



SIXTH REPORT ON VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA 2016

NIGERIA
WATCH

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ACRONYMS

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
APC	All Progressive Party
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAN	Christian Association Nigeria
CFR	Council on Foreign Relations
CJTF	Civilian Joint Task Force
GIS	Geography Information System
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FRSC	Federal Road Safety Commission
HRW	Human Right Watch
IFRA	French Institute for Research in Africa
IPOB	Independent People of Biafra
IMN	Islamic Movement of Nigeria
LGA	Local Government Area
MACBAN	Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria
MASSOB	Movement for the Sovereign State of Biafra
NA	Nigeria Army
NPF	Nigerian Police Force
NSRP	Nigerian Stability and Reconciliation Programme
NW	Nigeria Watch
PDP	People Democratic Party
PRIO	Peace Research Institute Oslo
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
WHO	World Health Organization

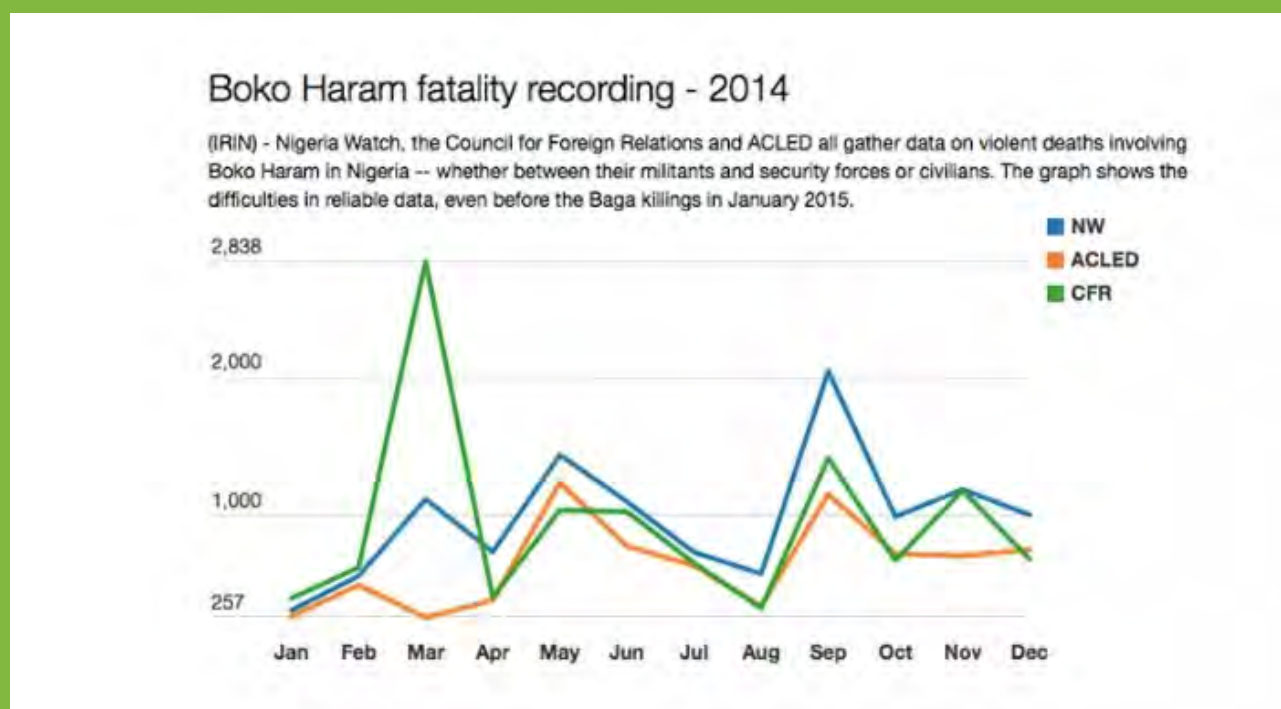


Figure 1: Boko Haram fatality recording: A comparison between NW, ACLED, and CFR in 2014

FOREWORD 1/3

This Sixth Annual Report on lethal violence in Nigeria covers the period between 1 January and 31 December 2016. It has been written at the University of Ibadan thanks to the continuous support of the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP) and the French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA-Nigeria).¹ The study has been conducted by Dr. Timothy Adeola Adams with the help of Assistant Coordinator Vitus Nwankwo Ukoji and Information Retrieval Specialists Abiola Victoria Ayodokun and Victor Chinedu Eze.

The publication of this report is a good opportunity to remind readers why the Nigeria Watch event dataset is so unique:

Firstly, it is the most documented tracking service on lethal violence in Nigeria. In 2014, for instance, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that Nigeria Watch recorded the highest number of fatalities (11,779), compared with the US-based Council on Foreign Relations (11,245) and the UK-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (7,711) (Figure 1).² A recent report by the International Crisis Group confirms this (Figure 2).³

Secondly, Nigeria Watch avoids politicization: it is neutral, it does not take sides, and it is not an advocacy organization.

Thirdly, it publishes its sources in order to pass the scientific test of crosschecking the quality of its findings. All the data units are 'atomic' in that they are coded by day, location, event-type, and actors (when they can be identified). Moreover, each entry refers to specific sources and distinct dates. The possibility of crosschecking the data is important because journalists can introduce bias through selective reporting and/or omission, according to political beliefs, self-censorship, geographical connection, urban location, community proximity, the scale of fatalities, etc. Hence it is absolutely necessary to use a diverse range of sources with different and contrasting views in order to triangulate and validate data. Indeed, a large pool of sources reduces individual biases in the overall dataset. In addition, the Nigeria Watch dataset is not machine-coded so as to avoid systemic mistakes and to weight possible errors.

FOREWORD 2/3

Since its creation in 2006, Nigeria Watch has supplemented the lack of data on violence in a country where official crime statistics are deficient. As shown in our previous studies, the police fail to publish reliable annual reports. There are a number of reasons for this. First, security officers and decision makers do not pay attention to collating statistics. Moreover, they attempt to hide the bodies of victims when state forces are responsible for massacres. This has been the case with the war on terror in Borno State, where corpses of civilians killed by the military were not released until family members signed forms stating that their relatives were Boko Haram fighters. Likewise, the army failed to keep records of recovered casualties in Zaria after the clashes with Shiites in December 2015. As for the Kaduna State government, it did not perform any autopsies and conducted a mass burial that violated Islamic traditions (mixing male and female Muslim corpses in one grave).⁴ The local authorities then demolished the premises of the cemetery where the mother and sister of the leader of the Shiite movement were buried.

Brutality and corruption also explain why citizens do not report murders to the police, for fear of being harassed to pay a fee akin to a bribe. According to a national survey conducted in 2009, only 20% of crime victims report their case to the security forces.⁵ As a result of such discrepancies, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) does not compute homicides in Nigeria from police sources but from surveys conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO).⁶ In the same vein, Nigeria Watch records more fatalities than those declared in police annual reports or press conferences. In Lagos in 2016, it recorded 837 violent deaths, including 460 resulting from various criminal incidents. In contrast, the police recorded 246 murders, or a low rate of 2.7 homicides for 100,000 people as per the 2006 census, against a national average of 20 according to UNODC.⁷ Anyone walking in the streets of Lagos would thus be quite surprised to learn that the city is almost as safe as Stockholm in Sweden or Geneva in Switzerland, two countries that record homicide rates equivalent to 2 homicides for 100,000 people.

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FOREWORD 3/3

The Nigeria Watch Project is also unique because it does not take sides. As a research group, it aims to address the general lack of data with regard to the victims of violence. It highlights its main findings but does not make recommendations, unlike human rights organizations. Moreover, it has no political agenda. It is thus different from the International Society for Civil Liberties and the Rule of Law, which is based in south-east Nigeria and which in 2016 rewarded Igbo distinguished personalities such as Nnamdi Kanu (the leader of Radio Biafra and considered a prisoner of conscience) and Peter Obi (the former governor of Anambra State, who was previously described by the same organization as a “first degree” violator of civic rights following the state’s refusal to conduct polls into some local governments in 2011). In contrast, Nigeria Watch not only relies on various sources to qualify a violent incident, but also avoids using controversial or inappropriate categories that would require a proper police investigation. Unlike the International Society for Civil Liberties and the Rule of Law, for instance, it does not compare Fulani cattle breeders to Janjaweed (the Sudanese Arab militia that were accused of crimes against humanity during the war in Darfur), and it does not call for the banning of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), which is wrongly assimilated to an armed opposition group. In the same vein, Nigeria Watch does not follow the discriminatory categorization of the Sydney-based Institute for Economics and Peace’s Global Terrorism Index, which identifies two terrorist groups in Nigeria: Boko Haram and ... Fulani cattle breeders.⁸

Finally, the Nigeria Watch Project is unique because it applies Every Casualty Worldwide’s international standards for recording fatalities⁹ and publishes all its sources to pass the scientific test of crosschecking the quality of data. A comparison with international or Nigerian body count practitioners is instructive in this regard. In Nigeria, to begin with, the International Society for Civil Liberties and the Rule of Law is quite clear when it defines quite strictly the “unnatural and inexcusable” criminal killings it records, excluding battlefield-related deaths and fatalities arising from transport accidents, domestic violence, street fighting, and starvation. But it is weaker when it comes to providing details about its tagged “independent” sources, which are briefly mentioned as local and international media and human rights organizations, the US Department of State on Human Rights, and the Global Terrorism Index. As a result, scientists do not know how it can claim that over 101,000 Nigerians were murdered between 1999 and 2006.

International datasets on armed conflicts also do not record every casualty. Yet they know how to market their productions to international financial institutions and aid agencies that use their data for policymaking and have no time to question methodological issues. A brief review shows the difference from the Nigeria Watch Project:

-The US-based Correlates of War project is probably the oldest attempt to produce a robust dataset of statistics on armed conflicts, and it is sacrosanct to many American political scientists.¹⁰ It started in 1963 as an academic study at the University of Michigan. However, it is the weakest when it comes to quoting its sources, which are not mentioned on its website.

-The Swedish-based Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) is more recent and has recorded ongoing violent conflicts since the 1970s.¹¹ It complements the Norwegian-based Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), which has data from 1946.¹² Both datasets are updated periodically and define very clearly the armed conflicts they investigate. But they use a different range of sources. PRIO relies heavily on summary estimates and expert assessments of overall fatalities, because its body count of battle deaths started at a time when there were no media databases such as Factiva and no Internet to undertake electronic searches for reports of individuals killed in battle. By contrast, the UCDP claims to provide “one of the most accurate and well-used data-sources on global armed conflicts” because it compiles a variety of sources to count the annual total of combat-related fatalities from news and human rights reports of individual violent incidents. This includes keying a specific string of search words related to organized violence into the online Factiva database, which carries over 10,000 different newspapers and newswires (Reuters, Agence France Presse, Xinhua), as well as television and radio broadcasts mentioned in BBC Monitoring.¹³ Articles are then downloaded by human coders and manually sorted to avoid possible biases. But the event data are provided without references to specific sources.

-Finally, the UK-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) began in 1997 at the University of Sussex. It now claims to be “the most comprehensive public collection of political violence and protest data for developing states”. Definitions and coding rules are clearly stated. Information is aggregated from a variety of primary and secondary sources. Local and international news reports are used to code over three-quarters of events, and ACLED relies on over 50 sources, as against two on average for UCDP.¹⁴ The project also claims to be connected with several local organizations that provide direct information, yet are not named to protect anonymity. As with UCDP, the event data statistics are in fact published without references to specific sources. This is, again, quite different from Nigeria Watch.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In 2016, the main causes of violence in Nigeria in order of number of fatalities were crime (4,127), political conflict (3,502), religious violence (3,361), and accidents including road crashes (2,618).
- There was a substantial decline in the number of violent deaths in Nigeria, from 17,573 in 2015 to 11,003 in 2016.
- Security agencies were the main actors involved in the killings reported in 2016.
- Fatalities from road accident are most prevalent in Lagos and from cult violence in Rivers.
- The security risk index of major states in Nigeria shows that Rivers (with 6.6 fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants) is more dangerous than Lagos (5.3 relative deaths) and Abuja (3.5 relative deaths). But Borno is still the most dangerous location in the country, with 56.2 fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants (Figure 2).
- Despite progress, the Boko Haram conflict remains a deadly issue, with 3,147 fatalities in 2016. In ten years, from 1 June 2006 to 31 May 2016, it has led to a total of 32,842 fatalities. Roughly the same number of people were killed directly by the insurgents (16,666) and by security forces (16,182).

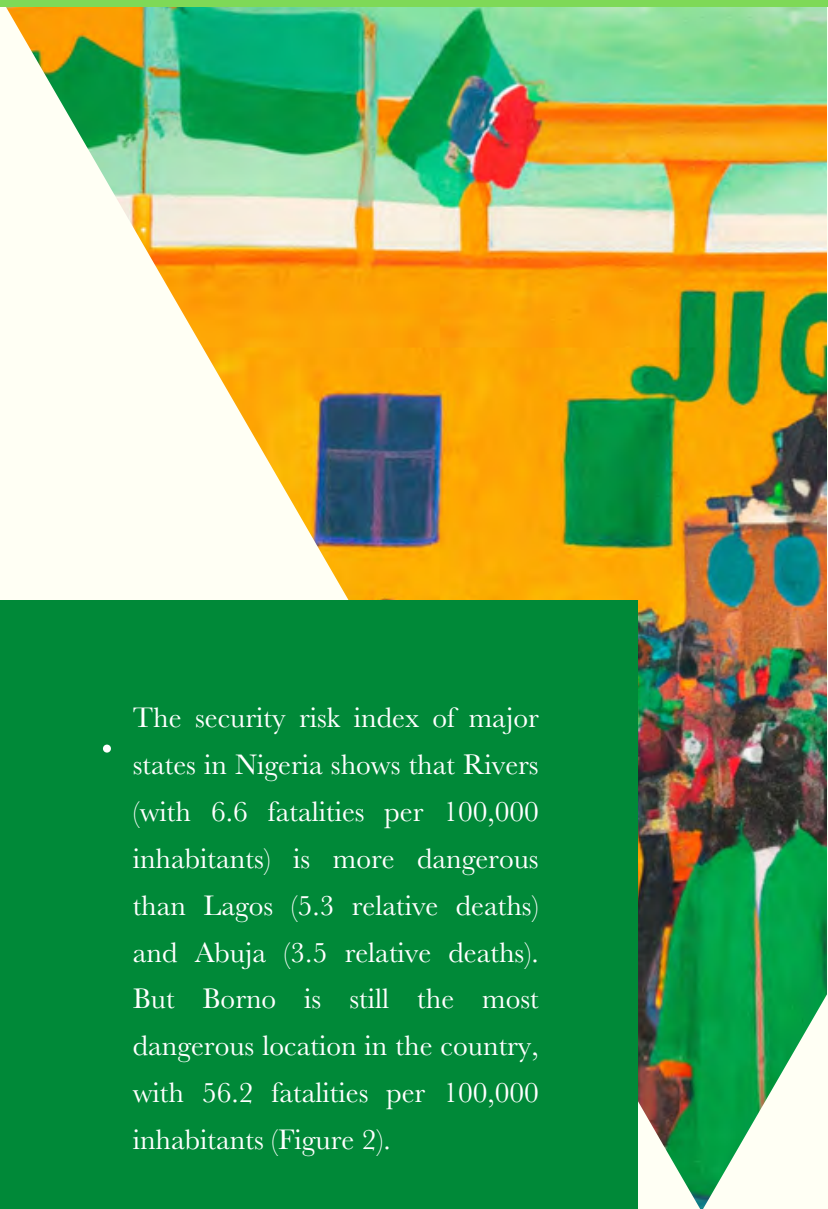
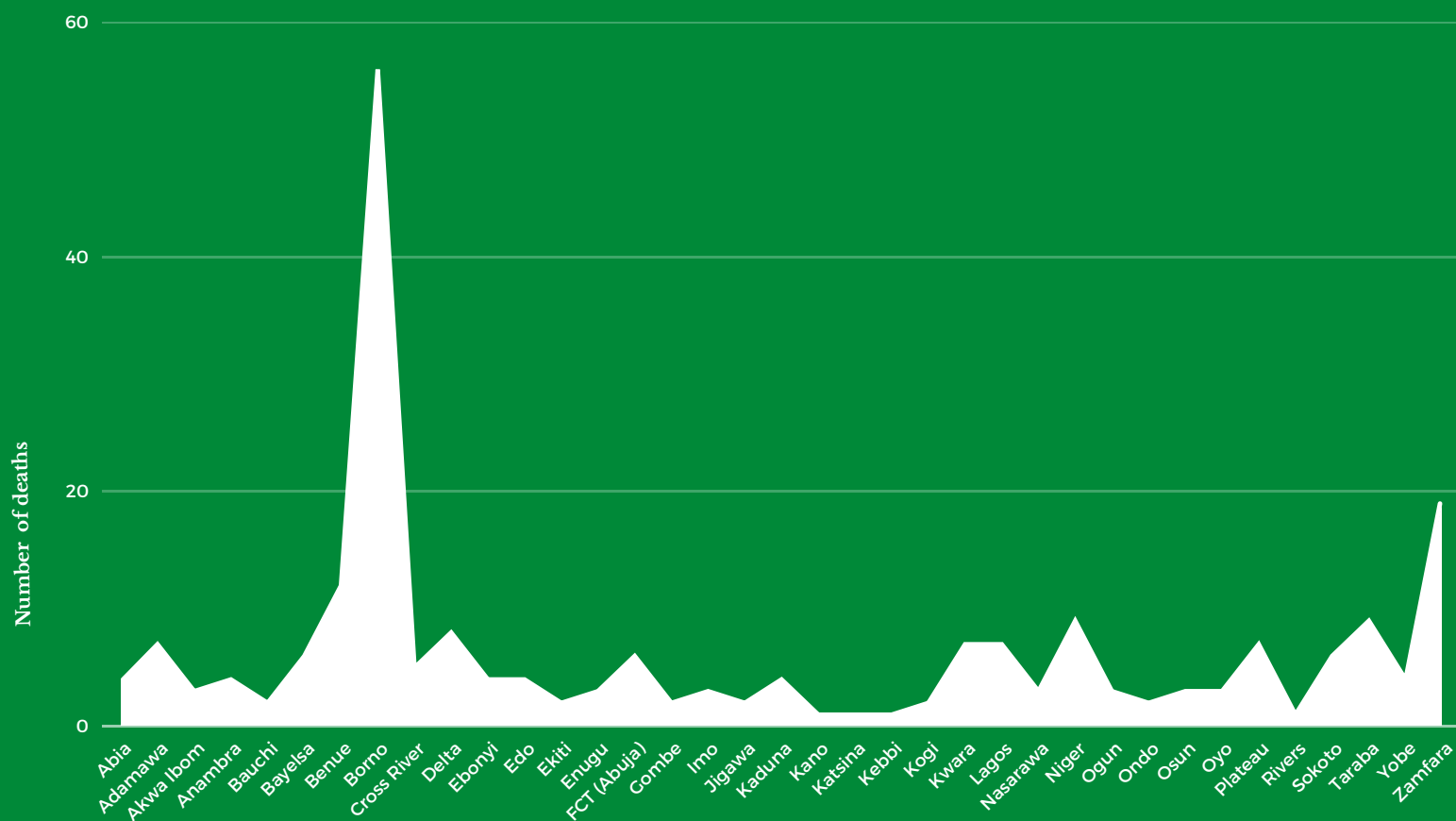


FIGURE 2: FATALITY FIGURES PER STATE IN 2016



1. GENERAL OVERVIEW

The effects of violence are multi-faceted. As a result, in order to assess risks and monitor trends the Nigeria Watch Project had to adopt realistic methodologies that attain an appreciable level of integrity. The study of violence can be traumatizing, just as the subject has tendencies to evoke strong emotions and reactions. The Nigeria Watch Project mitigates these challenges by relying on sources that are verifiable, consistent, and credible for public use. However, there are also critical areas the project cannot cover due to a variety of logistical problems in the developing country that is Nigeria.

1.1 Methodological issues

Nigeria Watch researchers are faced with three important methodological issues: data on violence are controversial; indicators are sometimes contested; and there is a risk of devising categories that do not reflect the real situation. In a sense, statistics are too selective and largely inadequate in accounting for all acts of violence. However, samples of events over a long period of time can facilitate trend analysis and historical studies of violence.

Access to reliable data remains a major obstacle in Nigeria. Security agencies have proven ineffective in providing credible statistics that can be relied upon for serious decision making at official level. Nigeria Watch covers this gap by relying on open sources, including official data. This is not to say that it is a perfect option. But it offers a systematic and credible means of providing scarce data and analysing trends of violence, to answer four critical questions:

- Where and when is violence taking place?
- Is violence increasing or decreasing?
- What are the main causes of violence?
- What is the security risk at certain locations?

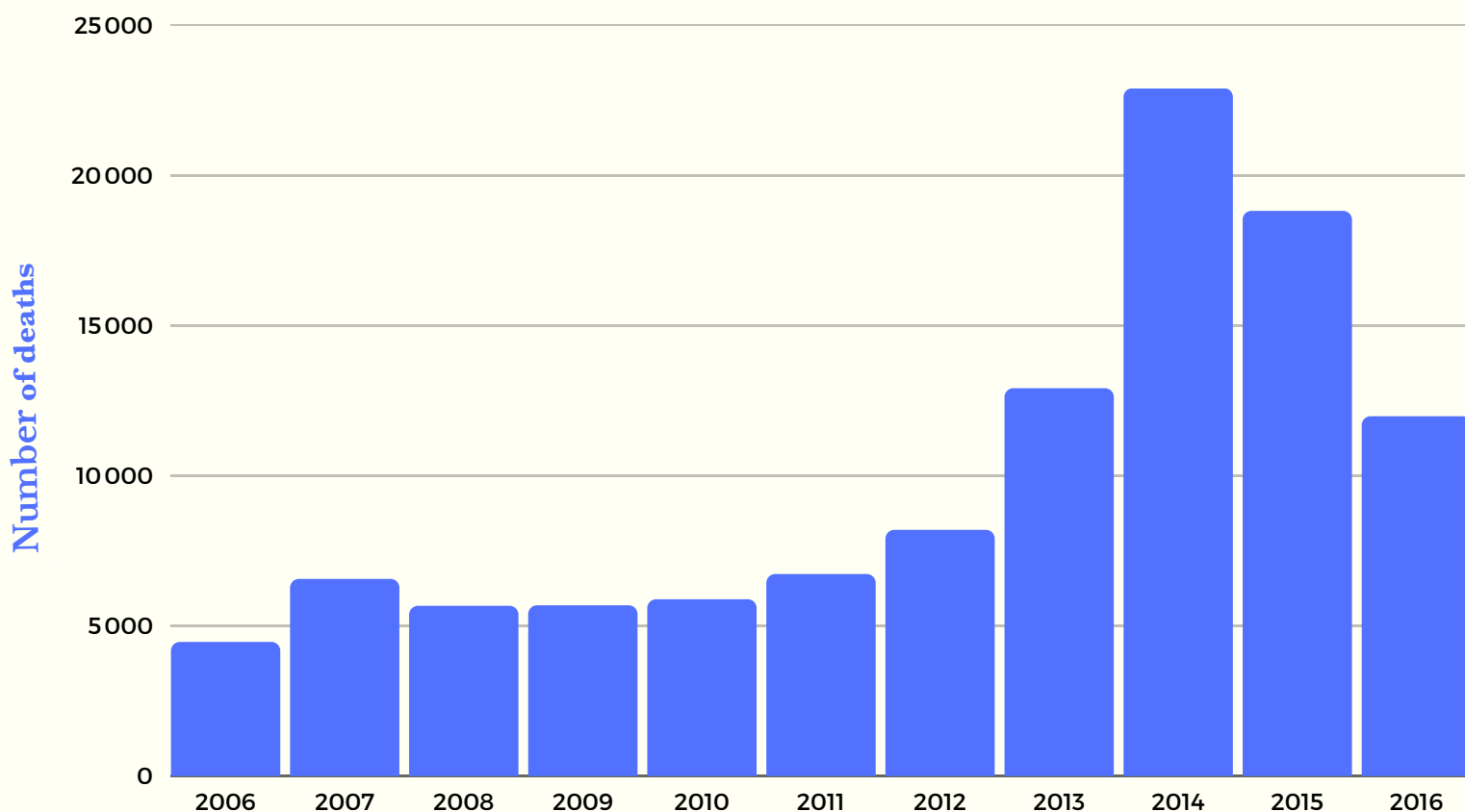
1.2 Summary of the 2015 Report

The 2015 Annual Report chronicled major incidents of violence and treated the various causes of fatalities and their intensity in different locations across the country. It noted that 2015 (17,031) recorded a decrease in the figures of fatalities in Nigeria compared with 2014 (22,544). The report also noted that the Boko Haram conflict accounted for the highest fatality figure (9,464), followed by crime (3,953) and road accident (1,835). The monthly statistics further showed that February 2015 (2,561) recorded the highest level of violence, followed by July (1,978), January (1,926), March (1,674), and December (1,326).

The year 2015 was very significant in the political history of Nigeria. It was a general election year that witnessed the transition of power from the then ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to the opposition coalition of the All Progressive Party (APC). This was unprecedented in the political history of Nigeria. The report captured the dynamics of violence during the general elections. The highest death figures were recorded in Rivers (70), Kaduna (32), Kano (31), Lagos (28), and Borno (19), while Yobe, Ebonyi, Ekiti, Zamfara, Nasarawa, Enugu, Bayelsa, and Abia did not show incidents of killings. Finally, the report indicated that political and religious groups, followed by security forces and criminal gangs, were the main drivers of violence in 2015. Political groups accounted for 8,121 deaths and religious groups for 6,642, while security forces and criminal gangs were involved in incidents that resulted in 4,596 and 2,069 deaths, respectively.

2. MAIN FINDINGS IN 2016

Figure 3: Number of fatalities resulting from different causes of violence in 2016



Source: Nigeria Watch 2016

2.1 Major trends of violence 2006–2016

A sharp decline in fatalities was observed since 2014 (Figure 3). This general drop can be attributed partly to the commitment of the government against Boko Haram in the north-eastern part of the country. Although many attacks by insurgents are still being witnessed, they are incomparable to the massacres and mass dislocations that were experienced in previous years.

In ten years, from 1 June 2006 to 31 May 2016, the Boko Haram conflict has in fact caused a total of 32,842 fatalities, almost one-third of the 101,480 deaths recorded during this period in the Nigeria Watch database. Roughly the same numbers of people were killed directly by the insurgents (16,666) and by security forces (16,182). At first glance, Boko Haram members seemed to be more focused on attacking civilians than the army. Out of 16,666 fatalities, 1,073 could not be identified as civilians or combatants, and 1,689 were military, police, spies, prison wardens, or militiamen of the CJTF (Civilian Joint Task Force). Most of the victims (13,904) were civilians, including 25 foreigners and 582 women and children. During the same period, the security forces killed ‘only’ 1,309 civilians, including 96 women and 31 children, while 1,445 casualties could not be identified. Most of their victims (13,428) were considered as ‘terrorists’. This is because the military usually do not admit killing civilians. For instance, people who die in detention are assumed to be terrorists, even though they have received no trial. To recover their bodies and bury them properly, family members have to sign forms acknowledging that their relatives were insurgents. On the other hand, the army tends to report Boko Haram atrocities against civilians while denying the victories of the group when it succeeds in killing soldiers.

According to interviews conducted by Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos in Maiduguri in 2015 and 2016, the total number of victims could actually have reached 70,000 people in ten years, because the Nigerian media do not report from rural areas they cannot access. In Borno, retired civil servants who witnessed extra-judicial killings confirm that the security forces had in fact a more deadly impact. First, they argue, the insurgents do not have the same firepower. Moreover, Boko Haram targeted only individuals, especially public officials, until the emergency rule in 2013 and the campaign of terror launched by Abubakar Shekau to deter people from joining the CJTF. Between 2010 and 2012, the military may have killed thrice the number of civilians killed by Boko Haram members.¹⁵



2.2 Main causes of violence in 2016

Interrogating violence in Nigeria often brings into sharp focus historical issues that have plagued the political landscape of the nation since independence. For instance, the combination of politics, ethnicity, and religion plays a large role in the contours of lethal violence in Nigeria. The 2015 Annual Report specifically implicated politics and religion as major drivers of violence. In 2016, however, the main drivers were crime and conflicts among herdsmen, a shift probably arising from the containment of the Boko Haram insurgency. Crime accounted for 4,127 deaths. This was followed by political conflict, religious violence, road accident, and other types of accidents. Many incidents involving Boko Haram were considered as both political and religious in origin.

2.2.1 Crime

Crime incidents included armed robbery, piracy, cult violence, mob action, kidnapping, domestic violence, ritual killings, herdsmen attacks, and killings by security forces. Apart from Benue State due to pastoral conflicts concentrated in Agatu, Ukum, and Logo LGAs the states of Rivers, Lagos, Zamfara, Ogun, and Delta recorded the highest levels of crime-related fatalities in 2016 (Figure 5). The main criminal activities in Rivers were cultism, militancy, armed robbery, piracy, communal clashes, and kidnapping. Of the 108 incidents recorded in the state, 42 (45%) were caused by cultists. But a higher number of crime incidents were recorded in Lagos (229) and Delta (115).

2.2.2 Political/religious violence

Boko Haram

It can be difficult to treat political and religious violence as separate categories in Nigeria, especially regarding the Boko Haram insurgency in the north-east. As a result, it is often reasonable to treat the two variables together. However, the focus on Boko Haram should not obscure incidents such as the Shiite confrontations with security forces or election-related assassinations, which can be purely political or religious in nature. In any case, political and religious issues have always accounted for a major part of the widespread violence experienced in previous years in the country. In 2016, the number of fatalities attributable to political and religious causes declined because of the reduction of the killings in the north-east. The statistics show that political and religious violence accounted for between 3,502 and 3,361 deaths in 2016, as against the much higher 9,628 and 9,440 in 2015.



Shiites vs police

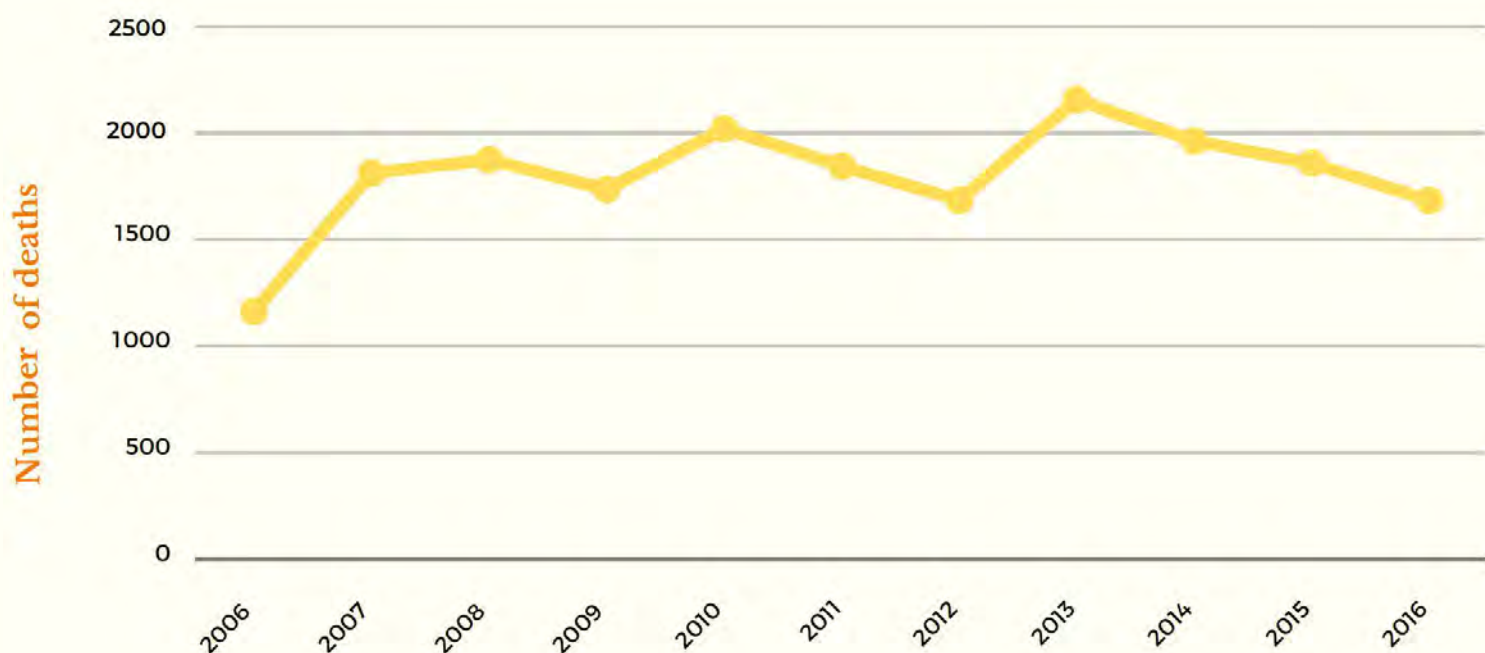
In the same year, a series of violent confrontations were recorded between the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (a Shiite group) and the police in Abuja, Jos, Kaduna, Sokoto, and Kano. Since the killings by the military in December 2015 of over 300 sect members and given the continued detention of their spiritual leader, El-Zakzaky, many peaceful protests have been carried out by the Islamic group. These often turned violent and, in extreme cases, recorded killings during their encounters with the police. In Kano, for instance, no fewer than 39 Shiite members were killed in two separate events, although there were allegations that some police personnel were also killed by the group. There were 7 deaths in Katsina, 5 in Kaduna, and 1 each in Jos and Sokoto.

Muslim vs Christian and violence in southern Kaduna

There were few fatal incidents in 2016 due to religious issues between Muslims and Christians compared with previous years. Two of the victims were pastors' wives within the space of a single week. The first involved 74-year-old Mrs Bridget Agbahime, who was killed for her alleged blasphemy against Prophet Mohammed in Kano on 2 June 2016. The second was a 42-year-old itinerant preacher, Mrs Eunice Olawale Elisha, who was hacked to death on 9 June 2016 by suspected Islamic extremists in the Kubua axis of Abuja during her early morning preaching.

Meanwhile, violence in southern Kaduna has become a perennial crisis in Nigeria. Like most communal clashes across the country, it is difficult to attribute the conflict to a single cause, as the interplay of politics, religion, land grazing, cattle rustling, and ethnic tension caused the problem to fester at various levels. Jemaa is the most affected LGA, with the killing of over 100 victims in the course of 13 attacks in 2016. The state government imposed a 24-hour curfew on Kauru, Zango-Kataf, and Jemaa LGAs in December 2016 when there were indications of reprisal attacks from certain quarters. The Catholic Church and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) have maintained that their members were the main target and that the number of people killed so far is approximately 808.

Figure 4: Road accident fatalities, 2006-2016

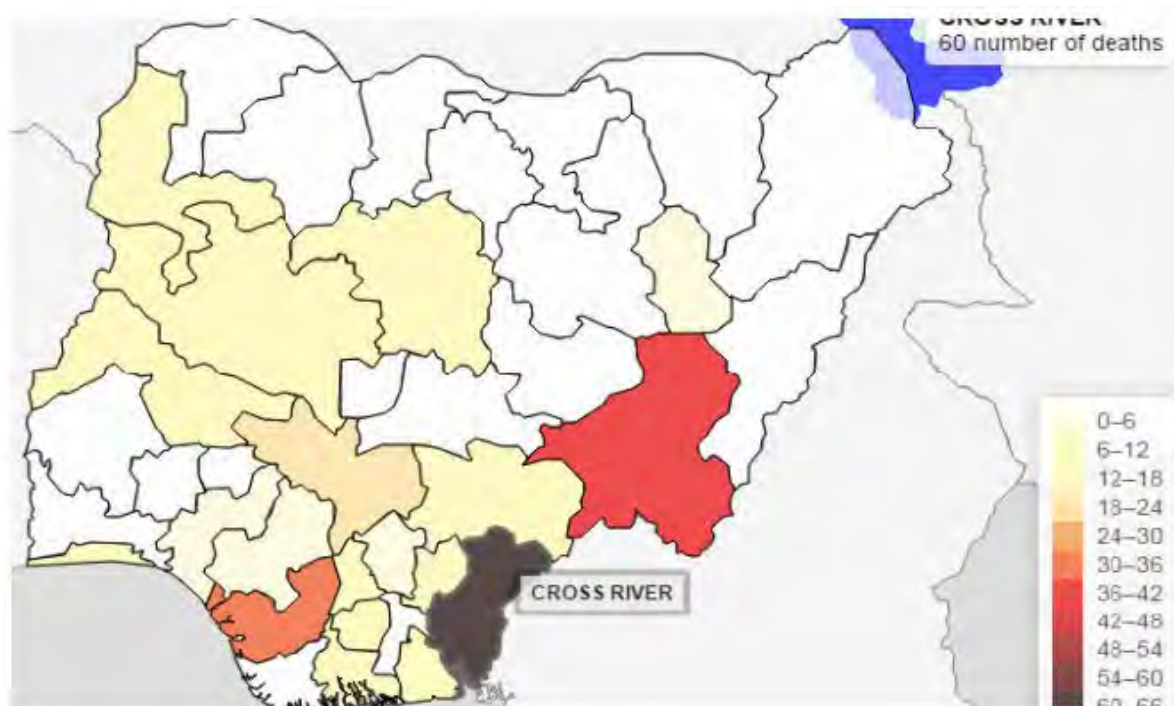


2.2.3 Road accident

After crime, politics, and religion, road accident ranks as the fourth most frequent cause of violent deaths in 2016. A total death figure of 1,654 was recorded during the year, compared with 1,848 in 2015. There has been a steady decline in the number of fatalities caused by road crashes since 2014 (Figure 4). It would be rather rash to conclude that this was due to any deliberate action of the government or improvements in the nation's road infrastructure. The economic crisis and constraints in mass transport may also have played a role. At the same time, it is noteworthy that the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) introduced the Speed Limiter system to check excessive speeding by commercial vehicles in 2016. The commission has gone ahead to conclude plans to apply the same device to private vehicles in 2017.

The most dangerous states in terms of road accident were concentrated in the south-west. Lagos led with 194 deaths in 90 incidents; Oyo followed with 181 deaths in 29 incidents; and Ogun had 140 deaths in 41 incidents. This concentration on the south-western region can be explained partly by the resumption of construction works on the Lagos-Ibadan expressway, which has been described as the busiest highway in Nigeria and which connects the three states listed as most prone to fatalities from road accident. The states that showed the fewest casualty figures included Kano, Kebbi, Ekiti, Bayelsa, and Cross River. By contrast, Ogun State was the most dangerous in terms of the relative number of road-related fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants. In other words, a fatal road accident in Ogun was more likely to occur than in any other state countrywide, including Lagos. In fact, places such as Oyo, FCT (Abuja), Kogi, and Edo were more dangerous than Lagos in terms of road fatality rates.

Figure 5: Map of fatalities caused by communal violence per state in Nigeria, 2016



2.2.4 Ethno-communal violence

In 2016, divisions along ethnic lines and explosive communal conflicts among neighbouring communities were rife. Approximately 65 incidents of communal violence were recorded across the country. The cause of violence in the communities was primarily land dispute, although there were a few instances of contests over chieftaincy matters—as in the case of Opherin community in Ughelli North LGA. In general, fatal community conflicts were prevalent in Delta, Cross River, Kogi, and Akwa Ibom states (Figure 5). The highest number of deaths was recorded in Cross River State, where roughly 60 victims died from communal attacks, especially in Yakurr LGA. Delta State recorded the second highest number of deaths from communal violence: no fewer than 31 persons were reportedly killed in various communal crises that gripped the state in 2016. Most of these killings occurred in Isoko South LGA, where Igbide and Okpolo-Enwhe communities have been engaging one another in a series of reprisal attacks over a land dispute. However, Gassol LGA in Taraba State was the deadliest in terms of communal crisis in Nigeria, with 22 deaths in 2016.

IPOB/MASSOB vs security forces

Deadly incidents that occurred in 2016 also involved the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). Since the arrest in 2015 of the leader of IPOB, Nnamdi Kanu, the agitations from their members have become more frequent and, indeed, lethal. Although the IPOB/MASSOB militants are usually not clear in their demands, their grievances are not unconnected with perceived marginalization and injustices in the region. Available statistics show that no fewer than 146 people died during clashes that erupted between security forces and IPOB/MASSOB in 2016. Five policemen were allegedly killed by IPOB/MASSOB members in two different incidents in Anambra and Delta states in May 2016. The clashes were recorded primarily in Anambra (76 deaths), Abia (61), and Delta (9). The deadliest encounter occurred in the Onitsha/Nkpor axis of Anambra State on 30 May 2016 when security forces killed between 32 and 95 militants, according to different sources.

3. MAIN PROTAGONISTS OF VIOLENCE IN 2016

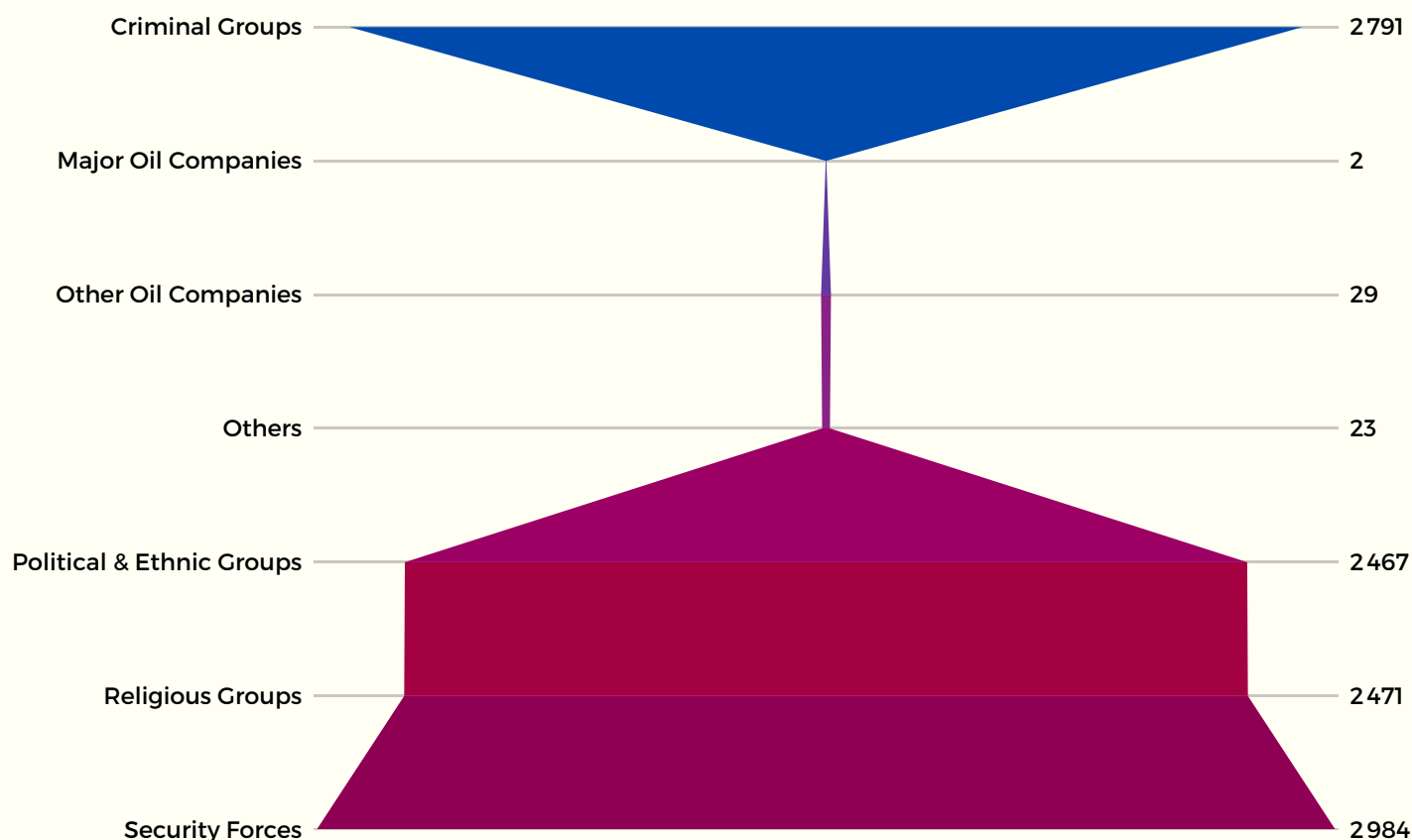


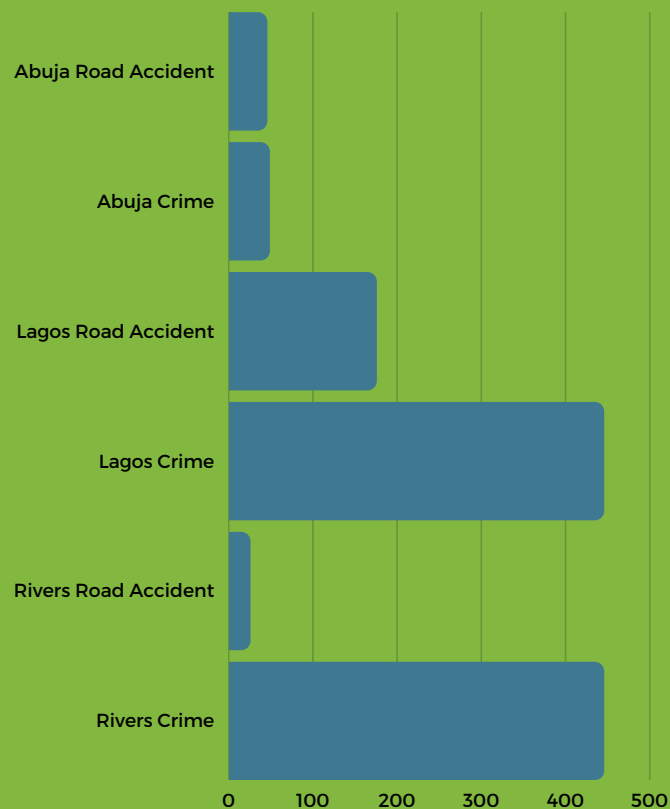
Figure 6: Main protagonists of violence per number of fatalities in 2016

3. Main protagonists of violence

A number of reports (especially those by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch) have highlighted the Nigerian army's involvement in gross human rights abuses during the anti-terrorism campaign in the north-east, the repression of IPOB/MASSOB in the south-east, and the massacres of Shiites in the north-west. During the period covered by this report, security forces (mainly the police, the navy, and the army) were involved in most of the killings across the country. The challenges are great indeed. Apart from the Boko Haram insurgency in the north-east, security forces (especially the military) are undertaking no fewer than ten other operations in various parts of the country. In fact, some soldiers, police, and officers have paid the ultimate price of service and died in action. In light of this, security forces were the main actors involved in fatal incidents in 2016, ahead of armed gangs, political groups, and religious organizations (Figure 6). The incidents where they intervened included counter-terrorism in the north-east, war against militancy in the Niger Delta, cattle rustling in the Middle Belt, cultist attacks in Rivers, armed robbery attacks in the main cities, and police confrontations with IPOB/MASSOB members.

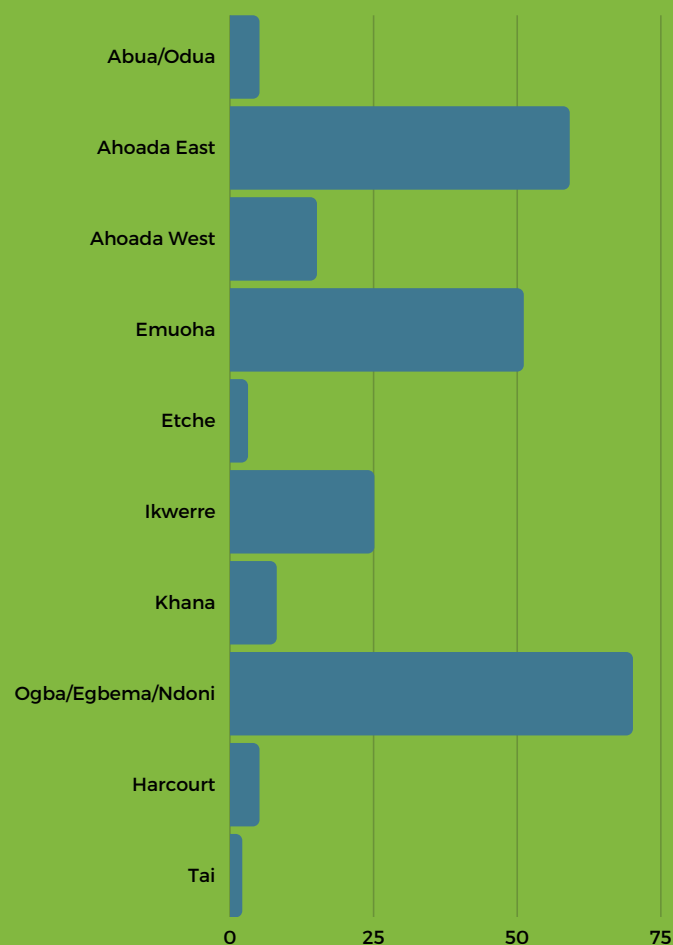
4. SPECIAL REPORT ON LAGOS, RIVERS, AND ABUJA (FCT)

Figure 7: Crime and road accident fatalities in Abuja, Lagos, and Rivers in 2016



Lagos, Rivers, and Abuja are important centres of commercial activities. They also attract strong diplomatic and administrative interests from within and outside the country, hence the necessity to analyse their main security issues, which are related to crime and road accident. Although the statistics for fatalities in Lagos and Rivers are quite similar, the former is far more prone to criminal activities than the latter (Figure 7). Lagos recorded 235 events, while Rivers listed just 108 incidents in 2016. Also, Lagos State recorded the highest number of fatalities (194) in road mishaps. The result is rather intriguing because there is no evidence to show that Rivers State has a better road infrastructure than Abuja and Lagos. Perhaps the explanation lies in the fact that vehicle pressures on Lagos and Abuja seem to be more intense. In the case of Lagos, the ongoing road construction on the Lagos–Ibadan expressway may be a factor.

Figure 8 : The distribution of cult-related fatalities in Rivers' LGAs in 2016



A major aspect of crime in Rivers was cult violence, which killed 254 people, as against 93 in Lagos and 2 in Abuja. Most of the cult killings were perpetrated by gangs such as the Icelanders, Greenlanders, and Deygbam. The killings occurred in 11 LGAs, especially in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni (80 deaths), Ahoada East (59), Emuoha (51), and Ikwerre (26) (Figure 8). The problem hinges on the fact that politicians reportedly use cultist groups to harass opposition.

The overall assessment of security as a combination of both crime incidents and road accidents shows that Rivers is more unsafe than Lagos and Abuja. However, the situation in these states is not comparable with Borno State, which records 56.2 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants.

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