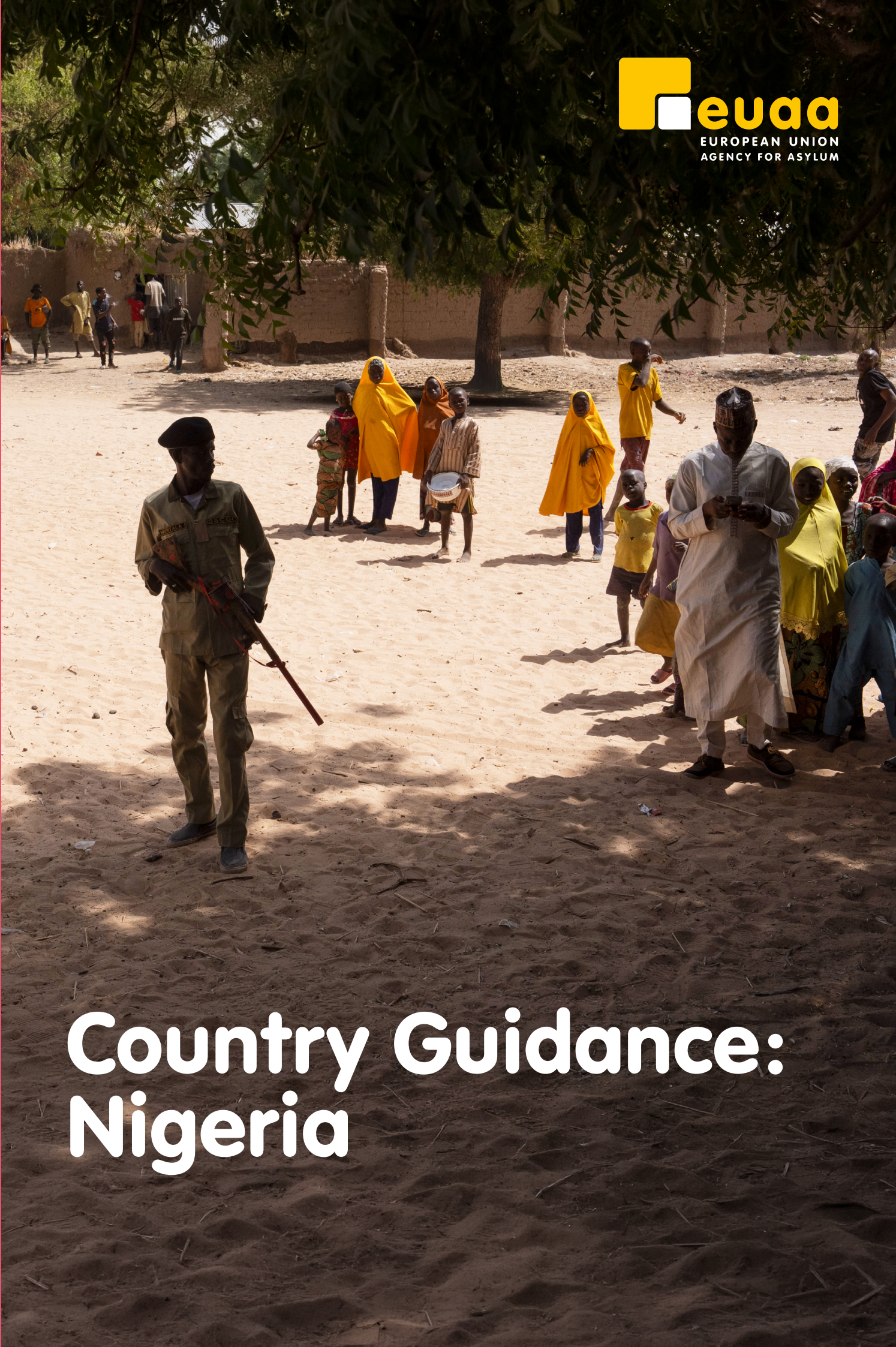


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March 2026



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Contents

Contents	3
List of abbreviations and glossary	7
Introduction	10
Common analysis, guidance note and methodological approach	11
Scope of this update	12
Guidance note	13
Common analysis	17
1. Nigeria: Political, social and security overview	18
2. Actors of persecution or serious harm	20
2.1. The Nigerian state forces and state-affiliated actors	20
2.2. Non-State actors	21
2.2.1. Boko Haram and other Islamist armed groups	21
2.2.2. Herders and farmers and communal militias	22
2.2.3. Pro-Biafra separatist groups	23
2.2.4. Criminal groups	23
2.2.5. Other non-state actors	24
3. Refugee status	25
3.1. Individuals within the reach of Boko Haram	26
3.2. Individuals with perceived links to Boko Haram	27
3.3. Members and perceived supporters of pro-Biafra separatist movements	28
3.4. Individuals (perceived as) not supporting the pro-Biafra cause	29
3.5. Members and supporters of political parties	31
3.6. Individuals belonging to herder or farmer communities	32
3.7. Christians and Muslims in specific areas	33
3.8. Protesters, human rights defenders and activists	34
3.9. Journalists and other media workers	35
3.10. Individuals accused of witchcraft	36
3.11. Individuals refusing chieftaincy titles	37
3.12. Persons with diverse SOGIESC	38
3.13. Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings	39





3.14. Women and girls.....	41
3.14.1. Gender-based violence (GBV)	41
3.14.2. Female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C).....	43
3.14.3. Child marriage and forced marriage	44
3.15. Children	46
3.16. Individuals with disabilities, including mental health issues.....	46
4. Subsidiary protection.....	48
4.1. Article 15(a) QD/QR: death penalty or execution	48
4.2. Article 15(b) QD/QR: torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment ..	49
4.2.1. Arbitrary arrests, illegal detention and prison conditions.....	50
4.2.2. Criminal violence.....	50
4.2.3. Trafficking in human beings.....	51
4.2.4. Health care and socio-economic conditions.....	52
4.3. Article 15(c) QD/QR: indiscriminate violence in situations of armed conflict.....	53
4.3.1. Armed conflict (international or internal)	54
4.3.2. Qualification of a person as a ‘civilian’	55
4.3.3. Indiscriminate violence.....	55
(a) Security situation in Nigeria: recent events	56
(b) Assessment of indiscriminate violence per state.....	60
High level of indiscriminate violence	62
North-East: Borno.....	62
North-West: Katsina.....	62
North-West: Zamfara	63
Indiscriminate violence not at a high level	63
North-Central: Benue	64
North-Central: Abuja/ Federal Capital Territory.....	64
North-Central: Kogi.....	64
North-Central: Kwara.....	65
North-Central: Nasarawa.....	65
North-Central: Niger	66
North-Central: Plateau	66
North-East: Adamawa	67





North-East: Taraba.....	67
North-East: Yobe.....	67
North-West: Kaduna.....	68
North-West: Sokoto.....	68
North-West: Kebbi.....	69
No real risk.....	69
North-East: Bauchi.....	70
North-East: Gombe.....	70
North-West: Jigawa.....	70
North-West: Kano.....	71
South-East: Abia.....	71
South-East: Anambra.....	72
South-East: Ebonyi.....	72
South-East: Enugu.....	73
South-East: Imo.....	73
South-South: Akwa Ibom.....	74
South-South: Bayelsa.....	74
South-South: Cross River.....	75
South-South: Delta.....	75
South-South: Edo.....	75
South-South: Rivers.....	76
South-West: Ekiti.....	76
South-West: Lagos.....	77
South-West: Ogun.....	77
South-West: Ondo.....	77
South-West: Osun.....	78
South-West: Oyo.....	78
4.3.4. Serious and individual threat.....	79
4.3.5. Qualification of the harm as a 'threat to (a civilian's) life or person'	80
4.3.6. Nexus/'by reason of'.....	80
5. Actors of protection.....	81
5.1. The Nigerian State.....	81
5.2. Parties or organisations, including international organisations.....	82
6. Internal protection alternative.....	83





6.1. Part of the country.....	83
6.2. Safety.....	83
6.2.1. Absence of persecution or serious harm.....	83
6.2.2. Availability of protection against persecution or serious harm.....	85
6.2.3. Conclusion on safety	85
6.3. Travel and admittance	85
6.4. Reasonableness to settle.....	86
6.4.1. General situation.....	86
6.4.2. Individual circumstances.....	88
6.4.3. Conclusion on reasonableness.....	89
6.5. General conclusion on the applicability of IPA.....	89
7. Exclusion	90
7.1. Exclusion based on the commission of international crimes	91
7.2. Exclusion based on the commission of a serious crime.....	91
7.3. Exclusion based on acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.....	92
7.4. Exclusion based on constituting a danger to the community or to the security of the Member State	93
Annex: Country of origin information references	94





List of abbreviations and glossary

Term	Definition
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
APC	All Progressives Congress
BLA	Biafran Liberation Army
BRGIE	Biafra Republic Government in Exile
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
CJTF	Civilian Joint Task Force
COI	Country of origin information
ESN	Eastern Security Network
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
EU	European Union
EU+ countries	Member States of the European Union and associated countries
FGM/C	Female genital mutilation or cutting
GBV	Gender-based violence
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons





Term	Definition
IEDs	Improvised explosive devices
IPA	Internal Protection Alternative
IPOB	Indigenous People of Biafra
ISSP	Islamic State Sahel Province
ISWAP	Islamic State West Africa Province
JAS	Jama'tu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad
Juju	A term commonly used to describe a spiritual belief system that involves the use of objects like amulets and the casting of spells
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (persons)
LGA	Local Government Area
Member States	Member States of the European Union
MMIA	Murtala Muhammed International Airport
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
NAF	Nigerian Armed Forces
NAPTIP	National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons
NAIA	Nnamdi Azikwe International Airport
NPF	Nigerian Police Force
PDP	People's Democratic Party





Term	Definition
NSCDC	Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps
QD (recast)	Qualification Directive — Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted (recast)
QR	Qualification Regulation – Regulation (EU) 2024/1347 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on standards for the qualification of third country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection and for the content of the protection granted, amending Council Directive 2003/109/EC and repealing Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council.
Refugee Convention	The 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees and its 1967 Protocol (referred to in EU asylum legislation and by the CJEU as ‘the Geneva Convention’)
SOGIESC	Sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, or sex characteristics
THB	Trafficking in Human Beings
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VGN	Vigilante Group of Nigeria



Introduction

The country guidance documents provide country-specific common analysis and guidance in relation to the assessment criteria established in the recast Qualification Directive (QD) ⁽¹⁾ and in the Qualification Regulation (QR) ⁽²⁾, which will repeal the QD with its entry into application on 12 June 2026. They are developed by the EUAA together with a network of senior-level policy officials from EU+ countries and represent their joint assessment of the situation in main countries of origin, in accordance with current EU legislation and jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). The European Commission and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also provide valuable input in this process.

The aim of the country guidance documents is to assist decision-makers and policy-makers in their daily work and to foster convergence in the assessment of applications for international protection and the type of protection granted in the context of the Common European Asylum System.

The development, review and update of country guidance is regulated under [Article 11 of the EUAA Regulation](#) ⁽³⁾.



In accordance with Article 11(3) EUAA Regulation, Member States have the obligation to take into account the common analysis and guidance notes when examining applications for international protection, without prejudice to their competence to decide on individual applications.



For more details on the process of producing country guidance documents and the exact role of stakeholders involved, see 'EUAA, [Country Guidance: Methodology](#), November 2024'.

This document encompasses the development, review and update of country guidance and regulates the work of the EUAA Country Guidance Network and all related processes.

-
- ⁽¹⁾ Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted (recast).
- ⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1347 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection and for the content of the protection granted, amending Council Directive 2003/109/EC and repealing Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council.
- ⁽³⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/2303 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2021 on the European Union Agency for Asylum and repealing Regulation (EU) No 439/2010.



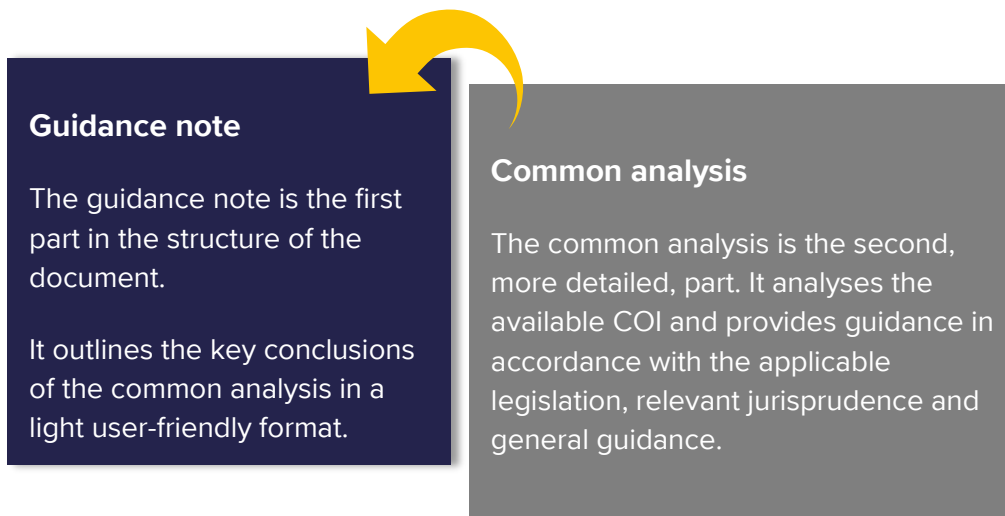
This common analysis is based on country of origin information (COI) covering the period 1 January 2024 – 31 August 2025. Some additional information on major political, security, and human rights developments covering the period 1 September 2025 – 31 December 2025 has also been reflected. Each section of the country guidance documents also clearly states the timing of its last update.


The analysis and guidance within this document should be considered valid as long as current events and developments in the country fall within the trends and patterns described within the COI on which the assessment at hand is based on.

The analysis and guidance provided within this document are not exhaustive.

Common analysis, guidance note and methodological approach

The country guidance document consists of two components: the guidance note and the common analysis. These two parts focus on the situation in the country of origin and provide analysis and guidance on the assessment of relevant international protection needs.





The Country Guidance documents should be read in conjunction with the separate document 'EUAA, [Country Guidance: explained](#), February 2026'.

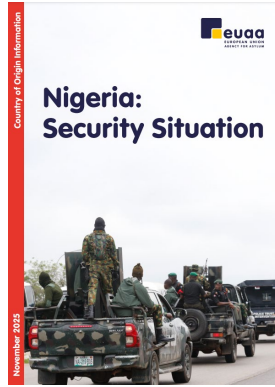
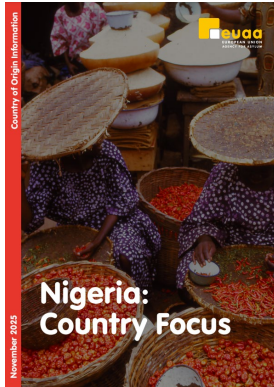
This document outlines the general guidance relied upon in this analysis, as well as the methodological framework, approach and indicators used to assess the different elements of qualification for international protection.



Scope of this update

The current version of the guidance updates and supersedes the EASO, [Country Guidance Nigeria](#), October 2021. A new approach regarding the incorporation of COI in the legal analysis has been adopted in this document and all sections of the document have been updated and restructured to reflect this approach.

This update is mainly based on the following recent COI:



Country Focus 2025	Security 2025	COI Update 2026
EUAA COI Report: Nigeria – Country Focus (November 2025)	EUAA COI Report: Nigeria – Security Situation (November 2025)	EUAA COI Query Response: Major political, security, and human rights developments (January 2026)
Available in PDF and online .	Available in PDF and online .	Available in PDF .

[Annex I: Country of origin information references](#) provides further details and links to all COI documents used as a basis for the analysis within this document. References within this document are to the respective sections of these COI documents.



To access EUAA COI reports, visit <https://euaa.europa.eu/country-origin-information>.



Guidance note

Last update: March 2026

The current version of the document supersedes the one issued in October 2021.

The guidance note on Nigeria is produced by the EUAA together with EU+ countries ⁽⁴⁾ in accordance with Article 11 of the EUAA Regulation ⁽⁵⁾. It is based on and summarises the conclusions of the comprehensive common analysis. The aim of the guidance note and the common analysis is to assist EU+ countries in the examination of applications for international protection, thereby fostering convergence of asylum practices and decisions across the EU.

The guidance note is part of the 'Country Guidance: Nigeria' and should be read in conjunction with the Common analysis.

In Nigeria, a wide range of groups and individuals can be considered as actors of persecution or serious harm, including State and non-State actors, such as the Nigerian state forces, Boko Haram and other Islamist groups, pro-Biafra separatist groups, herders and farmers and other communal militias as well as criminal groups. Members of the family and community can also be perpetrators of human rights violations. Reporting on some of these groups often relies on broad labels, blurring distinctions between them, especially where their activities overlap. See [Actors of persecution or serious harm](#).

Among the most commonly encountered profiles of applicants for international protection, the following would **in general have a well-founded fear of persecution and would highly likely qualify for refugee status**:

- [Persons with diverse SOGIESC](#)
- [Christians in areas where Boko Haram operates](#)
- [Journalists and other media workers](#) perceived as critical
- [Individuals with perceived links to Boko Haram](#)

Further guidance is provided on the **risk-impacting circumstances** which may affect the probability of granting refugee status for the following profiles:

- [Individuals within the reach of Boko Haram](#)
- [Members and perceived supporters of pro-Biafra separatist movements](#)
- [Individuals \(perceived as\) not supporting the pro-Biafra cause](#)

⁽⁴⁾ The assessment and guidance reflect the conclusions of the EUAA Country Guidance Network, which consists of EU Member States, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. The guidance note has been endorsed by the EUAA Management Board.

⁽⁵⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/2303 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2021 on the European Union Agency for Asylum and repealing Regulation (EU) No 439/2010.





- [Members and supporters of political parties](#)
- [Individuals belonging in herder or farmer communities](#)
- [Protesters, human rights defenders and activists](#)
- [Individuals accused of witchcraft](#)
- [Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings](#)
- [Women and girls](#)
- [Children](#)
- [Individuals with disabilities, including mental health issues](#)

The treatment faced by [Individuals refusing chieftaincy titles](#) in general **would not amount to persecution**.

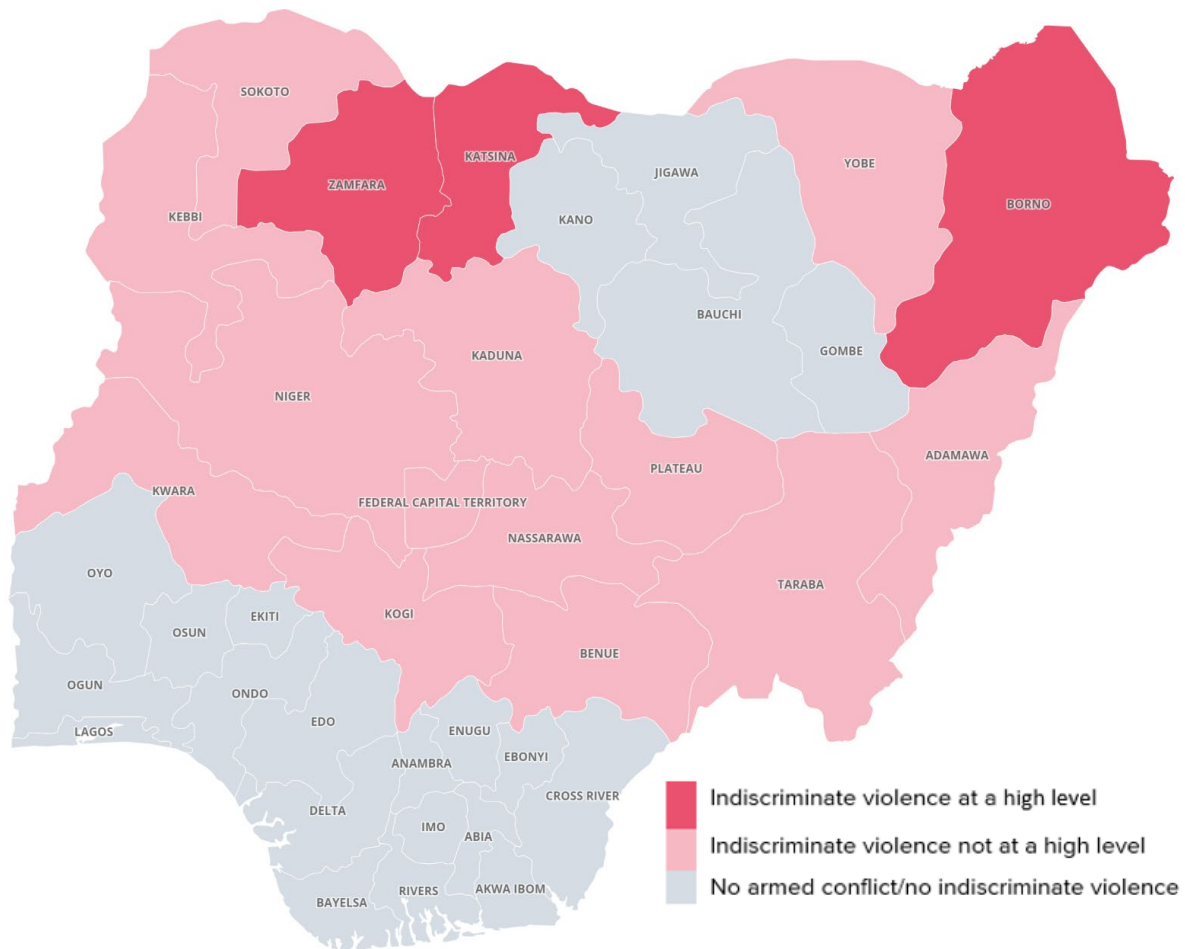
If an applicant is not considered eligible for refugee status, Member States should proceed to consider the granting of **subsidiary protection, taking into account personal circumstances**.

If there is a real risk for the applicant to face the death penalty or execution, and no nexus to a reason for persecution can be substantiated, subsidiary protection under [Article 15\(a\) QD/QR](#) shall be granted. Although no executions have been carried out since 2016, courts across the country still regularly issue death sentences. State- affiliated actors as well as non-state armed actors, including Boko Haram, vigilantes, and bandit groups have also carried out extrajudicial killings.

[Article 15\(b\) QD/QR](#) relating to the risk of torture, or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, may be applicable in certain cases. Criminality, including trafficking in human beings, remains pervasive in Nigeria.

With regard to subsidiary protection under [Article 15\(c\) QD/QR](#), the guidance provides an assessment of the level of indiscriminate violence in each state as per the following map:





It should be noted that the dynamics of violence in Nigeria involve overlapping actors, making distinctions between farmer–herder clashes, inter- and intra-communal conflicts, and banditry increasingly blurred.

In the North-East states where Boko Haram has long-standing and widespread presence, state protection would in general be considered unavailable. In other areas affected by criminality or other types of violence, the capacity of the Nigerian state is generally limited, but may be available in individual cases. Age, gender, home area, religion and socio-economic status are among the factors that affect the accessibility of protection. The protection of the Nigerian state is also generally not available for certain categories of individuals, such as for women and children victims of violence, FGM/C and forced marriage. Even though the Nigerian state has made progress in combatting trafficking in human beings, the protection may be proven inaccessible or ineffective for the victims, especially for those outside major urban centres and those not returning with an assisted program. When the Nigerian state is the actor of persecution, as is the case for some profiles in Nigeria, it is presumed that protection is not available. See [Actors of protection](#).

[Internal protection alternative](#) (IPA) may be applicable in Lagos and Abuja. More specifically, the requirement of safety may be satisfied in these cities, depending on the profile and the individual circumstances of the applicant. Furthermore, there are no legal or administrative restrictions to travel, access and settle in Lagos and Abuja. In relation to reasonableness, in



general, IPA would be reasonable for single able-bodied men and for married couples without children, including where they have no support network, as long as they have no additional vulnerabilities and have access to financial means. In general, when a support network is lacking, IPA would not be reasonable for unaccompanied children, elderly persons or applicants with severe illnesses or disabilities, as well as for non self-reliant women. In the case of other profiles, the individual circumstances of the applicant, in particular in relation to ethnoreligious background, gender and age, the existence of a support/clan network, etc. should be given due consideration.

Finally, [exclusion](#) considerations may be relevant in a number of cases concerning applicants from Nigeria.





Common analysis



1. Nigeria: Political, social and security overview

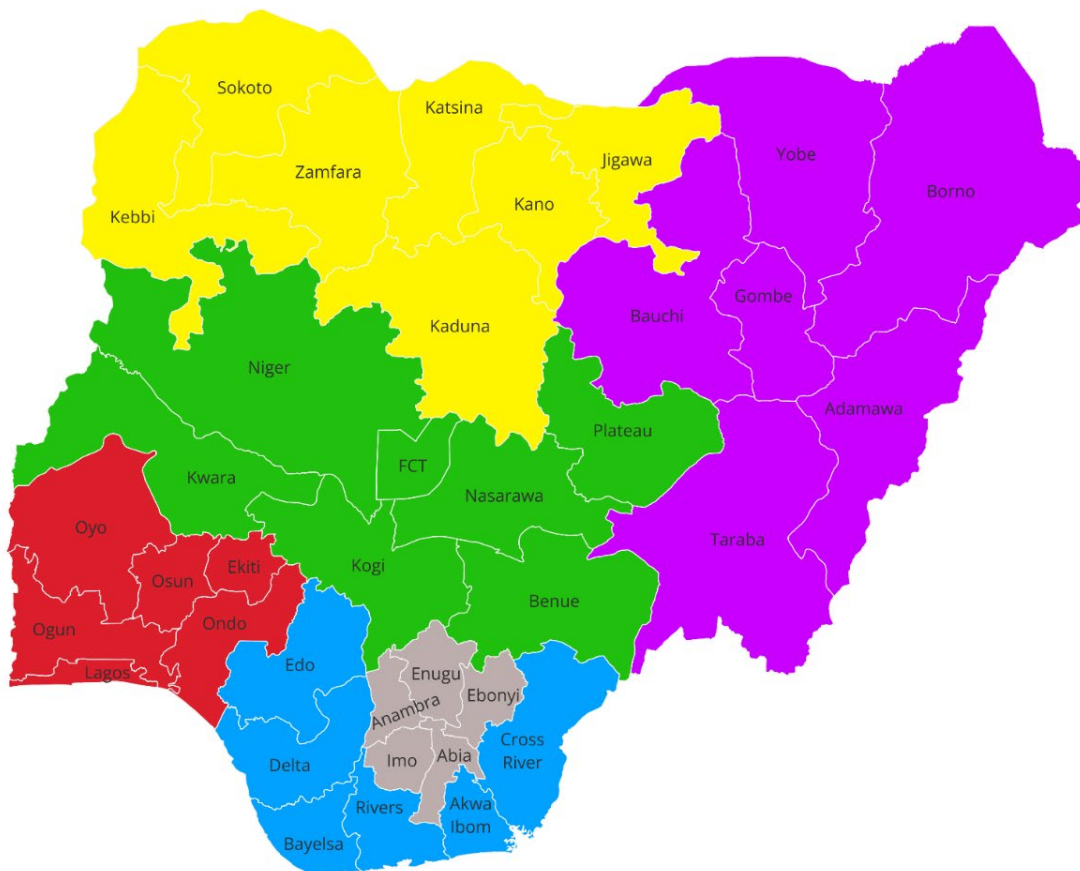
Last update: March 2026

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Country Focus 2025, 1.1., 1.2., 1.3.](#); [COI Update 2026, 1., 2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Nigeria gained independence in 1960 and experienced a civil war between 1967 (declaration of independence by the secessionist state of Biafra in the South-East Nigeria) and 1970 (Biafra's surrender); in the years that followed, Nigeria underwent a series of military regimes before transitioning to a more stable democratic system.

Nigeria is a federal republic composed of 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. It operates across three tiers of government: federal, state and local. The states and the FCT are grouped into six geopolitical regions.

Figure 1: Nigeria's geopolitical regions





The bicameral National Assembly comprises the Senate and the House of Representatives. The President of the country is elected through national general elections. While the local government system is constitutionally recognised, it remains largely under the administrative control of state governments. Each state has its own legislation. Key challenges at local level include limited autonomy, irregular revenue allocation, corruption and political interference. Although progress has been made in combating corruption, the phenomenon has remained a major barrier to the country's development, undermining democracy, governance, and public trust.

Nigeria's political landscape is partly dominated by the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) party, which has held control of the executive branch since 2015. It maintains a majority in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, and governs most of the country's states. In February 2023, Bola Tinubu won the presidential election; however, the electoral process was marked by widespread irregularities. Several sources suggested that the arrests of 40 military officers in October 2025 could be linked to an attempted coup, a claim dismissed by the Nigerian government.

Northern Nigeria operates under a dual justice system in which the secular provisions of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution coexist with *sharia* law in 12 states (Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara), whose application cover personal status, civil law, and criminal justice.

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, with an estimated population of 237 million. The country is a culturally diverse and multi-ethnic federal state comprising over 250 ethnic groups. The predominant ethnic groups are the Hausa and Fulani in the North, the Yoruba in the South-West and the Igbo in the South-East. 56.1 % of the population identifies as Muslim, while 43.4 % identifies as Christian. Other religious minorities include individuals practising African traditional religions, individuals with no religious affiliation, small communities of Buddhists, Hindus, and Jews. In general, Muslims predominantly reside in the northern regions of the country, whereas Christians are primarily concentrated in the South. While religious and cultural diversity is a defining feature of Nigeria's social landscape, it has also been a source of longstanding tension.

Nigeria has continued to experience an unprecedented wave of overlapping crises, marked by widespread insecurity and significant social and economic challenges. At a general level, in the North-West and the North Central, persistent banditry and kidnappings as well as increasing incidents of farmer-herder violence and intercommunal tensions drive instability, while the North-East experiences insurgent activities carried out by armed groups like Boko Haram. The South-East faces ongoing separatist agitation. In November 2025, a nationwide security emergency was declared.

These dynamics have contributed to a protracted humanitarian crisis. Rising living costs combined with human-made and natural disasters, have impacted millions of Nigerians. Overall, more than 133 million Nigerians are estimated to live in multidimensional poverty, representing the highest figure recorded globally.



2. Actors of persecution or serious harm



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this section, see 'EUAA, [Actors of persecution or serious harm](#) in *Country Guidance: explained*, February 2026'.

In Nigeria, a wide range of different groups and individuals can be considered as actors of persecution or serious harm. Applicants might be at risk of persecution or serious harm by more than one actor. The following sections highlight the main actors of persecution and serious harm as well as their areas of control/activity, in a non-exhaustive manner.

2.1. The Nigerian state forces and state-affiliated actors

Last update: March 2026

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Security 2025, 1.1.1., 1.1.2., 1.2.1.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The Nigerian state forces include the **Nigerian Police Force (NPF)**, the **Nigerian Armed Forces (NAF)** and the **Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC)**, deployed in all 36 states and Abuja FCT. Sources estimated the strength of NPF at 371 800 officers, serving a total population estimated in 2024 at 236 747 130, indicating a shortage in manpower. The NAF have been mostly engaged in counterinsurgency operations in the North-East with the help of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and combating criminal gangs/banditry in the North-West, farmer-herder violence, criminal activities targeting the oil industry in Niger Delta and separatist agitation in the South-East. NSCDC activities have been mostly about the protection of critical national assets and infrastructure. Nigerian state forces have been accused of misconduct, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests and detentions, airstrikes, ambushes, extortion, excessive use of force, and sexual violence. Moreover, disputes between the NSCDC and the police over their respective roles, as well as violent altercations between their members have been reported.

Due to the shortage in manpower, as well as corruption and insufficient resources, Nigerian state forces are assisted by various **vigilante groups** in the fight against insecurity all over the country, including in relation to banditry and kidnappings. Some groups have defined structures and operational procedures, especially those sponsored by state administrations, while others operated under no specific guidelines or organisation. The most powerful vigilante groups are the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN) in Benue state, which was estimated to have around 13 000 members in 2023, the Borno State Hunters Association (BoSHA), the Kesh Kesh and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in the Northeastern part of the country. Amotekun and Ebube Abu are also present in the South-West and South-East parts of the country. Vigilante groups are accused of human rights violations such as torture and extra-judicial killings.



2.2. Non-State actors



The term Boko Haram serves as an umbrella label covering multiple internal factions within this armed group. Some COI sources do not distinguish between the two main factions of Boko Haram, JAS and ISWAP, which may affect the specificity of information related to their activities, structures, and areas of control.

Furthermore, reporting on cult groups, herders and farmers, bandits, and in some cases vigilantes, separatists, or Islamist armed groups often relies on broad labels like criminals, gunmen, bandits, or terrorists. These terms can blur distinctions between different groups, especially where their activities overlap, making precise identification difficult.

2.2.1. Boko Haram and other Islamist armed groups

Last update: March 2026

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 1.1.3., 1.2.1., 2.1.4., 2.1.6.](#); [COI Update 2026, 1.1., 2.1.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Since 2016, there have been two main distinct factions of Boko Haram – the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Jama’tu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati wal-Jihad (JAS) – with considerable differences in their modus operandi and territorial control.

Sources estimated that **ISWAP** has between 4 000 and 12 000 fighters within its ranks, operating in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states. As its organisation, the group has split its territories in northeastern Nigeria into three provinces/*wilaya* (Buhaira, Faruq and Krenowa). ISWAP mainly targets the military forces and Christian communities and seeks to improve its relations with Muslim communities on whom it has imposed levies to maintain its standing armed fighting force. Deadly assaults against Shiites have also been reported. **JAS** is much less structured than ISWAP and estimated numbers are difficult to determine. As of mid-2024, the group controlled several areas in Nigeria, including its main territory on the Lake Chad islands in Borno and Yobe states, Gwoza Hills near the Nigeria-Cameroon border in Borno state and the hills near the Shiroro Reservoir in Kaduna State. While JAS primarily targets civilians, including Muslims, through plunders and abductions for ransom, the group has been also reported to regularly attack military posts to replenish its own arsenal. The group has also started to ‘tax’ residents in the Lake Chad enclave.

Boko Haram is expanding beyond the Lake Chad region into North-Central Nigeria, reportedly collaborating with bandits and with the emerging Lakurawa group. **Lakurawa** has been described as a violent jihadist group, suspected to have links with the Islamic State Sahel Province (ISSP), and operating in Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara states. Its members have attacked villages in both Nigeria and Niger and are accused of levying ‘taxes’ in the territory





they hold. In December 2024, the group was designated as a terrorist organisation by Nigerian authorities.

In addition, other Islamist armed groups such as Ansaru and Mahmuda exist in the northern part of Nigeria. **Ansaru** is an al-Qaeda-affiliated group and **Mahmuda** is a newly emerged group believed to be a Boko Haram splinter faction. Both groups are based around the Kainji National Park between Niger and Kwara states. Ansaru has been linked to several high-profile attacks and kidnappings in Kaduna state and across Nigeria. Mahmuda was primarily engaged in village attacks, kidnappings for ransom, forced labour and illegal taxation of herders and farmers. In August 2025, the leader and deputy leader of Ansaru were arrested and a trial was set to start in January 2026 with charges related to terrorism and other crimes. Deputy leader of Ansaru is also associated with Mahmuda. Furthermore, a Boko Haram faction, known as **Wulowulo**, has established a presence in Kwara state. Meanwhile, Sahel-based al-Qaeda-affiliated Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) also claimed its first attack in Kwara state in late October 2025.

For more information on the methods and tactics of these groups, see [4.3.3\(a\) Security situation in Nigeria: recent events](#).

2.2.2. Herders and farmers and communal militias

Last update: March 2026

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Security 2025, 1.1.3., 1.2.2., 1.2.7., 2.1.5., 2.1.7., 2.2.4., 2.4.3.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Farmer-herder violence has been long-standing in Nigeria. These tensions appear to be fuelled by competition over ever-dwindling resources and the impacts of climate change. Since herders are predominantly Muslim and farming communities largely Christian, tensions between the two may take a religious dimension which also overlaps with ethnic differences (e.g. between Fulani and Hausa). Farmer-herder violence, which has further been described as organised criminality led by armed groups or as terrorism, intensified in early 2025.

The highest levels of violence related to herders and farmers conflict are reported in the North-Central and North-West regions. In the second quarter of 2025, mass casualty attacks were reported in Benue and Plateau states. Violence between herders and farmers was sometimes inflicted by unidentified perpetrators. In some instances, herders and farmers have organised themselves into militias. Both groups have engaged in coordinated and mass-casualty attacks against each other's communities. These confrontations have also involved the killing of livestock, cattle rustling, destruction of property and farm produce.

Inter- and intra-communal clashes have also been reported in several parts of Nigeria, mainly in the North-Central and North-West, with some incidents also reported in the southern states. Community groups, often organised along ethnic or tribal lines, have at times formed communal militias. These clashes, typically fuelled by competition over land and natural resources, have led to civilian fatalities and property destruction.





Within this context, organised criminal activity and clashes between bandits and vigilante groups have been also reported.

2.2.3. Pro-Biafra separatist groups

Last update: March 2026

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 1.1.3.](#), [2.4.1.](#), [2.4.4.](#), [2.4.5.](#); [Country Focus 2025, 2.9.1.](#); [COI Update 2026, 1.1.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The Indigenous People of Biafra (**IPOB**), a splinter faction from the Movement for Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (**MASSOB**), is a secessionist group fighting for the restoration of the Republic of Biafra and designated as a terrorist organisation, banned by the Nigerian government in 2017. Since the 2021 arrest of its leader, Nnamdi Kanu, armed violence linked to the group has declined. Nevertheless, IPOB has been enforcing a sit-at-home order across the South-East using looting, arson, and targeted killings towards those disrespectful of the order. Kanu was sentenced to life imprisonment in November 2025.

The Eastern Security Network (**ESN**) is IPOB's paramilitary wing, whose strength is unknown, and it was created in December 2020 to allegedly protect the Igbos from attacks by armed men, including Fulani herders. Over 2024, ESN launched a campaign that dislodged Fulanis and criminal settlements in the forests of the South-East. During the same period, ESN also fought against security forces and regularly targeted police and military installations.

Since 2023, violent activities in the South-East, including attacks targeting security forces, were conducted by armed men linked to Simon Ekpa, a Finland-based agitator and founder of the Biafra Republic Government in Exile (**BRGIE**) and the Biafran Liberation Army (**BLA**), both created in 2025. The BRGIE is now considered more violent than IPOB. It has begun recruiting fighters, including among ESN members, and seems to be linked to the rising violence in the South-East region. The BLA has carried out violent attacks in the South-East, including kidnappings, killings, sexual violence, and trafficking in human beings. In September 2025, Ekpa was sentenced in Finland to six years for terrorism-related offences.

2.2.4. Criminal groups

Last update: March 2026

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Security 2025, 1.1.3.](#), [1.2.3.](#); [Country Focus 2025, 2.2.3.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Bandit groups, also known as organised criminals, unknown gunmen or terrorists, are mobile, economically motivated, and characterised by fragmentation and varying levels of capability and organisation. Reported forms of violence include armed robberies, killings, sexual violence, kidnappings, cattle rustling, armed attacks and raids on motorbikes targeting local communities. The intensity of their attacks has been steadily increasing and banditry-related



violence intensified across Nigeria's North-West and North-Central zones as well as parts of the South-West, including Lagos.

Furthermore, in southern Nigeria, several violent armed groups originated as university confraternities or **cult groups**. These include Black Axe (Aiye) also perceived as the Neo-Black Movement of Africa (NBM), which runs cells in numerous countries; the Supreme Eiyé Confraternity, operating mainly in Lagos; the Supreme Vikings Confraternity, strongly established in Edo and Delta states; the Buccaneers (Alora Sea Lords); the Maphite gang, dominant in Edo State; Deygbam, Deywel, Icelanders and Greenlanders, which are primarily operating in Rivers, Edo, Delta, and Bayelsa states. Among them, rivalries over the control of territories were reported. While these groups are well-known, the most recorded incidents of lethal violence were linked to unidentified gangs. Black Axe is particularly famous for its violence and brutality as it uses kidnappings, extortion, smuggling and drug dealing in big cities such as Benin City, Lagos and Port Harcourt.

Organised criminal groups as well as Nigerian confraternities, such as Black Axe, Supreme Viking Confraternity, Arobaga Vikings, the Maphite, and the ACHAD Life Mission International (operating in Kaduna and Plateau states) are also involved in [trafficking in human beings](#) and other [criminal activities](#) with their networks collaborating with European mafias and other organised criminal groups.

2.2.5. Other non-state actors

Last update: March 2026

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 2.2.3., 2.2.8., 2.3.3., 2.5., 2.16., 2.17.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Family members, friends and community members have also been actors of persecution or serious harm against [individuals with disabilities, including mental health issues](#), [individuals accused of witchcraft](#), and [persons with diverse SOGIESC](#). They have also been perpetrators of [domestic and sexual violence](#), [female genital mutilation or cutting \(FGM/C\)](#) and [forced marriage, especially child marriage](#), using coercion in the form of physical violence, threats, verbal harassment and financial oppression. In the case of FGM/C, older community members, midwives, and medical professionals typically carry out the procedure.

In the context of [trafficking in human being](#), although it is driven by criminal networks, multiple actors play critical roles throughout the recruitment and exploitation process. These include traditional religious figures (such as juju priests), who use oath rituals to control victims; community leaders and family members, who may facilitate the process through deception or threats; corrupt officials and other intermediaries, whose collaboration provides the logistical support required at various stages of the trafficking cycle.



For further information on human rights violations committed by different State and non-State actors and their relevance as potential exclusion grounds, see [7. Exclusion](#).



3. Refugee status

This chapter provides analysis and guidance on the potential international protection needs of selected profiles of applicants. These profiles were selected based on their relevance in the caseload of EU Member States. The list of profiles addressed in this chapter is non-exhaustive and the fact that a certain profile is included or not is without prejudice to the determination of their protection needs. Furthermore, the order of listed profiles does not reflect any ranking of the potential level of risk of persecution.

While the conclusions under this common analysis provide general guidance, the protection needs of each applicant should be **examined individually**. The non-exhaustive lists of examples with regard to sub-profiles at a differentiated risk and to circumstances, which would normally increase or decrease the risk, are to be taken into account in light of all circumstances in the individual case.

The considerations under each profile should, furthermore, be viewed without prejudice to the credibility assessment of the applicant's claims. This common analysis deals solely with issues of risk analysis and qualification.

For each profile, the guidance responds to the following questions:

Step 1: Do the reported acts qualify as persecution?

This part provides examples of acts reported to be committed against individuals belonging to the profile as well as guidance on whether such acts would reach the level of persecution according to Article 9 QD/QR.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

This part assesses how likely it is for applicants within the profile to have a well-founded fear of persecution. Further guidance is provided with regard to the circumstances which should be taken into account in the individual assessment, addressing also how they would impact the risk.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

This part provides guidance on whether in case of established well-founded fear of persecution, this would be connected to a reason falling within the provision of Article 10 QD/QR (nexus).

Relevant COI is also included in the analysis to substantiate the assessment provided. Links to the relevant EUAA COI reports and/or queries are also added.



For more guidance on how to read the following subsections, see 'EUAA, [Refugee status](#) in *Country Guidance: explained*, February 2026'.



3.1. Individuals within the reach of Boko Haram

Last update: March 2026

This profile refers to individuals who have been or may be targeted in areas where Boko Haram operates. For the areas of operation of Boko Haram see [2.2.1. Boko Haram and other Islamist armed groups](#).

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Country Focus 2025, 2.10](#); [Security 2025, 1.2.1](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.1](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts to which individuals within the reach of Boko Haram could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, civilians who are considered apostates by JAS, including members of the Muslim population, are often targeted through suicide attacks, massacres, enslavement, raids and abductions. Women victims of kidnapping are often forced to marry JAS fighters and are subjected to sexual violence and other abuses. Enslavement by JAS of those it labels 'infidels' or 'apostates' and by ISWAP of non-Muslims is permissible. While ISWAP limits violence against Muslim civilians, non-Muslims remain unprotected under its rule. ISWAP has mainly targeted the military forces and Christian communities. It has also carried out massacres of civilians accused of breaching its rules and those perceived as government collaborators, attacking towns and killing inhabitants, including Muslims, because of unpaid 'taxes'. Children have also been recruited by Boko Haram into armed conflict, including as soldiers.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

For Christians in areas where Boko Haram operates, a well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated, as they have been widely targeted by the group.

For **other individuals in areas where Boko Haram operates**, the individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Compliance with Boko Haram rules/values:** JAS considers non-abiding Muslims to be apostates and targets them accordingly. ISWAP has carried out massacres of civilians accused of breaching its rules, including against Muslims. Justifications include refusal to pay 'taxes', active support or suspected cooperation with government forces, or defiance of its authority.
- **Occupation:** Persons with certain professions may be accused of spying or not complying with Boko Haram rules/values and in such cases, they would have a higher risk of persecution. For example, ISWAP has increasingly targeted farmers, fishermen, loggers, herders, and metal scrap collectors, accusing them of spying and relaying information to the military and local militias opposing them. Humanitarian workers have



been also targeted. Members of civil society organisations have also faced threats and physical violence for speaking out against Boko Haram.

- **Gender and age:** Children and women are particularly targeted for abductions and sexual violence, especially in IDP camps. See also [3.14. Women and girls](#). Schoolchildren have been significantly impacted by Boko Haram's campaign against secular education. Attacks on schools and widespread abductions by Boko Haram have led to the closure or destruction of thousands of educational institutions at all levels. Furthermore, children from North-East face a higher risk of recruitment, abduction, or exploitation by Boko Haram.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for non-abiding Muslims and non-Muslims (including Christians), persecution is highly likely to be for reasons of **religion** as they are viewed as infidels or apostates. For those persecuted for not complying with Boko Haram rules, persecution is highly likely to be for reasons of **religion** and/or **(imputed) political opinion** as they are often perceived as Nigerian authorities' sympathisers or collaborators. For the potential nexus regarding persecution of women and girls, see also [3.14. Women and girls](#).

3.2. Individuals with perceived links to Boko Haram

Last update: March 2026

This profile refers to individuals perceived by the Nigerian authorities and/or by their communities to be affiliated with Boko Haram. Living in areas under Boko Haram control or having family relations to Boko Haram members could trigger perception of Boko Haram affiliation. The scope of this profile does not encompass members of Boko Haram, including former members, for which exclusion considerations would be particularly relevant (see [7. Exclusion](#)).

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 2.13](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which individuals with perceived links to Boko Haram could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, suspected Boko Haram members and affiliates face serious human rights violations perpetrated by the Nigerian security forces including extrajudicial killings, rape, torture and enforced disappearances. Elderly civilians escaping Boko Haram-controlled areas and children due to their own or their mothers' alleged links to ISWAP have been also arbitrarily detained. Unlawful military detention against young women and girls escaping Boko Haram was also documented.



The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that individuals with perceived links to Boko Haram could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be considered. More specifically, they face severe challenges to reintegrate, especially women, due to the lack of community support. Furthermore, boys face greater discrimination because of the belief that they may have joined the group more willingly than girls.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

A well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated for individuals with perceived links to Boko Haram as they often face serious human rights violations by the Nigerian security forces.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Persecution of individuals under this profile is highly likely to be for reasons of **political opinion**, since being perceived as having links to Boko Haram is seen as supporting an insurgent/terrorist group and/or as being critical of the authorities' policies and/or conduct.

3.3. Members and perceived supporters of pro-Biafra separatist movements

Last update: March 2026

This profile refers to members of pro-Biafra separatist movements, mainly of IPOB, as well as to their perceived supporters.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 2.9.1](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Nigerian authorities are negatively disposed to members of separatist groups as well as to anyone expressing support, endorsement or sympathy with the Biafra cause.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which members and perceived supporters of pro-Biafra separatist movements could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, separatist movements' members are often targeted by the Nigerian security forces during special operations. State repression against separatist movements and their perceived sympathisers in South-East Nigeria, under the pretext of combating IPOB/ESN/Biafra terrorism, has been described as frequent and excessive. Human rights violations include arbitrary arrests, prolonged detentions without trial, secret abductions, torture, extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances. Many real or suspected supporters of pro-Biafra agitation are held in military facilities under harsh, inhumane conditions, sometimes for years and without formal charges or trial.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that members and perceived supporters of pro-Biafra separatist movements could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures should also be considered. More specifically, extortion of perceived supporters at checkpoints by security forces has been reported. During election periods, intimidation targeting Igbo communities is known to increase, including violence against Igbo voters as well as public hate speech and attacks on Igbo-owned businesses.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for members and perceived supporters of separatist movements to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Home area and ethnicity:** Igbos living in the South-East states would have a higher risk of being perceived as supporters of separatist movements and therefore would have a higher risk of persecution. Igbo civilians have suffered from harassment and extortion by government security forces, especially during election periods.
- **Visibility of activities:** Most prominent individuals who are strongly supportive of the Biafra cause would have a higher risk of persecution as they are monitored very closely. For other persons supporting the cause, the state does not have the capacity to track them all; however, the authorities might become aware of their support through other means.
- **Age:** Young people are more frequently stopped by Nigerian security forces at the numerous checkpoints across the South-East, and if anything linked to Biafra is found, such as content on their phones, they are arrested, detained or otherwise extorted.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **political opinion**, as pro-Biafra cause is viewed as opposing the State.



Exclusion considerations could be relevant to this profile, as (former) members of separatist movements may have been involved in excludable acts. See [7. Exclusion](#).

3.4. Individuals (perceived as) not supporting the pro-Biafra cause

Last update: March 2026

This profile refers to Igbo individuals in the South-East region who do not support the Biafra cause or are perceived as such by the separatist groups.



The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 2.9.2](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Due to actions linked to separatist groups, civic space in the South-East is reported as increasingly shrinking, and individuals who publicly criticise those groups' methods or advocate for moderation and non-violence could face potential repercussions. Since 2021, a sit-at-home order has been enforced by IPOB in the South-East, imposing a shutdown of businesses and services every Monday. This order was originally intended as a symbolic act of solidarity to demand the release of IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which individuals (perceived as) not supporting the pro-Biafra cause could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, they have been targets of violence, including killings, by members of the separatist groups. Targeted killings of individuals who defy sit-at-home order have been also part of the separatist groups' enforcement methods.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that individuals (perceived as) not supporting the pro-Biafra cause could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures should also be considered. More specifically, when defying the sit-at-home order, they have been targeted with threatening messages as well by the burning of vehicles and looting.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for individuals (perceived as) not supporting the pro-Biafra cause to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Visibility:** traditional leaders, religious figures, journalists, politicians, and civil society representatives perceived as unsupportive of the Biafra cause are particularly targeted. Civilians refusing to take part in weekly pro-separatist actions, in particular those not closing their businesses/services during the sit-at-home order, are also considered as enemies of the cause. Furthermore, individuals that publicly criticise those groups' methods, or advocate for moderation and non-violence would face a higher risk.
- **Occupation:** young Igbos serving in the Nigerian security agencies, and particularly in the Nigerian army, have been specifically targeted by armed groups in the South-East. Their family-members can also be targeted.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **political opinion**, as behaviour perceived as questioning the legitimacy, methods, or direction of the agitation organised by pro-Biafra separatist groups is labelled as 'treason' or betrayal of the cause.





3.5. Members and supporters of political parties

Last update: March 2026

This profile refers to members and supporters of political parties active in Nigeria, and mainly addresses the issue of political/electoral violence. For activists and protesters see [3.8. Protesters, human rights defenders and activists.](#)

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.2., 2.9.](#); [Security 2025, 1.2.5., 2.4.2., 2.5.5., 2.6.3., 2.6.4.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) are the main political parties in Nigeria. Although the legal framework of Nigeria guarantees the right to organise in political parties, equal participation in political life, freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly, in practice, legislation on sedition, criminal defamation, and false information have constrained these rights.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which members and supporters of political parties could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, incidents of violence were reported in the context of gubernatorial and state elections, including assaults, shootings, abductions and killings. Killings also occurred in the context of clashes between APC and PDP supporters over control of local government areas (LGAs).

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that members and supporters of political parties could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures should also be considered. More specifically, federal and state authorities routinely prohibit or disperse public gatherings deemed to threaten national security or likely to provoke political, ethnic, or religious unrest.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for members and supporters of political parties to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, and **in particular the level of political activity**. Candidates, and members of political parties, political figures, as well as active organisers of political elections face a higher risk of persecution, especially during pre-election periods.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **political opinion**, as membership or support for a specific political party is perceived by other parties as opposing their political stance.



3.6. Individuals belonging to herder or farmer communities

Last update: March 2026

This profile refers to individuals belonging in herder and farmer communities, including unarmed civilians but also members of armed groups of herders and farmers and/or communal militias.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.2., 1.3., 2.10., 2.11., 2.12.](#); [Security 2025, 1.1.3., 1.2.2., 1.2.7., 2.1.1., 2.1.7., 2.3.5., 2.3.6., 2.6.3.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Nigeria continued to witness violence between herders and farmers. Herders and farmers have also been attacked by Islamist groups.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts to which individuals belonging in herders or farmers communities, could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, intercommunal violence between herders and farmers continues to cause killings, abductions, destruction of villages, sexual violence and forced displacement.

In addition to these communal conflicts, Boko Haram has also targeted herder and farmer populations in conflict-affected regions, by extorting levies or accusing them of spying or providing information to the military and local militias (see also [3.1. Individuals within the reach of Boko Haram](#)).

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for individuals belonging in herder or farmer communities to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Home area:** The highest levels of violence related to herder-farmer conflicts are reported in the North-Central region (especially Benue and Plateau) and the North-West region (particularly Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara) and therefore, individuals from these regions would be at a higher risk of violence in the context of farmer-herder conflict. The North-East remains affected by Boko Haram-related attacks and forced taxation of herders and farmers.
- **Involvement with armed groups:** Those participating in self-defence or vigilante groups would face a higher risk of retaliation from both opposing communities and armed extremist groups, such as Boko Haram.
- **Ownership of land or cattle:** Farmers owning fertile land and herders with large herds would have a higher risk of persecution by both intercommunal and extremist attacks,



as land and livestock represent key economic assets. Armed groups sometimes seize cattle or harvests as ‘tax’ or loot, which deepens economic vulnerability and fuels further displacement.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this may be for reasons of ethnicity (ground of **race** and/or **nationality** under QD/QR). For example, Fulani herders, may be collectively blamed for violence and face retaliatory attacks, or Hausa farming communities may be targeted along ethnic lines in parts of the Middle Belt. Persecution may also be for reasons of **religion** as attacks sometimes take on a sectarian character.

The lines between herder and farmer violence and banditry or cultism are often blurred. See also [4.2.2. Criminal violence](#).



Exclusion considerations could be relevant to this profile, as some individuals belonging to herder or farmer communities may have been involved in excludable acts in the context of the farmer-herder conflict, banditry or cultism. See [7. Exclusion](#).

3.7. Christians and Muslims in specific areas

Last update: March 2026

Christianity is dominant in the South-South, South-West and the South-East regions. Islam is the dominant religion in the North-West and North-East regions where significant Christian populations also reside. Christians and Muslims reside in approximately equal numbers in the North-Central region.

Christians and Muslims have been affected by violence in several parts of Nigeria, particularly in regions marked by religious tension or armed conflict.

Christians: In areas where Boko Haram operates, Christians have a well-founded fear of persecution in general (see [3.1. Individuals within the reach of Boko Haram](#)). In the North-Central and North-West regions Christians have been targeted in the context of farmers and herders conflict (see [3.6. Individuals belonging in herder or farmer communities](#)).

Muslims: In the North-Central and North-West regions Muslims have been targeted in the context of farmers and herders conflict (see [3.6. Individuals belonging in herder or farmer communities](#)). In areas where Boko Haram operates, non-abiding Muslims are targeted by the group as they are viewed as infidels or apostates (see [3.1. Individuals within the reach of Boko Haram](#)).



3.8. Protesters, human rights defenders and activists

Last update: March 2026

This profile refers to individuals who participate in protests, human rights defenders, political or social activists, and bloggers, as well as persons involved in civil society organisations and civic movements.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 2.7., 2.8.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association are guaranteed under Nigerian law. Although ruled unconstitutional, authorities continue to enforce the requirement for police approval of protests.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Legitimate actions of law enforcement, in particular in the context of protests, would not amount to persecution. However, other acts to which protesters, human rights activists and defenders could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, security forces and police have used excessive and sometimes lethal force to disperse protests. There were also documented cases of killing, physical assault, arbitrary arrest, and detention under appalling conditions, with some protesters and activists charged with treason, which could lead to death sentences.

Outside of the context of specific protests, human rights defenders and activists have faced harassment, intimidation, abduction, physical violence and widespread arrests. The government has used the 2015 Cybercrimes Act to restrict online publications and to arrest and detain activists for their online activity.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of the acts that human rights defenders and activists could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures should also be considered. More specifically, raids, search of materials, state surveillance, shutdowns of communication services by state agents have been reported.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for protesters, human rights defenders and activists to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Place of activity:** The North-Central region recorded the highest levels of civic space restrictions followed by the North-West. The southern regions reported relatively lower restrictions due to stronger civic institutions and greater media freedom. However, in the South-East region, the right to free speech by citizens has been severely curtailed by fears of arrests, abductions and killings by both government security forces and by pro-Biafra armed groups (see [3.3. Members and perceived supporters of pro-Biafra](#)

[separatist movements](#) and [3.4. Individuals perceived as not supporting the pro-Biafra cause](#)). Furthermore, risk may be higher in urban centres such as Abuja, Lagos, Port Harcourt, where major protests occur and where authorities deploy large police forces. For the North-East see [3.1. Individuals within the reach of Boko Haram](#).

- **Visibility of activities and public profile:** Individuals or activists with a high media exposure or leadership roles in civic movements are at increased risk of surveillance, arrest and physical violence.
- **Nature of activities:** Those involved in anti-corruption campaigns, political reform movements, activities critical of top government figures and public officials, as well as advocacy for LGBTIQ rights would have a higher risk of persecution.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **political opinion**, as for instance criticism of government institutions and of their practices, or advocacy for social reform is often interpreted as opposition to the authorities.

3.9. Journalists and other media workers

Last update: March 2026

This profile refers to journalists and other media workers perceived by the Nigerian authorities as critical of the government. Sensitive topics include reporting on corruption, abuse of power, fraud, diversion of public funds against Nigerian officials as well as protests against the government. For journalists unsupportive of the pro-Biafra cause see [3.4. Individuals perceived as not supporting the pro-Biafra cause](#).

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 2.6.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts to which journalists and other media workers could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, certain laws obstruct the work of journalists and have led to arbitrary arrests and detentions. Physical attacks have also been documented. State security agencies, including the military and intelligence services were responsible for more attacks on journalists than any other actor.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that journalists and media workers could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should also be considered. More specifically, governmental interference in the news media remains 'significant', taking the form of pressure, harassment of journalists and outlets, and, in some cases, censorship. Security agencies intimidated journalists, including editors and media owners, particularly in response to coverage perceived as critical of the government.



Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

A well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated for **journalists and other media workers perceived as critical** of the authorities, owing to the content of their work.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Persecution of individuals under this profile is highly likely to be for reasons of **political opinion**, as such journalists and media workers are viewed as critical of the authorities' policies and/or conduct.

3.10. Individuals accused of witchcraft

Last update: March 2026

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 2.17.](#); [Targeting 2018, 3.9.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Belief in witchcraft (or juju) is widespread in Nigeria. Nigeria's Criminal Code and Penal Code prohibit witchcraft-related acts, including self-identification as a witch, accusations of witchcraft and use of charms or juju.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which individuals accused of witchcraft could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, killings, mob violence, torture and physical assault by community members have been reported. Although Nigerian law prohibits accusing someone of witchcraft, prosecutions and convictions are rare.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that individuals accused of witchcraft could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be considered. More specifically, these individuals have been subjected to public humiliation and forced confessions. They are also often denied education, employment and health care.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for individuals accused of witchcraft to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Age, gender and family status:** Children and especially elderly women and widows would have a higher risk of being accused of witchcraft and therefore be subjected to persecution. A report of 2010 indicated that orphan children would also have a higher risk of being accused of witchcraft.





- **Relevant events:** A report of 2010 and of 2012 indicated that misfortune, whether illness, death or other misfortunate events, is rarely considered to have occurred completely naturally. Therefore, relevant events in the local community (e.g. death of a child, miscarriage of a pregnant woman) may increase the risk of witch-hunting.
- **Nature and visibility of a mental or physical disability:** People with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, epilepsy or widows struggling with their mental health are particularly vulnerable to accusations of witchcraft and therefore persecution. Signs of confusion or silence may be misinterpreted as evidence of witchcraft. A report of 2016 also indicated persons with kyphosis (hunchback) being potential targets. See also [3.16. Individuals with disabilities, including mental health issues](#).

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this may be for reasons of **religion**, as witchcraft can be viewed as having a spiritual dimension. Persecution may also be for reasons of **membership of a particular social group**. For example, persons accused of witchcraft on the basis of a physical or mental disabilities, share an innate characteristic (the disability) and have a distinct identity in Nigeria as indicated by the severe social stigma.

3.11. Individuals refusing chieftaincy titles

Last update: March 2026

This profile refers to individuals refusing traditional chieftaincy titles, which are mostly related to ethnic groups.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 2.15.](#); [Targeting 2018, 3.9.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

There are different levels of 'traditional' chiefs and some are part of the state administrative system and are appointed by the state government. The role is well-respected and sought-after. There is strong competition for certain chieftaincy titles, and titles are rarely refused. However, some people do refuse them due to religious convictions, personal or professional obligations, or incompatibility with modern lifestyles.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

In general, the treatment faced by individuals refusing chieftaincy titles would not amount to persecution. More specifically, while in some cases social pressure may arise within families or communities, particularly in hereditary cases, refusal of a chieftaincy title is generally permitted without legal or formal repercussions, and physical coercion is rare. In most communities, refusing a chieftaincy title is rather respected, and sometimes even admired.



3.12. Persons with diverse SOGIESC

Last update: March 2026

This profile refers to persons who are perceived as not conforming to state, religious and/or social norms because of their sexual orientations, gender identities and/or expressions, or sex characteristics, including the treatment of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, trans, intersex or queer, also commonly referred to as LGBTIQ persons.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 2.5](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which persons with diverse SOGIESC could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, same-sex relationships are criminalised under Nigerian law and can lead to up to 14 years of imprisonment. In the northern states applying the *sharia* law, flogging and the death penalty may still be imposed. Physical attacks, sexual assault and sometimes even deadly violence by non-state actors, such as community and family members as well as neighbourhood vigilante groups have been reported. Family members may also subject their LGBTIQ relatives to conversion practices, including forced confinement, starvation and torture.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that persons with diverse SOGIESC could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be also considered. More specifically, widespread discrimination by both authorities and society against LGBTIQ individuals in Nigeria persists, including when accessing private and public services such as justice, employment, housing and health care. Provider bias and legal barriers can result in denied or substandard care. For example, gender-affirming care for transgender people in particular, remains scarce and they turn to self-prescription of hormones. Police officers often carry out abuses against LGBTIQ individuals, including extortion attempts and discriminatory actions. Extortion, hate speech and verbal abuse by community members and vigilante groups as well as homophobic messages by religious institutions have been also reported.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

A well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated for persons with diverse SOGIESC, given the criminalisation of same-sex relationships and acts, the severity of punishments as well as the pervasive social discrimination and stigma.

It has to be noted that an applicant cannot be expected to conceal their sexual orientation⁽⁶⁾ or gender identity to avoid persecution.

⁽⁶⁾ CJEU, [Minister voor Immigratie en Asiel v X and Y and Z v Minister voor Immigratie en Asiel](#), joined cases C-199/12 to C-201/12, judgment of 7 November 2013, operative part (Court's ruling).



Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Persecution of individuals under this profile is highly likely to be for reasons of **membership of a particular social group**, based on the shared characteristic or belief that is so fundamental to the identity of the applicant, that they should not be forced to renounce it, as well as their distinct identity in Nigeria, as shown by the criminalisation and the social stigma. Persecution may also be for reasons of **religion**, for instance due to the implementation of *sharia* law by religious courts.

3.13. Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings

Last update: March 2026

This profile refers to persons who have been subjected to trafficking, irrespective of whether exploitation has occurred, as well as to potential victims of trafficking.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Nigeria ratified the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children in 2001 and enacted domestic legislation through the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act, as amended in 2015.

Despite Nigeria's legal framework prohibiting trafficking in human beings, the practice remains widespread, and law enforcement remains limited. Nigeria ranks first among the nationalities of trafficking victims identified within the European Union. It remains a source, transit and destination country for trafficking in human beings. The practice affects women, men and children for various forms of exploitation. Trafficking occurs internally as well as transnationally, with individuals taken from Nigeria to African and European countries.

For the state response to victims of trafficking and information on the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) see [5.1. The Nigerian State](#) under [5. Actors of protection](#).

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Trafficking in human beings amounts to persecution. Trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude, street vending/begging, criminal exploitation including cybercrime, abduction, kidnap, rape, forced pregnancy in the context of 'baby factories' have been reported. There are also instances of market for infants and children and illegal adoptions. Trafficked individuals have been reported to be forced to work under coercion, and subjected to physical and psychological abuse, threats and enslavement-like conditions, while minors are kept in facilities where they face unsanitary conditions, neglect, and exposure to disease. Women and girls are primarily trafficked for sexual exploitation, while men and boys are exploited in forced labour and illicit activities.



The actors involved in trafficking in human beings include organised criminal groups, confraternities, Boko Haram, family and community members, as well as individuals in religious settings. There are also instances of involvement of corrupt officials, security officers, and aid workers.

Other acts of violence by traffickers could also amount to persecution. A victim of trafficking may face persecution either by the same trafficker(s) or by a different trafficker(s).

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts to which victims of trafficking in human beings could be subjected and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be considered. More specifically, victims of trafficking often experience discrimination, rejection or exclusion within their families and communities, particularly women associated with sexual exploitation, including those who become pregnant or have children. Economic hardship, social stigma, blame and shaming that, among other things, hinder access to employment, contribute to many victims returning to trafficking.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for applicants to face persecution in relation to trafficking should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Home area:** Recruiting for trafficking in human beings seems more prevalent in certain regions of Nigeria and therefore the risk of being (re-)trafficked would also be higher in these areas. In the North-East region, extremist groups like Boko Haram forcibly recruit, abduct, and exploit children and women as labourers, soldiers, or sex slaves. In Kaduna state a sect known as ACHAD Life Mission International is allegedly linked to trafficking in human beings' activities. Plateau State (North-Central region) has been recently described as a human trafficking hotspot, particularly for cases involving the trafficking of children. In southern states such as Abia, Lagos, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo, the practice of 'baby-factories' is especially prevalent. Rural areas in southern regions are also the place of origin of victims mainly recruited for sex trafficking, forced labour, and 'baby-factories'. Most of the trafficking victims for sexual exploitation identified came from the southern region, especially Lagos, Edo and Delta states. Edo state and, in particular, Benin City, has been the central hub for sex trafficking from Nigeria to Europe for the last decades.
- **Age, gender and family status:** Orphans, children and single women may face a higher risk of persecution.
- **Socio-economic and educational background:** Limited education, poverty and unemployment are factors that may put the individual at a higher risk of (re-)trafficking. IDPs are targets of traffickers.
- **Support network:** Lack of family or rejection by family, including due to shame associated with having been a victim of trafficking in human beings, may place individuals at a higher risk of persecution. This risk may also arise when family members themselves arranged the trafficking, and the victims have continued to

provide them with financial support. Therefore, applicants whose family is involved in the trafficking would also be at a higher risk.

- **Level of power/capability of the traffickers:** Victims of trafficking who still have to pay off the debt or who are still on the radar of the trafficker may be at higher risk of persecution. An applicant who testified against or opposed to traffickers may also be at a higher risk of persecution.
- **Perception of the local community:** Returnees, especially women who experience social isolation within their community may be forced to return to trafficking.
- **Health situation:** Some victims experience severe physical and mental health issues after being trafficked. Such applicants may be more vulnerable to re-trafficking.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an **actual victim of trafficking**, this may be for reasons of **membership of particular social group**. For example, former victims of sex trafficking may be subjected to persecution based on their common background which cannot be changed (the past experience of having been trafficked) and a distinct identity in Nigeria, because they are perceived as being different by the surrounding society, as indicated by their stigmatisation.

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for a **potential victim of trafficking** in human beings, the individual circumstances, including gender, need to be taken into account to determine whether a nexus to a reason for persecution can be substantiated. Short of a nexus, the case should be examined under Article 15(b) QD/QR.



Exclusion considerations could be relevant to this profile. For example, some victims of human trafficking may have taken later the role of traffickers themselves and therefore, they may have been involved in excludable acts. See [7. Exclusion](#).

3.14. Women and girls

It should be noted that the different forms of violence against women (above 18 years old) and girls (below 18 years old) in Nigeria are often significantly interlinked. In such cases, the following subsections should be read in conjunction.

3.14.1. Gender-based violence (GBV)

Last update: March 2026

This profile refers to women and girls at risk of GBV. For more specific forms of GBV see sub-profiles below [3.14.2. Female genital mutilation or cutting \(FGM/C\)](#) and [3.14.3. Child marriage and forced marriage](#). See also [3.13 Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings](#).

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 2.3.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The Constitution prohibits gender-based discrimination and while Nigeria is signatory to international and regional treaties on women's rights, it has not yet incorporated the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) into national law. In 2015, Nigeria enacted legislation addressing various forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, rape, FGM/C, and child marriage. However, the law has not been adopted by all states, and its implementation remains uneven. The existence of shelters and services for abused women has been reported particularly in larger cities like Lagos and Abuja, however significant gaps were identified.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which women and girls could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, women and girls continue to face widespread and severe forms of physical violence throughout Nigeria. Reported acts include domestic violence, sexual violence including rape and sexual exploitation, sexual slavery and forced marriages, violence linked to socio-cultural practices and femicides.

Domestic violence is widespread and among married or cohabiting victims, 98 % experienced abuse by their intimate partners - which is often seen as a private matter. Legislation allows forms of domestic violence and under *sharia* law, 'beating of the wife is not a crime so long that the beating does not inflict serious injury or grievous harmful'. Underreporting of domestic violence against women and girls is common due to the risk of victim blaming.

Boko Haram has been responsible for serious violations of women's rights including forced marriages and rape. In 2024, Boko Haram militants abducted 400 individuals, the majority of whom were women and children during attacks on IDP camps. In 2024, over 900 cases of conflict-related gender-based violence were reported in the North-East, of which 65 % were children.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that women and girls could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be considered. More specifically, Nigerian women face widespread discrimination such as access to education, housing, employment, health care and other essential services. This combination may leave them vulnerable to isolation, poverty and struggle to secure basic needs.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for women and girls to face persecution in the context of gender-based violence should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Home area:** Women and girls from North-East Nigeria, especially in conflict-affected states face a higher risk of persecution, even more so women in IDP camps (see also [3.1. Individuals within the reach of Boko Haram](#)). In rural areas, lack of services, harmful



practices and discriminatory laws may be more prevalent due to the reduced access to protection.

- **Age:** Young women and adolescent girls face a heightened risk of sexual exploitation.
- **Educational and economic background:** Women with limited or no education have increased vulnerability to violence.
- **Family status and disabilities:** Unmarried, widowed, divorced, unemployed women, as well as single mothers face abuse, stigma, social exclusion and financial hardship or extreme poverty. Widows are often denied their late husband's property due to customary laws, exposed to gender-based violence through harmful traditions, and subjected to widowhood cultural practices, including levirate marriage, which have been also described as inhumane or unfair. Single women face severe barriers to accessing housing, employment, education and health care. Women and girls with disabilities face discrimination in accessing health care including for sexual, reproductive health and maternal health. Whereas some of these acts, as such, would not amount to persecution, they may render the applicant more vulnerable to other acts of violence.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for a woman in the context of gender-based violence, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **membership of a particular social group**⁽⁷⁾ due to their innate characteristic (being a female) and distinct identity in Nigeria as indicated by the social, moral, and legal norms affecting specifically women in Nigeria. Persecution may also be for reasons of **religion** as some forms of violence against women can be driven by religious norms, including when Boko Haram is the actor of persecution.

3.14.2. Female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C)

Last update: March 2026

This profile refers to women and girls who have not undergone FGM/C and assesses their risk to be subjected to the practice or the implications of the refusal.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 2.3.](#); [Country Focus 2017, 4.2.5](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

While there are laws forbidding FGM/C, the practice is driven by deep-rooted cultural, religious, ethnic and social norms and remains widespread with low rates of reporting and prosecution. There is a lack of state resources and capacity among the government to curb the practice. Furthermore, a concerning trend of medicalisation of FGM/C has emerged, whereby the procedure is performed by healthcare providers in healthcare facilities, perpetuating the practice under the guise of safety.

(7) CJEU, [WS v Intervjuirashit organ na Darzhavna agentsia za bezhantsite pri Ministerskia savet](#), case C-621/21, judgment of 16 January 2024, paras. 52 and 57.



Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

FGM/C amounts to persecution. Nigeria has the largest number of women and girls who have undergone FGM/C within the West and Central African region and has the third-highest prevalence of FGM worldwide. In some cultural contexts, victims may be labelled as unclean or disobedient and are subject to insults and accusations of dishonouring their families if they refuse FGM/C. Many victims face intense pressure from their families to partake in the practice. Coercion may take various forms such as physical assaults, threats, verbal harassment and financial oppression.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for women and girls to be subjected to FGM/C should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Home area:** FGM/C is most prevalent in the South-East and South-West regions while the North-East records the lowest prevalence. Furthermore, it is more prevalent in rural areas. However, lately the risk has increased also in urban areas. The most affected states are Lagos, Kaduna, Imo, Kano and Oyo.
- **Ethnicity:** FGM/C occurs across all ethnic groups, with the highest prevalence among Yoruba and lowest among Tiv and Igala women.
- **Age:** FGM occurs across all age groups, although the prevalence is higher among girls aged 0–14.
- **Family perceptions and background:** A report of 2014 indicated that educated parents and parents choosing to send their daughters to school are less likely to want to subject their daughters to FGM/C. Families who choose not to subject their daughters may face intense pressure and other consequences such as disputes, ostracism, gossip or threats to carry out the procedure involuntarily. Those whose mothers and generally broader family, support the practice are at higher risk.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **membership of a particular social group** due to the common characteristic (not having undergone FGM in accordance with local traditions or who continue to refuse to undergo the practice) and their distinct identity in Nigeria, as they are viewed as ‘unclean’. Additionally, persecution may be for reasons of **religion**, since FGM/C is also driven by religious norms.

3.14.3. Child marriage and forced marriage

Last update: March 2026

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 2.3.](#); [Country Focus 2024, 4.3.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Forced and child marriage are prohibited by law. However, there is a lack of effective implementation of legal provisions and as such, child marriage remains widespread across the country. Nigeria has more than 24 million underage brides. Forced marriages remain common especially in the north regions of Nigeria.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Forced and child marriage amount to persecution. Consequences of refusal to marry, such as physical violence and rape, would also amount to persecution. It also remains a barrier to education, particularly in northern Nigeria where cultural norms lead families to prioritise early marriage over education.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for women and girls to face persecution in the context of forced or child marriage should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Home area:** North-West and North-East regions have the highest rates of women aged 20-24 who were married before the age of 18. Security and instability have continued to influence the prevalence of child marriage in the North-East of Nigeria and Boko Haram and other armed groups force many women and girls into marriage (see also [3.1. Individuals within the reach of Boko Haram](#)).
- **Ethnic group:** Child marriage is particularly common among women from the Hausa ethnic group.
- **Age:** Young women and adolescent girls would have a higher risk of forced or child marriage.
- **Family background:** There is a strong link between poverty and early marriage. Child marriage is more prevalent among girls from low-income families, especially those living in rural regions or having limited access to education. Child marriage is commonly used by families as a protective measure against economic insecurity, abduction and sexual abuse.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant in the context of forced or child marriage, this may be for reasons of **religion**, as forced marriage is permitted under customary or Islamic laws in parts of northern Nigeria, and/or **membership of a particular social group**.

For women or girls who refuse forced marriage or who transgress the social norm by ending that marriage, persecution, where it is substantiated, is highly likely to be for reasons of **membership of a particular social group**. Such women or girls share a common background that cannot be changed, as well as a distinct identity in Nigeria, as they are perceived as not complying with cultural traditions of their communities.

3.15. Children

Last update: March 2026

This profile refers to Nigerian nationals under the age of 18.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Country Focus 2025, 2.4.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.1.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Children in Nigeria have been exposed to various forms of violence by various actors. Being a child is to be taken into account in the assessment on whether an act reaches the threshold of persecution.

On GBV, FGM/C, and child marriage practices against girls, see [3.14. Women and girls](#). Other forms of violence against children are addressed under [3.1. Individuals within the reach of Boko Haram](#) especially concerning the recruitment and use of children and schools' attacks, [3.2. Individuals with perceived links to Boko Haram](#) with particular regard to the unlawful detention by the military for months or years without charge of children escaping Boko Haram, [3.10. Individuals accused of witchcraft](#), [3.13. Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings](#), [4.2.2. Criminal violence](#) regarding the recruitment of children in cult groups as well as school kidnappings. Under some of the abovementioned profiles, being a child is considered a risk-enhancing circumstance.

3.16. Individuals with disabilities, including mental health issues

Last update: March 2026

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 2.16.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Nigeria faces significant challenges in relation to providing health care, including to persons with mental illnesses. The lack of personnel and adequate infrastructure to appropriately address the needs of individuals with (severe) medical issues fails to meet the requirement of Article 6 QD/QR regarding the existence of an actor that inflicts persecution or serious harm, unless the individual is intentionally deprived of health care ⁽⁸⁾.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts to which persons living with mental and physical disabilities could be subjected and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be considered. More specifically, those with disabilities, and especially

⁽⁸⁾ CJEU, [Mohamed M'Bodj v État belge, C-542/13](#), Judgment of the Court (Grand Chamber) of 18 December 2014, paras. 35-36. See also CJEU, [MP v Secretary of State for the Home Department](#), C-353/16, judgment of 24 April 2018 (MP), paras. 57, 59.



those with mental illnesses face severe stigma and discrimination, limiting their access to public services. Stigma associated with mental illness prevents individuals from seeking treatment; persons with mental illnesses are often targeted by mobs. Those with mental health challenges accused of witchcraft or demonic possession are often beaten, tortured and killed.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for individuals with disabilities, including mental health issues, to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Nature and visibility of the mental or physical disability:** Those with either physical disabilities or a mental health illness are susceptible to stigma.
- **Age and gender:** Women and girls with disabilities face discrimination in accessing health care and are at higher risk of gender-based violence and barriers to justice. See also [3.14.1. Gender-based violence \(GBV\)](#) under [3.14. Women and girls](#). Furthermore, women (especially older women) and children are reported to be more vulnerable to accusations of witchcraft due to mental health illness (see [3.10. Individuals accused of witchcraft](#)).
- **Home area:** Especially in rural or conflict-affected areas, persons with disabilities face significant marginalisation with limited access to education, health, and employment, compounded by stigma and discrimination.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this may be for reasons of **religion** (e.g. see [3.10 Individuals accused of witchcraft](#)) and/or **membership of a particular social group**, as they share a common characteristic and they may have a distinct identity in Nigeria, as indicated by the severe social stigma in some cases.



4. Subsidiary protection

This chapter addresses the EU-regulated status of subsidiary protection. Where the applicant has not been found to qualify as a refugee, they may be eligible for subsidiary protection in accordance with Article 15 QD/QR.



The CJEU ruled in 2023 on **the importance of the personal circumstances when determining if an applicant is eligible for subsidiary protection, before identifying the type of serious harm**, notably ⁽⁹⁾:

‘1. Article 15 of Directive 2011/95/EU (...) must be interpreted as meaning that in order to determine whether an applicant for international protection is eligible for subsidiary protection, **the competent national authority must examine all the relevant factors**, relating both to the individual position and personal circumstances of the applicant and to the general situation in the country of origin, **before identifying the type of serious harm** that those factors may potentially substantiate.’

Therefore, where refugee status is not granted, **personal circumstances** (e.g. age, gender, professional and economic background, home area, potential vulnerabilities) **are still to be taken into account in the assessment of Article 15 QD/QR**.



For further information on the **specific personal circumstances** which may be relevant to consider in the assessment of a **real risk of serious harm under Article 15 QD/QR**, see relevant sections below.

4.1. Article 15(a) QD/QR: death penalty or execution

Last update: March 2026



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this section, see ‘EUAA, [Article 15\(a\) QD/QR: death penalty or execution](#) in *Country Guidance: explained*, February 2026’.

⁽⁹⁾ CJEU, *X and Y v Staatssecretaris van Veiligheid en Justitie*, C-125/22, Fourth Chamber, judgment of 9 November 2023, operative part (Court’s ruling).



The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 2.1.1., 2.1.2., 2.5., 2.10.](#); [Security 2025, 1.1.3.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

In Nigeria, the death penalty is a ‘lawful punishment’ imposed nationwide, including for offences that do not meet the threshold of ‘most serious crimes’ under international law. In twelve northern states, *Sharia* Penal Code applies to Muslims, in addition to federal law. Under *sharia*, the death penalty may be imposed for offences such as adultery, blasphemy and same-sex relations, among others. Although no executions have been carried out since 2016, courts across the country still regularly issue death sentences.

State affiliated actors as well as non-state armed actors, including Boko Haram, vigilantes, and bandit groups have also carried out extrajudicial killings and executions.



As indicated under [3. Refugee status](#), some profiles of applicants from Nigeria may be at risk of death penalty or execution, e.g. [3.12. Persons with diverse SOGIESC](#), [3.1. Individuals within the reach of Boko Haram](#), [3.3. Members and perceived supporters of pro-Biafra separatist movements](#), and if such risk is substantiated, those individuals would qualify for refugee status.

For other individuals, where a real risk of death penalty or execution is substantiated but no nexus to a reason for persecution is established, Article 15(a) QD/QR would apply. The home area of the applicant is to be taken into account when assessing the real risk of death penalty or execution. For example, individuals in *sharia*-implementing states may face a higher risk, due to existence of additional offences punishable by the death sentence in *Sharia* penal code.

In some cases, the death penalty would have been imposed for a serious crime committed by the applicant, or for other acts falling within the exclusion grounds (Article 17 QD/QR) and, therefore, exclusion should be examined (see [7. Exclusion](#)).

4.2. Article 15(b) QD/QR: torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

Last update: March 2026



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this section, see ‘EUAA, [Article 15\(b\) QD/QR: torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment](#) in the country of origin in *Country Guidance: explained*, February 2026’.



4.2.1. Arbitrary arrests, illegal detention and prison conditions

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 2.1.1., 2.1.3., 2.9.1., 2.18.1.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Nigerian security forces, including vigilante groups in the North-eastern part of the country, are frequently accused of human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests and detentions.

Nigerian detention conditions were described as harsh, with overcrowded, poorly maintained detention facilities, inadequate provisions for basic needs (e.g. food, health care), and cases of torture and ill-treatment.



As indicated under [3. Refugee status](#), some profiles of applicants from Nigeria may be at risk of arbitrary arrest, illegal detention and harsh prison conditions e.g. [members and perceived supporters of pro-Biafra separatist movement](#) and of [political parties](#), [individuals with perceived links to Boko Haram](#), [journalists and other media workers](#), [persons with diverse SOGIESC](#). If such risk is substantiated and reaches the threshold of persecution, those individuals would qualify for refugee status.

For other individuals, if conditions of arrest and/or detention amount to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and there is no nexus to a reason for persecution, Article 15(b) QD/QR would apply.

In some cases, the arrest, detention and imprisonment would have been imposed for a serious crime committed by the applicant, or for other acts falling within the exclusion grounds (Article 17 QD/QR) and, therefore, exclusion should be examined (see [7. Exclusion](#)).

4.2.2. Criminal violence

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Country Focus 2025, 2.2.3.; Security 2025, 1., 1.1.3., 1.2.3.; COI Update 2026, 2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

From 2024, banditry and activities of gangs are one of the main drivers of violence in Nigeria. Criminal violence is mostly inflicted by bandit groups. Confraternities, also known as cult groups, are also involved in criminality. See [2.2.4. Criminal groups](#).

Bandit groups were mainly responsible for armed robberies, murders, rapes, kidnappings, cattle rustlings and armed raids and attacks in the northern part of Nigeria. Banditry-related violence intensified across Nigeria's North-West and North-Central zone and parts of the South-West, including Lagos. Highly mobile, armed motorbike-riding groups created widespread fear. Fatalities from rural banditry, cattle rustling, and related security operations rose sharply in 2024, especially in Katsina, Zamfara, and Kaduna, with another major surge



reported in mid-2025 in Niger, Katsina, and Zamfara. In April 2025, the military launched several operations targeting bandit hideouts in the North-West.

Kidnappings for ransom increased nationwide from early 2024, with the highest numbers recorded in the North-Central zone and incidents widespread across urban areas, rural communities, and highways. Estimates of abductions by various armed groups often have significantly underestimated the true scale of the issue. By mid-2025, kidnappings remained pervasive, affecting a wide array of individuals, including villagers, travellers, large numbers of schoolchildren, IDPs, public figures, clergy, businesspeople and individuals perceived as being well-off. At the end of 2025, as a result of mass abductions of students by Islamist groups and criminal gangs, several schools had been indefinitely shut down either partially or completely in eleven northern states.

Gang and cult networks dominate violence in the South-South and South-West, while the South-East has also experienced significant unrest. Cult groups were involved in extortion, smuggling and drug dealing in big cities such as Benin City, Lagos and Port Harcourt. They also clashed with rival groups and were involved in sex exploitation in European countries. Minors have been increasingly recruited into cult groups through aggressive tactics.

The lines between herder and farmer violence/conflict and banditry or cultism are often blurred. See also [3.6. Individuals belonging to herder or farmer communities](#) and [4.3. Article 15\(c\) QD/QR: indiscriminate violence in situations of armed conflict](#).



A real risk of a violent crime, such as abduction, would meet the requirements under Article 15(b) QD/QR.

Personal circumstances such as social and economic situation, home area, age and activities are to be taken into account for the assessment of real risk of criminal violence. For example, persons originating from the North-West and North-Central region as well as persons perceived to be well-off and/or frequently travelling along affected highways would face a higher risk of serious harm from bandit groups. Furthermore, schoolchildren in northern Nigeria would also face a higher risk. Individuals originating from the southern part of the country, especially Edo, Lagos and Rivers states would face a higher risk of suffering serious harm by cult groups.

Where there is no nexus to a reason for persecution under the refugee definition, but there is a real risk for such a violent crime, Article 15(b) QD/QR would apply.

4.2.3. Trafficking in human beings

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 2.2.1., 2.2.2., 2.2.3.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Nigeria ranks first among the nationalities of trafficking victims identified within the European Union. It remains a source, transit and destination country for trafficking in human beings. The practice affects women, men and children for various forms of exploitation. Women and girls in



precarious economic and social situation are the main victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and domestic servitude. Mostly, traffickers recruit their victims in their own families or environment, but they also operate among IDPs.

Most of the trafficking victims for sexual exploitation identified came from the southern region, especially Lagos, Edo and Delta states, and it appears that traffickers were mainly linked to criminal groups such as confraternities. Plateau State (North-Central region) has been recently described as a human trafficking hotspot, particularly for cases involving the trafficking of children. Extremist groups such as Boko Haram also forcibly recruited, abducted and exploited children and women in the North-East region. See also [3.13. Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings](#).



Where there is no nexus to a reason for persecution, individuals at real risk of being subjected to trafficking would qualify for subsidiary protection under Article 15(b) QD/QR. Trafficking in human beings amounts to serious harm. Personal circumstances such as gender, age, social and economic situation and home area are to be taken into account for the assessment of real risk of trafficking in human beings.

4.2.4. Health care and socio-economic conditions

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 2.8., 2.16., 3.1., 3.2., 2.3.3., 3.3., 3.4., 3.4.1., 3.5., 3.7.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Nigeria is characterised by widespread poverty and limited access to food, basic sanitation, safe drinking water, secure housing and health care. Healthcare issues include limited access to healthcare services and inadequate infrastructure, particularly for vulnerable people such as IDPs, women and persons with disabilities.

The country also faces its worst economic crisis in a generation, marked by high youth unemployment and predominance of informal employment, especially for people with disabilities. Nigeria is one of the poorest countries in the world. It ranked 110th out of 127 countries on 'hunger severity', with an estimated 3 million children suffering from severe acute malnutrition, an increase compared to 2024. Poverty, food security, and housing conditions are particularly dire in rural areas, in the northern regions of the country, as well as for IDPs and people forced to live into slums in cities such as Lagos and Abuja.



It is important to note that serious harm must take the form of conduct of an actor (Article 6 QD/QR). In itself, unless there is intentional conduct of an actor, the general unavailability of health care or other socio-economic elements is not considered serious harm meeting the requirements of inhuman or degrading treatment under Article 15(b) QD/QR.



4.3. Article 15(c) QD/QR: indiscriminate violence in situations of armed conflict

Last update: March 2026



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this section, see ‘EUA, [Article 15\(c\) QD/QR: indiscriminate violence in situations of armed conflict](#) in *Country Guidance: explained*, February 2026’.

In armed conflicts, the targeting of civilians may have nexus to one of the reasons for persecution and therefore, refugee status may be granted. Such targeted violence would not be considered ‘indiscriminate’.

The assessment for the applicability of Article 15(c) QD/QR is primarily based on the ‘[Security 2025](#)’ COI report, with **reference period 1 January 2024 - 31 August 2025**. Some indicators, mainly referring to data, are added during the finalisation of the document **until 31 December 2025** based on the [COI Update 2026](#).



This guidance should be considered valid as long as current events and developments fall within the trends and patterns of violence observed within the reference period of the mentioned COI report. New events and developments that cause substantial changes, new trends or geographical shifts in the violence, may lead to a different assessment. The security situation in a given territory should always be assessed in light of the most up-to-date COI available.

All the below elements have to be fulfilled in order to grant subsidiary protection under Article 15(c) QD/QR.

Figure 2. Article 15(c) QD/QR: elements of the assessment



4.3.1. Armed conflict (international or internal)

Last update: March 2026

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4](#); [COI Update 2026, 1., 2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

For information on the different state and non-state actors in Nigeria, see [2. Actors of persecution or serious harm](#).

Several different armed conflicts take place in the territory of Nigeria:

- **Armed conflict between Islamist groups and the NAF including state-affiliated armed groups:** The armed conflict between Boko Haram and state (affiliated) forces extends mainly in the North-East region, mainly in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states and to a lesser extent in Kaduna state (North-West). The North-West region, mainly Zamfara, Kebbi and Sokoto states, is affected by the armed conflict between Lakurawa and state (affiliated) forces. Niger and Kwara (North-Central), as well as Kaduna (North-West) are affected by the armed conflict between Ansaru, Mahmuda and state (affiliated) forces.
- **Armed conflict between JAS and ISWAP** as the fighting between these two Boko Haram factions has continued.
- **Armed conflict between armed separatist groups, such as ESN (IPOB's paramilitary wing) and Nigerian security forces** in the South-East region.
- **In some instances, armed conflicts involve communal militias of farmers and herders:** The territorial scope of those conflicts includes several states of the North-Central, North-West and South-South regions and to a lesser degree in the South-East region.
- **Conflicts among cults/gangs and with local community vigilantes:** Criminal violence such as violence against civilians by criminal gangs or student cults, including in the context of election-related violence, would in general not meet the criteria under the *Diakité* judgment, as this criminal violence does not involve armed confrontations between two or more armed groups. However, it should be noted that community vigilante groups, civilian self-defence militias, and youth groups have also conducted reprisal attacks against armed groups. Furthermore, on some occasions, armed confrontations between armed cults or gangs have been reported. Additionally, it should be noted that the dynamics of violence in Nigeria involve overlapping actors, making distinctions between farmer–herder clashes, inter- and intra-communal conflicts, and banditry increasingly blurred.



Nigeria is currently affected by multiple overlapping conflicts, in the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR. These conflicts affect different areas in Nigeria at different degrees. See more under [4.3.3. Indiscriminate violence](#).



4.3.2. Qualification of a person as a ‘civilian’

Last update: March 2026



Being a civilian is a prerequisite in order to be able to benefit from protection under Article 15(c) QD/QR. The purpose of the provision is to protect only those who are not taking part in the conflict. This includes the potential application of Article 15(c) QD/QR to former combatants who have genuinely and permanently renounced armed activity.

Applications by Nigerian nationals falling under the following profiles should be examined carefully. Based on an individual assessment, such applicants may be found not to qualify as civilians under Article 15(c) QD/QR. For example:

- members of Boko Haram or other Islamists groups, such as Lakurawa;
- farmers or herders directly involved in the conflict;
- members of vigilante groups and other communal defence groups;
- national security forces, including the NAF and the NSCDC and members of state affiliated armed groups;
- members of armed groups of separatist movements, including the ESN and the BRGIE.



See also [2. Actors of persecution or serious harm](#).

Actively taking part in hostilities is not limited to openly carrying arms but could also include substantial logistical and/or administrative support to combatants.



Exclusion considerations may also apply. See [7. Exclusion](#).

4.3.3. Indiscriminate violence

Last update: March 2026



The common analysis regarding the level of indiscriminate violence combines quantitative and qualitative elements in a **holistic and inclusive assessment**, which cannot exclusively depend on a minimum number of civilian casualties and deaths in the country of origin.

For more information on the methodology and indicators used to assess the level of indiscriminate violence in country guidance documents, see ‘EUAA, [Indiscriminate violence](#) in *Country Guidance: explained*, February 2026’.



The COI used as a basis for this assessment cannot be considered a complete representation of the extent of indiscriminate violence and its impact on the life of civilians. Concerns with regard to underreporting, especially pertinent to the quantitative indicators, should be taken into account.

(a) Security situation in Nigeria: recent events

Situation in Nigeria

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Security 2025, 1, 1.1.1, 1.2.1](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Nigeria continued to face a variety of concurrent security and multifaceted challenges, keeping the country in a state of security crisis. Islamist insurgency led by Boko Haram and other Islamist groups has continued to affect northern Nigeria. Tensions between herders and farmers over livelihoods persisted across the country, in particular the North-Central and North-West. Inter- and intra-communal clashes linked to land and resource disputes also occurred, mainly in the North-Central and North-West, with some incidents also reported the southern states. By early 2024, banditry violence had become increasingly lethal and widespread, particularly in the North-West, North-Central, South-West, and in Lagos. Gang and cult networks dominate violence in the South-South and South-West, while the South-East has also experienced significant unrest. Furthermore, Biafra secessionist activities in the South-East continued to be reported.

Presence, methods and tactics of actors

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 1.1.1, 1.1.3, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.5, 1.2.6](#); [COI Update 2026, 1.1](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Nigeria's security landscape remains dominated by a complex array of armed actors.

Nigerian security forces have conducted counter-insurgency and counter-offensive operations against various armed groups, including Islamist groups, criminal gangs/banditry, farmer–herder militias, and separatist movements. Such operations have been conducted through air and ground campaigns, clearance operations, ambushes, and airstrikes often causing civilian casualties.

Boko Haram continued to carry out armed attacks resulting in civilians' killings. During its operations against government forces, ISWAP adapted to the government's 'super camp' strategy, including through the deployment of motorcycle-mounted combat units, rapid assaults with light weaponry but also attacks using rifles and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), nighttime raids, bombings, the use of drones, large-scale offensive, near-simultaneous attacks and diversionary operations, assaults on strategic roads and bridges, as well as attacks to heavily fortified 'super camps'. JAS primarily relied on imposing 'taxes', plundering,



kidnapping residents, and attacking military posts. Lakurawa assaulted villages, levied ‘taxes’, and engaged in armed attacks, abductions, and banditry. Ansaru has been linked to several high-profile attacks and kidnappings in Kaduna state and across Nigeria. Mahmuda was involved in clashes with security forces in Niger and Kwara states and has carried out attacks, kidnapping for ransom, forced labour, and illegal taxation, in order to finance its operations. Reports also mentioned IED attacks, unclaimed suicide attacks, large-scale kidnappings, and militants shooting down military aircraft with anti-aircraft weapons.

ESN, in the context of its campaign against Fulani, dislodged Fulani herder and criminal settlements and carried out guerrilla-style attacks on police and military installations. BRGIE, considered more violent than IPOB, was linked to an increase in violent activities, including attacks against federal security personnel. The BLA has carried out violent attacks in the South-East, including kidnapping, killing, sexual violence, and trafficking in human beings.

Intercommunal and farmer–herder conflicts involved armed attacks, at times mass-casualty attacks, large-scale kidnappings, and killings of abductees.

Farmer and herder groups, inter- and intra-communal groups, and bandits often overlap. For more information on methods and tactics of bandits, see [4.2.2. Criminal violence](#). For general information on the presence of different armed actors in Nigeria and their main human rights violations, see [2. Actors of persecution or serious harm](#). For state level information, see [3.4.4.b. Assessment of indiscriminate violence per state](#).

Security incidents and geographical scope

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 1.2.7.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

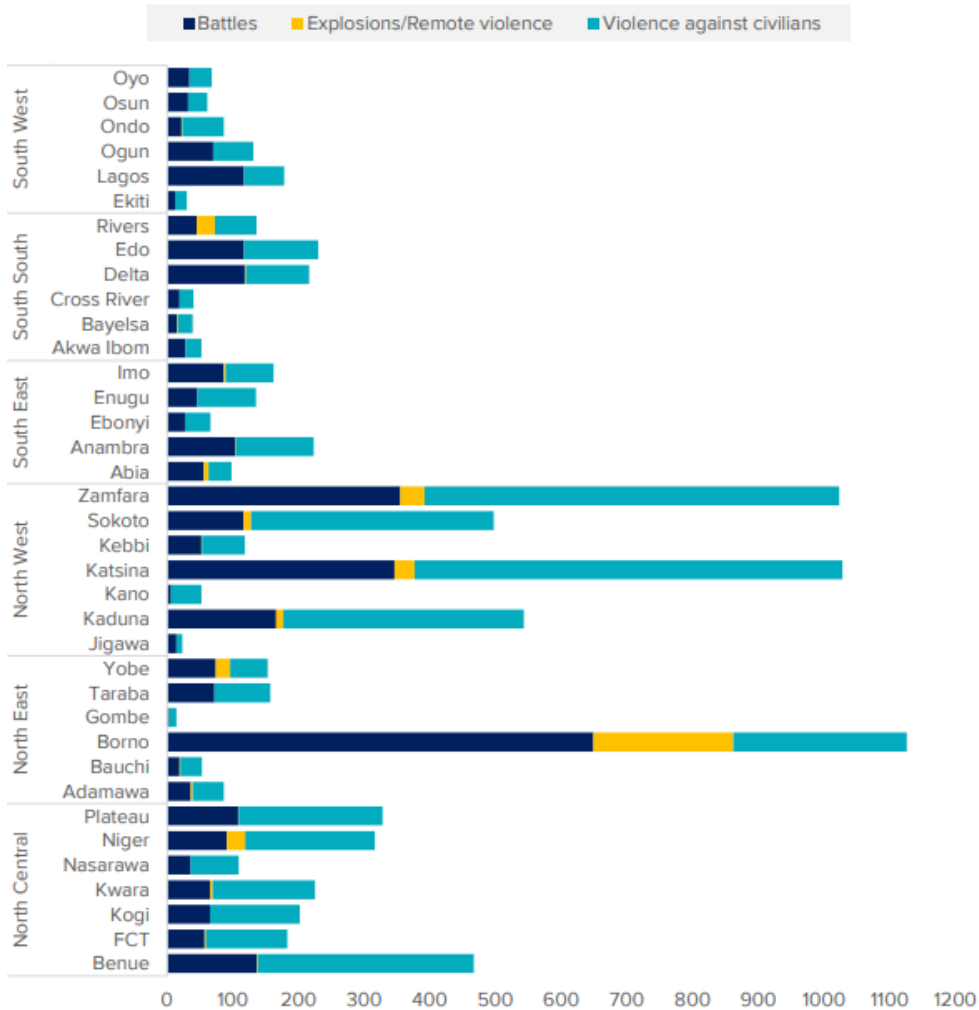


Data concerning this indicator are based on ACLED reporting from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025. For more information on the methodologies of data collection see [Security 2025, Sources](#).

According to ACLED data, 8 654 security incidents occurred across Nigeria during the reference period. Of these incidents, 3 415 were coded as battles, 410 as explosions/remote violence and 4 829 as violence against civilians. The highest numbers of security incidents were recorded by ACLED in Borno, Katsina and Zamfara states. By contrast, the fewest incidents were recorded in Gombe, Jigawa and Ekiti states.



Figure 3: Breakdown by state of number of security events recorded by ACLED, between 1 January 2024 - 31 December 2025



Fatalities

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 1.2.7.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

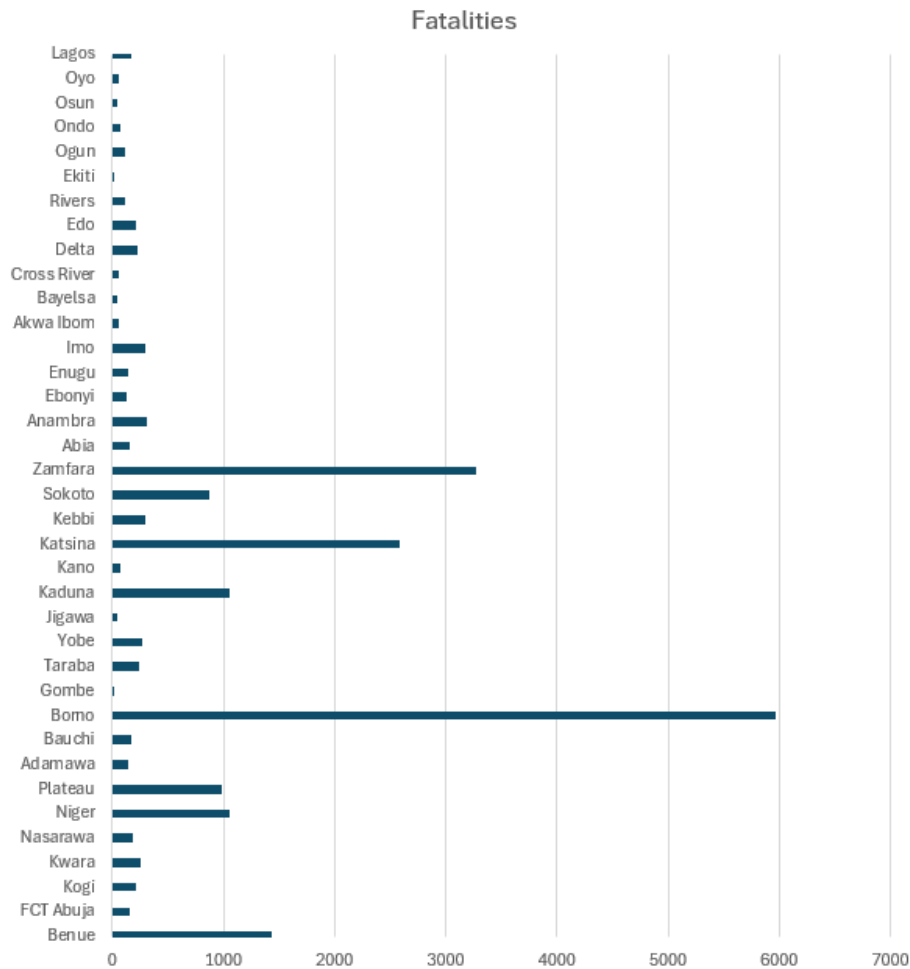


Data concerning this indicator are primarily based on ACLED reporting from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025. All ACLED fatality figures provided here are estimates based on ACLED’s methodology. ACLED’s database does not distinguish between civilian and non-civilian fatalities and only provides figures of direct deaths or fatalities per event, not of injured persons and casualties.

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 Nigeria. The highest number of fatalities were recorded in Borno, Zamfara and Katsina states. By contrast, the fewest fatalities were recorded in Gombe, Ekiti and Bayelsa states.



Figure 4: Breakdown by state of number of fatalities recorded by ACLED, between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025



Conflict-related displacement

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Security 2025, 1.2.7](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

According to UNHCR, as of August 2025, 3 575 114 IDPs and 23 732 refugee returnees (meaning Nigerian refugees who had fled mostly to Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Sudan and returned) were living in Nigeria. The highest number of people were displaced in the North-East, mainly due to insurgency, followed by the North-West and North-Central, driven by a variety of conflict-related dynamics. At state level, most IDPs were recorded in Borno, Benue, Katsina, Zamfara and Adamawa states.

According to the IDMC, 295 000 people were newly displaced across the country as a result of conflict and violence, including nearly 123 000 due to criminal violence in the North-West (Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara), 57 000 due to conflict in states such as Borno and Yobe, and 43 000 as a result of communal violence in Benue.



Further impact on civilians

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.](#); [Country Focus 2025, 1.2., 2.4.3., 2.10., 3.4., 3.4.1., 3.8.2.](#); [COI Update 2026, 1., 2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Conflict-related infrastructure damage remained widespread. Such damage includes the destruction of roads, bridges, communication lines, as well as attacks/destruction/burning of schools, hospitals and healthcare centres, religious sites, markets, farms, telecommunications infrastructure and private property such as houses, shops and vehicles. Attacks also resulted in the looting of medical supplies, the occupation of medical facilities, as well as livestock rustling and destruction of farm produce. Insecurity led many farmers to abandon their fields or prevented them from accessing markets to sell their harvests. Road security remained a concern and criminality was widespread in many areas of Nigeria (see also [4.2.2.Criminal violence](#)).

The humanitarian crisis persisted, particularly in the North-East, North-Central and North-West, with an estimated 3 million children suffering from acute malnutrition. Insurgent attacks across Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe have caused infrastructure destruction, resulting in obstruction of humanitarian aid. In Benue and other southern states, insecurity and poor road conditions have similarly constrained the presence of humanitarian actors.

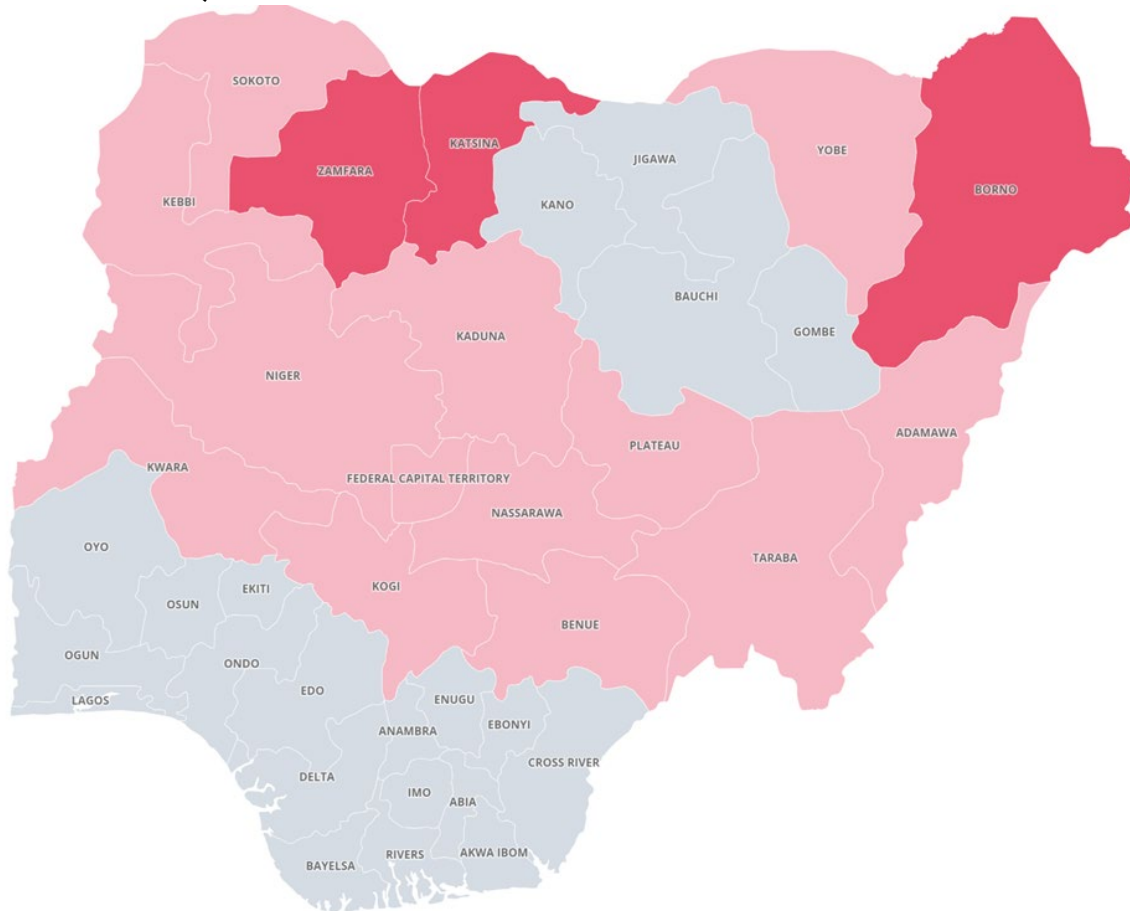
(b) Assessment of indiscriminate violence per state

Last update: March 2026

The map below summarises and illustrates the assessment of indiscriminate violence per state:



Figure 5: Level of indiscriminate violence in Nigeria (based on information up to 31 December 2025)



	The level of indiscriminate violence is such that mere presence would be considered sufficient to face a real risk of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD/QR.
	Indiscriminate violence reaches a high level and a lower level of individual elements is required to establish a real risk of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD/QR.
	Indiscriminate violence is taking place, however not at a high level , and a higher level of individual elements is required to establish a real risk of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD/QR.
	There is no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR.

Mere presence

Areas where the degree of **indiscriminate violence reaches such an exceptionally high level** that substantial grounds are shown for believing that a civilian, returned to the relevant area, would, **solely on account of their presence there**, face a real risk of being subject to the serious threat referred to in Article 15(c) QD/QR.

Accordingly, additional individual elements are not required in order to substantiate subsidiary protection needs under Article 15(c) QD/QR.

The areas assessed as belonging to this category as well as the main elements leading to this assessment are highlighted below.



No such areas were identified in Nigeria.

High level of indiscriminate violence

Areas where 'mere presence' would not be sufficient to establish a real risk of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD/QR, but where, **indiscriminate violence reaches a high level**. Accordingly, **a lower level of individual elements** (see [Serious and individual threat](#)) is required to show substantial grounds for believing that a civilian, returned to the area, would face a real risk of serious harm in the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR.

The areas assessed as belonging to this category as well as the main elements leading to this assessment are highlighted below.

North-East: Borno

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.2.3.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.1, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Borno state has been the centre of the 15-year-long insurgency by Boko Haram. ISWAP has assigned parts of the state to its three main provinces (Buhaira, Faruq and Krenowa) and ten LGAs across Borno were identified as being part of the 'Northeast Belt of Insurgency'. In March/April 2025, a resurgence of ISWAP militancy was reported, allowing the group to make some territorial gains in the state. Boko Haram repeatedly conducted attacks on security installations and civilians, involving the use of explosives, bombs, drones, suicide attacks and mass kidnappings, particularly against civilians. Fighting between Boko Haram factions and government airstrikes also caused civilian fatalities. IDPs were also targeted and abducted by insurgents which are also suspected to have killed farmers and fishermen. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 1 126 security incidents (10.8 security incidents per week) resulting in 5 973 fatalities (approximately 98 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). Boko Haram insurgents also targeted critical infrastructures including roads, hospitals, schools and buses, leading to the obstruction of humanitarian aid. As of February 2025, IOM estimated the number of IDPs in Borno state at 1 704 175, exclusively because of insurgency.

Considering the long-standing conflict with Boko Haram, the high number of security incidents, the number of fatalities as well as its significant general impact on civilians, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in Borno state, at a high level**.

North-West: Katsina

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.3.4.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2., 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Katsina state continues to experience high levels of violence, driven primarily by armed banditry, mass abductions and attacks on rural communities. The state experiences significant activity by armed groups including communal militias, bandit gangs and criminal networks engaging in inter-group clashes, killings, kidnappings, extortion, cattle rustling, attacks on



villages and destruction of infrastructure. A faction of Boko Haram was also present in the state. Government forces carried out security operations against bandits, including airstrikes. IED explosions were also reported. In the period from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 1 028 security incidents (9.9 incidents per week) and 2 578 fatalities (approximately 25 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). As of February 2025, IOM estimated 270 968 IDPs in the state, mainly due to armed banditry/kidnapping and communal clashes. Road security remains a concern and violence has resulted in dilapidated schools and health centres, with such infrastructure often destroyed or taken by armed groups.

Considering the high number of security incidents largely affecting civilians as well as the high displacement and infrastructure destruction, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in Katsina state at a high level.**

North-West: Zamfara

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.3.7.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.1, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The security situation in the state is characterised by persistent and widespread armed violence with long-standing tensions between ethnic, religious and communal groups leading to clashes, attacks and banditry. Armed actors including the Lakurawa groups were active across multiple LGAs, conducting attacks on villages and engaging in clashes with local vigilantes and state security forces. IED explosions were reported and some government airstrikes against bandits also resulted in civilian deaths. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 1 023 security incidents (9.8 incidents per week) resulting in 3 275 fatalities (approximately 56 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). As of February 2025, IOM estimate the number of IDPs in Zamfara state at 216 885, mainly due to armed banditry/kidnapping, insurgency and communal clashes. Hospitals and schools have shut down in Zurmi, Maru, Bungudu, Tsafe, Birnin Magaji, Gusau East, and Shinkafi LGAs for almost two years as a result of insecurity.

Considering the high number of security incidents largely affecting civilians as well as considering the high displacement and infrastructure destruction, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in Zamfara state at a high level.**

Indiscriminate violence not at a high level

Areas where indiscriminate violence is taking place, however **not at a high level.**

Accordingly, **a higher level of individual elements** (see [Serious and individual threat](#)) is required in order to show substantial grounds for believing that a civilian, returned to the area, would face a real risk of serious harm in the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR.

The areas assessed as belonging to this category as well as the main elements leading to this assessment are highlighted below.





North-Central: Benue

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.1.1.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2., 2.1, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Benue was frequently affected by intercommunal clashes, primarily fuelled by disputes between herders and farmers. Besides attacks by Fulani militias and unspecified armed men, other types of violence included abductions and clashes between rival militias or cult groups, such as Eiye, Vikings, Buccaneers, Red Axe and Chain. Gang activities often intersect with farmer-herder clashes. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 467 security incidents (4.5 security incidents per week) resulting in 1 439 fatalities (approximately 23 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). Gunmen also destroyed boreholes, clinics, schools, religious sites and grain reserves following attacks, while agricultural activities have been obstructed by armed groups. As of February 2025, IOM estimated the number of IDPs in Benue state at 457 666 mainly because of communal and farmer-herder clashes.

Taking into account the relatively moderate number of security incidents and fatalities in the context of herders and farmers armed conflict, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in Benue state, however not at a high level.**

North-Central: Abuja/ Federal Capital Territory

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.1.2.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The main security issues in the FCT involved kidnappings often occurring in its suburbs, attacks by gunmen, and clashes between them and police officers, as well as deadly clashes involving herders. IED explosions at a school and outside an army barrack in the centre of Abuja capital city were recorded. Deadly clashes between members of the proscribed Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) and security forces were also reported. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 183 security incidents (1.8 security incidents per week) resulting in 151 fatalities (approximately 5 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). Concerning the road security on the Abuja-Lokoja Highway, a significant reduction in criminal activities along the road was reported. No information could be found on conflict-induced displacement during the reference period.

Considering the nature of violence as well as the not high number of security incidents and fatalities, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in the Abuja/Federal Capital Territory, however not at a high level.**

North-Central: Kogi

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.1.3.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.1, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.





Deadly attacks by bandits, herders, criminal groups, unidentified armed groups and Kogi communal militias were reported in Kogi state, as well as violence linked to conflicts between herders and farmers and to inter-tribal crisis. Kogi was also highly affected by kidnappings. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 202 security incidents (1.9 security incidents per week) resulting in 216 fatalities (approximately 5 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). As of February 2025, IOM estimated the number of IDPs in Kogi state at 20 793, mainly because of disasters. Farm produce and properties were destroyed during bandits' attacks and conflict between communities.

Considering the nature of violence, as well as the not high number of security incidents and fatalities, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in Kogi state, however not at a high level.**

North-Central: Kwara

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.1.4.](#); [COI Update 2026, 1.1., 2., 2.1., 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Kwara is the state, along with Niger, where Mahmuda and Ansaru are most active, financing its operations through a combination of attacks, kidnappings, forced labour and illegal taxation of herders and farmers. A Boko Haram faction, known as Wulowulo, has established a presence in Kwara State. Kwara was also frequently affected by disputes between herders and farmers, especially in Kaiama LGA. Besides attacks by unspecified armed men and communal militias, other types of violence included ambushes and kidnappings, mainly along roads, and clashes between cults. In May 2025, the Nigerian army launched an operation to fight bandits and other criminal elements hiding within the Kainji Lake National Park and surrounding border areas between Kwara and Niger States. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 225 security incidents (2.2 security incidents per week) resulting in 253 fatalities (approximately 7 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). No information could be found on conflict-induced displacement during the reference period.

Considering the nature of violence, as well as the not high number of security incidents and fatalities, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in Kwara state, however not at a high level.**

North-Central: Nasarawa

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.1.5.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.1, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Nasarawa was frequently affected by intercommunal clashes, primarily fuelled by disputes between herders and farmers. Besides attacks by Fulani militias and ISWAP, kidnappings and banditry were also reported. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 109 security incidents (1 security incident per week) resulting in 183 fatalities (approximately 6 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). As of February 2025, IOM estimated the number of IDPs in Nasarawa state at 23 913 mainly because of communal clashes and





insurgency. During disputes between herders and farmers, properties and farm produces were damaged.

Considering the nature of violence, as well as the not high number of security incidents and fatalities, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in Nasarawa state, however not at a high level.**

North-Central: Niger

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.1.6.](#); [COI Update 2026, 1.1., 2., 2.1, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Niger is the state, along with Kwara, where Mahmuda and Ansaru are most active, including through attacks on communities, (massive) abductions, clashes with troops. Violence from bandits/armed groups were also reported in Niger state. Boko Haram cell also attacked security forces and civilians, including through the abduction of women, in Shiroro, Munya and Rafi LGAs. Nigerian forces clashed with and conducted airstrikes against bandits or 'terrorists'. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 316 security incidents (3 security incidents per week) resulting in 1 058 fatalities (approximately 16 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). As of February 2025, IOM estimated the number of IDPs in Niger state at 47 215 mainly because of banditry and insurgency.

Considering the nature of violence, as well as the not high number of security incidents, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in Niger state, however not at a high level.**

North-Central: Plateau

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.1.7.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2., 2.1, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Plateau was fuelled by disputes between herders and farmers. Besides attacks by gunmen (in some instances identified as members of herder and farmer communities) and armed groups, other types of violence included kidnappings and clashes between bandits and vigilantes, in some cases involving security forces. Extrajudicial killings by state security services during operations to tackle insecurity were also reported. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 328 security incidents (3.1 security incidents per week) resulting in 981 fatalities (approximately 21 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). As of February 2025, IOM estimated the number of IDPs in Plateau state at 55 053 mainly because of communal clashes and farmer-herder clashes.

Considering the nature of violence, as well as the not high number of security incidents, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in Plateau state, however not at a high level.**





North-East: Adamawa

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.2.1](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.1, 2.2](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Adamawa is one of the main bases of Boko Haram in Nigeria. ISWAP has assigned the state's north to its Faruq province (*wilaya*) and has expanded its operations there. Northern LGAs in Adamawa are part of what it called the 'Northeast Belt of Insurgency.' As of July 2025, the situation in the north of Adamawa state was described as marked by insecurity. Boko Haram (ISWAP) repeatedly conducted attacks on villages, carried out by gunmen on motorbikes and involved the use of explosives against vigilantes and police, resulting in local residents' fatalities. Meanwhile, deadly communal clashes erupted and armed robberies and kidnappings were also reported, with villagers and Catholic clergymen among those targeted. Between 1 January 2024 and 15 December 2025, ACLED recorded 86 security incidents (0.8 incidents per week) resulting in 148 fatalities (approximately 3 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). The conflict has led to the destruction of multiple civilian structures. As of November 2024, IOM estimated the number of IDPs in Adamawa state at 200 211, mainly because of insurgency and communal clashes.

Despite the long-standing activities by Boko Haram and the communal clashes, and considering the relatively low number of security incidents, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in Adamawa state, however not at a high level.**

North-East: Taraba

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.2.5](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Intercommunal clashes, primarily fuelled by long-standing land disputes between ethnic Tiv and Jukun communities, disputes between herders and farmers and attacks by Fulani herdsmen on farming communities were reported in Taraba state. Kidnappings and banditry, including by criminals working for Boko Haram, were also reported. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 157 security incidents (1.5 security incidents per week) resulting in 242 fatalities (approximately 7 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). As of February 2025, IOM estimated the number of IDPs in Taraba state at 62 564, mainly because of communal clashes and insurgency. Houses were set on fire in herders attacks and communal clashes, and road security remained a concern.

Considering the nature of violence, as well as the relatively low number of security incidents, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in Taraba state, however not at a high level.**

North-East: Yobe

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.2.6](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.



Alongside Borno and Adamawa states, Yobe is one of the main bases of Boko Haram in Nigeria. Moreover, the state's south has been integrated into ISWAP's Faruq province and is part of the 'Northeast Belt of Insurgency'. Boko Haram conducted deadly attacks against several communities and villages, carried out by gunmen on motorcycles. Insurgents also kidnapped civilians during those attacks and targeted NAF troops, including by bombings and a suicide car attack. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 153 security incidents (1.5 security incidents per week) resulting in 271 fatalities (approximately 7 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). As of February 2025, IOM estimated the number of IDPs in Yobe state at 167 320, mainly because of insurgency.

Despite the long-standing activities by Boko Haram, and considering the not high number of security incidents, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in Yobe state, however not at a high level.**

North-West: Kaduna

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.3.2.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2., 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The security situation in Kaduna was characterised by persistent and multi-dimensional insecurity, driven by ethnic and religious tensions, banditry, kidnappings, farmer-herder conflict, clashes between bandit groups and attacks on civilian settlements. Bandits and other armed groups carried out attacks on smaller towns, schools, hospitals, travellers and farming communities, resulting in civilian fatalities, abductions, property destruction and the looting of villages. In addition, long-standing communal and ethnic tensions, particularly in Southern Kaduna fuelled cycles of retaliatory violence leading to the destruction of villages such as Jika da Kolo and Tudun Biri. Attacks by Boko Haram, Ansaru and government counter-operations, including drone attack and airstrike in 2024, have also resulted in civilian fatalities. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 543 security incidents (5.2 incidents per week) resulting in 1 048 fatalities (approximately 12 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). The conflict in the north-western region has worsened leading to widespread displacement and as of February 2025, IOM estimated the number of IDPs in Kaduna state at 117 989, mainly due to armed banditry/kidnapping and communal clashes. Some medical facilities have shut down as a result of insecurity. Households were reported as being heavily affected by increasingly violent rural banditry, with Nigeria Watch identifying the state as the third worst affected by rural banditry in 2024.

Considering the relatively moderate number of security incidents and fatalities in the context of the armed conflict between herders and farmers, as well as between Islamist groups and the Nigerian state forces, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in Kaduna state, however, not at a high level.**

North-West: Sokoto

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.3.6.](#); [COI Update 2026 1., 2.1, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.



The state experienced insecurity driven largely by farmer-herder conflict, banditry, and armed Islamist groups, such as Lakurawa, which carried out attacks across several communities. Incidents resulted in civilian deaths, abductions and destruction of property. Vigilante forces also existed in Sokoto state. Government operations against armed groups, such as Lakurawa, including airstrikes by the US, were also reported. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 497 security incidents (4.8 incidents per week) resulting in 867 fatalities (approximately 14 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). As of February 2025, IOM estimated the number of IDPs in Sokoto state at 99 729, mainly because of armed banditry/kidnapping.

Considering the relatively moderate number of security incidents and fatalities in the context of the armed conflict between herders and farmers, as well as between Islamist groups and the Nigerian state forces, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in Sokoto state, however not at a high level.**

North-West: Kebbi

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.3.5.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Kebbi State continued facing elevated levels of insecurity, primarily driven by the activities of armed groups, bandits and Islamist groups, such as Lakurawa, operating across the wider North-West corridor. Security operations, including government raids and airstrikes were conducted against armed groups. Vigilante forces also existed in Kebbi state and have clashed with state forces. Between 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 118 security incidents (1.1 incidents per week) resulting in 291 fatalities (approximately 5 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). No information could be found on conflict-induced displacement during the reference period.

Considering the nature of violence, as well as the low number of security incidents, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in Kebbi state, however not at a high level.**

No real risk

Areas where, **there is no real risk** for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR.

This may be because the criteria for an armed conflict within the meaning of this provision are not met, or because no indiscriminate violence is taking place.

The areas assessed as belonging to this category as well as the main elements leading to this assessment are highlighted below.



North-East: Bauchi

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.2.2.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2., 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Security incidents in Bauchi state are mainly linked to clashes between bandits and local security forces, such as vigilantes. In the meantime, deadly communal clashes between herders and farmers and kidnappings were also reported in Darazo LGA. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 53 security incidents (0.5 security incidents per week) resulting in 164 fatalities (approximately 2 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). Security incidents were recorded in approximately half of the LGAs of the state. As of February 2025, IOM estimated the number of IDPs in Bauchi state at 65 876, mainly because of insurgency and communal clashes.

Considering the very limited number of incidents, not indicative of indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict, it can be concluded that there is there is **no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Bauchi state.**

North-East: Gombe

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.2.4.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Gombe state was described as the most peaceful state in 2024 and the one with the lowest number of insecurity incidents. Most of the incidents reported arose from clashes between herders and farmers, kidnappings linked to cattle rustling, and attacks by Fulani militias. Other types of violence, including an assault by suspected Kalare Boys (a gang in Gombe) and an attack against a Christian procession, were also reported. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 14 security incidents (0.1 security incidents per week) resulting in 13 fatalities (approximately 0 fatality per 100 000 inhabitants). As of February 2025, IOM estimated the number of IDPs in Benue state at 52 202, mainly because of insurgency and communal clashes.

Considering the very limited number of incidents, not indicative of indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict, it can be concluded that there is there is **no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Gombe state.**

North-West: Jigawa

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.3.1.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The situation in Jigawa was generally described as marked by low but persistent levels of violent conflict, primarily driven by herder-farmer clashes, communal violence and protests linked to economic hardship and political demands. Clashes between herders and farmers were reported across several LGAs including Miga, Jahun, Dutse, Kiyawa and Birnin Kudu.



Some of these clashes resulted in civilian deaths, injuries and burning of houses. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 23 security incidents (0.2 incidents per week) resulting in 45 fatalities (approximately 1 fatality per 100 000 inhabitants). No information could be found on conflict-induced displacement during the reference period.

Considering that the recorded violence in the state is very limited in scale and intensity, and while some incidents caused harm to civilians, it is noted that these were generally isolated and not indicative of indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is **no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Jigawa state.**

North-West: Kano

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.3.3.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The security situation in Kano is characterised by episodic unrest, mob violence, isolated explosions and criminal activity. Kano state police conducted security operations and raids, tackling armed robbery, thuggery, abductions, and criminal activities. JAS has maintained a long-standing presence in Kano state, employing tactics similar to those of bandits, including coercion. The state also experienced protest-related violence. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 52 security incidents (0.5 incidents per week) resulting in 69 fatalities (approximately 0 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). As of February 2025, IOM estimated the number of IDPs in Kano state at 12 555, mainly due to insurgency.

Considering that the recorded violence in the state is very limited in scale and intensity and, while some incidents caused harm to civilians, it is noted that these were generally isolated and not indicative of indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict. Therefore, it can be concluded that **there is no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Kano state.**

South-East: Abia

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.4.1.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Abia state had been described as one of the safest states in Nigeria during the period from 2011 to 2024. Drivers of insecurity included incidents linked to separatist militias attacking security forces, criminality (including kidnappings), communal violence and cult/gang-related clashes. In 2025 there was a resurgence of communal violence involving communities in Arochukwu, Ikwuano, Isuikwuato and Obi Ngwa LGAs and escalating attacks by suspected Fulani armed bandits and herdsmen on local communities, resulting also in kidnappings and farm destructions. Raids by security forces against IPOB/ESN were also reported. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 98 security incidents (0.9 security incident per week) resulting in 160 fatalities (4 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). No information could be found on conflict-induced displacement during the reference period.



Considering the limited number of incidents not indicative of indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict, it can be concluded that there is **no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Abia state.**

South-East: Anambra

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.4.2.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.1, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Anambra state has been described as marked by insecurity. Drivers of insecurity included incidents linked to cultism, criminality (armed robbery, kidnapping) and separatist militias. Anambra witnessed more fatalities from cult-related violence than any other state in Nigeria, with incidents often occurring near premises of institutions of higher education and several clashes between rival cults recorded in the state capital of Awka. Anambra recorded one of the lowest numbers of deaths linked to ethnic and communal violence, although an escalation of attacks on local communities related to suspected armed bandits and herdsmen has been reported for 2025. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 223 security incidents (2.1 security incident per week) resulting in 313 fatalities (5 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). No information could be found on numbers of individuals affected by conflict-induced displacement in Anambra, but communal violence has led farmers to abandon their lands in certain areas.

While some incidents caused harm to civilians, considering the predominance of criminal rather than indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict, it can be concluded that there is **no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Anambra state.**

South-East: Ebonyi

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.4.3.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The situation in Ebonyi state has been described as marked by some level of insecurity. Drivers of insecurity included incidents linked to herder-farmer conflicts, cult clashes and intra-community land disputes. Long-standing land disputes between various communities resulted in abductions and deadly clashes. Dozens of fatalities resulted from attacks on communities attributed to armed herdsmen and unknown gunmen. Incidents involving forest-based criminal groups, as well as 'escalating attacks' by suspected armed bandits and herdsmen on local communities, have been reported. In July 2025, ESN appears to have reduced the Fulani presence in the forests of the South-East with considerable success, apparently contributing to a reduction of kidnappings by Fulani elements in this area. However, attacks still take place. Ebonyi has the lowest figure of Pro-Biafra violence in South-Eastern Nigeria, with seven fatalities recorded in relation to separatist violence in 2024. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 66 security incidents (0.6 security incident per week) resulting in 126 fatalities (4 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). No information could be found on the exact numbers affected by conflict-induced displacement. Nevertheless, intra-



communal conflicts in Ohaukwu LGA were reported to have displaced thousands of residents during the past four years. Conflicts and other armed attacks resulted also in damage to buildings and property.

Considering the very limited number of incidents, not indicative of indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict, it can be concluded that there is **no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Ebonyi state.**

South-East: Enugu

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.4.4.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.1, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Enugu state has been described as experiencing increasing insecurity. Drivers of insecurity consisted of incidents linked to herder-farmer clashes mainly characterised by suspected herdsmen's attacks, separatist agitation, forest-based criminal activity, communal clashes, and kidnappings, resulting in fatalities. In July 2025, ESN appears to have reduced the Fulani presence in the forests of the South-East with considerable success, apparently contributing to a reduction of kidnappings by Fulani elements. However attacks continued to take place. Unidentified gunmen carried out multiple deadly attacks targeting police forces and vigilantes. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 135 security incidents (1.3 security incident per week) resulting in 140 fatalities (3 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). Attacks on communities in Uzo Uwani LGA and Eha-Amufu by suspected armed herdsmen have prompted displacements, although exact information on numbers of individuals affected in Enugu during this period could not be found.

While some incidents caused harm to civilians, considering the relatively limited number of incidents, some of them deriving from criminal activity not indicative of indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict, it can be concluded that there is **no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Enugu state.**

South-East: Imo

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.4.5.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The security situation in Imo has been described as marked by rising insecurity. Drivers of insecurity consisted of conflicts between separatist militants and security personnel, attacks on communities by armed herdsmen or unidentified armed groups, kidnappings, clashes with security forces, vigilante and mob violence, and cultism. Multiple deadly clashes between separatist militias and security forces particularly affected Orsu and Ehime Mbanjo–Oyo LGAs. Many of those killed were members of IPOB and ESN, and there were also reports of alleged lethal attacks on civilians. Criminal violence in Imo state resulted in one of the highest numbers of fatalities in the Niger Delta, with over 50 fatalities in 2024. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 162 security incidents (1.6 security incident per week) resulting in 292 fatalities (5 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). No information on conflict-related displacement or returns could be found during the reference period.





While some incidents caused harm to civilians, considering their not high number as well as that some of them stemmed from criminal activity not indicative of indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict, it can be concluded that there is **no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Imo state.**

South-South: Akwa Ibom

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.5.1](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2](#).; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Akwa Ibom has been reported to be among the five most peaceful states of the country. Insecurity is mainly driven by cult groups' violence, kidnappings, robberies and targeted killings. Intra- and inter-communal violence was also reported. Incidents frequently involved clashes between rival cult groups, killings related to cult targeting, for instance suspected cult members, incidents of mob violence against thieves and security forces, robberies, and abductions-for-ransom targeting particularly travellers and children. Sporadic violence by unidentified gunmen was also recorded. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 52 security incidents (0.5 security incidents per week) resulting in 63 fatalities (approximately 1 fatality per 100 000 inhabitants). Fatalities mostly resulted from cult-related shootings and targeted killings. There were also reports of attacks on police officers, destruction of property during cult clashes, and violence linked to criminal gangs operating along transport routes. No information could be found on conflict-induced displacement in Akwa Ibom state during the reference period.

Considering that the recorded violence in the state is limited in scale and intensity, and while some incidents caused harm to civilians, it is noted that these were generally isolated and not indicative of indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is **no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Akwa Ibom state.**

South-South: Bayelsa

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.5.2](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2](#).; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Bayelsa was one of the least violent states in the Niger Delta region, with violence largely driven by criminal activity, such as abduction and ambushes and cult groups' violence. Cult related violence involved clashes between cult groups, robberies and thefts, targeting both cult members and civilians. While instances of lethal clashes among communities over land ownership were reported, unlike states in the North-East or Middle Belt, Bayelsa did not face large-scale insurgency or widespread communal conflict. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 39 security incidents (0.4 security incidents per week) resulting in 44 fatalities (approximately 2 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). No information could be found on conflict-induced displacement in Bayelsa state during the reference period.

Considering the limited number of incidents, as well as the predominance of criminal rather than indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict, it can be concluded that there





is **no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Bayelsa state.**

South-South: Cross River

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.5.3.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Cross River experienced violence primarily driven by cult-related activities, including abductions and killings, as well as clashes, criminality and localised communal disputes. Criminal activities involved especially sea pirates' abductions for ransom and targeting of passengers. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 40 security incidents (0.4 security incidents per week) resulting in 53 fatalities (approximately 1 fatality per 100 000 inhabitants). No information could be found on conflict-induced displacement in Cross River state during the reference period.

Considering the limited number of incidents, as well as the predominance of criminal rather than indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict, it can be concluded that there is **no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Cross River state.**

South-South: Delta

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.5.4.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.1, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Communal, herders and farmers tensions, criminal violence (including killings, armed robberies and kidnappings), gang/cult-related violence and clashes were the main drivers of insecurity in Delta state. Clashes between security forces and bandits were also reported. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 216 security incidents (2.1 security incidents per week) resulting in 228 fatalities (approximately 4 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). No information could be found on conflict-induced displacement in Delta state during the reference period.

Considering that the recorded violence in the state seems of more criminal nature rather than indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict, it can be concluded that there is **no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Delta state.**

South-South: Edo

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.5.5.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.1, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The insecurity in Edo state is largely driven by cult groups, unidentified armed groups and Fulani ethnic militias. The most prevalent types of violence included clashes between cult gangs, criminal activities, including killings and kidnappings for ransom, as well as communal



violence, which included killings and abductions by suspected herders, mob violence and attacks by different actors. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 230 security incidents (2.2 security incidents per week) resulting in 208 fatalities (approximately 4 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). Residents were fleeing ‘en masse’ following violent clashes with suspected Ijaw militias affecting farming communities, but no further information on conflict-induced displacement in Edo state during the reference period could be found.

Considering that the recorded violence in the state seems of more criminal nature rather than indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict, it can be concluded that there is **no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Edo state.**

South-South: Rivers

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.5.6](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

In Rivers state, the primary drivers of insecurity included clashes between rival cult gangs, confrontations involving security forces and local vigilantes, kidnappings for ransom, as well as vigilante and mob violence triggered by criminal activity and clashes between cults and armed gangs. In the period between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 136 security incidents (1.3 security incidents per week) resulting in 118 fatalities (approximately 2 fatality per 100 000 inhabitants). Rivers was one of three states in the Niger Delta region with the highest level of lethal violence and was among the three most affected states in terms of cult-related fatalities and the fifth most affected state in terms of fatalities related to kidnappings in 2024. No information could be found on conflict-induced displacement in Rivers state during the reference period.

Considering that the recorded violence in the state seems of more criminal nature rather than indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict, it can be concluded that there is **no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Rivers state.**

South-West: Ekiti

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.6.1](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

In Ekiti state, the main armed actors were criminal groups, cult gangs, and unidentified armed men. Reported incidents included kidnappings for ransom, killings sometimes taking place in the context of abductions, and incidents involving cult groups’ activities. There was no insurgent presence. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 30 security incidents (0.3 security incidents per week) resulting in 16 fatalities (approximately 0 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). No information could be found on conflict-induced displacement in Ekiti state during the reference period.



Considering the very limited number of incidents, as well as the predominance of criminal rather than indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict, it can be concluded that there is **no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Ekiti state.**

South-West: Lagos

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.6.6.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Lagos state has been described as a hotspot for cultism and criminality. Cult-related violence and clashes were reported and occurred in various LGAs. Criminal activities also included robberies, kidnappings for ransom, violent clashes and killings. There were also several cases of mob justice targeting suspected criminals, as well as attacks by unidentified gunmen. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 178 security incidents (1.7 security incidents per week) resulting in 174 fatalities (approximately 1 fatality per 100 000 inhabitants). No information could be found on conflict-induced displacement in Lagos state during the reference period.

Considering the limited number of incidents, as well as the predominance of criminal rather than indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict, it can be concluded that there is **no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Lagos state.**

South-West: Ogun

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.6.2.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

In Ogun state, the main actors involved in security incidents were unknown gunmen, cult groups, Fulani herdsmen and unidentified armed groups. Cult violence, kidnapping, armed robbery and ritual killings were described as source of insecurity. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 131 security incidents (1.3 security incidents per week) resulting in 121 fatalities (approximately 2 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). The roads of Ogun state are considered dangerous due to the risk of kidnappings. No information could be found on conflict-induced displacement in Ogun state during the reference period.

Considering the limited number of incidents, as well as the predominance of criminal rather than indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict, it can be concluded that there is **no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Ogun state.**

South-West: Ondo

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.6.3.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.





In Ondo state, the main actors were unidentified armed groups, suspected (Fulani) herders and cult gangs. The incidents included clashes between communities, numerous incidents of kidnappings and killings, lethal attacks on farmers and farmer-herder conflicts, as well as incidents of cult-related violence. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 86 security incidents (0.8 security incidents per week) resulting in 73 fatalities (approximately 1 fatality per 100 000 inhabitants). Many farmers were abandoning their farms due to ongoing kidnappings and attacks by suspected herdsmen. As of August 2025, no further information could be found on conflict-induced displacement in Ondo state during the reference period.

Considering that the recorded violence in the state is limited in scale and intensity, and while some incidents caused harm to civilians, it is noted that these were generally isolated and not indicative of indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is **no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Ondo state.**

South-West: Osun

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.6.4.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

In Osun state, the main drivers of insecurity were reported to be gang-related criminality, armed robberies, kidnappings, lethal clashes between cult groups, communal violence over land disputes and political clashes. No insurgent activity was reported. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 61 security incidents (0.6 security incidents per week) resulting in 51 fatalities (approximately 1 fatality per 100 000 inhabitants). As a consequence of the violent clashes between Ilobu and Ifon communities, more than 100 000 residents were displaced. No further information could be found on conflict-induced displacement.

Considering the limited number of incidents, as well as the predominance of criminal rather than indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict, it can be concluded that there is **no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Osun state.**

South-West: Oyo

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Security 2025, 2.6.5.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

In Oyo state, the main drivers of insecurity were banditry, kidnappings, armed robberies, attacks by unidentified gunmen as well as cult-related clashes and violence, including ritual killings. Violent conflicts with herders and bandits were also reported. Between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025, ACLED recorded 68 security incidents (0.7 security incidents per week) resulting in 59 fatalities (approximately 1 fatality per 100 000 inhabitants). No information could be found on conflict-induced displacement in Oyo state during the reference period.





Considering the limited number of incidents, as well as the predominance of criminal rather than indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict, it can be concluded that there is **no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR in Oyo state.**



Please note that in areas where there would be ‘no real risk’ for a civilian to be affected by indiscriminate violence within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR, depending on personal circumstances, an applicant may still be exposed to a risk of persecution (see [3. Refugee status](#)) or a risk of serious harm under [4.1. Article 15\(a\) QD/QR: death penalty or execution](#) or [4.2. Article 15\(b\) QD/QR: torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment](#). Hence, this assessment of ‘no real risk’ should in no way be misconstrued as the designation of ‘safe areas’ for return or any other purposes.

4.3.4. Serious and individual threat

Last update: March 2026

In the context of the ‘sliding scale’, each case should be assessed individually, taking into account the applicant’s personal circumstances together with the nature and intensity of the violence in their home area (see also [4.3.3. Indiscriminate violence](#)). It is not feasible to provide exhaustive guidance as to what the relevant personal circumstances could be and how those should be assessed. Individual elements can exist in combination. Other factors may also be relevant.

Below are some examples of personal circumstances to be taken into account, where the ‘mere presence’ threshold is not reached, in the context of Nigeria:

- **Age:** Children and elderly people may not be able to move without help or be able to quickly assess and avoid risky locations. Furthermore, incidents in schools have been reported in many parts of Nigeria, especially in the states of Borno, Kaduna, and Katsina. Bandits in Zamfara state were also planting landmines on roads to block government forces’ accessing during attacks. Therefore, younger children and elderly persons may be more susceptible to indiscriminate violence.
- **Health condition and disabilities, including mental health issues:** Indiscriminate attacks in Nigeria by insurgents, Boko Haram and communal groups in the context of communal clashes, have taken place in public spaces, including hospitals and health centres, mostly in Borno, Katsina, Zamfara. Infrastructure damage in hospitals is also reported in the country. People with disabilities related to mobility or individuals with reduced mobility may not be able to move without help. Furthermore, people with mental health issues might not be able to quickly assess and avoid risky locations. Moreover, persons with health issues required to visit the hospital on a regular basis might be also exposed to indiscriminate violence, either at healthcare facilities or while traveling to and from them. Therefore, some persons with health conditions may be more susceptible to indiscriminate violence.



- **Profession and/or place of residence:** Indiscriminate attacks in Nigeria resulting from Boko Haram, communal clashes, herder-farmer conflicts, and cult clashes, have taken place in public spaces, such as hospitals/health centres, schools, universities, and markets, including in Borno, Kaduna, Katsina, Nasarawa and Niger. Persons who, due to their place of residence or professional activity, are frequently in the vicinity of such places (e.g. nurses, doctors, teachers, market workers) or people regularly commuting to such places (e.g. patients, school children) may be more susceptible to indiscriminate violence. Roads were also sites of attacks, killings, kidnappings, explosive devices incidents, carried out by Islamist groups, particularly affecting IDPs and travellers, especially in the state of Borno. Landmine contamination has been reported in Zamfara. Therefore, travellers, IDPs, and individuals moving for personal or professional reasons may be more susceptible to indiscriminate violence.
- **Economic situation:** The economic situation in Nigeria is difficult. People in dire economic situation may be forced to expose themselves to risks, such as working in areas affected by indiscriminate violence.
- **Knowledge of the area and support network:** Some Nigerians were born or have lived for an extensive period of time outside Nigeria. Such individuals may not have knowledge of the area and experience of local violence patterns; they may also lack the support network to inform them on such issues or provide them assistance. Therefore, they may be more susceptible to indiscriminate violence.

In some cases, these personal circumstances may be cumulative, leading to enhanced exposure to indiscriminate violence.

4.3.5. Qualification of the harm as a ‘threat to (a civilian’s) life or person’

Last update: March 2026

Some of the commonly reported types of harm to civilian’s life or person in Nigeria include killings, injuries, kidnappings, sexual violence, etc. A real risk of such serious harm would qualify as a threat to a (civilian’s) life or person in accordance with the provision of Article 15(c) QD/QR.

4.3.6. Nexus/‘by reason of’

Last update: March 2026

The interpretation of the causation ‘by reason of’ may not be limited to harm which is directly caused by the indiscriminate violence or by acts that emanate from the actors in the conflict. To a certain extent, it may also include the indirect effect of indiscriminate violence in situations of armed conflict. As long as there is a demonstrable link to the indiscriminate violence, such elements may be taken into account in the assessments, for example: destruction of the necessary means to survive, destruction of infrastructure, lack of rule of law potentially leading to criminality.



5. Actors of protection



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this section, see ‘EUAA, [Actors of protection](#) in *Country Guidance: explained*, February 2026’.

5.1. The Nigerian State

Last update: March 2026

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: [Country Focus 2025, 2.2.](#), [2.18.](#); [Security 2025, 1.1.](#); [COI Update 2026, 2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Nigeria’s legal system is a mix of English common law, *sharia* law in northern states, and traditional law. *Sharia* courts are only located in the 12 northern states where *sharia* law is applied (Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara). In these 12 northern states the *Sharia* Penal Code is applied. Most southern states use the Criminal Code Act as their state law. The judiciary is formally independent, however political interference, corruption and lack of equipment and training remain key problems. Especially corruption is a serious problem in Nigeria’s justice system.

Federal state authorities are accused of disregarding due process. In some cases, people are detained without being informed of the charges against them or allowing them access to counsel. Those detained by the military under terrorism charges are not accorded the right to legal representation, due process, or to be heard by a judicial authority. Prolonged pretrial detention of suspects sometimes continues even after courts have ordered their release on bail. Additionally, some individuals whose cases are dismissed by the courts reportedly remain in detention without clear legal justification. *Sharia* courts accord less weight to the testimony of women and non-Muslims. Gender inequality under *sharia* law impacts women’s rights and social status adversely.

The capacity of security forces—including the NPF, Department of State Services, NAF, and several other federal and state-level agencies—is significantly constrained. The police and military are overstretched by concurrent threats, such as insurgency in the North-East, banditry in the North-West and North-Central, secessionist violence in the South-East, and criminality in the Niger Delta. Security forces struggle with resource shortages, corruption, insufficient training, and limited operational reach. In many areas, gaps in state protection have led to the proliferation of vigilante groups and community-based defence organisations, which operate with varying degrees of state supervision. Their involvement sometimes contributes to human rights abuses, arbitrary detention, and excessive use of force. In November 2025, President Tinubu ordered the recruitment of 20 000 additional police officers to target armed groups.

Nigeria has established specialised institutions to address specific forms of crime, including the NAPTIP, which investigates human trafficking, child labour, and sexual exploitation. The



national agency has taken many actions to improve the response to modern slavery in the past few years, but tends to operate more reactively than proactively, often waiting for complaints before acting. NAPTIP conducts investigations, rescues victims, and coordinates with law enforcement. However, its overall effectiveness is hampered by limited funding, insufficient staffing and capacity constraints, especially outside major urban centres. Fragmentation of efforts across stakeholders and corruption has hindered investigations and prosecutions of traffickers. These issues are further exacerbated by the reluctance of victims and their families to provide information about traffickers and their networks.



In the North-East states where Boko Haram has long-standing and widespread presence, state protection would in general be considered unavailable.

In other areas affected by criminality or other types of violence (e.g. herders and farmers or communal conflicts, Islamist groups), the capacity of the Nigerian state is generally limited, but may in individual cases be available. Age, gender, home area, religion and socio-economic status are among the factors that affect the accessibility of protection. For the areas affected by these groups or conflicts, see [2.1.1. Boko Haram and other Islamist armed groups](#), [4.2.2. Criminal violence](#) and [4.3.3. Indiscriminate violence](#).

The protection of the Nigerian state is also generally not available for certain categories of individuals, such as for [women](#) and [children](#) victims of violence, [FGM/C](#) and [forced marriage](#).

The Nigerian state and its institutions, including NAPTIP and in collaboration with local organisations, have made progress in combatting trafficking in human beings. However, the protection may be proven inaccessible or ineffective for [victims of trafficking in human beings](#), especially for those outside major urban centres and those not returning with an assisted program.

Moreover, the Nigerian State may be an actor of persecution, for example in cases of [persons with diverse SOGIESC](#), [members and perceived supporters of pro-Biafra separatist movements](#), therefore, in such cases state protection would be unavailable.

5.2. Parties or organisations, including international organisations

Last update: March 2026



No parties or organisations that control the country or a substantial part of its territory and are able to provide protection were identified in Nigeria.



6. Internal protection alternative



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this section, see 'EUAA, [Internal protection alternative](#) in *Country Guidance: explained*, February 2026'.

6.1. Part of the country

Last update: March 2026

When identifying the part of the country to be considered for IPA, the decision-maker should take into account factors related to individual circumstances, including, *inter alia*, the applicant's area of origin, existing ties with the proposed area of relocation, such as previous stay or residence and/or availability of a support network, within the proposed area.

This guidance document looks into the existence of internal protection alternative, specifically in **Lagos** and **Abuja** as the main urban centres in Nigeria. **This is without prejudice to the possibility to apply IPA to other places in Nigeria.**

6.2. Safety

Last update: March 2026

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 2.](#); [Security 2025, 2.1.2.](#), [2.6.6.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

6.2.1. Absence of persecution or serious harm

When examining the element 'absence of persecution or serious harm', the decision-maker should refer to chapters 2 to 5 of this document.

When assessing the requirement of safety with regard to the applicability of IPA in individual cases of applicants from Nigeria, the following elements should be taken into account:

- **General security situation in relation to indiscriminate violence**

Based on the analysis under [4.3.3. Indiscriminate violence](#), the conclusions with regard to the two cities of Lagos and Abuja are as follows:

In **Lagos** (Lagos state): there is no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR.



In **Abuja** (Federal Capital Territory): indiscriminate violence takes place in FCT, however not at a high level.

- **Actor of persecution or serious harm and their reach**

In case where the person fears persecution or serious harm by the Nigerian State (e.g. [persons with diverse SOGIESC, critical journalists and other media workers](#)), there is a presumption that IPA would not be available.

The presence of other actors of persecution or serious harm, including Boko Haram, herders' and farmers' armed groups, student cults, trafficking networks, etc. is generally geographically limited. Therefore, in case of persecution by such actors, the safety requirement could be satisfied in other parts of the country, outside of their reach.

In some cases, where the applicant faces persecution or serious harm for reasons related to the prevalent social norms in Nigeria and the actor of persecution or serious harm is Nigerian society at large (e.g. [persons with noticeable mental or physical disabilities](#)), IPA would in general not be considered safe.

For certain particularly vulnerable categories, such as some women and children, if the actor of persecution or serious harm is the (extended) family of the applicant (e.g. FGM/C, forced marriage, some cases of trafficking), considering the reach of these actors, the lack of State protection and their potential vulnerability to other forms of violence or exploitation, IPA may not be safe.

For the area of operations and influence of actors, see also [2. Actors of persecution or serious harm](#) and [4.3.3. Indiscriminate violence](#).

- **Whether the profile of the applicant is considered a priority target and/or a threat by the actor of persecution or serious harm**

The applicant's profile could make him or her a priority target, increasing the likelihood that the actor of persecution or serious harm would attempt to trace them in the potential IPA location (e.g. religious leaders and politicians targeted by Boko Haram).

- **Behaviour of the applicant**

An applicant cannot be reasonably expected to abstain from practices fundamental to their identity, such as those related to religion or sexual orientation and gender identity, in order to avoid the risk of persecution or serious harm ⁽¹⁰⁾.

- **Other risk-enhancing circumstances**

The information under [3. Refugee status](#) should be used to assist in this assessment.

⁽¹⁰⁾ CJEU, [Minister voor Immigratie en Asiel v X and Y, and Z](#), joint cases C-199/12 to C-201/12, judgment of 7 November 2013, paras. 70-76; [Bundesrepublik Deutschland v Y and Z](#), joined cases C-71/11 and C-99/11, judgment of 5 September 2012, para. 80.



6.2.2. Availability of protection against persecution or serious harm

Alternatively, it may be determined that the requirement of safety is satisfied if the applicant would have access to protection against persecution or serious harm, as defined in Article 7 QD/QR, in the area where IPA is considered. In the case of persecution by the State, a presumption of non-availability of State protection applies. See also [5. Actors of protection](#).

6.2.3. Conclusion on safety



The requirement of safety may be satisfied in Lagos and Abuja, depending on the profile and the individual circumstances of the applicant.

6.3. Travel and admittance

Last update: March 2026

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 3.9.](#); [Security 2025, 2.1.2.](#), [2.6.6.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

If the criterion of ‘safety’ is satisfied, as a next step, it has to be established whether an applicant can **safely** and **legally travel** and **gain admittance** in the suggested IPA location.

- **Safely travel**

International airports operating international flights exist in various Nigerian cities, including in Lagos and Abuja.

Lagos is served by Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA) in Ikeja, the major transit hub of the country for both domestic and international travel. MMIA is generally accessible by road. No specific information could be found during the reference period on road security incidents or (attempted) kidnappings on the road from the airport to the city of Lagos. However, such incidents have been reported in Lagos and Ikeja LGA.

Abuja is served by Nnamdi Azikwe International airport (NAIA), located 12 kilometres west of Abuja, and is the country’s second busiest airport. NAIA hosts flights to and from domestic and international destinations. The Abuja-Lokoja Highway, directly west from the airport, has been reported as plagued by violent crime and kidnappings, although recent reports indicate a significant reduction in criminal activity due to increased patrols by Nigerian security forces. Deserted checkpoints on the Abuja-Lokoja Highway have been used for ambushes. Security incidents in the Abuja Municipal LGA have been also reported.

- **Legally travel**

There are no legal or administrative restrictions for Nigerians to travel in Nigeria, including in Abuja and Lagos.



- **Gain admittance**

There are no legal or administrative restrictions or requirements for Nigerians to be admitted in any part of the country, including in Abuja and Lagos.



Some security incidents have been recorded in Lagos and in Abuja, including at the proximity of the airports. However, this does not preclude the safety of travel, in general. Furthermore, there are no legal or administrative restrictions to travel and gain admittance in Lagos and Abuja.

6.4. Reasonableness to settle

If the criteria of safety and travel and admittance are met, the next step in assessing the existence of an IPA in Lagos and Abuja is to consider the reasonableness to settle in light of the general situation in Lagos and Abuja and the individual circumstances of the applicant.

6.4.1. General situation

Last update: March 2026

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 3](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

- **Means of basic subsistence and employment**

Lagos is the main economic hub in Africa and contributes over one fifth of Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP). Key economic sectors include trade and information and communication technology, with industrial and service sectors also seeing growth in 2024. In the same year, the agricultural sector suffered setbacks due to general insecurity, floodings, and logistics issues. The government of Lagos introduced several programs to ease the cost of living, including 25 % reductions on food staples and public transportation fares. The labour market remains highly informal in Lagos, with over three quarters of the labour force working on an informal basis.

Statistics from the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reports that 76.5 % of the labour force in the FCT are informally employed. 50 % of people living in **Abuja** experience poverty. An increasing number of school-age girls have been reported to be exploited into child labour in Abuja, mainly IDP girls from northern states.

Unemployment in Lagos State is 5.5 %, similar to the national average. Unemployment in the FCT (Abuja) in the same period is significantly higher than the national average, reaching 14.1 %. The methodology of calculating the unemployment rate has been criticised.

- **Food security**

Around 70 % of the population in Nigeria is food insecure, with an estimated 3 million children suffering from severe acute malnutrition. In **Lagos**, between 5 and 10 % of the population are



food insecure. For **Abuja**, this rate reaches between 20 and 30 %. Both cities have been classified as 'stressed' by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) for the period between June and August 2025.

- **Housing and shelter**

Lagos faces challenges accommodating its rapidly growing population, with the city facing a housing crisis. Sources report a housing deficit of 3.3 million units, leading residents to co-habit due to unaffordability and a lack of supply. Many existing units are structurally unsafe, severely overcrowded, or lack essential services. At the start of 2024, rents are reported to have increased by over 90 % over a five-year period. This has resulted in widespread homelessness and the expansion of slums. Lagos has some of the worst slums in the country, with high rates of deprivation in education and healthcare and precarious toilet facilities and waste management. These conditions have led to both minor and serious illnesses, and, combined with insufficient medical care, have contributed to high mortality rates. IDPs, especially those with limited resources, frequently settle in peripheral areas with informal housing and inadequate amenities.

Abuja is similarly experiencing rapid population growth, causing strain to social services and infrastructure. The city is reported to be facing a shortage of over 1.7 million housing units. 'Exorbitant' and rapidly rising rents are forcing many into overcrowded slums or makeshift and inadequate housing.

- **Water and sanitation**

In Nigeria, around 30 % of the population reportedly has access to safe drinking water, and most people lack access to basic sanitation.

A significant share of residences in **Lagos** lacks clean water and adequate sanitation. Clean water is scarce in certain areas of **Abuja**, such as Mpape and Dakibiyu, where poor infrastructure and unreliable electricity further compound living conditions.

- **Basic health care**

Nigeria faces limited access to healthcare services and inadequate infrastructure, particularly affecting IDPs, women, and persons with disabilities, as well as a shortage of mental health professionals. Nearly 28.5 % of global maternal deaths occur in the country, largely due to the criminalisation of abortion and limited access to health services and emergency care.

In 2024, **Lagos** State government issued an Executive Order to mandate compulsory health insurance for all residence of the state. This policy is being rolled out on a phased basis. In 2025, 34 resident doctors were hired in the Federal Capital Territory (**Abuja**) covering a broad range of medical specialisations.



The general circumstances in Lagos and Abuja do not preclude the reasonableness to settle in these cities. The assessment should take into account the individual circumstances of the applicant.



6.4.2. Individual circumstances

Last update: March 2026

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.3., 3.6.](#); [Security 2025, 2.1.2., 2.6.6.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

In addition to the general situation in the area of potential IPA, the assessment whether it is reasonable to settle in that part of the country should take into account the individual circumstances of the applicant, including his/her vulnerabilities and coping mechanisms.

Please note that this is a non-exhaustive list:

- **Ethnoreligious background:** Members of ethnic or religious groups would face difficulties relocating and assimilating into the community in an area dominated by other groups. Therefore, the ethnoreligious background of the applicant should be taken into account. Specifically in relation to Lagos and Abuja, as they are both characterised by a heterogenous population, such ethnoreligious considerations are taken into account, but generally they would not be determinative as to the reasonableness of IPA in these two cities.
- **Age:** Young age as well as elderly age could significantly limit the applicant's access to means of subsistence such as through employment, making him or her dependent on other providers. Therefore, this element should be seen in conjunction with the available support by the family or by a broader support network. In the case of children, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration, for example, with regard to access to basic education.

Primary education is free and compulsory in Nigeria, however, enrolment and literacy rates vary widely according to gender, geographical area, socio-economic background, and ethnicity. In Lagos, the vast majority of children attend primary and junior secondary education, while the out-of-school rate for senior secondary level reaches 23 %. In Abuja, out-of-school rates for children at primary and junior secondary levels are around 10 %, reaching 20 % for senior secondary level.
- **Gender:** Women and girls encounter additional difficulties in relation to education, work, maternity health care, etc. Further obstacles may be linked to being a single mother or a widow, a woman who has been previously trafficked, being of a certain ethnicity, etc. Therefore, the gender of the applicant should be taken into account along with his or her family status and available support.
- **State of health:** Access to health care is strained in various areas of Nigeria, making the health status of the applicant an important consideration when assessing the reasonableness of IPA for those who require medical treatment. The availability of the necessary medical treatment, as well as the applicant's state of health and its impact on their ability to work and to travel/relocate, should be considered. For persons with disabilities, access to basic means of subsistence, including through employment, would be further limited.



- **Professional and educational background:** The background of the applicant, their level of education and available financial means and in particular the access of the applicant to means of basic subsistence, should be taken into account when assessing the reasonableness of IPA.
- **Support network and local knowledge:** Local knowledge and social connections are important in helping a person settle and access basic needs and services. A support network may include extended family, friends, members of the same ethnicity. Special attention should be given to some people returning after long periods abroad, who may lack such networks.

These factors would often intersect in the case of an applicant, leading to different conclusions on the reasonableness of IPA. In some cases, more than one element of vulnerability would confirm a conclusion that IPA is not reasonable (e.g. unaccompanied child, or person with disabilities without support network), while in other cases, they may balance each other (e.g. single woman who has a socio-economic background and a support network facilitating her access to basic subsistence, particularly through employment).

6.4.3. Conclusion on reasonableness



Lagos and Abuja

In general, IPA would be reasonable for **single able-bodied men** and for **married couples without children**, including where they have no support network in the IPA area, as long as they have no additional vulnerabilities and have access to financial means.

In general, when a support network is lacking, IPA would not be reasonable for **unaccompanied children, elderly persons or applicants with severe illnesses or disabilities**, as well as for **non self-reliant women**.

In the case of **other profiles**, the individual circumstances of the applicant, in particular in relation to ethnoreligious background, gender, age, the existence of a support network, etc. should be given due consideration. In cases where the applicant is a child, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

6.5. General conclusion on the applicability of IPA



Taking into account the assessment with regard to the three criteria under Article 8 QD/QR, it can be concluded that:

IPA in Lagos and Abuja may be applicable depending on the profile and individual circumstances of the applicant, as detailed above.



7. Exclusion

Last update: March 2026



For general guidance on Exclusion, see 'EUAA, [Practical Guide: Exclusion](#), January 2017' and 'EUAA, [Practical Guide on Exclusion for Serious \(Non-Political\) Crimes](#), December 2021'.

For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this section, see 'EUAA, [Exclusion](#) in *Country Guidance: explained*, February 2026'.

In the context of Nigeria, various circumstances may require consideration of the potential applicability of exclusion grounds. The QD/QR does not set a time limit for the application of the grounds for exclusion. Applicants may be excluded in relation to events regardless of when they took place. Relevant situations from the past could include, for example, the armed conflict (civil war) in Biafra in 1967-1970 and the coups d'état and military regimes in 1966-1979 and 1983-1998.

More specifically, the need to examine possible exclusion issues in the context of Nigeria may arise, for example, in cases of applicants being former or current members of the groups cited below. This list is non-exhaustive:

- Boko Haram and other Islamist groups
- Nigerian security forces
- Herders' and farmers' and other communal militias
- Vigilante groups
- Separatist groups
- Militant groups in the Niger Delta
- Trafficking networks, student cults, criminal gangs and/or bandits



Given the serious consequences that exclusion may have for the individual, the exclusion grounds should be interpreted restrictively and applied with caution.

The examples mentioned in this chapter are non-exhaustive and non-conclusive. Each case should be examined on its own merits.



7.1. Exclusion based on the commission of international crimes

Last update: March 2026

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 2.10., 2.13.](#), [Security 2025, 1.1.2., 1.1.3.](#); [Targeting 2018, 2.1.1, 3.14](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The ground ‘crime against peace’ is not found to be of particular relevance in the cases of applicants from Nigeria.

Serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law have occurred in Nigeria’s non-international armed conflict between the Nigerian state forces and state-affiliated forces, on the one hand, and Boko Haram and other Islamist groups on the other. The Nigerian security forces have been accused of extrajudicial killings, torture, enforced disappearances and sexual abuse. CJTF has also recruited minors. Boko Haram has committed massacres, abductions, child recruitment, attacks on civilians and in churches and schools, and widespread sexual slavery. In 2020, the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) found a reasonable basis to believe both Boko Haram (since 2009) and the Nigerian military (since 2011) committed war crimes and crimes against humanity.

7.2. Exclusion based on the commission of a serious crime

Last update: March 2026

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 2.9.2., 2.14.](#); [Security 2025, 1.2.2., 1.2.3., 1.2.4.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The personnel of some Nigerian state actors may also be found responsible for serious (non-political) crimes (e.g. killings, sexual abuse, torture, beatings, illegal detention). Some of the crimes committed by militant groups in the Niger Delta include e.g. kidnapping and car bombing and oil bunkering. IPOB and ESN members have also conducted attacks mainly against police and military installations but also against persons not supporting their cause. Violence between herders and farmers, as well as communal militias, has led to casualties, abductions, and destruction of villages and livelihoods. Criminal activity in Nigeria is widely reported, including kidnappings, assassinations, drug trafficking, piracy, human trafficking, and robberies. A rise in the recruitment of children by cult groups has been also reported. Such crimes may trigger the application of Article 12(2)(b) QD/Article 17(1)(b) QD/QR.





Violence against women and children (for example, in relation to FGM/C, domestic violence or in the context of forced and child marriage, etc.) is widespread in Nigeria and could also potentially amount to a serious (non-political) crime.

Some serious (non-political) crimes could be linked to an armed conflict (e.g. if committed in order to finance the activities of armed groups) or could amount to fundamentally inhumane acts committed as a part of a systematic or widespread attack against a civilian population, in which case they should instead be examined under Article 12(2)(a)/Article 17(1)(a) QD/QR.

7.3. Exclusion based on acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations

Last update: March 2026

(Former) membership in groups such as Boko Haram could trigger relevant considerations and require an examination of the applicant's activities under Article 12(2)(c)/Article 17(1)(c) QD/QR, in addition to the considerations under Article 12(2)(b)/Article 17(1)(b) QD/QR.

Membership alone is not sufficient to substantiate exclusion, however, participation in the activities of a terrorist group, undertaken with knowledge of the fact that such participation will contribute to the criminal activities of the terrorist group, should be given significant weight in the exclusion assessment⁽¹⁾. The application of exclusion should be based on an individual assessment of the specific facts in the context of the applicant's activities within that organisation. The position of the applicant within the organisation would constitute a relevant consideration and a high-ranking position could justify a (rebuttable) presumption of individual responsibility. Other engagement with a group, such as the aforementioned, could also trigger exclusion considerations. Nevertheless, it remains necessary to examine all relevant circumstances before an exclusion decision can be made.

Where the available information indicates possible involvement in crimes against peace, war crimes or crimes against humanity, the assessment would need to be made in light of the exclusion grounds under Article 12(2)(a)/Article 17(1)(a) QD/QR.

⁽¹⁾ Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on combating terrorism and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA.





7.4. Exclusion based on constituting a danger to the community or to the security of the Member State

Last update: March 2026

In the examination of the application for international protection, the exclusion ground under Article 17(1)(d) QD/QR (danger to the community or the security of the Member State) is only applicable to persons otherwise eligible for subsidiary protection.

Unlike the other exclusion grounds, the application of this provision is based on a forward-looking assessment of risk. Nevertheless, the examination takes into account the past and/or current activities of the applicant, such as association with certain groups considered to represent a danger to the security of the Member State or criminal activities of the applicant.



Annex: Country of origin information references

The main COI sources used in the common analysis are the following (listed alphabetically by reference used in the text)

COI update 2026	<p>EUAA Country of Origin Information Query: Nigeria: Major political, security, and human rights developments</p> <p>(January 2026)</p> <p>Available at:</p> <p>https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2026_01_EUAA_COI_Query_Response_Q4_Nigeria_Major_political_security_human_rights_developments.pdf</p>
Country Focus 2025	<p>EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Nigeria: Country Focus</p> <p>(November 2025)</p> <p>Available at:</p> <p>https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-nigeria-country-focus-1</p>
Security 2025	<p>EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Nigeria: Security Situation</p> <p>(November 2025)</p> <p>Available at:</p> <p>https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-nigeria-security-situation-0</p>
Targeting 2018	<p>EASO Country of Origin Information Report: Nigeria: Targeting of individuals</p> <p>(November 2018)</p> <p>Available at:</p> <p>https://www.euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2018-EASO-COI-Nigeria-TargetingIndividuals.pdf</p>



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