

# TWELFTH REPORT ON VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA 2022

Funded by the  
European Union



Implemented by  
the British Council



**NIGERIA**  
**WATCH**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



LIST OF FIGURES.....	3
ACRONYMS .....	4
FOREWORD .....	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	6
INTRODUCTION.....	7
1. GENERAL TRENDS OF VIOLENCE (2006-2022).....	7
2. MAIN CAUSES OF VIOLENCE IN 2022.....	8
• 2.1 Crime .....	8
• 2.1.1 Cultism .....	8
• 2.1.2 Rural Banditry .....	9
• 2.1.3 Kidnapping.....	9
• 2.1.4 Farmers/Herdsman clashes.....	10
• 2.2 Protagonists to violence in Nigeria.....	11
• 2.3 Political and religious violence.....	11
• 2.3.1 Boko Haram Insurgency.....	11
• 2.3.2 Pro-Biafra Agitators.....	11
• 2.4 Road accidents.....	12
• 2.4.1 Road accidents by states.....	12
• 2.5 Ethno-communal violence.....	13
3. THE MOST DANGEROUS STATE .....	14
REFERENCES.....	15



# LIST OF FIGURES



**Figure 1:** Main trend of lethal violence, 2006-2022

**Figure 2:** Number of fatalities resulting from different causes of violence in 2022

**Figure 3:** Number of fatalities resulting from banditry per state in 2022

**Figure 4:** Number of fatalities resulting from pastoral violence per state in 2022

**Figure 5:** Number of fatalities resulting from pastoral violence per month in 2022

**Figure 6:** Main protagonists of violence per number of fatalities in 2022

**Figure 7:** Fatalities resulting from road accidents per month in 2022

**Figure 8:** Fatalities resulting from road accidents per state in 2022

**Figure 9:** Number of fatalities caused by communal violence per state in Nigeria, 2022

**Figure 10:** Map of fatalities' rates per 100,000 inhabitants in Nigeria, 2022

# ACRONYMS

CJTF	Civilian Joint Task Force
ECC	Every Casualty Counts
ESN	Eastern Security Network
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FGC	Federal Government College
GIS	Geographic Information System
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IFRA	French Institute for Research in Africa
IPOB	Independent People of Biafra
IRD	Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, Paris
ISWAP	Islamic State West African Province
JAS	Jama'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihad
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KKK	Ka Klux Klan
LGA	Local Government Area
MCN	Managing Conflict in Nigeria
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSCDC	Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps
NW	Nigeria Watch
PMS	Premium Motor Spirit

**Dr. Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos**

*Senior Researcher, Institut de recherche  
pour le développement (IRD)*

# FOREWORD

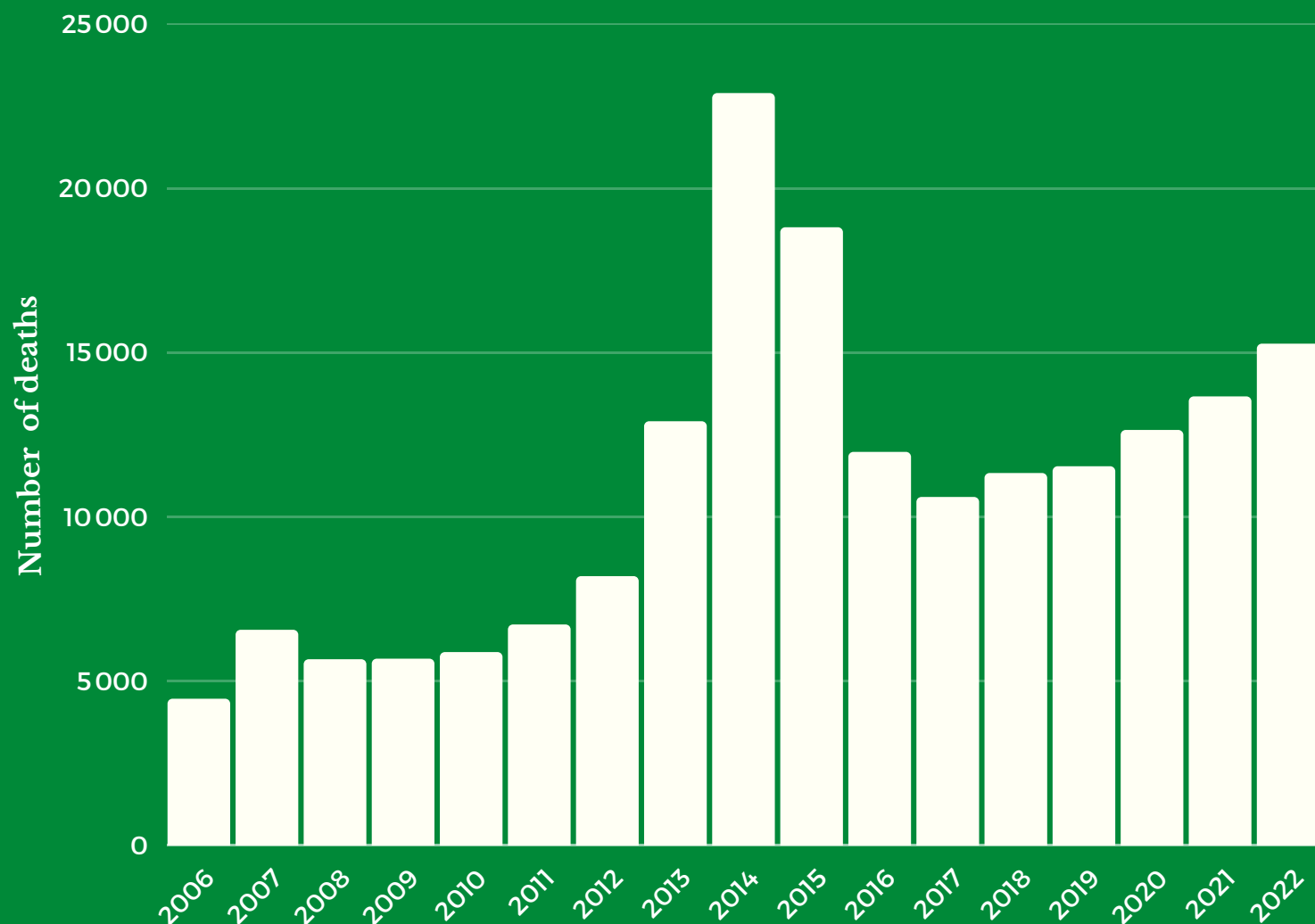
This twelfth Annual Report on lethal violence in Nigeria covers the period between 1 January and 31 December 2022. The study was conducted by Vitus Nwankwo Ukoji with the help of Abiola Victoria Ayodokun, Dr. Victor Chinedu Eze, Enzo Fasquelle and Egbochice Precious of Nigeria Watch. The Nigeria Watch project is hosted by the French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA-Nigeria) at the University of Ibadan's Institute of African Studies.<sup>1</sup> It is supported by the IRD (Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, Paris), JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), and the British Council's programme Managing Conflict in Nigeria (MCN). The Nigeria Watch project is also a member of an international network of body-count practitioners under the aegis of a London-based NGO, ECC (Every Casualty Counts).<sup>2</sup> It aims at following the Standards for Casualty Recording launched at the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) in Geneva in November 2016.<sup>3</sup> Our methodology and sources are online.<sup>4</sup> They have been discussed in various books and occasions, especially during an international conference organized by IFRA at the University of Ibadan in October 2016.<sup>5</sup> The data are updated daily by a team of Nigerian researchers and they come from a wide variety of local open sources, mainly the press.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The number of fatalities from violence in Nigeria reached 15,245 in 2022, bringing the total for the period 2006-2022 to 184,415. Borno State was most affected by lethal violence. It accounted for the highest absolute number of fatalities (2,921) and the highest relative number of deaths per 100,000 population (41.08). Niger, Zamfara, Kaduna and Katsina also recorded a high number of deaths and were on the list of the 5 most dangerous states in Nigeria.
- Crime remained a major cause of death in Nigeria in 2022. Despite a drop in the number of fatalities, from 7,527 deaths reported in 2021 to 7,031 in 2022, many communities, especially in the north, are ravaged by rural banditry and mass kidnapping.
- In 2022, clashes involving farmers and herdsmen were reported across 24 Nigerian states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). No fewer than 579 lives were lost in these incidents. Benue, Enugu and Plateau states recorded the highest number of deaths while Bayelsa, Kogi, and Kwara states reported the least.
- Criminal gangs and government security forces were involved in more lethal incidents than other protagonists of violence in 2022.
- More deaths were recorded in road accidents in Nigeria in 2022 than in 2021. Like previous years, Ogun State accounted for the highest number of road accident fatalities. The daily volume of traffic on the sides of the Lagos-Ibadan and Lagos-Abeokuta expressways is partly to blame for the state's continued high rate of fatal traffic accidents. Generally, over-speeding, overloading, and traffic violation were among the main causes of road crashes in 2022.



# INTRODUCTION

Figure 1: main trend of lethal violence, 2006-2022<sup>6</sup>

- Nigeria Watch methodology is online. The database relies on open sources to offer a systematic and credible means of analyzing trends of violence with a Geographic Information System (GIS).<sup>7</sup> It answers four critical questions
- Where and when is fatal violence taking place?
- What are the main causes of fatal violence?
- Is fatal violence increasing or decreasing?
- What is the security risk?

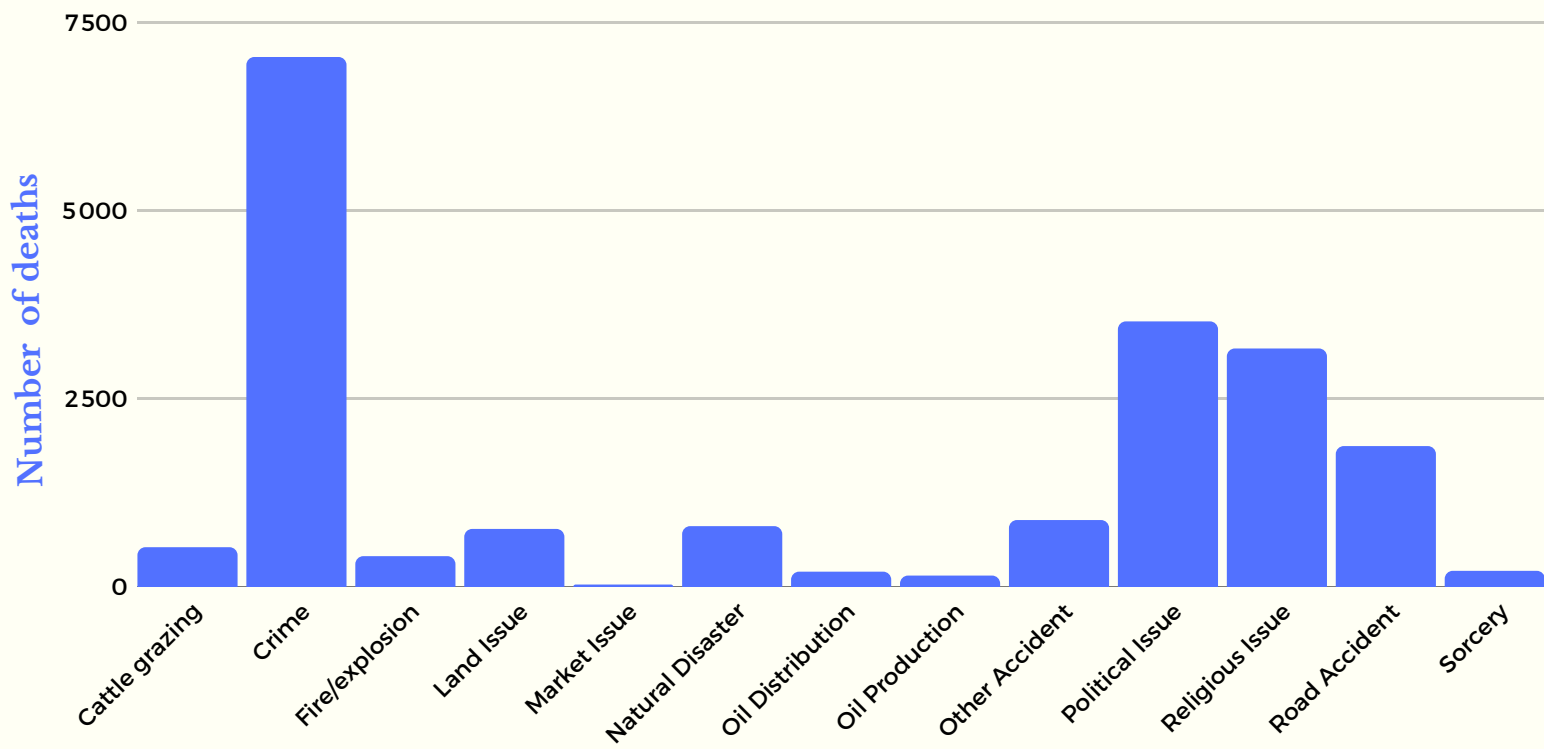
## 1. GENERAL TRENDS OF VIOLENCE (2006-2022)

Between 2006 and 2022, Nigeria lost about 184,395 people in 38,158 violent incidents across the 36 states and the FCT. The number of deaths as shown in Figure 1 increased to 15,245 in 2022 from the 13,640 reported in 2021. Borno State recorded the highest number of fatalities (2,921) in 2022, followed by Niger (1,542), Kaduna (1,385), Zamfara (1,152), and Katsina (564). Terrorism and counter operations by government security forces in Borno and Niger states accounted for the high number of fatalities that occurred in both states while Kaduna, Zamfara, and Katsina states continued to grapple with rural banditry. Ekiti State recorded the least number of deaths (35), followed by Nasarawa (78), Osun (103), Akwa Ibom (112) and Cross River (115). Ekiti and Gombe have over the years reported fewer fatalities from violent incidents in Nigeria.

In 2022, the North accounted for about 77% of the overall fatalities in Nigeria, leaving the South with 23%. The relative number of deaths per 100,000 population in the North averaged 8.8 against 3.7 in the South.

# 2.MAIN CAUSES OF VIOLENCE IN 2022

Figure 2: Number of fatalities resulting from different causes of violence in 2022



Crime, political issues and road accidents were the major causes of violent death in Nigeria in 2022 while market issues, oil production and distribution contributed to the lowest number of fatalities.

## • 2.1. Crime

Nigeria is considered to be a country with a high level of crime. In 2022, Nigeria lost about 7,031 lives in criminal activities (Figure 2), against 7,527 in 2021.

North West and North Central states were the most affected, with Zamfara reporting the highest number of fatalities (1,173), followed by Kaduna (1,110), Niger (1,012), Plateau (452) and Katsina (420). Rural banditry was prevalent in the states. On the other hand, Yobe, Jigawa, Gombe, Ekiti and Cross River states were much less affected by violent crimes.

## • 2.1.1 Cultism

Twenty states in Nigeria recorded cult violence in 2022. Fifteen of the states are in the south while 5 are in the north. Over 301 fatalities were recorded across the affected states, with Lagos and its neighbor, Ogun, recording the highest number of deaths. Both states, located in the South West, harbor a good number of cult societies, including the Aiye and Eiye confraternities, the two most notorious groups in the region. Clashes between both groups were reported in Lagos Mainland, Kosofe, Badagry, Ikorodu, Ojo, Alimosho and Shomulu LGAs in Lagos State and Ijebu North, Ijebu Ode, Shagamu, Obafemi Awolowo, Abeokuta North and South LGAs in Ogun State.

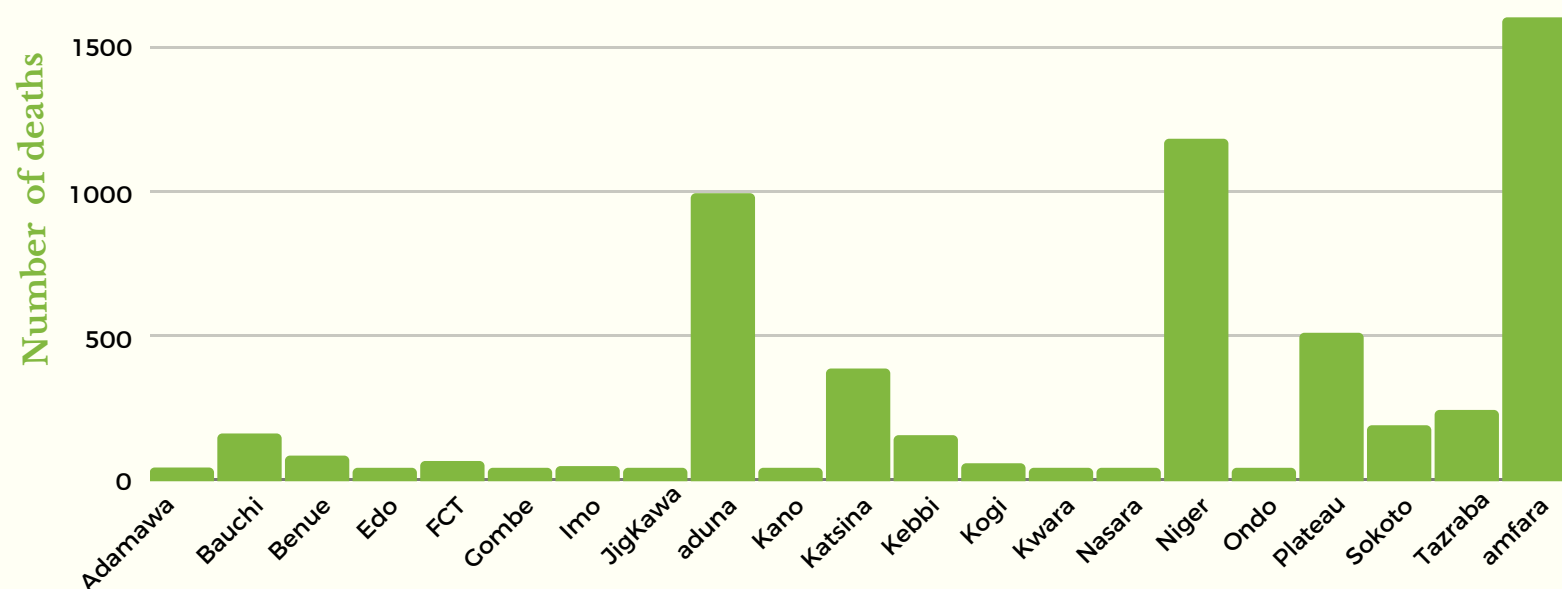
Four out of the five states in the South East recorded fatalities from cult violence. Anambra State was the most affected with 32 deaths, especially around Awka. Victims included rival cult members, civilians and vigilantes who were commissioned to tackle cultism in Awka and its surroundings. On February 02, 2022, over 10 mourners were thus shot dead in Ebenebe community in Awka North LGA by suspected cultists.

Across three states in the South-South, dominant cult groups, i.e. the Icelanders, Ka Klux Klan (KKK), and Degbam, fight over supremacy and territorial expansion. They also target government anti-cult establishments in a bid to evade arrests and go after rival members. Delta State recorded the highest number of fatalities from cult violence (20), followed by Rivers (16) and Akwa Ibom (13).



## 2.MAIN CAUSES OF VIOLENCE IN 2022

Figure 3: Number of fatalities resulting from banditry per state in 2022



### 2.1.2 Rural Banditry

Rural banditry and counter-operations by government forces claimed about 5,725 lives across 19 states and the FCT in 2022 (see Figure 3). States in the North West and North Central zones were the most affected, especially Zamfara (1,632 fatalities), followed by Niger (1,204) and Kaduna (1,012). These 3 states also recorded a high number of fatalities from banditry in 2021.

Victims of banditry include civilians, government forces and bandits themselves, many of whom were killed by troops of Operation Forest Sanity, Operation Whirl Punch, Operation Thunder Strike and Operation Hadarin Daji. On December 12, 2022, about 10 soldiers, 68 villagers, and scores of bandits died in a gun duel in Mutunji village of Dansadau Emirate in Maru LGA, Zamfara State. In Niger State, a Joint Security Task Force killed over 100 suspected bandits in Bangi of Mariga LGA on March 16, 2022. People abducted by bandits were sometimes rescued during some of the operations.

### 2.1.3 Kidnapping

Kidnap for ransom and mass abductions remain massive in Nigeria. About 1,145 fatalities were recorded in incidents that involved kidnappings and rescue operations by government forces across 34 states and the FCT. Fatalities resulting from kidnappings have doubled in 2022 compared with last year. Niger State recorded the highest number of fatalities (291), seconded by Kaduna (152), Zamfara (114) and Kebbi (74). Some of the victims were killed after ransom was paid for their release, while others lost their lives due to the inability of their families to raise enough money.

Foreigners were also targeted for abduction. Eight Chinese nationals and 2 others were abducted in Edo, Kebbi, Niger and Ondo states. In Niger State, 4 Chinese expatriates lost their lives during kidnap incidents in Zungeru Hydro Power Dam in Wushishi LGA on January 04, 2022, and at a mining site at Ajata-Aboki, Shiroro LGAs on June 30, 2022. Attempts to foil their abduction resulted in the death of 14 policemen, 21 soldiers, and 16 civilians, among which were 2 factory workers. About 5 kidnappers were also killed by security operatives.

The main protagonists in lethal kidnap incidents in 2022 were bandits, cultists, terrorists who claim to fight for an Islamic cause, suspected Fulani herdsmen, pro-Biafra agitators, and ritualistic internet fraudsters popularly called 'Yahoo Plus'. Kidnap victims included civilians who were either killed on the scene of abductions or during their transit to hostage camps, government forces who were abducted and killed by suspected members of the Eastern Security Network (ESN), the militia wing of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), gunmen and security operatives who died during rescue operations, and individuals who were killed for sorcery.

## 2.MAIN CAUSES OF VIOLENCE IN 2022

Figure 5: Number of fatalities resulting from pastoral violence per month in 2022

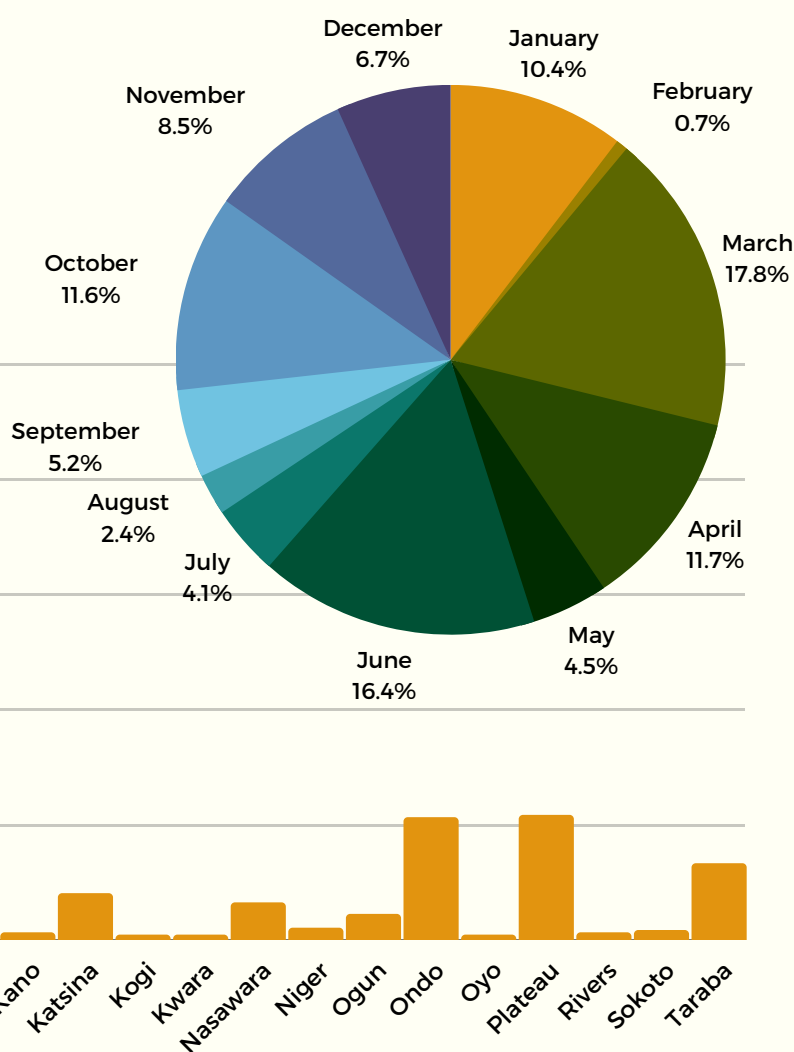
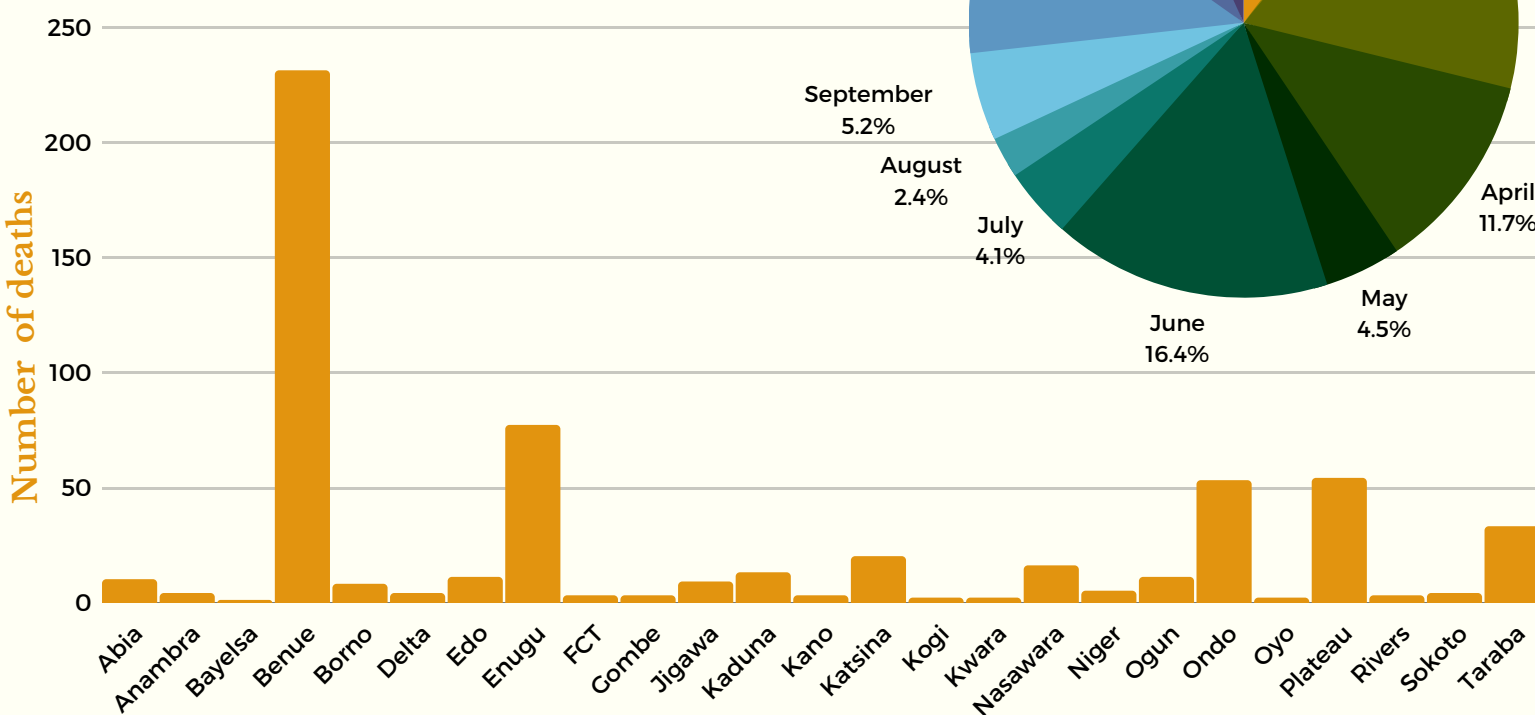


Figure 4: Number of fatalities resulting from pastoral violence per state in 2022



### 2.1.4 Farmers/Herdsman clashes

In 2022, violence involving farmers and herdsmen in Nigeria claimed about 579 people across 24 states and the FCT. That is a decrease from the 703 deaths recorded in 2021. Clashes and killings occurred in the grazing field, farming communities, and Fulani settlements.

The highest number of deaths occurred in Benue, followed by Enugu and Plateau states while the least occurred in Bayelsa, Kogi and Kwara states (See Figure 4). For some years now, Benue has recorded the highest number of fatalities from clashes involving suspected herdsmen and farmers. Such incidents were reported in 11 LGAs. Guma LGA was the most affected with 93 deaths, followed by Logo (35) and Ukum (30). The adjoining states of Plateau and Enugu reported the 2nd and the 3rd highest number of fatalities.

While land for grazing was central to clashes between farmers and herdsmen, cattle rustling and other forms of crime were major triggers. In Anyii community in Logo LGA of Benue State, for instance, 3 persons including 2 Fulani herders and a villager were killed over rustling and killing of cows. Some people were injured in the incident and many were displaced, while women and girls were reportedly raped.. On July 24, 2022, again, suspected Fulani herdsmen raided Guma town, killed 9 farmers, and raped some women. Similar allegations were leveled against suspected Fulani herders in the Ogbede-Mgbuji Eha-Amufu community of Isi-Uzo LGA of Enugu State on December 17, 2022.

March, June and October recorded the highest number of fatalities from clashes between farmers and herdsmen in 2022 (See Figure 5). These months mark the beginning of rainfall, planting season, crop harvesting and the seasonal migration of cattle.

# 2.MAIN CAUSES OF VIOLENCE IN 2022

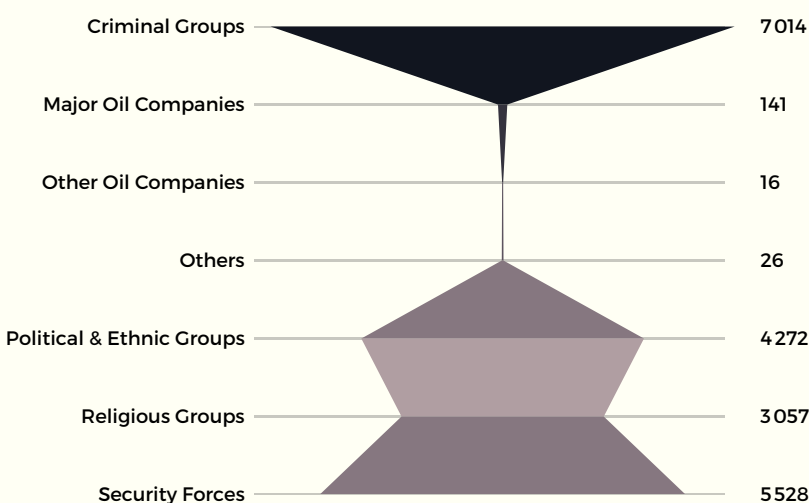


Figure 6: Main protagonists of violence per number of fatalities in 2022

## 2.2 Major protagonists to lethal violence in Nigeria

The involvement of criminal gangs and government security forces in lethal violence remains a huge concern in Nigeria. In 2022, both protagonists were involved in more fatal incidents than any other group, especially oil companies (See Figure 6).

## 2.3 Political and religious violence

### 2.3.1 Boko Haram Insurgency

Boko Haram, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Ansaru attacks, as well as counter operations by government security forces, claimed about 3,110 lives across 9 states in Nigeria and the FCT, against 2,116 in 2021[MOU1]. Like previous years, Borno State recorded the highest number of fatalities related to these incidents (3,110), followed by Niger (131) and Yobe (65). At least 19 LGAs in Borno State were affected, with Bama accounting for 830 deaths and Gwoza 678. [MOU2] Kaduna, Kano, Taraba, Kogi, Zamfara and the FCT also reported fatalities from insurgents' attacks and counter operations by government forces. Multiple attempts were made by the rebels to overrun some parts of the FCT. In July 2022, ISWAP raided the Kuje Correctional Center and freed some of its members. Five people, including an official of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and 3 ISWAP fighters died in the encounter.

The struggle for supremacy and territorial control between Boko Haram (Jama'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihad (JAS) and ISWAP cost both factions many men and women. Since the death of Abubakar Shekau in May 2021, ISWAP has absorbed some Boko Haram commanders and foot soldiers. Others who did not align with ISWAP have either been killed or forced to surrender to ISWAP command or Nigerian troops. However, some loyalists to Shekau have preferred to fight ISWAP. On November 21, 2022, about 50 Boko Haram fighters were thus killed in an ISWAP ambush along the Chillaria axis of Sambisa Forest, Gwoza LGA, Borno State. On December 05, 2022, Boko Haram retaliated by killing 56 ISWAP members, including their wives, in Sambisa, Ukuba, Arra, Sabil Huda and Farisu. In Borno, the different factions also clashed in Bole and Yale Camps in Konduga LGA, Gijibo in Dikwa LGA, Gaizuwa in Bama LGA, and the Chinene/Barawa axis in the Mandara Mountains in Gwoza LGA, among others.

### 2.3.2 Pro-Biafra Agitators

The number of fatalities linked to the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and its militia wing, the Eastern Security Network (ESN), in the Southeast and South-South zones increased from the 306 deaths recorded in 2021 to 420 in 2022. Anambra State recorded the highest number of fatalities (158), followed by Imo (106), Ebonyi (71), Enugu (53), Abia (27) and Delta (5). This is also because Anambra communities in Aguata, Ihiala, Orumba South and North, Awka North, Nnewi South, Ogbaru, Oyi, Idemmilli South and Anaocha LGAs became rallying points for rogue elements in IPOB after they were displaced from Imo State by government forces in 2021.

The targets of pro-Biafra agitators included security operatives, politicians, and traditional rulers. On June 21, 2022, a politician and a former lawmaker in Anambra State were reportedly beheaded by suspected IPOB and ESN members. In Imo State, a would-be military couple on transit to formalize his traditional marriage was also beheaded by suspected ESN members. IPOB denied any involvement in the murder. Meanwhile, government security forces sustained the onslaught against suspected IPOB and ESN members in a bid to curtail their excesses. On July 9, 2022, in Awka North LGA of Anambra State, about 10 suspected IPOB and ESN were killed and their hideout in Achalla was destroyed. The raid was a reprisal for the murder of 2 policemen in the area. With improved security in the region, the enforcement of a weekly sit-at-home order on residents has largely become ceremonial, with socio-economic activities revived in some states.

## 2.MAIN CAUSES OF VIOLENCE IN 2022

Figure 7: Fatalities resulting from road accidents per month in 2022

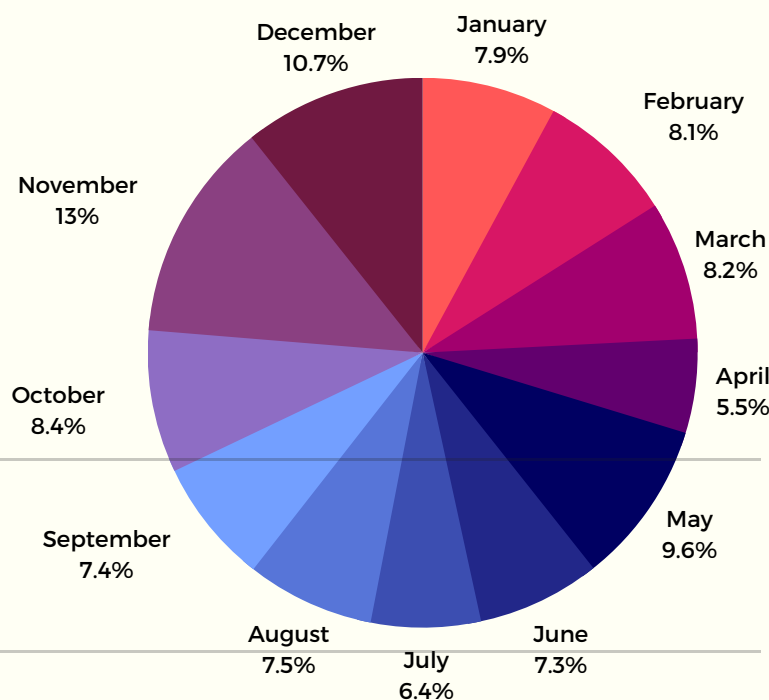
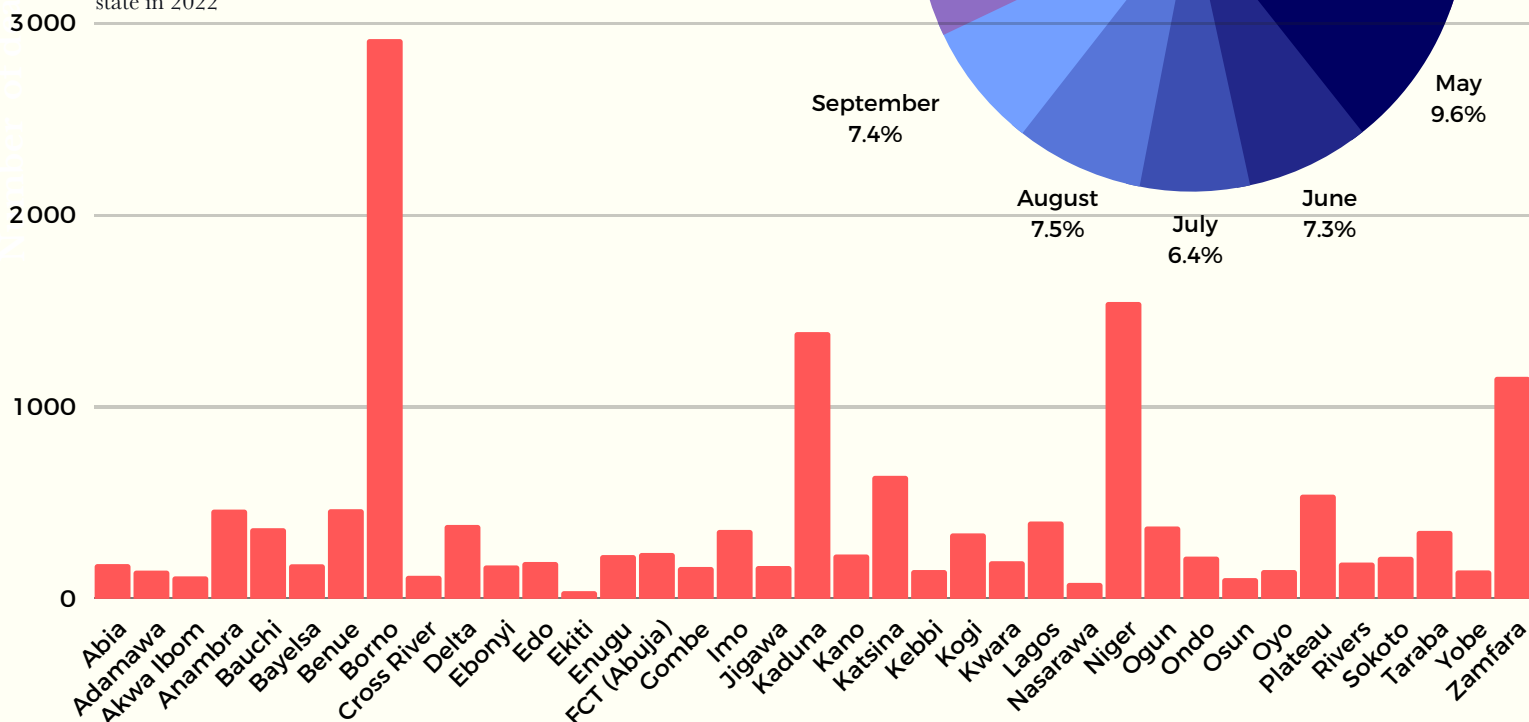


Figure 8: Fatalities resulting from road accidents per state in 2022



### 2.4 Road accidents

Nigeria lost 29,505 people to road accidents between 2006 and 2022. Out of this number, 1,860 deaths were reported in 2022 (Figure 7), a slight increase from the 1,817 recorded in 2021. While the distribution of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) by tankers and agricultural goods by trucks were major causes of lethal road incidents in 2022, overs-peeding and traffic violations also resulted in many deadly multiple crashes. In Bauchi State, for instance, 37 persons were burnt to death in an accident that involved two Hummer buses and a Golf Saloon car along the Damaturu-Maiduguri Federal Highway on November 22, 2022. The accident was blamed on excessive speeding by one of the vehicles coming from the opposite direction. Similarly, 37 people were burnt to death for the same reason along the Maiduguri-Damaturu road in Borno State on November 11, 2022, when 2 Toyota HiAce buses and a Volkswagen Golf saloon car were involved in multiple road accidents

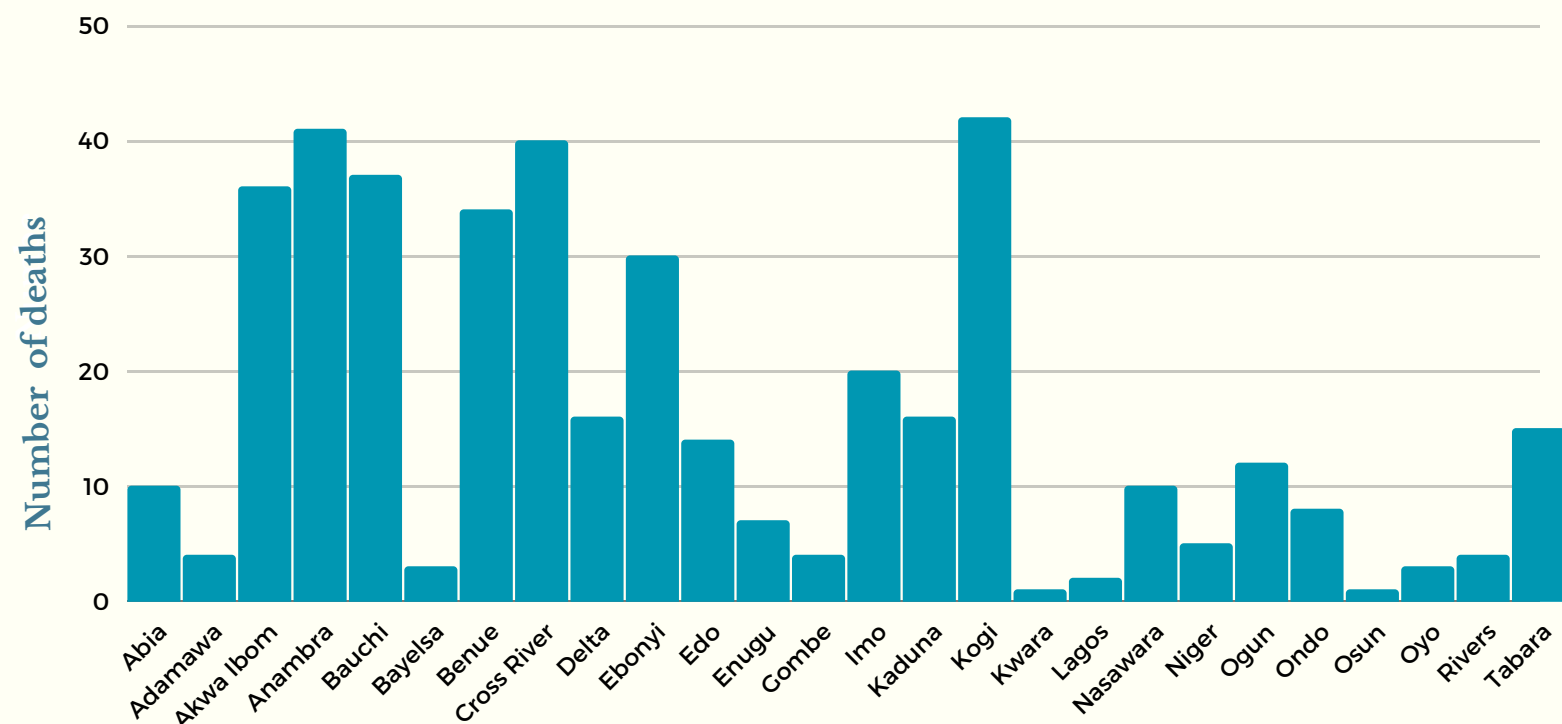
#### 2.4.1 Road accidents by states

Ogun state has recorded the highest number of road accident deaths in Nigeria for the past 6 years. In 2022, it totalled 211 fatalities, followed by Bauchi (158), Kaduna (119), Niger (108) and Kogi (103) (Figure 8). On the other hand, Taraba was the least affected state, followed by Bayelsa (3 deaths), Sokoto (5), Nasarawa (6) and Imo (8). Speed violations, road obstruction, wrongful overtaking and oil distribution were responsible for most of the crashes. In Ogun, more specifically, the daily traffic volume of the Lagos-Ibadan and the Lagos-Abeokuta expressways remained a major issue. The movement of refined petroleum products from fuel storage tanks within Lagos Mainland to other states via Ogun was also responsible for many crashes. For instance, on October 20, 2022, about 10 people were burnt to death when a petrol tanker burst into flames at Conoil Petrol Station and Sagamu Interchange in Shagamu LGA, Ogun State. The truck was reportedly on top speed before the driver lost control, and hit another petrol tanker, triggering an explosion.



## 2.5 ETHNO-COMMUNAL VIOLENCE

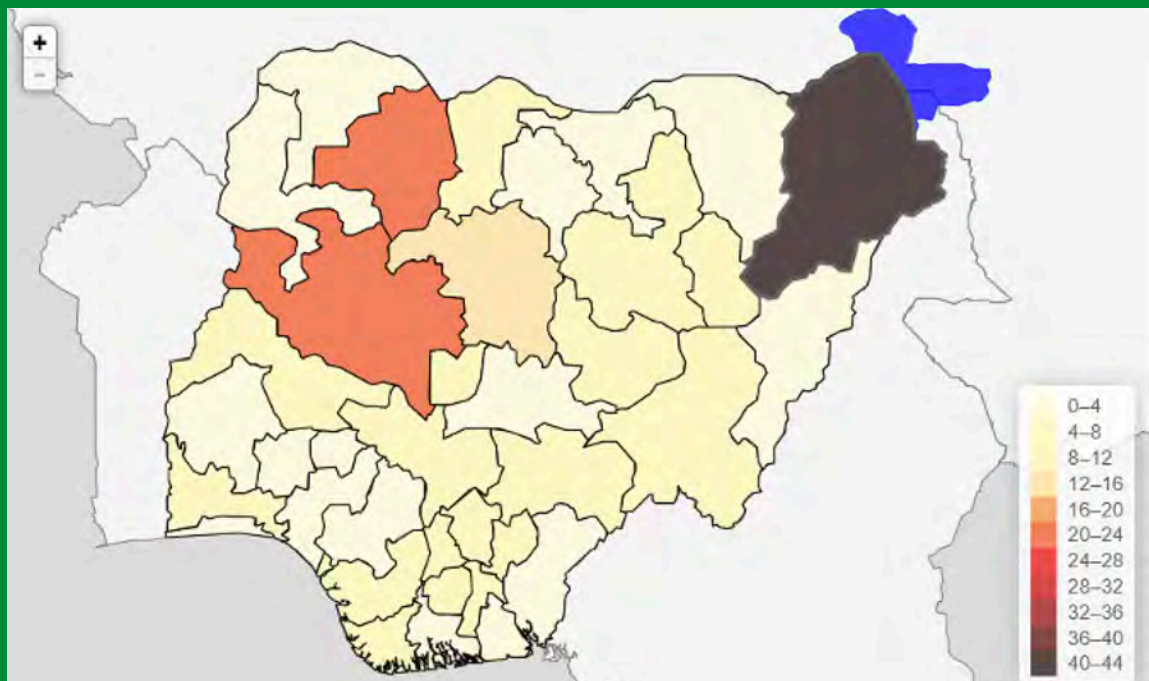
Figure 9: Number of fatalities caused by communal violence per state in Nigeria, 2022



Ethno-communal violence in 2022 claimed about 415 lives across 26 states, against 794 in 2021. Incidents included land disputes, conflicts between indigenes and settlers, attacks on security operatives, and chieftaincy matters, among others. As shown by Figure 8, Kogi was the most affected state with 42 deaths, followed by Anambra (41), Cross River (40), Bauchi (37) and Akwa Ibom (36). For instance, a land dispute between Igburra and Bassa communities claimed 18 lives in Uga-Cheure and Igburra, Bassa LGA, on May 30, 2022. Outside of Kogi State, lethal land conflicts were also reported between Lunguda and Hausa communities in Larmurde LGA, Adamawa State, Ilaje and Ibeno communities in Ibeno LGA, Akwa Ibom State, Tarbuwa and Kubdiya communities in Zakki and Gamawa LGAs, Bauchi State, Igbide and Okpolo-Enwhe communities in Isoko South LGA, Delta State, and Ngbo and Ezza communities in Ohaukwu LGA, Ebonyi State. While people were killed and properties destroyed, many residents were displaced and forced to take refuge in neighboring communities.

### 3. THE MOST DANGEROUS STATES

Figure 10: Map of fatalities' rates per 100,000 inhabitants in Nigeria, 2022



- Borno State emerged as the most dangerous state in Nigeria in 2022, with 41.08 fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants, followed by Niger State (22.86) and Zamfara State (21.34). The Boko Haram crisis and banditry explain this. By contrast, Ekiti State was the most peaceful state with 0.9 fatality per 100,000 inhabitants, followed by Kano (1.43), Oyo (1.51), Akwa Ibom (1.67) and Osun (1.81).
- In 2022, some LGAs in Borno and Niger states also emerged as the most dangerous areas in Nigeria. In Borno, Bama was the most affected, with 187.43 fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants, followed by Gwoza (142.86), Marte (89.63), Kala/Balge (81.88), Abadam (81.84) and Mafa (74.68). In Niger State, the corresponding figures were 148.04 in Moya, 84.58 in Mariga and 80.36 in Shiroro. By contrast, the most peaceful LGAs were Konshisha (Benue), Asari-Toru (Rivers), Bagudo (Kebbi), Gokana (Rivers), Funakaye (Gombe), Akpabuyo (Cross River), Kubau and Sabon-Gari (Kaduna), Saki West (Oyo), Birni Kudu (Jigawa) and Dala (Kano).

# REFERENCES

- 1 Please visit [www.ifra-nigeria.org](http://www.ifra-nigeria.org) for more information about IFRA.
- 2 <https://www.everycasualty.org/practice/ipn>
- 3 [https://www.everycasualty.org/downloads/ec/pdf/StandardsforCasualtyRecording-Version1.0\(2016\).pdf](https://www.everycasualty.org/downloads/ec/pdf/StandardsforCasualtyRecording-Version1.0(2016).pdf)
- 4 <http://www.nigeriawatch.org/index.php?html=4>
- 5 Pérouse de Montclos, Marc-Antoine, Elizabeth Minor & Samrat Sinha (ed.), Violence, statistics, and the politics of accounting for the dead, Dordrecht, Springer, 2016, 140p.; Pérouse de Montclos, Marc-Antoine (ed.), Violence in Nigeria: A qualitative and quantitative analysis, Ibadan, IFRA-Nigeria, Leiden, African Studies Centre, Waposos Series n°3, 2016, 217p.
- 6 Data for 2006 only cover the period from June to December.
- 7 In the online system, figures are updated whenever a new source provides a different report, which explains why trends may change slightly according to the current state of data when they are accessed. The algorithm used also rounds up figures a little differently per cause or per incident.