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NATIONAL CONFLICT WATCH

April 2026

NATIONAL CONFLICT WATCH – APRIL 2026

A SUMMARY OF CONFLICT CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS

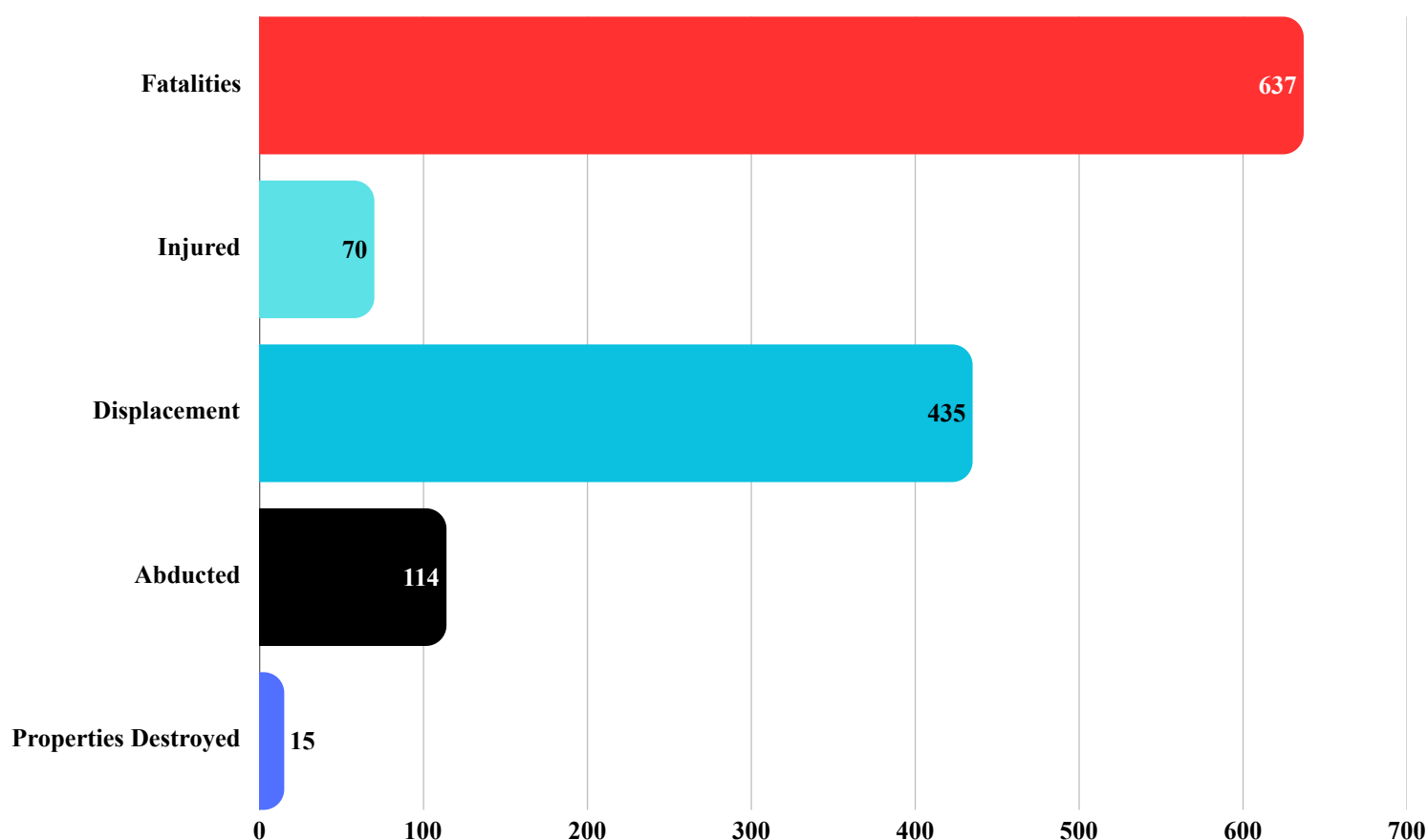
Overview

Nigeria continue to face multidimensional insecurity in April 2026, driven largely by non-state armed groups (NSAGs) operating across all six geopolitical zones and extending into transnational theater such as the Lake Chad Basin. The month was marked by intensified insurgent assaults. April 2026 was highly volatile for North-Central region, with conflict affecting nearly every state in the zone in different ways. Fatalities, abductions, injuries, and heavy losses among security personnel, indicated widespread insecurity and threat patterns across the region. The North-West region remained volatile, with continued incidents of banditry, kidnappings, and armed confrontations. The North-East, characterized by a continuation of high-tempo insurgent operations in Borno and Yobe states, with a dramatic escalation of ISWAP activity into Adamawa State. There are sustained farmer-herder violence in Taraba State.

The month of April 2026, witnessed a notable increase in criminal and violent activities across the South-West geopolitical zone, particularly in Lagos State, which recorded a high volume of law-enforcement engagements and violent incidents. South-South was marked by a mix of high-impact violent incidents and intensified security operations, with conflict dynamics dominated by kidnapping, cultism, communal violence, maritime piracy, and organized criminal activity. Within the South-East region, Imo and Anambra remained the most volatile states in the Southeast due to ongoing militant activities and security operations, while Enugu and Ebonyi were relatively calmer but still faced risks from spillover effect across the region.

At the sub regional level, the Lack Chad Basin and Sahel remained highly volatile, characterized by escalating insurgency, political instability, inter-communal violence and worsening humanitarian conditions. Overall, the situation in April 2026 underscored the strong link between domestic instability and regional security threats, fueled by governance gaps, climate stressors, economic hardship, and the proliferation of armed groups.

APRIL 2026 CONFLICT IMPACT CHART

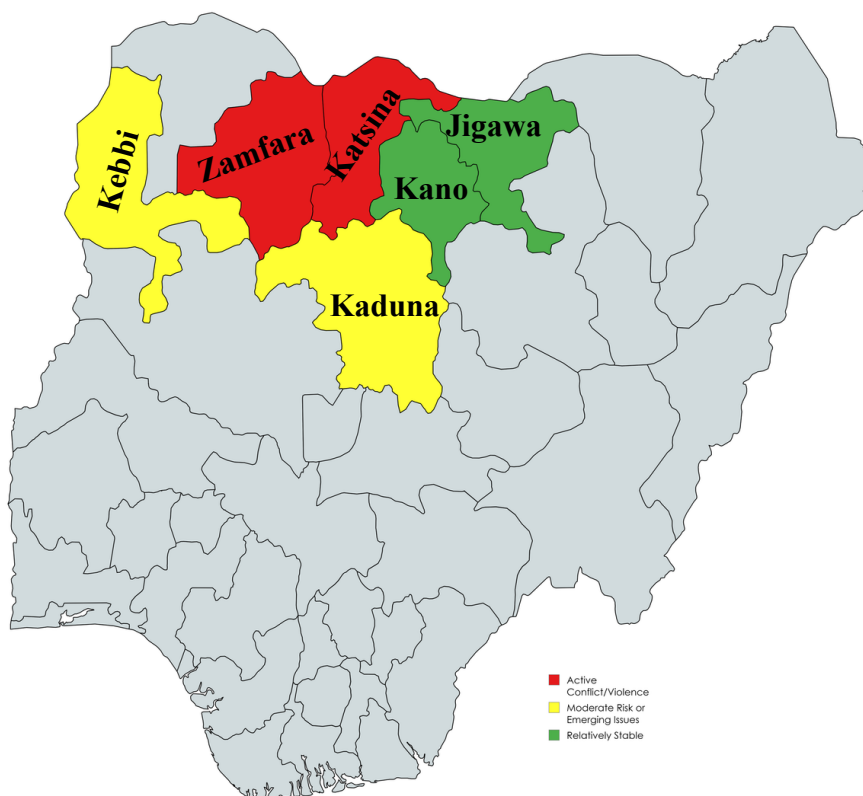


CONFLICT ANALYSIS OF GEOPOLITICAL REGIONS

NORTH-WEST

In April 2026, the North-West geopolitical zone comprising Katsina, Zamfara, Sokoto, Kebbi, Kaduna, Kano, and Jigawa States remained highly volatile, with persistent and complex armed violence largely driven by banditry and rural insecurity. Zamfara State continued to serve as a major hot spot of insecurity, as armed groups carried out sustained attacks on rural communities, imposed illegal levies, and maintained influence over remote territories. Katsina State also remained heavily affected, experiencing repeated attacks on villages and ongoing confrontations between bandits and security forces, resulting in civilian casualties and abductions across several local government areas. In Kaduna State, violence persisted, although at slightly lower levels compared to previous periods. Security incidents were concentrated mainly in rural and peri-urban communities, involving kidnappings and sporadic killings. Kebbi State witnessed troubling developments as attacks targeting security personnel continued to emerge. Meanwhile, Kano State remained comparatively stable, recording only isolated security incidents. Similarly, Jigawa State maintained a relatively calm security environment, with minimal incidents reported, most of which were criminal in nature, while law enforcement agencies largely retained operational control.

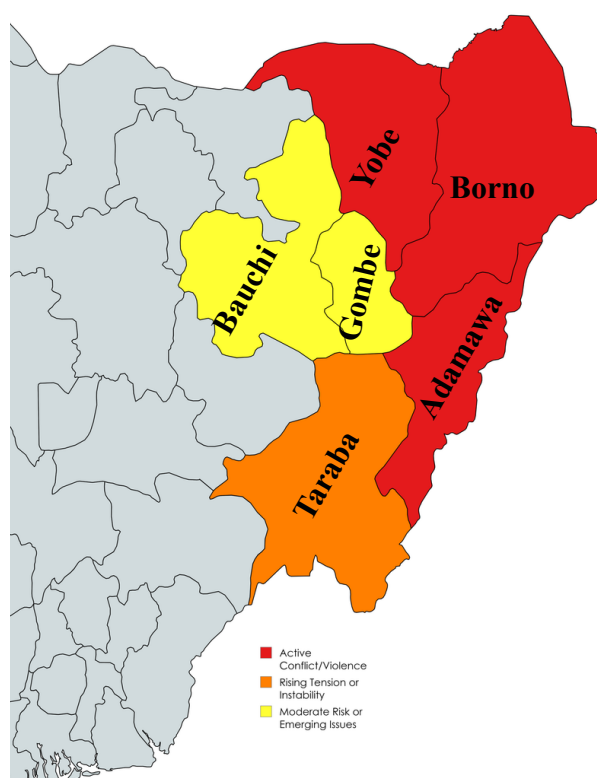
North-West Conflict Hotspots



NORTH-EAST

Nigeria's North-East geopolitical zone comprising Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, and Taraba States remained the country's primary hotspot of insurgency and insecurity, largely driven by the continued operations of Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). On 9 April 2026, ISWAP launched a coordinated night attack on a military base in Benisheikh, Kaga LGA of Borno State, resulting in the death of Brigadier-General Oseni Omoh Braimah, Commander of the 29 Task Force Brigade, alongside three others, including the barracks Imam. Two days later, on 11 April, the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) carried out an airstrike along the Jillli axis of Gubio Local Government Area, Borno State, as part of ongoing counterinsurgency operations. In Taraba State, six people were killed during coordinated ambushes allegedly carried out by Fulani militias in Amadu Chanchanji and Tyo-Jande communities of Takum LGA. Meanwhile, Adamawa State recorded multiple deadly ISWAP attacks. Militants attacked the Christian community of Kubako village, killing 12 persons and burning down a church. In a separate incident in Guyaku/Sangere Mapindi, Gombi LGA, ISWAP fighters stormed a community football gathering, killing at least 29 people. Although Bauchi State did not experience insurgency at the scale of Borno or Adamawa, it maintained an elevated risk profile due to persistent bandit activity in rural LGAs and the operations of cross-border criminal networks, particularly around the Alkaleri axis and surrounding corridors. In contrast, Gombe State remained relatively stable during the reporting period, with fewer major security incidents recorded.

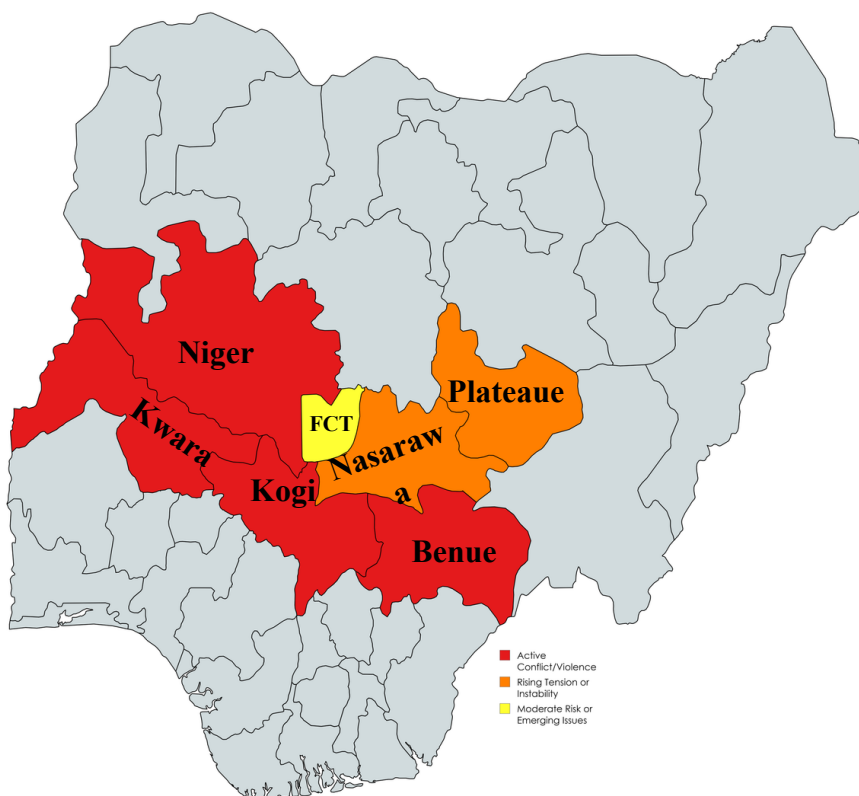
North-East Conflict Hot Spots



NORTH-CENTRAL

In April 2026, the North-Central geopolitical zone of Nigeria comprising Plateau, Benue, Nasarawa, Niger, Kogi, Kwara, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) faced highly volatile security situation characterized by persistent banditry, communal clashes, and politically motivated violence, further underscoring the region's position as one of the most insecure in the country. Among the states, Benue recorded the highest civilian casualty figure, with 60 deaths, alongside 7 injuries and 18 abductions. Kwara State experienced a combination of fatalities and kidnappings, with 9 persons killed and 9 abducted. Plateau State reported 13 deaths and 14 injuries, making it one of the states most affected in terms of physical harm. In Nasarawa State, 11 persons were killed, although no injuries or kidnappings were documented during the reporting period. Notably, Kogi State recorded no deaths or injuries, but after Benue, it had the highest number of kidnappings in the zone, with 29 persons abducted. In contrast, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) experienced relatively lower levels of violence, recording one fatality and no reported injuries or kidnappings.

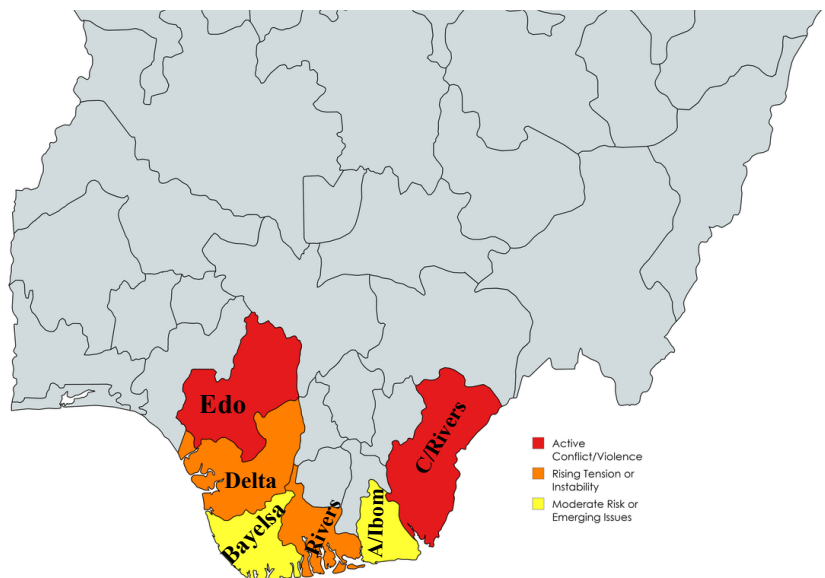
North-Central Conflict Hotspots



SOUTH-SOUTH

The South-South geopolitical zone comprising Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, Akwa Ibom, and Cross River States, experienced significant insecurity driven by kidnapping, cultism, communal clashes, maritime piracy, and organised criminal activities. Among the states, Cross River State recorded the highest fatality rate and the most severe humanitarian impact during April 2026. The Odonget–Esabang communal crisis led to the deaths of 61 persons, 17 injuries, and the displacement of about 435 households, coupled with destruction of homes and farmlands. Edo State remained a major kidnapping hotspots in the region, particularly along highways and forest corridors. A notable example was the ambush of a GUO transport bus, which resulted in one death and the abduction of approximately 14 passengers, underscoring the continued targeting of public transportation systems by criminal groups. In Rivers State, insecurity was largely linked to cult-related violence and armed abductions. This included the killing of a civilian during an intra-cult clash in Port Harcourt and the abduction of a vigilante leader following a gun duel. Delta State experienced a mix of security challenges, including kidnapping, cultism, arms proliferation, and a reported case of extrajudicial killing involving a police officer. Despite these incidents, the overall situation remained relatively contained. Although Akwa Ibom State recorded fewer incidents, it remained strategically significant due to security developments such as the arrest of a notorious kidnapping kingpin and the prevention of a planned bomb attack on a custodial centre. Meanwhile, Bayelsa State, based on prevailing regional trends, continued to face underlying risks associated with drug trafficking networks and cult-related activities, consistent with patterns observed in previous months.

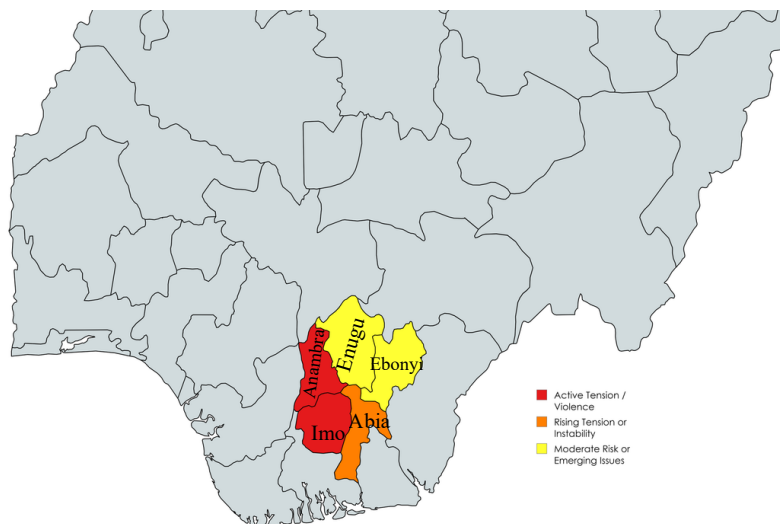
South-South Conflict Hotspots



SOUTH-EAST

The South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria, comprising Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, and Imo States, experienced persistent insecurity driven by activities of unknown gunmen, IPOB/ESN operatives, kidnappings, armed robbery, communal clashes, and other criminal incidents. Among the states, Imo and Anambra remain the major hotspots of violent activity in the region, accounting for a significant proportion of fatalities linked to armed group operations and violent enforcement activities. In Imo State, the Nigerian Police dismantled a suspected IPOB/ESN enclave in Aboh Mbaise LGA, recovering heavy ammunition, surveillance drones, and other weapons. In Anambra State, security operations intensified as troops encountered multiple improvised explosive device (IED) explosions during offensive operations in Ihiala LGA. Security forces also neutralized a suspected IPOB/ESN member and recovered arms in Orumba North LGA. In addition, coordinated police raids led to the rescue of kidnapped victims and the arrest of suspected kidnappers, while increased deployments of security personnel to schools and public spaces reflected heightened security concerns. Although relatively less volatile, Ebonyi State continues to experience the indirect effects of regional insecurity, including fears of armed group activities and economic disruptions arising from instability across the Southeast. Similarly, Enugu State remains vulnerable to spillover threats, particularly concerns relating to kidnapping and the spread of criminal activities within the region. Meanwhile, Abia State continues to be affected by broader Southeast insecurity dynamics, including IPOB/ESN-related tensions, kidnapping threats, and disruptions associated with sit-at-home directives.

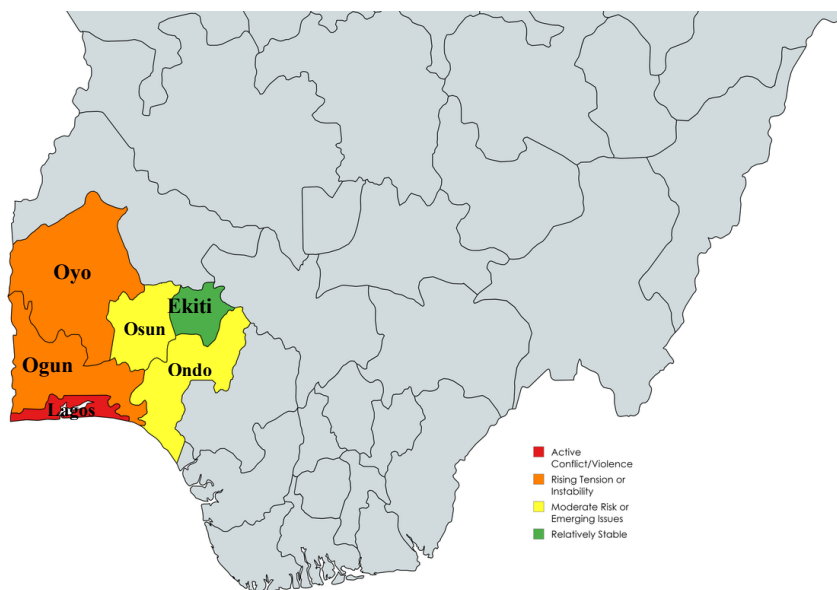
South-East Conflict Hotspots



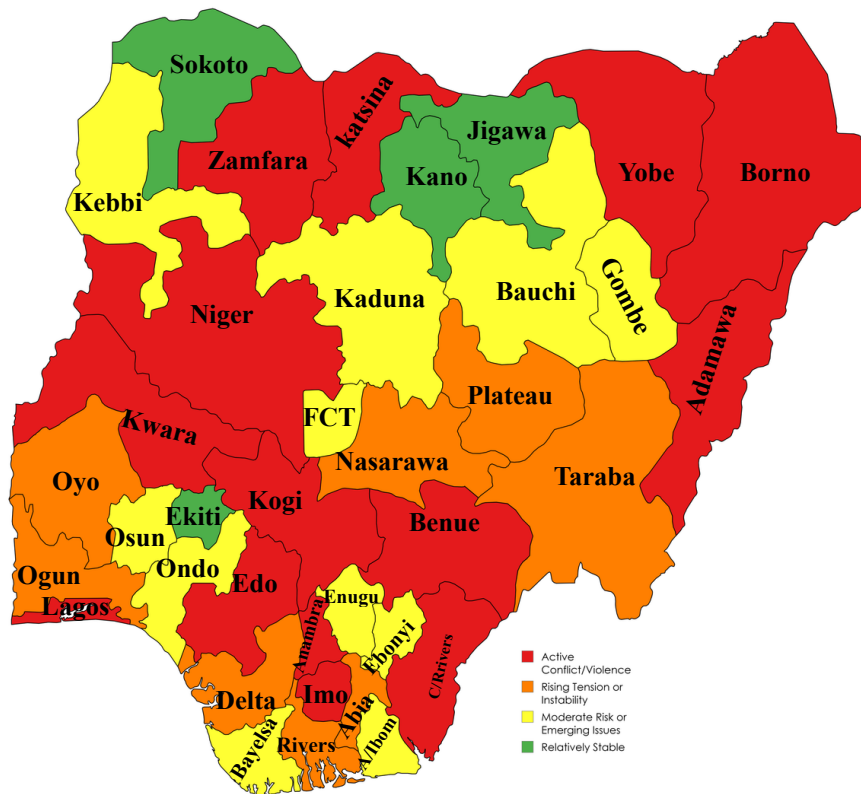
SOUTH-WEST

The South-West geopolitical zone comprising Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, and Ekiti States, remained largely affected by criminality-driven insecurity in April 2026. The security landscape was characterized by armed robbery, targeted killings, gang-related violence, and intensified law enforcement operations. Compared to March, the month of April recorded a noticeable increase in fatalities and arrests, reflecting both rising criminal activities and strengthened security interventions across the region. In Lagos State, a major security operation resulted in the arrest of 47 suspects and the recovery of 14 firearms, alongside several other coordinated crackdowns targeting criminal networks. Oyo State experienced increasing criminal incidents, including violent altercations and multiple arrests linked to criminal activities. Ogun State recorded moderate but persistent criminal activity, particularly involving arrests and weapons-related incidents. In Ondo State, isolated cases of violent attacks and arrests were reported during the period. Meanwhile, Osun State remained relatively calm, with only limited security incidents documented. Similarly, Ekiti State maintained a relatively stable security environment, recording minimal incidents and no significant escalation of violence throughout April 2026.

South-West Conflict Hotspots



CONFLICT HOTSPOTS



Securities Personnel Casualties

In April 2026, the North-Central region recorded the deaths of 49 security personnel, reflecting the intensity of ongoing security challenges across the zone. One of the most significant incidents occurred on 9 April 2026, when ISWAP fighters carried out a coordinated night attack on a military base in Benisheikh, Kaga LGA of Borno State. The attack claimed the life of Brigadier-General Oseni Omoh Braimah, Commander of the 29 Task Force Brigade under Operation HADIN KAI, alongside other personnel. The North-West region recorded the killing of four security personnel during the same reporting period.

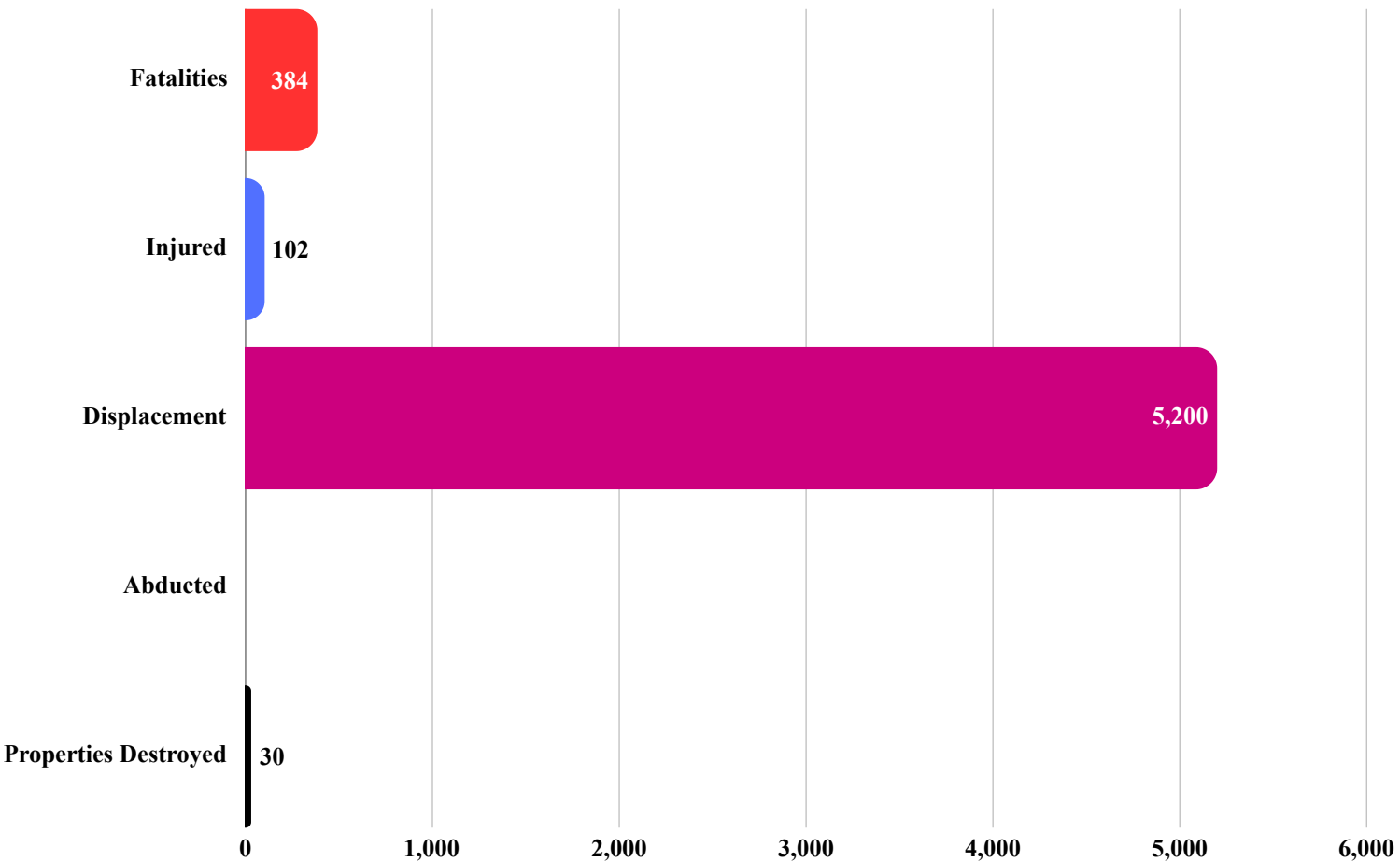
Cross-border Outlook

LAKE-CHAD BASIN AND SAHEL REGION

The security situation across the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel remained deeply unstable in April 2026, with increasing insurgency, political tensions, communal violence, and worsening humanitarian conditions across several countries in the region. Sudan recorded the highest level of violence as clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) intensified, leading to significant civilian casualties and large-scale displacement. Mali and Chad also experienced rising insecurity driven by jihadist attacks, communal conflicts, and political unrest, while Niger and Cameroon continued to struggle with persistent extremist threats and separatist activities. Although countries such as Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and Senegal remained relatively more stable, fears of spillover from the broader Sahel crisis continued to grow. One of the deadliest incidents occurred on 15 April 2026, when an airstrike on the town of Umm Dukhun in Central Darfur, Sudan killed and injured more than 44 people, including women and children.

On 25 April 2026, Mali’s Defence Minister, Sadio Camara, was reportedly killed during an attack on his residence near Bamako amid ongoing fighting between government forces and Tuareg rebels supported by jihadist groups. In Chad, at least 42 people were killed in the eastern part of the country after a dispute between two families over access to water escalated into violent reprisal attacks, according to Deputy Prime Minister Limane Mahamat. Overall, the region recorded at least 384 deaths and 102 injuries during the month, while more than 5.2 million people remained displaced, underscoring the scale of the humanitarian and security crisis facing the Lake Chad Basin and Sahel region.

APRIL 2026 CONFLICT IMPACT CHART





NO DATA FOR GULF OF GUINEA

CONCLUSION:

April 2026 highlighted a complex security environment across Nigeria, with different regions facing distinct and inter-related security challenges. National Conflict Watch recorded major coordinated offensives during the period. Insecurity remained deeply rooted due to factors such as the presence of criminal hideouts in forested areas, porous borders, thriving kidnapping-for-ransom networks, weak governance structures, and growing socio-economic hardships. While counter insurgency by security operations led to several arrests and the recovery of weapons, these efforts alone may not be sufficient to achieve lasting peace and stability. Addressing the country's security challenges will require a more comprehensive approach that combines effective civil military cooperation, reforms within the justice sector, economic support and resilience programmes for vulnerable communities, and stronger regional diplomatic collaboration. Without these measures, Nigeria is likely to continue experiencing recurring and widespread insecurity throughout 2026.

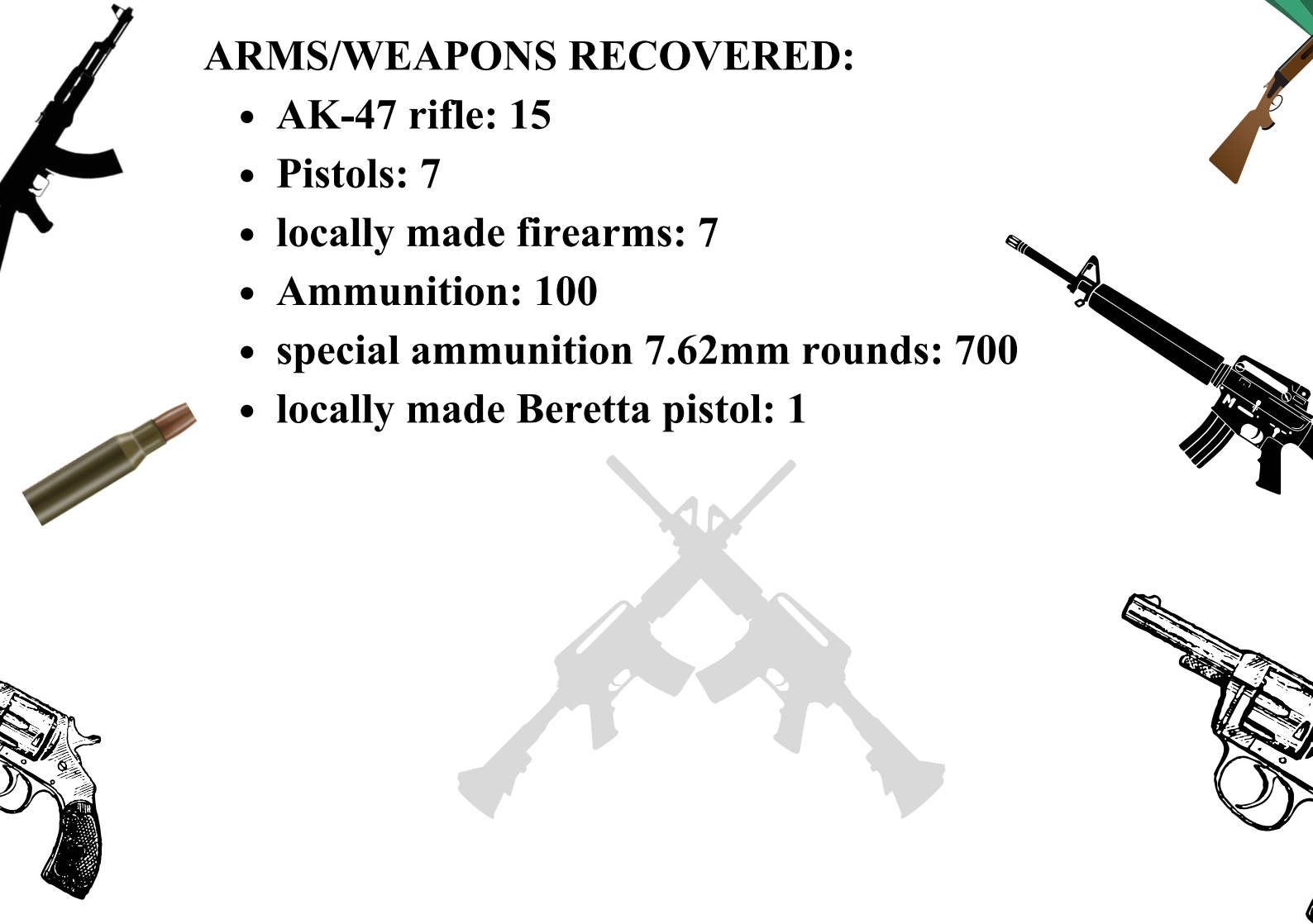
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Strengthen arms control and border management by tightening small arms interdiction, enhancing joint patrols and biometric checks, and conducting public information campaigns to counter violent extremism and promote demobilization awareness.
2. Establish rapid response and reinforcement mechanisms by deploying well-equipped units capable of immediate action, supported by improved air assets (helicopters and UAVs) for surveillance, evacuation, and quick reinforcement of vulnerable locations. At the same time, leverage on technology-driven solutions by expanding the use of drones, thermal imaging, and AI-based threat detection systems, alongside secure communication networks to prevent interception and enhance operational efficiency.
3. Strengthen early warning systems for communal conflicts, particularly land disputes in rural areas
4. Enhance highway and maritime corridor security, including surveillance and patrols
5. Restore and strengthen regional security cooperation in the Lake Chad Basin and Sahel by revitalizing MNJTF operations, enhancing intelligence sharing, and supporting partner states with logistics, surveillance, and training for effective border security and civilian protection.

WEAPONS RECOVERED

ARMS/WEAPONS RECOVERED:

- **AK-47 rifle: 15**
- **Pistols: 7**
- **locally made firearms: 7**
- **Ammunition: 100**
- **special ammunition 7.62mm rounds: 700**
- **locally made Beretta pistol: 1**



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