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COI QUERY RESPONSE – Nigeria

Major political, security and human rights developments

This COI query response provides key developments covering the period from 1 September to 31 December 2025. It must be noted that the reference period for data on security incidents and fatalities at country and state level covers instead the period from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025.

This COI query response is intended to be read alongside the 2025 EUAA COI Nigeria Security Situation and Nigeria Country Focus reports for full context.

1. Political situation

President Tinubu and his administration have been facing increased public discontent over the economy, and over deteriorating security situation.[1]

On 18 October 2025, 16 military officers (including soldiers and high-ranking officers) were arrested for alleged 'indiscipline and breach of service regulations'.[2] Several sources noted that the arrests might be linked to an attempted coup plot against President Tinubu. The Nigerian government promptly dismissed these reports as false.[3] By late October, about 40 military officers had been arrested.[4]

Following nationwide strikes by various workers in previous months, in October 2025, the education sector went on strike over - among other reasons - unpaid salaries and unresolved agreements. On 1 November, the Nigerian Association of Resident Doctors (NARD) began a 29-day nationwide strike, which limited public hospitals to emergency services, leaving many patients without treatment.[5] Key demands behind the strike included unpaid salary arrears and better working conditions.[6]

In recent months, the Nigerian government has also faced mounting pressure from the US administration,[7] which culminated on 26 December with US airstrikes in the North-West of the

[1] Channels TV, UPDATED: NLC Protests Over Rising Insecurity In Nigeria, 17 December 2025, url; BBC, Nigeria: Was there an alleged coup plot?, 5 November 2025, minutes 00:00 – 10:58, url; ICIR, 2025 in review: major events that defined Tinubu's first term, 23 December 2025, url
[2] Premium Times, 16 Nigerian military officers under investigation – DHQ, 4 October 2025, url
[3] BBC, Nigeria : Was there an alleged coup plot?, 5 November 2025, url; International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch database, Nigeria, October 2025, url; DW, Nigeria denies officers arrested over coup plot, 18 November 2025, url; Al Jazeera, Nigeria replaces top security officials days after coup plot denial, 24 October 2025, url
[4] Vanguard, Falana demands release or trial of detained military officers, 12 January 2025, url
[5] ICIR, 2025 in review: major events that defined Tinubu's first term, 23 December 2025, url
[6] AA, Patients stranded across Nigeria as doctors' strike enters 2nd week, 14 November 2025, url
[7] International Crisis Group, Why is President Trump Threatening a Humanitarian Intervention in Nigeria?, 7 November 2025, url

country[8] (see 2. Security situation) – in what the Nigeria government described as a 'joint operation'.[9] The US have been pressing the Nigerian authorities over alleged religious freedom violations,[10] accusing the government to fail to take actions against what the US administration has labelled an 'existential threat' to Christians in the country.[11] The Nigerian government dismissed allegation of religious persecution of Christians as unfounded.[12] In relation to the December US airstrikes, Nigerian officials stated that the 'anti-terrorist operation' had nothing to do with a particular religion.[13] Pro-Biafra separatist lobby networks, were reported to promote[14] and sustain US campaign against alleged persecution of Christians in Nigeria.[15] Various sources have questioned the US framing of persecution of Christians in Nigeria, noting that the country's security crisis impacts both Christians and Muslims.[16]

1.1. Judicial proceedings against armed groups

Following a decade-long case, in November 2025, Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)'s leader Nnamdi Kanu was sentenced to life imprisonment for terrorism, treason and other charges.[17] In September, pro-Biafran leader, Simon Ekpa, was sentenced by a Finnish court to six years in prison for terrorism-related offences, including equipping armed groups with weapons and explosives through his network. Nigerian government called for Ekpa's extradition.[18] Self-proclaimed 'prime minister' of the Biafra Republic Government-in-Exile (BRGIE),[19] Simon Ekpa is also the founder of the Biafra Liberation Army (BLA), an armed group reportedly linked to violent attacks in the South-East, including kidnappings, killings, rape, and trafficking in human beings.[20] For more details on IPOB and other pro-Biafran separatist groups, see 1.1. Main Actors in EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Security Situation November 2025 and 2.9.1. Treatment

[8] BBC, US launches strikes against Islamic State in Nigeria, 27 December 2025, url; Global Initiative, Legitimizing Lakurawa, 9 January 2026, url
[9] BBC, US launches strikes against Islamic State in Nigeria, 27 December 2025, url; Global Initiative, Legitimizing Lakurawa, 9 January 2026, url
[10] ICIR, 2025 in review: major events that defined Tinubu's first term, 23 December 2025, url
[11] DW, US strikes 'terrorist targets' in Nigeria, 26 December 2025, url
[12] ICIR, 2025 in review: major events that defined Tinubu's first term, 23 December 2025, url
[13] DW, US strikes 'terrorist targets' in Nigeria, 26 December 2025, url
[14] Guardian, 'Biafra lobby network fuelling Christian Genocide campaign in U.S.', 19 November 2025, url; International Crisis Group, Why is President Trump Threatening a Humanitarian Intervention in Nigeria?, 7 November 2025, url; BBC, The kidnap gangs, jihadists and separatists wreaking havoc in Nigeria, 28 November 2025, url
[15] Daily Post, Alleged Genocide: Ekpa's BRGIE vows to sustain campaign against persecution of Nigerian Christians, 13 January 2026, url
[16] International Crisis Group, Why is President Trump Threatening a Humanitarian Intervention in Nigeria?, 7 November 2025, url; BBC, Are Christians being persecuted in Nigeria as Trump claims?, 26 December 2025, url; DW, US strikes 'terrorist targets' in Nigeria, 26 December 2025, url; Global Initiative, Legitimizing Lakurawa, 9 January 2026, url
[17] BBC, Nigerian separatist leader sentenced to life for terrorism, 20 November 2025, url
[18] BBC, Nigeria secessionist activist jailed for terrorism in Finland, 1 September 2025, url
[19] Sahara Reporters, Nnamdi Kanu's Self-professed Disciple, Simon Ekpa Declares Full Biafran Government In Exile, Says No Going Back On Separation From Nigeria, 2 August 2022, url
[20] Daily Trust, Ekpa in jail, opportunity for peace, 2 September 2025, url

by authorities of pro-Biafran separatists and perceived pro-Biafran supporters in EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Country Focus, November 2025.)

A trial against two top leaders of Al-Qaeda-affiliated Ansaru group[21] was set to start in January 2026.[22] The Nigerian government announced the arrest of Mahmud Muhammad Usman (also known as Abu Bara'a/Abbas/Mukhtar) and of Mahmud al Nigeri (known as Mallam Mahmuda) - respectively the leader and deputy leader of the group - in August 2025.[23] Ansaru has been linked to several high-profile attacks and kidnappings across Nigeria.[24] The charges against the defendants include terrorism, kidnapping, illegal mining, receiving war tactics training from a 'terrorist' group in Mali.[25] Deputy leader of Ansaru, Mahmud al Nigeri (known as Mallam Mahmuda), is also associated with newly emerging group Mahmuda network in North-Central Nigeria[26] - a group responsible for attacks in rural villages in Kwara and Niger states.[27]

2. Security situation

During the reference period, Nigeria experienced a sharp intensification of kidnapping-for-ransom[28] and mass school abductions[29] across various regions,[30] especially in the North-Central and North-West zones,[31] with dozens of civilians kidnapped or killed.[32] Insurgent, bandit and communal violence continued at high level in northern states[33] (for more details see 2.1. Main security developments per geopolitical zone). Estimates of abductions by various armed groups differ, and often significantly underestimate the true scale of the issue.[34] In November only, armed groups kidnapped over 500 people across several states.[35] The most prominent incident during the reporting period was the mass abduction of more than 300 students and 12 staff from the St. Mary's Catholic School in Papiri, Niger State, on 21

[21] Premium Times, UPDATED: Two Ansaru terrorism suspects arraigned, one jailed 15 years after pleading guilty to illegal mining, 11 September 2025, url
[22] Guardian, Court fixes January 15 for trial of Ansaru terror suspects, 19 November 2025, url
[23] Nigeria, NCTC, Counter-Terrorism: Nigeria captures top leaders of Ansaru terrorist group, 18 August 2025, url
[24] Guardian, Court fixes January 15 for trial of Ansaru terror suspects, 19 November 2025, url
[25] Premium Times, UPDATED: Two Ansaru terrorism suspects arraigned, one jailed 15 years after pleading guilty to illegal mining, 11 September 2025, url
[26] HumAngle, What Arrests of Ansaru's Top Leaders Mean for Nigeria's Security, 20 August 2025, url
[27] ADF, Terror Group Mahmuda Emerges in North-Central Nigeria, Wreaks Havoc, 10 June 2025 url
[28] Punch, Mass abductions return, 145 missing in four days, 18 November 2025, url; UN News, Nigeria: Hundreds abducted in the north as insurgent attacks rise, 25 November 2025, url
[29] HRW, Nigeria: Renewed Spate of School Kidnappings, 25 November 2025, url
[30] Reuter, In Nigeria, anguish turns to anger for parents of kidnapped children, 5 December 2025, url
[31] International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch database, Nigeria, September, October, November, December 2025, url
[32] Reuters, Nigeria's Tinubu declares security emergency, orders mass recruitment of police and army, 26 November 2025, url
[33] AP, Parents of abducted children plead with the Nigerian government for news of rescue, 28 November, url; Reuters, In Nigeria, anguish turns to anger for parents of kidnapped children, 5 December 2025, url
[34] AI, Nigeria: Generation of children at risk of missing out on education in the north, 25 November 2025, url
[35] International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch database, Nigeria, November 2025, url

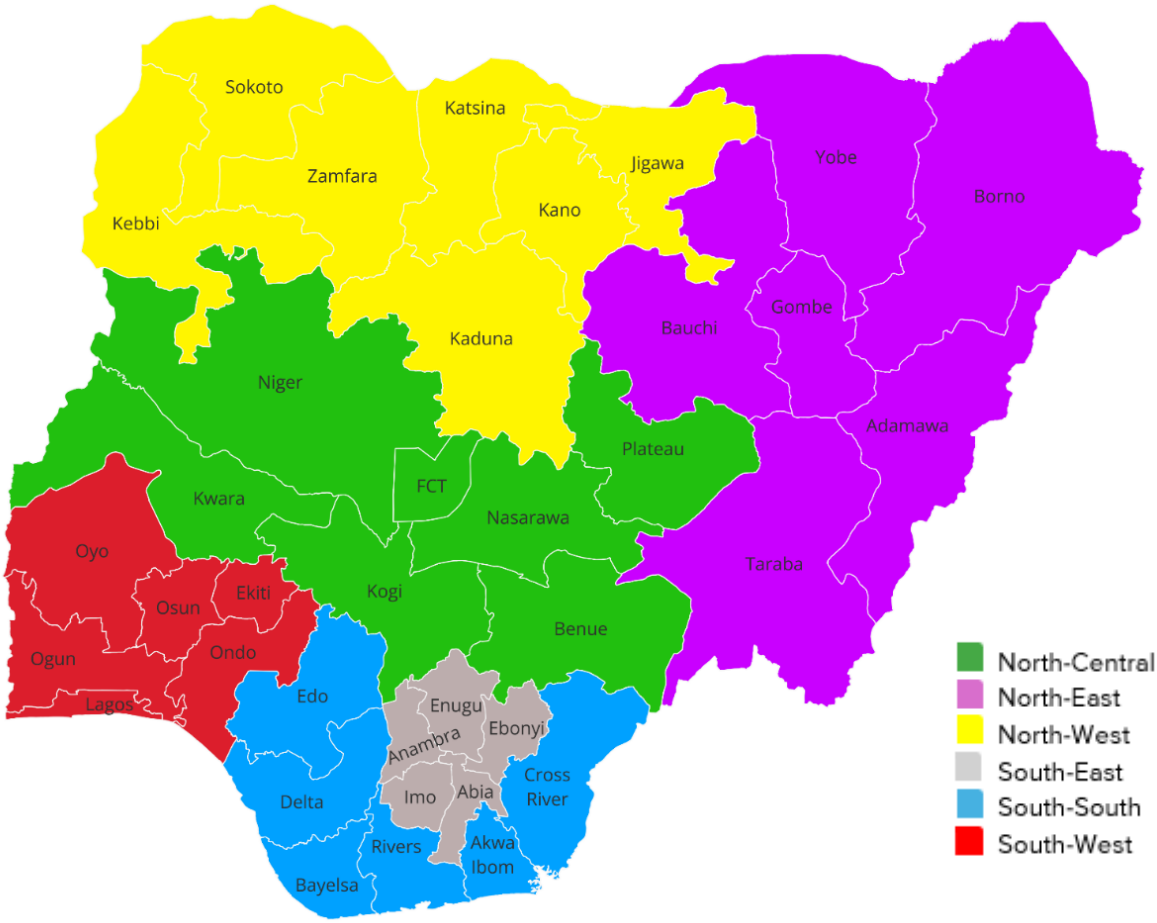
November. Some of these children were freed within few days,[36] and, at the end of December, Nigerian authorities stated that all remaining students and teachers had been released.[37]

In response to the attacks and mounting US pressure,[38] on 26 November, President Tinubu declared a nationwide security emergency.[39] He ordered the recruitment of 20 000 additional police officers, deployment of newly recruited forest guards to target armed groups in forests, and urged parliament to review laws to allow states to establish their own police forces.[40] The President also directed the use of National Youth Service Corps camps for police training and redeployment of officers from VIP duties to conflict zones.[41]

As a result of mass abductions of students by Islamist groups and criminal gangs,[42] at the end of November 2025, several schools had been indefinitely shut down, either partially or completely in eleven northern states.[43] According to Amnesty International, 20 468 schools were indefinitely closed across seven states, namely Bauchi, Benue, Kwara, Plateau, Niger, Benue, Yobe and Katsina.[44]

[36] Reuters, More than 300 taken from Nigeria school in one of worst mass abductions, 22 November 2025, url; Reuters, Last group of freed Nigerian schoolchildren to be reunited with their families, 22 December 2025, url
[37] BBC, All pupils kidnapped from Nigeria Catholic school now free – officials, 22 December 2025, url
[38] International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch database, Nigeria, November 2025, url
[39] Reuters, Nigeria's Tinubu declares security emergency, orders mass recruitment of police and army, 27 November 2025, url
[40] International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch database, Nigeria, November 2025, url
[41] Reuters, Nigeria's Tinubu declares security emergency, orders mass recruitment of police and army, 26 November 2025, url
[42] Reuters, Nigeria reopens some schools in the north, defying threats of kidnap, 12 January 2026, url
[43] International Crisis Group, Schools Shut Down across Northern Nigeria in Wake of Mass Abductions, 28 November 2025, url; UN News, Nigeria: Schools should be 'sanctuaries not targets' says deputy UN chief following latest mass abduction, 22 November 2025, url
[44] AI, Nigeria: Generation of children at risk of missing out on education in the north, 25 November 2025, url

2.1. Main security developments per geopolitical zone



Map 1. EUAA visualisation based on publicly available information by Federal Government of Nigeria[45] and publicly available data on administrative boundaries sourced from the Office for the Surveyor General of the Federation of Nigeria (OSGOF), Ehealth, United Nations Cartographic Section (UNCS) on UN OCHA, The Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX).[46] The visualisation has been generated using QGIS 3.44[47]

[45] Nigeria, About Nigeria, States, n.d., url
[46] OSGOF, UNCS, UN OCHA, HDX, n.d., latest modified 4 April 2023, url
[47] QGIS 3.44, n.d., url

North-Central - Security situation continued to deteriorate during the reference period due to attacks by armed groups, insurgents, criminal gangs,[48] and herder-farmer violence.[49] In Niger state, the majority of schools were closed for security reasons following incidents of mass abductions.[50]

Boko Haram is reported to be expanding beyond the Lake Chad region into North-Central Nigeria, collaborating with bandits and with the emerging Lakurawa group[51] (for more details on Lakurawa, see EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Security Situation November 2025). Nasarawa State governor warned that a Boko Haram faction, known as Wulowulo, had established a presence in Kwara State. Meanwhile, Sahel-based al-Qaeda–affiliated Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) claimed its first attack in Nigeria in late October, reporting the killing of a soldier in Kwara State.[52]

Some illustrative examples of security incidents in the North-Central during the reference period include:

- In September, in two separate incidents in Kwara State, armed groups killed five people and abducted ten in Edu, Ifelodun, and Patigi areas,[53] and killed at least 12 forest guards in Oke-Ode town.[54]
- On 19 September, in Benue State, armed groups killed at least 11 police officers in Katsina-Ala area,[55] and at least six people in two villages near Makurdi on 20 September.[56]
- On 10 October, armed groups stormed Nindama village (Kokona, Nasarawa State), killing at least nine people, leaving six others missing; authorities linked the attack to a land dispute.[57]
- On 18 November, armed groups abducted 38 worshippers at a church in Eruku town (Kwara State).[58]
- On 21 November, armed groups abducted over 300 students and 12 staff from St. Mary's Catholic School in Papiri (Niger State).[59]
- On 26 November, at least 20 farmers were abducted in Shiroro area (Niger State).[60]

[48] International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch database, Nigeria, September, October, November, December 2025, url
[49] PBS, 12 forest guards killed by gunmen in northcentral Nigeria, 29 September 2025, url
[50] Reuters, Nigeria reopens some schools in the north, defying threats of kidnap, 12 January 2026, url
[51] Conversation (The), Boko Haram on the rise again in Nigeria: how it's survived and how to weaken it, 6 October 2025, url
[52] International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch database, Nigeria, October 2025, url
[53] Punch, Tears as gunmen kill father of five, spread terror in Kwara, 6 September 2025, url
[54] Premium Times, Bandits kill 12 forest guards in Kwara, 28 September 2025, url
[55] Cable, Police recover seven more bodies of officers killed in Benue attack, 22 September 2025, url
[56] International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch database, Nigeria, September 2025, url
[57] Vanguard, Gunmen invade Nasarawa communities kill nine, six missing in night attack, 12 October 2025, url
[58] Reuters, Gunmen attack church in Nigeria, killing two and kidnapping others, 19 November 2025, url
[59] Reuters, More than 300 taken from Nigeria school in one of worst mass abductions, 22 November 2025, url; Reuters, Last group of freed Nigerian schoolchildren to be reunited with their families, 22 December 2025, url
[60] TVC News, 20 Farmers Reportedly Kidnapped As Fresh Attack Hits Niger, 27 November 2025, url

- On 14 December, armed men on motorcycles attacked Ayetoro-Kiri community (Kabba/Bunu, Kogi State), abducting at least 30 residents, mostly children and elderly worshippers; attackers raided homes and churches before fleeing into nearby forests.[61]
- On 15 December, in Kwara State, armed groups abducted five road construction workers in Isin area.[62]
- On 15 and on 23 December, in Benue State, armed groups killed at least nine people in three farming villages in Guma area; residents attributed the attacks to herders.[63]
- On 16 and on 31 December, in Plateau State, armed groups killed at least 23 people in villages in Barkin Ladi and Jos South areas; residents blamed Fulani armed groups.[64]

North-East - Islamist insurgency showed resurgent and increasingly sophisticated activity (including use of drones and cross-border presence of Sahel-linked groups), producing deadly attacks on military targets and civilians, worsening the humanitarian situation.[65]

Some illustrative examples of security incidents in the North-East during the reference period include:

- On 6 September, Boko Haram killed over 60 people in Darul Jamal village (Borno State) after dislodging troops from a nearby military base.[66]
- Between September and October, more than 5 000 people fled across the border into Cameroon after Boko Haram captured Kirawa town (Gwoza area, Borno State).[67]
- In November, fighting between Boko Haram and rival ISWAP militants on the shores of Lake Chad left about 200 people dead.[68]
- In December, a suicide bomber killed five soldiers at a military position in Firgi near Pulka town (Borno State).[69]
- In December, at least five people were killed in an attack against a mosque in Maiduguri (Borno State).[70]
- On 14 December, government airstrikes in Kukawa area (Borno State) mistakenly killed an unspecified number of civilians.[71]
- On 29 December, Boko Haram killed 14 people in Hong area (Adamawa State).[72]

[61] ICIR, Black Sunday: the hidden horror of Ayetoro-Kiri Church attack, 23 December 2025, url
[62] Premium Times, Terrorists abduct seven workers, including ministry officials, in Kwara community 16 December, url
[63] International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch database, Nigeria, December 2025, url
[64] International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch database, Nigeria, December 2025, url
[65] Reuters, Nigerian army repels drone-backed insurgent attacks, 23 October 2025, url; Reuters, Insurgents raid Nigerian military barracks in Banki, soldiers retreat, residents and sources say, 19 September 2025, url
[66] AP, Boko Haram militants kill 60 in an attack in Nigeria's northeast, 7 September 2025, url
[67] Africa News, Thousands seek refuge in cameroon following Boko Haram assault in Nigeria, 3 October 2025, url
[68] Guardian, Terrorist turf war battle in north-eastern Nigeria leaves about 200 dead, 10 November 2025, url
[69] RFI, Suicide bomber kills five soldiers in northeast Nigeria: sources, 16 December 2025, url
[70] BBC, Bomb blast in packed Nigerian mosque kills five, 25 December 2025, url
[71] Premium Times, Hours after assuring civilian safety in operations, air force bombs many in Borno, 15 December 2025, url
[72] Sahara Reporters, BREAKING: Boko Haram Terrorists Attack Adamawa Communities, Kill 14 Residents, Set Ablaze Shops, Food Stores, 31 December 2025, url

North-West - Violence, including kidnappings and killings, continued across several states, involving a range of actors such as Islamist groups, Fulani armed groups, criminal gangs, farmers and herders, and other unidentified actors.[73] Several local authorities in Katsina State signed peace deals[74] with predominantly Fulani armed groups (locally known as 'bandits'), despite their designation as 'terrorists' by the federal government in 2022. These developments were seen as signalling eroding trust in the government's ability to fight armed groups.[75]

On 26 December, the US launched airstrikes against Lakurawa camps in Tangaza area in Sokoto state, at the border with Niger.[76] Both US and Nigerian officials stated that militants were killed, however the number of casualties remained unclear. Tangaza is an area comprised of remote villages, whose residents are mostly Muslims. During the operation, munition debris landed in two communities, Jabo village in Sokoto State and Offa in Kwara State, located about 600 km to the south. No civilian casualties were reported in either area.[77]

Some other illustrative examples of security incidents in the North-West states during the reference period include:

- On 4 September, residents of Shagari and Tureta areas (Sokoto State) attacked armed groups in nearby forests, killing at least 15 members. Locals also freed several kidnapped victims who had been held hostage in nearby forests.[78]
- On 13 September, in Zamfara State, armed groups killed five soldiers in Gusau area.[79]
- On 15 September, gunmen attacked a mosque in Tsafe area in Zamfara state, killed five people and abducted about 40 people.[80]
- On 18 October, at least 73 people were abducted in two villages in Bukkuyum area (Zamfara State).[81]
- On 15 November, armed groups killed 3 people and abducted at least 64, mostly women and children, in Tsafe area (Zamfara State).[82]
- On 17 November, at least 25 girls were abducted by gunmen from a secondary school in Maga (Kebbi State); a teacher was killed. The girls were subsequently freed.[83]
- On 25 December, a military airstrike in Silame Local Government Area (Sokoto State) reportedly killed at least 10 civilians, displacing many residents, mostly farmers.[84]
- On 27 December, three IED explosions along the Dansadau–Magami road (Zamfara State) killed at least nine people.[85]

[73] International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch database, Nigeria, September, October, November, December 2025, url
[74] BBC, Nigerian villagers 'too scared to speak' after hundreds of schoolchildren kidnapped, 30 November 2025, url
[75] International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch database, Nigeria, September, October, November, December 2025, url
[76] Global Initiative, Legitimizing Lakurawa, 9 January 2026, url
[77] BBC, US launches strikes against Islamic State in Nigeria, 27 December 2025, url
[78] Vanguard, Bloody Weekend: 102 Killed in Borno, Sokoto, Katsina, Edo, 7 September 2025, url
[79] Punch, Military confirms killing of five soldiers in Zamfara, 13 September 2025, url
[80] Punch, No more olive branches: Crush the bandits, 28 September 2025, url
[81] Premium Times, Bandits abduct 73 from two Zamfara villages – Report, 21 October 2025, url
[82] Daily Trust, Bandits kill 3, abduct 64 in Zamfara, 17 November 2025, url
[83] CNN, Two dozen schoolgirls freed after kidnapping in northwestern Nigeria last week, 25 November 2025, url
[84] Premium Times, Villagers killed by military airstrike buried in Sokoto, 26 December 2025, url
[85] Daily Trust, '9 killed' as explosions rock Zamfara, 27 December 2025, url

- On 28 December, armed groups killed eight people and abducted others in three villages in Shanga area (Kebbi State).[86]

South-East - Clashes between Nigerian security forces and armed members of IPOB/ESN (Eastern Security Network) were reported across the South-East, especially in Anambra[87] and Imo states.[88] In September 2025, in Imo State, Nigerian army troops arrested notorious IPOB/ESN commander Ifeanyi Eze Okorienta, also known as Gentle de Yahoo, and recovered various weaponry, ammunition, police and military uniforms.[89] Such an arrest is considered as a significant blow to IPOB/ESN operations in Imo State and the wider South-East.[90] Other incidents included violent confrontations between rival cult groups,[91] communal violence over disputes,[92] kidnappings perpetrated by unidentified gunmen.[93] In December, Nigerian army pledged enhanced security in the South-East region.[94]

Some other illustrative examples of security incidents in the South-East during the reference period include:

- In September, in Aguluezechukwu (Aguata, Anambra State), security forces dislodged suspected IPOB/ESN members and destroyed their camp; several militants reportedly escaped with gunshot wounds.[95]
- In September, in Onitsha (Onitsha North, Anambra State), operatives of a security brigade recruited by the state shot and killed four traders after they seemingly refused orders to remove their wares.[96]
- In September, in Ezi, Ogidi (Idemili North, Anambra State), suspected members of cult group Bagger opened fire at a mourning gathering of unarmed Aye members, killing four people and injuring 15 others.[97]
- In October, in Ezinifite community (Nnewi South, Anambra State), the Agunechemba vigilante group engaged IPOB/ESN members in a firefight, killing one militant and injuring several others who reportedly escaped.[98]
- In October, in Onoli, Ugwuleshi Autonomous Community (Awgu, Enugu State), suspected Fulani herdsmen killed a young man, amid a series of preceding attacks that had displaced residents from farmlands.[99]

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[86] TVC News, 8 Killed As Bandits Attack Three Kebbi Villages, 30 December 2025, url
[87] Premium Times, Security operatives dislodge IPOB fighters from hideout, recover bombs, 5 September 2025, url; Daily Post, Vigilantes foil IPOB attack in Anambra, kill one suspect, 28 October 2025, url
[88] Nation, Security forces engage IPOB ESN in fierce gun battle in Imo, 17 September 2025, url
[89] Vanguard, 17 September 2025, Army confirms arrest of IPOB/ESN Commander Gentle De Yahoo, url
[90] HumAngle, What the Arrest of 'Gentle De Yahoo' Means for South East Nigeria, 17 September 2025, url
[91] Vanguard, Cultists kill 4, injure 15 at burial ceremony in Anambra, 12 September 2025, url
[92] Punch, My two sons were killed on community farmland over chairmanship dispute – 65-year-old Enugu woman,16 November 2025, url
[93] Vanguard, Troops rescue 14 kidnap victims in Enugu – Benue border forest, 7 December 2025, url
[94] Guardian, GOC pledges enhanced security strategies in South-East, 2 December 2025, url
[95] Premium Times, Security operatives dislodge IPOB fighters from hideout, recover bombs, 5 September 2025, url
[96] Punch, Anambra brigade operatives arrested over pregnant woman, four traders' killing, 10 September 2025, url
[97] Vanguard, Cultists kill 4, injure 15 at burial ceremony in Anambra, 12 September 2025, url
[98] Daily Post, Vigilantes foil IPOB attack in Anambra, kill one suspect, 28 October 2025, url
[99] Punch, Anger as suspected herdsmen kill Enugu youth, 6 October 2025, url

- In November, in Abatete (Idemili North, Anambra State), suspected IPOB/ESN fighters attacked a joint police patrol, injuring one police officer, burning one police vehicle, damaging another, seizing two rifles, and fleeing.[100]
- In December, in Nawfia community (Njikoka, Anambra State), four people were killed during a rival cult confrontation.[101]
- In December, in Lilu community (Ihiala, Anambra State), an unidentified armed group attacked St. Andrews Anglican Church, killing two people, including the pastor's wife, injuring several others, and setting fire to the church and its property.[102]
- In December, in the Enugu–Benue border forest, 14 people were kidnapped by unidentified bandits from Udenu (Enugu State) and Ogbadigbo (Benue State) and were subsequently freed following a joint military–vigilante operation.[103]

South-West - Several violent incidents involving confrontations between rival cult groups were reported across Lagos State during the reference period, including killings and injures.[104]

South-South - The Delta–Edo Federal Highway (Onitsha–Asaba–Benin–Lokoja axis) is reported to have become increasingly dangerous for travellers due to kidnappings. Police checkpoints offered limited verification of security, as passengers could not always confirm the authenticity of uniforms, with unidentified armed men reportedly using fake checkpoints to target motorists. Vigilante groups have proliferated in both Delta and Edo states. While some communities report that these groups have contributed to reducing crime, others report incidents of abuse and killings.[105]

2.2. Security incidents and fatalities at country and state level: 1 January 2024 – 31 December 2025

According to ACLED data, 8 654 security incidents (coded as 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence', and 'violence against civilians'[106]) occurred across the country during the period from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025. Of these incidents, 3 415 were coded by ACLED as battles, 410 as explosions/remote violence, and 4 829 as violence against civilians.[107]

[100] Punch, Gunmen attack police patrol team in Anambra, burn vehicle, 27 November 2025, url
[101] Punch, Four killed in Anambra cult clash, 8 December 2025, url
[102] BBC, Gunmen attack church for Anambra, how e take happun?, 8 December 2025, url
[103] Vanguard, Troops rescue 14 kidnap victims in Enugu – Benue border forest, 7 December 2025, url
[104] Guardian, Two dead as cultists clash in Lagos community, 12 September 2025, url; TVC News, Police Arrest Five Suspects In Lagos Violent Cult Clash, 6 October 2025, url ; Daily Post, One feared dead as rival cult groups clash in Lagos, 4 December 2025, url
[105] HumAngle, Delta–Edo's Deadly Highway: Between Kidnappers and Vigilantes, 2 October, 2025, url
[106] Kidnappings are categorised by ACLED as 'violence against civilians'
[107] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa, data covering 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025, as of 9 January 2026, url

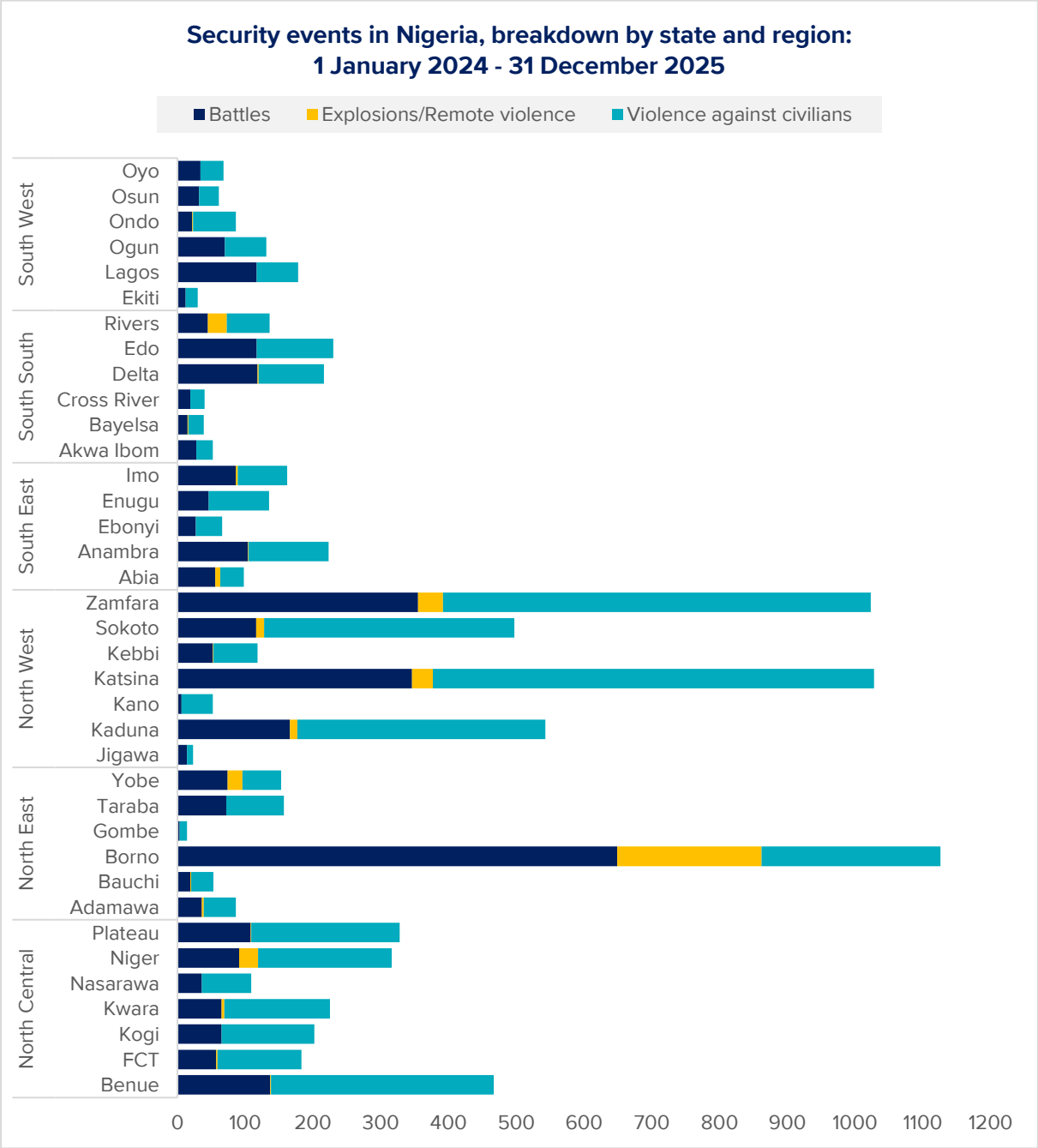

Figure 1: Breakdown of countrywide security events in Nigeria by states, grouped per geopolitical region, 1 January 2024 – 31 December 2025, based on ACLED data

The highest numbers of security incidents were recorded by ACLED in Borno (1 126), Katsina (1 028), and Zamfara states. (1 023). By contrast, the fewest incidents were recorded in Gombe (14), Jigawa (23) and Ekiti states (30).[108]

[108] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa, data covering 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025, as of 9 January 2026, url

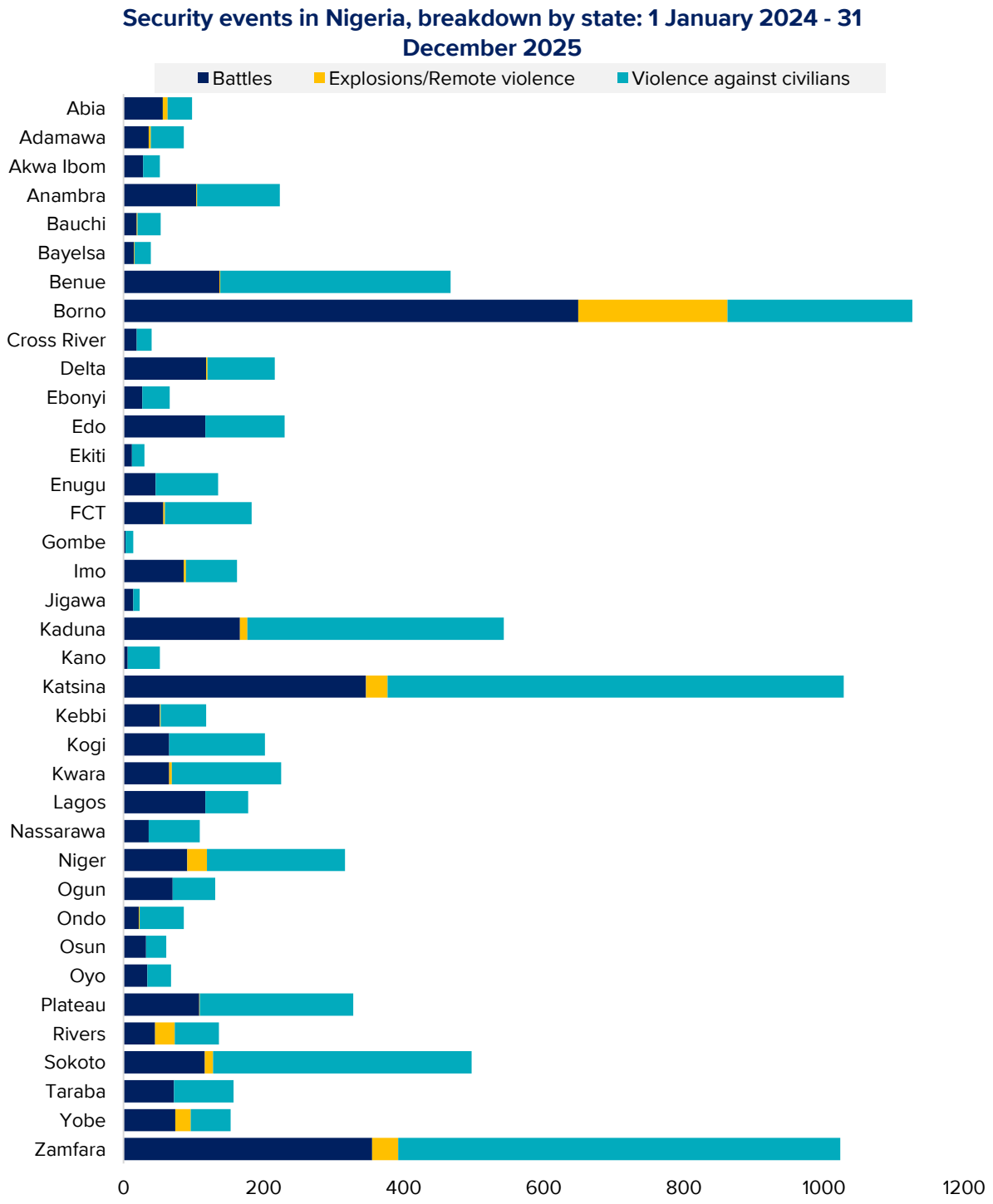

Figure 2: Breakdown of countrywide security events in Nigeria by states, in alphabetical order, 1 January 2024 – 31 December 2025, based on ACLED data

ACLED recorded a total of 21 504 fatalities as having been caused by security incidents (coded as 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence', and 'violence against civilians) across the country from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025. Of those, 7 590 resulted from incidents coded as 'violence against civilians'.[109]

[109] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Africa, data covering 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025, as of 9 January 2026, url

State-level incidents and fatalities: 1 January 2024 – 31 December 2025

States and FCT	Security incidents Coded as Battles, Explosions/Remote violence, Violence against civilians	Fatalities Derived from incidents coded as Battles, Explosions/Remote violence, Violence against civilians
Abia	Battles : 56 Explosions/Remote Violence : 7 Violence against civilians : 35 **Total : 98**	**Total : 160**
Adamawa	Battles : 36 Explosions/Remote Violence : 3 Violence against civilians : 47 **Total : 86**	**Total : 148**
Akwa Ibom	Battles : 28 Explosions/Remote Violence : 0 Violence against civilians : 24 **Total : 52**	**Total : 63**
Anambra	Battles : 104 Explosions/Remote Violence : 1 Violence against civilians : 118 **Total : 223**	**Total : 313**
Bauchi	Battles : 19 Explosions/Remote Violence : 1 Violence against civilians : 33 **Total : 53**	**Total : 164**
Bayelsa	Battles : 15 Explosions/Remote Violence : 1 Violence against civilians : 23 **Total : 39**	**Total : 44**
Benue	Battles : 137 Explosions/Remote Violence : 1 Violence against civilians : 329 **Total : 467**	**Total : 1 439**

Borno	Battles : 649 Explosions/Remote Violence : 213 Violence against civilians : 264 **Total : 1 126**	**Total : 5 973**
Cross River	Battles : 19 Explosions/Remote Violence : 0 Violence against civilians : 21 **Total : 40**	**Total : 53**
Delta	Battles : 118 Explosions/Remote Violence : 2 Violence against civilians : 96 **Total : 216**	**Total : 228**
Ebonyi	Battles : 27 Explosions/Remote Violence : 0 Violence against civilians : 39 **Total : 66**	**Total : 126**
Edo	Battles : 117 Explosions/Remote Violence : 0 Violence against civilians : 113 **Total : 230**	**Total : 208**
Ekiti	Battles : 12 Explosions/Remote Violence : 0 Violence against civilians : 18 **Total : 30**	**Total : 16**
Enugu	Battles : 46 Explosions/Remote Violence : 0 Violence against civilians : 89 **Total : 135**	**Total : 140**
FCT (Federal Capital Territory)	Battles : 57 Explosions/Remote Violence : 2 Violence against civilians : 124 **Total : 183**	**Total : 151**
Gombe	Battles : 3 Explosions/Remote Violence : 0	**Total : 13**

	Violence against civilians : 11 **Total : 14**	
Imo	Battles : 86 Explosions/Remote Violence : 3 Violence against civilians : 73 **Total : 162**	**Total : 292**
Jigawa	Battles : 14 Explosions/Remote Violence : 0 Violence against civilians : 9 **Total : 23**	**Total : 45**
Kaduna	Battles : 166 Explosions/Remote Violence : 11 Violence against civilians : 366 **Total : 543**	**Total : 1 048**
Kano	Battles : 6 Explosions/Remote Violence : 0 Violence against civilians : 46 **Total : 52**	**Total : 69**
Katsina	Battles : 346 Explosions/Remote Violence : 31 Violence against civilians : 651 **Total : 1 028**	**Total : 2 578**
Kebbi	Battles : 52 Explosions/Remote Violence : 1 Violence against civilians : 65 **Total : 118**	**Total : 291**
Kogi	Battles : 65 Explosions/Remote Violence : 0 Violence against civilians : 137 **Total : 202**	**Total : 216**
Kwara	Battles : 65 Explosions/Remote Violence : 4	**Total : 253**

	Violence against civilians : 156 **Total : 225**	
Lagos	Battles : 117 Explosions/Remote Violence : 0 Violence against civilians : 61 **Total : 178**	**Total : 174**
Nasarawa	Battles : 36 Explosions/Remote Violence : 0 Violence against civilians : 73 **Total : 109**	**Total : 183**
Niger	Battles : 91 Explosions/Remote Violence : 28 Violence against civilians : 197 **Total : 316**	**Total : 1 058**
Ogun	Battles : 70 Explosions/Remote Violence : 0 Violence against civilians : 61 **Total : 131**	**Total : 121**
Ondo	Battles : 22 Explosions/Remote Violence : 1 Violence against civilians : 63 **Total : 86**	**Total : 73**
Osun	Battles : 32 Explosions/Remote Violence : 0 Violence against civilians : 29 **Total : 61**	**Total : 51**
Oyo	Battles : 34 Explosions/Remote Violence : 0 Violence against civilians : 34 **Total : 68**	**Total : 59**
Plateau	Battles : 108 Explosions/Remote Violence : 1 Violence against civilians : 219 **Total : 328**	**Total : 981**

Rivers	Battles : 45 Explosions/Remote Violence : 28 Violence against civilians : 63 **Total : 136**	**Total : 118**
Sokoto	Battles : 116 Explosions/Remote Violence : 12 Violence against civilians : 369 **Total : 497**	**Total : 867**
Taraba	Battles : 72 Explosions/Remote Violence : 0 Violence against civilians : 85 **Total : 157**	**Total : 242**
Yobe	Battles : 74 Explosions/Remote Violence : 22 Violence against civilians : 57 **Total : 153**	**Total : 271**
Zamfara	Battles : 355 Explosions/Remote Violence : 37 Violence against civilians : 631 **Total : 1 023**	**Total : 3 275**

Table 1: List of security events and fatalities in Nigeria by states, in alphabetical order, 1 January 2024 – 31 December 2025, based on ACLED data

3. Human rights situation related to certain profiles and groups of the population

In October, President Tinubu initially approved a pardon and clemency list for 175 individuals, accused of crimes ranging from drug trafficking, illegal mining, kidnapping, and coup plot. Such decision triggered criticism within the country and suspicion of political motivation.[110] In a press release, Amnesty International expressed concern over such pardons, warning that the actions risk undermining the rule of law, obstructing justice for victims of human rights violations, and entrenching impunity.[111] Following public backlash, the President ordered a

[110] Guardian, Prerogative of mercy: Criticisms, outrage, suspicion trail presidential pardon of 175, 13 October 2025, url

[111] AI, Nigeria: Presidential Pardon for Human Rights Crimes Undermines Rule of Law, 14 October 2025, url

review of the list and removed individuals convicted of grave offenses, such as kidnapping, drug trafficking, and trafficking in human beings.[112]

Protesters - In October, Nigerian police dispersed protesters in Abuja demanding IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu's release, clashing with demonstrators participating in the #ReleaseNnamdiKanuNow campaign. According to eyewitnesses, police used tear gas to break up the protest in the Utako area, injuring several people, including journalists.[113]

In December, in Lamurde (Adamawa State), Nigerian army soldiers reportedly opened fire on protesters, killing nine. The victims were all women, who were protesting the military's handling of a communal dispute between the Bachama and Chobo tribes. The army denied responsibility, attributing the deaths to a local militia operating in the area.[114] For more information see in 2.7. Protesters in EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Country Focus, November 2025.

Victims of trafficking in human beings - The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) informed to have exposed a large-scale child trafficking, sale, and illegal adoption network in Benue State. The agency rescued 26 children, while investigations are ongoing to trace approximately 274 others reportedly trafficked across Benue, Enugu, Lagos, Nasarawa, and Abuja.[115] In October, in a coordinated operation, NAPTIP rescued 24 alleged victims at Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja, and arrested five suspected traffickers.[116] For more information see 2.2. Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) in EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Country Focus, November 2025.

LGBTIQ+ - In Kano State, northern Nigeria, religious police have arrested 25 young people (eighteen men and seven women, all in their early 20s) accused of organising a gay wedding. The *Hisbah*, the region's Sharia police, reportedly stormed an event centre in the city, acting on a tip-off from residents.[117] For more information see 2.5. LGBTIQ individuals in EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Country Focus, November 2025.

[112] Punch, Tinubu revokes pardon for Sanda, 140 high-profile inmates, 30 October 2025, url
[113] Reuters, Nigerian police use teargas to quash protests over separatist leader's detention, 20 October 2025, url; AA, Protests in Nigeria for release of separatist leader turn violent, 20 October 2025, url
[114] AP, Nigerian soldiers open fire on protesters in the northeast, killing 9, witnesses say, 9 December 2025, url; ICIR, Lamurde shooting: How military silenced unarmed protesting women, 17 December 2025, url
[115] NAPTIP, NAPTIP Uncovers A Large-Scale Alleged Child Trafficking Syndicate In Benue Linked To A High-Profile Founder Of An NGO: Arrests The 60-Year-Old Orphanage Owner And Three Others, 27 October 2025, url
[116] NAPTIP, NAPTIP Storms Nnamdi Azikwe International Airport, Arrests Five Suspected Traffickers, Rescues 24 Victims, 1 October 2025, url
[117] Guadian/AFP, Hisbah arrests 25 over alleged gay wedding in Kano, 26 October 2025, url

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