

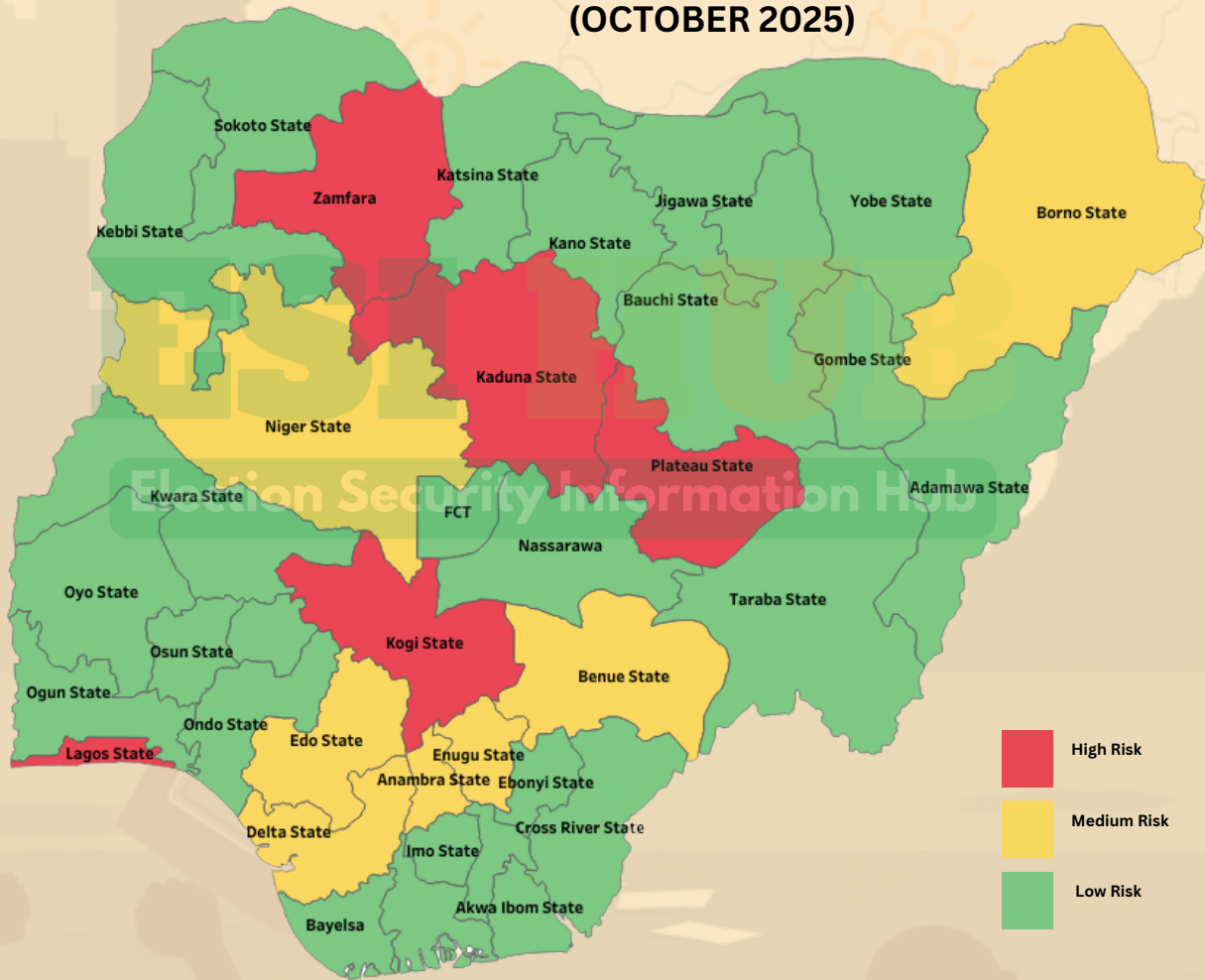


Funded by the European Union



MONTHLY THREAT ASSESSMENT REPORT – OCTOBER 2025

NATIONAL RISK MAP (OCTOBER 2025)



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ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

The Kukah Centre (TKC), founded by Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah, is a non-profit policy and research institution dedicated to promoting democracy, good governance, and national cohesion in Nigeria. Through evidence-based research, data-driven analysis, and inclusive dialogue, the Centre works to strengthen human-rights protection, accountability, and sustainable peace. Its interventions are designed to generate actionable insights that inform governance reforms, deepen civic participation, and reinforce institutional resilience.

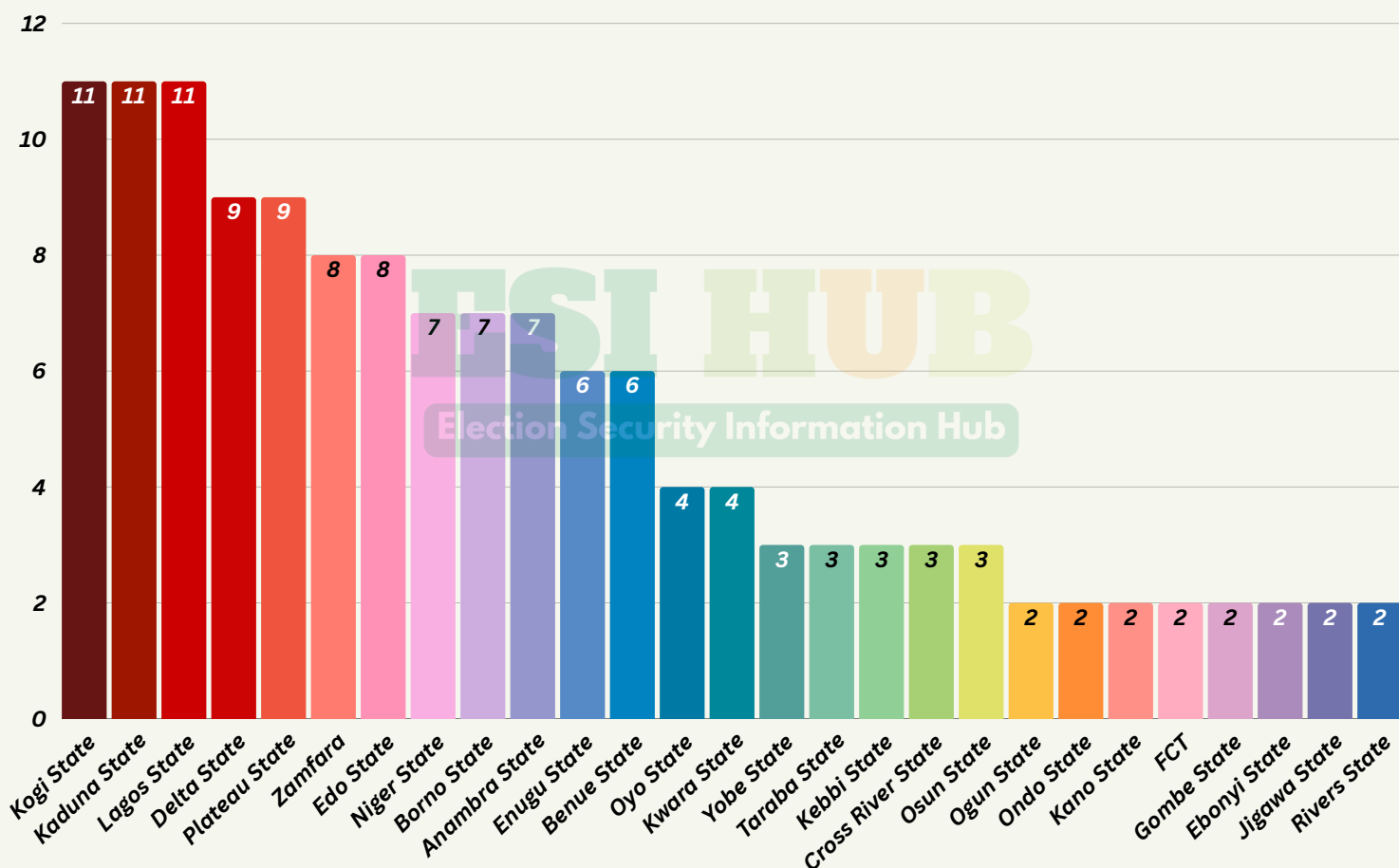
As the Secretariat of the National Peace Committee (NPC), The Kukah Centre provides administrative support to the NPC — a non-governmental, non-partisan body of eminent Nigerians that has been central to Nigeria’s democratic stability since its establishment in 2015. The Committee is widely recognized for facilitating the National Peace Accords, through which political parties and candidates commit to issue-based campaigns and respect for electoral outcomes. Beyond the accords, the NPC engages in preventive diplomacy, mediation, and dialogue, consistently helping to de-escalate political tensions and safeguard democratic transitions across electoral cycles.

In alignment with this peacebuilding mandate, The Kukah Centre accepted to host the Election Security Information (ESI) Hub under the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN II) programme. The ESI Hub functions as a central coordination and data-intelligence platform that tracks electoral offences, identifies insecurity flashpoints, and generates verified, real-time analysis to inform decision-making. By integrating systematic data collection, geospatial analysis, and strategic communication tools, the Hub provides actionable insights to key stakeholders, including INEC, security agencies, civil society organizations, media, and development partners. Thereby enhancing early warning, countering disinformation, and advancing the shared goal of peaceful, credible, and inclusive elections in Nigeria.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report covers 1–31 October 2025. During this period, the ESI Hub recorded 148 insecurity incidents across all 6 geopolitical zones. These events led to an estimated 157 deaths, 64 injuries, and 116 kidnappings. While overall incident volume was lower than in September 2025, casualty figures remained high, particularly in the North-West/North-Central corridor and cult-linked killings in parts of the South West.

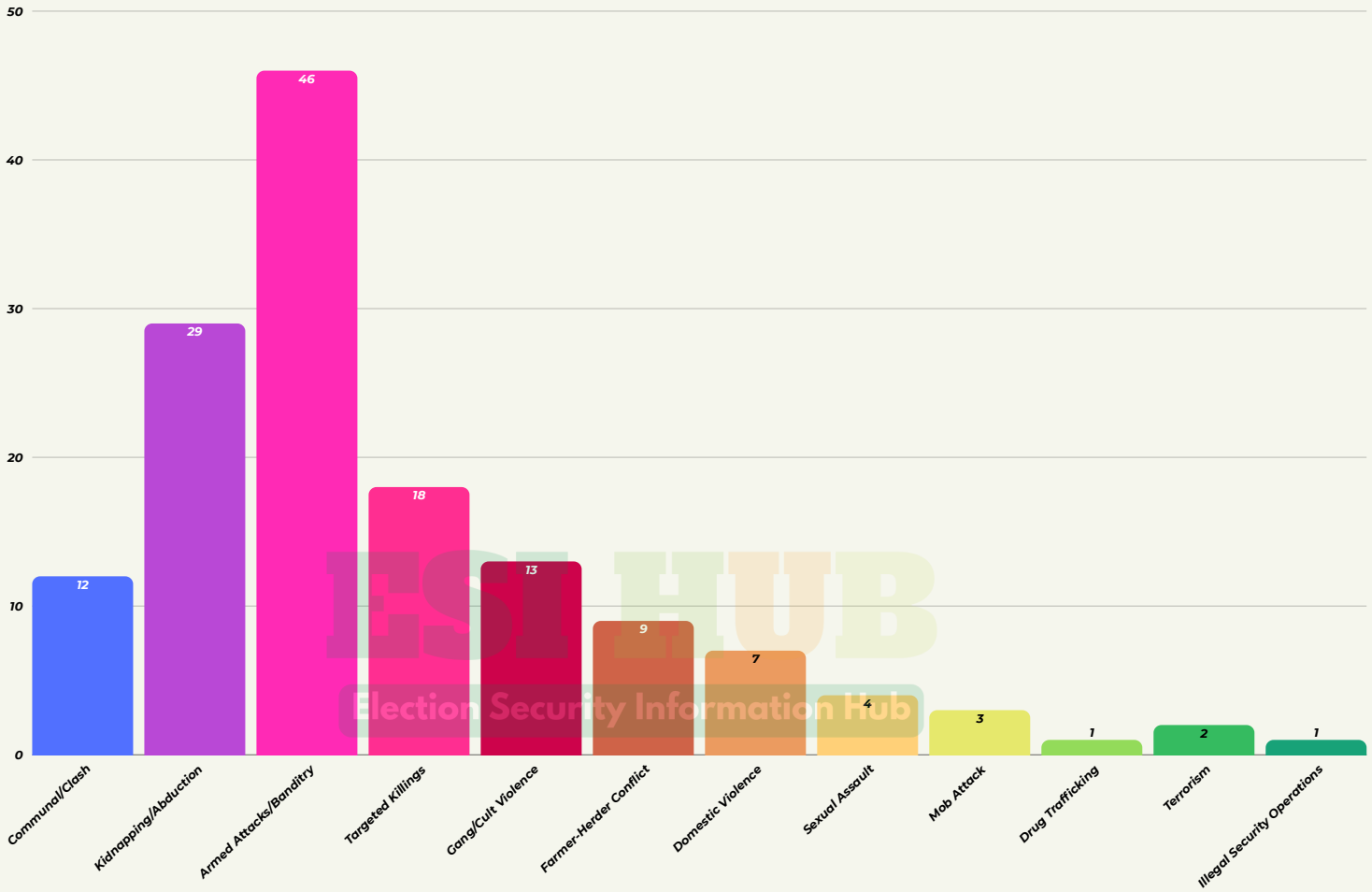
NUMBER OF INCIDENTS ACROSS NIGERIA October 2025



The highest flashpoint areas appear to be concentrated in Zamfara, Kaduna, Plateau, Kogi, and Lagos, which together accounted for a disproportionate share of casualties. The ESI Flashpoint Severity Index ranked Zamfara and Kaduna at the top (crimson tier), followed by Plateau and Kogi (red/high), with Lagos also elevated due to persistent urban violence.

The leading threat categories were Kidnapping (29 incidents), Banditry (22), Gunmen Attacks (15), targeted Killings (13), Cultism (12), and Armed Robbery (9). Kidnapping and banditry together account for 115–116 abductions this month and remain the primary public-safety and humanitarian risks.

FREQUENCY OF THREAT OCCURENCE
OCTOBER 2025



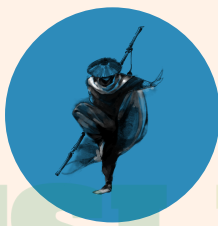
DISTINCT PATTERNS IN GEOPOLITICAL ZONES
OCTOBER 2025.



North-Central
Gunmen Attacks dominated.



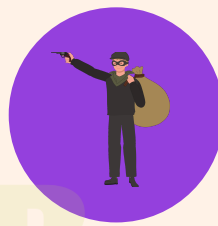
North-East
Farmer-herder conflict spiked in localized hotspots.



North-West
Banditry was the core threat with repeated village raids and highway abductions



South-West
Cultism and robbery drove urban insecurity (Lagos/Ogun/Osun clusters).



South-East
Armed robbery was most frequent, with sporadic killings and extra-judicial cases.



South-South
Kidnapping was prevalent, including attacks on commuters and community members.

Victims included civilians, students, commuters, traders, and farmers, alongside security personnel in ambushes and checkpoint attacks. Women and minors appeared in several kidnapping, domestic-violence, and sexual-assault cases, underscoring the protection gap for vulnerable groups. Although most incidents were non-electoral, the same criminal economies (highway/hinterland kidnapping, cultism, armed robbery) overlap with election-period risk vectors—threatening safe movement, logistics, and public confidence in flashpoint LGAs across Kaduna, Kogi, Zamfara, Plateau, Delta, Lagos, and Anambra.

Priority Area	Key Locations	Main Objective	Core Outcome
Anti-Kidnapping	Kaduna, Zamfara, Kogi	Disrupt ransom networks	Safer travel corridors
Urban Violence	Lagos, Ogun, Osun	Contain cult and gang activity	Restored urban order
Farmer–Herder Conflict	Benue, Plateau, Gombe, Borno	Prevent reprisals	Reduced casualties & displacement
Victim Protection	Nationwide	Support survivors	Trust & recovery
Election Safeguarding	High-risk states	Protect the polling process	Credible elections

October shows emerging threats of highly lethal forms of insecurity concentrated in a predictable belt across the North-West/North-Central. In urban areas of South-West, South-East, and South-South, there are increased threats of cultism, armed robbery, and kidnappings. Sustained early warning → rapid response, alongside community-based prevention and rights-respecting enforcement, remains essential to reduce harm in the immediate and protect electoral integrity in the coming cycles.

METHODOLOGY

The Election Security Information (ESI) Hub is an initiative of The Kukah Centre (TKC), which serves as the technical secretariat of the National Peace Committee (NPC). It operates under the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN II) programme, specifically the Support to the National Peace Committee Project implemented by TKC. The Hub contributes to the EU's broader objective of strengthening democratic governance, peacebuilding, and credible elections in Nigeria.

Conceived as a central coordination, research, and data-intelligence platform, the ESI Hub monitors, analyses, and communicates patterns of election-related insecurity while also tracking broader governance risks that may indirectly influence electoral processes. Its mandate is to bridge the evidence gap between field-level security incidents and strategic decision-making, providing actionable insights that inform policy, coordination, and preventive response.

Through its core components, the Election Security Trends Reports, Electoral Offences Tracking System (EOTS), and ESI Studio, the Hub generates verified data and analysis to support early warning and early response (EWER), strengthen institutional accountability, and promote collaborative peacebuilding. It works closely with security agencies, INEC, civil society organisations, media partners, and development actors, ensuring that national peace and security efforts are grounded in credible, real-time evidence.

The October Monthly Security Assessment (TKC/ESI/MTA/V.02/2025), [AB1] which focuses on emerging incidents for October 2025, reflects both election-related incidents of insecurity and broader insecurity trends with potential electoral implications. It situates these within Nigeria's wider governance and democratic landscape, showing how armed violence, disinformation, and institutional weaknesses intersect to threaten peace and political stability.

The assessment aims to:

1

Strengthen understanding of security dynamics influencing democratic and electoral integrity across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones.

2

Support early-warning, coordinated response, and accountability mechanisms among security, governance, and peace institutions.

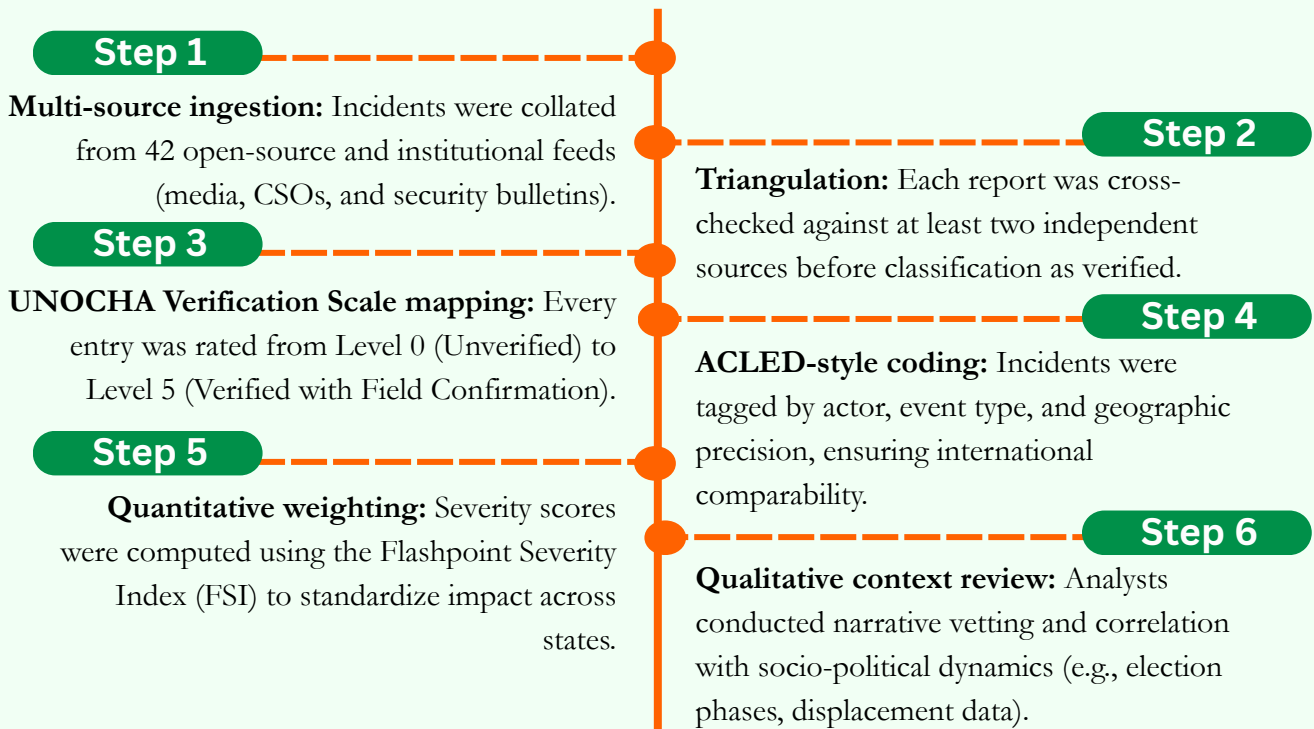
3

Provide a verified, gender-responsive data foundation for continuous monitoring, comparative analysis, and strategic planning across electoral cycles.

By combining quantitative incident tracking with qualitative field insights from the NPC's Independent State Peace Architectures (ISPAs), civil-society partners, and media observers, the report contributes to a unified national framework for election security analysis. It complements the NPC's preventive diplomacy work, peace accords, mediation, and dialogue facilitation while aligning with international best practices in data validation, transparency, and conflict prevention.

This security assessment applies a six-step hybrid methodology adapted from the Operational Framework of the Election Security Information (ESI) Hub and refined in alignment with international standards such as the UNOCHA Verification Scale, ACLED data validation protocols, and EU-SDGN II early-warning benchmarks. The approach integrates both quantitative and qualitative analysis to ensure data reliability, accuracy, and contextual depth.

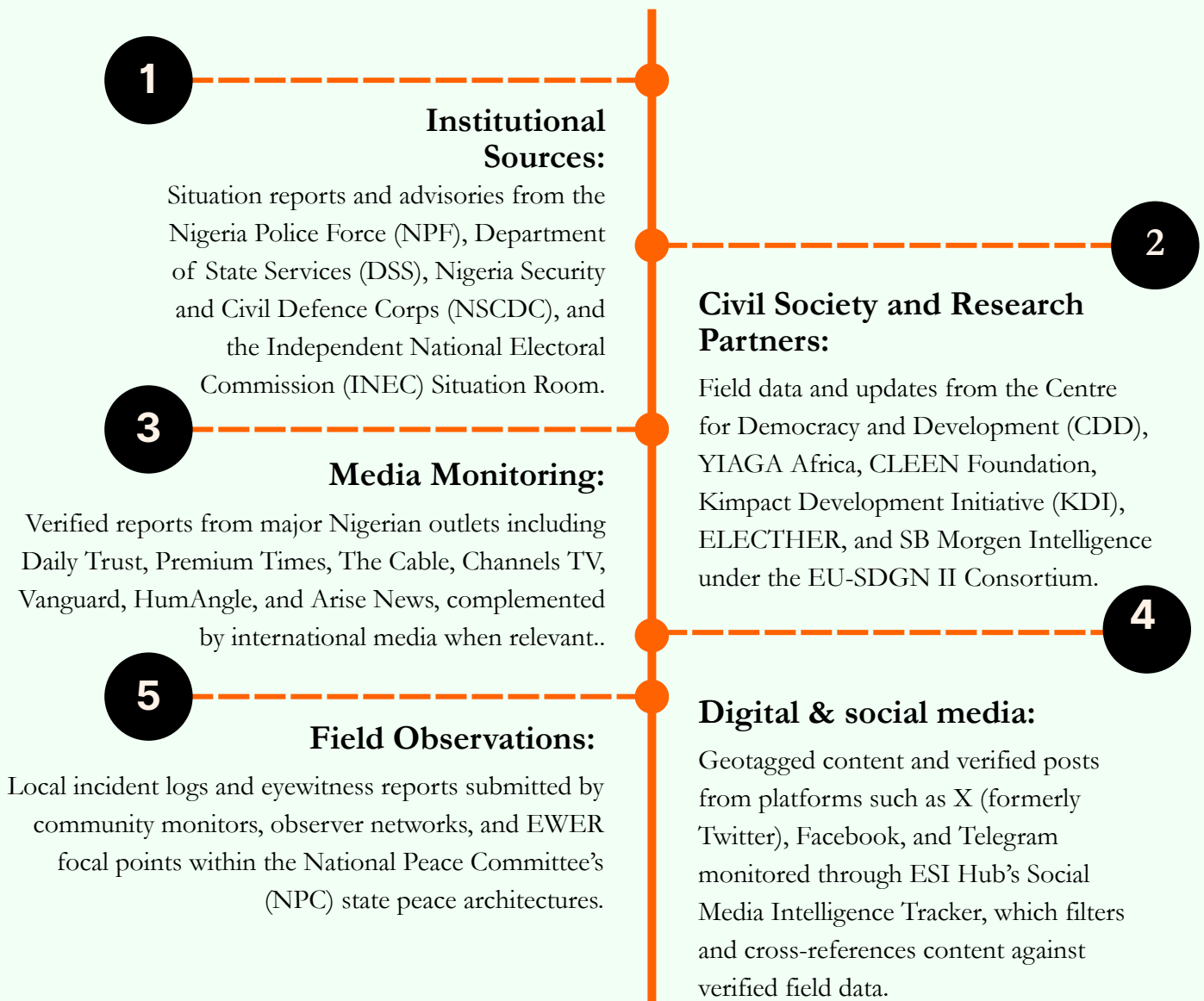
In practice, this alignment is reflected in the data-collection and verification process:



This methodology not only ensures consistency with global verification norms but also allows the ESI Hub dataset to serve as a traceable, evidence-based reference for policy, humanitarian coordination, and electoral risk mapping.

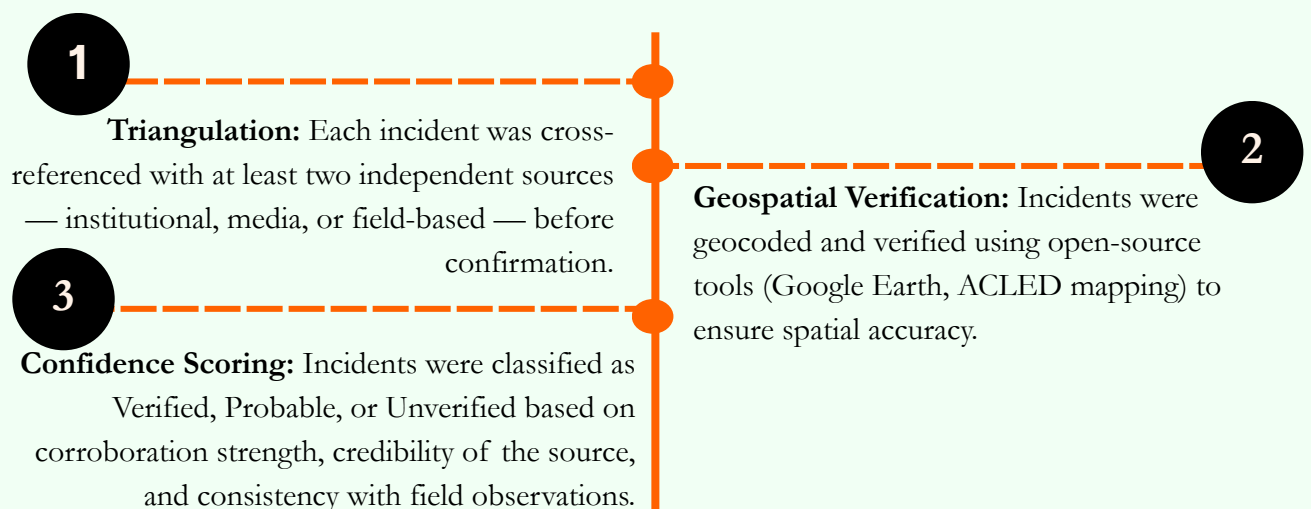
Data Sources

Data for this report were obtained from multi-source inputs combining primary and secondary channels to check accuracy, verify and confirm data in order that findings are mutually corroborated and authentic.



Data Verification and Validation

To ensure reliability, all data underwent a three-stage validation protocol consistent with the ESI Hub's verification framework:

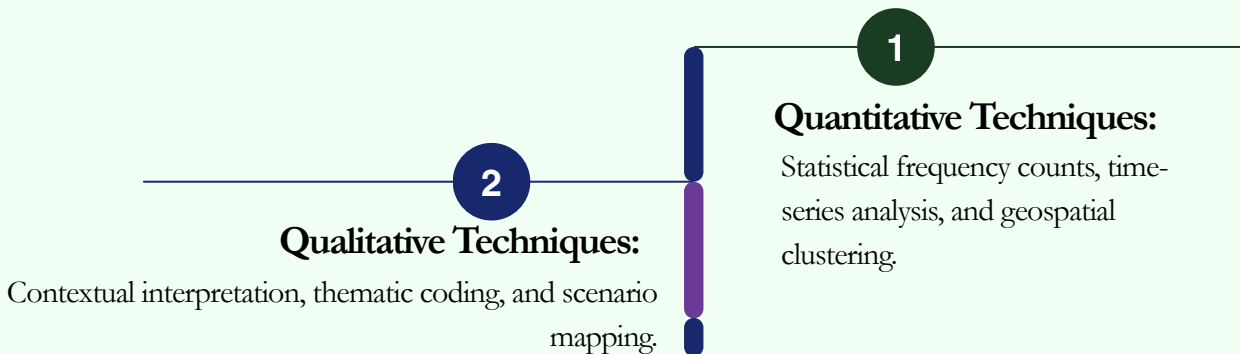


The validated dataset was then subjected to peer review within the ESI analytical team and internal/external review with partners.

Data Processing and Analysis

Following verification, data were cleaned, standardized, and consolidated using the ESI Hub’s database schema. Duplicate entries and unverifiable reports were excluded.

Analysis combined:



Findings were visualized through charts, infographics, and heatmaps for trend interpretation.

Time Frame and Scope

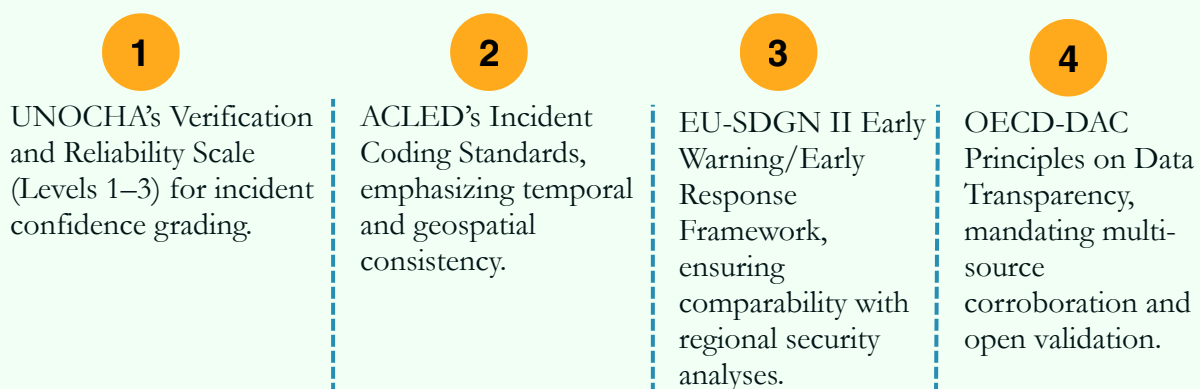
This assessment covers 1–31 October 2025, capturing all incidents of insecurity recorded within that period across 36 Nigerian states. However, incidents of insecurity were recorded within that period only in 27 states. Only incidents falling within the reporting window were analysed.

Limitations

While every effort was made to ensure accuracy, constraints such as underreporting in rural or conflict-prone areas, information blackouts, and delayed verification may limit data completeness. These limitations are transparently acknowledged to preserve analytical integrity.

Alignment with International Best Practices

The methodology aligns with:



Purpose

Beyond serving as an analytical tool, this methodology underpins accountability, transparency, and preventive action. It enables security agencies, INEC, civil society, and development partners to translate verified data into evidence-based interventions that strengthen Nigeria’s democratic resilience.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS



Communal Clash refers to violent confrontations between ethnic, religious, or geographically defined groups, often fueled or exacerbated by electoral competition. These clashes can be triggered by political mobilization along ethnic lines, disputes over polling unit locations, or manipulation of existing grievances by political actors to intimidate voters, indigene-settler dichotomy, voter suppression in rival areas, overvoting, the deployment of partisan security personnel to support electoral malpractice. The violence often results in displacement, preventing legitimate voters from participating and can undermine the credibility of election results in affected areas.



Terrorism primarily refers to acts of violence perpetrated by non-state extremist groups (such as Boko Haram or ISWAP) aimed at disrupting electoral processes, intimidating voters and election officials, or undermining the legitimacy of the state and its democratic institutions. Terrorist attacks can involve bombings, abductions, or direct assaults on polling centers, effectively disenfranchising populations in affected regions, creating a climate of fear, and challenging the state's capacity to conduct credible elections.



Banditry refers to the organized criminal activities of armed groups (e.g., kidnapping for ransom, cattle rustling, village raids) that directly impact electoral processes by creating pervasive insecurity, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. These bandit groups can disrupt voter registration, prevent the deployment of electoral materials and personnel, force the relocation or closure of polling units, and intimidate or abduct voters, candidates, or election observers, thereby suppressing turnout and compromising the fairness of elections in affected regions for purely financial or opportunistic gains.



Extra Judicial Killings refer to unlawful killings carried out by state security forces (police, military) or state-backed non-state actors, often under the guise of maintaining order during election periods. These killings can be used to suppress opposition, intimidate voters or protesters, eliminate political rivals, or enforce curfews and restrictions in ways that disproportionately affect specific populations. Their occurrence erodes public trust in security agencies and the electoral process, and can incite further violence or lead to widespread apathy.



Farmer Herder Conflict refers to violent confrontations between sedentary farming communities and nomadic or semi-nomadic herders primarily over access to land, water, and grazing routes. These disputes often escalate when armed community militias, vigilante groups, political actors or criminal opportunists intervene, amplifying the cycle of retaliation. Electoral competition can heighten existing tensions by politicizing resource disputes, leading to targeted attacks or displacement that disenfranchise communities, alter voter demographics, or create no-go areas for electoral officials and voters. The insecurity arising from these conflicts directly undermines the ability to conduct free, fair, and inclusive elections in affected rural areas.



Gunmen Attacks is a descriptive term for violent incidents perpetrated by unidentified or unaligned armed individuals or groups, which directly threaten the integrity and safety of the electoral process. These attacks often target electoral infrastructure (e.g., INEC offices, polling units), electoral personnel, security forces, voters, or even politicians, leading to casualties, destruction of materials, and widespread fear. Such attacks are frequently opportunistic or politically motivated, designed to disrupt elections, suppress turnout, or facilitate other forms of malpractice, often without a clear ideological backing like terrorism.



Kidnapping refers to the abduction of individuals, often for ransom, which becomes a significant threat during electoral periods. This can involve the targeting of election officials, security personnel, candidates, their families, or even ordinary voters to disrupt election logistics, extort funds for political campaigns, or intimidate political opponents and communities. The pervasive fear of abduction can suppress voter turnout, hinder the deployment of election materials, and create a climate of fear that undermines the freeness and fairness of the electoral process.



Thuggery refers to the organized use of intimidation, coercion, and physical violence by politically sponsored groups or individuals ("thugs" or "political touts") to manipulate electoral outcomes. These groups are often employed by politicians or parties to disrupt opponents' rallies, snatch ballot boxes, intimidate voters at polling units, perpetrate voter suppression, or facilitate ballot stuffing. Thuggery is a pervasive feature of Nigerian elections, directly undermining their credibility and contributing significantly to electoral violence and distrust.



Armed Robbery though a general crime, can become particularly prevalent and impactful during election periods. Criminal gangs may target electoral officials, security convoys, or even ordinary citizens during transportation of electoral materials or sensitive financial assets (e.g., cash for ad-hoc staff payments). Such incidents not only result in loss of life and property but also disrupt the logistics of elections, create widespread fear, and can lead to the loss of sensitive election materials.



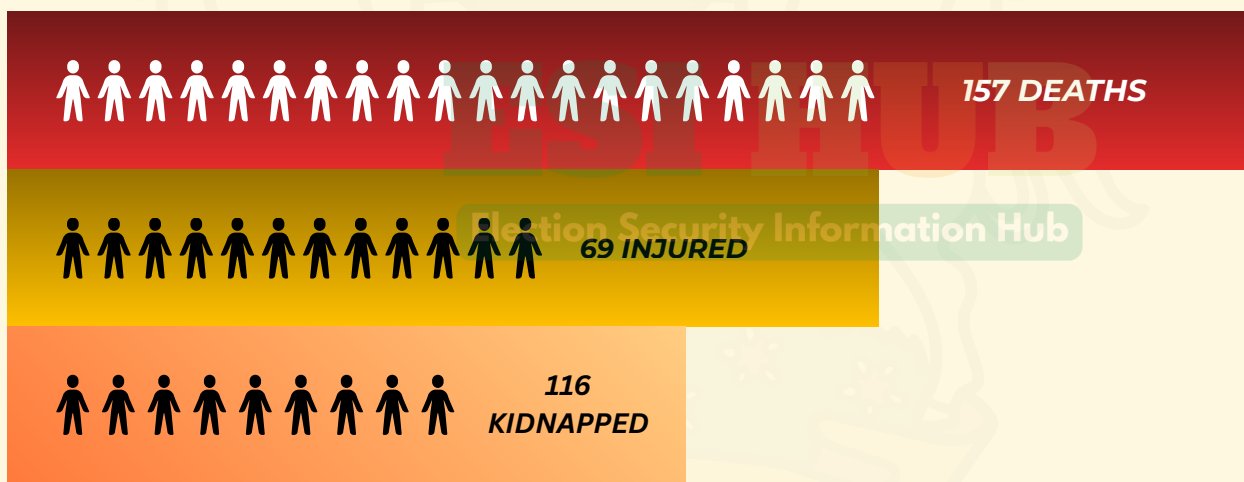
Cultism refers to the activities of secret confraternities or fraternities, often operating in tertiary institutions and urban areas, which are frequently co-opted or sponsored by political actors during elections. Members of these cult groups (also known as "campus cults" or "street cults") are used as political thugs to intimidate voters, snatch ballot boxes, instigate violence at rallies or polling units, and assassinate rivals.

OVERVIEW OF THE INCIDENCES OF INSECURITY

Original / Similar Threats	Merged Threat Category
Clash, Communal Clash, Violent Clash, Violence, Civil Unrest, Violent protest	Communal/Clash
Kidnapping, Human trafficking	Kidnapping/Abduction
Banditry, Gunmen Attacks, Armed Robbery	Armed Attacks/Banditry
Killing, Extra-Judicial Killings	Targeted Killings
Cultism, Inter-Gang-Violence	Gang/Cult Violence
Farmer-Herder Conflict	Farmer-Herder Conflict
Domestic Violence	Domestic Violence
Sexual Assault	Sexual Assault
Mob Attack	Mob Attack
Drug Trafficking	Drug Trafficking
Terrorism	Terrorism
Illegal Security Operations	Illegal Security Operations

Figure 1: Shows full threat category breakdown and how they are grouped

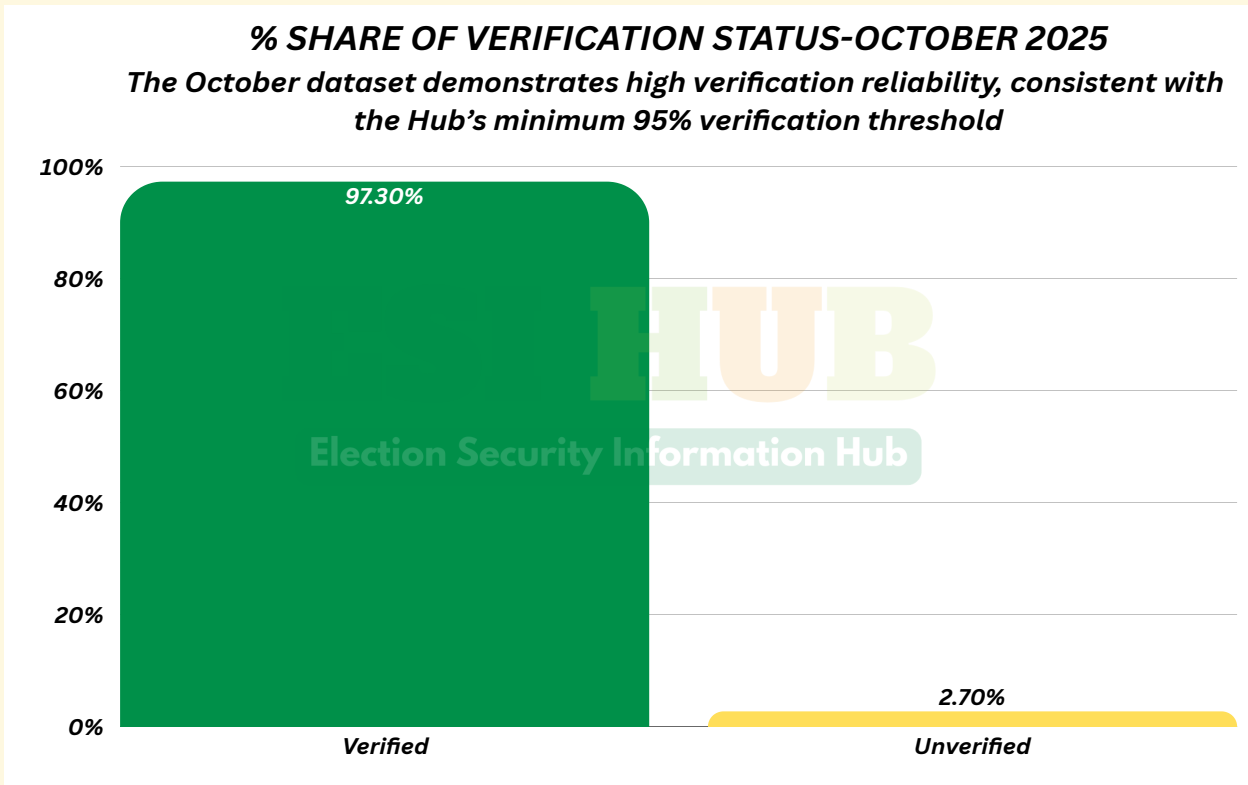
OCTOBER 2025



The security situation in October 2025 showed a surface calm that did not reflect the real tension across the country. Between October 1 and 31, the ESI Hub recorded 148 insecurity incidents across 34 states and 94 LGAs. These incidents led to 157 deaths, 69 injuries, and 116 kidnappings. Although the number of incidents was lower than in September, the impact was still very serious. Many of the attacks were deadly, targeted, and disruptive to daily life. Large-scale abductions, armed raids, cult-related clashes, and selected killings created fear in both rural and urban communities.

The data shows that it is not the number of attacks alone that matters, but the weight of their impact. Even fewer incidents can destroy lives, displace families, shut down communities, and weaken public confidence in government security efforts. This is why October remains a high-risk month despite the drop in total incidents.

Overall, 97.30% of incidents were verified, giving a clear and reliable picture of the ongoing insecurity shaping the country.



National Overview of Insecurity (October 2025)

Insecurity during the month of October 2025 unfolded at a time when many Nigerians were struggling with rising prices, job losses, and public frustration with government services.[AB1] The month also coincided with increased political activity in Anambra State, which was preparing for its 8 November 2025 governorship election. This political build-up created opportunities for certain groups, including youth gangs and local political actors, to reposition themselves in expectation of influence or patronage as campaigns intensified.

At the same time, several institutions, particularly security agencies and local policing structures, showed signs of strain because of repeated deployments and limited resources. This form of institutional fatigue affected response times, reduced deterrence, and weakened public confidence.

These combined pressures allowed different non-state armed actors to continue operating and, in some areas, to widen their activities. The outcome in October was a mixture of criminal attacks, politically linked intimidation, and community disputes that increasingly overlapped and fed into one another.

1. Economic Strain and Criminal Banditry

Prices of essential goods remained high in 2025. Official inflation figures reported by The Impact newspaper show that headline inflation stood at about 18% year-on-year in September 2025, while food inflation averaged around 17%. These levels remain well above pre-crisis baselines and continue to weaken household incomes, particularly in rural communities across the North and Middle Belt.

Armed groups exploited this economic pressure. Field accounts and local media reports describe how groups in Zamfara, Kaduna, Niger, and Kogi imposed informal levies on farmers, collected forced contributions during harvest periods, and expanded kidnapping for ransom as a source of income^[1]. These patterns echo earlier findings from Lake Chad, where armed organisations such as ISWAP have taxed civilian populations on a large scale, sometimes collecting more revenue than formal state authorities^[2].

This broader economic context is reflected in the October 2025 dataset. Armed Attacks and Banditry (46 incidents) and Kidnapping or Abduction (29 incidents) together accounted for more than half of all recorded insecurity incidents. Even with fewer overall incidents than September, these categories continued to produce significant loss of life, displacement, and disruption to rural livelihoods. This shows that the severity of insecurity is not only linked to the number of incidents but also to their intensity, frequency, and impact on daily life.

2. Urban Criminality and Political Opportunism

Urban violence in October was concentrated in parts of Lagos, Delta, Edo, and Oyo. In Lagos in particular, the data and EOTS records show clear overlap between criminal structures and political messaging.

At the same time, the Gang/Cult Violence (13 incidents) recorded in October reflects long-running turf fights, market clashes, and reprisal attacks among youth groups in Lagos–Ogun–Oyo, with some actors hired informally for “security” or crowd control. Where this overlaps with party activities or campaign structures (as seen in Lagos and parts of Delta and Edo), violence takes on a political edge. But in many locations, it remains driven mainly by local criminal economies, unemployment, and weak policing rather than a formal election timetable^[3].

In conclusion, in Lagos and some South-South states, the October data show both economic/cult criminality and early political use of gangs. In other states without imminent off-cycle elections, available evidence points more to crime and social stress than to direct election scheduling.

^[1] Malik, S. (2020). ISWAP's “taxation” and civilians in the Lake Chad Basin. *The New Humanitarian* (as referenced in: Impact Nigeria, 2025, “Lake Chad insurgency and local taxation”)

^[2] Samuel, M. (2025, July). ISWAP drains Lake Chad through taxes: Inside a US\$191 million war economy. *The New Humanitarian*.

^[3] Efobi, U., Adejumo, O., & Kim, J. (2025). Climate change and the farmer–pastoralist's violent conflict: Experimental evidence from Nigeria. *Ecological Economics*, 228, Article 108449. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2024.108449>

3. Farmer–Herder and Resource Competition

Farmer–Herder Conflict in October was concentrated in Benue, Plateau, and parts of Borno. Although the number of incidents was smaller than for banditry, these clashes caused high casualties and displacement, reflecting the long-running tensions in the Middle Belt. Recent reporting highlights how these conflicts often spiral into violence after disputes over land, water, and crop destruction.

Studies and field observations link the persistence of these clashes to competition over shrinking grazing routes, population growth, climate pressure on rain-fed agriculture, and the rising cost of farm inputs. October’s incidents follow this pattern. In Benue, a confrontation between farming and herding groups resulted in several injuries^[4],^[5]. In Plateau, a land-use dispute escalated into a revenge attack, leaving multiple people wounded^[6]. In Borno, an earlier disagreement over grazing access triggered a clash that led to the death of farmers^[7].

These incidents show that, even when the numbers appear small, the impact remains serious. A few violent clashes can deepen mistrust between communities and spark cycles of retaliation. They also disrupt food production in states that contribute significantly to Nigeria’s food supply, with wider effects on prices and household livelihoods.

4. Domestic and Targeted Violence in Civil Spaces

Targeted killings and domestic violence continued to show how insecurity also operates quietly inside homes and public spaces, not only through large-scale attacks. October’s data suggests that women and children were often among the most affected, especially in cases of domestic assault, sexual violence, and abductions. Some incidents involved security personnel and civilians, raising concerns about accountability and public trust.

In Delta State, for instance, a man was reportedly shot dead in his vehicle by suspected police officers in Asaba^[8] while in Niger State, a soldier killed his wife and later died by suicide in Wawa Cantonment^[9]. Together, these cases reinforce a wider pattern in which families and neighbourhoods face risks both from non-state actors and from those meant to protect them.

Although less visible than high-profile raids or mass kidnappings, such incidents have deep social impacts: they create fear within households, disrupt community cohesion, and make it harder for survivors to seek help or justice. They also weaken confidence in law-enforcement institutions, particularly when allegations involving officials are not resolved quickly or transparently.

^[4] Daily Post. (2025, October 5). Suspected herdsmen kill two farmers in fresh attack in Benue. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/10/05/suspected-herdsmen-kill-two-farmer-in-fresh-attack-in-benue/>

^[5] Zagazola. (2025). Three killed, houses burnt in Benue communal clash, as Army restore order. <https://zagazola.org/index.php/breaking-news/three-killed-houses-burnt-in-benue-communal-clash-as-army-restore-order>

^[6] NewsNG. (2025). Plateau: 13 die in Barkin Ladi after deadly reprisal by bandits over killing of three Fulani. <https://newsng.ng/plateau-13-die-in-barkin-ladi-after-deadly-reprisal-by-bandits-over-killing-of-three-fulani/>

^[7] Zagazola. (2025). Farmer killed as herdsmen invade beans farm in Monguno, Borno. <https://zagazola.org/index.php/breaking-news/farmer-killed-as-herdsmen-invade-beans-farm-in-monguno-borno>

^[8] Gistmania. (2025, October 19). Man shot dead in his Benz GLK in Asaba by suspected police officers. Gistmania. <https://www.gistmania.com/talk/topic,630275.0.html>

^[9] People’s Gazette. (2025, October 13). Soldier killed wife, died by suicide at Wawa Cantonment: Nigerian Army. <https://gazettengr.com/soldier-killed-wife-died-by-suicide-at-wawa-cantonment-nigerian-army/>

5. Weak Deterrence and Governance Fatigue

The October landscape further reflected diminishing deterrence capacity within several state security architectures. While joint task forces successfully contained some flashpoints (e.g., swift deployments in Delta and Katsina), most responses remained reactive rather than preventive. Across many LGAs, community vigilante formations continued to operate as first responders, often unregulated and occasionally implicated in reprisals. This growing reliance on non-state protection actors signals a weakening state monopoly of violence and underlines Nigeria's decentralised security reality.

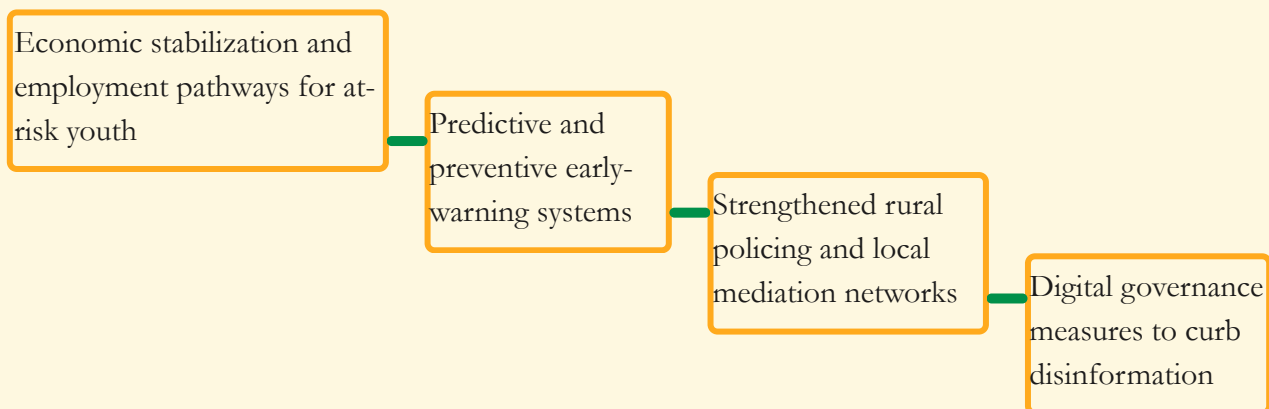
6. Digital and Disinformation Dynamics

Parallel to physical violence, digital insecurity intensified across the South-East and South-South zones through coordinated disinformation and ethnic hate campaigns, particularly around migration, policing, and political narratives. The amplification of AI-generated propaganda and targeted misinformation further undermined trust between communities and institutions, sometimes preceding physical clashes or mob actions.

In sum, October 2025 has reinforced insecurity as both a symptom and sustainer of Nigeria's economic and governance fragility. While the frequency of incidents slightly moderated, the pattern of violence evolved, becoming more commercial, urbanised, and decentralised.

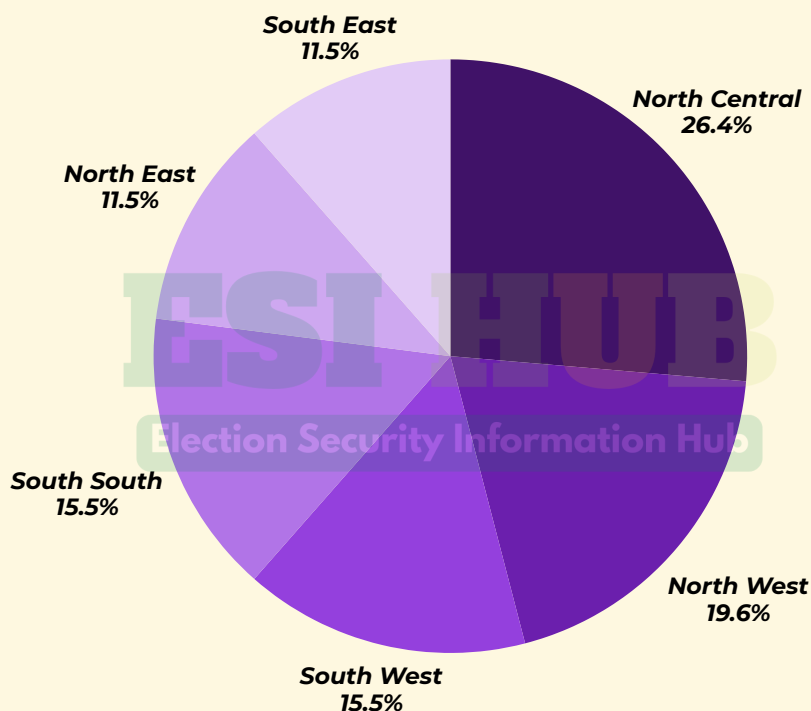
From the bandit taxation economies of the northwest to the gang economies of southern cities and the agrarian crises in the middle belt, violence remains Nigeria's most persistent currency of survival and power.

Addressing this requires a whole-of-society approach that blends:



Without these, the insecurity recorded in October 2025 risks deepening into a structural feature of everyday governance, not just a cyclical crisis.

**DISTRIBUTION OF INCIDENTS
ACROSS THE SIX GEOPOLITICAL
ZONES
OCTOBER 2025**



Nigeria’s insecurity geography in October 2025 continued to mirror long-term, zone-specific trajectories but with deepening cross-regional entanglements. A total of 148 incidents were recorded across 34 states, marking a persistent national diffusion of violence. Where once insurgency, banditry, or cultism had geographically distinct boundaries, the migration of armed actors, illicit weapons circulation, and cross-zonal political linkages have blurred these divides, producing a nationalized ecosystem of insecurity.

Cross-Zonal Diffusion of Threats

October’s incident data confirm that insecurity in Nigeria is no longer confined to fixed regional patterns. Rather than remaining limited to traditional hotspots, several threat types appeared across multiple zones, suggesting a more fluid and interconnected security environment.

Farmer–herder violence, while still most pronounced in North Central states such as Benue and Plateau, was also recorded in parts of the South East and North East during the month. Incidents in Enugu State^[10] and repeated cases across Benue, Plateau, Gombe, Bauchi, Borno, Taraba, and Yobe indicate that land pressure, grazing disputes, and seasonal farming activities continue to generate violence beyond their historical core areas. Although the number of these incidents was lower than banditry or kidnapping, they frequently resulted in fatalities or serious injuries, reinforcing their outsized humanitarian and food-security impact.

^[10] Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 2). Anger as suspected herdsmen kill Enugu youth. <https://punchng.com/anger-as-suspected-herdsmen-kill-enugu-youth/>

Banditry and kidnapping showed the clearest signs of geographic spread. Traditionally concentrated in the North West, these crimes were recorded extensively across North Central corridors, particularly in Kogi^[11], Niger, Kwara, and the Federal Capital Territory^[12]. Multiple abductions along the Abuja–Lokoja–Anyigba^[13] axis demonstrates how ransom-driven violence now follows transport routes linking northern and southern Nigeria. Large-scale abductions in Zamfara, Kaduna, Sokoto, and Kebbi further underline the persistence of organised bandit networks with the capacity to operate across state boundaries.

Urban centres also reflected this diffusion. Cultism, armed robbery, and targeted killings were recorded across Lagos^[14], Ogun^[15], Osun^[16], Oyo, Edo, Delta, Rivers, Enugu, Imo^[17] and Anambra state. These incidents were largely non-election-related, but they contributed to an atmosphere of insecurity in densely populated areas. Repeated cult clashes and shootings in Lagos^[18] and Ogun show how urban criminal violence continues independently of rural insurgency or banditry trends.

Extremist activity remained primarily concentrated in the North East, particularly in Borno and Yobe. Incidents involving Boko Haram and ISWAP, including attacks on security forces in Ngala^[19] and Gulani^[20], did not indicate territorial expansion during the month. However, they demonstrate continued insurgent capability to mount targeted attacks, especially against patrol teams and border-adjacent communities.

Beyond organised violence, October's data also highlight the prevalence of interpersonal, domestic, and communal violence across all zones. Domestic violence incidents involving fatal outcomes were recorded in Akwa Ibom^[21], Niger^[22], Lagos^[23], Ekiti, and Enugu^[24] states. Mob actions, vigilante violence, and communal clashes further illustrate how insecurity is increasingly embedded within everyday social spaces, not only in high-profile attacks.

Taken together, the October incidents suggest that Nigeria's insecurity is less about isolated regional crises and more about overlapping threat systems. Banditry, kidnapping, communal violence, cultism, and domestic abuse now coexist across zones, often feeding into one another through displacement, economic stress, and weak local dispute-resolution mechanisms. This pattern underscores the need for coordinated, cross-state security responses and stronger community-level early warning and protection structures, rather than approaches limited to single regions or threat types.

^[11] Daily Post article Daily Post. (2025, October 2). Gunmen abduct seven travellers on Kogi highway. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/10/02/gunmen-abduct-seven-travellers-on-kogi-highway/>

^[12] Zagazola report Zagazola. (2025). Gunmen abduct veterinary doctor, three children in FCT border village. <https://zagazola.org/index.php/breaking-news/gunmen-abduct-veterinary-doctor-three-children-in-fct-border-village>

^[13] Tribune Online. (2025, October 7). Kogi bandits abduct three family members, demand N100m. <https://tribuneonline.ng/kogi-bandits-abduct-three-family-members-demand-n100m/>

^[14] The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 3). Cultists kill three in Ogun communities. <https://punchng.com/cultists-kill-four-in-lagos-ogun-communities/>

^[15] The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 2). Graduate killed by stray bullet in Osun. <https://punchng.com/stray-bullet-kills-osun-graduate-after-nysc-call-up>

^[16] The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 3). Imo vigilantes stab fresh graduate to death. <https://punchng.com/imo-vigilantes-stab-fresh-graduate-to-death/?amp>

^[17] The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 25). One killed in fresh Lagos cult clashes. <https://punchng.com/two-killed-in-fresh-lagos-cult-clashes/>

^[18] Zagazola. (2025, October 9). Troops repel Boko Haram attack in Gamboru Ngala, kill one terrorist. <https://newsng.ng/troops-repel-boko-haram-attack-in-gamboru-ngala-kill-one-terrorist/>

^[19] Zagazola. (2025, October 30). ISWAP ambush mobile police patrol team in Yobe. The Cable. <https://www.thecable.ng/two-officers-injured-as-iswap-fighters-ambush-police-patrol-team-in-yobe>

^[20] Daily Post. (2025, October 7). Army officer dies after being set ablaze by wife in Akwa Ibom. Zagazola. <https://zagazola.org/index.php/breaking-news/army-officer-dies-after-being-set-ablaze-by-wife-in-akwa-ibom>

^[21] Zagazola. (2025, October 6). Man sets woman ablaze in Ibadan after failed relationship. <https://zagazola.org/index.php/breaking-news/man-sets-woman-ablaze-in-ibadan-after-failed-relationship>

^[22] The Eagle. (2025, October 25). 56-year-old lawyer reportedly loses her life in domestic violence incident with her husband, weeks after being called to the bar. <https://theeagleonline.com.ng/56-year-old-lawyer-reportedly-loses-her-life-in-domestic-violence-incident-with-her-husband-weeks-after-being-called-to-the-bar/>

^[23] The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 25). Enugu man arraigned for allegedly killing wife. <https://punchng.com/enugu-man-arraigned-for-allegedly-killing-wife/>

REGIONAL PATTERNS AND HISTORICAL DYNAMICS

North-West: From Cattle Rustling to Ransom Economies

The North-West remained the most lethal zone in October. Zamfara recorded 8 incidents resulting in 61 casualties, while Kaduna reported 11 incidents with 42 casualties, placing both states at the top of the Flashpoint Severity Index. The abductions in Bungudu and the coordinated armed raids across five communities in Kajuru, including Janwuriya, Afogo, Agwallan Centre, Kallah, and Aokpeshura, show the continued spread of a well-organised ransom economy that has become rooted in rural insecurity.

A central driver of this violence is the strong link between armed groups and unregulated gold mining activities in Zamfara, Kaduna, and Katsina. For over a decade, illegal mining sites have provided steady revenue streams for criminal networks, creating an economy that sustains violence rather than discouraging it. Evidence from investigative reporting and independent research shows that armed groups use these mining corridors to collect informal taxes from miners, control access routes, and trade raw gold through black markets that span Nigeria and neighbouring states^{[25][26][27]}. These proceeds support the purchase of weapons, fuel, and kidnapping operations and pay informants across multiple communities.

This explains why recent incidents, including the Kajuru attacks and repeated abductions in rural Zamfara, continue to follow a pattern of economic extraction rather than isolated acts of violence. Bandit groups are no longer only stealing cattle or raiding farms. They operate as hybrid criminal enterprises that combine ransom taking, illicit mining revenues, and forced taxation of rural households. Their ability to move freely across the Rugu and Kuyanbana forest belts strengthens their control over rural areas and undermines state authority.

The October attacks show how deeply these economic networks are entrenched. Each abduction, raid, or extortion event is tied to a wider informal economy that encourages violence, weakens local governance, and disrupts farming cycles. These pressures limit rural production, increase displacement, and contribute to rising food prices in wider markets^[28]. Without a coordinated approach that combines law enforcement, mining regulation, financial disruption, and rural protection mechanisms, the North-West's insecurity will remain self-sustaining and difficult to resolve.

North-East: Insurgency Adaptation and Fragmentation

In the North East, the number of recorded incidents in October was lower than in other zones, but attacks in states like Borno and Yobe remained very deadly. Open-source research shows that Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Boko Haram no longer try to hold large towns. Instead, they use the islands and marshes around Lake Chad as rear bases, where they tax farmers, fisherfolk, herders, and traders who need access to land and water^[29].

^[25] HumAngle. (2025). Analysis of ISWAP taxation and local governance structures. HumAngle Media.

^[26] Pulitzer Center. (2025). Interviews with Lake Chad farmers and herders on ISWAP taxation. Pulitzer Center.

^[27] Institute for Security Studies. (2025). Drivers of ISWAP expansion in the Lake Chad Basin. ISS Africa.

^[28] The Guardian Nigeria. (2025). Reports on farmer herder conflict and food production pressures in the Middle Belt. The Guardian.

^[29] Africa Defense Forum. (2025, August 19). ISWAP drains Lake Chad region through taxes. Africa Defense Forum. Retrieved from <https://adf-magazine.com/2025/08/iswap-drains-lake-chad-region-through-taxes>

Security studies describe this as a shift from open territorial control to lighter, mobile units that rely on illegal checkpoints, escort fees, and “protection” payments along cross-border routes linking Nigeria with Niger, Chad, and Cameroon^[30]. For civilians, this means fewer big battles but a steady pattern of ambushes, road attacks, and intimidation, which restricts movement, raises the cost of food and transport, and makes it harder for aid agencies to reach remote communities.

North-Central: Corridor of Contestation

The North-Central region recorded 39 incidents in October, including several significant abductions and communal clashes in Niger^[31] and Kogi^[32]. Available evidence suggests that this corridor may be functioning as a meeting point between armed groups moving in from the North-West and smaller criminal cells operating further south. The terrain, major transit routes, and reportedly low policing density appear to make movement easier for these groups. Plateau, although quieter in terms of incident numbers, still recorded high casualties (26 deaths) linked to inter-communal reprisal attacks^[33]. This pattern seems to confirm long-standing tensions over land, identity, and local authority in parts of the Middle Belt.

Overall, the region continues to show a mix of overlapping threats: farmer–herder tensions, highway kidnappings, and periodic communal reprisals. These pressures are made worse by limited institutional reach in some rural LGAs and rising displacement, which together appear to sustain the area’s volatility.

South-East: Political Contestation and Armed Agitation

The South-East in October continued to show a mix of urban and politically influenced violence. In Anambra and Ebonyi, there were renewed incidents involving gangs, cult groups, and actors reportedly linked to political interests. Some of these incidents appeared to occur around periods of political mobilisation ahead of local and off-cycle electoral activities.

Reports suggest that a range of local actors, including vigilante groups and individuals aligned with political factions, may have used intimidation, online messaging, and selective attacks to shape public behaviour and influence the civic environment.

The October data seems to indicate a growing overlap between politics and security in parts of the South-East. When political disputes appear to move into the streets, they can heighten fear, discourage participation in civic processes, and contribute to wider fatigue with democratic institutions^[34].

South-West: Urban Criminal Markets and Patronage

The South-West recorded 23 incidents in October, with most activity concentrated in Lagos, Ogun, and Osun. Cult-related and gang violence featured prominently, particularly in Lagos Island, Ifo, and Ile-Ife, where recurring clashes suggest ongoing rivalry for control of neighbourhood spaces.

^[30] Samuel, M. (2025). Unseen advances, quiet offensives: ISWAP’s strategic resurgence and the limits of Nigeria’s military response (Good Governance Africa report). Good Governance Africa.

^[31] Zagazola. (2025, October 5). Two stab each other to death during fight over traditional title in Niger. Daily Post Nigeria. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/10/05/two-stab-each-other-to-death-during-fight-over-traditional-title-in-niger/>

^[32] Zagazola. (2025, October 2). Gunmen abduct seven travellers on Kogi highway. Daily Post Nigeria. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/10/02/gunmen-abduct-seven-travellers-on-kogi-highway/>

^[33] Zagazola. (2025, October 15). Plateau: 13 die in Barkin Ladi after deadly reprisal by bandits over killing of three Fulani. Newsng. <https://newsng.ng/plateau-13-die-in-barkin-ladi-after-deadly-reprisal-by-bandits-over-killing-of-three-fulani/>

In-text citation:

^[34] SBM Intelligence. (2025). Political thuggery and electoral violence trends in Southeast Nigeria (2020–2025). Lagos: SBM Report Series.

There were also instances where economic crimes, such as armed robbery and extortion, appeared to overlap with local political networks, especially at the ward level and in areas preparing for political meetings or mobilisation. These patterns indicate that criminal and political interests may, at times, intersect in ways that complicate law-enforcement responses.

Although the South-West was less lethal than northern flashpoints during the month, the persistence of urban disorder affects how communities perceive safety and state authority. It can disrupt daily economic activity and may contribute to the gradual normalisation of political thuggery into more permanent criminal markets^[35].

South-South: Factional Politics and Resource Patronage

The South-South recorded 23 incidents in October, with most occurring in Edo and Delta. The incidents mainly involved intra-party disputes, small armed groups operating around urban edges, and several kidnapping cases affecting commuters and local businesses.

The region’s recurring flashpoints appear to stem from more than political disagreements. Evidence suggests that long-standing resource grievances, local patronage networks, and the availability of small arms contribute to periodic instability. During election periods, these pressures often intensify, creating risks that may influence not only state-level politics but also national dynamics^[36].



^[35] CLEEN Foundation. (2024). Urban crime, cultism, and policing effectiveness in southwestern Nigeria. Abuja: CLEEN Policy Brief

^[36] Stakeholder Democracy Network. (2023). Oil, patronage, and micro-militancy in the Niger Delta. Port Harcourt: SDN Research Paper.

^[37] Small Arms Survey. (2024). Illicit weapon flows and artisanal mining networks in West Africa. Geneva: Graduate Institute of International Studies.

^[38] FAO. (2024). Climate impacts on transhumance and conflict pathways in Nigeria’s Middle Belt. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization.

^[39] Nigeria Watch. (2025). Annual conflict and policing database. Lagos: University of Ibadan.

^[40] Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD). (2024). Digital disinformation and political polarization in Nigeria. Abuja: CDD West Africa

Region	Incidents	Deaths	Injured	Kidnapped	FSI Tier	Top States
North Central	39	56	30	26	High	Kogi, Niger, Plateau
North West	29	42	14	83	Critical	Zamfara, Kaduna
North East	17	12	9	0	Moderate	Borno, Yobe
South West	23	23	8	2	Moderate	Lagos, Ogun
South South	23	15	6	3	Moderate	Delta, Edo
South East	17	9	2	2	Low	Anambra, Enugu

The spatial patterns of October 2025 demonstrate a systemic convergence of violent economies: banditry-as-business in the northwest, communal revenge cycles in the middle belt, and politicized urban gangs in the south. Each region's insecurity is no longer isolated; it forms part of an interconnected matrix of risk where mobility, arms trade, and disinformation fuel a mutually reinforcing national crisis.

ARMED ATTACKS / BANDITRY

State	Incidents	Deaths	Injured	Kidnapped
Zamfara	8	5	2	54
Kaduna	11	14	0	28
Niger	7	9	10	1
Kogi	11	6	2	19
Katsina	2	13	2	0
Lagos	11	15	1	1
Edo	8	5	2	2
Delta	9	8	3	1
Benue	6	10	4	0
Borno	7	5	3	0
Total	46	85	35	68

ARMED ATTACKS / BANDITRY

OCTOBER 2025

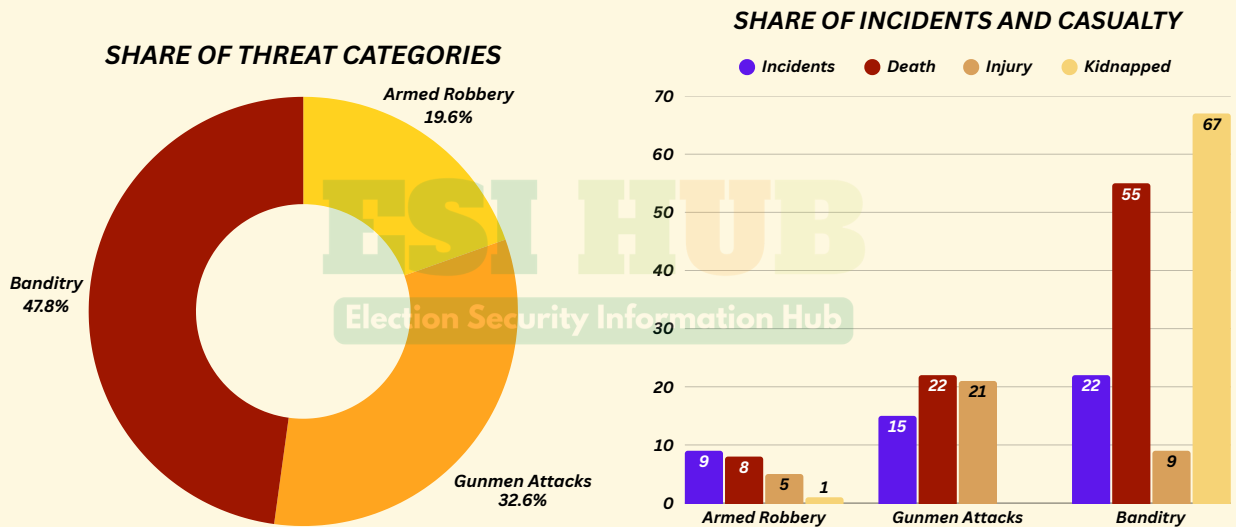


Figure 2 Armed Attacks and Banditry accounted for nearly one-third (31%) of all incidents and over half of recorded deaths (54%). This reflects the entrenched nature of ransom-driven violence in the North-West and urban armed criminality in Lagos and the Delta. The cross-zonal spread underscores economic predation as the dominant driver of insecurity.

Banditry and armed attacks continued to dominate Nigeria’s insecurity landscape in October 2025, accounting for 46 verified incidents and roughly a third of all recorded violence nationwide. October 2025 seems to indicate persistent assaults across Zamfara, Kaduna, Niger, Katsina, Kogi, Edo, Lagos, and Delta States, resulting in 85 deaths, 35 injuries, and 68 abductions.

North-West:

Zamfara and Katsina allegedly remain the epicentres. In Gusau^[41], bandits ambushed security patrols, killing two officers; in Sabon Birni, Sokoto, three civilians were murdered, and dozens were kidnapped^[42]. Despite multiple clearance operations, armed groups retained control of forest corridors linking Tsafe–Zurmi–Shinkafi, sustaining ransom economies and taxation networks.

North-Central:

Kaduna and Kogi are said to have registered repeated highway ambushes—Kallah^[43] and ESI-202510-137 (Abuja–Lokoja Highway^[44]—targeting commuters, traders, and political convoys. In Niger, assaults around Shiroro and Rafi signalled continued southward diffusion of armed mobility toward the FCT.

^[41] Zagazola. (2025, October 8). Police kill two bandits in Zamfara during midnight clash. Daily Post Nigeria. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/10/08/police-kill-two-bandits-in-zamfara-during-midnight-clash/>

^[42] Politics Nigeria. (2025, October 30). Bandits kill three, abduct villagers in fresh Sokoto attack. Politics Nigeria. <https://politicsnigeria.com/just-in-bandits-kill-three-abduct-villagers-in-fresh-sokoto-attack/>

^[43] Daily Post. (2025, October 25). Gunmen attack Kaduna community, kidnap residents. Daily Post Nigeria. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/10/25/gunmen-attack-kaduna-community-kidnap-residents/>

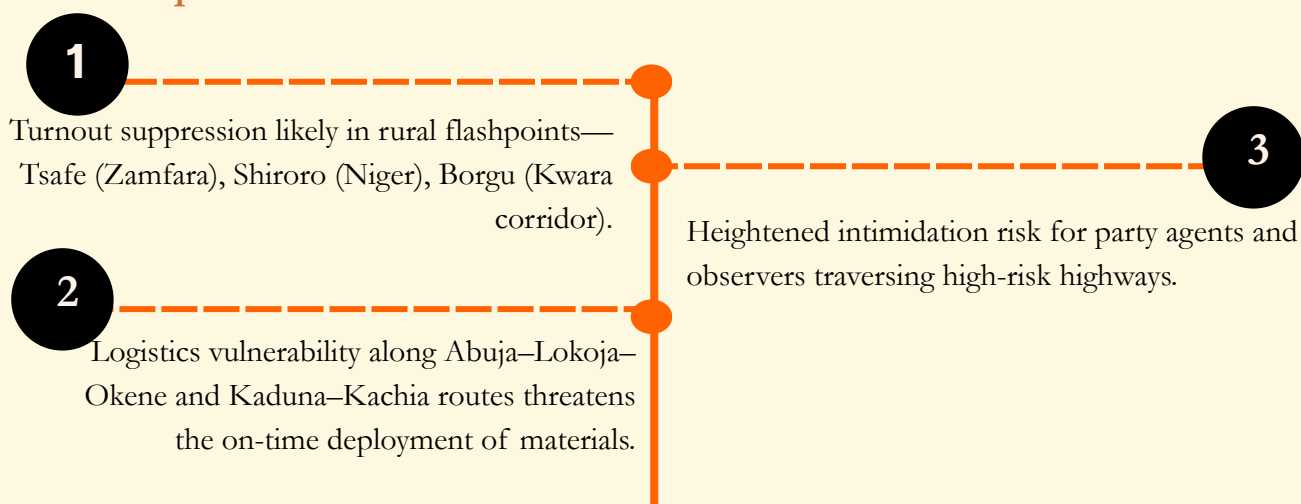
^[44] Daily Trust. (2025, October 30). Gunmen abduct passengers on Abuja-Lokoja highway. Daily Trust. <https://dailytrust.com/gunmen-abduct-passengers-on-abuja-lokoja-highway/>

South & Urban Spread:

Urban robbery-style attacks seem to have featured in Lagos, Ojo^[45], Oyo^[46], and Edo, demonstrating the overlap between organised bandit operations and metropolitan criminal gangs. These incidents disrupted markets, evening transport, and small-business activity.

Cumulative fatalities exceeded 80 persons, with widespread displacement along rural belts of Zamfara, Niger, and Kogi. The attacks disrupted economic life, fuelled food-supply shocks, and reinforced citizen distrust in local authorities.

Election implications:



October 2025’s pattern reinforces that banditry has consolidated into a structured criminal enterprise, a hybrid of organised crime and local governance failure. Sustained displacement, taxation of civilians, and routine ambushes have turned the Zamfara-to-Kogi corridor into a continuous insecurity belt where both humanitarian relief and electoral logistics remain precarious.

KIDNAPPING / ABDUCTION

State	Incidents	Deaths	Injured	Kidnapped
Kaduna	4	1	0	24
Kogi	3	0	0	13
Zamfara	3	2	0	5
FCT	2	1	0	4
Lagos	2	0	0	1
Kwara	2	0	0	2
Ebonyi	2	0	1	1
Edo	2	0	0	2
Total	29	4	4	48

^[45] The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 19). Gunmen shoot butcher dead inside Lagos barracks market. The Punch Newspaper. <https://punchng.com/gunmen-shoot-butcher-dead-inside-lagos-barracks-market/>

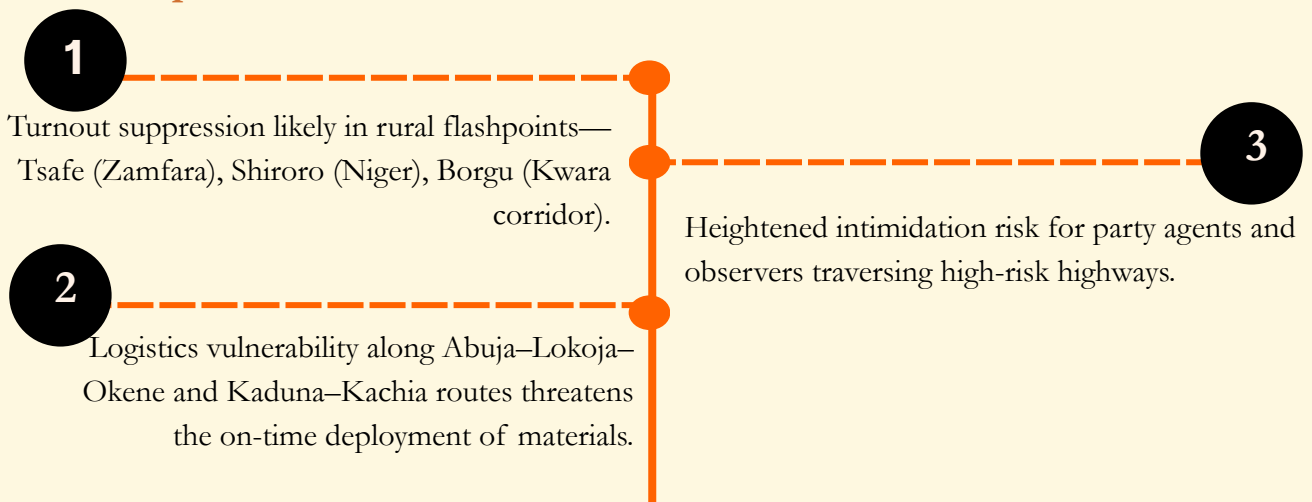
^[46] The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 27). Armed robbers attack bank customer, injure policeman in Oyo. The Punch Newspaper. <https://punchng.com/armed-robbers-attack-bank-customer-injure-policeman-in-oyo/>

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^[46] The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 27). Armed robbers attack bank customer, injure policeman in Oyo. The Punch Newspaper. <https://punchng.com/armed-robbers-attack-bank-customer-injure-policeman-in-oyo/>

KIDNAPPING/ABDUCTION

OCTOBER 2025

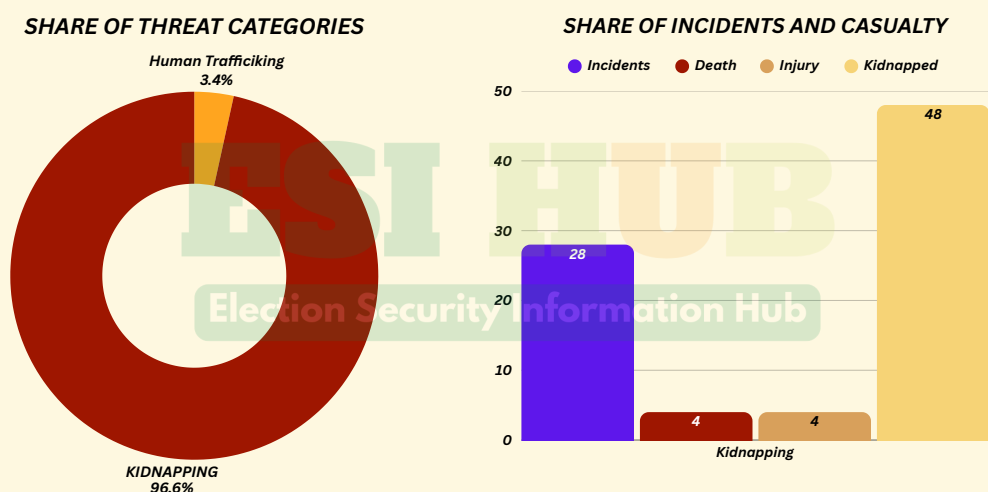


Figure 3: The concentration in Kaduna–Kogi–Zamfara reveals the commercialization of abductions, now institutionalized through ransom economies extending to the FCT.

Kidnapping remained one of the most pervasive and economically motivated threat categories in October 2025, with 28 verified incidents across Kaduna, Kogi, Niger, Zamfara, Anambra, and Kebbi States. The ESI Hub recorded 4 deaths and 48 abductions, reflecting the persistence of ransom-driven operations despite intensified patrols and military airstrikes.

Northern Belt (Kaduna–Kogi Axis):

The month's most coordinated abductions occurred along the Kaduna–Kogi transit corridor, a hotspot linking northwestern and central criminal economies. In Kajuru^[47], successive raids on Janwuriya and Agwallan villages saw multiple family members abducted. On the Abuja–Lokoja highway, gunmen intercepted vehicles, seizing passengers in a pattern reminiscent of September's ransom cycles. In Kallah, Kaduna, four residents were kidnapped in a targeted nighttime attack.

Isolated High-Profile Cases:

In Kebbi, the Deputy Speaker's abduction underscored the reach of criminal syndicates into political elites. FCT-border communities^[48] reported the killing of a veterinary doctor and the kidnapping of three minors, showing that abduction risk remains acute even near federal security presence^[49].

Southward Diffusion:

In the southeast, Anambra^[50] recorded a trafficking-related arrest tied to the sale of infants, a hybrid crime that blends abduction with black-market exploitation. This aligns with a small but rising pattern of “non-traditional” kidnappings for ritual or commercial resale motives in peri-urban areas. Kidnapping incidents created sustained psychological pressure on rural and commuter populations. Victims were often targeted during transit or at night, with communities forced to negotiate ransoms amid minimal state protection. Repeated incidents have normalized fear and curtailed inter-LGA movement, reducing market attendance and communal activity.

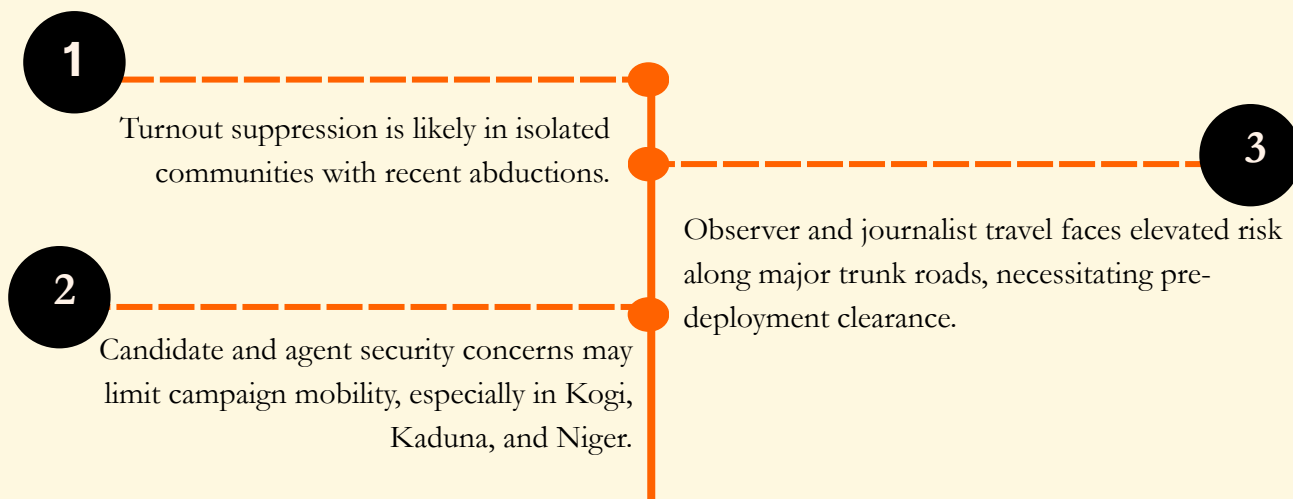
^[47] Daily Post. (2025, October 25). Gunmen attack Kaduna community, kidnap residents. Daily Post Nigeria. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/10/25/gunmen-attack-kaduna-community-kidnap-residents/>

^[48] Zagazola. (2025, October 8). Gunmen abduct veterinary doctor, three children in FCT border village. Zagazola. <https://zagazola.org/index.php/breaking-news/gunmen-abduct-veterinary-doctor-three-children-in-fct-border-village>

^[49] Vanguard. (2025, November 1). Bandits abduct Kebbi Deputy Speaker. Vanguard. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/11/bandits-abduct-kebbi-deputy-speaker/>

^[50] Daily Post. (2025, October 31). Woman receives N350,000 from proceed of baby sold for N1.7m. Daily Post Nigeria. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/10/31/woman-receives-n350000-from-proceed-of-baby-sold-for-n1-7m/>

Election implications:



Kidnapping in October 2025 displayed continued institutional resilience of ransom-based economies, merging opportunistic raids with political intimidation. The pattern underscores the urgent need for integrated hostage-tracking databases, cross-zonal patrols, and rapid response coordination between security, telecom, and civic actors to protect both civilians and election stakeholders.

Northern Belt (Kaduna–Kogi Axis):

State	Incidents	Deaths	Injured
Benue	4	6	2
Delta	2	1	0
Enugu	3	3	1
Imo	2	2	0
Edo	2	1	0
Kebbi	3	4	0
Total	18	25	3

TARGETED KILLINGS

OCTOBER 2025

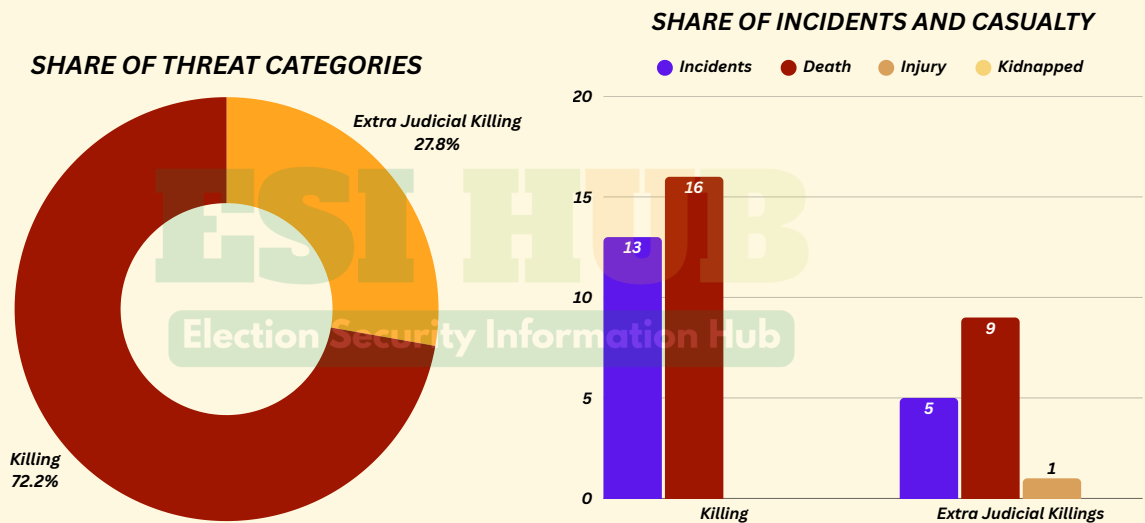


Figure 4: Targeted killings accounted for 12% of incidents but 16% of total deaths, showing a high lethality rate (1.4 deaths per incident). These ranged from retaliatory assassinations to state-linked executions, particularly in Benue and Enugu, reflecting the erosion of civilian protection and rule of law.

Targeted killings persisted as a grave and politically sensitive threat in October 2025, with 18 verified incidents spanning Kaduna, Benue, Delta, Niger, Plateau, and Kebbi States. The pattern reflected a mix of politically motivated attacks, community reprisals, and extra-judicial violence, resulting in 16 civilian deaths and 3 security fatalities.

Security and Political Figures:

In Kaduna, two police officers were killed in a targeted assault on a divisional station in Giwa^[51], followed by Benue^[52], where two security operatives were ambushed and killed by armed assailants who carted away their rifles. These incidents highlight both the vulnerability of frontline personnel and targeted retribution against enforcement units.

Civilian and Community Leaders:

In Delta, a man was reportedly shot by suspected security operatives under disputed circumstances^[53], while in Niger, a soldier killed his wife before taking his own life, demonstrating how personal violence and occupational stress intersect within conflict-prone environments^[54]. Plateau's^[55] recorded the killing of a herdsman and 36 livestock in an ethnic reprisal, extending the state's pattern of identity-linked violence. Kebbi^[56] involved the brutal murder of a traveller by unknown assailants on a rural road.

^[51] Zagazola. (2025, October 17). Gunmen attack Zonkwa police station in Kaduna, kill two officers. Zagazola. <https://zagazola.org/index.php/breaking-news/gunmen-attack-zonkwa-police-station-in-kaduna-kill-two-officers>

^[52] Zagazola. (2025, October 24). Gunmen kill two security operatives, cart away rifles in Benue. Zagazola. <https://zagazola.org/index.php/breaking-news/gunmen-kill-two-security-operatives-cart-away-rifles-in-benue>

^[53] Gistmania. (2025, October 19). Man shot dead in his Benz GLK in Asaba by suspected police officers. Gistmania. <https://www.gistmania.com/talk/topic/630275.0.html>

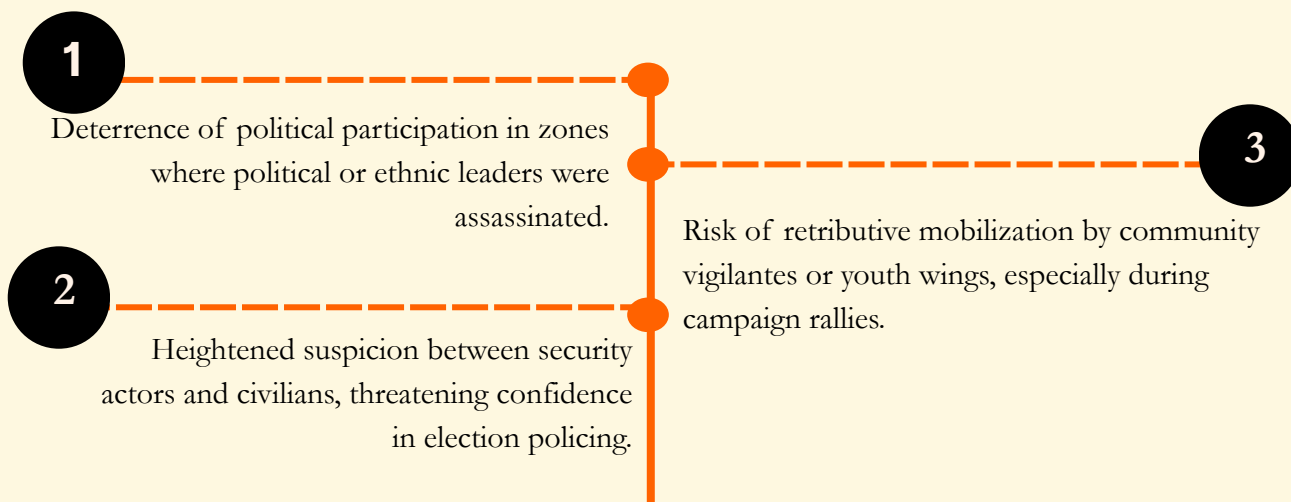
^[54] People's Gazette. (2025, October 13). Soldier killed wife, died by suicide at Wawa Cantonment; Nigerian Army. People's Gazette. <https://gazettengr.com/soldier-killed-wife-died-by-suicide-at-wawa-cantonment-nigerian-army/>

^[55] Zagazola. (2025, October 9). Herdsman, 36 cows shot dead in fresh unprovoked attack in Plateau. Zagazola. <https://zagazola.org/index.php/breaking-news/herdsman-36-cows-shot-dead-in-fresh-unprovoked-attack-in-plateau>

^[56] The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 31). Police arrest 50-year-old man for hacking Zamfara traveller to death in Kebbi. The Punch Newspaper. <https://punchng.com/50-year-old-man-arrested-for-hacking-kebbi-traveller-to-death/>

Targeted killings deepened community mistrust and triggered localized displacement in Plateau and Benue. Reprisal fears constrained security patrols in Giwa and Otukpo, while the perception of selective justice further weakened institutional legitimacy. Fatalities among uniformed personnel have also dampened morale and reduced police visibility in volatile LGAs.

**High in North-Central and North-West (Benue, Kaduna, Plateau);
Elevated in Delta and Kebbi.**



Targeted killings in October reflected a convergence of criminal and political motives—ranging from revenge to intimidation. They illustrate how personalized violence and extra-judicial acts undermine institutional neutrality, posing both security and perception risks for upcoming electoral operations.

GANG/CULT VIOLENCE

State	Incidents	Deaths	Injured
Lagos	5	7	1
Ogun	2	3	0
Oyo	2	0	1
Osun	3	4	2
Delta	1	2	0
Total	13	14	4

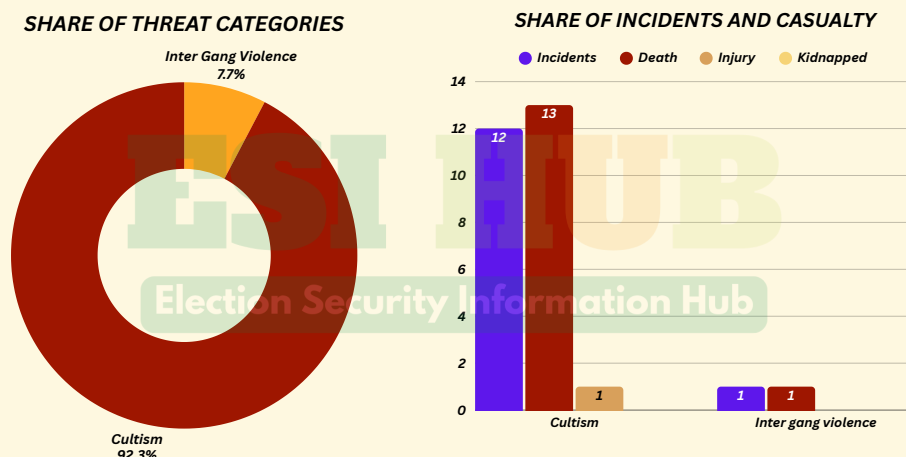


Figure 5: Gang/Cult-related incidents made up 9% of all events and were predominantly urban (85%). Lagos, Osun, and Ogun continue to serve as hotbeds of political patronage-linked cult activity, often overlapping with youth mobilization and ward-level intimidation.

Gang and cult-related violence maintained a worrying urban footprint in October 2025, with 14 verified incidents recorded across Lagos, Delta, Osun, Ogun, Anambra, and Cross River States. These incidents, while less lethal than northern armed attacks, remain disruptive to civic order, politically exploitable, and highly visible in urban centres ahead of the off-cycle elections. In total, 13 deaths and 6 injuries were documented under this category.

Urban Gang Clashes and Cult Rivalries:

In Lagos, a clash between rival cult groups in Ojo led to one civilian shot and another injured near the barracks market. Similar urban flare-ups occurred in Osogbo, Osun^[57] and Abeokuta, Ogun^[58], where youth gangs affiliated with rival confraternities attacked traders and commuters following disputes over transport levies. In Warri, Delta, a foiled abduction attempt turned violent as a cult-linked group engaged security agents in a gun duel^[59].

Politicization and Community Fear:

Reports from Anambra^[60] and Calabar South, Cross River^[61] revealed cult factions allegedly mobilized by political patrons for “territorial control” in anticipation of local primaries. These groups, often masquerading as “youth wings” or “community task forces,” acted as informal instruments of intimidation and campaign crowd control. Their presence at political events has blurred the boundary between criminality and partisanship.

Cult and gang violence eroded public confidence in law enforcement and triggered night-time curfews in several LGAs. The economic toll was visible in reduced market hours, public transport disruptions, and community-imposed restrictions. While casualty numbers were lower than in the North-West, the psychological and governance costs, including fear, extortion, and normalization of violent youth politics, were pronounced.

^[57] Daily Post. (2025, October 22). OAU condemns armed robbery attacks on students. Daily Post Nigeria. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/10/22/oau-condemns-armed-robbery-attacks-on-students/>

^[58] Badagry Today. (2025, October 21). Assaults shoot shawarma vendor dead in Lagos. Badagry Today. <https://www.badagrytoday.com/2025/10/shawarma-vendor-afecz-shot-dead-in.html>

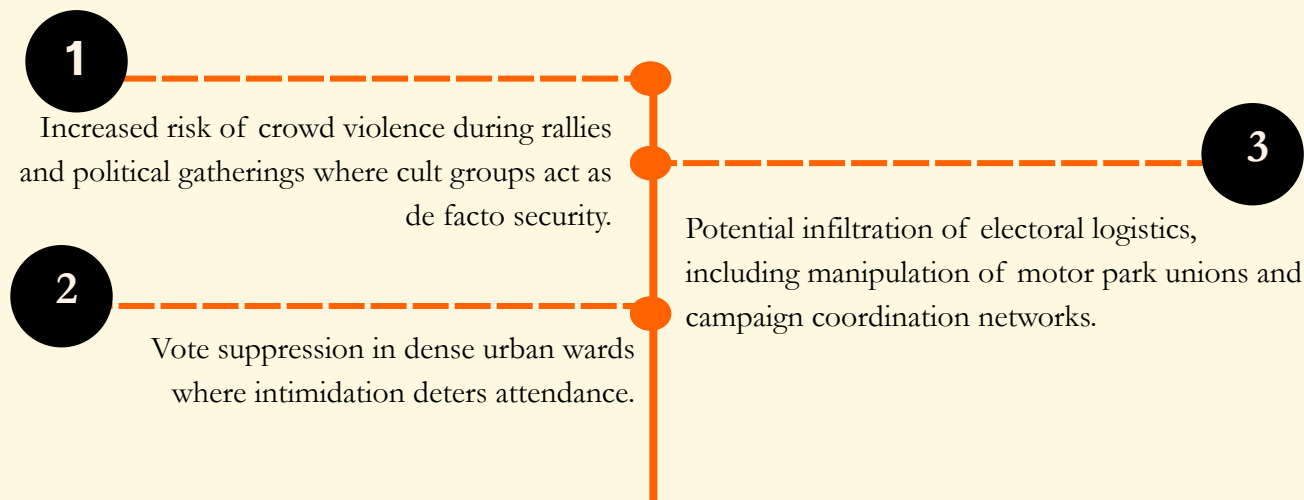
^[59] The Whistler. (2025, October 19). Edo police rescue 12-year-old girl, foil kidnap attempt. The Whistler. <https://thewhistler.ng/edo-police-rescue-12-year-old-girl-foil-kidnap-attempt/>

^[60] Zagazola. (2025, October 23). One killed, three injured as gunmen attack farmers in Plateau. Zagazola. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/10/23/gunmen-kill-one-injure-three-in-attack-on-plateau-farmers/>

^[61] Zagazola. (2025, October 24). Herders attack farmer in Konduga, cut off his hand. Zagazola. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/10/24/herders-attack-farmer-in-konduga-cut-off-his-hand/>

Risk levels are elevated in South-West and South-South urban zones (Lagos, Delta, Cross River); Moderate but persistent in South-East (Anambra).

Election implications:



Gang and cult violence in October reaffirm that urban insecurity is increasingly politicized, with criminal youth networks functioning as instruments of coercion and micro-governance. The ESI Hub assesses this trend as a medium-term election threat, demanding pre-election vetting of campaign security outfits, stricter enforcement of firearms bans, and targeted youth demobilization programs in Lagos, Delta, and Anambra.

COMMUNAL/CLASH VIOLENCE

State	Incidents	Deaths	Injured
Plateau	4	18	6
Kwara	2	2	0
Kogi	1	0	0
Yobe	1	1	2
Edo	1	2	0
Niger	2	2	0
Total	15	25	8

COMMUNAL / CLASH VIOLENCE
OCTOBER 2025

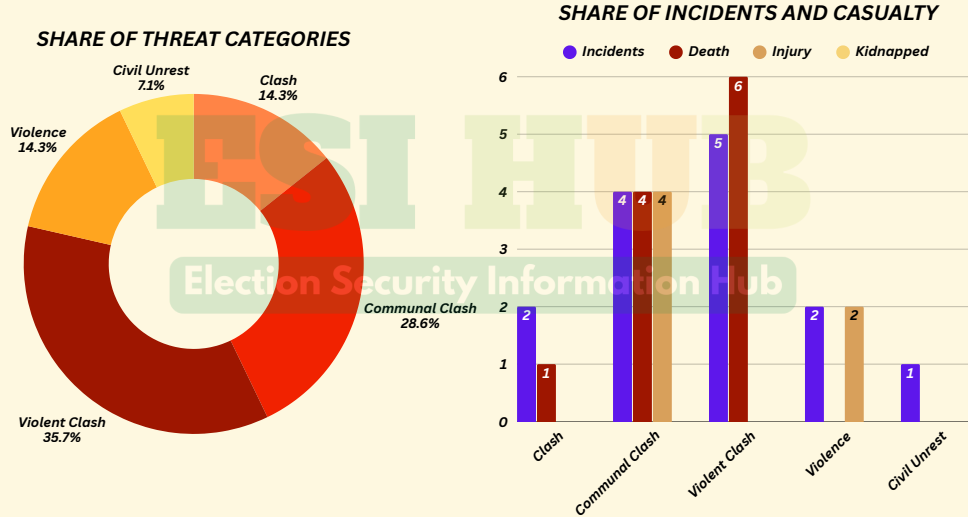


Figure 6: Communal and clash-related incidents contributed 10% of total insecurity events but were disproportionately deadly (25 deaths). These events, especially in Plateau, underscore Nigeria’s recurring communal grievance cycle.

FARMER-HERDER CONFLICT

State	Incidents	Deaths	Injured
Benue	2	3	2
Borno	1	1	1
Enugu	1	2	0
Plateau	2	4	3
Jigawa	1	2	7
Gombe	1	2	4
Total	9	10	17

FARMER-HERDER CONFLICT
OCTOBER 2025

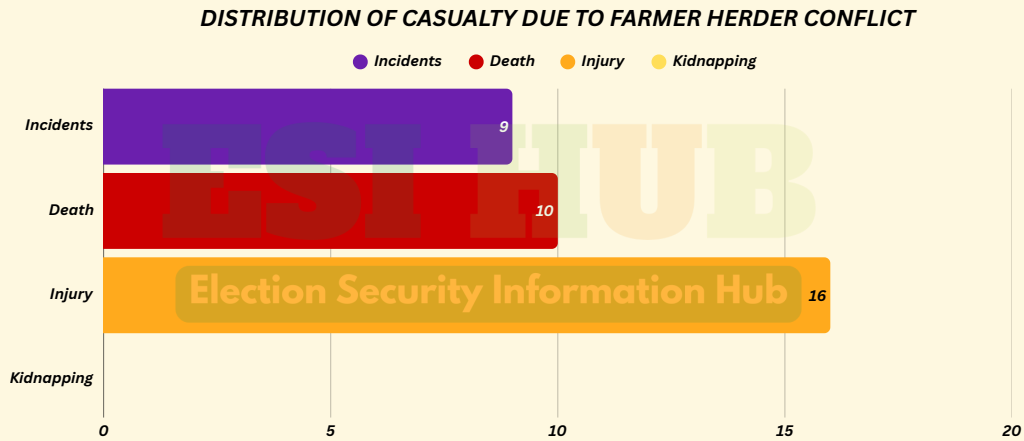


Figure 7: Farmer–Herder clashes reflect prolonged resource pressure and weak local mediation mechanisms across the Middle Belt.

FARMER-HERDER CONFLICT

State	Incidents	Deaths	Injured
Benue	2	3	2
Borno	1	1	1
Enugu	1	2	0
Plateau	2	4	3
Jigawa	1	2	7
Gombe	1	2	4
Total	9	10	17

Farmer–herder conflict continued to drive localized violence and displacement in October 2025, with 9 verified incidents recorded across Benue, Plateau, Gombe, Jigawa, Borno, Enugu, and Bauchi States. The incidents collectively resulted in 10 deaths, 16 injuries, and dozens displaced, sustaining a long-term pattern of resource-based clashes and reprisal attacks that blur into broader communal violence.

Middle Belt Epicentres (Benue and Plateau):

In Benue, a gun duel between herders and local vigilantes in Gwer West led to 2 deaths and 4 injuries^[62], while Otukpo^[63] witnessed renewed hostilities over grazing rights. Kwande^[64] also reported two civilians killed and two injured after an early-morning ambush, reinforcing Plateau’s position as a high-intensity zone for cyclical agrarian violence.

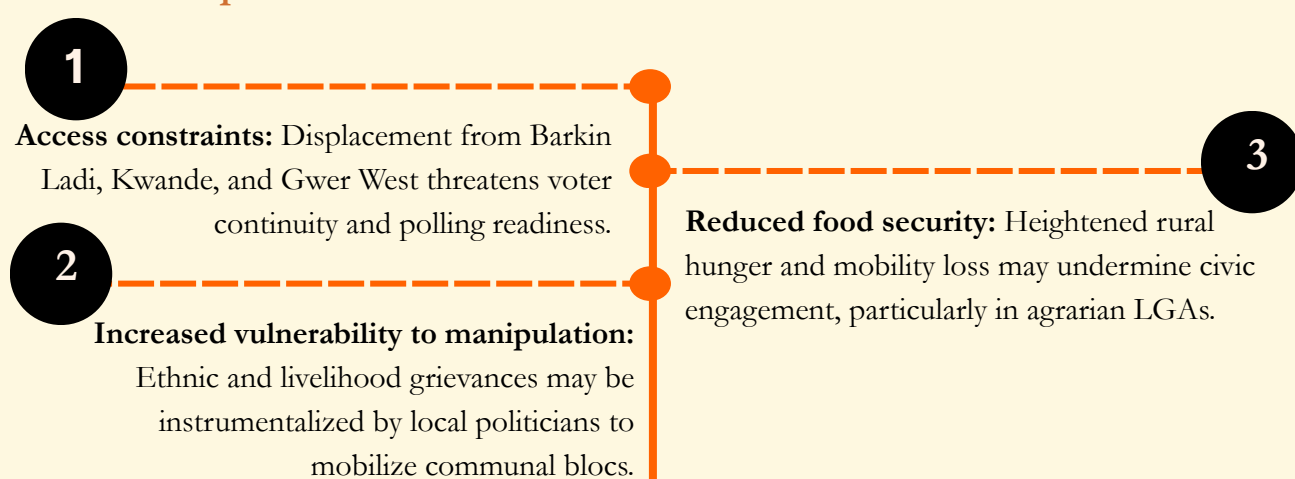
Northern Extension (Borno–Gombe–Jigawa):

In Borno, violent clashes between pastoralists and farmers in Konduga LGA resulted in one death and one injury, disrupting farming settlements and forcing residents to flee to Maiduguri^[65]. Funakaye, Gombe^[66] and Biriniwa, Jigawa^[67] recorded parallel disputes involving farmland encroachment and cattle theft, causing cumulative injuries and destruction of crops. These northern events demonstrate the persistence of farmer–herder conflicts even outside the traditional Middle Belt, increasingly tied to climate stress and grazing-route disputes.

Emerging Southward Diffusion:

In Enugu^[68], smallholder farmers reported crop destruction and intimidation by armed pastoralists, a continuation of the southward migration trend observed since Q3 2025. Though less lethal, such incursions indicate a gradual expansion of agrarian flashpoints into southern forest zones. These incidents displaced over 400 individuals, destroyed farmlands, granaries, and livestock, and exacerbated food insecurity in affected LGAs. Community-based peace agreements brokered earlier in the year appear to have weakened under resource pressure, as economic desperation drives renewed confrontation. Risk levels are high in Plateau and Benue; Moderate in Bauchi, Gombe, and Jigawa; and emerging in Enugu and Borno.

Election implications:



^[62] Zagazola. (2025, October 24). Gunmen kill two security operatives, cart away rifles in Benue. Zagazola. <https://zagazola.org/index.php/breaking-news/gunmen-kill-two-security-operatives-cart-away-rifles-in-benue>

^[63] Daily Post. (2025, October 27). Plateau police arrest Unijos student for killing best friend. Daily Post Nigeria. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/10/27/plateau-police-arrest-unijos-student-for-killing-best-friend/>

^[64] The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 13). Two killed, seven injured in Jigawa farmers-herders clash. The Punch Newspaper. <https://punchng.com/two-killed-seven-injured-in-jigawa-farmers-herders-clash/>

^[65] Daily Post. (2025, October 5). Suspected herdsmen kill two farmers in fresh attack in Benue. Daily Post Nigeria. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/10/05/suspected-herdsmen-kill-two-farmer-in-fresh-attack-in-benue/>

^[66] Zagazola. (2025, October 14). Two herders attacked, robbed in Taraba community. Zagazola. <https://newsexpressng.com/news/279613/two-herders-attacked-robbed-in-taraba-community>

^[67] Zagazola. (2025, October 14). Gunmen kill one, injure two in Plateau attack. Zagazola. <https://independent.ng/gunmen-kill-one-injure-two-others-in-plateau/>

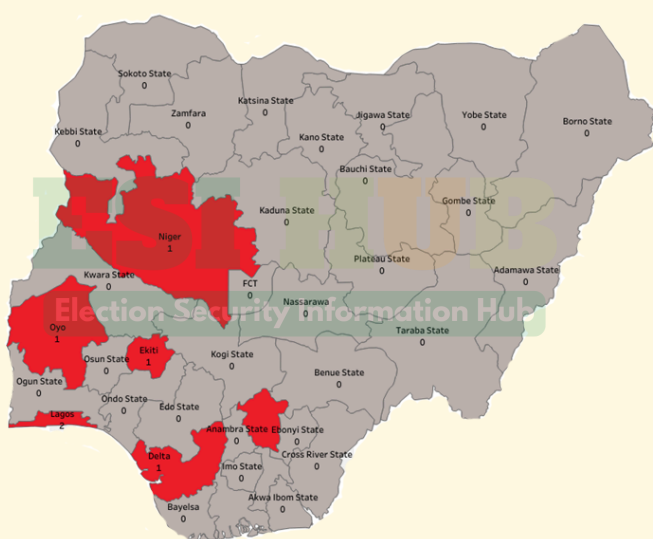
^[68] Zagazola. (2025, October 13). 12 bandits killed, 2 soldiers injured in clash in Katsina. Zagazola. <https://prnigeria.com/2025/10/14/army-eliminates-bandits-two/>

Farmer–herder violence in October 2025 underscores a systemic crisis of livelihood competition, deepened by climate stress, weak mediation, and governance fatigue. The ESI Hub assesses this threat as a medium- to long-term destabilizer, with direct implications for electoral logistics, humanitarian access, and communal trust. Integrating early-warning intelligence, agro-ranching support, and traditional mediation frameworks is critical to curbing further escalation before the 2026 election cycle.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

State	Incidents	Deaths	Injured
Lagos	2	1	1
Ekiti	1	0	1
Niger	1	1	0
Enugu	1	1	0
Delta	1	1	0
Oyo	1	1	0
Total	7	5	2

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA



Domestic violence continued to reflect Nigeria’s growing invisible crisis of household insecurity, with 7 verified incidents reported across Lagos, Delta, Ekiti, Enugu, Niger, Oyo, and Akwa Ibom States. These cases, while individually isolated, represent systemic socio-economic stress and gender-based vulnerability intensified by inflation, unemployment, and declining mental health support.

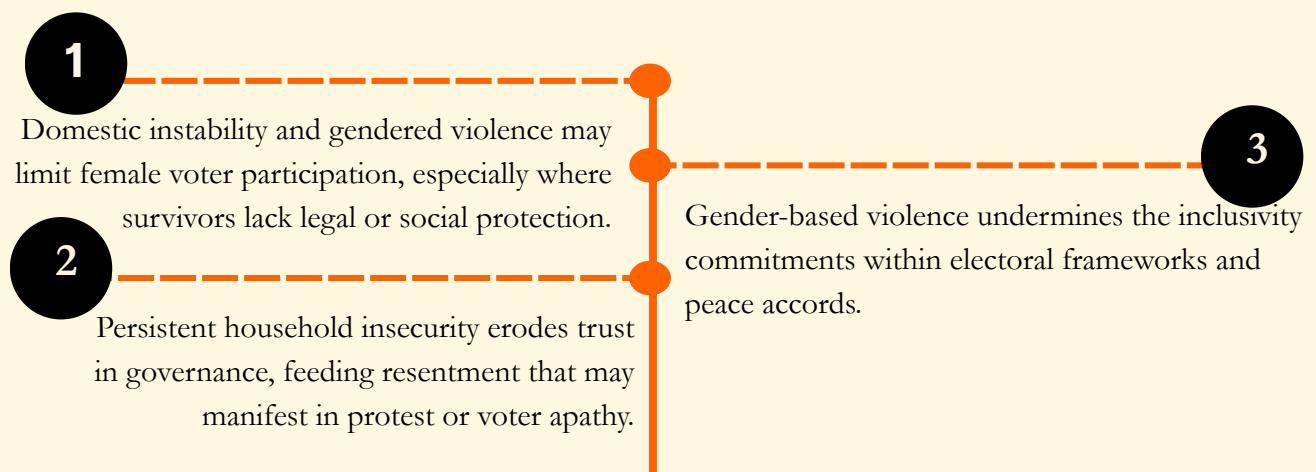
Representative Cases:



Across all incidents, 5 fatalities and 2 injuries were confirmed. Victims were overwhelmingly women, often within economically distressed or socially isolated households. The incidents underscore the intersection of poverty, unemployment, and weak psychosocial support as enablers of gendered violence. Civil society monitoring groups note a rising normalization of domestic abuse narratives in local media, often without effective prosecution follow-through.

Risk level: Moderate nationwide but elevated in urban centres with high cost-of-living burdens (Lagos, Delta, Oyo).

Election implications:



^[69] The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 21). Police rescue Edo traders in foiled kidnap attempt. The Punch Newspaper. <https://punchng.com/police-rescue-edo-traders-in-foiled-kidnap-attempt/>

^[70] Zagazola. (2025, October 18). Bandits kill nine, injure several in Kaduna community. Zagazola. <https://newsng.ng/bandits-kill-nine-injure-several-in-kaduna-community/>

^[71] Zagazola. (2025, October 10). Troops repel gunmen attack in Taraba, recover weapons. Zagazola. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/10/10/troops-foil-attack-in-taraba-recover-weapons-motorcycles/>

^[72] Daily Post. (2025, October 2). Two councillors, Imam kidnapped in Zamfara. Daily Post Nigeria. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/10/02/two-councillors-imam-kidnapped-in-zamfara/>

^[73] The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 27). Armed robbers attack bank customer, injure policeman in Oyo. The Punch Newspaper. <https://punchng.com/armed-robbers-attack-bank-customer-injure-policeman-in-oyo/>

Domestic violence in October 2025 illustrated that insecurity is not only public but also intimate and structural. The persistence of gender-based abuse reveals deep governance gaps in justice delivery, mental-health access, and economic safety nets. The ESI Hub classifies this as a latent but compounding social threat—one that, while less visible than armed attacks, directly affects civic stability and women’s political participation.

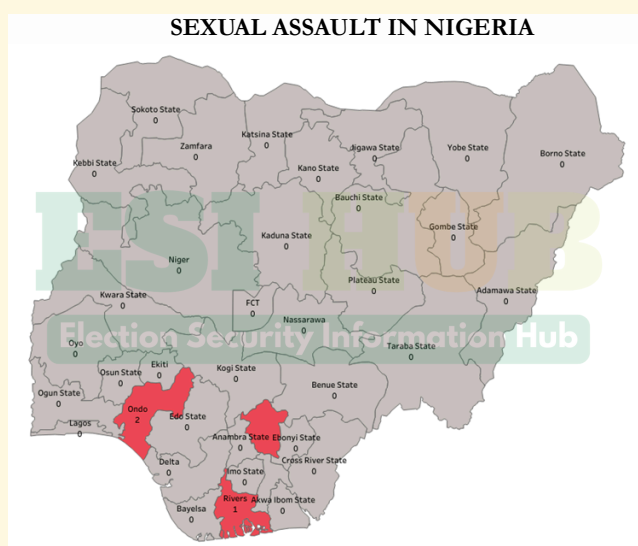
Recommended actions:

Integration of GBV (Gender-Based Violence) early-warning indicators into the national threat dashboard.

Expansion of community mediation and survivor referral systems through local peace committees and CSO partners.

Public education linking domestic stability to peace-building and electoral participation.

SEXUAL ASSAULT



Sexual assault persisted as a serious but underreported human security threat in October 2025, with 4 verified cases recorded across Enugu, Ondo, and Rivers States. Though fewer in number compared to other violent crimes, these incidents underscore a continuing erosion of personal safety, particularly for women and minors, within both domestic settings and public spaces.

In Enugu State, multiple incidents of sexual violence against minors were recorded in October. In one case, a 63-year-old pastor was arrested for allegedly drugging and raping two sisters in Ezeagu LGA^[74]. In a separate incident, a man was arrested for allegedly defiling his two biological daughters, aged 2 and 5, highlighting severe domestic abuse and safeguarding failures within households^[75].

In Ondo State, police arrested a man for sexually assaulting a 6-year-old girl in Ore, Odigbo LGA. The incident, which involved indecent assault of a minor, reinforced concerns about child protection, community vigilance, and the need for faster protective interventions^[76].

In Rivers State, a 17-year-old was arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting a fellow teenager at a football academy in Port Harcourt. The case drew attention to safeguarding gaps in youth and sports institutions, prompting renewed calls for stronger supervision and child-protection frameworks^[77].

^[74] The Guardian Newspaper. (2025, October 1). 63-yr-old pastor arrested for alleged rape of two sisters in Enugu. <https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria/metro/63-yr-old-pastor-arrested-for-alleged-rape-of-two-sisters-in-enugu/>

^[75] The Guardian Newspaper. (2025, October 29). Man arrested in Enugu for allegedly defiling two daughters. <https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria/metro/man-arrested-in-enugu-for-allegedly-defiling-two-daughters/>

^[76] The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 3). Ondo man nabbed for sexually assaulting minor. <https://punchng.com/ondo-man-nabbed-for-sexually-assaulting-minor/>

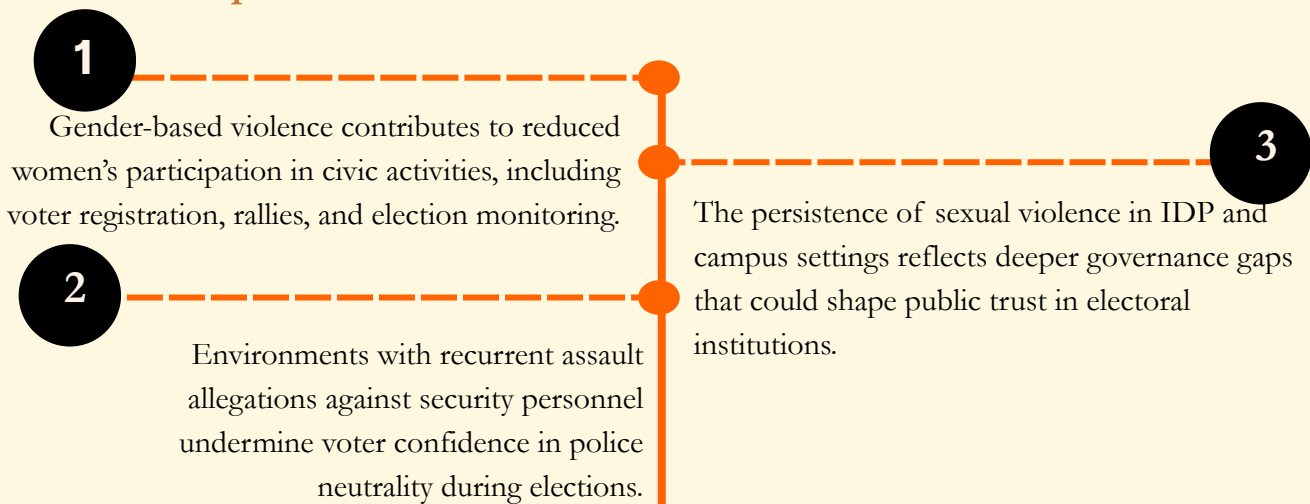
^[77] The Guardian Newspaper. (2025, October 29). 17-year-old arrested over alleged sexual assault at Rivers football academy. <https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria/metro/17-year-old-arrested-over-alleged-sexual-assault-at-rivers-football-academy/>

Impact:

These incidents resulted in severe psychological trauma, stigmatization, and loss of trust in law enforcement, with survivors facing social isolation and inadequate support systems. Activist organizations documented that over 60% of cases handled through community paralegal channels during October ended without formal prosecution. The ESI Hub notes that the low prosecution-to-report ratio continues to embolden perpetrators, particularly in regions with weak institutional accountability.

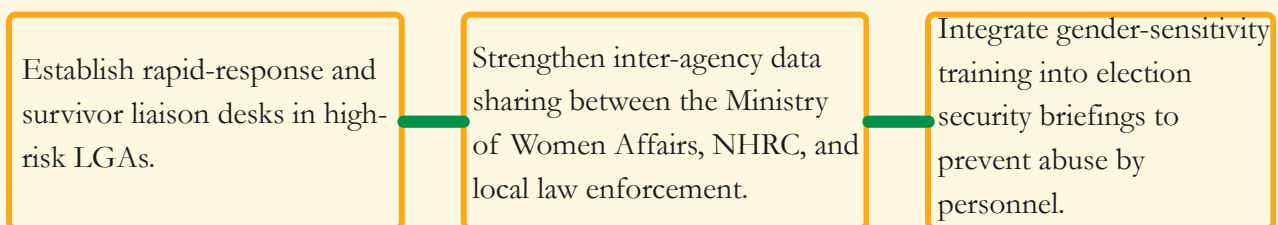
Risk level: Moderate but pervasive—high in urbanized states with dense youth populations (Enugu, Rivers, Ondo).

Election implications:



Sexual assault in October underscores Nigeria's deep-seated crisis of gendered insecurity—intersecting poverty, patriarchy, and impunity. The pattern calls for enhanced survivor-centered mechanisms, including confidential reporting lines, integration of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) indicators into the ESI Hub's threat monitoring dashboard, and collaboration with rights organizations to improve referral and prosecution pathways.

Recommended actions:



MOB ATTACK

Mob attacks, though fewer in number than other forms of violence, remained a significant indicator of declining public trust in law-enforcement institutions and the growing normalisation of extra-judicial punishment at the community level. In October 2025, the ESI Hub recorded 3 verified incidents of mob violence across Edo, Imo, and Ondo States, resulting in 2 deaths and 1 injury.

These incidents demonstrate how collective anger, misinformation, and delayed or weak institutional response can converge to produce sudden but deadly violence, often outside formal justice processes.

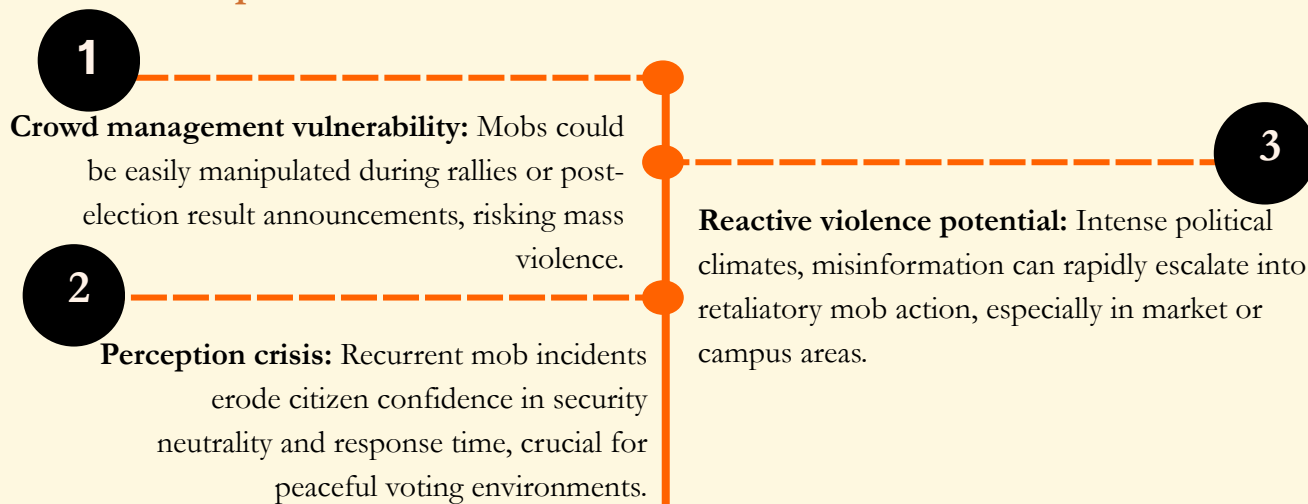
In Edo State, a suspected kidnapper was lynched by a mob in Benin City following a failed abduction attempt. Available reports indicate that police arrived only after the suspect had already been set ablaze, highlighting delayed response times and visible hostility towards security authorities in moments of crisis.

In Imo State, two young men accused of phone theft were beaten to death by residents in Owerri before police intervention^[78]. Witness accounts suggested that some community members viewed mob action as the only effective form of justice, citing previous experiences where suspects were allegedly arrested and later released without prosecution.

In Ondo State, a commercial driver narrowly escaped death after being attacked by a mob in Akure following a minor traffic dispute^[79]. The victim sustained head injuries before being rescued by bystanders, underscoring how everyday disputes can quickly escalate into life-threatening violence.

minority and transient populations often profiled as suspects. Recurrent mob violence also deters witness cooperation, hampers evidence gathering, and sustains a culture of vigilantism. Risk level: Moderate nationwide but elevated in urban centres with weak police-community relations (Edo, Imo, Ondo).

Election implications:



Mob attacks in October 2025 reveal a dangerous erosion of social order and civic restraint. They represent not just spontaneous acts of violence but symptoms of systemic distrust in institutions tasked with justice delivery. The ESI Hub assesses mob justice as a cross-cutting social security threat, capable of triggering wider unrest during electoral periods if unaddressed.

^[78] Zagazola. (2025, October 21). Security forces restore calm after communal clash in Yankwashi, Jigawa. <https://t.co/ucTDm5UDyy>.

^[79] Zagazola. (2025, October 21). Army troops rescued victims as bandit attack in Kaduna leaves one dead, several injured. <https://newsng.ng/tag/army-troops-rescued-victims-as-bandit-attack-in-kaduna-leaves-one-dead>

Recommended actions:

Strengthen community-police liaison structures to rebuild confidence in lawful dispute resolution.

Deploy rapid communication channels to counter misinformation and prevent mob formation.

Include crowd control and rumour verification training in pre-election security briefings for officers and local volunteers.

OTHERS

While less frequent than armed attacks or kidnappings, a cluster of low-frequency but high-risk threats persisted across Nigeria in October 2025. These included Drug Trafficking, Illegal Security Operations, and Terrorism, accounting for 4 verified incidents nationwide. Although disparate in form, these threats collectively point to state fragility in border control, institutional oversight, and extremist containment.

Drug Trafficking

In October 2025, drug trafficking featured as a low-frequency but strategically important driver of insecurity, manifesting primarily through confrontations between narcotics networks and law enforcement rather than widespread civilian harm. In Rivers State, operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency arrested three suspects in Port Harcourt despite violent resistance from hoodlums attempting to disrupt the operation^[80]. The incident illustrates the degree to which drug-related actors are embedded within urban criminal ecosystems and are willing to challenge state authority openly. Although the October dataset does not record large-scale seizures or clearly articulated transnational trafficking routes, the incident nonetheless signals the role of narcotics markets in sustaining violent urban networks, weakening law enforcement credibility, and contributing to broader criminal resilience. From an electoral standpoint, these dynamics pose indirect risks, as drug-linked networks may intersect with cult groups or political enforcers during campaign periods, particularly in densely populated urban centres where enforcement presence is contested.

Illegal Security Operations

Illegal security operations emerged in October as a distinct institutional risk with direct implications for public trust and electoral integrity. In Anambra State, security agencies arrested five suspected illegal private security operatives during coordinated raids in Awka^[81]. Investigations confirmed that the individuals were not affiliated with any recognised security agency and had been operating under false credentials. This incident underscores the growing challenge posed by unauthorised armed actors who exploit public insecurity and institutional gaps to impersonate legitimate security forces. Such practices erode confidence in formal law enforcement, blur accountability, and heighten fear among civilians, particularly in politically sensitive environments. As elections approach, the presence of illegal security operatives raises serious concerns about voter intimidation, impersonation at polling locations, and interference with electoral logistics, especially in states with a prior history of vigilante activity and political thuggery.

^[80] The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 27). NDLEA arrests three suspects despite hoodlums' attack in Rivers. <https://punchng.com/ndlea-arrests-three-suspects-despite-hoodlums-attack-in-rivers/?amp>

^[81] The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 29). Five suspected illegal private Anambra security operatives nabbed. <https://punchng.com/five-suspected-illegal-private-anambra-security-operatives-nabbed/>

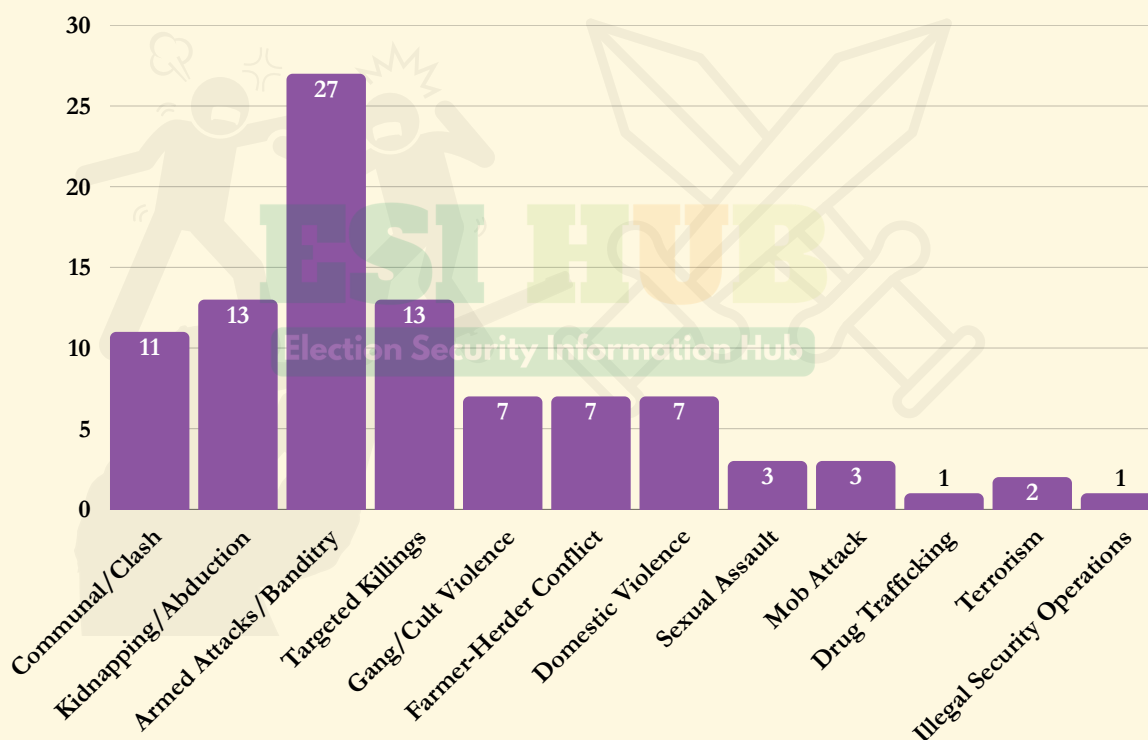
Terrorism

Terrorist activity remained persistent but geographically contained in the North-East throughout October 2025, with incidents largely directed at security forces rather than mass civilian targets. In Borno State, troops repelled a Boko Haram attack in Gamboru Ngala, killing one terrorist^[82]. Similarly, in Yobe State, Islamic State West Africa Province fighters ambushed a mobile police patrol team in Gulani, injuring two officers^[83]. These incidents reflect the continued operational capability of extremist cells to conduct targeted, high-impact attacks despite the decline of large-scale territorial control. The pattern observed in October suggests a reliance on ambushes and hit-and-run tactics aimed at degrading security presence and maintaining psychological pressure in border and rural communities. For electoral processes, such activity poses ongoing risks to the deployment of materials, the safety of poll workers, and the willingness of security personnel to operate in affected local government areas, particularly along known insurgent corridors in Borno and Yobe States.

Strategic Implications

Taken together, the October 2025 data highlight the multipolar nature of Nigeria's insecurity landscape. Drug trafficking, though less visible, reinforces the economic foundations of urban criminal networks; illegal security operations undermine institutional legitimacy and public trust; and terrorism, while geographically constrained, continues to challenge state authority in the North-East. The interaction of these threats exposes vulnerabilities in internal security coordination and carries clear implications for election preparedness, logistics continuity, and voter confidence as political activities intensify.

NUMBER OF STATES AFFECTED BY THREAT
OCTOBER 2025



^[82] Zagazola. (2025, October 9). Troops repel Boko Haram attack in Gamboru Ngala, kill one terrorist. NewsNG. <https://newsng.ng/troops-repel-boko-haram-attack-in-gamboru-ngala-kill-one-terrorist/>

^[83] Zagazola. (2025, October 30). ISWAP ambush mobile police patrol team in Yobe. The Cable. <https://www.thecable.ng/two-officers-injured-as-iswap-fighters-ambush-police-patrol-team-in-yobe/>

REGIONAL OVERVIEW - OCTOBER 2025

Volume concentration: North Central (26.4%).
Kidnapping concentration: North West (83/116; 71.6%).

REGION	INCIDENTS	SHARE (%)	DEATHS	INJURED	KIDNAPPED	NOTABLE OBSERVATION
North Central	39	26.4	56	30	26	Highest incident volume
North West	29	19.6	42	14	83	Highest kidnapping count
South West	23	15.5	23	8	2	Cultism prominent
South South	23	15.5	15	6	3	Diverse threat mix
North East	17	11.5	12	9	0	Farmer–Herder dominant
South East	17	11.5	9	2	2	Armed robbery prevalent

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ACROSS NIGERIA'S 6 GEOPOLITICAL ZONES – OCTOBER 01–31, 2025

October 2025 reflected a continuation of entrenched insecurity patterns, but with sharper regional polarisation. The ESI Hub recorded 148 verified incidents across 34 states, resulting in 157 deaths, 69 injuries, and 116 kidnappings. While the overall incident volume was lower than September's 229 cases, the distribution of fatalities and high-impact events suggests that insecurity remained concentrated in a set of high-risk corridors, particularly across parts of Zamfara, Kaduna, Plateau, and Kogi, where violence continued to carry elevated lethality and mobility risks. Across the country, the threat environment increasingly resembled a set of networked, cross-zonal criminal ecosystems rather than isolated pockets of local violence—directly shaping election logistics planning, voter movement, and civic participation outcomes.

North-West — Banditry Epicentre and Expanding Abduction Belt

The North-West remained Nigeria's most consistently volatile banditry corridor, with Zamfara, Kaduna, and Katsina sustaining cycles of raids, abductions, and violent reprisals. A defining feature of the zone in October was the persistence of large-scale kidnapping and armed attacks that reinforced the region's status as a high-risk abduction belt. In Kaduna State, gunmen attacked Zonkwa Police Station in Zangon Kataf LGA, killing 2 police officers in a coordinated assault.^[84] In Zamfara State, bandit operations continued to generate severe security pressure, including reprisal violence that led to the death of 2 soldiers in Tsafe^[85]. These patterns sustain fear-driven rural flight and heighten the risks associated with election material movement across vulnerable axes, especially where abduction markets and armed groups operate with territorial familiarity.

North-Central — Corridor of Mixed Threats and Strategic Highway Risk

North-Central emerged as the highest-volume zone in October, driven by a convergence of kidnapping on strategic road networks, gunmen attacks, and resource/community-related violence. Kogi and Plateau remained central to the lethality profile of the zone, reflecting how insecurity along transit routes and rural communities can quickly become election-relevant. In Kogi State, gunmen abducted passengers along the Abuja–Lokoja highway, reinforcing the vulnerability of one of Nigeria's most critical mobility corridors (ESI-202510-137). In Plateau State, gunmen attacked farmers in Bokkos LGA (Mbor), killing 3 civilians and injuring 2, illustrating the continuing exposure of agrarian communities to armed violence^[86]. For election operations, these dynamics signal heightened risk to INEC deployment corridors, observer movement, and the safety of ad hoc personnel, especially where abduction and road insecurity intersect.

North-East — Persistent Insurgent Capability and Targeted Security-Force Exposure

In the North-East, October showed continued insurgent capability expressed through targeted attacks on security forces rather than widespread territorial control. In Borno State, troops repelled a Boko Haram attack in Gamboru Ngala, killing 1 terrorist, demonstrating ongoing militant activity around the border and transit communities^[87]. In Yobe State, ISWAP fighters ambushed a mobile police patrol team in Gulani, injuring 2 officers^[88]. These incidents reinforce the risk of ambush-style attacks that complicate election logistics and increase hesitation among personnel operating in exposed rural corridors, while displacement and accessibility constraints continue to challenge voter participation planning in affected LGAs.

^[84] Zagazola. (2025, October 17). Gunmen attack Zonkwa police station in Kaduna, kill two officers. Channelstv. <https://www.channelstv.com/2025/10/18/gunmen-attack-kaduna-police-station-kill-two-officers-free-inmates/>

^[85] Zagazola. (2025, October 21). Troops repel terrorists' reprisal attack after killing notorious kingpin in Tsafe Zamfara, 2 soldiers killed. Daily Post. <https://dailypost.ng/2025/10/22/zamfara-troops-repel-terrorists-reprisal-attack-in-tsafe-two-soldiers-killed/>

^[86] The Star.ng. (2025, October 30). Gunmen kill farmers while harvesting crops in Jos. <https://www.thestar.ng/gunmen-kill-farmers-while-harvesting-crops-in-jos/>

^[87] NewsNG. (2025, October 9). Troops repel Boko Haram attack in Gamboru Ngala, kill one terrorist. <https://newsng.ng/troops-repel-boko-haram-attack-in-gamboru-ngala-kill-one-terrorist/>

^[88] The Cable. (2025, October 30). Two officers injured as ISWAP fighters ambush police patrol team in Yobe. <https://www.thecable.ng/two-officers-injured-as-iswap-fighters-ambush-police-patrol-team-in-yobe/>

South-East — Targeted Crime, Institutional Trust Gaps, and Politicised Anxiety

South-East insecurity in October was shaped less by mass-casualty violence and more by targeted criminality, episodic armed attacks, and persistent fear dynamics that can depress participation and increase misinformation susceptibility. In Anambra State, security forces foiled a robbery attack in Nnewi South, killing 1 suspect during the confrontation.^[89] a reminder of the continued presence of armed criminal activity in politically sensitive states. In Enugu State, the month also recorded serious sexual assault cases, including the arrest of a 63-year-old pastor accused of raping 2 sisters^[90], reinforcing the broader dimension of human security threats beyond conventional armed violence. These patterns feed into perception-driven voter apathy, weaken community–police confidence, and increase the risk of localised intimidation and disruption around political events.

South-West — Cultism, Armed Robbery, and Dense Urban Insecurity

In the South-West, insecurity remained largely urban and youth-driven, dominated by cultism, armed robbery, and street-level violence in Lagos and Oyo, with Ondo also recording incidents of mob-related unrest. In Lagos State, armed robbers attacked a barber shop in Ojo LGA, killing 2 teenagers and injuring 1 civilian, illustrating the brutality of urban robbery incidents^[91]. In Oyo State, armed robbers attacked a bank customer in Ibadan and injured 1 police officer, underscoring how opportunistic violence can escalate quickly in urban movement periods^[92]. For election risk planning, these trends matter because dense urban wards amplify crowd-control pressures, expose staging areas and distribution points, and create opportunities for cult-political convergence during rallies and turnout periods.

South-South — Fragmented Violence, Urban Contestation, and Enforcement Clashes

The South-South reflected a broad mix of threats in October, including kidnapping attempts, enforcement clashes, cult-related incidents, and domestic insecurity. In Edo State, police rescued a 12-year-old girl and foiled a kidnapping attempt, showing both kidnapping pressure and responsive enforcement outcomes^[93]. In Rivers State, drug enforcement activity featured prominently, with NDLEA operatives arresting suspects in Port Harcourt despite disruption attempts by hoodlums, reflecting the way drug-related networks intersect with wider urban criminal ecosystems^[94]. These patterns remain significant for election risk because elite-linked contestation, coercive financing networks, and urban criminality can combine to create disruption risks around primaries, rallies, and ward-level mobilisation.

^[89] The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 27). Police foil robbery attack in Anambra, kill one suspect. <https://punchng.com/police-foil-robbery-attack-in-anambra-kill-one-suspect/>

^[90] The Guardian Newspaper. (2025, October 1). 63-yr-old pastor arrested for alleged rape of two sisters in Enugu. <https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria/metro/63-yr-old-pastor-arrested-for-alleged-rape-of-two-sisters-in-enugu/>

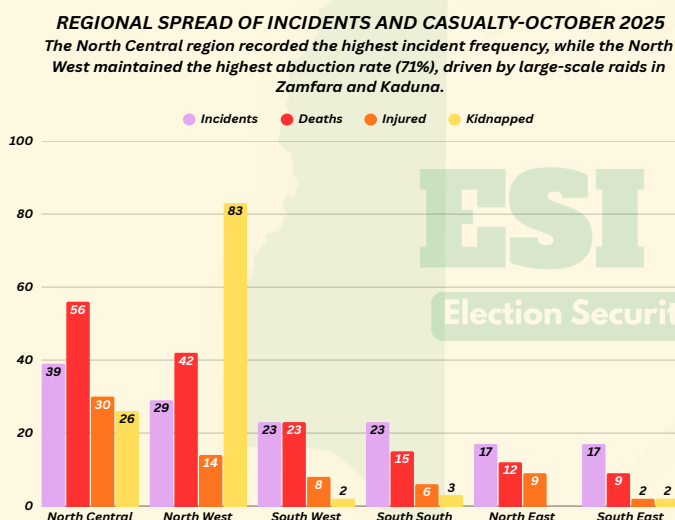
^[91] The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 5). Two teenagers killed as robbers attack Lagos barber shop. <https://punchng.com/two-teenagers-killed-as-robbers-attack-lagos-barber-shop>

^[92] The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 27). Armed robbers attack bank customer, injure policeman in Oyo. <https://punchng.com/armed-robbers-attack-bank-customer-injure-policeman-in-oyo/>

^[93] The Whistler. (2025, October 19). Edo police rescue 12-year-old girl, foil kidnap attempt. <https://thewhistler.ng/edo-police-rescue-12-year-old-girl-foil-kidnap-attempt/>

^[94] The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 27). NDLEA arrests three suspects despite hoodlums' attack in Rivers. <https://punchng.com/ndlea-arrests-three-suspects-despite-hoodlums-attack-in-rivers/?amp>

Regional Impact and Strategic Implications



Region	Most Prevalent Threat	Incident Count
North Central	Gunmen Attacks	10
North East	Farmer–Herder Conflict	5
North West	Banditry	14
South East	Armed Robbery	3
South South	Kidnapping	6
South West	Cultism	8

Nigeria’s insecurity in October 2025 reflected a regional reconfiguration of threats rather than a nationwide decline. North-Central functioned as a strategic corridor where violence and abduction risks intersected with critical transport routes, while the North-West retained the strongest kidnapping and banditry profile. The North-East continued to present low-frequency but high-impact insurgent exposure that constrains logistics and participation. In contrast, the Southern zones were shaped by more urbanised insecurity; cultism, robbery, enforcement clashes, and human-security threats, creating a different but still election-relevant risk environment. Effective response, therefore, requires zone-specific planning: convoy protection and route intelligence in North-West/North-Central, security-risk mapping and accessibility frameworks in the North-East, and political mediation plus community policing confidence-building in the South, supported by cross-zonal early-warning systems ahead of the next election cycle.

Electoral Offences Tracking System (EOTS) – October 2025

October 2025 showed a measurable shift in Nigeria’s election-risk environment from overt physical harm to “integrity erosion” behaviours, the kinds of actions that may not produce mass casualties in the moment but steadily weaken the conditions for credible participation. The ESI Hub logged 33 EOTS incidents spanning FCT, Lagos, Ekiti, Osun, Abia, Enugu, Imo, Anambra, and Kwara. The dominant pattern was not ballot-day violence; it was pre-election coercion, narrative warfare, and institutional trust attack.

¹⁸⁹ The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 27). Police foil robbery attack in Anambra, kill one suspect. <https://punchng.com/police-foil-robbery-attack-in-anambra-kill-one-suspect/>

¹⁹⁰ The Guardian Newspaper. (2025, October 1). 63-yr-old pastor arrested for alleged rape of two sisters in Enugu. <https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria/metro/63-yr-old-pastor-arrested-for-alleged-rape-of-two-sisters-in-enugu/>

¹⁹¹ The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 5). Two teenagers killed as robbers attack Lagos barber shop. <https://punchng.com/two-teenagers-killed-as-robbers-attack-lagos-barber-shop>

¹⁹² The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 27). Armed robbers attack bank customer, injure policeman in Oyo. <https://punchng.com/armed-robbers-attack-bank-customer-injure-policeman-in-oyo/>

¹⁹³ The Whistler. (2025, October 19). Edo police rescue 12-year-old girl, foil kidnap attempt. <https://thewhistler.ng/edo-police-rescue-12-year-old-girl-foil-kidnap-attempt/>

¹⁹⁴ The Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 27). NDLEA arrests three suspects despite hoodlums’ attack in Rivers. <https://punchng.com/ndlea-arrests-three-suspects-despite-hoodlums-attack-in-rivers/?amp>

What the incident set reveals about how electoral integrity is being attacked

Across the month, the incidents cluster into a pre-election pressure system: actors raise the cost of participation (threats, intimidation, venue suppression), reduce informational clarity (mis/disinformation), and heighten elite hostility (inciteful rhetoric and blame-games). Research on Nigeria's campaigns supports why these matters: Afrobarometer evidence on Nigerian elections finds that exposure to intimidation/violence depresses turnout, even when the share directly targeted is not many voters, because fear travels socially beyond those directly attacked^[95].

In practical terms, October's EOTS incidents describe how risk is being laundered into "normal politics." The mechanisms are familiar: intimidation is framed as "enforcement," misinformation is framed as "breaking news," and state action (or inaction) becomes a signal about whether rules are neutral.

Coercion and venue suppression as "silent" vote suppression

Several October incidents show direct constraints on assembly and political organising, especially in urban settings where party activities are visible and easier to disrupt. In Lagos–Mushin (0074), reports describe the sealing of an opposition meeting venue amid claims of intimidation and disruption, an incident type that rarely shows up as election-day casualty figures but systematically shrinks civic space and discourages marginal participants (especially women and first-time voters) from attending meetings, volunteering, or becoming polling agents.

This kind of suppression is electorally consequential because it reallocates "who can safely mobilise" long before the vote. It also changes security incentives: when parties learn that intimidation works without consequence, they build it into their strategy, creating a self-reinforcing coercion market.

Threat rhetoric and the normalisation of intimidation

A second pattern is incitive rhetoric and explicit threats, particularly from politically connected networks. The case involving the Lagos transport union leadership^[96] is a good illustration: the public messaging reported here functions as pre-commitment intimidation, a warning delivered early enough to shape expectations about consequences for "wrong choices."

Similarly, elite statements that dramatize electoral stakes, such as "write your wills" style warnings^[97] can operate less as literal instruction and more as permission structures: they legitimise the idea that politics is war and that coercion is foreseeable. The strategic risk is not only copycat threats, but the way such language pre-frames disputes as existential, making moderation harder during primaries and rallies.

^[95] Bratton, M. (2008). Vote buying and violence in Nigerian election campaigns (Afrobarometer Working Paper No.99). Afrobarometer. <https://afrobarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/migrated/files/publications/Working%20papers/afropaperno99.pdf>

^[96] Sahara Reporters. (2025, October 3). Lagos NURTW chairman threatens to punish anyone who refuses to vote APC in 2027, faces DSS grilling over threat. <https://www.icirnigeria.org/2027-lagos-nurtw-chair-faces-sss-over-viral-incitement-video/>

^[97] Punch Newspaper. (2025, October 18). Abia 2027: Those planning to rig should write their wills, Otti. <https://punchng.com/abia-2027-those-planning-to-rig-should-write-their-wills-otti/>

Information disorder as an operational threat, not just a communications problem

October's EOTS record is unusually rich in verified misinformation corrections, a sign that the “battlefield” is increasingly informational. Multiple fact-checks targeted narratives around INEC leadership credibility, high-salience national candidacy rumours^[98], and election logistics claims in Anambra^[99],^[100] all of which can erode trust or trigger panic behaviours that distort participation and security deployment.

Why this category deserves “security-level” attention is straightforward: disinformation can redirect policing and convoy priorities, provoke retaliatory messaging, and harden beliefs that outcomes will be rigged—raising the probability of post-result rejection even where procedures are sound. Contemporary counter-disinformation research and practice increasingly recommend pre-bunking/inoculation approaches (pre-emptive exposure to manipulation techniques) because they can reduce susceptibility at scale compared to purely reactive debunking^[101].

Intra-party conflict as a predictor of election-day volatility

The October set also highlights party instability and internal violence, which tends to spill outward into community tension, splinter mobilisation, and violent enforcement by rival factions. Enugu's major defection story^[102] and PDP disciplinary actions^[103] fit the profile of pre-primary fracture events that often precede localised intimidation and tit-for-tat propaganda.

The most direct signal here is Abia's legislative fracas with 1 injury^[104] a reminder that elite conflict can quickly become physical, and that primaries (and money disputes around them) can act as stress tests for broader restraint norms.

High-salience national security signalling and “institutional neutrality” doubts

A recorded Incident of a threat reporting around the National Assembly complex^[105] underscores a separate but important integrity pathway: when national institutions are perceived as exposed or when threats dominate the public agenda, citizens infer that the state is either overwhelmed or selective in enforcement, which reduces confidence in the rule framework around elections^[106].

In parallel, the Abuja protest-policing incidents logged matter because they influence whether citizens believe security agencies are neutral arbiters or partisan instruments. Where neutrality is doubted, even lawful enforcement can be interpreted as suppression, increasing resistance, and raising the temperature of mobilisation.

^[98] Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD). (2025, October 8). FACT CHECK: Has former President Goodluck Jonathan declared his intention to run for the 2027 presidential election? <https://cddfactcheck.org/fact-check-has-former-president-goodluck-jonathan-declared-his-intention-to-run-for-the-2027-presidential-election/>

^[99] Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD). (2025, October 13). FACT CHECK: Did Soludo instruct principals in all Anambra secondary schools to compile teachers' details and PVCs? <https://cddfactcheck.org/fact-check-did-soludo-instruct-principals-in-all-anambra-secondary-schools-to-compile-teachers-details-and-pvcs/>

^[100] Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD). (2025, October 8). FACT CHECK: Did INEC propose to keep sensitive materials for the Anambra November 8 governorship election in Delta State? <https://cddfactcheck.org/fact-check-did-inec-propose-to-keep-sensitive-materials-for-the-anambra-november-8-governorship-election-in-delta-state/>

^[101] Roozenbeek, J., & van der Linden, S. (2021). Inoculation theory and misinformation (NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence). <https://stratcomcoe.org/publications/download/Inoculation-theory-and-Misinformation-FINAL-digital-ISBN-ebbe8.pdf>

^[102] Premium Times. (2025, October 15). PDP crisis escalates: Enugu Gov. Peter Mbah defects to APC with state structure. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/827853-updated-enugu-governor-peter-mbah-others-dump-pdp-for-apc.html>

^[103] Daily Times. (2025, October 16). PDP suspends two state chairmen for alleged anti-party activities. <https://dailytimesng.com/pdp-suspends-two-state-chairmen-for-alleged-anti-party-activities/>

^[104] 247ureports. (2025, October 10). One injured, as Abia State lawmakers fight dirty over Gov. Alex Otti's cash gift. <https://247ureports.com/2025/10/one-injured-as-abia-state-lawmakers-fight-dirty-over-gov-alex-ottis-cash-gift/>

^[105] Premium Times. (2025, October 29). Nigerian lawmakers raise alarm over terrorists' threats to bomb National Assembly complex. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/831521-nigerian-lawmakers-raise-alarm-over-terrorists-threats-to-bomb-national-assembly-complex.html>

^[106] Mom, C. (2025, July 28). Report: ISWAP earning \$191m annually from taxing farmers, fishers in Lake Chad region. TheCable. <https://www.thecable.ng/report-iswap-earning-191m-annually-from-taxing-farmers-fishers-in-lake-chad-region/>

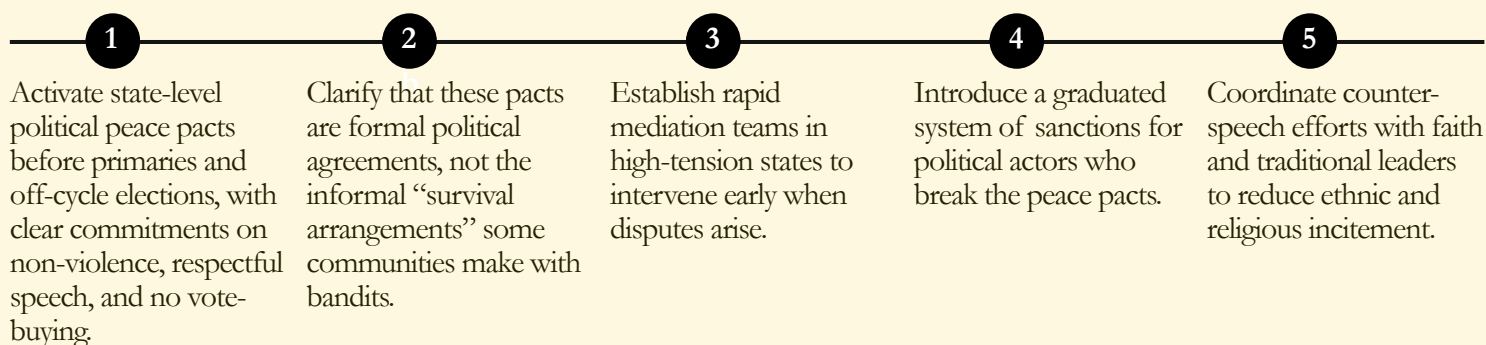
What “verified incidents” suggest as priority response logic (narrative, not checklist)

The October EOTS evidence points toward a 2-track integrity response. First, Nigeria’s election integrity defenders (INEC, security agencies, regulators, CSOs, and credible media) need to treat information disorder as an operational risk: not merely “comms,” but an input into logistics confusion and legitimacy collapse. The fact-check record shows that the ecosystem can respond; the gap is speed, coordination, and repetition across channels that voters use. Pre-bunking guidance is particularly relevant for recurrent narratives because it reduces future load on reactive fact-checking. [107]

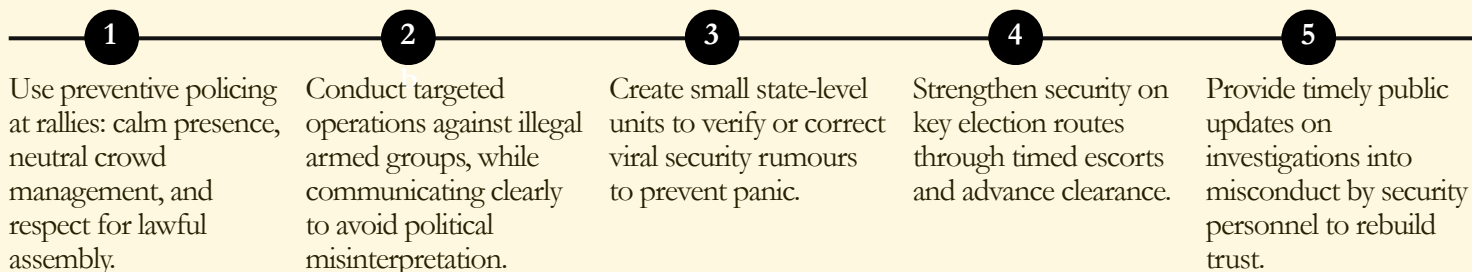
Second, the coercion incidents indicate that enforcement needs to be publicly legible: swift, procedurally clean, and communicated without triumphalism. Where arrests occur (as in the illegal operative’s case linked to Anambra preparations), authorities should communicate in ways that deter illegal outfits while avoiding generalised chilling effects on lawful assembly.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. National Peace Committee (NPC)



2. Security Agencies (Police, NSCDC, DSS, Military Support)



[107] Roozenbeek, J., & van der Linden, S. (2021). Inoculation theory and misinformation (NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence). <https://stratcomcoe.org/publications/download/Inoculation-theory-and-Misinformation-FINAL-digital-ISBN-ebbe8.pdf>

3. Civil Society Organisations and Observer Groups

1

Standardise incident reporting across organisations and share verified information promptly.

2

Develop short, easy-to-understand “pre-bunking” materials to stop common rumours before they spread.

3

Offer protection pathways for women and youth, including emergency hotlines and access to legal support.

4

Provide mediation support for political parties dealing with internal conflicts.

5

Publish simple, regular scorecards assessing security behaviour, access to venues, and the speed of public clarifications.

4. Media and Digital Platforms

1

Set up election-integrity desks to review political claims quickly and label them accurately.

2

Adopt safe-speech guidelines to ensure threatening or inflammatory remarks are reported responsibly.

3

Produce short public messages explaining citizens’ rights, how to report intimidation, and what to do during unrest.

4

Maintain a central corrections page so verified debunks are easy for the public to find and share.

5. Political Parties and Candidates

1

Establish internal codes that forbid hiring thugs, cult groups, or vigilante elements for campaign activities.

2

Ensure disciplinary committees act quickly and communicate decisions openly.

3

Commit to clean campaigning, no ethnic or religious incitement, and joint factchecking of statements about rivals.

4

Share rally schedules with other parties and security agencies to prevent clashes.

5

Train campaign teams on safety, conflict de-escalation, and how to operate in high-risk areas without endangering supporters.

6. Crosscutting (All Actors)

1

Adopt a clear “breach to remedy” approach: every act of intimidation, misinformation.

2

Promote transparency through regular public summaries of key offences such as vote-buying, thuggery, intimidation, and hate speech.

3

Prioritise the protection of women, youth, and minorities who face higher levels of intimidation both online and offline.

^[10] Roozenbeek, J., & van der Linden, S. (2021). Inoculation theory and misinformation (NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence). <https://stratcomcoe.org/publications/download/Inoculation-theory-and-Misinformation-FINAL-digital-ISBN-ebbe8.pdf>

ANAMBRA STATE COMMENTARY – OCTOBER 2025

Anambra remained the focal point of politically charged insecurity in October 2025, accounting for a significant cluster of EOTS-coded incidents tied to the pre-election environment ahead of the state's gubernatorial poll. The state's incidents reflected an intersection of political thuggery, misinformation, ethnic incitement, and institutional fragility, demonstrating how electoral tension continues to mirror wider governance and security stress across the South-East.

KEY INCIDENTS AND PATTERNS

Politically Motivated Thuggery and Intimidation

Politically motivated thuggery remained a defining feature of insecurity across several LGAs in Anambra during October. In Njikoka, the arrests recorded under EOTS 0082 and 0083 showed security agencies acting ahead of potential election disruptions. Although these arrests prevented immediate harm, they also revealed how deeply cult groups remain embedded within local political structures, often resurfacing during periods of heightened political activity.

Further north in Awka North, the incident documented as EOTS 0096 brought another layer to this trend. The NSCDC's interception of suspected illegal security operatives, alongside the recovery of firearms, suggested that private militias were attempting to position themselves as informal power brokers ahead of the election season. Such groups often operate under the guise of community protection, but their presence can escalate local tensions and undermine legitimate security frameworks.

Taken together, these incidents indicate that political actors in the state may still rely on youth gangs, cult networks, and loosely regulated vigilante groups to secure influence in peri-urban areas such as Awka North and Njikoka. This pattern poses risks not only to community safety but also to the fairness and credibility of local political competition.

Vote-Trading and Patronage Dynamics

The controversy involving Governor Soludo's reported offer of ₦1 million in what many interpreted as a "cash-for-votes" pledge, reignited national debate about the boundary between social support and electoral inducement. Although framed by some as political encouragement, the announcement was widely perceived as an attempt to influence voter behaviour, drawing criticism from civil society groups, media commentators, and opposition voices.

The reaction to the incident reflects a wider shift in Nigeria's political environment. What was once discreet has increasingly become open and public, with inducement now operating as a form of political messaging rather than a hidden transaction. This development raises concerns about the normalisation of transactional citizenship, where material gifts are seen as part of the political bargain rather than a breach of electoral ethics.

The implication is clear: when vote inducement becomes overt and unchallenged, trust in anti-corruption enforcement weakens, and campaign integrity is undermined. As the state approaches off-cycle elections, such practices risk shaping voter expectations, weakening democratic accountability, and eroding confidence in lawful political participation.

Disinformation and Ethnic/Religious Incitement

October saw a surge in coordinated misinformation across the South-East, with several verified false claims shaping public discourse in ways that deepened suspicion and political tension. These included fabricated narratives about alleged religious disputes between LP and APGA, false claims that INEC intended to store sensitive election materials outside Anambra, and viral messages suggesting that school principals were collecting teachers' PVC details under government instruction. Although each of these stories was debunked, they gained traction quickly, revealing how easily fear and distrust can spread in the current information environment.

Such narratives did more than mislead; they strategically tapped into existing community anxieties about fairness, identity, and institutional neutrality. In a region where politics, religion, and ethnicity often intersect, disinformation becomes a powerful tool for shaping voter emotions and influencing turnout. Online influencers and partisan groups continue to use digital platforms to amplify these themes, pushing content that frames elections as existential battles rather than democratic contests.

The broader implication is that the South-East faces a heightened level of digital vulnerability. Manipulated messages are increasingly used to polarise communities, create religious and ethnic fault lines, and erode trust in institutions before any physical incident occurs. Without stronger fact-checking systems, early-warning mechanisms, and civic education, these information threats will continue to distort voter perceptions and weaken confidence in the entire electoral process.

Community Disenfranchisement and Governance Failure

The incident recorded in Ogidi, Igbo-Ukwu, and Nnewi Ichi highlighted how environmental degradation is beginning to shape political participation in the South-East. In these erosion-affected communities, parties reportedly avoided campaign visits due to difficult terrain and damaged access routes. What appears at first to be a logistical challenge has deeper implications. When communities become physically isolated, they also become politically sidelined.

The erosion crisis long neglected by successive administrations has now evolved into a form of structural disenfranchisement. Residents are not only dealing with the loss of homes, farmlands, and livelihoods; they are also being gradually excluded from political engagement because candidates and campaign teams find these locations too risky or inaccessible to enter. As a result, citizens in these areas receive less information, fewer interactions with office seekers, and diminished representation in decision-making processes.

The implication is clear: environmental degradation has become a pathway through which communities lose political voice. When physical inaccessibility keeps voters out of campaign networks, it reinforces feelings of abandonment and weakens trust in government. Without targeted intervention, erosion-affected LGAs risk becoming invisible in both governance priorities and future electoral outcomes.

Political Intimidation and Identity Politics

The land-demolition protest captured in showed how quickly a governance dispute can take on political and ethnic tones in Anambra. What began as a community demonstration against alleged land takeovers soon shifted into intimidation, accusations of political bias, and ethnic messaging. This transformation reflects a wider trend in the South-East, where policy grievances, especially around land, development, and security, are easily folded into political mobilisation.

As frustration rises, different actors, including local leaders and partisan groups, often tap into ethnic sentiment to gain support or discredit opponents. This broadens a local issue into a regional or identity-based contest, increasing tension and reducing the space for constructive dialogue.

When governance disputes become tied to ethnic narratives, the threshold for conflict lowers. Electoral protests can quickly escalate into communal tension, making it harder for institutions to maintain neutrality and protect civic space during the election period.

Impact Assessment

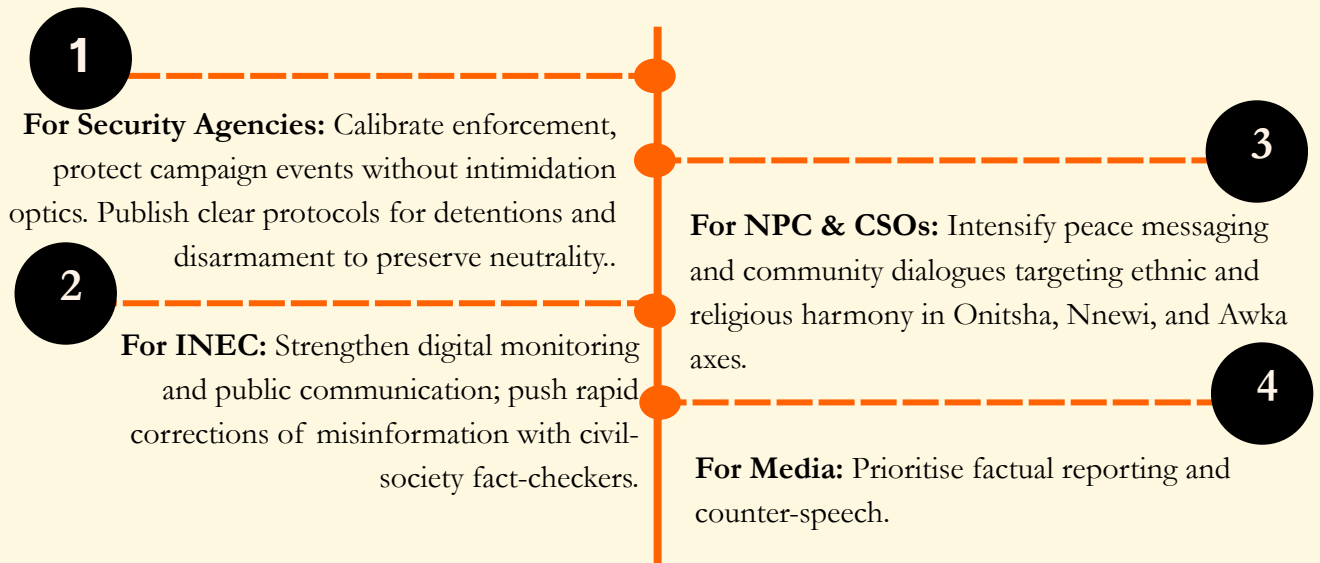
In October, insecurity in the South-East was moderate in physical intensity, with no major casualties recorded, but the zone experienced a high volume of intimidation, propaganda, and politically coordinated messaging. The incidents were largely information-driven rather than outright violent, with political parties, allied vigilante structures, and influential local actors shaping the tone of the civic space. Unlike the North, where armed groups dominate, the threat profile here was shaped less by insurgency and more by organised political behaviour.

This created a serious risk environment for electoral integrity. Disinformation circulated repeatedly across the zone, spreading false claims about religious divisions, party alliances, and INEC procedures. Such narratives have the potential to reduce voter turnout and weaken public trust in the neutrality of electoral institutions. At the same time, security operations such as the NSCDC arrests of illegal operatives in Awka North, though legitimate, can easily be interpreted as partisan if not transparently managed, feeding suspicion and political tension.

For many citizens, especially young people and women, the steady flow of intimidation, coercive speech, and online propaganda risks creating fatigue and discouragement, particularly in Njikoka, Awka North, and Idemili South, where multiple incidents were recorded. Added to this, environmental and infrastructure challenges continue to affect travel, campaign access, and the distribution of election materials, creating further barriers to participation.

Overall, the South-East's insecurity in October was less about physical violence and more about the strategic manipulation of information, institutions, and local grievances, factors that can quietly undermine the credibility of the electoral process even in the absence of widespread attacks.

Strategic Implications



Anambra's October 2025 profile situates the state at the crossroads of politics, perception, and security. The data confirms that while overt violence has been curtailed, informational and institutional manipulation have become the primary instruments of electoral disruption. The month's incidents—spanning intimidation, misinformation, and illegal security mobilisation reinforce that the centre of risk has shifted from physical to psychological warfare. If unaddressed, this trajectory could erode voter confidence, distort campaign equity, and test the credibility of Nigeria's democratic institutions ahead of the 2026–2027 cycle.

CONCLUSION

The combined findings from the October 2025 dataset underscore a transitional phase in Nigeria's political risk landscape, where violence is no longer always overt or spontaneous but increasingly strategic, symbolic, and information driven. Across all regions, the ESI Hub's data reveals an evolving ecosystem of threats shaped by the convergence of political opportunism, institutional fragility, and social discontent.

The North-West and North-Central remain engulfed in lethal banditry and abductions that disrupt mobility, civic participation, and electoral logistics. The South-West and South-East, though less violent, show deepening vulnerabilities in the form of thuggery, disinformation, ethnic incitement, and vote-trading, all of which erode democratic norms without necessarily spilling blood. The South-South continues to experience sporadic urban insecurity and political intimidation linked to oil-related patronage networks.

Anambra, as illustrated in the October EOTS dataset, epitomises this hybrid risk environment. While overt armed clashes are relatively contained, psychological and informational manipulation—manifesting through propaganda, fake news, and subtle coercion—now dominate the state’s electoral terrain. This reflects a wider national shift from battlefield-style violence to perception warfare, where legitimacy is contested long before ballots are cast.

The institutional dimension remains the most critical fault line. Weak enforcement, selective policing, and delayed justice have entrenched a culture of impunity, undermining public confidence in state neutrality. When law enforcement and political accountability appear partisan, the deterrent effect of legal frameworks diminishes, creating fertile ground for repeated offences.

From a governance standpoint, these trends threaten not only the integrity of elections but also the cohesion of the Nigerian state. Electoral offences—whether physical (thuggery, intimidation) or digital (disinformation, hate speech)—are symptoms of deeper governance decay: unemployment-fuelled youth militancy, politicized security institutions, and a collapsing social contract.

The overarching lesson is clear: democratic resilience cannot be legislated; it must be enforced and lived. Legal instruments like the Electoral Act 2022 and the National Peace Accord provide a strong normative base, but their impact depends on visible accountability, inter-agency cooperation, and citizen vigilance.

Going forward, the National Peace Committee (NPC) must reinforce mediation structures at state and LGA levels; security agencies must uphold impartial protection, not selective coercion; INEC and the media must build public trust through transparency and fact-based communication; and civil society must amplify civic education and early warning mechanisms.

Ultimately, October 2025 serves as both a warning and a window of opportunity. Nigeria stands at an inflection point—where it can either normalize subtle authoritarianism cloaked in democratic language or reclaim electoral integrity through decisive collective action. The data demands not passive observation but proactive prevention: a whole-of-society effort to ensure that the 2026–2027 election cycle strengthens, rather than strains, Nigeria’s fragile democracy.