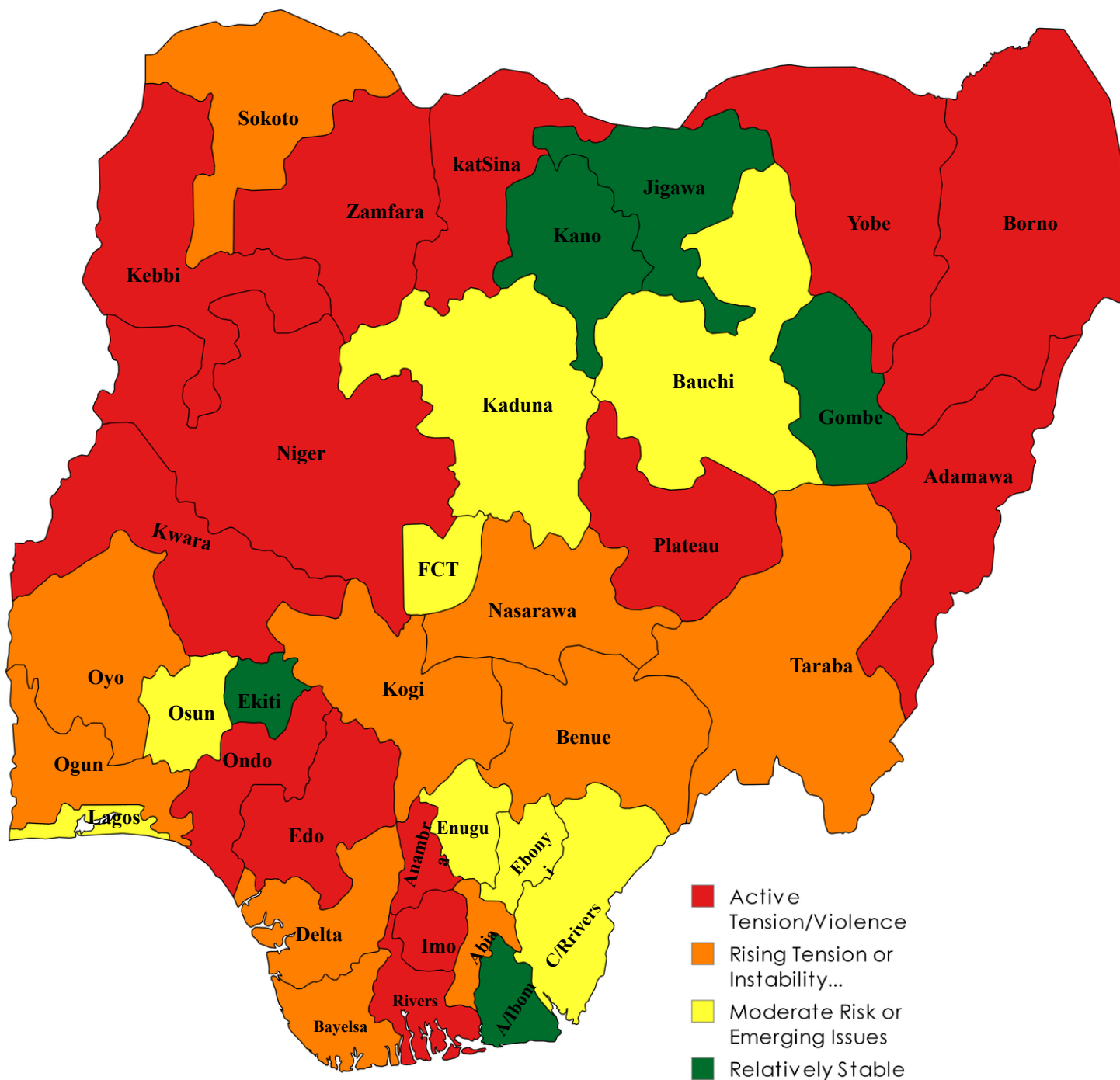
SOUTH-WEST

February 2026 witnessed a mixed security landscape across the South-West region comprising Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Ekiti, and Osun States. The month was characterized largely by criminality-driven violence including kidnapping, armed robbery, cult-related clashes, and isolated communal tensions rather than large-scale organized armed conflict. While no state recorded insurgency-type violence, incidents of kidnapping along interstate corridors, cultism in urban centers, and sporadic communal disputes sustained moderate security concerns. Security agencies remained active throughout the month, with multiple arrests, arms recovery, and disruption of criminal networks recorded across the zone. Overall, the region maintained relative stability compared to high-conflict zones nationally, but persistent criminal violence and localized tensions indicate the need for sustained early warning monitoring and rapid response mechanisms.

South-West Conflict Hotspots



CONFLICT HOTSPOTS



Securities Personnel Casualties

February 2026 report revealed that at least 55 security personnel were killed in Nigeria across the various zones, highlighting persistent nationwide insecurity. Most of those killed in February 2026 were lower ranking personnel. No verified report of senior military officer deaths during the month.

Cross-border Outlook

LAKE-CHAD BASIN AND SAHEL REGION

The security situation across the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel during February 2026 remained fragile and complex, marked by active conflicts, rising tensions, and persistent insurgent activities. The most severe violence occurred in Sudan, where clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) continued to cause significant civilian casualties, displacement, and destruction of infrastructure. In the broader Sahel, jihadist groups linked to Jama'at Nasrul al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) and the Islamic State Sahel Province intensified attacks in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, targeting military positions and civilian communities.

Meanwhile, Chad experienced growing instability due to cross-border spillover from the Sudan conflict and the continued threat of extremist groups in the Lake Chad Basin, including Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province. In Cameroon, the security environment remained tense due to the ongoing Anglophone Crisis; although no major insurgent attacks were reported during the month. However, Senegal and Mauritania maintained relatively stable security conditions despite minor protests and continued vigilance along border areas.



NO DATA FOR GULF OF GUINEA

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Address root causes of conflict through economic empowerment and youth engagement programs across all zones.
- Enhance intelligence gathering, surveillance, and inter-agency coordination in the North-West, North-East and North-Central zones.
- Sustain targeted military and counter-insurgency operations in across all Northern zones.
- Improve border security to curb arms trafficking and cross-border movements across all zones.
- Increase protection of highways and vulnerable communities prone to attacks and kidnappings across all zones.
- Strengthen community policing and local security networks to improve early warning systems across all zones.

CONCLUSION:

The overall security situation in Nigeria during February 2026 remained fragile, with persistent threats from insurgency, banditry, and criminal violence across multiple regions. Despite ongoing security operations and notable recoveries of arms and arrests, the resilience of armed groups and structural challenges continue to undermine stability. A comprehensive approach that combines military efforts with governance reforms, socio-economic development and community engagement is essential to achieving lasting peace. Without addressing both immediate security threats and their underlying drivers, the risk of continued violence and humanitarian crises remains significant.

WEAPONS RECOVERED

ARMS/WEAPONS RECOVERED:

Significant recoveries include:

- AK-47 rifles, machine guns, locally fabricated weapons
- Thousands of cartridges and ammunition
- Explosives (including dynamite and IED components)
- Other items such as cutlasses, machetes, and operational tools
- Additional seizures include fuel, cannabis, and illicit drugs

Note: The figures displayed may not fully reflect the actual scale due to verification challenges and the fluid security environment.