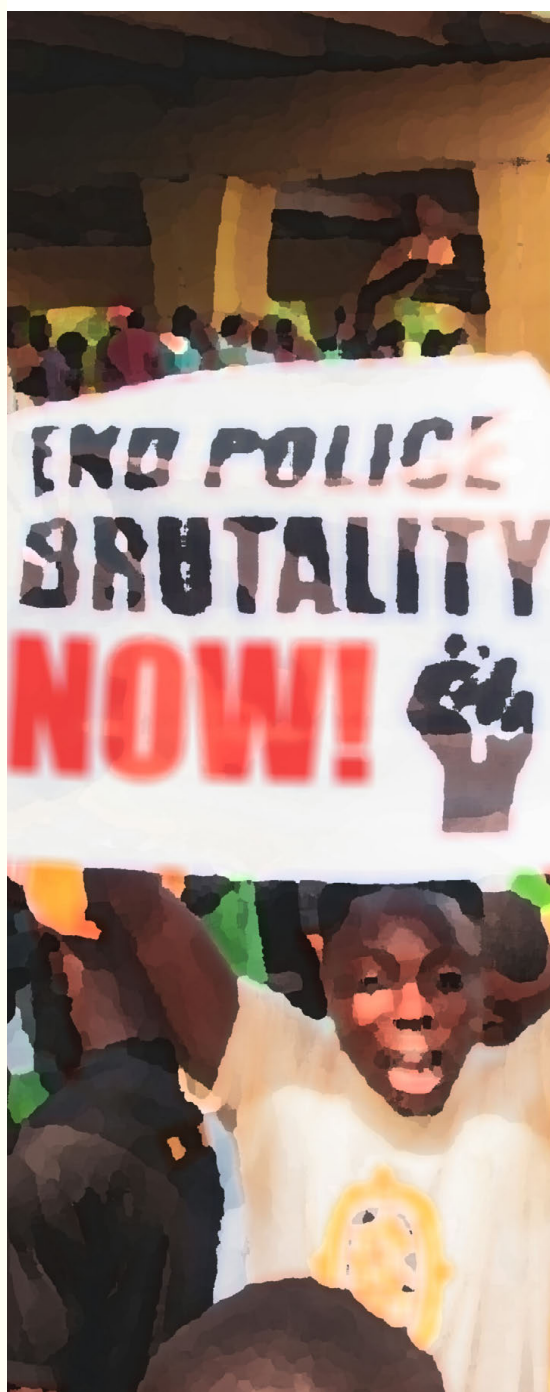




FOURTEENTH REPORT ON VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA 2024

NIGERIA
WATCH

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ACRONYMS

ECC	Every Casualty Counts
ESN	Eastern Security Network
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
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
LGA	Local Government Area
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NAF	Nigerian Air Force
NW	Nigeria Watch
PMS	Premium Motor Spirit

FOREWORD

This fourteenth Annual Report on lethal violence in Nigeria covers the period between 1 January and 31 December 2024. The study was conducted by Vitus Nwankwo Ukoji, with the help of Dr. Abiola Victoria Ayodokun, Dr. Victor Chinedu Eze and Miss Egbochice Precious Patience. It is important to note that the economic crisis and budget constraints have hindered the work and the training capacity of Nigeria Watch. Readers should be aware that it is extremely difficult to maintain a free access to the data and our main results.

The Nigeria Watch project is a passive surveillance system hosted by the French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA-Nigeria) at the University of Ibadan's Institute of African Studies¹. It is supported by the IRD (Institut de recherche pour le développement, Paris). 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)². It aims to follow the Standards for Casualty Recording launched at the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) in Geneva in November 2016³. Our methodology and sources are online⁴. They have been discussed in various books and occasions, especially during an international conference organized by IFRA at the University of Ibadan in October 2016⁵.

The data are updated daily and they come from local open sources, mainly the press. All fatalities are properly documented. The scans of the sources are archived and stored into a backup folder. Such a methodology helps to refine the grain to constitute a unique history of violence in Nigeria at the local level. It also explains why our figures might be lower than the estimates produced by aggregators or retrospective surveys. For instance, the Swiss organization Small Arms Survey recorded 27,238 violent deaths in Nigeria in 2017, of which only 4,850 were allegedly related to conflicts, while 18,686 were intentional homicides, and the rest were unintentional homicides and killings during legal interventions⁶. These figures were much higher than the 10,178 fatalities documented by Nigeria Watch this year. But they were not sourced and did not provide informations on a case-by-case basis.

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1 Please visit <https://ifra-nigeria.org/> for more information about IFRA.

2 <https://www.everycasualty.org/practice/ipn>

3 <https://everycasualty.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/StandardsforCasualtyRecording-Version1.0.12020-en.pdf>

4 <https://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, Wapos Series n°3, 2016, 217p.

6 Small Arms Survey [2021], *Nigeria: National Small Arms and Light Weapons Survey*, Abuja, PRESCOM, 110.

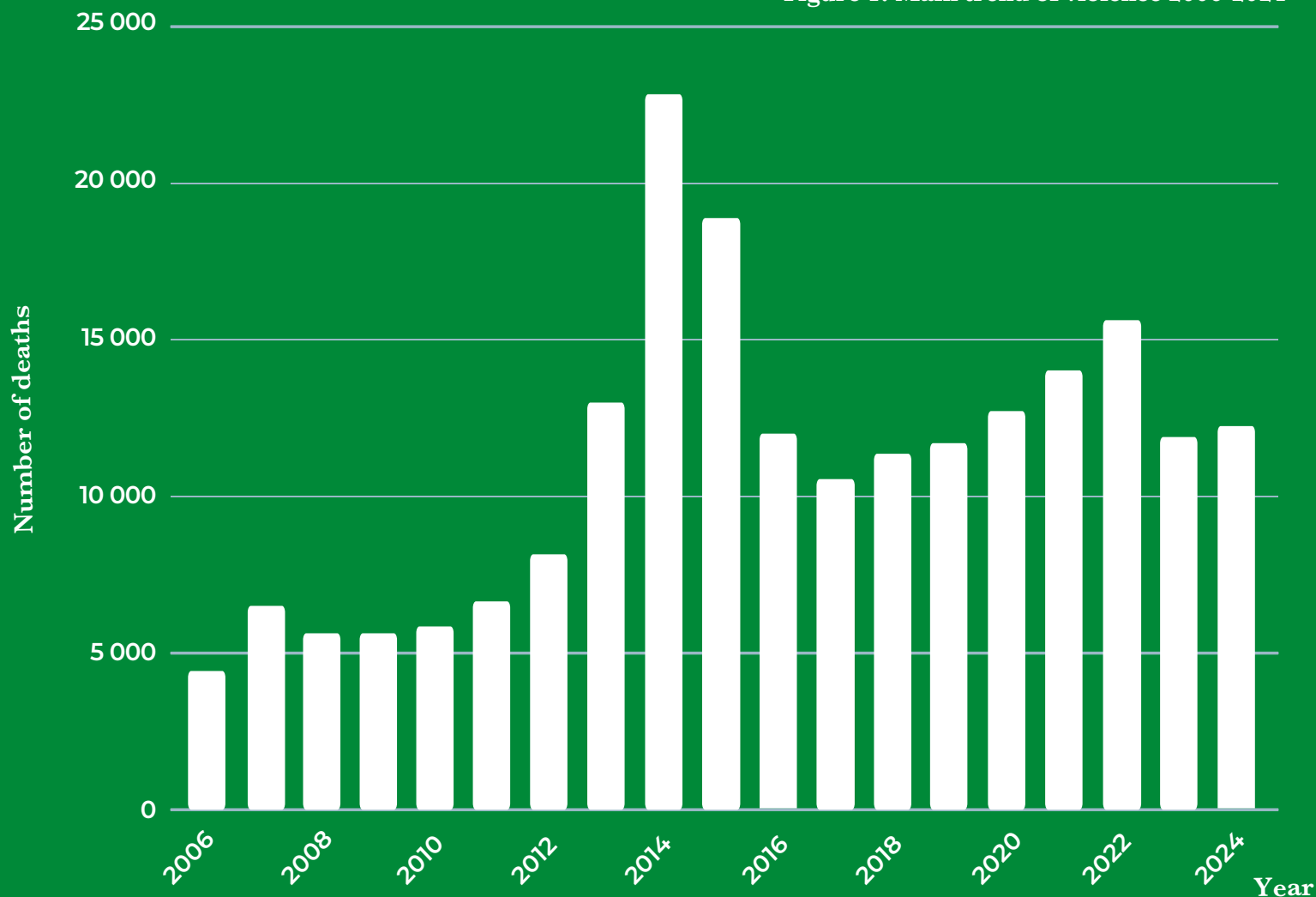
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



- The number of fatalities reported from violent incidents in Nigeria reached 12,162 in 2024, bringing the total to 208,998 deaths since 2006. Borno State was most affected by lethal conflicts. It accounted for the highest absolute number of fatalities (1,263) and the second-highest relative number of deaths per 100,000 population (17). Zamfara, Niger, Kastina and Benue also were on the list of the 5 most dangerous states in Nigeria.
- In 2024, crime was responsible for the highest number of deaths from lethal violence in Nigeria. It accounted for 6,018 deaths, an increase from the 5,356 fatalities recorded in 2023. Katsina, Zamfara and Kaduna states were the worst affected due to rural banditry.
- Clashes involving farmers and herders claimed 567 lives across 20 Nigerian states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Benue, Plateau and Kogi states recorded the highest number of deaths while Enugu, Kano, and Kebbi states were the least affected.
- Criminal gangs and security forces were more involved in lethal incidents than other perpetrators of violence in 2024.
- While Nigeria was battling with Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province insurgency, another violent extremist group, Lakurawa, expanded into border communities in the north, especially in Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara states. Raids and counter-operations by government forces claimed about 48 lives.
- Reported road accident fatalities increased from 1,565 in 2023 to 1,672 in 2024, especially because of explosions related to the distribution of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS).

INTRODUCTION

Figure 1: Main trend of violence 2006-2024⁸



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)⁷. 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 (2006-2024)

Between 2006 and 2024, Nigeria lost about 208,998 people in 43,558 lethal incidents across the 36 states and the FCT. The number of violent deaths as shown in Figure 1 increased to 12,162 in 2024 from 11,869 in 2023. Borno State recorded the highest number of fatalities (1,263), followed by Katsina (1,130), Zamfara (1,126), Kaduna (1,078), and Niger (943). Insurgency, banditry and counter-operations by government security forces accounted for the highest number of deaths in the most affected states. By contrast, Gombe State recorded the least number of deaths (14), followed by Cross River (18), Ekiti (59), Akwa Ibom (64) and Bayelsa (91).

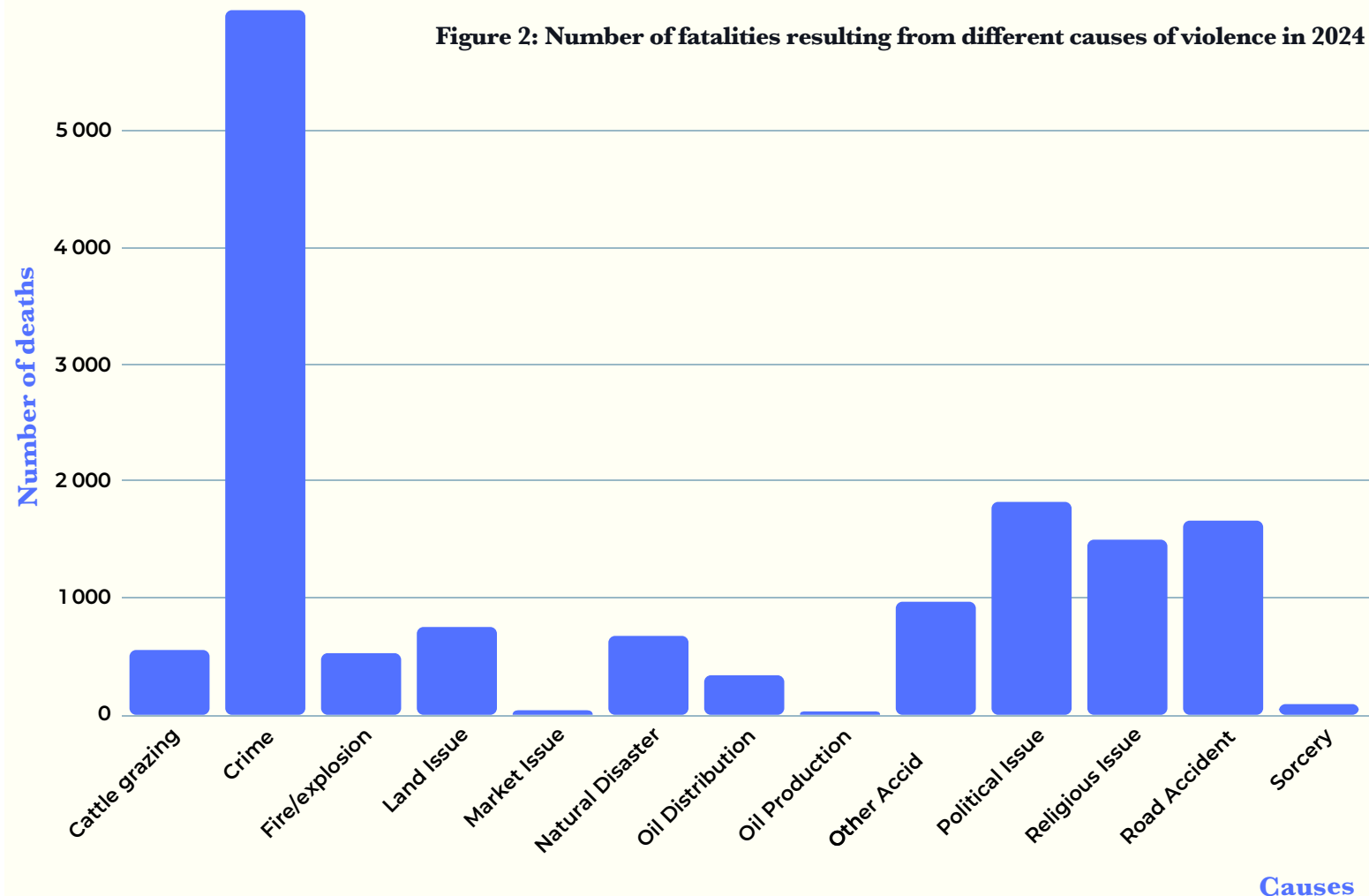
In 2024, about 75% of fatalities resulting from violent incidents in Nigeria occurred in the North. This high percentage was primarily attributed to insurgency, rural banditry and counter-operations by government forces, while the South was mainly affected by crime, pro-Biafra agitation, and communal issues.

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 incident.

⁸ Data for 2006 only cover the period from June to December.

2.MAIN CAUSES OF VIOLENCE IN 2024

Figure 2: Number of fatalities resulting from different causes of violence in 2024



2. Main Causes of Violence in 2024

2.1. Crime

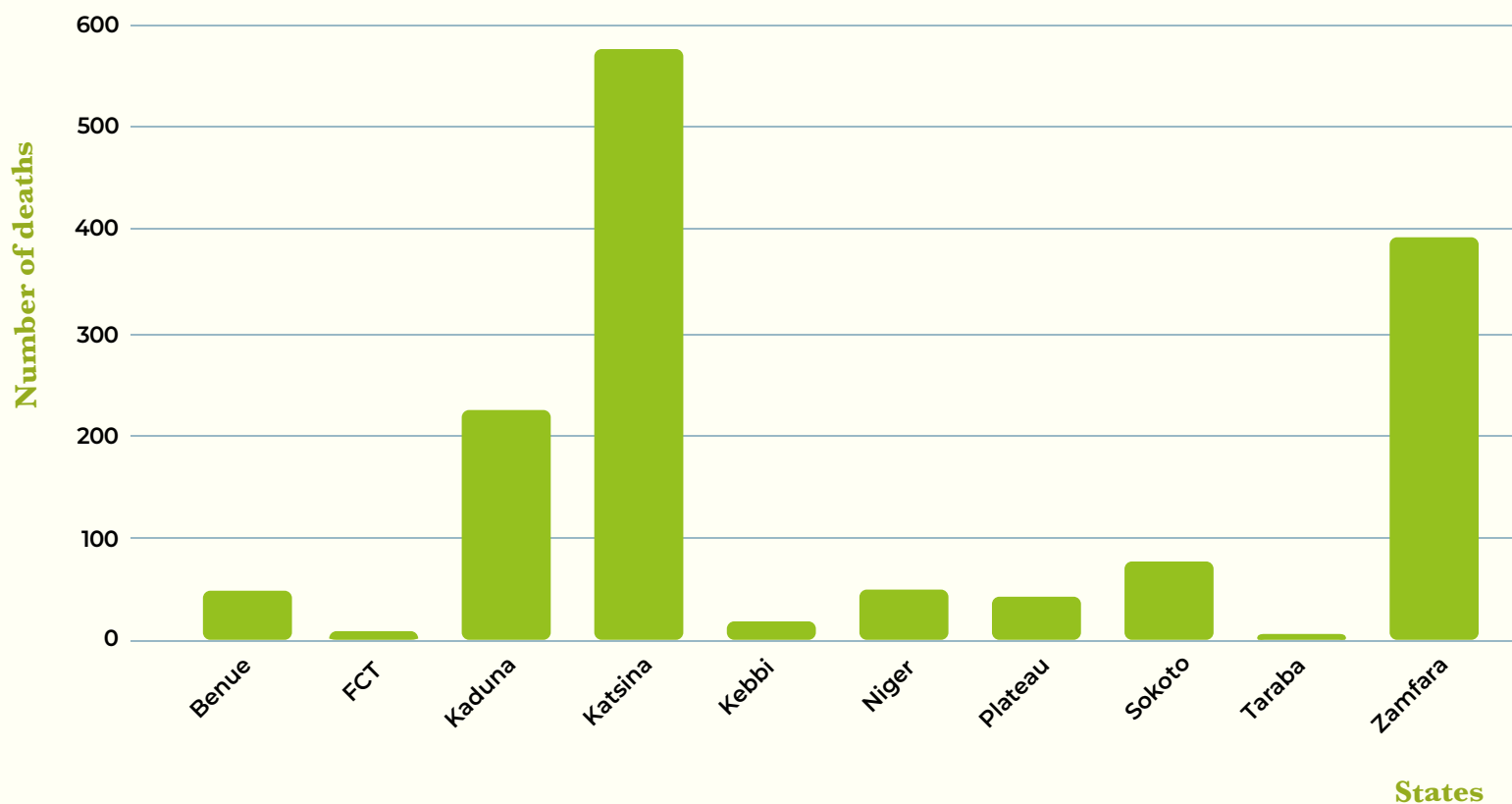
As shown in Figure 2, crime in Nigeria, claimed 6,018 lives, an increase from the 5,356 deaths recorded in 2023. Katsina State recorded the highest number of deaths from crime (1,092), followed by Zamfara (1,005), Kaduna (844), Niger (451) and Benue (317).

2.1.1 Cultism

In 2024, cultism in Nigeria claimed 328 lives, a decrease from 371 in 2023. Anambra State was the most affected, recording 88 deaths, followed by Lagos and Rivers states with confraternities such as Eiyé or Aiye in Lagos and Debam, Deewell, Greenlanders, and Icelanders in the Niger Delta. In Anambra, the strongholds of cult activities were to be found in Awka, the state capital. Their victims were not only rival members but also students and security operatives. On 31st March 2024, for example, a staff of Anambra State Judiciary and 12 others were killed during a cult clash in Okpuno, Eke Akwa and Obinagu areas of Awka. On October 20, 2024, 13 lives were also lost in another cult clash in Nibo and Nodu-Okpuno communities in Awka South LGA.

2.MAIN CAUSES OF VIOLENCE IN 2024

Figure 3: Number of fatalities by states resulting from rural banditry in 2024



2.1.2 Rural Banditry

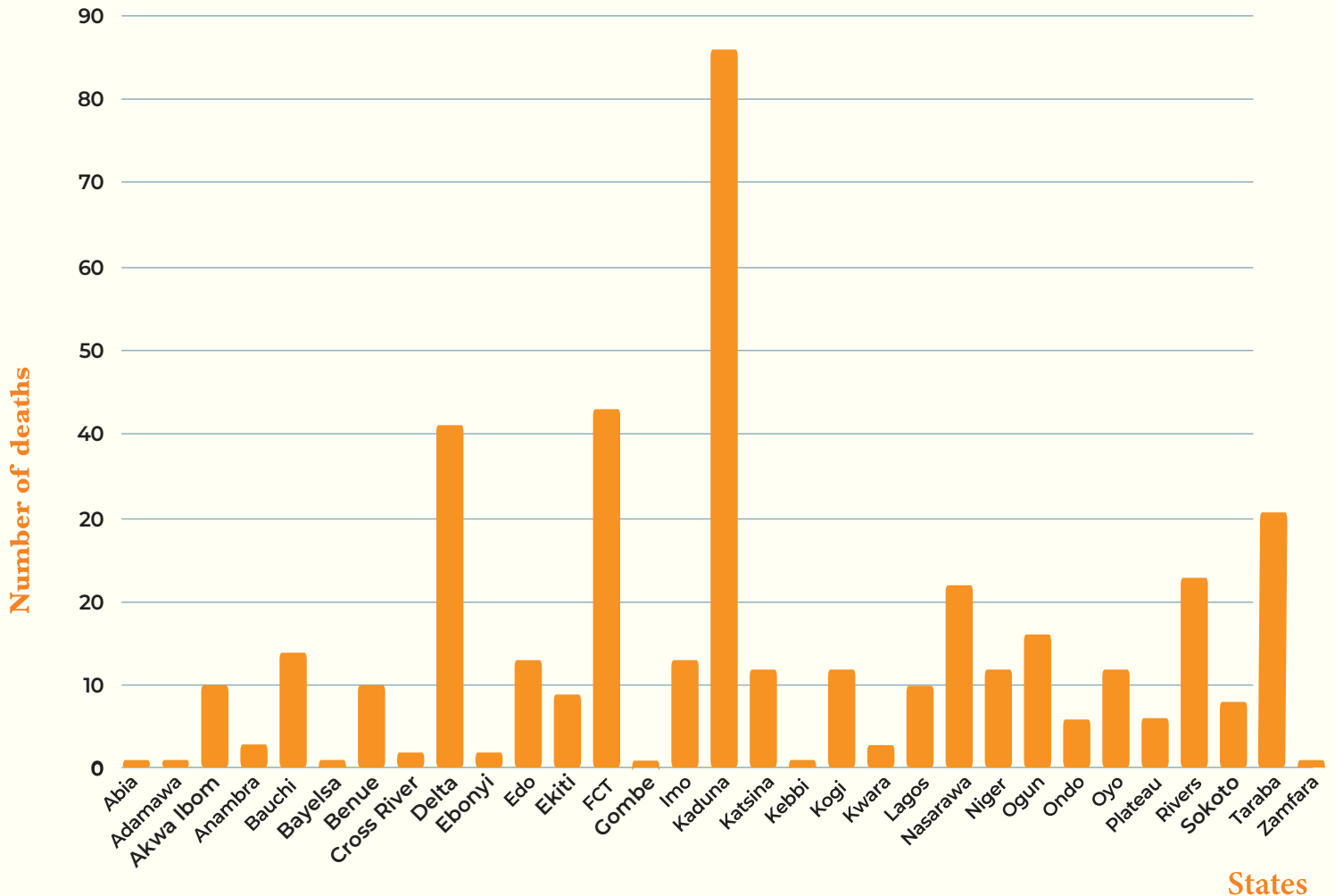
Rural banditry, cattle rustling and counter-operations by government forces claimed about 1,452 lives across 9 states and the FCT, an increase from the 892 deaths recorded in 2023. Katsina State recorded the highest number of fatalities (577), followed by Zamfara (394) and Kaduna (225), while Taraba (6 deaths), FCT (11) and Kebbi (18) reported the lowest death toll.

In 2024, victims included bandits themselves, security personnel, and civilians. According to the analysis of media reports, about 55% of them were bandits killed during government counter-operations, 7% were security forces and vigilantes, and 38% were civilians who died during raids on communities, attacks on farmlands, and ambushes on roads and in markets. Some were also killed for violating bandits-imposed taxes and bans on farming activities, for example in the villages of Yar-Taba in Kankara LGA, Katsina State, and Bilbis in Tsafe LGA, Zamfara State.

Power tussle among bandit groups remained prevalent in 2024. Clashes were driven by leadership crises and the quest for territorial dominance. On February 10 in Katsina State, a fight between bandit groups thus resulted in the deaths of 20 prominent leaders and followers in Dan-Ali. Another clash on September 21 resulted in the death of a notorious bandit commander linked to the 2021 Bethel Baptist High School abduction. He was killed in Hambakko in the middle of the Rijana and Kaso forests of Kaduna State.

2.MAIN CAUSES OF VIOLENCE IN 2024

Figure 4: Number of fatalities by states resulting from kidnapping in 2024



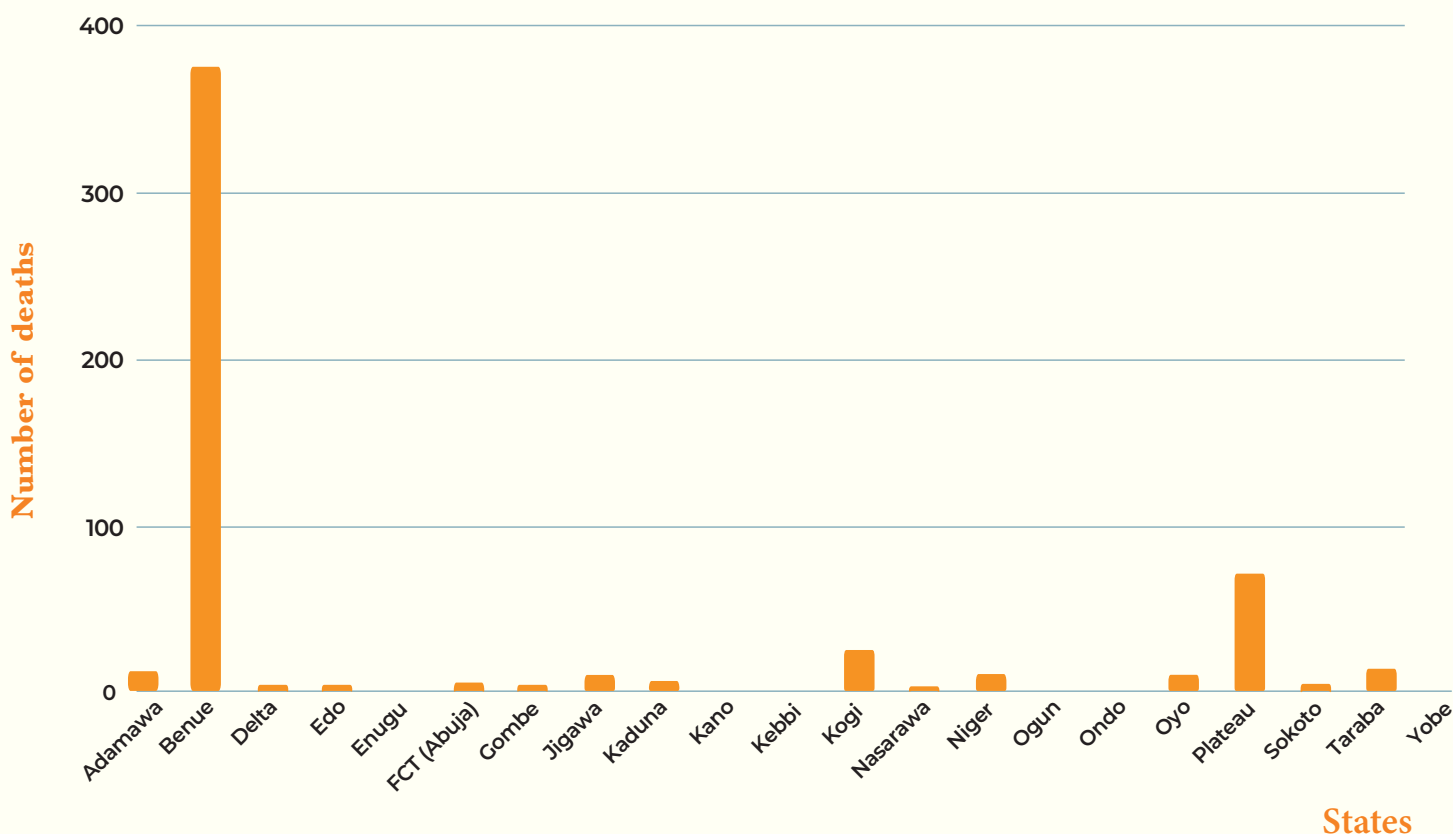
2.1.3 Kidnapping

Meanwhile, fatalities related to kidnapping in Nigeria reduced from 536 in 2023 to 425 in 2024. Kaduna State recorded the highest number of deaths (86), followed by the FCT (43), Delta (41), Taraba (33), and Rivers (23), as shown in Figure 4. Some of the incidents occurred at the kidnap scenes or in captivity. Victims were foreigners, politicians, lecturers, students, clergymen, traditional rulers and security operatives, while perpetrators included bandits, cultists, herders, sea pirates, internet fraudsters, and pro-Biafra agitators.

For example, on November 07, 2024, two Chinese nationals were abducted and their police orderly killed in Quarry Camp, Akamkpa LGA, Cross River State. Some kidnappers were then killed during rescue operations by security forces and local vigilantes. Also, on May 7, 2024, abductors of 3 Indians were killed during a rescue operation along the Shagamu-Ijebu Ode-Benin expressway.

2.MAIN CAUSES OF VIOLENCE IN 2024

Figure 5: Number of fatalities by states resulting from pastoral conflicts in 2024



2.1.4 Farmers/Herdsmen Clashes

In 2024, violence involving farmers and herders in Nigeria claimed about 567 lives across 20 states and the FCT, a drop from the 860 deaths recorded in 2023. Benue State recorded the highest number of deaths (376), followed by Plateau and Kogi while Enugu, Kano and Kebbi states recorded the lowest number (See Figure 5). The victims were killed during clashes in the grazing fields and farmlands, attacks and reprisals in communities and counter-operations by security operatives.

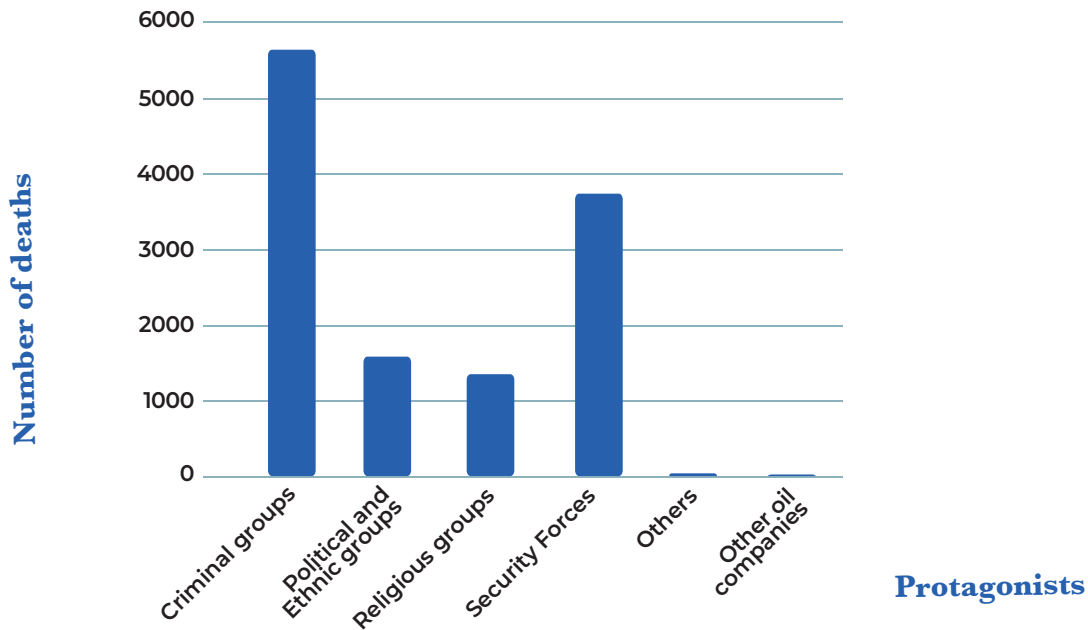
Benue was the most affected state, especially in Agatu (99 deaths), Kwande (76), Logo (60), Gwer West (46) and Apa (32). On January 23, 2024, for example, an attack on Ejima and Ogwumogbo communities in Agatu LGA by suspected herders resulted in 30 deaths and several injuries.

Eight days later, 15 others were killed in Ugboju, another community in Agatu LGA.

Plateau State recorded the second-highest number of fatalities from clashes involving farmers and herders in 2024. Bokkos LGA was the worst hit, recording 40 deaths. Riyom followed with 14 fatalities. On April 12, for example, Mandar Shar village in Bokkos LGA came under attack by suspected herders. About 15 people were killed and houses destroyed. Raids on communities were also accompanied by mass displacements.

2. MAIN CAUSES OF VIOLENCE IN 2024

Figure 6: Main protagonists of violence per number of fatalities in 2024



2.2 Major protagonists to lethal violence in Nigeria

The participation of criminal gangs and government security forces in deadly violence continued to be a major concern in 2024. These groups were involved in more fatal incidents than any other actor (see Figure 6).

2.3 Political and religious violence

2.3.1 Lakurawa: The new face of terror

Lakurawa, a violent jihadist group, heightened security concern in northern Nigeria in 2024. Its name is a Hausa-ization of the French for “recruits” and its militants allegedly crossed the border from the Niger Republic into Sokoto state in 2018. In 2024, raids on communities and counter operations by government forces resulted in 48 deaths. Zamfara State accounted for the highest number of fatalities (22), followed by Kebbi (16) and Sokoto (10). Many of the victims in Sokoto State were killed in aerial bombardments by NAF. For example, on Christmas Day, 10 people died when NAF reportedly bombarded Lakurawa locations in Gidan Sama and Rumtuwa communities in Silame LGA. There were claims that the victims were farmers but the military insisted the targets were associated with Lakurawa⁹.

2.3.2 Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province

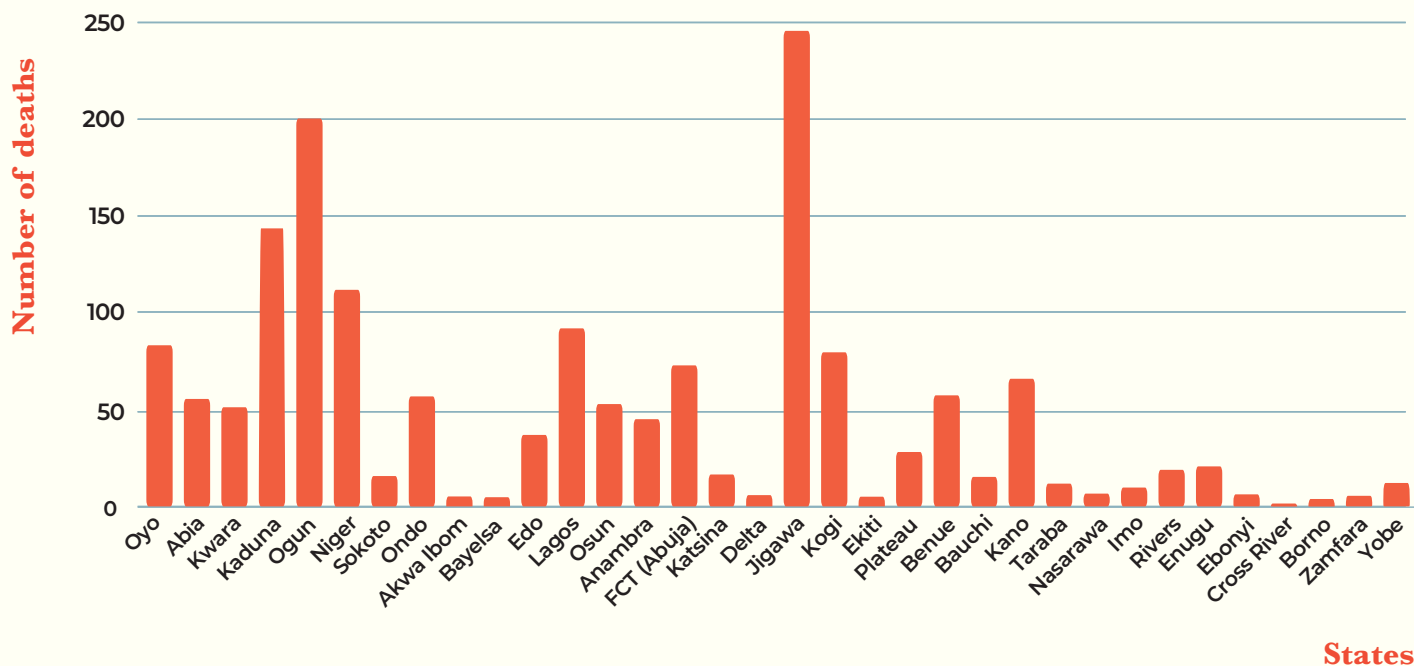
In 2024, Boko Haram, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Ansaru’s attacks, together with counter operations by government forces, claimed 1,254 lives. Borno State recorded the highest number of deaths (960), followed by Yobe (123), Niger (118), and Kaduna (53). At least 15 LGAs in Borno were affected, with Gwoza (299 deaths), Marte (259 and Abadam (145) the worst hit. Victims died in suicide attacks, IED explosions, ambushes, abductions, aerial bombardments and attacks on rural communities, military establishments, terrorist strongholds, churches and schools.

In 2024, various factions of Boko Haram, including ISWAP, lost 218 commanders and combatants during clashes in Abadam and Marte LGAs of Borno State. For instance, on April 24, Boko Haram and ISWAP clashed in Tudun Shawakkil, Tumbum Bakwarram, Mallam Basiru, Kwaleram, Kandahar and Tumbum Ali Island, leading to 118 deaths from both groups in Marte LGA, Borno State. Another clash on the Island of Toubum Gini on August 3 also claimed 100 lives.

⁹ Solomon Odeniyi, Animasahun Salman and Isah Ojo. Sokoto villagers accidentally killed as NAF bombs Lakurawa terrorists. Punch Newspaper, 26th December 2024. <https://punchng.com/sokoto-villagers-accidentally-killed-as-naf-bombs-lakurawa-terrorists/>

2. MAIN CAUSES OF VIOLENCE IN 2024

Figure 7: Fatalities resulting from road accidents by states in 2024



2.3.3 Pro-Biafra Agitators

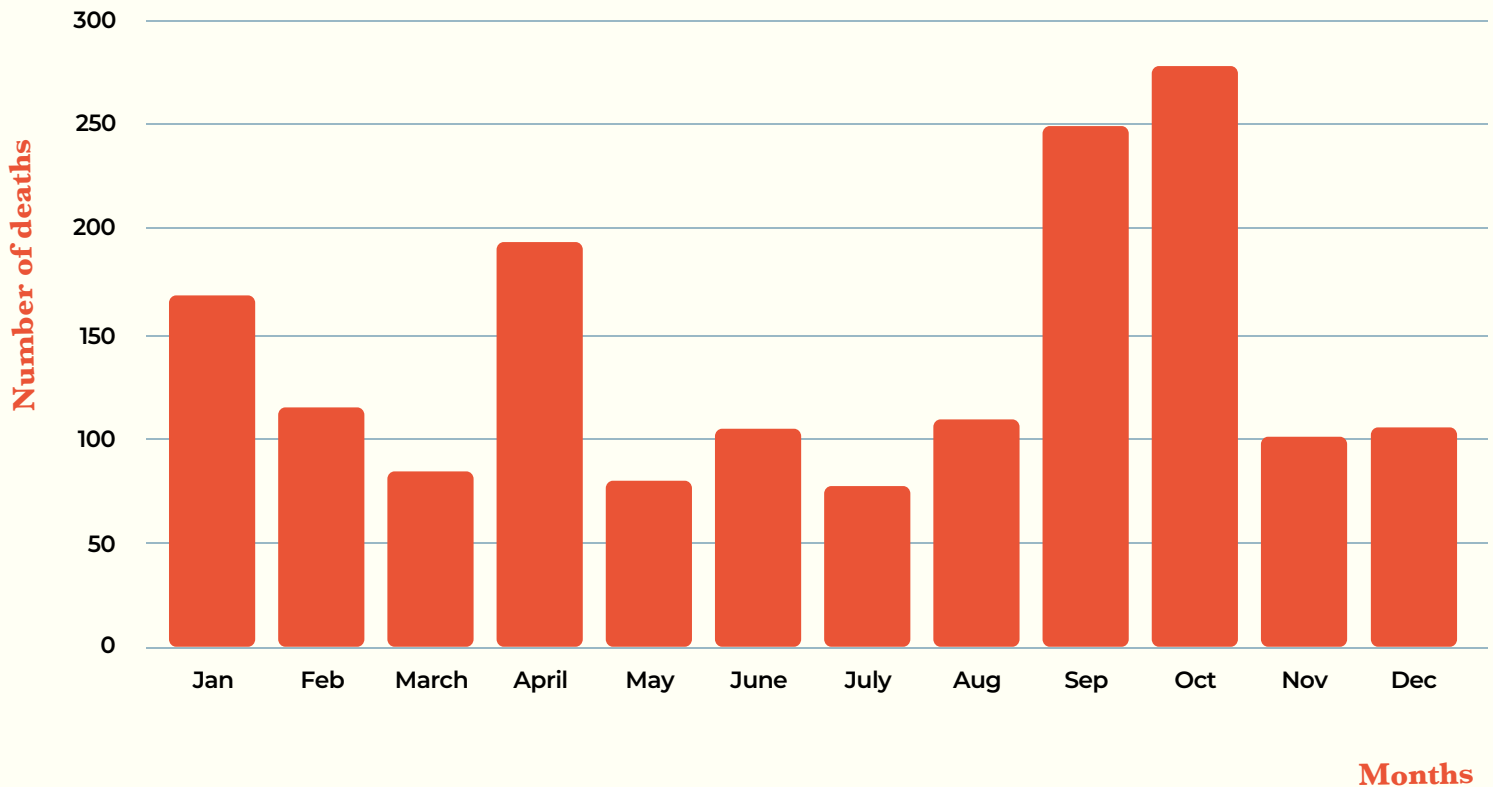
In 2024, pro-Biafra agitation in Southeast Nigeria claimed 379 lives, with Imo State recording the highest number of deaths (174), followed by Anambra (114), Enugu (50), Abia (34) and Ebonyi (7). Communities in Orsu and Ehime Mbano LGAs of Imo State and Ihiala and Aguata LGAs in Anambra State were the worst hit. Many of the victims were IPOB and ESN members who were killed in special operations by government security forces. Yet, other victims included traditional rulers, politicians, business people and security operatives.

2.4 Road Accidents

Nigeria lost at least 32,765 lives in road accidents since 2006. In 2024, the number of fatalities increased to 1,672 from 1,565 in 2023. Jigawa State recorded the highest number of road accident deaths, followed by Ogun and Kaduna, while Cross River, Borno, Bayelsa and Akwa Ibom states were the least affected (See Figure 7). A significant contributor to these fatalities was the daily distribution of PMS. For example, about 45 people died in a petrol tanker explosion in Makurdi, Benue State, on February 15, 2024. Also, another 125 died as they were scooping spilled fuel from a crash scene in Majia, Taura LGA, Jigawa State, on October 10.

2.MAIN CAUSES OF VIOLENCE IN 2024

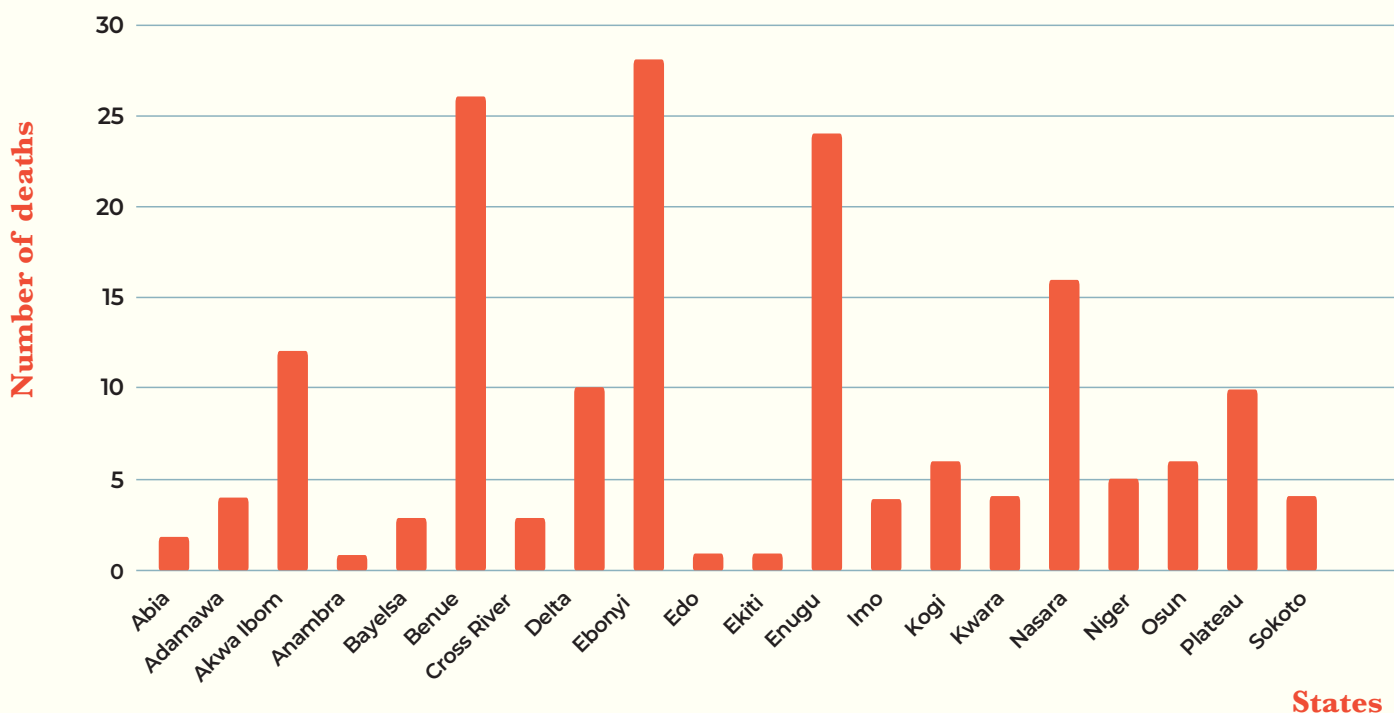
Figure 8: Fatalities resulting from road accidents by months in 2024



A monthly analysis of road accidents showed that October recorded the highest number of fatalities, followed by September and April (See Figure 8). There was no regular pattern in this regard, despite legends about a peak of road crashes during the 'Ember' months (September, October, November and December). Rather, November and December recorded fewer fatalities from road accidents than April, January, February and August.

2.5 ETHNO-COMMUNAL VIOLENCE

Figure 9: Fatalities caused by communal violence by states in 2024

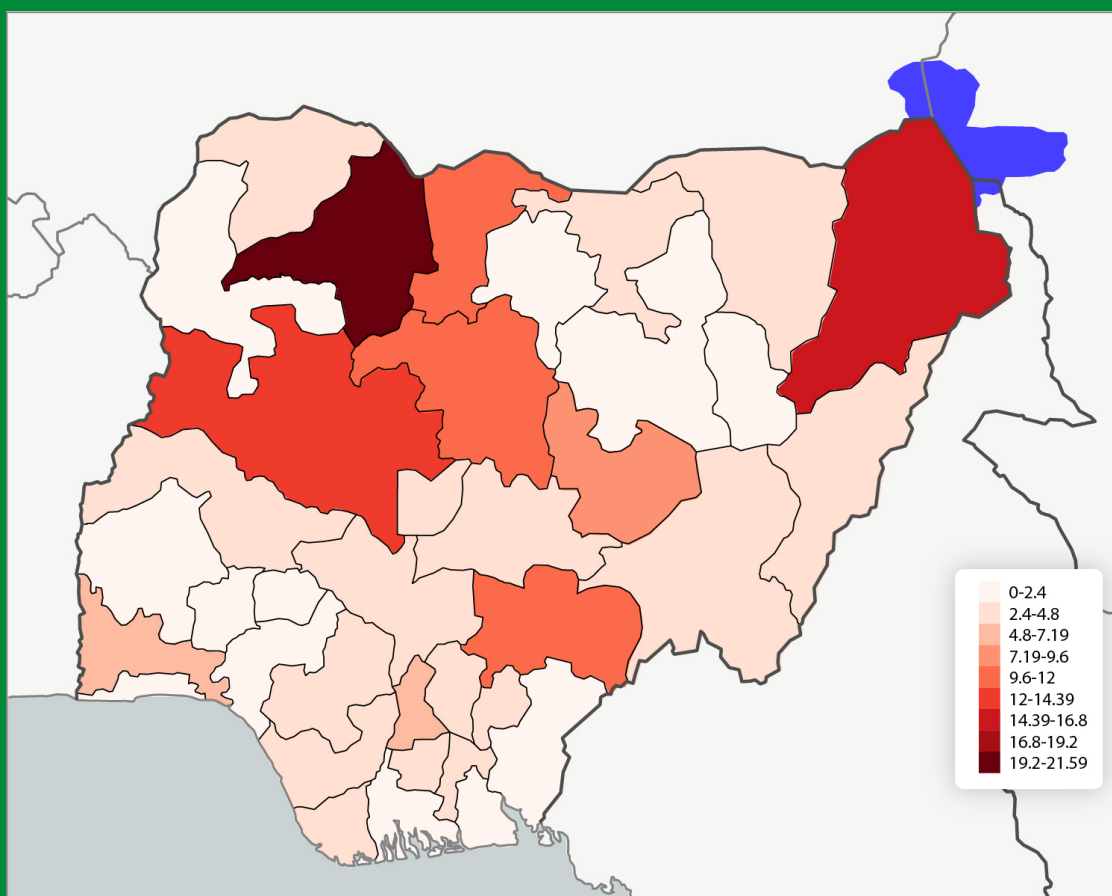


2.5 Ethno-communal violence

In 2024, ethno-communal violence claimed 170 lives across 20 states in Nigeria. Ebonyi State recorded the highest number of fatalities, followed by Benue and Enugu (see Figure 9). On the contrary, Anambra, Edo and Ekiti recorded the least number of fatalities. Most of the victims (166) died in inter and intra-state land disputes. For instance, in May, 2 people were killed in an inter-state boundary dispute between Isu and Ukwa communities in Arochukwu LGA (Abia) and Eket LGA (Akwa Ibom) respectively, while 4 others died in another conflict opposing the villages of Ezza-Ezekuna in Ado LGA (Benue) and Akparata in Ohaukwu LGA (Ebonyi) in December. Also, intra-communal land disputes were prevalent in Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi and Nasarawa states.

3.THE MOST DANGEROUS STATES

Figure 10: Map of fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants by states in 2024



3 The most dangerous states

In 2024, Zamfara State became the most dangerous state in Nigeria, registering 19.52 fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants, primarily due to banditry. Borno State dropped to the second position with 16.57 deaths, primarily due to the Boko Haram conflict. Niger (12.99), Katsina (11.39) and Benue (11.17) followed closely. In stark contrast, Gombe State emerged as the most peaceful state with 0.33 fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants, followed by Cross River (0.37), Akwa Ibom (0.89), Kano (1.37) and Ekiti (1.4).