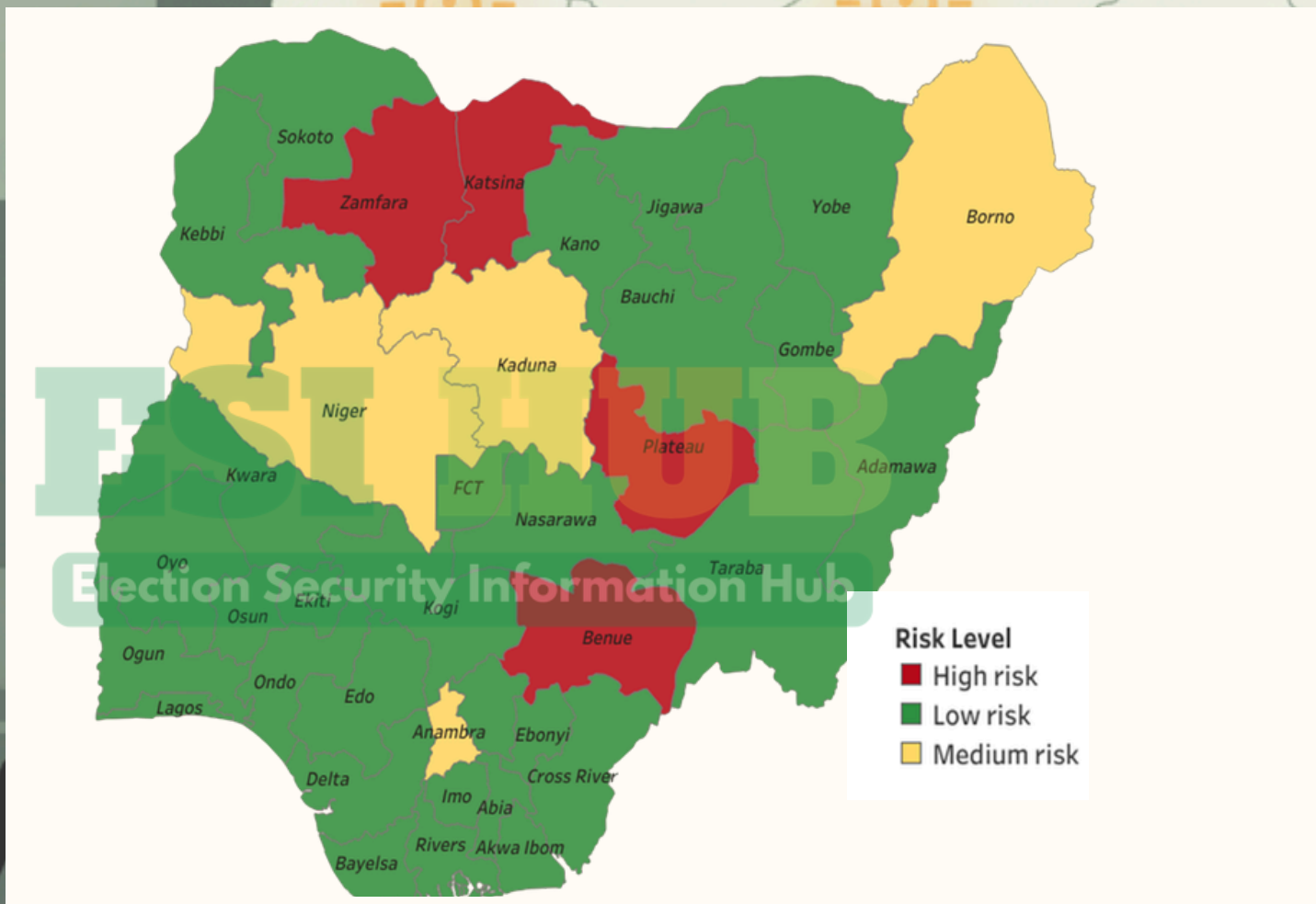




Funded by the European Union



QUARTERLY THREAT ANALYSIS ON ELECTION SECURITY INCIDENTS (JUNE-SEPTEMBER 2025 EDITION)



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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.

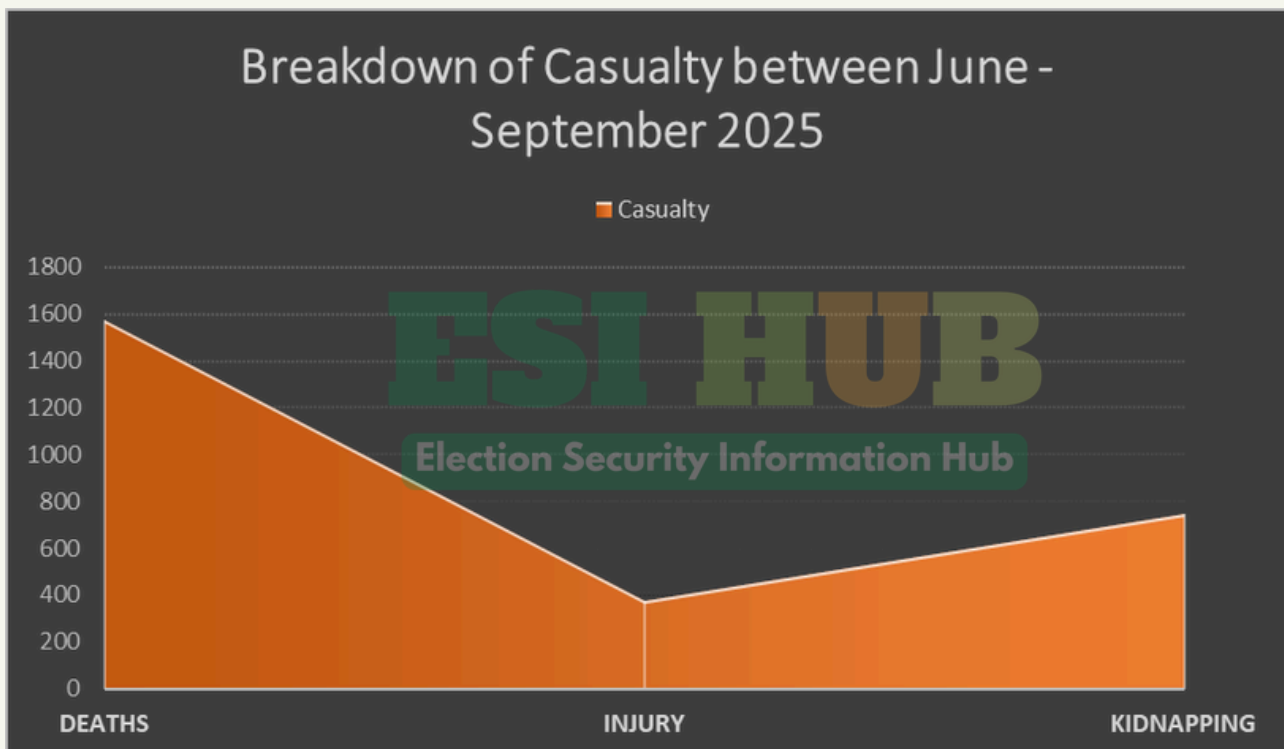
As the Secretariat of the National Peace Committee (NPC), The Kukah Centre provides administrative support to the NPC — a non-governmental, non-partisan body of eminent Nigerians that has been central to Nigeria’s democratic stability since its establishment in 2015. The Committee is widely recognized 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

Between June and September 2025, Nigeria's security environment remained volatile, reflecting both the persistence of multidimensional threats and the emergence of new dynamics across regions. During this period, the Elections Security Information (ESI) Hub documented a total of 624 security-related incidents spanning all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). These incidents collectively resulted in 1,575 deaths, 374 injuries, and 745 kidnappings, amounting to 3700 internally displaced nationwide. The figures underscore the sustained human toll of insecurity in the third quarter of 2025 and highlight the spatial and temporal variations that define Nigeria's evolving conflict landscape.

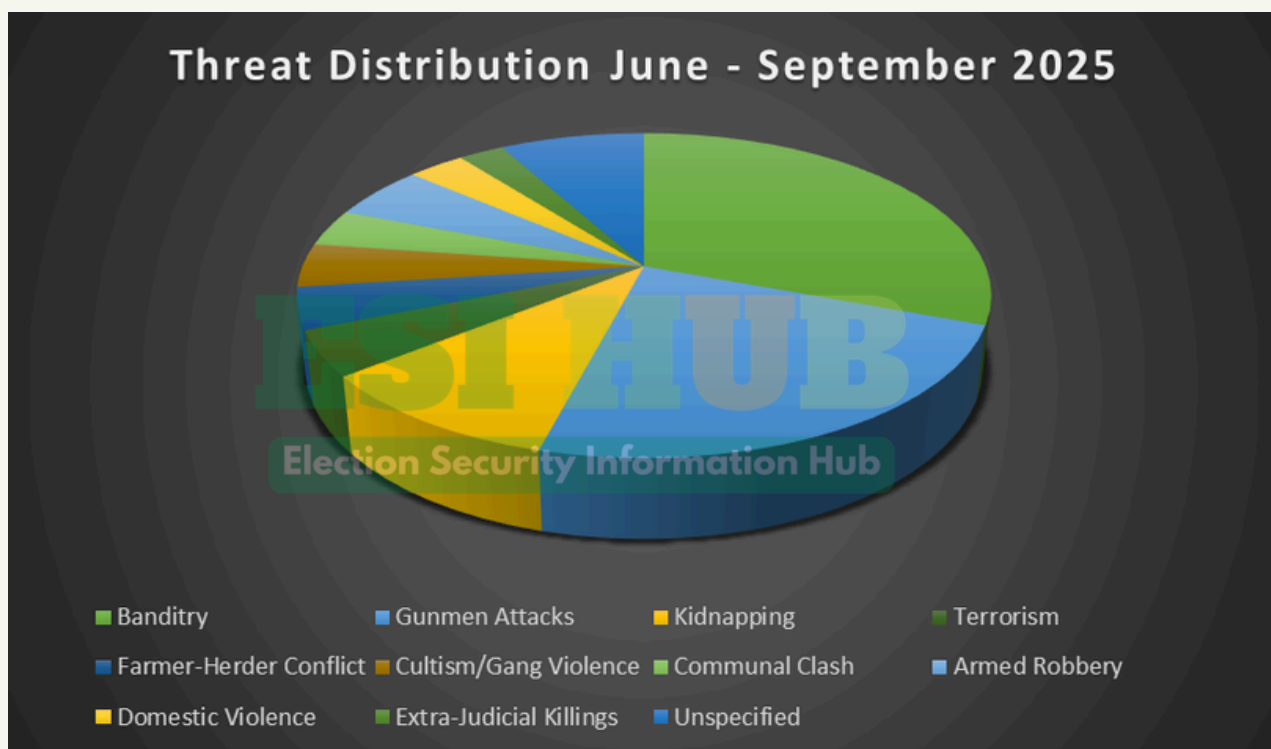
Beyond their humanitarian impact, these figures reveal the depth of insecurity shaping Nigeria's pre-electoral climate. The concentration of incidents in politically active states and the escalation of localized violence highlight how insecurity directly threatens voter participation, electoral logistics, and the credibility of democratic processes. In several regions, particularly the North West and North Central, the overlap between conflict flashpoints and upcoming electoral constituencies underscores the potential for violence to influence campaign activities, voter mobility, and turnout.



This reporting period serves as the baseline analytical reference for the 2025–2027 electoral monitoring cycle. As the first consolidated quarterly assessment under the ESI Hub's enhanced data framework, it establishes a foundation against which future reports will benchmark escalation patterns, actor realignments, and the evolution of flashpoints over time.

The insights derived from this quarter’s analysis are intended to guide preventive interventions by electoral management bodies, security agencies, policymakers, and international partners as preparations for subsequent elections intensify.

Overall, the data reveals that insecurity is widespread, complex, and asymmetrical across Nigeria’s geopolitical zones. Banditry and Gunmen Attacks jointly accounted for more than half of all recorded incidents (52%) and nearly 60% of documented casualties, confirming their continued dominance in the national threat spectrum. The North West and North Central zones emerged as the primary theatres of violence, largely driven by organized bandit networks, recurrent communal clashes, and the entrenchment of kidnapping-for-ransom (KFR) economies. Within these zones, Zamfara and Kaduna States were classified as Crimson (Critical) flashpoints under the ESI Hub’s Flashpoint Severity Classification Framework (v2.0), owing to their exceptionally high incident frequency and casualty magnitude. Benue, Borno, and Plateau States followed as Red (High Risk) zones, where persistent inter-communal violence and insurgency-related attacks sustained elevated lethality throughout the period.



Temporal analysis indicates that September 2025 recorded the highest single-month incident count with 229 cases, marking a notable shift from lethal confrontations toward abduction-focused tactics. This transition reflects the increasing operational sophistication of violent actors, who appear to be prioritizing ransom-driven economic incentives over mass-casualty assaults. The proliferation of abductions, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas, signals the persistence of organized criminal structures and the deepening commodification of human security.

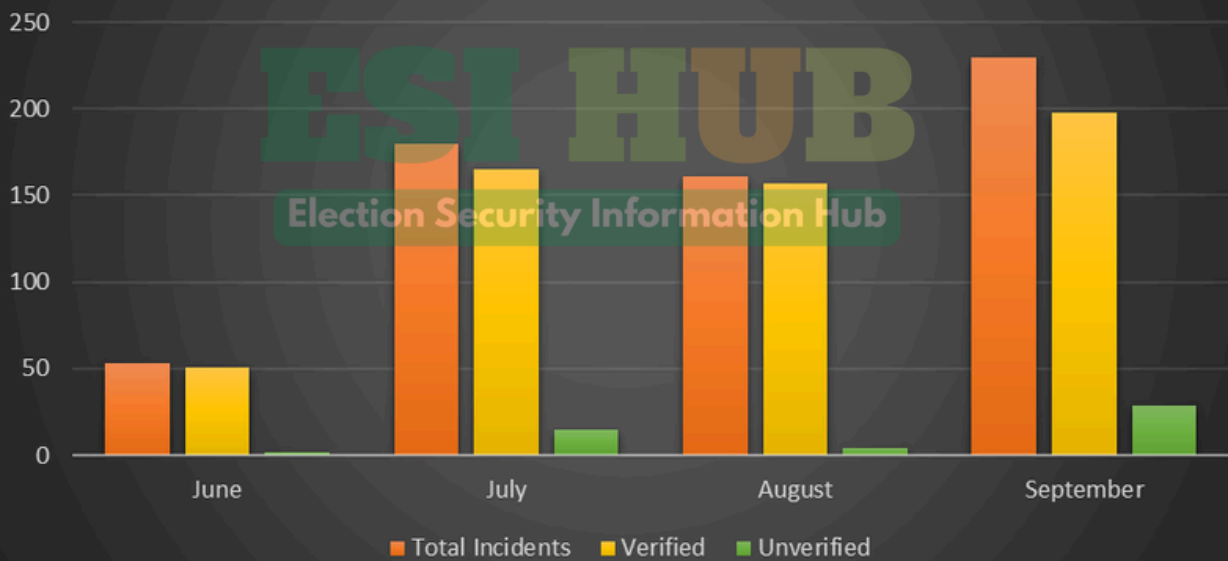
No of Incidents by Month



Nearly half of all incidents (44.9%) remain unverified, underscoring systemic gaps in multi-source validation and the need for stronger coordination among reporting actors. Verification challenges are most pronounced in remote or contested areas where communication infrastructure and security presence are limited. This data gap not only constrains analytical precision but also poses challenges for real-time early-warning systems and humanitarian response planning.

Addressing these gaps will require stronger collaboration among security agencies, civil society monitors, and local networks, alongside improved verification protocols and data-sharing arrangements. Exploring options such as a centralized validation mechanism and targeted field verification in high-risk zones could enhance the reliability and timeliness of future datasets.

Monthly Breakdown of Incidents by Verification



Beyond the quantitative dimensions, this quarter exposes the institutional and human geography of insecurity in Nigeria. It is one characterized by increasing decentralization, localized adaptation, and blurred distinctions between organized crime, political violence, and communal retaliation. The rise in civilian-led aggression, mob actions, and multi-actor incidents points to the gradual erosion of traditional community-level deterrence and the weakening of local governance structures. Such shifts suggest that violence is no longer confined to conventional insurgent or criminal actors but is diffusing into everyday social relations and local dispute systems.

As a baseline quarter, the June–September 2025 report provides a strategic lens for tracking Nigeria’s security trajectory in the lead-up to the electoral season. The ESI Hub’s analytical framework: combining real-time incident monitoring with the Flashpoint Severity Index (FSI) — enables continuous, data-driven assessment of both lethal and non-lethal threats. This approach supports the transition from reactive security management to proactive early-warning and early-response mechanisms, equipping national institutions and their international partners with the evidence required to anticipate, prevent, and mitigate violence before it escalates into election-related instability.

624 INCIDENTS

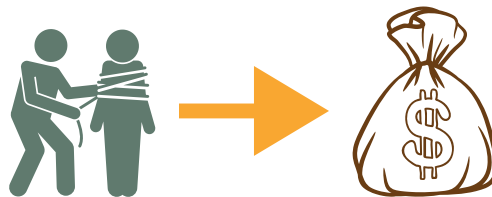
1949 CASUALTIES

745 KIDNAPPED

1575 DEATHS

374 INJURES

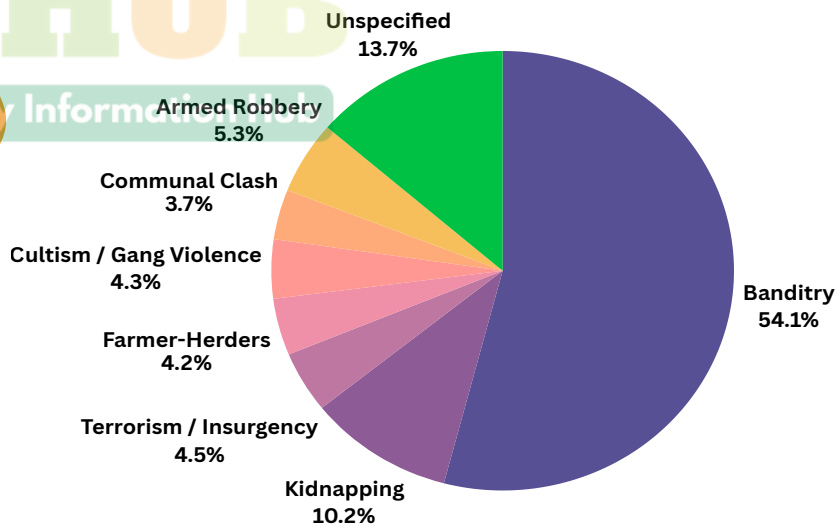
EMERGING THREAT: KIDNAPPING FOR RANSOM (KFR)



ESI HUB
Election Security Informatics

MOST AFFECTED STATES

- Zamfara
- Kaduna
- Benue
- Borno
- Plateau



INTRODUCTION

This inaugural edition of the Quarterly Threat Analysis marks a critical step in institutionalizing systematic, data-driven monitoring of election-related security dynamics in Nigeria. Developed by the Elections Security Information (ESI) Hub under The Kukah Centre, the report provides an integrated framework for observing, classifying, and interpreting security incidents that bear implications for electoral processes, democratic governance, and national stability. It is conceived not merely as a statistical exercise but as a strategic tool for preventive action and coordinated response.

The primary purpose of the Quarterly Threat Analysis is to strengthen understanding of the spatial, temporal, and thematic patterns of insecurity that shape Nigeria's electoral environment. By consolidating verified and unverified data from multiple sources—including field monitors, media tracking, and institutional partners—the report aims to generate actionable intelligence that supports risk mitigation, peacebuilding, and policy design. This analytical approach situates electoral security within the broader discourse on democratic consolidation and human security, recognizing that credible elections are inseparable from conditions of peace and public safety.

The relevance of this analysis lies in its ability to bridge data with decision-making. As recent election cycles have shown, threats to electoral integrity often emerge from complex intersections of criminal, communal, and political violence. Understanding these intersections is essential for effective prevention. The Quarterly Threat Analysis therefore links electoral security directly to credible elections, peace, and democratic stability, emphasizing that the protection of voters, candidates, institutions, and infrastructure is foundational to sustaining public confidence in Nigeria's democracy.

For stakeholders, the value of this framework is both diagnostic and strategic. It provides security agencies with early-warning insights to guide operational deployment; supports the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in identifying high-risk areas for logistics and poll management; assists civil society organizations (CSOs) in designing conflict-prevention interventions; and enables political parties and the media to contextualize security narratives responsibly. Moreover, by aligning its analytical standards with global frameworks such as United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) — Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX, 2023) and the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) — Conflict Intensity Index (2024), the ESI Hub ensures that its outputs are compatible with the information needs of international development partners, including the European Union, UNDP, and ECOWAS.

This report establishes a durable baseline framework to track, analyse, and respond to election security incidents over time. This analytical foundation contextualises the second half of 2025, the ESI Hub provides a reference point against which future fluctuations in threat levels can be measured, both in the pre-election buildup and in the aftermath of electoral contests.

The scope of this first edition spans the period from June to September 2025, covering incidents across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones. It integrates quantitative data on incident frequency and casualty magnitude with qualitative analysis of threat patterns, actor behaviors, and spatial clustering. The findings are national in coverage, they emphasize regional differentiation, highlighting the unique vulnerabilities of the North West and North Central zones, as well as the rising urban risks in the South South and South East.

By grounding its analysis in empirical data and internationally recognized methodologies, this inaugural report seeks to transform how election-related insecurity is tracked and interpreted in Nigeria. Its ultimate goal is to enable proactive, evidence-based interventions that strengthen peace, protect democratic institutions, and safeguard the legitimacy of Nigeria's electoral process.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology applied for this Quarterly Threat Analysis is the mixed-methods research; the integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches in the collection of data.^[1] It is a framework where qualitative and quantitative approaches are combined to check accuracy, verify and confirm data in order that findings are mutually corroborated.^[2] Additionally, it is designed to ensure analytical transparency, credibility, and replicability across reporting cycles. It combines quantitative data aggregation with qualitative interpretation to capture the scale, nature, and distribution of election-related insecurity in Nigeria, and how other forms of insecurity will likely impact the elections. The approach reflects the Elections Security Information (ESI) Hub's commitment to evidence-based reporting and aligns with global standards for conflict and humanitarian data management established by United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA, 2023); Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED, 2024); and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) — Early Warning Frameworks (2022)



^[1] Ahmad, Rabiah and Yunus, Zahri, 2012. "The Application of Mixed Method in Developing a Cyber Terrorism Framework". *Journal of Information Security* 3: 209-214, p. 210.

^[2] Ibid.

Institutional and Operational Framework of the ESI Hub

The Elections Security Information (ESI) Hub, functions as a multi-stakeholder coordination and intelligence platform, tasked with collecting, verifying, analysing, and disseminating security information relevant to Nigeria's electoral process.

The Hub's mandate is operationalized through a Six-Step Data Methodology, forming the backbone of its analytical workflow:

Data Gathering:

The ESI Hub establishes a comprehensive, real-time repository of election-related security information. Data is sourced from official channels (INEC, security agencies), civil society networks, traditional and social media monitoring, and field reports submitted by trained observers and citizen monitors. This ensures a multi-perspective view of threats ranging from insurgent activity to localized electoral violence.

Data Verification:

The ESI Hub establishes a comprehensive, real-time repository of election-related security information. Data is sourced from official channels (INEC, security agencies), civil society networks, traditional and social media monitoring, and field reports submitted by trained observers and citizen monitors. This ensures a multi-perspective view of threats ranging from insurgent activity to localized electoral violence.

Data Cleaning:

Once verified, data is standardized for analysis. Duplicate entries, inconsistent spellings, or incomplete records are removed. Standardized fields – date, location, actor, incident type, and verification status, ensuring that datasets remain internally coherent and analytically compatible.

Data Analysis:

The ESI Hub's Research Team applies both quantitative and qualitative analytical tools to extract insight. Statistical models highlight frequency, lethality, and spatial distribution, while narrative analysis identifies underlying social and political drivers. Data visualization through charts, maps, and flashpoint grids enhances interpretability for stakeholders.

Data Validation:

Preceding dissemination, all findings undergo internal peer review and validation by qualified. This multi-level validation reinforces the accuracy, credibility, and neutrality of the analysis, particularly in politically sensitive contexts.

Reporting and Publication:

The validated analysis is synthesized into reports, policy briefs, and public communication outputs. The Research Manager reviews all analytical products, ensuring methodological compliance and quality assurance. In coordination with the Media and Communications Officer, findings are also adapted into public-facing formats infographics, short videos, podcasts, and civic education materials, ensuring accessibility for diverse audiences while preserving accuracy.

This structured methodology guarantees that every output of the ESI Hub—whether a technical report or media brief is grounded in verified, data-driven evidence and consistent with both national and international analytical standards.

Data Sources and Verification Architecture

The data underpinning this report were compiled from multiple triangulated sources to maximize validity and reduce bias. Primary inputs included field-level incident reports, media monitoring outputs, and verified submissions from security agencies and civil society organizations (CSOs).

The ESI Hub's nationwide monitoring network, composed of state observers, community informants, and research fellows, provides continuous situational awareness across all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. These field networks are supplemented by open-source intelligence (OSINT)—including digital verification platforms, news monitoring systems, and structured data collaborations with partners under the EU-SDGN II program.

All incidents are cross-referenced, geo-tagged, and time-stamped before inclusion. The verification outcomes (46.5% verified, 44.9% unverified, and 8.6% unspecified) are directly integrated into this report's Flashpoint Severity Index (FSI) calculations to ensure analytical proportionality.

Severity Classification and Analytical Framework

The Flashpoint Severity Index (FSI) is designed by the analysts as a unique algorithm combining international standard classification methods as well as statistical process. It is the analytical engine for ranking flashpoints by combining incident frequency (volatility) and casualty magnitude (impact) into a unified score:

$$\text{FSI} = (0.4 \times \text{Normalized Incident Frequency}) + (0.6 \times \text{Normalized Casualty Magnitude})$$

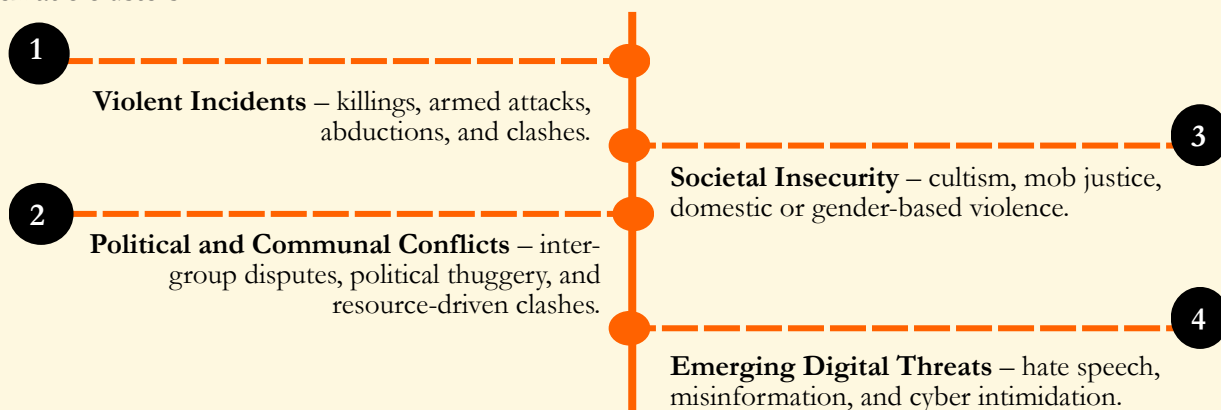
The weighting scheme emphasizes human impact while maintaining sensitivity to recurring instability. The resulting index produces four severity categories:

- **Crimson (Critical):** Statistical outliers exceeding $Q3 + 1.5 \times IQR$.
- **Red (High Risk):** At or above the 67th percentile.
- **Yellow (Moderate Risk):** Between the 33rd and 66th percentiles.
- **Green (Low Risk):** At or below the 33rd percentile.

This hybrid method ensures that both high-frequency incidents (chronic volatility) and high-casualty events (acute crises) are captured in equal analytical weight.

Categorization and Typology of Incidents

To ensure consistency across datasets and reporting cycles, the ESI Hub employs a standardized incident typology capturing the diversity of election-related threats. Incidents are classified into four thematic clusters:



Each entry is encoded with key metadata: date, state, LGA, actor(s), verification status, and source category. This structured classification ensures cross-comparability across time, geography, and reporting partners.

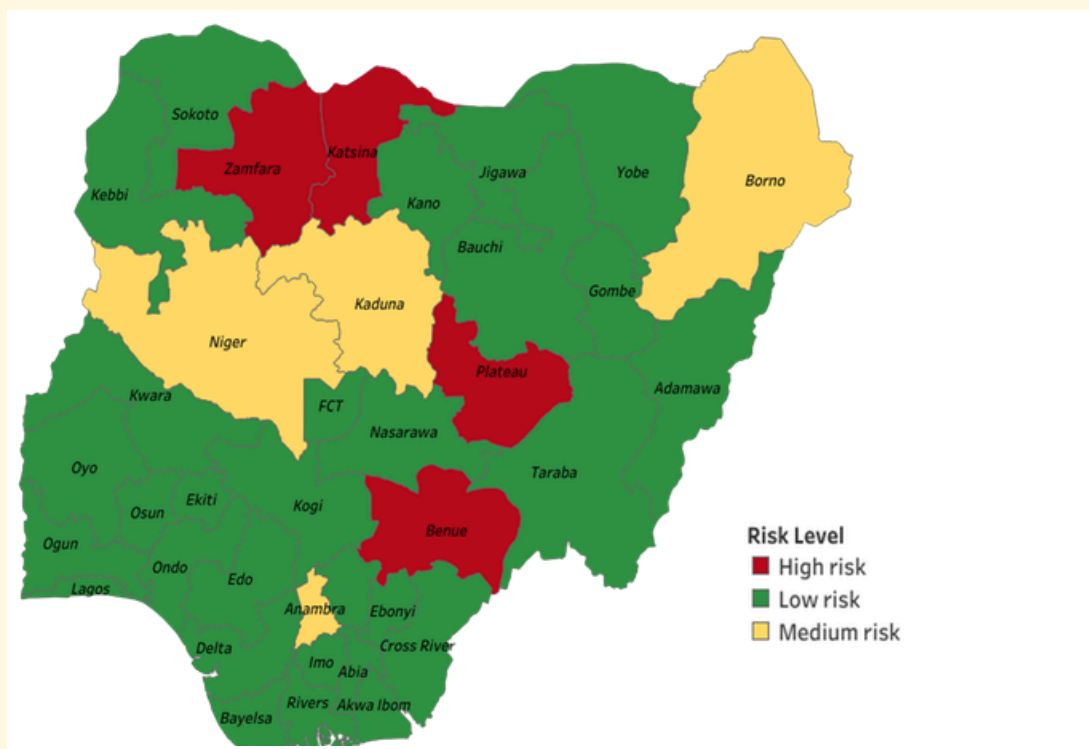
Limitations

Several structural and contextual limitations must be acknowledged. Underreporting remains prevalent in areas with poor connectivity or security access, particularly across insurgency-affected LGAs. Verification lag may occur when events are difficult to confirm through independent channels. Temporal bias can emerge from uneven media coverage, while actor ambiguity complicates causal attribution in multi-party conflicts. These limitations do not undermine the validity of the analysis but highlight the need for iterative verification and methodological caution.

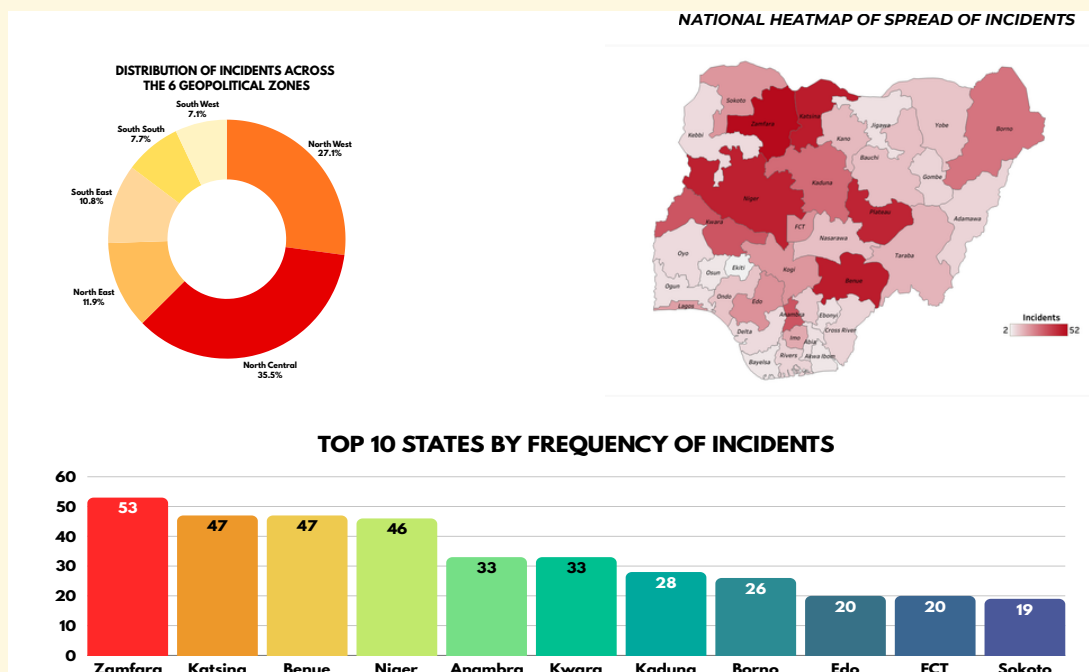
Future Evolution

The ESI Hub recognizes the dynamic nature of Nigeria's conflict and data ecosystems. Future reporting cycles will integrate machine-learning-based event classification, geospatial normalization per 100,000 inhabitants, and automated incident harvesting from digital media streams. The Hub is also developing a centralized Election Security Dashboard, linking its datasets with INEC's Election Risk Management System (ERMS) and NPC's peace accord monitoring platforms.

The long-term vision is to evolve from periodic reporting toward a real-time, interoperable election security intelligence architecture one capable of informing early-warning, guiding resource deployment, and shaping peacebuilding interventions nationwide.



Future Evolution



Between June and September 2025, Nigeria recorded a total of 624 security-related incidents, marking the first consolidated dataset under the Elections Security Information (ESI) Hub’s upgraded analytical architecture. These incidents collectively resulted in 1,784 deaths, 352 injuries, and 817 kidnappings, amounting to 2,953 total casualties nationwide. This reporting period therefore establishes the empirical baseline against which all future analyses of electoral security will be measured.

Beyond their immediate humanitarian toll, these incidents have direct implications for Nigeria's electoral and democratic landscape. The concentration of violence in politically active states—particularly those preparing for off-cycle elections—poses risks to voter confidence, campaign activities, and electoral logistics. Recurrent insecurity also threatens to restrict civic participation and distort political representation by discouraging turnout in high-risk areas.

Incident Count and Temporal Context

The quarterly dataset reveals clear temporal variation. June recorded 53 incidents, representing the lowest activity level of the period, while September peaked sharply at 229 incidents, signaling a significant intensification of insecurity toward the end of the quarter. July (180 incidents) and August (162 incidents) maintained consistently high levels of volatility, suggesting that insecurity in Nigeria is sustained rather than episodic. This upward trajectory aligns with historic patterns in which violent incidents rise as the electoral cycle enters its mid-phase, when political mobilization and resource competition deepen pre-existing local conflicts.

Geographic Spread and Regional Patterns

The distribution of incidents was national in scope but regionally concentrated, underscoring Nigeria's asymmetric security landscape. The North West and North Central zones collectively accounted for over half of all recorded incidents (52%), driven primarily by banditry, communal clashes, and kidnapping-for-ransom (KFR) operations.

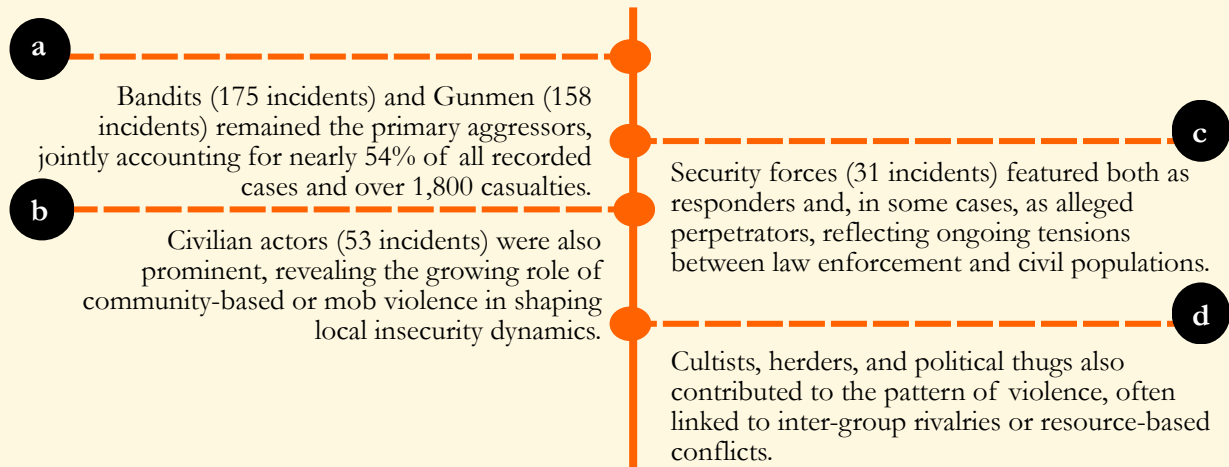
The North East continued to experience insurgent violence, though at a lower frequency compared to previous years, while the South East and South South zones reported sporadic outbreaks of politically motivated violence, cultism, and gang clashes. In the South West, criminality including armed robbery, cult attacks, and targeted abductions—remained the dominant form of insecurity, often spilling into urban centers such as Lagos, Ibadan, and Akure.

At the subnational level, Zamfara (72 incidents) and Kaduna (49 incidents) were identified as the most volatile states, both classified as Crimson (Critical) under the Flashpoint Severity Framework due to their high casualty and kidnapping rates. Benue (71 incidents), Borno (39 incidents), and Plateau (39 incidents) followed closely, representing Red (High Risk) zones characterized by communal and insurgency-driven violence.

Conversely, southern states such as Ekiti, Cross River, and Bayelsa recorded the fewest incidents, classified as Green (Low Risk), indicating relative stability though not immunity from sporadic violence.

Actors Involved

The pattern of insecurity during this period highlights the diversification of perpetrators. Among the recorded incidents, non-state armed actors were dominant, reflecting both the fragmentation of organized violence and the erosion of centralized control.



This diverse actor spectrum underscores the blurring of lines between criminality, political violence, and communal unrest, which complicates attribution and policy response. It also highlights the necessity for nuanced early-warning frameworks that can distinguish between opportunistic violence and politically motivated aggression.

Typology of Incidents

The typology of insecurity recorded in this quarter reinforces the multi-dimensional nature of Nigeria's threat environment. The most frequent forms included banditry, gunmen attacks, kidnappings, terrorism, and communal clashes, which together accounted for more than 70% of the quarter's incidents.



- a** Banditry emerged as the most recurrent and lethal threat, with 184 incidents leading to 1,274 casualties, including 379 kidnappings.
- b** Gunmen Attacks followed with 140 incidents and 463 casualties, characterized by sporadic shootings and village raids.
- c** Terrorism and insurgent activity, primarily in Borno and Adamawa, resulted in 214 deaths across 27 incidents.
- d** Farmer–Herder Conflicts and Communal Clashes remained localized but deadly, reflecting persistent grievances over land use and political boundaries.
- e** Cultism, domestic violence, and armed robbery represented the core of societal insecurity in the southern states.
- f** Digital threats such as hate speech and misinformation were recorded at lower frequencies but noted as emerging trends with potential for escalation as the election period advances.

These diverse threat types demonstrate that electoral insecurity cannot be understood solely through physical violence but must include the socio-digital and psychological dimensions that shape voter behavior and public trust.

Baseline Benchmark and Analytical Implications

The typology of insecurity recorded in this quarter reinforces the multi-dimensional nature of Nigeria’s threat environment. The most frequent forms included banditry, gunmen attacks, kidnappings, terrorism, and communal clashes, which together accounted for more than 70% of the quarter’s incidents.

The June – September 2025 period establishes a baseline benchmark for tracking security dynamics with electoral relevance in Nigeria. The 624 recorded incidents represent the broader conflict and insecurity context within which election-related risks are evolving. This dataset serves as the reference point against which subsequent quarterly fluctuations—particularly those intersecting with electoral processes—will be compared.

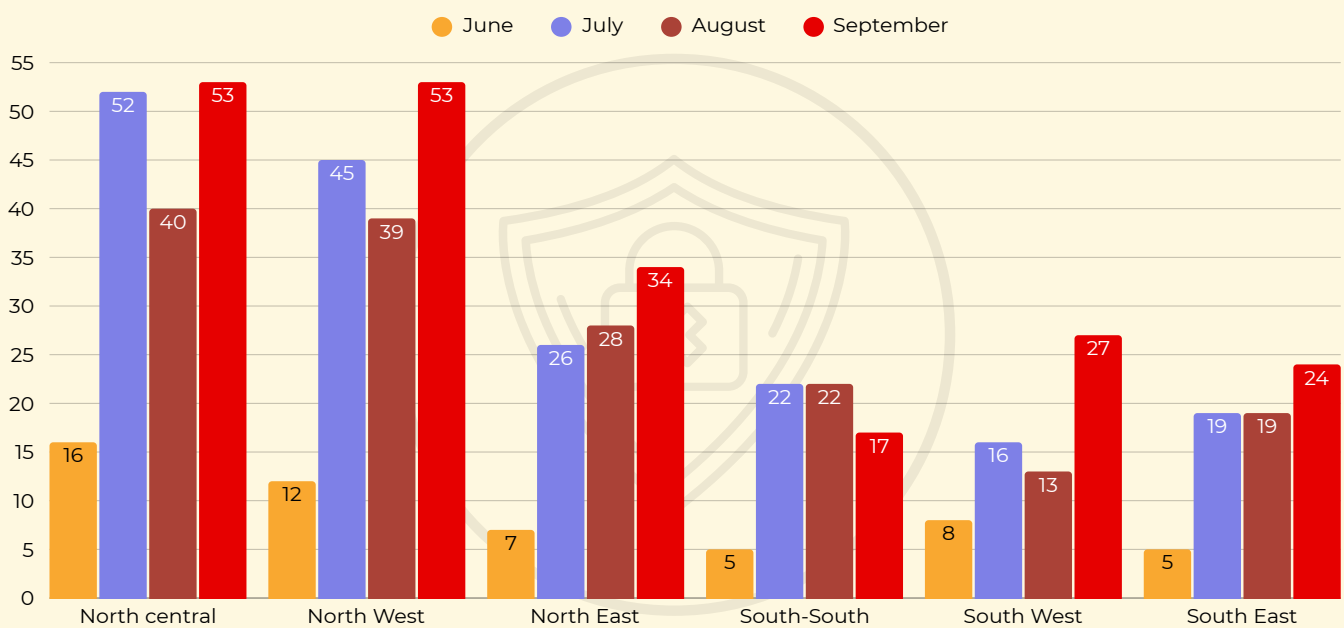
By maintaining methodological continuity, each new reporting cycle will not only identify emerging flashpoints but also measure the persistence, migration, or diffusion of incidents that have potential electoral implications. This approach ensures that preventive strategies remain data-driven, adaptive, and sensitive to the overlap between general insecurity and election-specific threats.

SECURITY TRENDS AND PATTERNS

The analysis of security trends between June and September 2025 reveals that Nigeria's conflict landscape remains dynamic, adaptive, and deeply intertwined with the political and governance environment. The Elections Security Information (ESI) Hub's data show evolving geographic concentration, actor behavior, and thematic linkages between violent incidents and political developments. These trends form the empirical foundation for early-warning insights in advance of the 2026 off-cycle and 2027 general elections.

Distribution and Regional Dynamics

Number of Insecurity Incidents by Geopolitical Zones June - September 2025



Spatial analysis confirms a persistent North–South divide in both the nature and intensity of insecurity.

North West and North Central Zones remain the epicentres of lethal violence, accounting for over 50% of recorded incidents and 60% of casualties during the quarter. States such as Zamfara, Kaduna, and Niger recorded recurring raids by armed groups, reflecting the consolidation of bandit networks and weak deterrence capacity of local security formations.

Benue, Plateau, and Nasarawa in the North Central zone exhibited elevated communal and farmer–herder violence, largely linked to land-use disputes and political boundary tensions.

In the North East, the operational tempo of insurgent groups declined marginally but remained significant, with Borno and Yobe registering periodic attacks around former conflict corridors.

- Southern Nigeria presented a contrasting threat environment — while lethality was lower, incidents were more diffuse, urban, and politically charged. The South East saw intermittent violence linked to separatist agitation and political protests, whereas the South South recorded incidents of cultism, oil-related criminality, and electoral intimidation.

- South West states, particularly Lagos and Oyo, experienced an uptick in targeted kidnappings and organized robbery, signaling a rise in urban insecurity tied to economic stressors.

The geographic data confirm that violence has not only persisted but diversified — moving beyond traditional insurgent zones into semi-urban and peri-urban contexts, a trend that increases both visibility and civilian vulnerability.

Correlation with Political Activities

The temporal clustering of incidents suggests a strong correlation between political milestones and spikes in insecurity. Across multiple states, data points from the ESI Hub indicate heightened violence around party primaries, campaign declarations, and court litigations.

- The months of July and September corresponded with periods of intra-party tensions, campaign preparations, and judicial rulings, all of which coincided with localized outbreaks of violence, intimidation, or protest.

- In Benue, Rivers, and Kogi, clashes between rival political supporters and youth groups were reported following the release of candidate lists and contentious nomination processes.

- In Kano and Lagos, pre-campaign mobilization triggered confrontations between party-aligned transport unions and civic groups, reflecting the politicization of informal power structures.

- At the federal level, the court judgments on pre-election disputes appeared to influence the tone of public discourse, amplifying narratives of exclusion and regional grievance that often translate into physical aggression at the subnational level.

While not all incidents were directly political, the timing and nature of escalation show that political processes serve as amplifiers of pre-existing security fragility. This underscores the importance of embedding early-warning mechanisms into electoral calendars, particularly during nomination windows and judicial pronouncements.

Evolution of Threat Behaviors

The quarter's data indicate a tactical evolution among violent actors.

- Kidnapping-for-Ransom (KFR) has overtaken mass killings as the preferred modus operandi among armed groups, signifying a strategic pivot from territorial domination to economic extraction. This shift is evident in the rising proportion of abduction cases relative to deaths—817 kidnappings versus 1,784 fatalities.
- Gunmen attacks, often unclaimed and ambiguously motivated, increased in semi-urban areas, suggesting a convergence between politically motivated violence and organized criminality.
- Bandit groups displayed growing operational sophistication, using coordinated assaults and cross-border retreat routes between Kaduna, Katsina, and Zamfara.
- Cult and youth gangs in southern Nigeria continued to act as localized instruments of intimidation, frequently co-opted by political patrons ahead of campaign seasons.
- Meanwhile, security forces' engagements reflected a dual narrative—both reactive operations against armed actors and allegations of heavy-handed enforcement contributing to civilian unrest.

This behavioral diversification complicates traditional state responses, which tend to focus on single-actor threats rather than multi-actor, economically driven violence with political overlays.

Early-Warning Indicators

Based on the ESI Hub's Flashpoint Severity Index (FSI) and verification-weighted trend models, several early-warning indicators emerge:

- **Escalation Risk:** The consistent month-on-month increase in incidents from June (53) to September (229) signals a rising volatility curve that may extend into Q4 2025 if unmitigated.
- **Geospatial Overlap:** States with recurrent high-intensity events—Zamfara, Kaduna, Benue, Plateau, and Borno—are at risk of contagion effects, where local violence radiates into adjoining LGAs.
- **Actor Transformation:** The emergence of hybrid criminal-political alliances (e.g., gangs co-opted for political intimidation) suggests that traditional security frameworks may underestimate election-specific risks.
- **Economic and Governance Drivers:** Rising food inflation, displacement, and youth unemployment remain structural accelerants of insecurity, particularly in agrarian and peri-urban areas.



Information Ecosystem Risks: The digital environment is increasingly weaponized through misinformation and hate speech, heightening polarization and reinforcing physical security risks.

Collectively, these indicators support the ESI Hub’s early-warning recommendation that multi-agency coordination, proactive intelligence-sharing, and localized peace interventions should be intensified ahead of the 2026 off-cycle elections.

Implications for Policy and Operations

The observed trends emphasize that Nigeria’s security risks are increasingly political in expression but socio-economic in root cause. The data demonstrate that electoral processes, rather than creating new conflicts, often activate latent grievances that manifest violently when combined with weak state capacity and economic stress.

Effective mitigation will therefore require not only law enforcement responses but also confidence-building and community-level engagement, including civic dialogue platforms supported by the National Peace Committee (NPC), INEC, and local civil society partners.

The ESI Hub’s continued data-driven monitoring provides the foundation for these preventive interventions, ensuring that future responses are anticipatory rather than reactive.

DRIVERS OF INSECURITY

The June–September 2025 analysis period highlights that Nigeria’s security challenges are not only event-driven but structurally embedded. The incidents captured during the quarter — 624 in total, cutting across 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory — stem from a complex interplay of political, ethno-religious, economic, informational, and institutional factors. Understanding these drivers is critical for building predictive intelligence and designing early interventions ahead of the electoral cycle’s peak period.

The Electoral Offences Tracking System (EOTS) findings reinforce the structural link between governance fragility and insecurity in Nigeria. Beyond traditional drivers such as political rivalry, communal division, and economic deprivation, the EOTS dataset underscores the centrality of electoral contestation as both a trigger and amplifier of violence. The data reveal that 70% of recorded electoral offences occurred before elections, often mirroring the same spatial and actor dynamics seen in broader insecurity patterns — particularly in Anambra, Edo, and Kaduna. This convergence illustrates that electoral periods do not create violence *ex nihilo*; rather, they reactivate and intensify pre-existing fault lines through political manipulation, disinformation, and weak institutional response. Accordingly, strengthening the integrity and responsiveness of electoral and security institutions emerges as both a peacebuilding and preventive security imperative.

The ESI Hub’s cross-sectoral assessment identifies five primary categories of insecurity drivers, which together define the contextual baseline for national and subnational stability.

Political Rivalries and Intra-Party Disputes

Politics remains the most consistent accelerator of violent incidents within Nigeria’s electoral landscape. The data reveal that localized political rivalries, intra-party disputes, and pre-election litigations have increasingly triggered confrontations across multiple states, reinforcing a pattern where political contestation directly translates into physical insecurity.

Findings from the Electoral Offences Tracking System (EOTS) confirm that political rivalry is the most violent and recurrent trigger of insecurity in the current electoral cycle. Political-related offences accounted for nearly one-third of all incidents captured under the EOTS, demonstrating that electoral competition has become a consistent precursor to localized insecurity. The overlap between political incidents and violent flashpoints was most pronounced in Anambra, Edo, and Kaduna, where pre-campaign tensions and rival mobilizations escalated into open hostilities.

Between July and September 2025—a period coinciding with candidate nominations and early campaign activities—several states, including Benue, Kogi, Rivers, and Kano, experienced violent clashes linked to factional disputes and contestations over party control. Youth groups aligned with rival political blocs engaged in street-level intimidation, while thugs and informal militia networks were mobilized to influence public gatherings or disrupt opposition events. The recurrent nature of these incidents suggests that political violence is not spontaneous but strategically orchestrated to secure territorial dominance and voter influence ahead of elections.

Such patterns reflect the instrumentalization of violence as a political strategy, where physical coercion replaces institutional negotiation. The absence of intra-party democracy, coupled with opaque candidate selection processes, continues to erode trust and escalate competition into violence. This aligns with historic findings from the CLEEN Foundation (2023) and UNDP Governance Indicators (2022)^[1], which link violent contestation to weak internal party regulation and monetized political culture^[2].

Ethno-Religious and Communal Tensions

Communal conflicts remain a deeply entrenched feature of Nigeria’s insecurity profile. The quarter’s data confirm the persistence of ethno-religious and identity-based violence, especially in the North Central zone (Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa) and parts of the North West (Kaduna, Zamfara).

While some incidents were directly political, most were hybrid in nature—political triggers activating pre-existing ethnic or religious fault lines. In Plateau and Benue, land-use disputes between farmers and herders escalated into violent confrontations, resulting in multiple fatalities and displacement. In Kaduna, both rural and urban communities remain polarized along ethno-religious lines, providing fertile ground for manipulation by political actors.

^[1] CLEEN Foundation. (2023). Electoral security threats in Nigeria: Mapping violence risks during the 2023 elections. Lagos: CLEEN Foundation.

^[2] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2022). Governance indicators: Conflict prevention and democratic stability. New York: UNDP.

These conflicts are not isolated flashpoints but systemic expressions of unresolved structural tensions over land rights, traditional authority, and representation. As noted in UNDP’s Early Warning for Sustaining Peace Report (2024), localized violence in Nigeria often stems from identity narratives that have been politicized and sustained through generational grievances^[5].

Socioeconomic Triggers: Poverty, Unemployment, and Marginalization

Economic insecurity continues to serve as a root cause and amplifier of violence. Youth unemployment, income inequality, and social exclusion collectively form the socioeconomic substratum upon which criminal and political violence thrives.

In the North West, banditry and kidnapping-for-ransom have evolved from survivalist tactics into structured economic enterprises, sustained by poverty, extortion economies, and limited state presence. In urban and peri-urban centres such as Lagos, Port Harcourt, and Kano, unemployed youth are frequently recruited into cult gangs or political thuggery networks for financial incentives^[6].

The Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (2025) reports youth unemployment at over 33%, while inflationary pressures and declining real incomes have deepened household vulnerability^[7]. These conditions perpetuate what the ESI Hub terms the “economics of insecurity” — a self-sustaining feedback loop in which insecurity erodes livelihoods, and poverty, in turn, reproduces insecurity^[8].

Without sustained socio-economic interventions — especially livelihood programs targeting youth in violence-prone LGAs — purely militarized responses are unlikely to produce durable stability^[9].

^[9] World Bank. (2024). Nigeria economic update: Managing the poverty–conflict nexus. Washington, DC: World Bank Group

Proliferation of Misinformation and Hate Speech

The digital environment has become an emerging frontier of insecurity, blurring the boundaries between online agitation and offline violence. During the quarter, the ESI Hub documented a rise in misinformation, ethnic profiling, and hate narratives across major social media platforms, particularly during high-profile political events. EOTS findings reinforce that digital misinformation and hate speech are not peripheral issues but primary accelerants of conflict. Online narratives often preceded physical violence, particularly in the South East and South West, where disinformation about candidates and ethnic groups mobilized offline hostilities.

Unverified claims of electoral bias, doctored videos, and inflammatory commentary have been used to mobilize outrage or delegitimize state institutions. In regions such as the South East and North Central, digital rumors have directly triggered protests, vigilantism, and retaliatory violence^[10].

^[5] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2024). Early warning for sustaining peace: Integrated approaches to conflict prevention in Africa. New York: UNDP.

^[6] Okoli, A. C., & Nwankwo, I. (2023). Youth militancy, urban insecurity, and electoral politics in Nigeria. *African Peace Review*, 14(3), 27–49.

^[7] National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). (2025). Nigeria Labour Force Survey Q2 2025. Abuja: NBS.

^[8] Nextier SPD. (2024). The economics of insecurity: Banditry, ransom, and survival in Nigeria’s North West. Abuja: Nextier SPD

^[9] World Bank. (2024). Nigeria economic update: Managing the poverty–conflict nexus. Washington, DC: World Bank Group

^[10] [10] Ndukwe, I. (2024). Online hate speech and electoral violence in Nigeria: A content analysis of social media narratives. *African Journal of Political Communication*, 9(1), 112–135.

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES, 2024) warns that Nigeria’s unregulated online ecosystem amplifies misinformation faster than traditional counter-narratives can respond, particularly in periods of political contestation. The ESI Hub’s digital monitoring corroborates this, showing that digital hate speech peaks within 48 hours of major political announcements or judicial rulings^[11].

This highlights the urgent need for multi-stakeholder media literacy programs, digital verification units, and ethical communication codes—especially for political actors and influencers whose narratives shape public sentiment.

Institutional Weaknesses and Security Gaps

The persistence of insecurity across Nigeria reflects not only social drivers but also institutional fragility within both electoral and security systems. The quarter’s data expose gaps in coordination, rapid response, and accountability across key agencies tasked with safeguarding elections and public order.

While the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) continues to advance technological innovations in election administration, its field-level risk management mechanisms remain under-integrated with security operations^[12]. Similarly, the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) shows uneven functionality across states, with limited intelligence-sharing and delayed incident response in high-risk zones^[13]. “EOTS data underscores institutional fragility not only within the security sector but also within electoral management structures. INEC’s operational lapses, selective enforcement by security agencies, and absence of rapid accountability frameworks collectively deepen the culture of impunity that fuels wider insecurity.

At the security level, overstretched personnel, inadequate logistics, and limited community engagement have weakened state presence in many LGAs, particularly in rural flashpoints such as Tsafe (Zamfara), Guma (Benue), and Monguno (Borno). These structural weaknesses enable non-state actors to operate with impunity and erode citizen confidence in state protection.

Strengthening institutional coordination — particularly between INEC, security agencies, and peacebuilding actors such as the National Peace Committee (NPC) — remains crucial to mitigating risks ahead of the next electoral phase^[14].

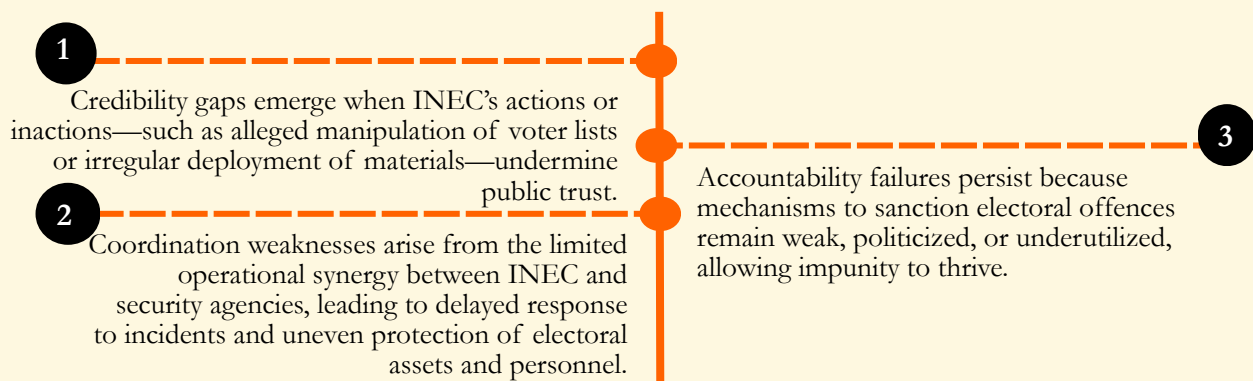
This interdependence underscores the need for integrated responses — combining political dialogue, socio-economic inclusion, strategic communication, and institutional reform. The ESI Hub’s holistic monitoring model, which triangulates political, social, and economic indicators, is designed to provide the evidence base for such multi-dimensional interventions.

^[11] International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). (2024). Digital democracy and disinformation in sub-Saharan Africa. Washington, DC: IFES.

^[12] Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). (2024). Strategic plan for election security coordination 2024–2027. Abuja: INEC.

^[13] The Kukah Centre. (2025). Election Security Information (ESI) Hub Quarterly Dataset (June–September 2025). Abuja: The Kukah Centre.

^[14] Adebayo, T., & Okafor, C. (2023). Civil–military coordination and the dynamics of state fragility in Nigeria. *Journal of African Security Studies*, 18(2), 45–63.



The EOTS data provides tangible evidence of this fragility. For instance, allegations of INEC misconduct in Anambra, Ogun, and FCT—ranging from tampering with candidate lists to collusion with party actors—mirror broader governance challenges long documented in Nigeria's electoral history. Similarly, the inability of security agencies to prevent or swiftly address vote buying and thuggery incidents in Edo, Lagos, and Kaduna underscores operational vulnerabilities within ICCES's preventive framework.

Ultimately, institutional weakness does not merely permit electoral offences—it legitimizes them by eroding deterrence. The blurred lines between political authority and institutional neutrality transform electoral management bodies into contested arenas where violence becomes both an instrument and outcome of competition. Strengthening institutional capacity and independence is a prerequisite for stabilizing Nigeria's electoral landscape and mitigating the security risks that stem from governance failure^[15].

Electoral Contestation as a Conflict Multiplier

The convergence of political ambition, weak enforcement, and disinformation has positioned elections as both a barometer and a multiplier of Nigeria's broader insecurity. Data from the Electoral Offences Tracking System (EOTS) reveal that 70.3% of recorded offences occurred in the pre-election period, when political actors mobilized along existing ethnic, religious, and regional fault lines. This temporal pattern demonstrates that elections do not create new conflicts but reactivate latent tensions, transforming socio-political grievances into organized violence.

Elections serve as moments of concentrated political and economic stakes, where access to state resources and legitimacy is contested through both formal and informal means. Consequently, electoral periods often amplify underlying drivers of insecurity—including unemployment, exclusion, and identity-based polarization—by fusing them with elite competition and propaganda networks. Digital disinformation, as captured in nine verified EOTS cases, further magnifies this volatility by weaponizing identity narratives and deepening mistrust among communities.

The cyclical nature of these dynamics suggests that Nigeria's insecurity cannot be decoupled from its electoral processes. In regions such as Anambra, Edo, and Kaduna, spikes in violence during by-elections mirrored the geography of previous communal and political unrest, confirming the mutually reinforcing relationship between electoral conflict and general insecurity.

^[14] International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). (2024). Digital democracy and disinformation in sub-Saharan Africa. Washington, DC: IFES.

^[12] Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). (2024). Strategic plan for election security coordination 2024–2027. Abuja: INEC.

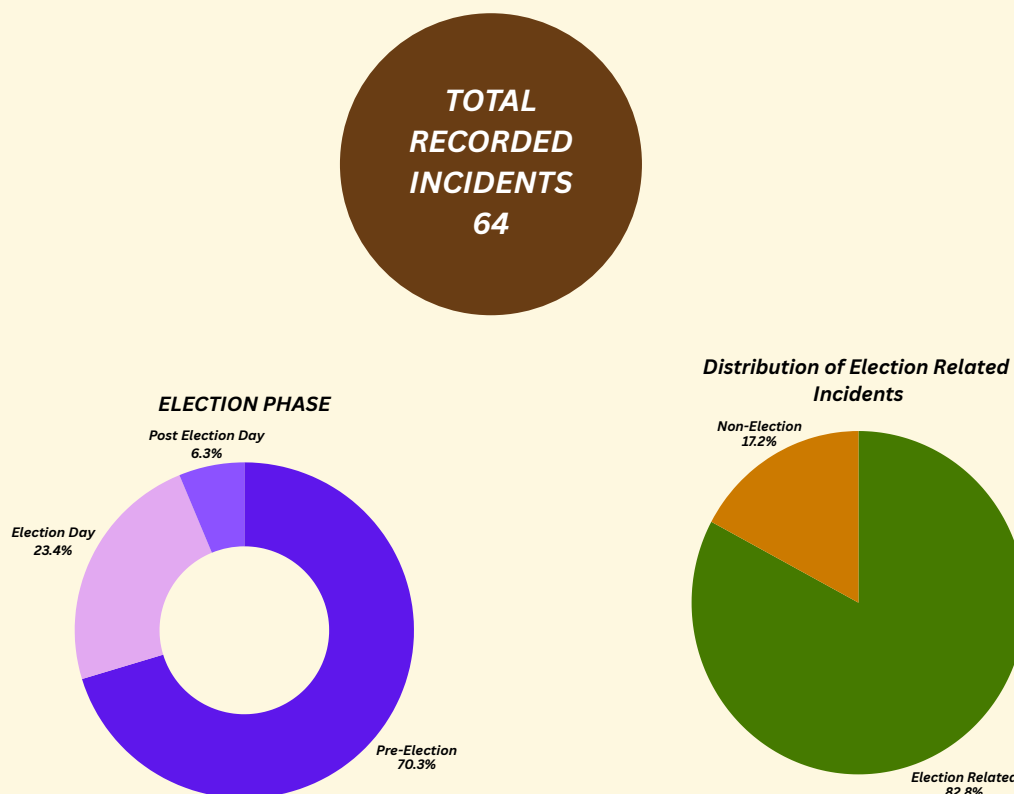
^[13] The Kukah Centre. (2025). Election Security Information (ESI) Hub Quarterly Dataset (June–September 2025). Abuja: The Kukah Centre.

^[14] Adebayo, T., & Okafor, C. (2023). Civil–military coordination and the dynamics of state fragility in Nigeria. *Journal of African Security Studies*, 18(2), 45–63.

^[15] European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM). (2023). Final Report: Nigeria 2023 General Elections. Brussels, Belgium: European Union External Action Service. <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eucom-nigeria-2023>

Therefore, strengthening electoral integrity—through timely justice for offenders, transparent communication, and professional security engagement—is not merely a democratic imperative but a conflict-prevention strategy. The stability of Nigeria’s democracy depends on transforming elections from flashpoints of contestation into instruments of peaceful political expression, ensuring that the pursuit of power does not perpetuate the very insecurity it seeks to govern.

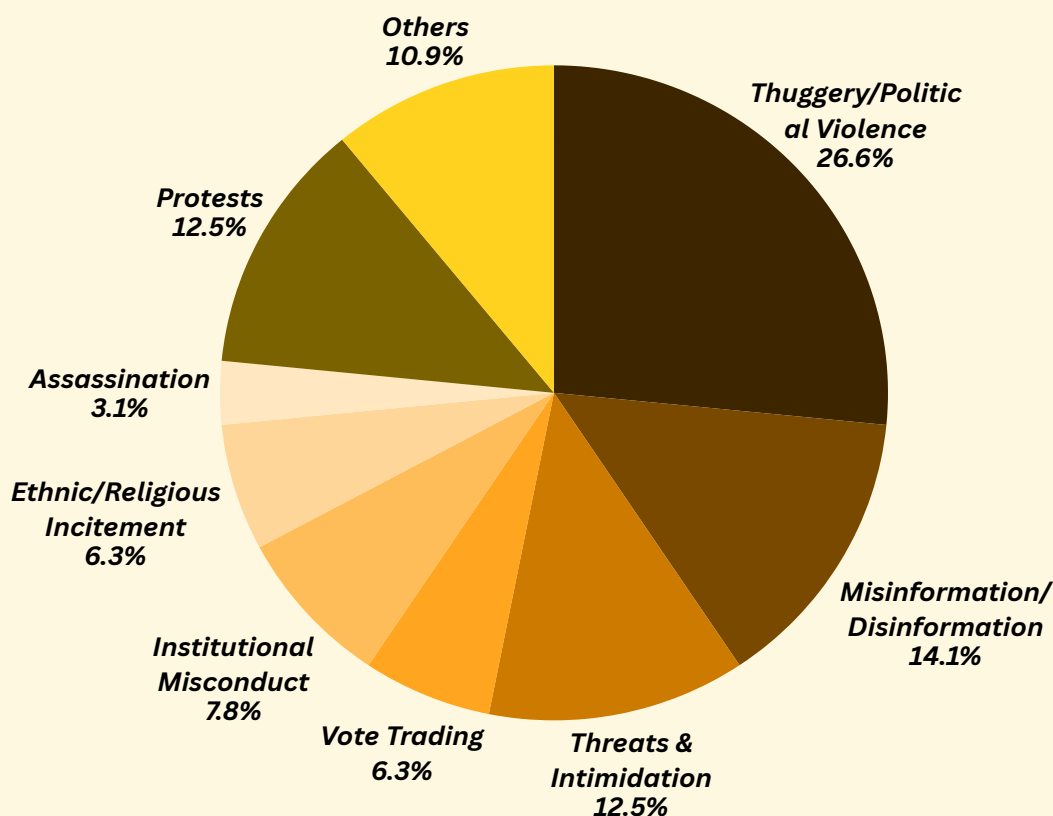
ELECTORAL OFFENCES TRACKING SYSTEM



Between July and September 2025, the Election Security Information (ESI) Hub’s Electoral Offences Tracking System (EOTS) documented 64 verified incidents of election-related offences across 24 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) (EOTS dataset, July–Sept 2025). This quarter establishes the first national-level baseline for tracking electoral offences under the Hub’s upgraded monitoring framework and will be used to measure trends across the 2026–2027 electoral cycle.

The recorded offences cut across the pre-election, election-day and post-election phases. Within the EOTS dataset, 70.3% occurred during the pre-election phase, 23.4% on election day, and 6.3% post-election (EOTS internal breakdown). The incidents—ranging from vote-buying and intimidation/thuggery to online disinformation, hate speech, and alleged institutional bias—illustrate how electoral misconduct now combines physical and digital modalities to influence campaign dynamics, voter behaviour, and the integrity of electoral processes.

TYPOLOGY AND DISTRIBUTION OF ELECTORAL OFFENCES



Analysis of the dataset reveals that three offence types dominated the quarter:

- 1** **Vote Trading and Financial Inducement:** Incidents of cash distribution, bribery, and transactional manipulation were documented in Kaduna, Ogun, and Edo, often involving both party agents and INEC officials. Arrests were reported in a few cases in Kaduna^[15] and Ogun States^[16], but prosecutions remain rare, indicating persistent impunity and weak enforcement.
- 2** **Intimidation and Thuggery:** Political violence, physical attacks, and intimidation of voters, candidates, and journalists accounted for approximately 25% of the 64 verified electoral offences recorded during the quarter, representing about 16 individual cases. The South East (Anambra) and South South (Edo) zones recorded recurrent assaults on polling units, rallies, and campaign offices. These incidents highlight how violence remains a tool of political bargaining, particularly during intra-party disputes and by-elections.
- 3** **Misinformation and Hate Speech:** The digital ecosystem remained a key driver of electoral tension. Across Twitter (X), Facebook, and online outlets, the EOTS recorded nine verified cases of misinformation and hate narratives. These included false election results, fake candidate declarations, and ethnic or gender-based attacks (e.g., a manipulated video falsely claiming a clash between Senator Uche Ekwunife and Governor Charles Soludo in Anambra). In Anambra, a viral Facebook post falsely announcing the disqualification of a major gubernatorial candidate triggered street protests in Awka, while in Edo, a WhatsApp voice note alleging that security agents were “bought over” by a rival party led to youth clashes at a campaign rally in Benin City. These cases show how online falsehoods rapidly translate into offline violence and political unrest.

^[16] BusinessDay. (2025, August 16). Kaduna man nabbed with ₦25m in suspected by-election vote-buying mission. BusinessDay Nigeria. [Credibility gaps emerge when INEC's actions or inactions—such as alleged manipulation of voter lists or irregular deployment of materials—undermine public trust.](#)

^[17] Punch Newspaper. (2025, August 16). By-election: INEC staff, politician caught with huge cash in Ogun. Punch Newspaper. [Credibility gaps emerge when INEC's actions or inactions—such as alleged manipulation of voter lists or irregular deployment of materials—undermine public trust.](#)

Institutional and Structural Gaps Across Electoral and Security Agencies

Beyond individual offences, the EOTS revealed recurring weaknesses within Nigeria’s election management and security systems that allow electoral infractions to persist.

INEC Accountability and Operational Integrity: Several verified incidents involved allegations of INEC officials colluding with party agents or mismanaging sensitive materials. For instance, in Imo State, polling materials meant for one LGA were reportedly diverted to another, sparking protests by opposition observers. In Benue, electoral staff were accused of tampering with result sheets under pressure from local politicians. Such breaches expose continuing credibility gaps in electoral administration and underscore the need for stronger internal monitoring and transparent sanctions mechanisms within INEC operations.

Security Sector Involvement and Selective Enforcement: Reports from Edo and Anambra States documented cases where armed thugs disrupted campaign rallies and polling preparations while nearby security personnel failed to intervene. In Edo’s Oredo LGA, for example, hoodlums attacked a campaign convoy and vandalised party offices without immediate arrests. Similar incidents in Anambra’s Idemili area revealed a pattern of selective enforcement, where responses depended on the political affiliation of those involved. This undermines public trust in security neutrality and weakens deterrence for electoral crimes.

Political Elite Behaviour: Senior political figures, including sitting governors and prominent candidates, made incendiary remarks or issued veiled threats against opponents during rallies and media appearances. In one case, a South-South governor publicly warned voters of “dire consequences” for supporting rival parties, while a North-Central candidate was filmed urging supporters to “defend results by any means necessary.” Such rhetoric legitimises violence and normalises hate speech within Nigeria’s political culture, deepening systemic fragility in the electoral environment.

Cross-Cutting Insight

Taken together, the quarter’s findings affirm that electoral insecurity is no longer episodic but systemic — spanning both physical violence and information warfare. The digital dimension now amplifies traditional election threats, allowing misinformation and hate speech to cascade across regions in real time. Meanwhile, weak institutional oversight, especially within INEC and security agencies, creates enabling conditions for impunity and recurrence.

At-a-Glance Summary Table

Category	Illustrative Examples
Vote Trading ^[18] / Financial Misconduct ^[19]	Arrests of INEC officials and politicians for cash inducement during by-elections.
Intimidation ^[20] / Thuggery ^[21]	Attacks on polling units, candidates, and party meetings.
Misinformation ^[22] / Disinformation ^[23]	False statements, fake news about candidates or elections.
Institutional Misconduct ^[24] (INEC, Security ^[25])	Alleged misallocation of election materials, selective enforcement.
Ethnic ^[26] or Gender-Based Hate Speech ^[27]	Illustrative Examples
Political Assassination ^[28] / Threats ^[29]	Arrests of INEC officials and politicians for cash inducement during by-elections.
Protests ^[30] / Civic Mobilization ^[31]	Attacks on polling units, candidates, and party meetings.

^[18] Channels Television. (2025, August 16). Kaduna man arrested with ₦25m cash for alleged vote-buying. Channels TV. [Category](#)

^[19] Punch Newspaper. (2025, August 16). By-election: INEC staff, politician caught with huge cash in Ogun. Punch Newspaper. [Category](#)

^[20] Parallel Facts News. (2025, September 10). APC thugs attack ADC meeting in Ondo. Parallel Facts News. [Category](#)

^[21] Nigerian Eye. (2025, August 16). By-election: Chaos erupts at Anambra polling unit as thugs shoot voter, snatch ballot boxes. Nigerian Eye. [Category](#)

^[22] Nigerian Bulletin. (2025, July 30). Peter Obi dismisses false claims of ADC role and PDP return. Nigerian Bulletin. [Category](#)

^[23] Vanguard. (2025, August 9). August 16 bye-election 'I determine who's in charge of Anambra – APC's Ukachukwu. Vanguard Nigeria. [Category](#)

^[24] @b_pastor1. (2025, August 16). [Video showing voters alleging INEC materials diverted to private residence in Anambra bye-election] X (formerly Twitter). [Category](#)

^[25] Punch Newspaper. (2025, August 16). By-election: INEC staff, politician caught with huge cash in Ogun. <https://punchng.com/by-election-inec-staff-politician-caught-with-huge-cash-in-ogun>

^[26] Premium Times. (2025, September 14). Soludo's wife tackles Ekwunife, challenges her to paternity test over infidelity claims. [Category](#)

^[27] @experience75745. (2025, September 12). [Tweet alleging ethnic bias against Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour, describing him as "Omo Ibo" and rejecting his Lagos governorship ambition]. X (formerly Twitter). [Category](#)

^[28] ThisDay. (2025, July 20). Anambra PDP governorship candidate Jude Ezenwafor shot in Abuja. <https://www.thisdaylive.com/2025/07/20/anambra-pdp-governorship-candidate-jude-ezenwafor-shot-in-abuja/>

^[29] Osun Defender. (2025, August 5). 'I Will Make You Beg For Death', Osun APC member reportedly arrested, arraigned for threatening Gov Adeleke (Video). Osun Defender. <https://osundefender.com/just-in-i-will-make-you-beg-for-death-osun-apc-member-reportedly-arrested-arraigned-for-threatening-gov-adeleke-video/>

^[30] @O_basslet. (2025, August 5). [Tweet linking to video of alleged threat]. X (formerly Twitter). https://x.com/O_basslet/status/1952685632825811092

^[31] Politics Nigeria. (2025, August 8). Video: Protest in Zamfara over fresh bandit attacks. <https://politicsnigeria.com/video-protest-in-zamfara-over-fresh-bandit-attacks/>

^[32] People's Gazette. (2025, September 26). Strike: JUSUN reiterates commitment to actualise demands in Osun. <https://gazettengr.com/strike-jusun-reiterates-commitment-to-actualise-demands-in-osun/>

Institutional Accountability Breakdown

Institution	Alleged Offences / Mentions	Pattern of Allegations
INEC	7 cases	Material bias, manipulation, negligence.
Security Agencies (Police, DSS, Local Vigilantes)	5 cases	Selective enforcement, intimidation, failure to protect.
Political Parties (APC, PDP, LP, ADC, APGA)	26 cases	Violence, disinformation, intra-party conflict, bribery.
Media / Online Influencers	6 cases	Amplifying false claims, unverified content.
Civil Society / Protesters	4 cases	Peaceful resistance to manipulation or exclusion.

Narrative Insight

The EOTS data demonstrate that electoral offences are multidimensional — political, institutional, and digital. Political parties remain the primary vectors of violence and misinformation, while institutional actors like INEC and security agencies face growing scrutiny for bias and weak enforcement. The increasing prevalence of online hate narratives, often intersecting with ethnic and gender identities, underscores the hybrid nature of electoral insecurity in Nigeria’s democratic trajectory.

Going forward, the ESI Hub recommends that the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES), INEC, and the National Peace Committee (NPC) jointly strengthen:

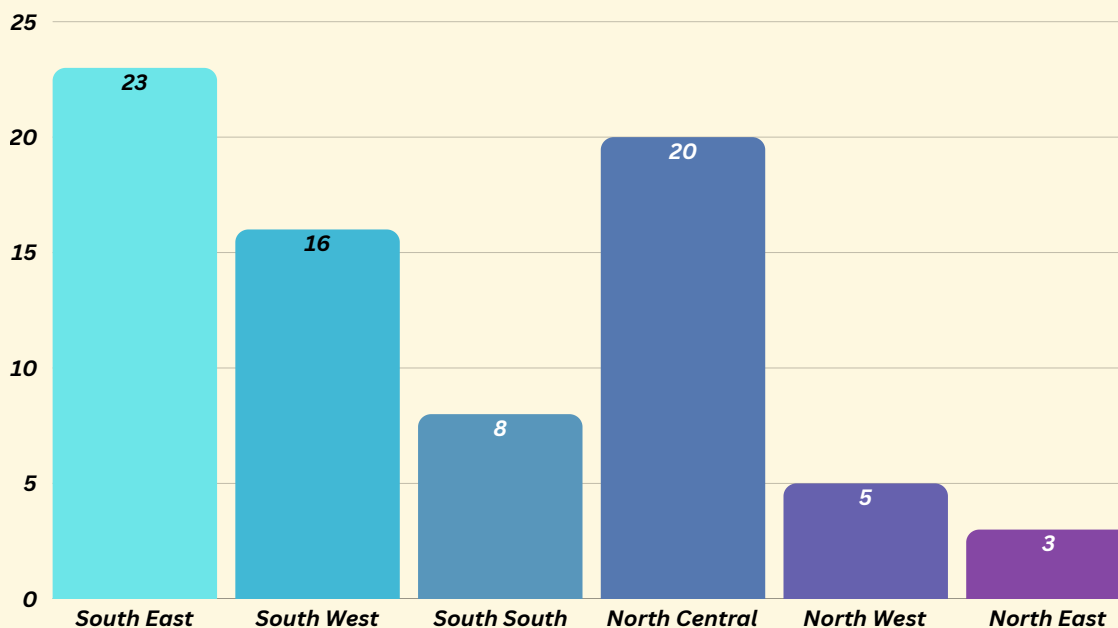
- Pre-election monitoring
- Rapid verification mechanisms, and
- Digital offence tracking to ensure that violations are identified early, verified quickly, and prosecuted consistently.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The security and electoral landscapes between June and September 2025 demonstrate an increasingly volatile and interconnected environment, where political, criminal, and informational threats overlap. The ESI Hub’s integrated analysis of insecurity data and the Electoral Offences Tracking System (EOTS) identifies converging trends that elevate Nigeria’s election-related risk profile heading into the next quarter (October–December 2025).

A total of 624 insecurity incidents and 64 electoral offences were recorded across 36 states and the FCT, underscoring a nationwide spread of vulnerabilities. While general insecurity remains driven by insurgency, banditry, and communal violence, the EOTS data reveal that electoral flashpoints now overlap significantly with existing zones of fragility, especially in states experiencing political contestation and institutional breakdown.

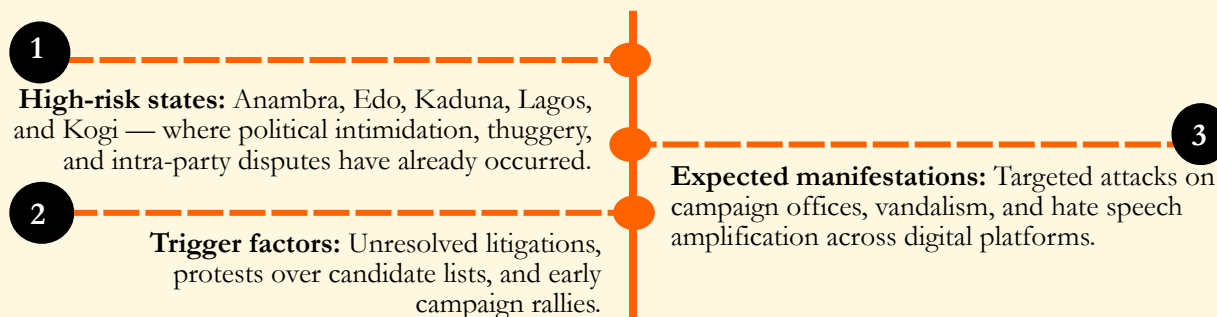
GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF ELECTORAL OFFENCES



Short-Term Risks (October–December 2025)

Heightened Political Tensions Ahead of Campaigns

The transition from pre-election to active campaign phase poses the most immediate short-term threat. The EOTS data show that 70.3% of electoral offences occurred before formal campaign commencement, implying that escalation is likely as candidate mobilization intensifies.



Information Disorder and Hate Speech

Digital disinformation, recorded in over 9 verified EOTS cases, continues to erode public trust. Misleading narratives, fake videos, and ethnically charged commentary could mobilize youth groups or vigilante actors, particularly in urban centers such as Lagos, Kano, and Onitsha.

- The convergence between misinformation and security incidents suggests that online agitation increasingly translates into offline unrest.
- Without coordinated counter-messaging, social media will remain a potent accelerant for electoral instability.

Emerging Hotspots

The combined geospatial analysis of ESI and EOTS data identifies cross-cutting hotspots where both political violence and broader insecurity are likely to intersect in the next quarter.

Zone	Key Hotspot States/LGAs	Primary Triggers	Risk Level
North West	Zamfara (Kaura Namoda, Zurmi), Kano (Gwale, Shanono)	Banditry, political thuggery, vote buying	High
North Central	Benue (Makurdi, Guma), Kogi (Omala), FCT (Abuja Municipal)	Communal conflict, electoral manipulation, institutional grievances	High
South East	Anambra (Awka North, Orumba, Aguata), Enugu (Nsukka)	Electoral violence, hate speech, cyber disinformation	Very High
South South	Edo (Ovia South-West, Esan Central), Rivers	Intra-party violence, intimidation of candidates	High
South West	Lagos (Mainland, Alimosho), Osun (Ifelodun), Oyo (Ibadan North)	Ethnic incitement, vote buying, political protests	Medium–High

Visual correlation between both datasets shows that Anambra, Edo, Kaduna, and Lagos feature repeatedly across political, electoral, and general insecurity clusters — qualifying them as Tier 1 flashpoints for targeted early warning and response interventions.

Medium-Term Risks (Through Q1 2026)

Institutional Stress and Legitimacy Deficits

The institutional fragility identified under the EOTS analysis — including allegations of INEC misconduct and uneven security coordination — poses enduring risks to credibility and stability.

- If not addressed, these deficits could deepen cynicism and trigger coordinated non-state resistance (e.g., protests, boycotts, cyber campaigns).
- A loss of institutional legitimacy may transform localized grievances into systemic distrust of democratic processes.

Socioeconomic Deterioration and Youth Mobilization

Persistent poverty, unemployment, and inflation continue to feed the economics of insecurity. The same unemployed youth population driving rural banditry in the North now fuels urban political thuggery in the South.

- Unless economic mitigation or youth engagement programs are deployed, this cross-sectoral mobilization base will remain available to political actors and violent entrepreneurs through the 2026 campaign period.

Cross-Regional Contagion Risks

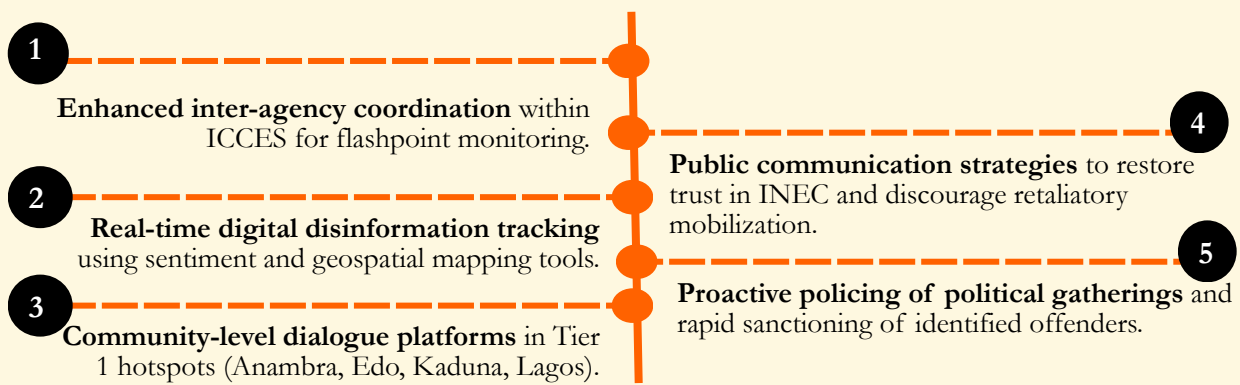
The clustering of political violence in the South East and North Central could inspire copycat mobilizations elsewhere, especially through viral digital content. Misinformation that blends political and ethnic rhetoric could spread inter-regionally, heightening the national contagion potential of localized electoral violence.

Overall Risk Matrix (Summary)

Threat Dimension	Probability	Impact	Overall Risk
Political Rivalries and Intra-Party Violence	High	High	Severe
Hate Speech and Disinformation	High	Medium	High
Vote Buying and Electoral Corruption	Medium	High	High
Security Force Partisanship / Institutional Weakness	Medium	High	High
Communal and Ethno-Religious Tensions	Medium	High	High
Socioeconomic Pressures and Youth Unrest	High	Medium	Moderate–High
Banditry, Kidnapping, and Rural Insecurity	High	High	Severe

Forward Outlook and Early Warning Priorities

The next quarter will test the resilience of Nigeria’s electoral and security institutions. Based on the combined ESI–EOTS evidence, early warning systems should prioritize:



Nigeria’s path to the 2026 election cycle hinges on the state’s ability to convert predictive insight into preventive action. Electoral integrity and public safety remain inseparable pillars of democratic consolidation.

STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES

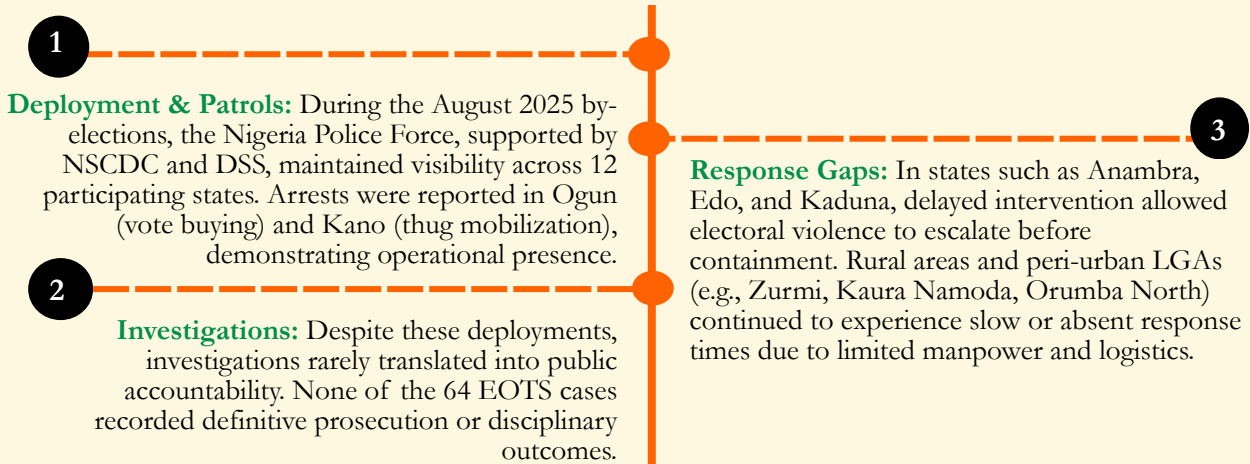
The June–September 2025 period provided a mixed picture of institutional engagement and responsiveness. While security agencies demonstrated improved visibility during high-tension periods, the combined findings from the ESI Hub insecurity dataset and Electoral Offences Tracking System (EOTS) highlight persistent coordination gaps, limited accountability, and uneven preventive capacity among key stakeholders.

Across both datasets, less than 35% of recorded incidents showed evidence of active institutional response — a pattern consistent with the Hub’s earlier analyses of Nigeria’s reactive rather than preventive security culture. This limited responsiveness continues to erode public confidence and contributes to cyclical violence around political events.



Security Agencies

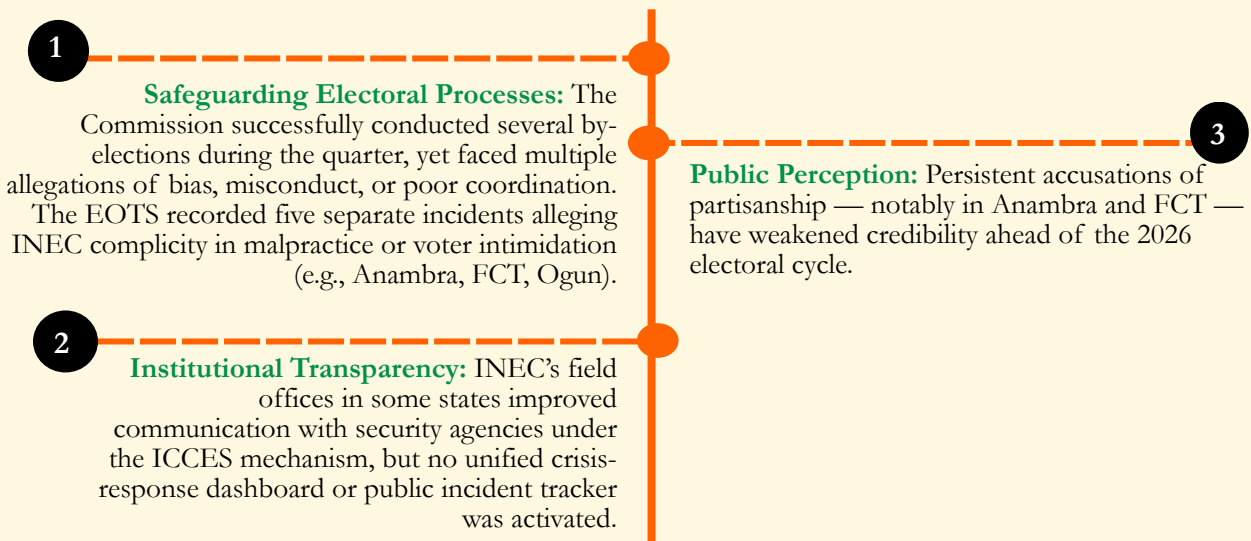
Security institutions remain the primary actors in both preventive and reactive responses to political and electoral violence.



Effectiveness: Moderate (Yellow) — Active deployments visible, but deterrence and justice outcomes remain weak.

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

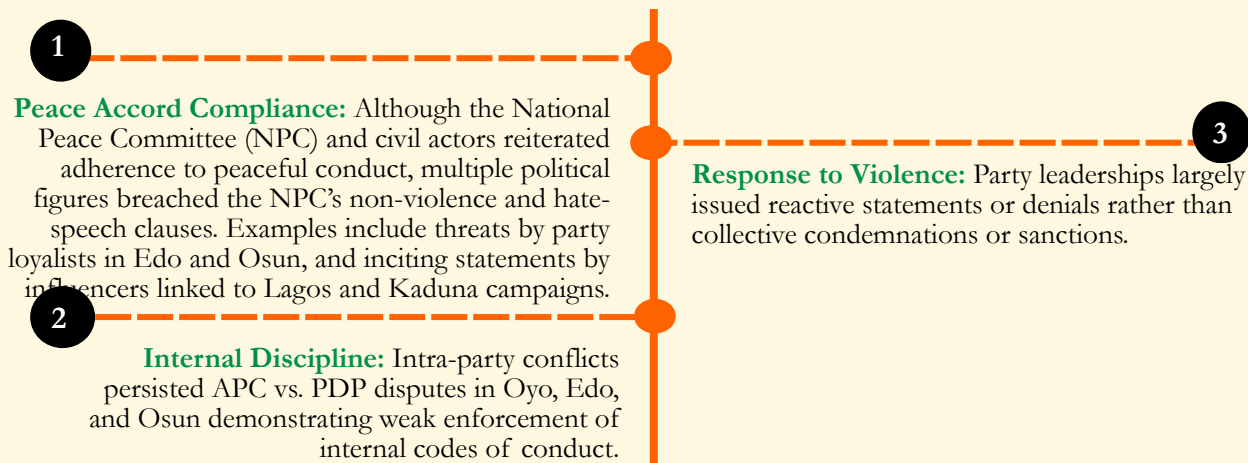
INEC continues to occupy a dual role — both as a regulator and as a subject of public scrutiny.



Effectiveness: Low–Moderate (Yellow/Red) — Operational continuity sustained, but credibility deficit and transparency weaknesses remain critical vulnerabilities.

Political Parties and Candidates

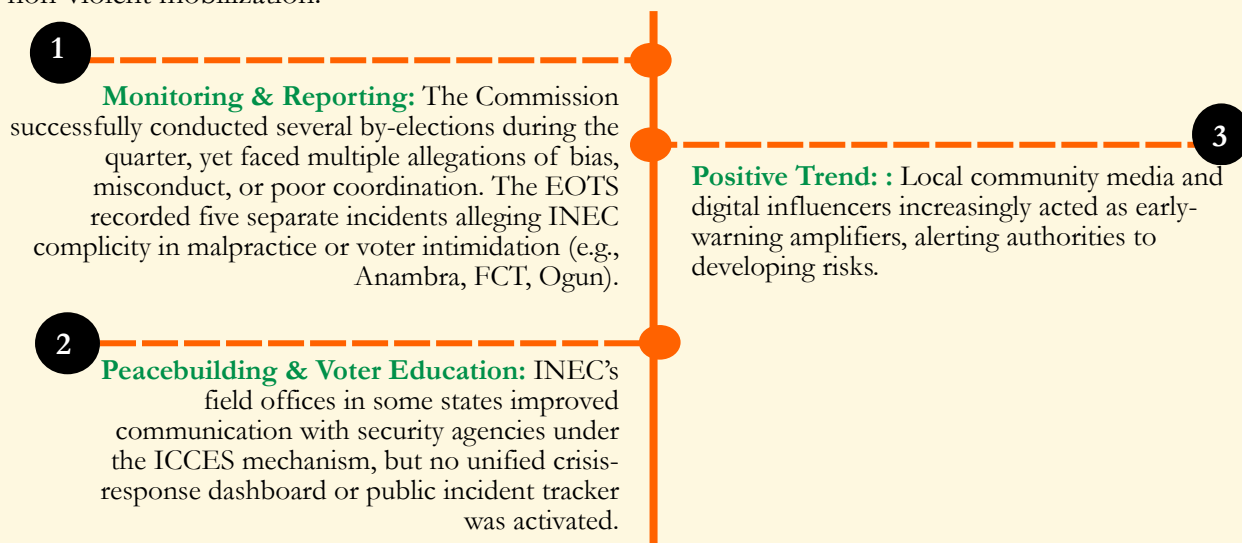
Political actors were both drivers and responders in the quarter's conflict dynamics.



Effectiveness: Low (Red) — High involvement in violence, poor compliance with peace accords, and minimal internal accountability.

Civil Society, Media, and Community Actors

Civil society organizations (CSOs) and media outlets remain key to transparency, citizen education, and non-violent mobilization.



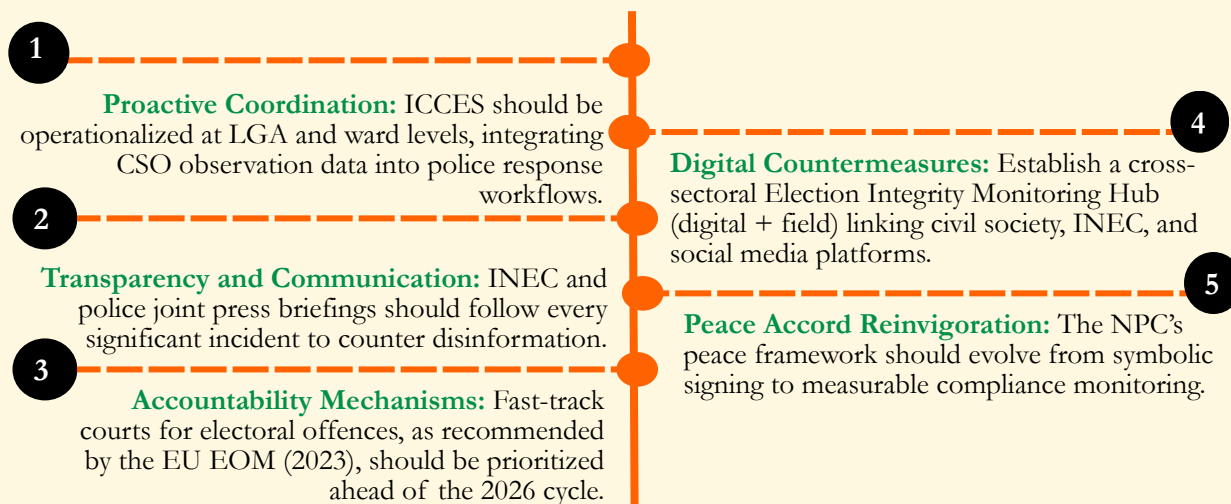
Effectiveness: Moderate–High (Green/Yellow) — Active in awareness and monitoring, but limited capacity for rapid response and offline mediation.

Gaps Identified

The combined datasets highlight systemic gaps that, if unaddressed, could undermine both electoral credibility and security outcomes:

Gap Category	Observed Weakness	Consequence
Inter-Agency Coordination	ICCES protocols underutilized in state-level operations	Delayed responses, fragmented situational awareness
Judicial Enforcement	No prosecutions for electoral offences	Perpetuation of impunity
Communication Transparency	Poor public reporting from INEC and police	Fueling misinformation and distrust
Digital Governance	Absence of coordinated counter-disinformation units	Spread of hate narratives and false claims
Peace Infrastructure	Weak linkage between NPC accords and party discipline	Symbolic rather than operational impact

Strategic Implications



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The June–September 2025 reporting period revealed that Nigeria’s electoral and security ecosystems remain deeply intertwined — with electoral offences, political violence, and weak institutional response reinforcing one another.

To prevent escalation ahead of the next electoral cycle, this section outlines strategic and time-bound recommendations aligned with the ESI Hub’s Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) framework.

Short-Term Actions (Before the Next Quarter)

Objective: Contain immediate risks, prevent recurrence of violence, and reinforce public trust before the next electoral window (October–December 2025).

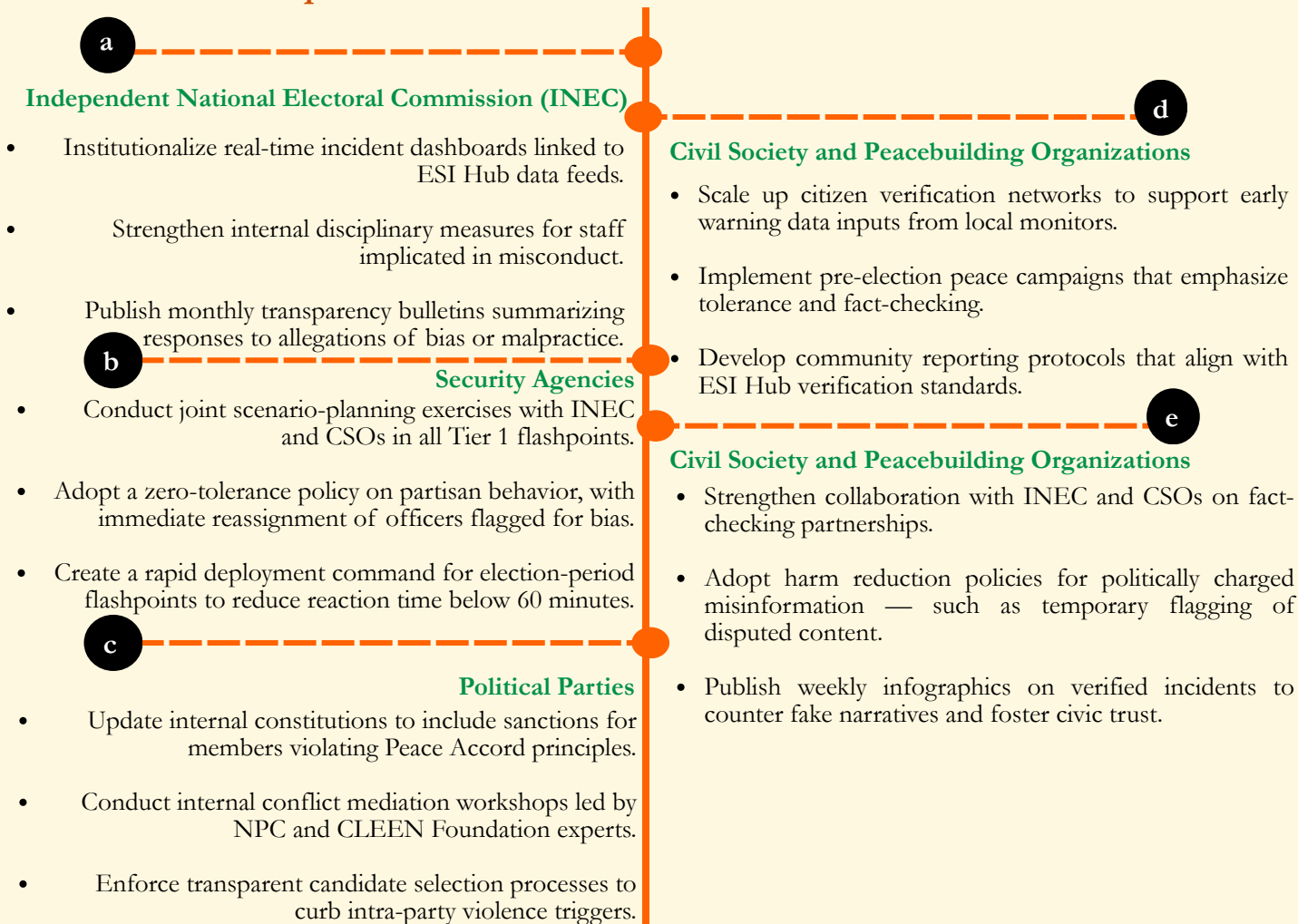
Action Area	Specific Measures	Responsible Stakeholders
1. Rapid Early Warning Activation	Deploy community-level observers in identified flashpoints (Anambra, Edo, Kaduna, Lagos, Kogi) to generate weekly situation briefs feeding into ICCES dashboards.	ESI Hub, Security Agencies, INEC, CSOs
2. Counter-Misinformation Cells	Establish temporary joint verification desks (INEC + media + CSOs) to respond to viral election-related claims within 24 hours.	INEC, NBC, Fact-checking Networks, Civil Society
3. Political Risk Communication	Require political parties to publicly reaffirm Peace Accord commitments, with NPC-led televised signing renewals.	Political Parties, NPC, INEC
4. Localized Conflict De-escalation	Facilitate inter-party dialogue forums and youth peace caravans in volatile LGAs (Awka North, Ovia South-West, Omala, and Gwale).	CSOs, State Peace Commissions, Community Leaders
5. Targeted Security Deployment	Pre-position quick-response units in high-risk electoral LGAs with instructions for non-partisan conduct and human rights adherence.	Police, NSCDC, DSS, Military Liaison Commands
6. Real-Time Data Sharing	Integrate ESI Hub incident reports into the ICCES live-tracking tool and ensure weekly cross-verification with state police commands.	ESI Hub, ICCES Secretariat, INEC

Medium-Term Actions (Next 6–12 Months)

Objective: Institutionalize resilience, strengthen inter-agency accountability, and align Nigeria’s electoral peace infrastructure with international standards.

Action Area	Strategic Measure	Expected Outcome
1. Institutional Coordination Reform	Reactivate State and LGA ICCES units with clearly defined SOPs and a unified data repository accessible to INEC, security agencies, and CSOs.	Streamlined early warning and incident response.
2. Electoral Offences Prosecution Mechanism	Operationalize Electoral Offences Tribunal or designated fast-track courts to prosecute verified EOTS cases.	Deterrence through timely accountability.
3. Strengthen INEC Security & Integrity Systems	Establish a Crisis Response Unit within INEC’s Situation Room to handle threats, misinformation, and attacks on staff or infrastructure.	Improved protection of electoral assets and personnel.
4. Data Integration and Predictive Analytics	Link ESI Hub datasets (EOTS + Security Incidents + Socioeconomic Indicators) to predictive risk models using Power BI or GIS.	Evidence-based planning for preventive security deployment.
5. Digital Literacy and Ethical Media Training	Partner with tech platforms (Meta, X, Google News) and journalism schools to deliver Pre-Election Information Integrity Bootcamps.	Reduced spread of hate speech and fake news.
6. Community-Based Peace Infrastructure	Expand the NPC’s Peace Accord framework into a Grassroots Compliance Network, tracking real-time breaches and sanctions.	Enhanced local ownership of peace processes.
7. Socioeconomic Risk Mitigation	Support livelihood programs and political youth internships in violence-prone zones to reduce vulnerability to political mobilization.	Reduced recruitment into thuggery and militias.

Stakeholder-Specific Guidance



Action Pathway (Short- vs. Medium-Term)

Timeline	Focus Area	Primary Goal
Next 3 Months (Q4 2025)	Rapid preventive response	Early warning, misinformation control, and visible stakeholder coordination
Next 6–12 Months (2026 Electoral Cycle Prep)	Institutional resilience	Data integration, accountability, prosecution of offences, and citizen confidence restoration

CONCLUSION

This baseline edition of the Election Security Information (ESI) Hub Quarterly Analytical Report (June–September 2025) marks a significant milestone in Nigeria’s democratic and peacebuilding architecture. For the first time, a single, data-driven framework systematically integrates security incidents, electoral offences, and institutional responses into one cohesive early-warning and accountability mechanism.

By combining the ESI Hub’s national insecurity database with the Electoral Offences Tracking System (EOTS), this report provides a comprehensive evidence base for anticipating risks, informing policy, and guiding preventive interventions across Nigeria’s 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.

The findings reveal that electoral insecurity is not a seasonal anomaly but a structural feature of governance and competition — one that requires consistent, transparent, and multi-sectoral monitoring. Political violence, disinformation, and institutional fragility are interlinked drivers that cannot be managed in isolation; they demand collaboration between electoral, security, and civic actors at every level.

As the baseline edition, this report establishes the reference point for all future quarterly assessments. Sustained data collection, verification, and analysis will enable the ESI Hub to detect shifts in threat patterns, evaluate the impact of mitigation measures, and refine early-warning thresholds in real time.

Ultimately, the ESI Hub’s mission extends beyond documentation — it is to transform information into prevention, ensuring that every data point contributes to rapid response, stakeholder accountability, and the preservation of electoral peace. The success of this effort will depend on continuity, partnership, and political will.

Informed vigilance is Nigeria’s best defence. Each quarter’s insight is not merely a record of events, but a step toward a more secure, credible, and peaceful democracy.