



ANNUAL SECURITY REPORT FOR NIGERIA 2023

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Year 2023 In Review

1st Quarter (January, February, March)

- During the initial quarter of the year, Borno, and Yobe States experienced the highest frequency of terrorist attacks, often involving illegal checkpoints, with a total of 42 incidents reported.
- Communities in Benue, Delta, Edo, Enugu, Sokoto, Ondo, Plateau, Kaduna, Katsina, Niger, and Zamfara states reported a total of 86 attacks carried out by armed herders who were disguised in military uniforms. These attacks resulted in more than 198 fatalities and 108 individuals being kidnapped.
- Protest actions were also captured in all 6 regions of the country, with over 175 occurrences. Civilians protested various issues ranging from unpaid remunerations to political-related issues, increases in fuel prices, and scarcity of bank notes. Some of these protests escalated to violence which resulted in 15 fatalities.
- In February, the Federal Government (FG) ordered the closure of all land borders in the country from 0000hrs on 25th February to 0000hrs on 26th February, and restricted vehicular movement across all states ahead of the Presidential and National Assembly elections to allow for safe movement of electoral materials. Only officials from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), electoral observers, ambulances, firefighters, and others on confirmed emergency services were exempted from the order.
- During this quarter, there was a notable increase in election-related violence, characterized by protests, vandalism, assaults, and even armed attacks. This surge occurred as civilians voiced their dissatisfaction with the results of the election process.

2nd Quarter (April, May, June)

- Labour Union members and associated unions staged protests against the removal of fuel subsidies and the economic challenges faced by residents nationwide. Demonstrators held placards bearing various messages during the protests while security personnel accompanied the protesters to maintain peace and order.
- During the second quarter of the year, the Southeast region witnessed a persistent series of attacks targeting security forces, totalling more than 16 incidents. On 21st April, armed individuals carried out an attack at the Okpala Junction in Ngor Okpala Local Government Area(LGA), Imo State, resulting in the tragic deaths of at least 7 individuals, including 5 policemen and 2 civilians, at a checkpoint.
- Mass kidnap attacks were the most recorded during this quarter, with over 146 kidnap incidents and 860 kidnap victims. On 7th April, an estimated 60 persons, mostly children were kidnapped by armed men at the border of Tsafe and Faskari of Zamfara and Katsina states.
- Services were suspended while cargoes were confined in Lagos State, following the shutdown by port workers under the Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria (MWUN), over poor remunerations of its members from shipping companies operating in Nigeria, who failed to increase the workers' welfare for the past 6 years.



3rd Quarter (July, August, September)

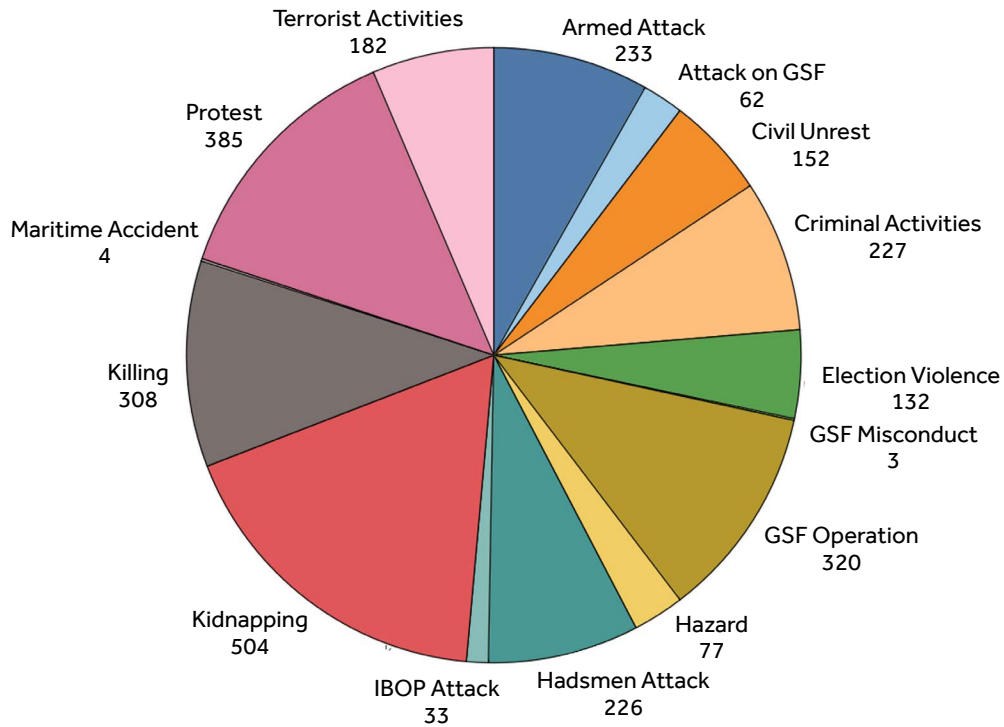
- Throughout the reporting period, there was a notable and concerning increase in sporadic instances of murder, amounting to over 94 incidents, which led to 126 fatalities. Anambra state experienced the highest number of these incidents during the year.
- Terrorist attacks resurged in the month specifically in Cross River, Borno, and Yobe states. On 6th July, an estimated 50 Boko Haram members were killed by ISWAP terrorists during an armed clash at Sambisa Forest in Bama Local Government Area(LGA), Borno State.
- Health authorities in Nigeria confirmed an outbreak of the lethal diphtheria disease in the capital city of Abuja after the passing of a four-year-old patient. As of 1st July, close to 800 cases of the disease were confirmed in the country, primarily affecting children aged between 2 and 14 years old.
- Borno state had the greatest number of incidents during the 3rd quarter of the year. Incidents captured ranged from attacks on Government Security Forces (GSF) to communal clashes, terrorist activities, kidnapping, hazards, protests, and criminal activities.

4th Quarter (October, November, December)

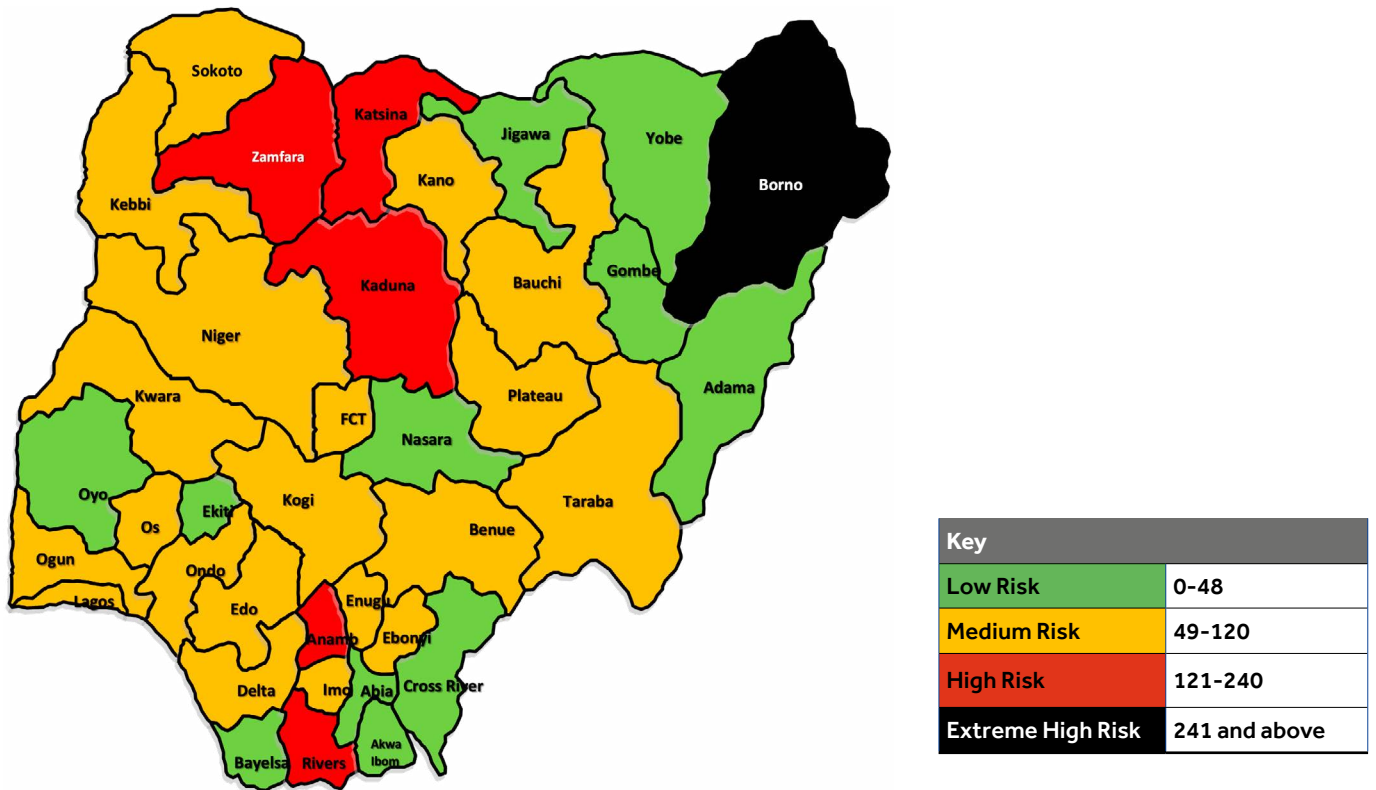
- Tragedy struck in southern Nigeria as an illegal oil refinery erupted in flames, resulting in the deaths of at least 18 individuals, among them a pregnant woman. The incident occurred on 2nd October in the Emohua district of Rivers State. The explosion happened when a makeshift refinery ignited a nearby oil reservoir, causing severe burns to the victims.
- Hundreds of Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) members marched through the city of Abuja carrying Palestinian flags and displaying mannequins symbolizing deceased children, showing support for the Palestinian cause and condemning Israel in the ongoing conflict with Hamas which escalated on 7th October. In Kaduna, northern Nigeria, clashes broke out between police and a Shiite group sympathetic to Iran protesting Israel's actions in Gaza, resulting in a fatality and multiple injuries.
- Between 23rd and 25th December, Plateau State in central Nigeria experienced a string of armed attacks. These attacks impacted around 17 rural communities within the Bokokos and Barkin Ladi local government areas, leading to a minimum of 160 fatalities and injuries to over 500 individuals, alongside considerable property damage. Despite no official claim of responsibility, there is a belief that the attacks were carried out by Fulani militias.



Incidents Recorded From January - December 2023



Map of Nigeria



Risk rating is a crucial component of security intelligence reports that helps organizations assess the severity and potential impact of various incidents. It enables decision-makers to prioritize resources, allocate security measures, and respond effectively to emerging threats. This content explores how to determine risk ratings for incidents, the

types of risk ratings, and scenarios where they can be adopted. The risk rating above represents the rating of each state according to the total number of incidents reported within the year. Borno state with over 338 incidents, is at an extremely high-risk rate

Introduction

The year 2023 was characterized by a series of diverse incidents in Nigeria, encompassing armed attacks, kidnappings, hazards, protests, criminal activities, and election-related violence. These occurrences significantly affected businesses, communities, and individuals, including foreign nationals. Nigeria, akin to other West African nations, grappled with security challenges stemming from more than a decade of insurgency. To address the country's unrest, the military and Air Force conducted various operations nationwide throughout the year. While five major security operations had been ongoing for years across most regions, adjustments were made in response to the nationwide spread of criminal activities as the need arose. In 2023, over 218 counterterrorism and counter-insurgency missions were carried out in red zones, resulting in at least a thousand insurgent fatalities. Similar to previous years, Borno State saw the highest number of operations and insurgent casualties, followed by Zamfara and Kaduna states. There appeared to be a return to normalcy in the state, indicating relative success. The success of the state's operations is credited to the leadership of Operation Lafia Dole, actively combating Boko Haram and the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) terrorist groups.

However, despite the military's achievements in operational effectiveness in the Northeast region, there was a surge in terrorist activities during the third and fourth quarters of the year, specifically in July, August, and November. This increase was felt in various parts of the country due to sporadic military responses, as the forces were predominantly engaged in combating terrorism within Borno State. Consequently, regions with vulnerable borders, such as those with Lake Chad and Cameroon, remained susceptible to infiltration by armed groups. This led to a rise in incidents such as kidnappings, homicides, robberies, armed confrontations, attacks by herders, politically motivated assaults, and explosions caused by improvised explosive devices (IEDs). HWA documented approximately 2,849 incidents, not including road traffic accidents. Within these incidents, there were approximately 6,274 fatalities and 3,594 individuals abducted. It's important to note that the data does not account for fatalities related to road traffic accidents or instances of

kidnappings where the number of victims remains undisclosed.

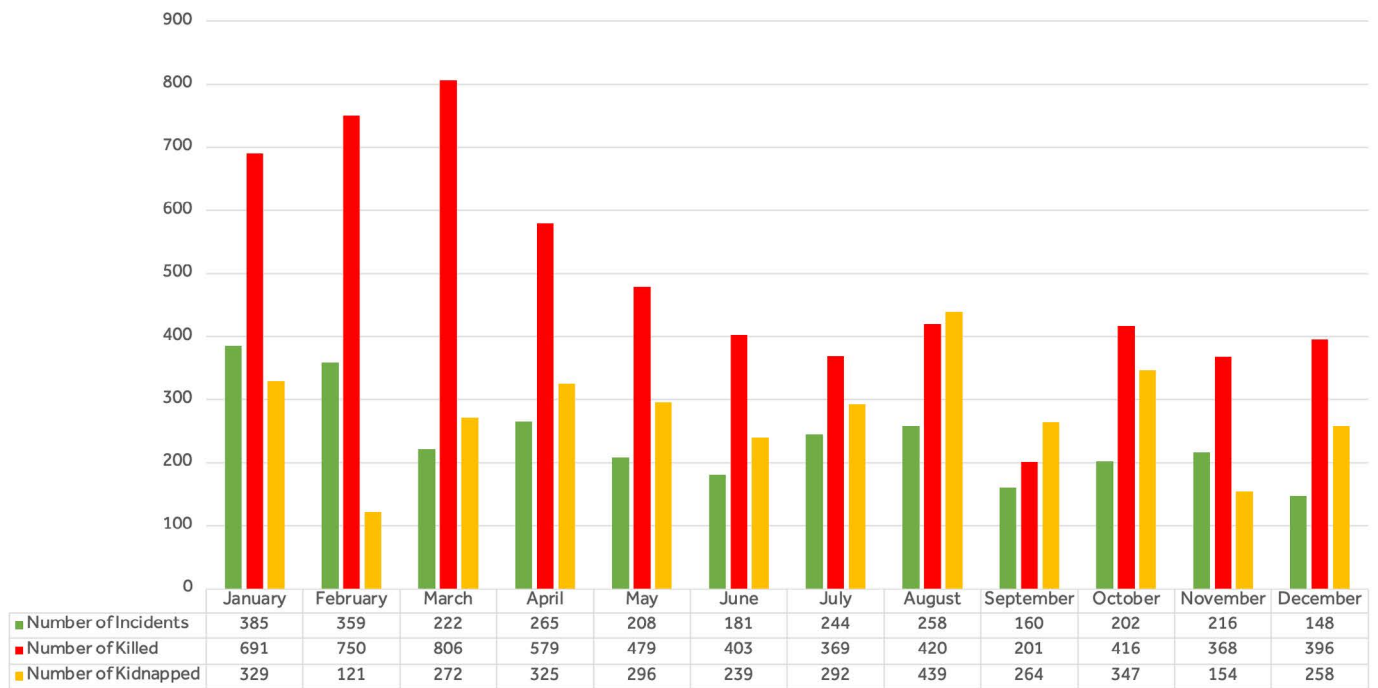
Economically, the elimination of fuel subsidies had significant repercussions. This move contributed to an increased inflation rate, subsequently reducing living standards, job prospects, and access to essential goods. Consequently, crime rates surged, with a noticeable rise in criminal activities in high-risk areas that experienced new incidents related to terrorism, criminal acts, and insurgency. The primary factors driving this violence either remained specific to certain regions or spanned across multiple locations.

The following threats would be discussed in the next paragraphs:

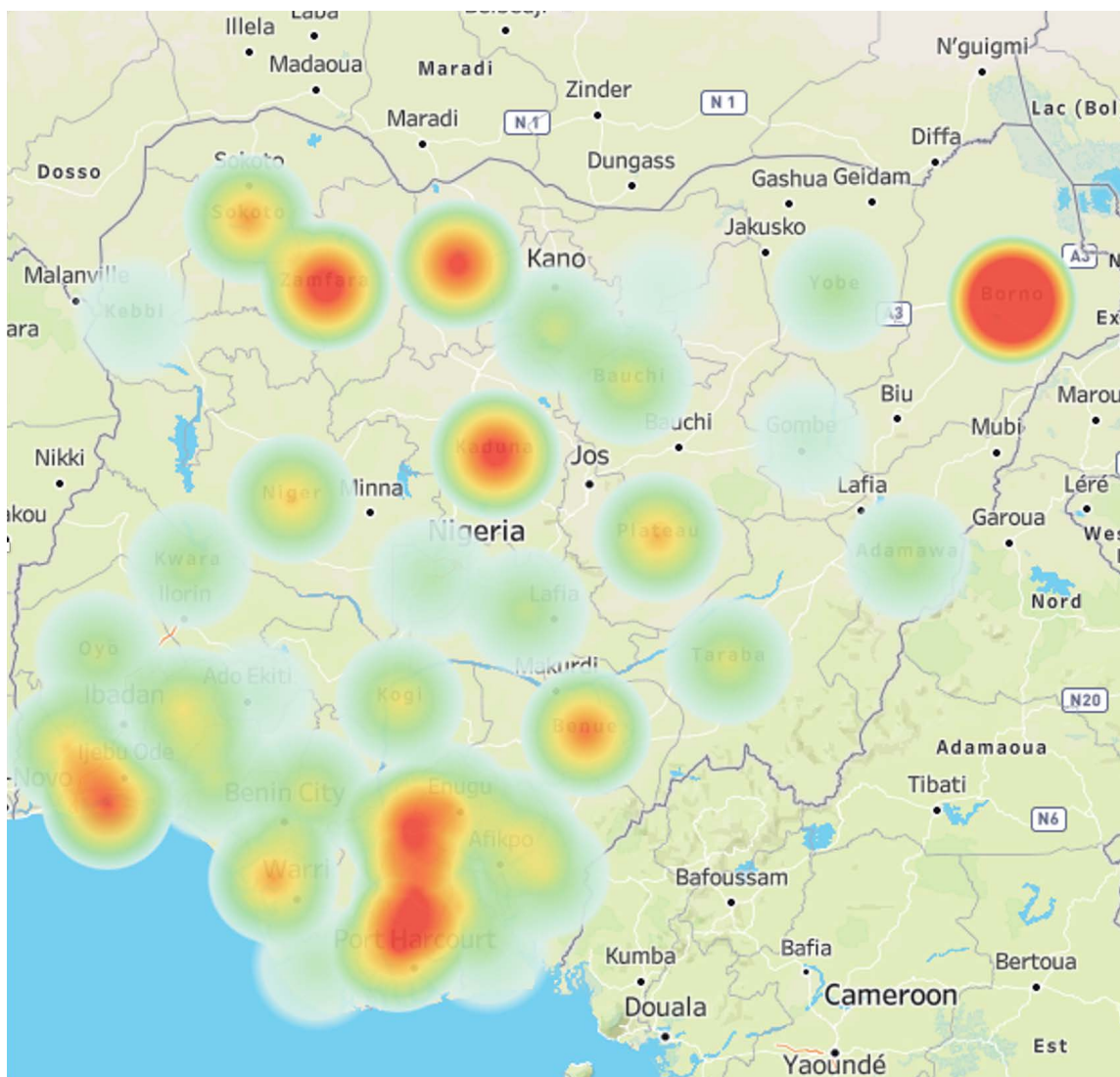
1. Terrorism and Insurgency Analysis
2. Government Security Forces (GSF) Operations
3. Kidnapping
4. Civil Unrest
5. Criminality



Chart Showing Total Incident Count January - December 2023



Heat Map for Total Incidents in 2023



1. Terrorism and Insurgency Analysis



HWA defines an armed attack as an incident where individuals from organized criminal factions penetrate a specified area, firing indiscriminately with the intent to injure, kill, or overpower others. These assaults are prevalent throughout the country, with heightened activity in specific areas. The regions of North West (NW), North Central (NC), and South East (SE) have experienced a surge in such attacks, while some states in North East (NE), South-South (SS), and South West (SW) report a more moderate frequency. Recent intelligence indicates a shift, with armed groups increasingly moving from their traditional bases in the north to southern regions. In total, HWA documented 736 armed attacks across the country, resulting in over 3,237 fatalities.

Terrorist attacks continued in the northern and Southeast (SE) areas, leading to an escalation in military and paramilitary counter-terrorism efforts. The various groups include: outlawed bandit factions that are mainly active in the NW and North Central (NC) regions; the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) operating extensively in the Northern Regions and may have some presence in the Southern Region; Boko Haram is less frequent in the NW and NC but remains highly active in Borno State in the NE; and the Indigenous People of Biafra, along with their militant wing, the Eastern Security Network (ESN), are notably active in the SE Region.

1.1. Boko Haram and ISWAP Activities

There are over 200 armed groups with splinter groups. Despite efforts to diminish its influence, Boko Haram remains active and maintains the ability to engage in conflicts with its rival group, ISWAP. For instance, on 27th February, a clash occurred between ISWAP fighters and Boko Haram [JAS Faction] members in Choliye village, Konduga Local Government Area (LGA) (Borno). During this encounter, approximately 200 individuals lost their lives, as Boko Haram members attempted to escape with their families, predominantly women and children.

In 2023, the North East region experienced 168 terrorist incidents, with over 149 of these incidents occurring in Borno State alone. The remaining incidents took place in Yobe, Gombe, Taraba, Adamawa, and Bauchi states between January and December. Terrorist activities

surged in the second quarter of the year, particularly in April which recorded 24 incidents most of which occurred in Borno state. In Yobe State, at least ten persons were killed on 14th April, while 15 others were allegedly kidnapped by Boko Haram terrorists during an attack at Buni Gari in Gujba Local Government Area (LGA). November also witnessed a surge. To give you a better perspective, the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) under Operation Hakin Kai reportedly neutralized 17 ISWAP terrorists at Ajigin in the Timbuktu Triangle, Damboa Local Government Area. Reports indicate the operatives fired at their hideouts on 8th November during plans to attack a security position.

Approximately 1,025 deaths were reported in Borno State over the year, primarily involving fatalities related to

terrorism. Interestingly, terrorists accounted for the most significant number of casualties, followed by soldiers, with civilian deaths being the least. The army has successfully reclaimed a substantial portion of the Sambisa Forest, a major terrorism stronghold in Borno. However, this success has compelled terrorist factions to fragment into smaller groups, relocating to various Local Government Areas (LGAs).

groups like Boko Haram in the northeast region, have resulted in extensive loss of lives, displacement of millions, and widespread destruction of infrastructure. This persistent insecurity has hindered development, deterred investment, and exacerbated poverty in affected areas. Moreover, the continuous threat of terrorism has strained security forces, leading to significant human and financial resources being diverted from other essential sectors. Additionally, the psychological trauma and fear instilled in communities have eroded social cohesion and trust, complicating efforts for reconciliation and peacebuilding.

The impact of terrorism in Nigeria has been profound and multifaceted, significantly affecting its socio-economic and political landscape. Terrorist activities, particularly by

Map Showing Intensity of Terrorist Activity Across Nigeria

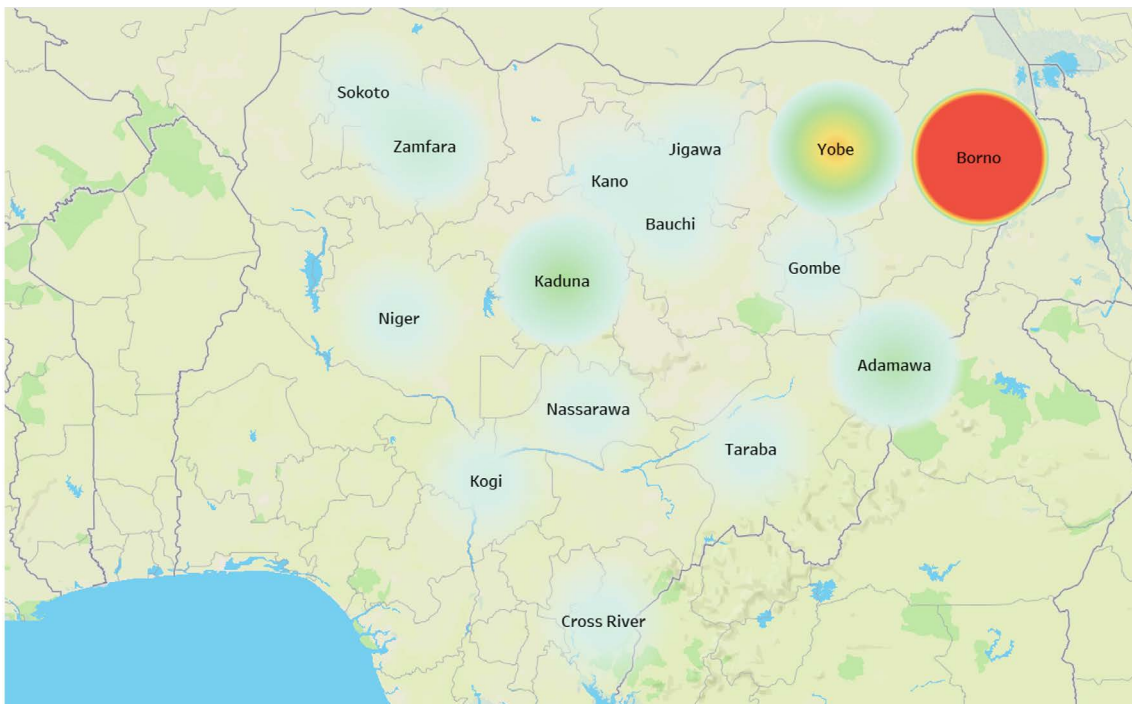
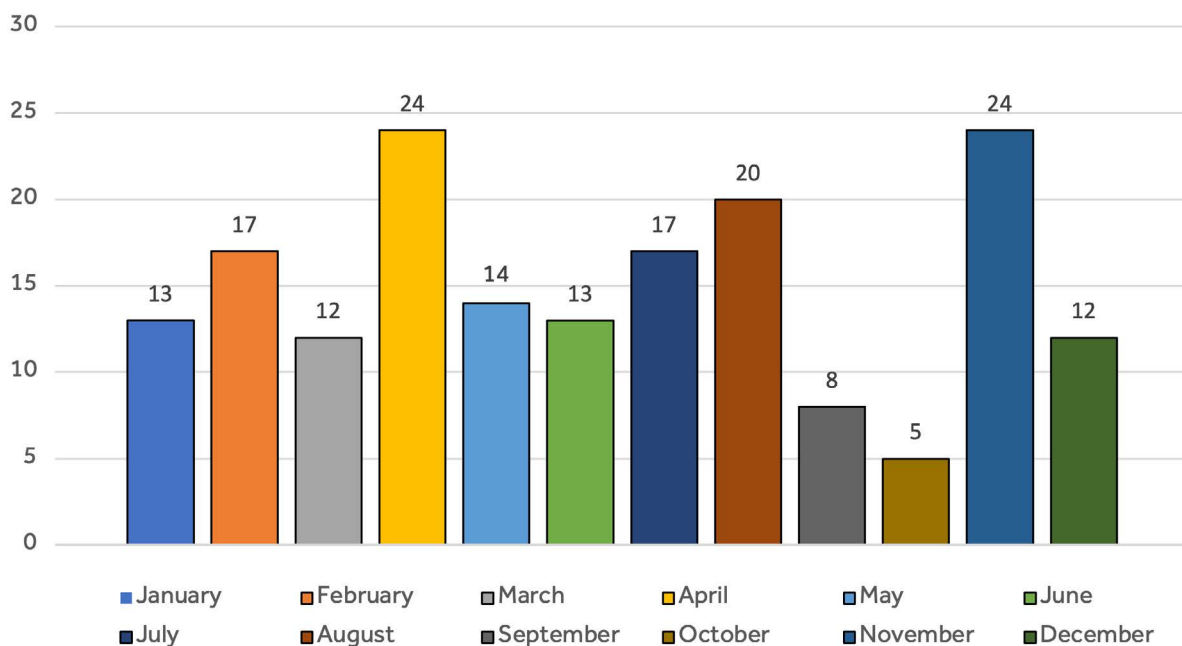


Chart Showing Number of Terrorist Attacks for January - December 2023



1.2. Banditry/Herdsman Activities

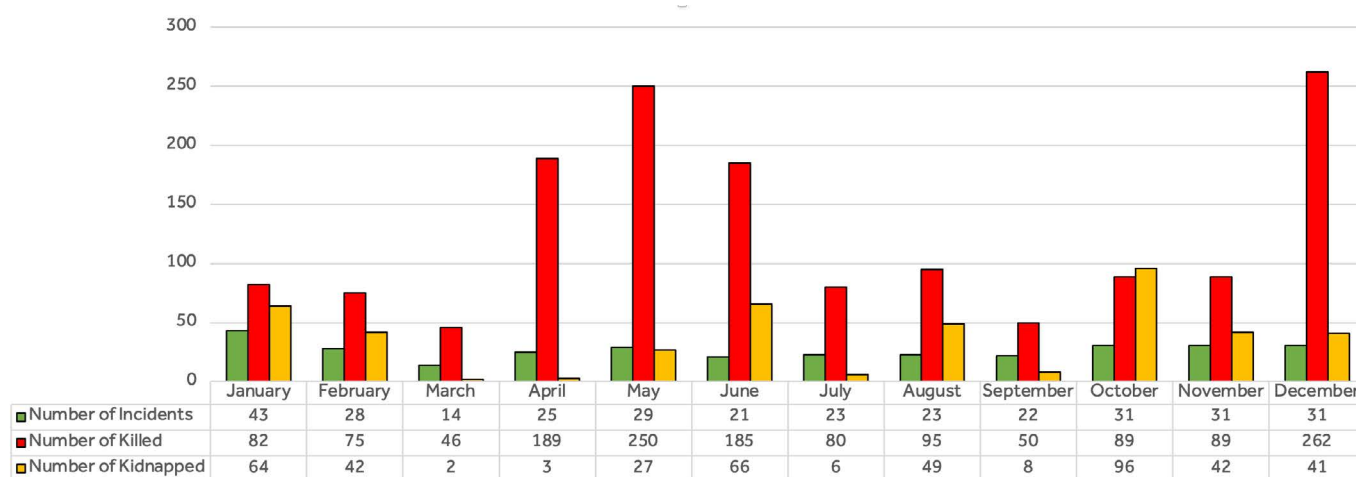
Bandits are armed groups or criminal elements operating primarily in the northern regions of the country, particularly in states like Zamfara, Kaduna, Katsina, and Niger. These bandit groups engage in various criminal activities, including kidnapping for ransom, cattle rustling, armed robbery, and other forms of violence against local communities. Unlike ideologically driven groups like Boko Haram, bandits are often motivated by economic gains and take advantage of the region's vulnerabilities, such as porous borders, limited security presence, and socio-economic challenges. The activities of these bandit groups have contributed to widespread insecurity, displacement of communities, and strained relations between different ethnic and religious groups.

In 2023, 220 incidents including 1,083 fatalities along with 276 kidnapped individuals were recorded in 25 states while 9 states- Adamawa, Abia, Akwa Ibom, Borno, Bayelsa, Kogi, Osun, Lagos, and the Federal Capital Territory recorded no attacks. 22.73% of all these incidents were reported in Benue state.

Bandit attacks across Nigeria were significantly greater than terrorist activities. In one such incident, an estimated 46 persons were killed by Fulani herders at Umogidi village in Entekpa-Adoka District, Otukpo Local Government Area(LGA), Benue State. Typically, herder attacks occur during the dry season as the claims are that herders in search of forage for their cattle clash with locals within the state to forcibly access these resources.

While the majority of these attacks are predominantly focused on the Northwest (NW) and North Central (NC) regions of Nigeria, sporadic incidents involving herders have also been documented in the South-South (SS), South-East (SE), and South-West (SW) regions. Specifically, within the southern states, Agwu Local Government Area (LGA) in Enugu state reported the highest number of incidents in the South-East, whereas Ondo state witnessed the most occurrences in the South-West.

Chart of Banditry/Herdsman Attacks for January - December 2023



1.3. IPOB Related Activities

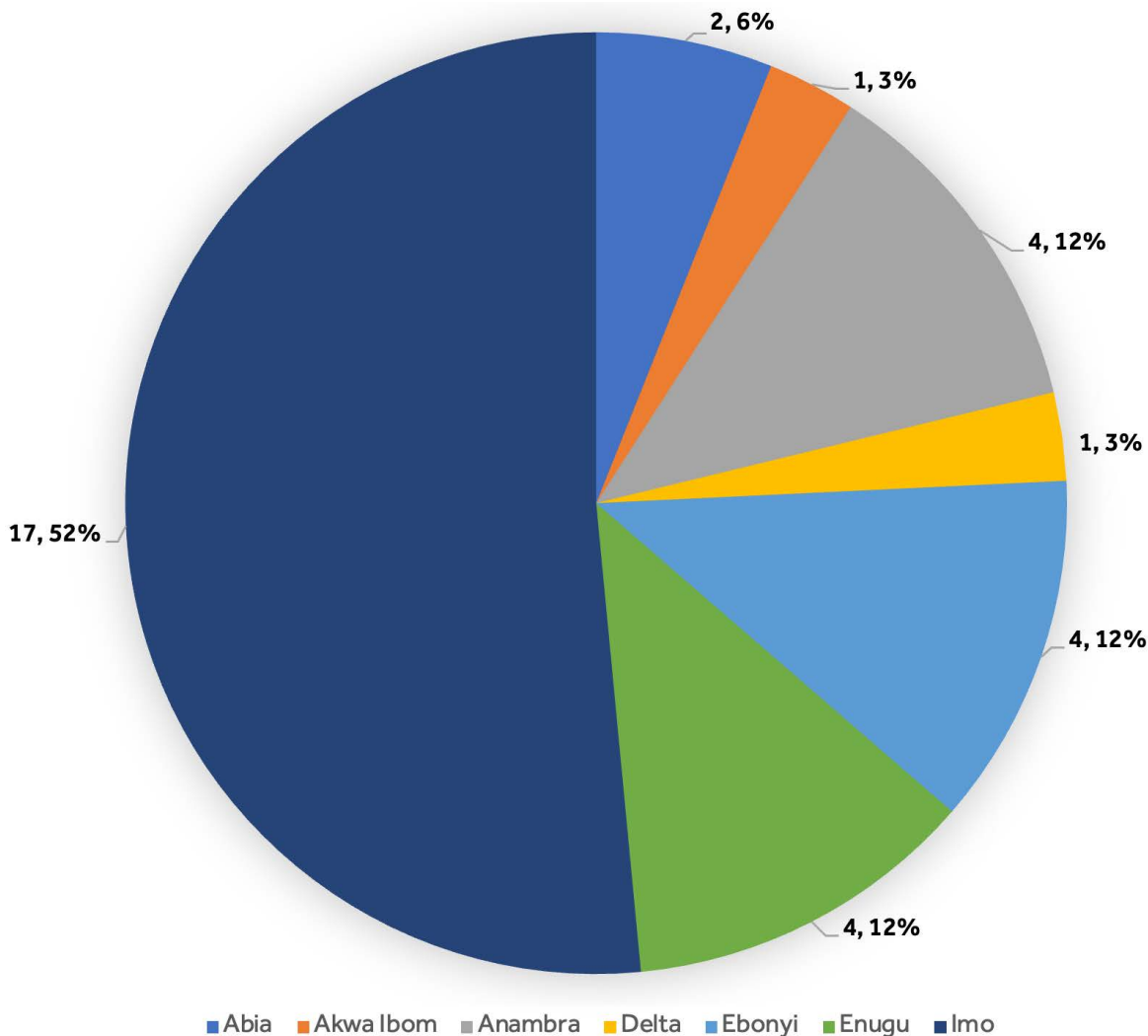
The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is a separatist organization in Nigeria that advocates for the secession of the southeastern region, primarily inhabited by the Igbo ethnic group, from the rest of Nigeria to form the independent state of Biafra. Founded by Nnamdi Kanu in 2012, IPOB gained prominence for its calls for self-determination and has attracted a significant following, particularly among the Igbo population. The group's activities, including protests and demonstrations, have gradually resulted in vandalism, violent attacks against civilians and security forces, including staged kidnap attacks.

Armed secessionism persists in the South-East (SE) region, making economic and social activities more vulnerable to sporadic attacks by Unidentified Armed

Groups (UAGs) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). In 2023, 33 confirmed IPOB attacks were reported within the country, with Imo state having the most reported incidents.

The establishment of a militia backed by regional support could intensify the situation, given that inadequate coordination and public endorsement have led to significant shortcomings and allegations of extrajudicial killings. The desire for secession extends beyond just the SE, with various independent groups emerging across the southern regions, such as the Niger Delta Republic in the South-South (SS) and the Republic of Oduduwa in the South-West (SW).

Percentage of IPOB Related Incidents in Each State



1.4. Armed attacks by Unidentified Armed Groups (UAGs)

Due to the activities of known armed groups across various parts of the country, this has significantly fueled the creation of other armed groups operating under this cover, to extort individuals. These clandestine groups operate with varying motives, including but not limited to, economic gains, political agendas, ethnic or religious affiliations, or resistance against perceived injustices. Their activities range from kidnappings, armed robberies, and attacks on communities to clashes with security forces, exacerbating existing tensions and conflicts. The presence of these unidentified armed groups further complicates Nigeria’s complex security landscape, undermining efforts to foster peace, unity, and development across the nation.

In 2023, 138 armed attacks by various UAGs were reported nationwide, with over 426 fatalities including 331 kidnapped individuals. Plateau and Rivers states recorded most of these incidents.

2. Government Security Forces (GSF) Operation



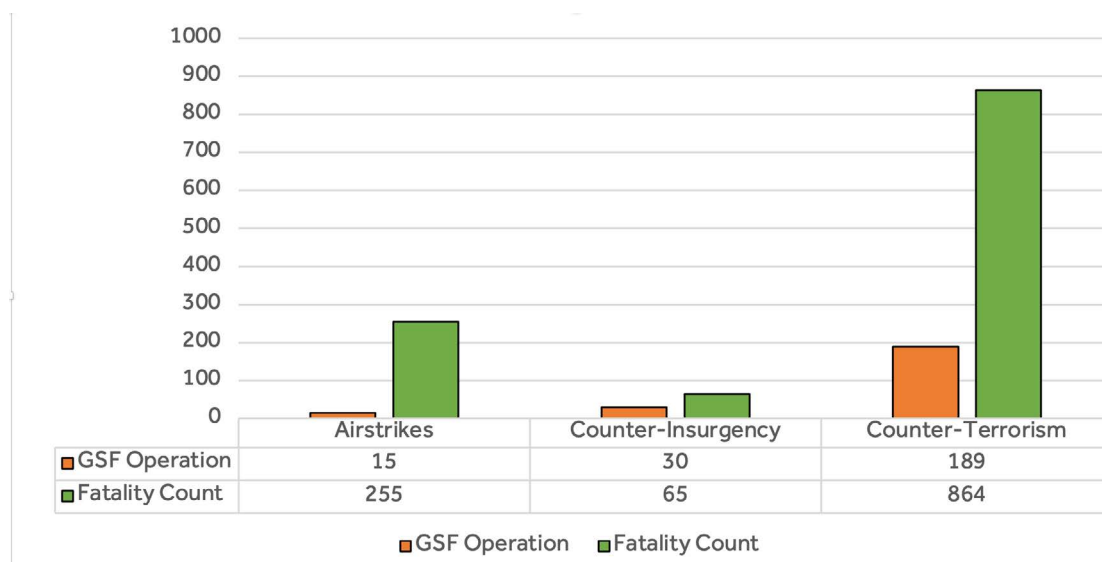
The efforts to combat terrorism have achieved notable progress in the northern region, preventing the infiltration of terrorists into the states of the middle belt and southern regions. Military authorities attribute this success to “enhanced strategic intelligence surveillance,” enabling security forces to respond promptly to attacks.

Military airstrikes in the Northwest region proved effective as they targeted and neutralized notable bandit commanders. On 17th January, the Nigerian Airforce carried out airstrikes in Kurebe, Shiroro of Niger State, resulting in the deaths of 2 wanted Boko Haram (JAS) commanders, Abu Ubaida and Mallam Yusuf Abba. Additionally, around 40 fighters were also eliminated during the operation, with a total of 42 fatalities reported.

On 16th January, the Nigerian Air Force also conducted air strikes against the Sokoto Militia in Rarah of Sokoto state. The air bombardment occurred in 3 different locations and led to the death of hundreds of the militiamen. Over 234 counterterrorism, counter-insurgency operations, and airstrikes were carried out by various security agencies across Nigeria during the reporting period.

The significance of having a well-equipped and modernized military cannot be emphasized enough, as it is essential for the government to maintain its exclusive control over the use of force, especially amid a rising tide of armed insurgency that exacerbates widespread violence.

Number of GSF Operations and Fatalities Recorded in 2023



3. Kidnapping



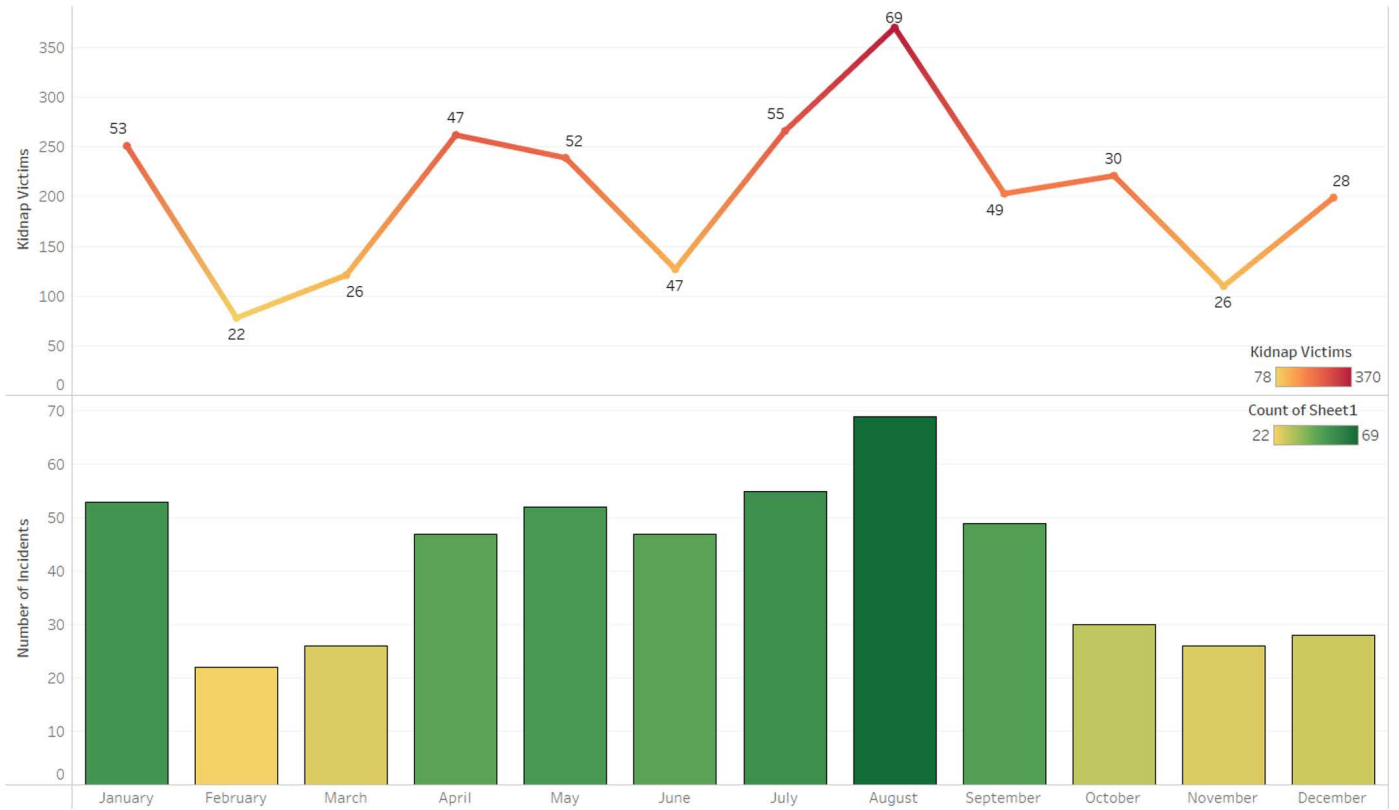
The motives behind kidnappings vary, including economic gain, political objectives, and social grievances. Criminal gangs have been responsible for numerous kidnappings for ransom, targeting individuals from all walks of life, including schoolchildren, prominent figures, and ordinary citizens. Additionally, the activities of extremist groups like Boko Haram in the northeastern region have also involved kidnappings as a tactic to instill fear, exert control, and generate funds. The prevalence of kidnappings has had profound social, economic, and psychological impacts, leading to increased insecurity, displacement of communities, and mistrust in institutions. Efforts by the Nigerian government to address this menace have included military operations, negotiations, and collaborations with neighboring countries. Despite these efforts, kidnapping remains a major security challenge, requiring comprehensive strategies, community engagement, and international cooperation to mitigate its impact and restore peace and security.

Although kidnapping remains a concern throughout Nigeria, the majority of incidents have been documented in the northern states of Zamfara, Kaduna, and Borno, as well as the southern states of Anambra, Cross River, and Rivers. Additionally, states in the middle belt, such as the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and Benue, have also experienced these incidents. In total, 504 kidnapping incidents were reported, involving approximately 2,447 victims, including individuals who were released following ransom payments.

While strategic changes like the redesign of Nigerian currency notes have not substantially hindered kidnappers' activities, they have modified the ransom dynamics and the preferred currency for their operations. Some groups have been observed demanding new notes or U.S. dollar bills from the families of abducted victims.



Chart Showing Number of Kidnapped Incidents and Victims from January - December 2023



4. Civil Unrest



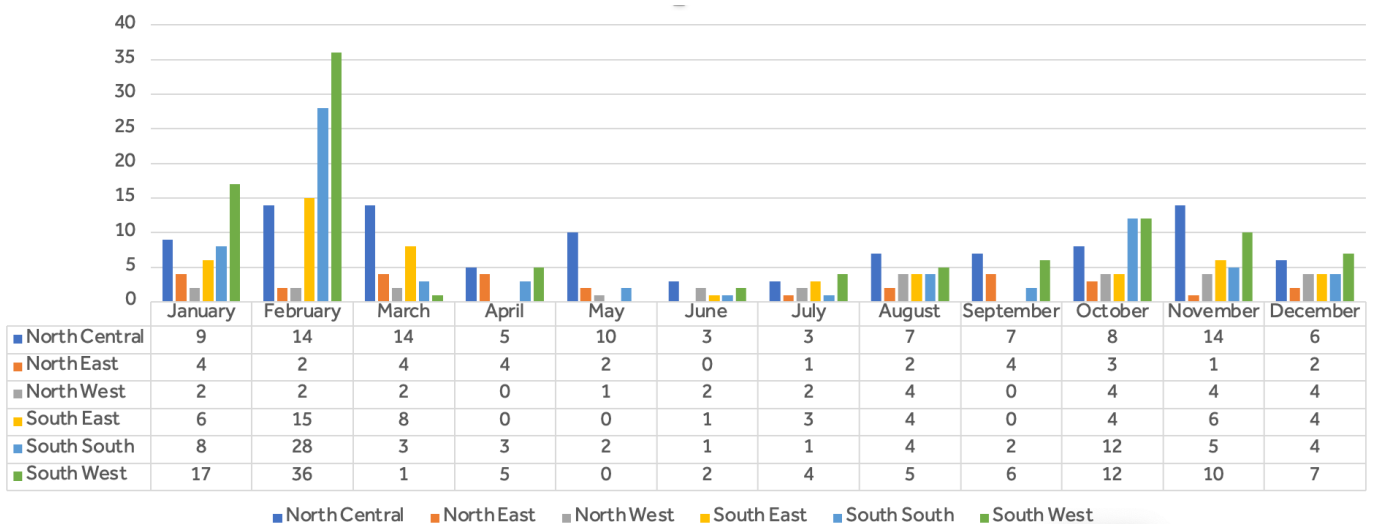
Throughout the year, protests and strike actions led by various unions such as the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), Non-Academic Staff Union, Nigerian Union of Teachers, as well as civil society organizations and ordinary citizens, continued to be prominent manifestations of civil unrest in the country. Both rioting and protests have become prevalent means of expressing discontent and dissatisfaction among the populace.

In 2023, a total of 385 instances of protests, including 4 noteworthy riots, were documented. Protests predominantly occurred in states such as Abuja, Lagos, Delta, Ogun, Anambra, and Edo. Notably, February

recorded the highest number of protests, a surge likely linked to the Presidential elections held during that month. Many groups expressed their discontent with the election outcomes through these protests.

Politics in Nigeria is often perceived as a high-stakes endeavor, particularly in states within the Northwest region, where political tensions frequently escalate. These tensions manifest through both inter-party and intra-party conflicts. For many Northern states, politics holds significant importance, as the ruling politician or party gains control over scarce resources. Essentially, politics revolves largely around resource allocation, highlighting socio-economic considerations as fundamental factors fueling political disputes and conflicts.

Chart Showing Number of Protests per Region from January - December



5. Criminality



Various forms of crime, including but not limited to, armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, cybercrime, drug trafficking, and communal clashes, are prevalent across different regions and urban centers. The factors contributing to the high crime rate in Nigeria are multifaceted and include socio-economic disparities, unemployment, poverty, inadequate law enforcement, corruption, and weak judicial systems. Additionally, ethnic, and religious tensions, political rivalries, and resource disputes further exacerbate the crime landscape. Efforts by the Nigerian government to address these challenges

have involved law enforcement operations, judicial reforms, community policing initiatives, and collaborations with international partners. Despite these efforts, crime continues to pose significant security concerns, impacting the well-being of citizens, hindering investment, and undermining the rule of law.

The HWA analysis on criminality comprises of robberies, killings, assassinations, oil bunkering, political attacks, mob violence, internet fraud, money laundering, and drug trafficking.

5.1. Killing

January witnessed the highest incidence of targeted killings, particularly among political figures. This surge can be attributed to the presidential elections held in February 2023, indicating a likely correlation between the increase in political violence and the heightened tensions surrounding the electoral process.

On 22nd February, Oyibo Chukwu, the 2023 Labour Party (LP) senatorial candidate for Enugu East District, was

fatally shot by gunmen suspected to be political assassins in Amechi Awkunanaw, Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State, located in south-east Nigeria. Alongside Mr. Chukwu, five of his supporters who were in his vehicle were also killed. Tragically, the attackers further exacerbated the situation by setting the victims' bodies on fire.

5.2. Mob Violence

Mob violence emerged as a particularly challenging form of criminality for security forces to address effectively. This type of violence is alarming, given that many of its victims are often innocent bystanders. In total, 61 incidents of mob violence were documented

nationwide, resulting in over 53 deaths. This form of violence is prevalent in the South-South (SS), South-West (SW), and South-East (SE), as well as certain Northern states, highlighting its widespread nature and significant impact on communities.

Ethnic and religious tensions frequently contribute to violent confrontations, in the Northern part of Nigeria as disputes over land, resources, or religious practices can quickly escalate. Economic hardships, such as poverty and unemployment, further exacerbate the situation, as disputes over resources or economic opportunities can ignite violent reactions among aggrieved individuals or groups.

In the Southern regions of Nigeria, mob violence often targets individuals suspected of criminal activities such

as robbery, rape, or murder. Rather than waiting for formal justice mechanisms, some communities take matters into their own hands, resulting in violent confrontations with individuals believed to be perpetrators. This form of vigilante justice is particularly prevalent in states like Lagos, Ogun, Delta, Edo, Rivers, Imo, and Anambra, where incidents of mob violence against suspected criminals frequently occur. On 25th March, at least five suspected robbers were killed by a mob after a failed robbery operation at Old Nkpor road, near People's Club national headquarters in Onitsha, Anambra State.

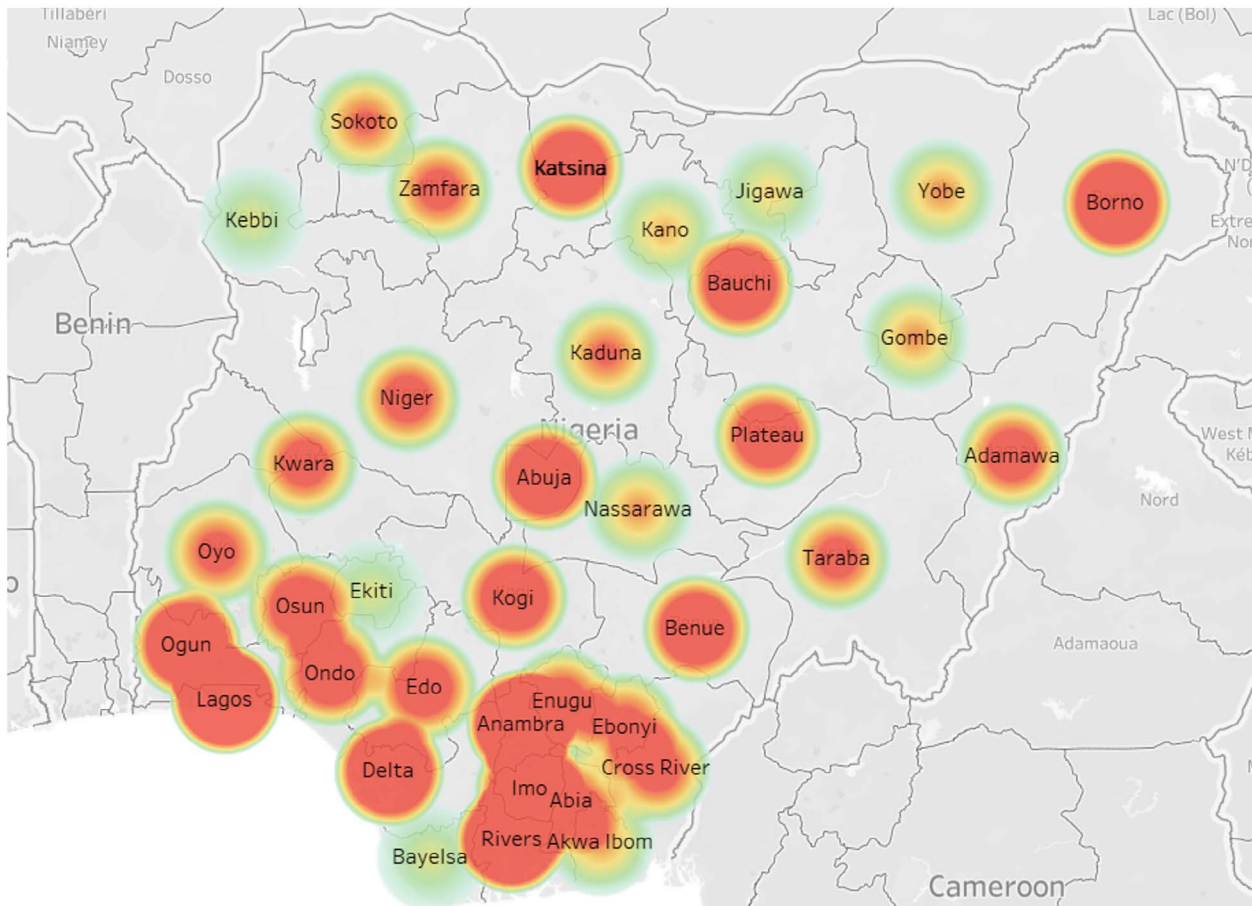
5.3. Armed Robbery

Robberies remain a prevalent threat in various settings across Nigeria, including highways, residential areas, banks, small businesses, and even places of worship. These criminal activities range from armed robberies involving firearms and sharp-edged weapons to unarmed offences such as pickpocketing and burglaries targeting unoccupied homes and businesses. The year witnessed a total of 135 robbery incidents, resulting in at least 38 fatalities and numerous additional casualties. The diverse methods and locations of these robberies underscore the challenges faced by law enforcement

agencies in combating such crimes effectively and ensuring the safety and security of citizens and businesses.

Bank robberies surged in 2023, with over 4 attacks reported. On 20th October, robbers raided several banks in Otukpo Local Government Area (LGA), Benue State, shot dead 8 people, injured several others, and stole an unknown amount of money. The perpetrators were said to have used dynamite to force open the safe doors, in a heist that lasted approximately 2 hours.

Map Showing Intensity of Criminal Activities Nationwide



6. Economy



The economy of a country profoundly influences its security landscape. Economic downturns can trigger social and political instability, leading to internal unrest and vulnerabilities that extremist groups or foreign entities might exploit. Moreover, resource constraints from a weak economy can hamper defense capabilities and critical infrastructure development. Trade disruptions or economic sanctions can strain international relations, escalating tensions. Additionally, economic challenges can foster conditions conducive to cyber threats, terrorism, and organized crime. Furthermore, energy insecurities arising from economic vulnerabilities can compromise a nation's resilience and strategic position.

In the context of Nigeria, the economy significantly intersects with its security dynamics. In 2023, Nigeria faced challenges stemming from economic disparities, notably exacerbated by corruption, oil dependency, and

uneven development. Economic grievances, including high unemployment rates and income inequalities, have contributed to social unrest and internal conflicts, particularly in regions like the Niger Delta, where tensions over oil resources persist. Moreover, economic vulnerabilities have fueled the activities of extremist groups like Boko Haram in the northeast, exploiting grievances and recruiting disaffected youth.

In November 2023, Nigeria experienced a surge in its annual inflation rate, reaching 28.9%, marking the highest level since August 2005 and surpassing the anticipated 27.9%. This uptick was an increase from the 27.3% recorded the previous month. Notably, inflationary pressures intensified across various sectors: food and non-alcoholic beverages rose to 32.6% from October's 31.3%, clothing and footwear edged up to 16.6% from 16.4%, housing and utilities increased to 23.4% from

Inflation Rate from January to October 2023



22.9%, health costs went up to 23.9% from 23.3%, recreation and cultural activities saw a rise to 8.8% from 8.4%, and restaurants and hotels registered 24.1% compared to the earlier 24%. However, sectors like communication witnessed a slight dip from 6.3% to 6.1%, education costs decreased from 21.1% to 20.4%, and miscellaneous goods and services moderated from 22% to 21.6%. Meanwhile, the inflation rate for alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and kola held steady at 16.5%, as did furnishings and household equipment at 16.3%. Looking at monthly trends, consumer prices inched up by 2.1% in November, a slight acceleration from the 1.7% uptick observed in October.

Nigeria's inflation rate continues to increase further on the back of the surge in energy and food prices, coupled with the cash crunch experienced in the first quarter of 2023 as a result of the new naira redesign by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). Meanwhile, inflation is expected to continue its upward trend through the year, following the announcement of the removal of petrol subsidies and the adjustment of the FX rate at the official market.



7. Hazards



A hazard refers to any potential source or situation that can cause harm, damage, or adverse health effects to individuals, property, the environment, or any other entity. During the year, several hazardous incidents which were either natural or manmade were recorded and common incidents were air mishaps, building collapse, fire, and flooding.

The most reported hazard during the reporting year was fire outbreaks with over 45 occurrences while flooding and building collapses accounted for just 30 incidents. 15.56 % of all fire outbreaks were reported in Lagos state followed by 11.11% in Borno State, 8.89% in Oyo and Rivers state, and 6.67% in Anambra, Kano, and Kwara states. All other states had sporadic patterns of fire outbreaks.

Apart from conventional fire incidents in the homes and outlets, other common hazards; were petrol tankers, and gas explosions. These incidents were common in Lagos and Abuja. Several fire incidents were contained, while others escalated, resulting in fatalities, casualties, and destruction of valuables and properties. Noteworthy, fire incidents in Borno State were mostly arson attacks from terrorists, and they were recorded in IDP camps.

During the year, diphtheria continued to claim lives across the country since it began in 2022. According to the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and WHO, there have been 13 416 suspected cases of diphtheria since 9th May 2022, with 8576 confirmed cases across 116 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in 19 States and the Federal Capital Territory, as of 1st Oct 2023. The states most severely affected include Kano, Yobe, Katsina, Bauchi, Borno, and Kaduna, making up 95.8% of the reported cases, with 73.6% impacting children between

the ages of 1 and 14. Kano stood out as the main hotspot, registering roughly 85% of these cases. As of 12th October 2023, diphtheria had led to more than 600 fatalities, predominantly among children. The epidemic, which began in May 2022, intensified due to factors like population expansion, climate-induced reductions in hygiene stemming from water scarcity, and insufficient coverage of diphtheria vaccinations.



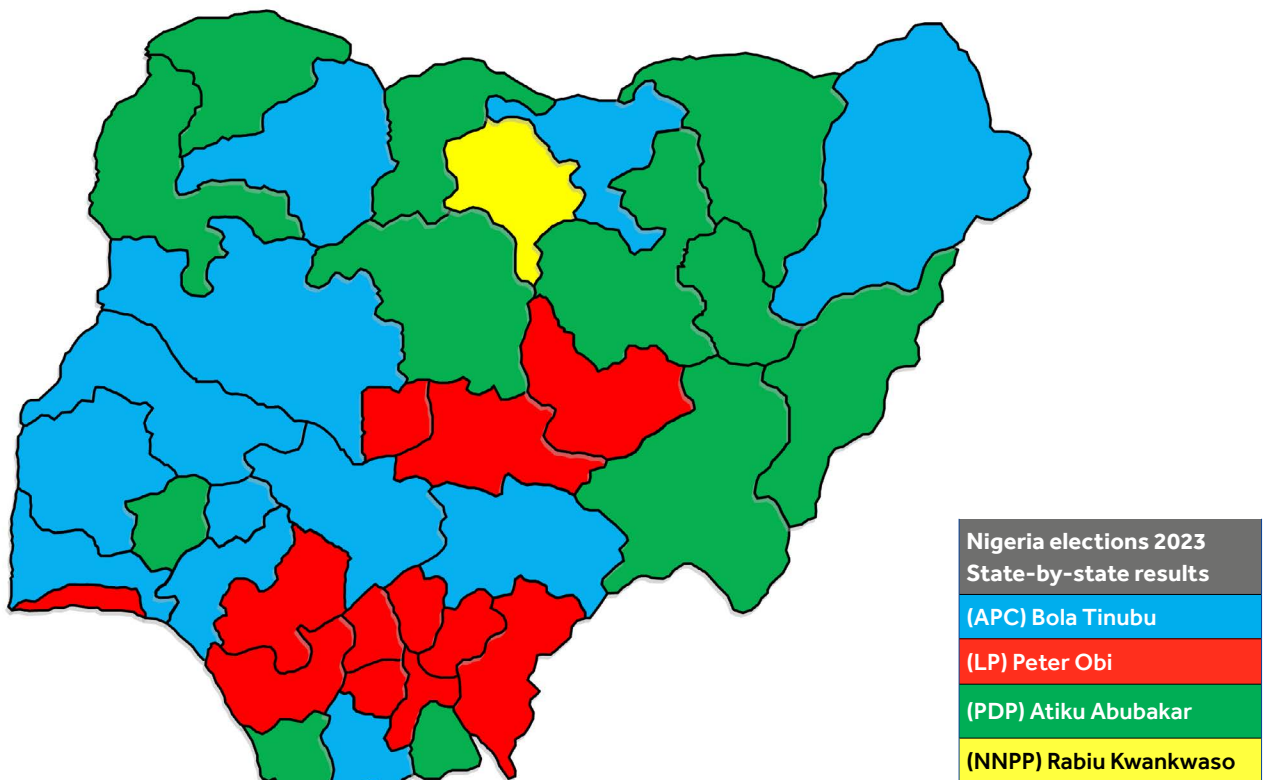
8. Politics



The first quarter of the year saw a spike in politically related issues such as campaigns, protests, and violence due to the Presidential and Gubernatorial elections that took place in the country. The Presidential Election was contested by 18 candidates, a drop compared to the 2019 election which had 73 candidates. The presidential frontrunners include Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the incumbent

All Progressives Congress (APC), Atiku Abubakar of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), and Peter Obi, the Labour Party (LP). Elections were held nationwide on 25th February however, voting had to be extended to the next day, 26th February in some states due to sporadic cases of unrest which disrupted the electoral process.

Nigeria Elections 2023 State-by-state Results



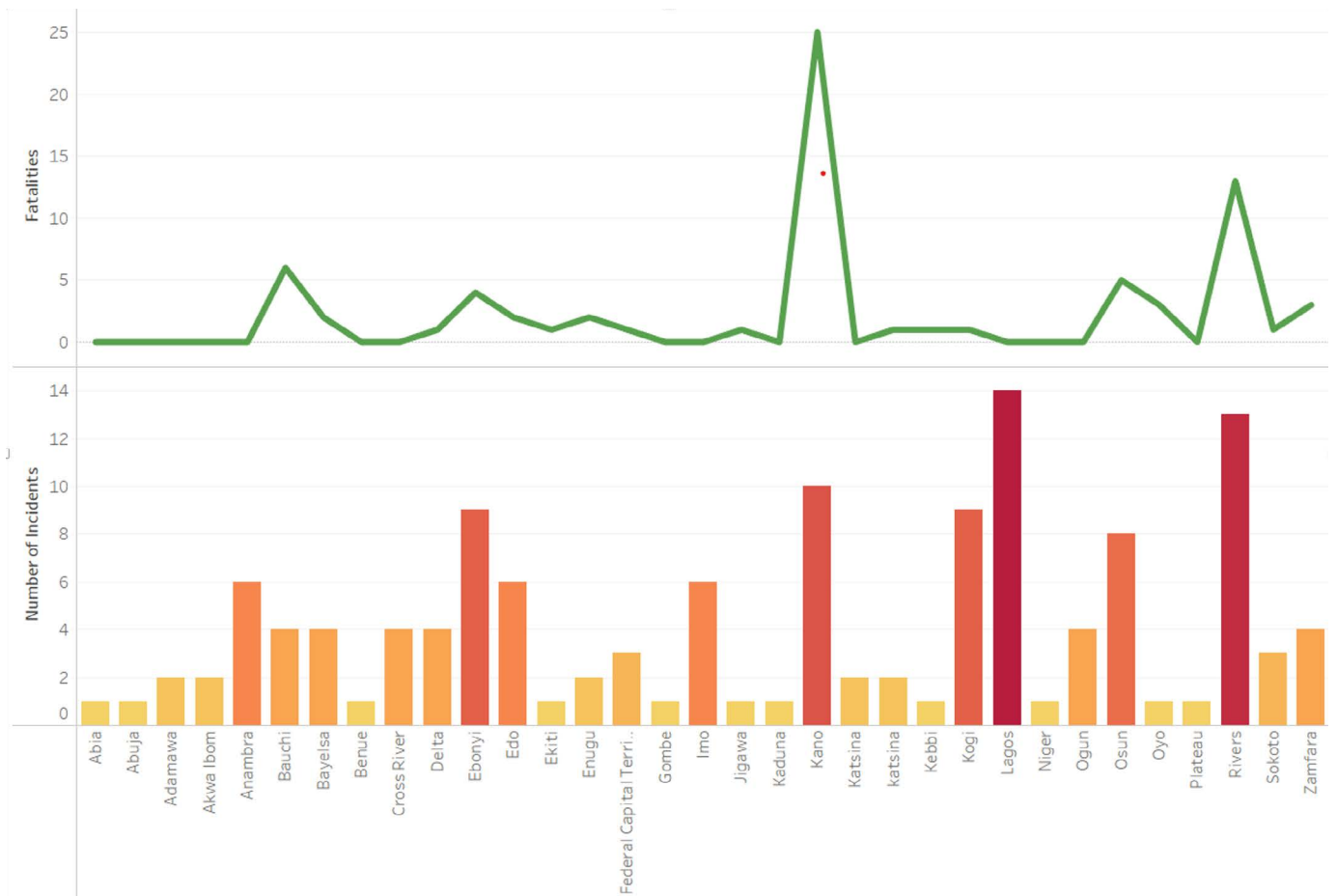
The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) announced Bola Ahmed Tinubu from the All Progressive Congress (APC) as the victor of the 2023 presidential election. Tinubu secured 8,794,726 votes, outpacing his nearest contender, Atiku Abubakar of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), who garnered 6,984,520 votes. Peter Obi representing the Labour Party (LP) claimed the third spot with 6,101,533 votes, whereas the New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP) candidate trailed in fourth place with 1,496,687 votes. These results caused a stir among civilians who protested repeatedly against the results of the elections.

Following one of the nation's closely contested elections, challenges arose as former Lagos governor Tinubu secured the presidency with 37 per cent of the vote,

surpassing Atiku Abubakar of the PDP and Peter Obi of the LP. Despite the victory, opposing parties sought to nullify the election, citing irregularities and fraud. The presidential election tribunal in Nigeria ultimately declared that the main opposition parties were unable to substantiate their allegations of electoral malpractice against the ruling APC in the disputed February elections, thereby upholding the current results.

During the reporting period, a total of 132 election-related incidents were captured. These incidents ranged from arson attacks to armed attacks, assault, mob violence, and vandalism. Incidents of electoral violence were captured across all states, with Lagos and Rivers (states recording 14 and 13 incidents respectively).

Visualisation of the Number of Political Related Security Incidents and Fatalities in 2023



Forecast for 2024

Security Forecast

Following the installation of the new government and the declaration of new laws and strategies to govern the country, insecurity challenges are expected to surge in 2024. Based on the occurrences of 2023 and the projection into 2024, HWA presents the forecast for 2024 as follows::

1. The first quarter of the year usually comes with a decline in attacks from armed groups, however, following the Christmas massacre of 200 villagers across four local government areas by Fulani marauders in Plateau State, we anticipate a surge in armed attacks in the Northern part of the country in the first quarter.
2. Due to the recent downward changes in the economy of the nation along with the emergence of new bandit groups in northern Nigeria, a surge in insecurities in the form of armed attacks, armed robbery, and kidnapping for ransom is envisaged.
3. Protests are likely to continue in 2024 as various groups express their grievances over unaddressed issues by the governing bodies.
4. A combination of armed confrontations, the effects of climate change, and increasing inflation are projected to push approximately 26.5 million Nigerians into severe food insecurity by 2024. This represents a significant increase from the current figure of around 18.6 million individuals at risk of food shortages in Nigeria, as reported by the Cadre Harmonisé initiative, which concentrates on food and nutrition analysis.
5. The federal government plans to spend \$4 billion on defense and security next year, constituting 12 percent of the total budget and a significant increase compared to the previous budget. Hence, we expect an increase in security operations during the year.



Economic Forecast

Beyond the anticipated security concerns in 2023, the nation's economic well-being remains a significant focal point. Nigerian legislators have endorsed a budget of 28.77 trillion naira (\$34 billion) for 2024, acknowledging an increase in funding that the government had requested due to more optimistic revenue projections and a devalued currency. Initially, President Bola Tinubu had put forth a 27.5 trillion naira budget to the legislative body, forecasting a deficit equivalent to 3.9% of the gross domestic product (GDP) and assuming an average exchange rate of 750 naira to the dollar. However, during a special session on 30th December 2023, both the Senate and the House of Representatives deliberated on the budget separately and decided to approve it with the modifications proposed by the government.

Nigeria has struggled with high deficits over the years due to low tax revenue and falling production of oil, its biggest export, forcing the government to borrow more. The 2024 United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) report highlights that Nigeria's

escalating public debt, ongoing inflation, and increasing cost of living present significant challenges to the nation's economic growth prospects for the year. Therefore, the following economic implications are expected.

1. The country is projected to manage its existing debt by acquiring more loans, potentially worsening its financial situation.
2. Unemployment is expected to surge in the first and second quarters, following a shortage of foreign and domestic investors. This could be attributed to the failing economy and the closure of several foreign companies in Nigeria.
3. As the impacts of last year's exchange rate adjustments and elimination of fuel subsidies diminish, inflation is anticipated to gradually decrease. These structural changes are forecasted to enhance fiscal revenue in the upcoming period.



Recommendations

Events in the first quarter of the year are expected to be influenced by the 2023 presidential election. Therefore, as INEC prepares for the 2023 general elections, the possibility of unrest and violence is high which could lead to loss of life, destruction of properties, theft of assets, and disruption of business activities.

On that account, HWA recommends the following to reduce the impact of disruptions on individuals and organisations.

Individuals/Families

- Due to the presence of highway robberies, always keep all the doors and windows of your vehicle locked while in transit.
- Refrain from being out late, particularly if you reside in areas known for high crime rates or violence. Additionally, criminals tend to exploit bandit-prone zones to commit offenses, so it's advisable to refrain from moving during early mornings or when it's still dark.
- Refrain from participating in violent activities. Avoid associating with individuals or groups that may incite violence on election day due to the associated consequences.
- Ensure adequate lighting in and around your home, particularly in dark or vulnerable areas, to deter unauthorized activities and enhance visibility.
- Towards working to maintain a safe and secure environment, it's practically essential to heighten your security awareness and remain vigilant. Know your surroundings and who or what should or should not be there. If you have a concern or see something suspicious, report it immediately to security or law enforcement.

High Profile Individuals

- Avoid staying out late, especially for persons living in areas with high threats or records of violence. More so, because criminals perpetrate crimes, early morning runs or movement when still dark should be avoided.
- Maintain a low public profile where possible and avoid unnecessary exposure or visibility in high-risk or volatile environments.
- Due to the risk of transit kidnap attacks, develop comprehensive travel security plans, including risk assessments, route planning, secure accommodations, and secure transportation arrangements. Employ experienced security personnel, drivers, and local contacts to facilitate safe and secure travel arrangements, especially in high-risk or unfamiliar environments.
- Do not partake in violence. Avoid any person or groups of persons gathering to instigate violence be it during protests or otherwise.
- Be discreet - do not advertise your social life and vacation plans or that of others, to people visiting or calling.

Security Operatives

- Always maintain situational awareness.
- Ensure to move in groups, especially around hostile areas.
- Prepare for defensive measures in areas known to record consistent violence.

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