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THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA: NAVIGATING NIGERIA'S PREDATORY ECONOMY AND THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF VIOLENCE.

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Abstract
The study examines the evolving landscape of insecurity in Nigeria through the lens of political economy by arguing that contemporary violence is no longer merely a byproduct of Ethnic and religious friction, but a structured commercialized industry. As the Nigerian state's monopoly on force weakens, a predatory economy has emerged where state and non-state actors derive economic rent from instability. By utilizing a multi-layered analytical framework, the study investigates the unique manifestation of this phenomenon across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones: the transformation of rural banditry into a high-stakes kidnapping for ransom industry in North-West, the transition of the Boko Haram Insurgency into a war economy involving illicit fishing and agricultural taxation in North-East, the commodification of land and identity through the lens of farmer-herder conflict in North-Central, the enduring oil-insurgency complex where crude oil theft and artisanal refining fund militias in South-South, the intersection of separatist agitation with organized criminal networks and the sit-at-home economy in South-East and the rise of militant area boys and the politicization of transport unions as instrument of coercion in the South-West. The study adopted a qualitative-dominant mixed method approach, utilizing a multi-scholar comparative analysis across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones. The theoretical model adopted for this study was the political economy of conflict approach. The utility of the theory to the study is that it provides a lens to understand how economic incentives drives the duration and intensity of violence. The findings from the study revealed that insecurity in Nigeria has evolved from sporadic grievance-based violence into a sophisticated multi-sectorial industrial complex. In this system, violence is a deliberate economic strategy used by both state and non-state groups to capture rent. The study recommended that to break the circle, the Nigerian state must move beyond purely military (Kinetic) solutions which often only trim the branches of violence while leaving the roots of the predatory economy intact, to economic counter-terrorism approach. Above all, the study offers a novel. Conceptual mapping of how state fragility serves as a prerequisite for understanding modern conflict in resource rich but institutionally weak nations.
Keywords: Commercialization of Violence, Nigeria, Political Economy, Predatory Economy, Rent-Seeking, State Fragility.

Introduction

Historically, insecurity in Nigeria has largely been interpreted through the lens of grievance. The dominant narrative surrounding Nigeria's security challenges has therefore emphasized factors such as ethnic grievances, religious extremism, and competition over scarce resources. However, in the contemporary period, a more troubling dimension has emerged: the commercialization of insecurity. This phenomenon suggests that insecurity is no longer merely a breakdown of law and order but has evolved into a lucrative enterprise that sustains a predatory economy involving a complex network of bandits, insurgents, terrorists, farmer–

herder militias, militant groups, private security contractors, and, in some cases, complicit state officials.

Nigeria's trajectory toward state fragility has been accompanied by a gradual erosion of the social contract between the state and its citizens. As the state increasingly loses its monopoly over the legitimate use of force, a governance vacuum emerges. Within this vacuum, violence becomes commodified and embedded in economic activities. From large-scale kidnapping for ransom in the North-West to sophisticated oil theft syndicates in the Niger Delta, the political economy of insecurity reveals that several actors now possess vested financial interests in the persistence of instability rather than in its resolution.

The fundamental challenge confronting Nigeria is that insecurity has gradually transitioned from a sporadic security concern into a systematic business model. Despite enormous budgetary allocations to the defence and security sectors, often amounting to trillions of naira annually, the security situation continues to deteriorate. This paradox raises critical questions about the effectiveness of the prevailing security architecture and suggests that it may not only be ineffective but could also be undermined by actors who benefit from the persistence of insecurity. Within this predatory economic structure, violence has become a profitable commodity. Criminal enterprises, particularly those involved in kidnapping for ransom and industrial-scale oil theft, increasingly operate with a level of sophistication that mirrors corporate organizations.

A major driver of this phenomenon is the relatively high Return On Investment (ROI) associated with criminal activities compared to the declining opportunities within the formal economy. This dynamic creates incentives for non-state actors to sustain prolonged instability in order to guarantee a continuous flow of ransom payments, protection fees, and illicit resource revenues. While existing scholarship has extensively documented the traditional drivers of insecurity in Nigeria, such as poverty, religious extremism, and ethnic divisions, there remains a significant gap in empirical research examining the market dynamics and economic incentives that sustain insecurity as a profitable enterprise. It is within this context that this study examines the political economy of insecurity in Nigeria. Specifically, the study interrogates how the interaction between state fragility and predatory economic structures has transformed the provision and protection of security into a high-stakes economic market. In doing so, the study seeks to bridge an important gap in the literature by analysing the incentive structures that link state fragility to the emergence and persistence of a flourishing predatory economy of violence.

Theoretical Explication of the Discourse

The theoretical framework guiding this study is the Political Economy of Conflict (PEC). The discourse on the commercialization of insecurity in Nigeria occupies a complex intersection of economics, governance, and conflict. While multiple perspectives can be applied, the PEC framework, particularly the Greed versus Grievance paradigm and the concept of violent entrepreneurship, most effectively captures the dynamics of a predatory economy operating within a fragile state. This framework moves beyond viewing conflict merely as a breakdown of order; instead, it conceptualizes conflict as an alternative system of profit and power. In the Nigerian context, insecurity is not solely a failure of the state but functions as an economy for certain actors.

The Greed thesis, proposed by Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, suggests that many contemporary conflicts are driven more by the pursuit of economic rents than by political or social grievances. In Nigeria, industries such as kidnap-for-ransom and oil bunkering are not

simply criminal acts; they represent rational economic choices in environments where the costs of illicit activity are lower than the potential profits. This aligns with the security–insecurity paradox, wherein the line between protector and predator often blurs in fragile states. Here, insights from predatory state theory, as advanced by scholars like Margaret Levi and Robert Bates, become critical. When security agencies are underfunded or lack oversight, security itself becomes a commodity, a phenomenon evident in the proliferation of private security firms, the payment of protection money to insurgents, and opaque allocations of security votes. In such contexts, elements within the state may even have incentives to sustain a degree of instability to justify ongoing security spending and emergency contracts.

A further dimension of the PEC framework is violent entrepreneurship, popularized by Vadim Volkov, which describes the use of organized force to extract economic value. In Nigeria's predatory economy, violent entrepreneurs include bandit leaders running territorial protection rackets, political thugs employed to secure electoral outcomes, and corrupt officials profiting from arms deals. The utility of this theoretical lens lies in its capacity to demonstrate that Nigeria's insecurity is not random or senseless violence; rather, it constitutes a structured, albeit destructive, market in which state fragility provides the "oxygen" sustaining predatory actors, both in uniform and in suits.

The Political Economy of Insecurity in Nigeria

Exploring the political economy of insecurity in Nigeria requires looking past the surface – level violence to the underlying structural, economic, and power dynamics. The focus suggests that insecurity is not just a failure of law and order but is often deeply embedded in how resources are distributed and contested. At the heart of this discourse is the Resource Curse or the paradox of plenty. While Nigeria is Africa's largest economy and a major oil producer, the wealth is concentrated in a tiny elite. At the other side of the continuum, is the fact that the government relies heavily on oil rents rather than a diversified tax base. This creates a disconnect between the state and its citizens, leading to a struggle for control over these revenues rather than productive investment. With a massive population of young people facing chronic unemployment, extremist groups (like Boko Haram) or criminal enterprises (like kidnapping and banditry) become alternative employers. The political economy of insecurity in Nigeria shifts the focus from purely military explanations to the underlying structural, economic, and political drivers, that is, insecurity as a market or a byproduct of how resources, power, and opportunities are distributed (or withheld). Across the Federation, the common thread is the retreat of the state, where the government's inability to provide public goods (security, jobs, and infrastructure) has created ungoverned spaces filled by non-state actors. The study looks at the various forms of insecurity across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria and tries to look at the political economy behind it.

In the South-South, there is the issue of resource curse and rent-seeking, which led to the issue of militancy. The ethnogenesis of the Niger Delta crisis rests on three crucibles of minority question, resource control, and environmental degradation. The Niger Delta as a region is blessed with an abundance of physical and human resources, including the majority of Nigeria's oil and gas deposits, good agricultural land, excellent fisheries, and extensive forests. This is an indication that there is enormous potential for economic growth and sustainable development. Oil minerals are undoubtedly the mainstay of the Nigerian economy as they account for over 80% of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 90% of Foreign Exchange Earnings, 95% of the National Budget, and 80% of the Nation's Wealth. Nigeria in the seventies, earned so much from its oil mineral resources that during the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) state's negotiations with the European Economic Community

(EEC) for the first Lome convention, Nigeria even contemplated contributing to the European Development Fund (EDF) instead of being a recipient (Owugah, 2001; Piate, 2017, Owugah, 2000). Oil-based wealth enhanced Nigeria's continental leadership aspiration, provided assistance to needy African states, and contributed to the African liberation movement cum the liberation fund of the Organization of African Unity (OA), now the African Union (Piate & Nekari, 2025 & Piate, 2025). Again, the architecturally designed mansions erected by public officers, top military men, contractors, etc., billions of dollars sunk into the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) Venture in Liberia and Sierra Leone (Piate, 2025), and millions and billions of various currencies recently revealed as stolen by top public office holders came largely from the oil revenue (Owugah, 2001). The oil, which has brought so much wealth to the nation and many corrupt individuals, has also brought to the people of the Niger Delta persistent pollution, degradation of their environment, and poverty. Paradoxically, the environment is the axis on which man's sustainable development revolves. In their profit maximization bid, the oil companies and the Nigerian state have rendered both the people and the environment unhealthy, which poses a serious threat to the achievement of sustainable development. The lack of attention by the Nigerian state to the development of oil-bearing communities in the Niger Delta led to the transformation of a peaceful protest into a militant movement. The insecurity and militancy in the Niger Delta are rooted in a complex perfect storm of environmental degradation, economic marginalization, and Political Frustration. While the region is the heartbeat of Nigeria's economy, the local population has historically felt that they bear all the costs of production while receiving none of the benefits. For decades, oil exploration has devastated the local ecosystem. Frequent oil spills and gas flaring have poisoned the soil and water, destroying the traditional livelihoods of the people, primarily fishing, farming, and hunting. This creates a massive class of unemployed youth with no economic future, making them easy recruits for militant groups. There is also a stark paradox in the Niger Delta: It produces the vast majority of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings, yet it remains one of the least developed regions. Basic amenities like clean water, electricity, and paved roads are often absent in oil-producing communities. Despite the presence of Multi-National Corporations, local hiring is often minimal, leading to a sense of "resource curse" where the wealth beneath their feet doesn't reach their pockets. A major grievance is the derivation principle. Communities have long argued that the percentage of oil revenue returned to the region (currently 13%) is insufficient to address the damage caused by extraction. Agencies created to develop the region, such as the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), have often been plagued by corruption and mismanagement, failing to deliver tangible projects to the people. The political landscape in Nigeria has also played a role. The evolution of conflict in the Niger Delta can be analysed through three distinct phases: Political instrumentalization, criminal diversification and institutional mitigation. As noted by scholars below, local youths were historically weaponized by the political elite. Arming these groups served a short-term goal: Securing electoral victories through intimidation. This created a dangerous precedent where violence became a recognized political currency. Once the electoral cycle concluded, the withdrawal of political patronage left a vacuum. These newly armed groups, possessing both weapons and organized structures, pivoted toward illegal oil bunkering and militancy. This shift wasn't criminal, it was a survival strategy and a form of resource insurgency against perceived systemic marginalization. The Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) serve as a successful firefighting measure, trading stipends for de-escalation. However as scholars argue, the Presidential Amnesty Programme by the Yar'Adua administration only addressed the symptoms rather than the drivers of conflict. Till date, the Niger Delta remains fragile because the weapons were surrendered, but the underlying reasons for picking them up: Poverty and environmental ruin, remain largely unaddressed. (Akpobibio, 2002; Asiodu,

1980; Bassey, 2003; Frynas, 2001; Human Right Watch, 1999; Ibaba, 2005; Lewin, 1968; Nna 1997; Obi, 1998, Obi, 1999; Okoko, 2002; Okonta and Douglas, 2001; Soremekin and Obadere, 1998; Piate, 2013; Piate, 2014).

The nature of the struggle in the Niger Delta evolved from peaceful protest in the 1990s into armed insurgency by the early 2000s. This conflict was marked by asymmetric warfare within the challenging terrain of mangrove swamps and winding creeks. Key tactics employed by militant groups included sabotage and pipeline vandalism, such as bombing infrastructure to "shut in" oil production and exert economic pressure on the Federal Government, as well as oil bunkering, involving the illegal siphoning of crude oil for sale on the black market or refining in local bush refineries. Kidnapping for ransom also became prevalent, targeting expatriate oil workers and high-value local figures to finance operations or gain leverage. The conflict landscape was fragmented, comprising multiple groups with varying mixes of ideological and criminal motives, including the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF), and the Niger Delta Avengers. Today, militancy has largely transformed into organized oil theft and localized gang violence, including cultism, as structural grievances, such as environmental degradation and lack of infrastructural development, remain largely unaddressed (Piate, 2025).

The insecurity in the Niger Delta is not merely a series of random outbursts, it is a deeply entrenched political economy where oil, power and poverty interest. This complex landscape is defined by resource wealth, systemic marginalization, and war economy that has evolved over decades. While the struggle began as a grassroots movement for environmental justice and resource control, it has transformed into a sophisticated environment where political and criminal interests frequently overlap. As off today, the situation remains a delicate balance between state-led pacification and oilification: The framing of all local grievances solely through the lens of oil security. The foundational driver remains the stark contrast between the region's massive oil wealth and its profound underdevelopment. Militancy is no longer just a form of protest, it is a multi-billion dollar industry. With an estimated 200,000 to 300,000 barrels of oil lost daily to theft, a massive parallel economy has emerged. Artisanal refineries provide local employment but continue to devastate the ecology. Furthermore, a shadow alliance involving militant groups, high –ranking security officials and political elites profiting from illicit trade ensures that insecurity remains a convenient smokescreen for criminal activity.

The Nigerian government's strategy has shifted from purely military force to a model of financial pacification. The Presidential Amnesty Programme launched in 2009, continues today with an annual budget of a approximately N65 billion. While this has curtailed large-scale insurgency, it has effectively monetized peace by paying ex-militant leaders to maintain calm in the creeks. A controversial pillar of the current political economy is the awarding of multi-billion naira pipeline surveillance contracts to former militant leaders, such as Government Tompolo Ekpemupolo's Tantita Security Services. This shift has transformed former rebels into the states frontline security assets, creating a new class of militant entrepreneurs. In essence, the Niger Delta's political economy is a self-perpetuating cycle: marginalization justifies militancy, and militancy becomes a tool for elite bargaining. While the state maintains a fragile stability by buying peace through Amnesty and security contracts, the underlying triggers-environmental ruin and the lack of alternative industries remain largely unaddressed.

Table 1: Militancy Activities in the Niger Delta from 2002 to 2025

Date/Year	Event	Location	Company Affected
May 2002	Militant youths attack.	30 houses set ablaze and three persons killed in Bori, headquarters of Ogoniland in Rivers State	Houses belonging to individuals
March, 2003	Militants attack	Upomani village	The Total and ELF tank farm was attacked, killing five soldiers and destroying property worth billions of naira.
Nov. 2004	Ijaw youths protest	Odima Community in Brass Bayelsa State	Attacked, shut down and occupied Shell Petroleum Dev. Company Station.
January, 2006	Militants kidnapped 4 foreign workers	Forcados export terminus	Shut down Shell's offshore E.A. oilfield and blew up the crude oil pipeline.
February 2006	A militant attack abducted nine workers		A US oil services company, NNPC, and Shell loading platform.
March, 2006	Militant attack		An Agip and an Italian oil company pipeline blown up.
May, 2006	Unknown gunmen	Port Harcourt	Killed an oil Executive of Baker Hughes (an American Company)
May 11, 2006	Gunmen kidnapped 3 oil workers	Port Harcourt	Saipem, an Italian Oil Contracting Firm
June 2, 2006	Gunmen kidnapped 6 Britons. One Canadian and an American	Port Harcourt	Bulford Dolphin Oil rig, own by Norwegian oilfield services
June 7, 2006	Militant attacked oil facilities, killed five soldiers and kidnapped five South Korean contractors	Niger Delta	Shell
June 20, 2006	Unknown gunmen kidnapped two Filipinos with Beaufort International	Port Harcour	
July, 2006	Gunmen kidnapped Michael Los, while the Niger Delta Mob seized Agip Ogbainbiri Flow Station taking 24 workers hostage	Bayelsa	Dutch Oil
August,	Armed men kidnapped	Port Harcourt	Schiffarth Guido works for

2006	Schiffarth		Bilfiger and Berger
August, 2006	Gunmen abduct 3 Filipino oil workers	Port Harcourt	Filipino oil
Between 9th and 10th of August	Kidnapping of foreign oil workers	Port Harcourt	Norwegian oil workers, Belgian and Moroccan contractors
August, 2006	Kidnapping of foreign oil workers	Nightclub in Port Harcourt	Oil Companies lost six (two Britons, a German, an Irish, a Pole and an American)
August, 2006	Gunmen kidnapped a Lebanese	Port Harcourt	A Lebanese Company
August, 2006	Gunmen kidnapped an oil worker	Port Harcourt	Saipem Italian Oil
Oct., 2006	Gunmen ambushed oil workers	Shell facilities in the Cawthorne Channel boats carrying supplies of Shell Niger Delta	Royal Dutch Shell (twenty-five Nigerian employees were seized).
Oct., 2006	Militants raid	Port Harcourt	Exxon Mobil lost seven foreign oil workers (four Britons, one Indonesian, one Malaysian and an Romanian).
Nov., 2006	Militants raided survey ship	Off the coast of Bayelsa	Petroleum Geo-Service (PGS) lost British and American employees.
Nov. 22, 2006	Militant/Soldier clash	Port Harcourt	British Oil Company lost a worker during an attempt by Nigerian soldiers to free seven hostages abducted by militants.
December 7, 2006	Gunmen raided residential facility	Port Harcourt	Oil Company lost 3 Italians and a Lebanese
December 14, 2006	Gunmen invade the Nun River logistics base.	Bayelsa State	Royal Dutch Shell lost 5 workers to kidnapping.
December 18, 2006	Car bombs explosion	Port Harcourt	Agip and Shell P.D.C. lost residential facilities.
December 21, 2006	Militants attacked oil facilities	Obagi oil field in Rivers State	Total Oil lost three staff
January 5, 2007	Gunmen kidnapped and bombed facilities	Port Harcourt, Bonny Island and Warri	Chinese Telecom Firm and Shell PDC lost workers and residential facilities.
January 10, 2007	Gunmen attacked a base operated by South Korea	Bayelsa State	South Korea's Daewoo Engineering lost ten workers to kidnapping.
January 16, 2007	Gunmen attacked boat, operated by South Korean firm Hyundai.	Around Bonny Island export terminal	South Korean firm Hyundai lost free people including a Dutch oil worker.

January 20, 2007	Militants seized a 24 Filipino crew members	Around Warri Port	German shipping line Baco-liner Cargo ship.
January 23, 2007	Gunmen kidnapped two engineers	Port Harcourt	Foreign Oil Company lost an American and Briton
January 25, 2007	Militant kidnapping	Bayelsa State	Chinese National Petroleum Company (CNPC) and Shell lost nine employees to kidnapping
February 6, 2007	Gunmen kidnapped oil workers	Port Harcourt – Owerri road	Filipino Oil
February 7, 2007	Gunmen kidnapped oil workers	Port Harcourt	Total Oil Co lost a Filipina woman and a French oil worker Gerard Laporal
Feb., 2007	Militant raided church/public facilities	Port Harcourt	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints lost 4 missionaries
Feb., 2007	Militant raid	Port Harcourt	Hydrodrive lost 3 Croatian workers
June 2009	Nigerian government introduced the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) after years of Militant attacks and kidnappings	Niger Delta (General)	Multiple oil companies (Shell, Chevron, Agip)
Feb. 2012	Attack on oil pipeline and bombing of facilities by suspected militants	Bayelsa State	Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC)
Feb. 2016	Niger Delta Avengers blew up the Forcados Export Pipeline	Delta State	Shell/Forcados Terminal
May 2016	Multiple coordinated attacks on oil facilities causing a drop in Nigeria's oil production.	Delta and Bayelsa States	Chevron and Shell Facilities
July 2016	Militants attacked Chevron offshore platform and pipelines	Escravos, Delta State	Chevron Nigeria Limited
Jan 2017	Militants threatened renewed attacks after government delays in negotiations with ex-militants	Niger Delta Region	Several oil Installations
Aug. 2018	Militants sabotaged pipelines and engaged in clashes with security forces	Rivers State	Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) Pipelines
Mar 2019	Militants attacked oil Pipelines during political tensions around	Bayelsa State	Shell pipelines

	elections		
Oct. 2020	Pipeline vandalism and oil theft linked to militant groups.	Rivers State	NNPC pipeline infrastructure
June 2021	Illegal refinery operations linked to militant networks destroyed by security forces.	Rivers & Delta State	NNPC facilities and pipelines
April 2022	Massive oil theft and pipeline sabotage reported across the region	Niger Delta region	Shell, NNPC pipelines
July 2023	Security agencies dismantled militant-lined illegal refining camps	Bayelsa State	NNPC pipeline network
Feb. 2024	Renewed pipeline vandalism linked to militant groups and oil thieves	Rivers State	Trans-Niger Pipeline (Shell)
Jan. 2025	Reports of continued sabotage and illegal refining operations in the Niger Delta	Delta & Bayelsa States	NNPC and multinational oil pipelines

Source: Piate, 2025; Routers, 2024

The primary trigger for violence in the South-East is the perception of regional marginalization. The Federal Government approach is frequently criticized as heavy-handed; military operations aimed at flushing out Eastern Security Network (ESN) camps have often resulted in collateral damage, including the destruction of property and extrajudicial killings. The perceived punitive bias contrasted with the response to terrorism and banditry in other regions fields the "US versus them" narrative exploited by the separatist group. Consequently, deep-seated frustration among Igbo people has led to a reinvention of the Biafra Ideology as a vehicle for economic and political emancipation. The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and the Eastern Security Network (ESN) have transitioned from protest movements to enforcers of sit-at-home orders. These disruptions have crippled the local economy, with research indicating a loss of approximately N17 trillion over the last five years. While IPOB leadership occasionally claims to rescind these orders, breakaway factions and "Unknown Gunmen" use violence and arson to ensure compliance. This has created a shadow economy of agitation, where the line between political protest and organized crime has vanished. The Eastern Security Network originally framed as a defense against herder attacks, now functions as a state within a state collecting informal taxes. Armed gangs use Biafran rhetoric as a cover for extractive crimes, including kidnapping for ransom and extorting protection money from market unions. As of early 2026, while Northern Nige5rian remains the epicenter of mass fatalities, the South-East has experienced a specific surge in targeted assassinations and high-profile kidnappings. The insecurity has shifted from a purely political struggle to a decentralized, extractive business model. Local politicians are often caught in the middle, accused of using these groups as political thugs during election cycles, only to lose control of them as the groups evolve into independent criminal enterprises.

(Otite, 2008; Oyoubaire, 1974; Salawu, 2010; Ogbulor, 2013; Ogbulor, 2013; Nnoli, 1978, Nfor, 2007; Osaghae and Suberu, 2005; Agbu, 2004; Akinwunmi, 2014; Jega, 2002).

Table 2: South East Nigeria Casualty Profile (Estimated 2009 – 2025)

Date/Year	Category	Estimated Fatalities	Primary Cause	Key Affected States
2009–2014	Civilians	~80–120	Political violence, cult clashes, and criminal kidnappings	Abia, Anambra
2015	Civilians / Protesters	~40–60	Security crackdown during pro-Biafra demonstrations	Anambra, Abia
May 2016	Civilians / IPOB supporters	~50–150	Security forces firing during Biafra remembrance protests	Anambra, Abia
2017 (Sept.)	Civilians & IPOB members	~20–40	Military operation "Operation Python Dance II" targeting separatist activities	Abia
2018–2019	Civilians	~60–100	Communal clashes, cult violence, and kidnappings	Ebonyi, Enugu
Oct. 2020 – Dec. 2020	Civilians & Security Forces	~80–120	Attacks on police stations during EndSARS unrest and subsequent violence	Imo, Anambra
Jan.–Dec. 2021	Security Forces	~200–300	Armed attacks on police stations and checkpoints by suspected separatist groups/ESN	Imo, Anambra
Jan.–Dec. 2021	Civilians	~250–350	Sit-at-home enforcement attacks, kidnappings, and clashes	Imo, Abia, Anambra
Jan.–Dec. 2022	Armed Group Members	~200–300	Security raids on militant camps and gun battles	Imo, Abia
Jan.–Dec.	Civilians	~200–300	Armed attacks, political violence	Anambra, Imo
2022	Civilians	~150–250	Election-related violence and separatist enforcement actions before elections, criminal gangs	Imo, Ebonyi
Jan.–Dec. 2023	Security Forces	~70–120	Ambushes and attacks on patrol units	Imo, Anambra
Jan.–Dec. 2023	Civilians	~120–200	Kidnappings, armed clashes, and enforcement of sit-at-home orders	Anambra, Abia
Jan.–Dec. 2024	Armed Group Members	~80–150	Military and police operations against militant camps	Imo

Jan.–Feb. 2025	Civilians & Security Forces	~40–80	Sporadic clashes between armed groups and security forces	Imo, Anambra

Source: Council on Foreign Relations (2025).

While the South-West Nigeria remains relatively more stable than other regions, it has seen the emergence of ethno-regional protectionism. The creation of Amotekun reflects a profound lack of faith in the centralized federal security architecture. Consequently, insecurity in the region has evolved from traditional petty crimes into a complex network of organized threats driven by overlapping economic, environmental, and institutional factors. One of the most persistent drivers is the friction between sedentary farming communities and mobile herding networks. Driven by desertification in the North, herders have migrated South in search of "green gold" (pasture), leading to violent clashes over crop destruction and land use. Again, extensive forest reserves (particularly in Ondo, Oyo, and Ogun states) have become "black holes" for security. Criminal elements and bandits utilize these dense forests as hideouts to coordinate attacks and conceal victims, often overwhelming under-equipped local forest guards. Kidnapping for ransom has also transformed from a sporadic occurrence into a lucrative, sophisticated business model. Major arteries, such as the Lagos-Ibadan expressway and the Akure-Ilesa road, remain hotspots where organized gangs intercept travelers. This is exacerbated by a growing trend of insider threats, where local informants provide intelligence on wealthy targets in exchange for a percentage of the ransom. (Abioye, 2020; Olaniyi, 2020; Adejumo, 2021; Ojo, 2023; Obioha, 2021; Baderinwa, 2019; Wojuade, 2021; Nwagbo and Ezeakoafor, 2025; Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2020).

Table 3: South-West Casualty Profile (2009-2025)

Date/Year	Category	Estimated Fatalities	Primary Cause	Key Affected States
2009–2012	Civilians	~70–120	Armed robbery, cult clashes, and urban crime	Lagos, Ogun
2013–2014	Civilians	~50–80	Political violence, cult rivalry, and kidnappings	Lagos, Oyo
2015	Political actors & civilians	~20–40	Election-related violence during the general elections	Lagos, Oyo, Ogun
2016–2017	Civilians	~40–70	Kidnappings along highways and criminal banditry	Ondo, Ogun
2018	Farmers & herders	~30–60	Farmer-herder clashes in rural communities	Oyo, Ondo
2019	Civilians & security forces	~40–70	Election violence and clashes with criminal gangs	Lagos, Ogun
Oct. 2020	Civilians	~40–80	End SARS protests and shootings at protest sites	Lagos, Oyo

Oct.–Dec. 2020	Civilians & security forces	~60–120	Post-EndSARS riots, prison breaks, and attacks on police stations	Lagos, Ogun, Oyo
Jan.–Dec. 2021	Civilians	~60–100	Kidnappings and rural banditry in forest reserves	Ondo, Oyo
June 2022	Civilians	~40–50	St. Francis Catholic Church attack	Owo, Ondo State
Jan.–Dec. 2022	Civilians	~70–120	Kidnappings and violent criminal activity	Ogun, Ondo
Jan.–Dec. 2023	Civilians & political actors	~30–60	Election-related violence during presidential and gubernatorial elections	Lagos, Ogun
Jan.-Dec. 2024	Civilians	~40-80	Kidnappings and clashes between vigilantes and criminal groups	Ondo, Oyo
Jan.-Feb. 2025	Civilians	~20-40	Sporadic kidnappings and armed attacks along highways	Ogun, Ondo

Source: Council on Foreign Relations (2025)

Insecurity in the south-west is driven by the interaction of political power, economic desperation, and the failure of state institutions. Unemployment has turned kidnapping for ransom into a job for alienated youths. It functions as a perverse redistribution of wealth from the middle class to criminal syndicates. Again, a shadow economy have emerged involving informants, food suppliers for kidnappers dens and money launderers. Also, the south-west serves as a "breadbasket" and a major transit corridor, making its land and roads high-value assets. Here, is competition over dwindling resources (land and water) exacerbated by climate change and the southward migration of herders. The creation of the Western Nigeria Security Network (Amotekun), signaled a loss of faith in the federally controlled police, and so insecurity is used as a political leverage to demand for state police and fiscal restructuring. So insecurity in the South-west is a symptom of a broken social contract. When the state fails to provide economic opportunities or physical safety, non-state actors (from Amotekun to criminal gangs) step in to fill the vacuum, each with their own economic agendas.

In the North-central is the issue of farmer-herder conflict. The farmer-herders conflict is a rising pattern of skirmishes in between the nomadic pastoralists and the agriculturalists. It is a conflict basically over the shared land and water resources which is strained by an array of socio-economic, environmental and political pressures. There are several causal explanations, which have been postulated in literature. Some scholars argued that the immediate cause of the clashes is the weakening of the generally recognised authority, herders, it is argued do not respect local compacts. Without approval of the owner of the farm, herders simply move into the farm capitalizing on the beliefs held that land is a shared resource under the customary land tenure systems. Other behavioural causes is the herder's tendency to burn those lands developed in cultivation, graze on crops they have harvested, take farm products and destroy

the top soil. Other key explanation variable is climatic variability, which is a long-term change in the weather condition like the temperature, precipitation and windiness of the region. These changes come hand in hand with the movement of herders and their cattle, which has resulted into endless war between the herders and the farmers. The proliferation of small arms and Light Weapons (SALW) among the nomadic herdsmen and people of agricultural communities have exacerbated inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts that have long been rooted in the middle (North Central) part of Nigeria, therefore leading to a severe jeopardization of human security. The uninformed bombardments are more deadly now as both side now control sophisticated weapons hence under cutting the personal security and right to life of the civilians who become victims of the tug of war (Piate, 2025; Albert *et al*, 2025, Halidu and Abdullahi, 2021; Piate, 2025).

Table 4: Herdsmen – Farmers Conflicts in Nigeria (2009 – 2025)

Date	Where	What Caused It	What Happened
2009 - 2011	Plateau State (Jos, Barkin Ladi)	Competition over grazing land and water resources between Fulani herders and Berom farmers	Hundreds killed; destruction of villages and displacement of residents
2012	Benue State (Guma, Logo)	Grazing on farmland and crop destruction	Dozens killed; increased communal tensions
2013	Nasarawa State (Lafia, Doma)	Expansion of farmland into grazing routes	Over 100 deaths; communities displaced
2014	Kaduna State (Southern Kaduna)	Ethnic tensions, land disputes, and cattle grazing	Villages burned; over 100 fatalities reported
2015	Benue State	Competition for land and retaliatory attack between herders and farmers	Dozens killed; farms destroyed
2016	Agatu, Benue State	Grazing disputes and retaliation after cattle rustling allegations	Over 300 people reportedly killed; massive displacement
Feb 11, 2016	Abbi, Enugu State	Not mentioned	2 people died, others couldn't be found
Feb 23, 2016	A village in Agatu, Benue State	Not mentioned	50 people were killed
Feb 24, 2016	Agatu, Benue State	Retaliation for 2013 killing	Over 500 killed or injured, many forced to leave their homes
Mar 2, 2016	Ossissa, Delta State	Not mentioned	5 people killed, some injured, homes destroyed
Mar 7-17, 2016	Mbaya-Tombo, Benue State	Dispute over destroyed crops	Over 35 people lost their lives, properties destroyed
2017	Southern Kaduna (Kaduna State)	Land ownership disputes and ethnic tensions	Hundreds killed; humanitarian crisis
2018 (Jan-	Benue, Plateau,	Grazing conflicts and	Over 500 deaths;

June)	Nasarawa States	retaliation after anti-open grazing laws	destruction of homes and farms
2019	Taraba State (Wukari area)	Farmer – herder disputes over land and cattle routes	Dozens killed; communities displaced
2020	Benue and Plateau States	Competition for farmland and grazing land, climate pressure	Dozens killed; villages abandoned
2021	Oyo and Ondo States	Movement of herders southward due to desertification and insecurity in the North	Rising tension; some fatalities and displacement
2022	Plateau State (Bassa and Barkin Ladi)	Retaliatory attacks between farming communities and herders	Over 100 people killed; destruction of villages
2023	Benue State (Gwer West, Guma)	Grazing disputes and reprisal attacks	Dozens killed; large-scale displacement
2024	Plateau State (Mangu)	Competition over land and ethnic tensions	Scores killed; homes burned
2025	Benue and Plateau State	Ongoing grazing disputes and retaliatory attacks	Continued fatalities and displacement

Source: Piate, 2025

Insecurity in Nigeria's North Central zone (the Middle Belt) often framed as a simple "clash of cultures" or religious war, however looking through the lens of political economy, the violence is deeply rooted in competition over dwindling resources, the breakdown of traditional mediation and the business of conflict. At the core is an ecological-economic crisis. That is climate change and desertification in the far North have pushed pastoralists southward, turning the North central zone into a frontier for survival. The transition from traditional open grazing to sedentary farming has vanished. What use to be seasonal migration routes are now permanent farmlands leading to zero-sum game for land. Again, when a farmer loses a harvest to cattle, they lose their annual income, when a herder loses cattle to rustlers or reprisal, they lose their ancestral wealth. Both sides view the other as an existential threat to their economic survival.

In the North-West, is the issue of banditry and kidnapping. Banditry as a phenomenon is an organized violent crime by groups of organized criminals know as bandits whose activities are those of outlawed entities that exist beyond the legal system and resorted to the use of force, advanced weapon and intimidation as their tools for fulfilment of their objectives. Among the most striking ones are kidnapping for ransom where people or groups are taken and money paid to release them, armed robbery, where people are targeted and robbed of what they have, livestock rustling which often entails high numbers of animals stolen, a business activity that is very economical in most of the areas involved and assault of travelers on highways and intrusions into communities. Bandits usually dwell in ungoverned areas like forest, mountains areas or villages that are abandoned with little or no government presence in such areas. The proliferation of the small arms and light weapons (SALW) has increased banditry-related and kidnapping attacks particularly in the North-West States of Nigeria hence creating a high risk of human insecurity. Through the use of these weapons, bandits raid, steal, loot houses and kidnap the inhabitants for ransom.

Table 5: Incidences of Banditry in Nigeria's Northwest Region (2009 – 2025)

S/N	Date	Location	What Happened	Casualties / Impact
1.	2009–2011	Zamfara State (Anka, Maru LGAs)	Cattle rustling, competition over land, collapse of rural security	~100 deaths / Rise of armed bandit groups and village raids
2.	2012	Katsina State (Faskari area)	Armed robbery networks evolving into organized banditry	~30 deaths / Increased insecurity in rural communities
3.	2013	Zamfara and Sokoto forests	Illegal mining disputes and cattle rustling	~60 deaths / Formation of heavily armed bandit camps
4.	2014	Kaduna State (Birnin Gwari)	Bandit attacks on farming communities and highway robbery	~50 deaths/ Mass displacement of villagers
5.	2015	Zamfara State	Competition over gold mining sites and cattle rustling	~70 deaths /Destruction of villages and livestock loss
6.	2016	Katsina State	Armed raids on villages and kidnapping for ransom	~80 deaths /Increased kidnappings across rural areas
7.	2017	Zamfara State (Shinkafi, Maradun)	Organized bandit gangs and weak security presence	~200 deaths/ Large-scale displacement and humanitarian crisis
8.	2018	Zamfara and Sokoto States	Expansion of bandit groups and retaliatory vigilante attacks	~300 deaths/ Closure of schools and markets
9.	2019	Zamfara State	Escalation of bandit attacks despite government peace deals	~500 deaths/ Thousands displaced; farmland abandoned
10.	2020	Katsina, Sokoto, Kaduna	Bandit kidnappings and raids on villages	~400 deaths/ Growing internally displaced persons
11.	May 6, 2020	Faskari & Sabuwa LGAs, Katsina	Armed group attacked residents and police	5 killed, 1 kidnapped, DPO shot
12.	May 20, 2020	Three villages, Tsafe LGA, Zamfara	Night raid on communities	12 killed, livestock stolen
13.	Jun 5, 2020	Maru & Talata-Mafara LGAs, Zamfara	Gunmen struck communities	21 people killed
14.	Jun 25, 2020	Sunko, Gavya, Marafa (Shiroro), Niger	Gunmen raided villages	4 people killed
15.	Jul 21, 2020	Magani & Tungan-Bajo, Rafi LGA,	Mass abduction incident	16 people kidnapped

		Niger		
16.	Jul 26, 2020	Jema'a & Kaura LGAs, Kaduna	Armed men stormed rural communities	10 people killed
17.	Aug 9, 2020	Zamfarawa, Batsari LGA, Katsina	Community clash between residents and attackers	2 villagers and 8 bandits killed
18.	Sep 4, 2020	Dukku & Kagara, Niger	Armed attack targeting vigilantes	22 people killed (19 vigilantes)
19.	Sep 13, 2020	Udawa, Kaduna	Family abducted from farming community	16 family members kidnapped
20.	Sep 18, 2020	Tangaza, Sokoto	Police station stormed by gunmen	DPO, 1 inspector killed, 2 women abducted
21.	Oct 12, 2020	Faskari (Katsina) & Rafi (Niger)	Dual attacks in two states	14 killed, 3 injured, 1 kidnapped
22.	Oct 12, 2020	Southern Kaduna	Community leader and son murdered	2 people killed
23.	Nov 17, 2020	Kaduna-Abuja Road	Kidnap of university students	8 ABU students kidnapped
24.	Nov 17, 2020	Gidan Zaki, Zangon Kataf, Kaduna	District head and son assassinated	2 people killed
25.	Nov 20, 2020	Mariya, Niger	Village attack	14 kidnapped, 1 policeman killed
26.	Nov 23, 2020	Kanoma, Maru LGA, Zamfara	Gunmen stormed mosque during worship	Imam and 17 worshippers kidnapped
27.	Dec 1, 2020	Sabuwa LGA, Katsina	Farmers attacked while working	7 killed, 30 abducted
28.	Dec 5, 2020	Kasuwan Magani, Kajuru LGA, Kaduna	Attack on community	1 person killed
29.	Dec 10, 2020	Pmahbe Layout, Ushafa, Abuja	Residents kidnapped in a night operation	3 people abducted
30.	Dec 12, 2020	Tse-Angbande, Makurdi LGA, Benue	Village raided overnight	4 killed, 7 injured
31.	Dec 12, 2020	Kankara, Katsina	Schoolboys abducted from boarding school	About 333 students missing
32.	Dec 13, 2020	Chukuba, Shiroro LGA, Niger	Village attacked by gunmen	1 person killed, 20 kidnapped
33.	Dec.	Kankara, Katsina	Kidnapping of	No fatalities reported; over

	2020	State	schoolchildren by armed bandits	300 students abducted / International attention to insecurity in schools
34.	2021	Kaduna and Zamfara States	Mass kidnappings from schools and villages	~500 deaths/ School closures and community displacement
35.	2022	Zamfara, Kebbi, Katsina	Armed attacks on villages and military clashes with bandits	~600 deaths/ Intensified military operations
36.	2023	Kaduna State (Birnin Gwari)	Bandit raids and kidnappings along highways	~200 deaths/ Transport disruption and economic losses
37.	2024	Zamfara and Katsina States	Competition over rural resources and organized criminal networks	~150 deaths/ Continued displacement and food insecurity
38.	2025	Zamfara, Sokoto, Kaduna	Ongoing bandit attacks and military counter-operations	~100+ deaths/ Persistent insecurity and humanitarian challenges

Source: Olapeju, Peter, (2022); Council of Foreign Relations (2025).

The crisis in North-west Nigeria could best-be framed as a breakdown of law and order, but it could more accurately be described as a vibrant illicit shadow economy where power, money and resources are exchanged between state actors, local communities and criminal enterprise. The structural drivers and the business model of North West banditry is accentuated by the collapse of the rural economy. In many areas in the Northwest the state has vanished. Bandits fill this vacuum by imposing harvest taxes. Farmers must-pay a fee to the bandits just to plant or harvest their crops. If they don't pay, they are killed or kidnapped. Kidnapping has evolved from a desperate act into a highly organized multi-billion naira industry. The supply chains here is that there is a sophisticated hierarchy involving spotters (those who identify targets in cities), transporters and guards (those who hold victims in forest camps like the Rugu or Kamuku forests). Ransoms act as a massive transfer of wealth from the poor and middle class to criminal syndicates. This money is rarely kept in cash, it is reinvested into high-grade weaponry (AK-47s, RPGs), for logistics like buying of motorcycles and fuel and laundering, often through cattle rustling or real estate in urban centres. The most chilling part of the political economy is the role of informants. Those Local youths, security personnel and traditional rulers who provide intelligence to bandits for a cut of the ransom. The weakness of the Nigerian state in effective border policing especially the Sahel, allows for the easy flow of arms from post-conflict zones like Mali and Libya. In essence, insecurity in the North West is no longer just a crime wave, it is a self-sustaining economic system. Here the bandits are the labour, the ransoms and gold are the revenue and the lack of state presence provides the market for these activities to thrive (Piate, 2025; Tukur, 2013; Olapeju and Peter, 2022; Onuoha, 2023; Rosenje and Adeniyi, 2025; Onuoha, 2024; Mukhtar, 2022, Ibrahim, 2026).

In the North-East is the issue of Terrorism, that is Boko Haram and ISWAP. Boko Haram was formed by Muhammed Yusuf with the aim of creating an Islamic state in Nigeria, but became famous for promoting violent extremism after 2009. There are several explanations as to why Boko Haram has appeared in Nigeria. Those that subscribed to the socio-economic factor school of thought claim that Boko Haram is strongly linked to poor infrastructure, poverty, unemployment and lack of education. Others, still aligning to this thought, argued

that the unequal way resources are shared in the country and the gap between the North and South of Nigeria which has made the North poorer and more economically disadvantaged, is the reason the region is more likely for the rise in violence by Boko Haram. This idea, seem to have defined the communique issued at the end of the conference on security challenges in Nigeria organized by Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, held on September, 2011, which stated that if Nigeria improves its infrastructure, economy, create job opportunities and education, terrorist attacks will be greatly reduced or eliminated. My problem with this line of thinking is that those who supported the socio-economic reason for the rise of Boko Haram in the North, did not consider the role of elites in creating poverty there.

The political factor school of thought, argued that the rise of Boko Haram in the North was a reaction to the North being denied its turn at the presidency. The PDP's decision to break the zoning agreement by allowing Jonathan to take over the presidency after the death of President Yar'Adua. Though this factors may have contributed to the rise of Boko Haram in the North, the truth remain that the emergence of Boko Haram is due to religious fanaticism, that is the influence of radical ideas and brain washing. The substratum behind this position is inferred from the sect declaration after the Kano bombing that killed between 166 and 200, that our war is against the government that opposes Islam, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) that kills Muslims and anyone who helps them, even if they are muslim (Daily Sun, 2012, Agwu, 2013, the Guardian, 2012, This Day, 2012, Nigerian Tribune, 2012, Ibaba, 2018, Ajayi, 2012, Alao *et al*, 2012).

The insecurity in the North East Nigeria remains a complex, dual-threat landscape dominated by two rival factions: JAS (the original Boko Haram) and ISWAP (Islamic State West Africa Province). While both groups seek to establish an Islamic state, their methods, governance and relationship with the local population have diverged sharply, leading to a civil war within the insurgency that is often as intense as their fight against the Nigerian state. ISWAP has emerged as the more sophisticated and strategically dangerous of the two. They have moved away from the indiscriminate killing of Muslims that characterized the early years of the insurgency. They provide a crude form of governance in the areas it controls (Particularly around Lake Chad and Northern Borno), by taxing trade (fishing and agriculture) rather than simply looting and in return, they provide a level of security. Their attacks are surgically focused on the Nigerian military, government officials and infidels (Christians or non-compliant Muslims).

Unlike ISWAP, Boko Haram continues to utilize more brutal predatory tactics. They view any civilian who doesn't live within their territory or support them as a legitimate target. They rely heavily on kidnapping for ransom, suicide bombings (though has reduced since 2010) and cattle rustling. They are most active in South-Central Borno, the mandara mountains, and have recently pushed back into parts of the Lake Chad islands leading to bloody clashes with ISWAP (Adebayo, 2014, Awortu, 2015, Kelly, Luka and Baban'umma, 2024, Mamman, 2020).

Table 6: Terrorist Attacks in Nigeria (2009 – 2025)

S/N	DATE	PLACE OF INCIDENCE	SUSPECTS	VICTIMS
1.	19/10/1986	Dale Giwa's house; Ikeja, Lagos	IBB	Dele Giwa
2.	31/5/1995	Ilorin Stadium	Unknown	Figure unknown

3.	18/1/1996	Durbar Hotel, Kaduna	Suspects killed but name not available	Figure unknown
4.	20/1/1996	Aminu Kano Int'l Airport, Kano	Unknown	Figure unknown
5.	11/1/1996	Ikeja Cantonment, Lagos	Unknown	Figure unknown
6.	25/4/1996	Air Force Base, Ikeja, Lagos	Unknown	Figure unknown
7.	Murtala Muhammed Airport	Unknown		Chief Security Officer
8.	16/12/1996	Not available	Unknown	Col. Marwa's convoy
9.	18/12/1996	Not available	Unknown	Task force on environmental sanitation
10.	17/5/1997	Not available	Unknown	Nigeria Army bus hit
11.	22/4/1997	Evans square	Unknown	3 died, several people injured
12.	12/5/1997	Abuja Airport	Unknown	Lt. Col. Oladipo Diya escapes death
13.	27/1/2002	Ibadan	Unknown	Federal ministry of works and housing human victim not known
14.	26/7/2009	Bauchi State	First clash with security agencies on Dutsen Tanshi	39 civilians dead, 2 policemen dead, 1 soldier killed.
15.	27/7/2009	Yobe State	First attack in Yobe leading to invasion of Potiskum divisional headquarters	5 civilians dead, 3 policemen dead
16.	29/7/2009	Yobe State	Confrontation with security men at Mamundo village	33 BH dead
17.	29/7/2009	Borno State	All right battle between BH and combined security operatives	Scores killed and operation base destroyed.
18.	July 2009	Maiduguri, Borno State and other northern cities	Boko Haram	800 civilians, security personnel, and insurgents killed during uprising
19.	7/1/2010	Borno State	BH gunmen on motorcycle fired at a tea shop in Gazangi-Tashan Gandu	3 civilians dead
20.	2/4/2010	Bauchi State	Attack on prison at	1 prison warder killed

			Maiduguri	
21.	15/5/2010	Warri, Delta State	Niger Delta Militants	Figures not available
22.	1/10/2010	Abuja	Boko Haram	Figure not available
23.	8/4/2011	Suleja, Niger State	Boko Haram	Figure not available
24.	26/4/2011	Maiduguri, Borno State	Boko Haram	Figure not available
25.	1/1/2011	Abuja	Boko Haram	Army market, human victim not known
26.	28/1/2011	Bauchi State	Killed governorship candidate of (ANPP) Alhaji Modu Fannami Gubio	5 injured
27.	2/3/2011	Kaduna State	Attack residence of divisional police officer	2 policemen killed
28.	7/4/2011	Borno State	An explosion of bomb	Many injured
29.	8/4/2011	Kaduna State	An explosions at independent electoral commission office Suleja	11 civilians killed
30.	21/4/2011	Borno State	Two suspected bomb makers	2 BH dead
31.	25/4/2011	Kano State	Three bomb blast at Tudu palace Hotel and Kano motor park in Maiduguri	Figure not available
32.	5/5/2011	Bauchi State	Bomb explosion in Damaturu	1 policeman injured
33.	5/5/2011	FCT Abuja	Attack on Bauchi State government house at Abuja	1 civilian dead, 1 policeman dead others injured.
34.	5/5/2011	Bauchi State	Attack on two Islamic clerics, Sheikh Goni Tljiam and Mallam Alhaji Abur at his residence	2 islamic clerics dead
35.	9/5/2011	Bauchi State	Attack on Ibrahim Dudu Gobe	1 civilians killed
36.	13/5/2011	Bauchi State	Bomb explosion at Londo Chinki Maiduguri	2 civilians killed
37.	15/5/2011	Bauchi State	Bomb exposition at military barrack	3 policemen dead, 2 soldiers dead
38.	29/5/2011	Bauchi State	Attack Shehu of Borno's brother, Alhaji Abba Anas Graba El-Kanemi	14 soldiers dead
39.	31/5/2011	Borno State	Attack on police station in Maiduguri	1 civilian dead
40.	28/5/2011	Borno State	A blast at the mammy	13 civilians dead, 40

			market of Shandawank Barracks	injured.
41.	29/6/2011	Bauchi State	An explosion at Zuba of Kubwa in Abuja	8 civilians lose their legs.
42.	1/6/2011	Borno State	Attack on police station in Maiduguri	5 policemen dead
43.	12/6/2011	Bauchi State	Attack on drinking joint at Damboa	4 civilians dead
44.	16/6/2011	Bauchi State	Bomb explosion at Damboa	4 civilians dead
45.	16/6/2011	FCT Abuja	Bomb explosion at the force headquarters	2 policemen dead
46.	16/5/2011	FCT Abuja	A massive explosion at the national police headquarters building in Abuja	Figure not available
47.	4/7/2011	Borno State	Bomb blast	4 civilians dead, 10 injured
48.	13/7/2011	Borno State	Bomb blast	5 civilians dead, 2 soldiers injured
49.	26/8/2011	FCT Abuja	Bomb blast at UN House Abuja	33 civilians dead, 11 UN personnel and several people injured.
50.	Aug. 26, 2011	Abuja (UN Headquarters)	Boko Haram	23 killed, over 80 injured
51.	17/10/2011	Borno State	BH storm police barracks	14 vehicles burnt
52.	8/12/2011	Kaduna State	Bomb blast	15 civilians dead several others injured.
53.	20/12/2011	Yobe State	Bomb blast	3 suspected BH injured
54.	25/12/2011	Niger State	Bomb blast at St. Theresa's Catholic Church	Several people injured.
55.	15/1/2012	Gombe	Deeper Life Bible Church in Gombe	8 worshippers dead, 18 injured.
56.	Jan. 20, 2012	Kano State	Boko Haram	~185 people killed in coordinated bombings and shootings
57.	16/1/2012	Adamawa State	Christ Apostolic Church, Jimeta, BH spraying worshippers with bullets	16 worshippers dead.
58.	21/1/2012	Kano State	Several bomb blast at police stations	200 killed including civilians and policemen
59.	27/1/2012	Kano State	Bomb blast	2 civilians dead

60.	20/9/2012	Plateau State	Attack on the State capital	9 civilians dead
61.	17/10/2012	Plateau State	Attack on security	1 soldier macheted, 3 BH killed.
62.	Apr. 14, 2014	Chibok, Borno State	Boko Haram	276 schoolgirls abducted
63.	May 2014	Jos, Plateau State	Boko Haram	~118 civilians killed in twin bombings
64.	Jan. 2015	Baga, Borno State	Boko Haram	Estimated 300–2,000 civilians killed
65.	June 2015	Maiduguri, Borno State	Boko Haram	~50 civilians killed in suicide bombings
66.	Feb. 2018	Dapchi, Yobe State	Boko Haram/ISWAP	110 schoolgirls abducted
67.	July 2019	Borno State villages	ISWAP	~65 mourners killed during funeral attack
68.	Nov. 28, 2020	Zabarmari, Borno State	Boko Haram	76 farmers killed
69.	June 2021	Konduga, Borno State	ISWAP	31 civilians killed in attack
70.	Mar. 2022	Abuja–Kaduna train route	Suspected terrorist group linked to Boko Haram/ISWAP	8 killed, dozens kidnapped
71.	Jan. 2023	Borno State (various)	ISWAP	40 civilians killed
72.	2024	Borno and Yobe States	Boko Haram / ISWAP	Dozens killed in sporadic attacks on villages and security posts
73.	2025	North-East Nigeria (Borno Region)	Boko Haram/ISWAP	Continued attacks causing dozens of civilian and military casualties.

Source: Piate (2025).

Conclusion

The political economy of insecurity in Nigeria has transitioned from a series of isolated regional grievances into a unified, integrated marketplace of violence. Across all six geopolitical zones, the state's retreating authority has been replaced by a predatory economy where insecurity is not merely a byproduct of instability, but a deliberate high-revenue industry. From the North-east's war-economy built on aid diversion and illicit taxing, to the South-South's refined oil theft and the South-west's sophisticated kidnapping, violence has become a rational economic choice for both desperate non-state actors and complicit elites. Insecurity in Nigeria is a systemic economic enterprise. The way forward is fundamental restructuring of the Nigeria state from a predatory entity that extracts value to a productive entity that protect it. Until the profit of peace exceeds the dividend of disorder, the commercialization of violence will continue to undermine the Nigerian project.

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