

PSJ-UK/iNSDEC OCTOBER MONTHLY INSECURITY REPORT

**“From Killings to Kidnappings: Escalating Banditry and Uneven Security Outcomes in
Nigeria”**

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Executive Summary:

The PSJ-UK / iNSDEC October 2025 Monthly Insecurity Report presents a comprehensive assessment of violent incidents recorded across Nigeria during the reporting period, highlighting a persistent and geographically uneven security crisis. October 2025 recorded 72 violent incidents, resulting in 147 fatalities, 18 injuries, and 272 abductions, underscoring a sustained high tempo of insecurity despite fluctuations in overall casualty figures compared to earlier months. While fatalities declined relative to peak periods earlier in the year, the continued prevalence of mass abductions and targeted killings reflects the resilience and adaptability of armed non-state actors.

Regionally, the North Central and North West zones remained the epicentres of violence. The North Central recorded the highest number of fatalities, driven by lethal attacks in Plateau, Kogi, Nasarawa, and Kwara States, while the North West accounted for the majority of abductions, with Zamfara and Kaduna States emerging as critical hotspots. These patterns indicate a dual threat landscape lethal communal and criminal violence in the North Central, and kidnapping-driven banditry in the North West each requiring tailored policy and security responses.

Actor analysis reveals that bandit groups continued to dominate the conflict space in October, responsible for the majority of killings and abductions, particularly in rural and peri-urban communities. The cumulative impact of these attacks has deepened humanitarian vulnerabilities, disrupted livelihoods, weakened local economies, and strained already fragile social structures. Overall, the October data confirms that Nigeria's insecurity remains systemic rather than episodic, demanding coordinated, data-driven, and regionally differentiated interventions.

Introduction:

In October, a total of 437 casualties were recorded from insecurity-related incidents, comprising 147 deaths, 18 injuries, and 272 abductions, indicating a persistently high level of violent activity. Abductions constituted the largest share of atrocities, underscoring the continued reliance on kidnapping by armed groups and criminal networks, particularly in vulnerable communities. The high number of fatalities further reflects the severe human cost of ongoing attacks and raids during the month.

Overall, the October data point to a deteriorating security and humanitarian situation, with civilians bearing the brunt of violence. The combined scale of deaths and abductions highlights the urgent need for more effective security responses, enhanced intelligence-led operations, and strengthened community protection measures to curb the growing impact of insecurity.

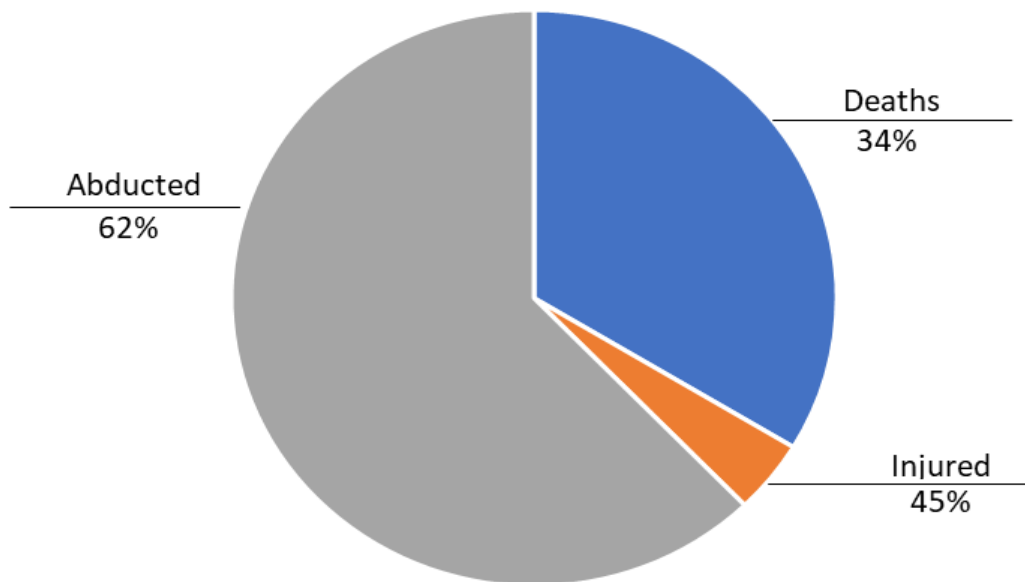


Figure 1: Total Atrocities for October, 2025 (Source: iNSDEC Casualty Tracker, 2025)

A comparative review of insecurity indicators between August and October reveals notable fluctuations in the scale and pattern of atrocities. August recorded the highest overall impact, with 215 deaths, 19 injuries, and 449 abductions, indicating intense violent activity dominated by mass kidnappings and fatal attacks. In September, fatalities declined slightly to 203 deaths, while injuries rose sharply to 85, suggesting a shift toward incidents resulting in non-fatal harm. Abductions dropped significantly to 155, reflecting a temporary reduction in large-scale kidnapping operations during the month.

By October, the data show a further decline in fatalities to 147 deaths and injuries to 18, pointing to a reduction in lethal and injury-causing incidents compared to previous months. However, abductions increased again to 272, reversing the September decline and indicating a resurgence of kidnapping activities. Overall, the August-October trend suggests a gradual reduction in killings, contrasted by volatile abduction patterns, with kidnapping remaining a persistent and adaptive threat within the insecurity landscape.

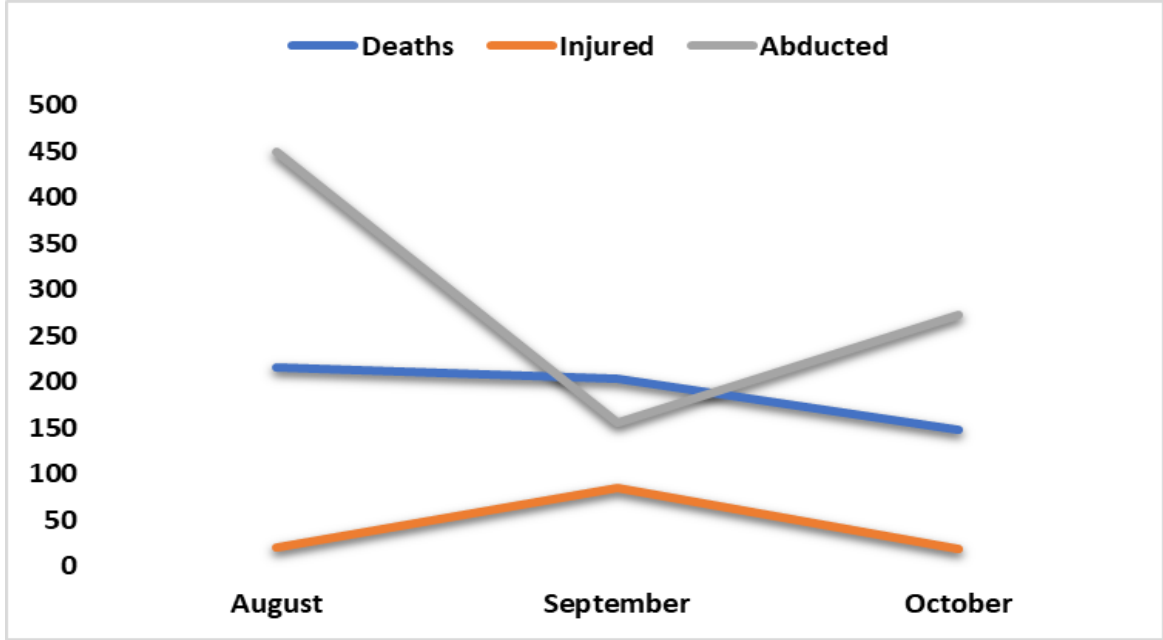


Figure 2: Comparison between Total Atrocities Committed between August-October 2025 (Source: iNSDEC Casualty Tracker, 2025)

States with Highest Death Record

In October 2025, the distribution of fatalities across Nigerian states was highly concentrated, with five states accounting for the majority of recorded deaths. Leading the list was Zamfara State with 32 fatalities, driven by sustained bandit raids in local government areas such as Tsafe, Bukkuyum, and Gusau, where attacks on civilians, vigilantes, and security forces were frequent. Plateau State followed closely with 29 deaths, largely resulting from militia and communal violence in Barkin Ladi, Riyom, and Bokkos. Kogi State recorded 28 deaths, including a significant incident in Yagba West, while Kaduna State reported 23 fatalities across Kajuru, Chikun, Birnin Gwari, and Kauru. Nasarawa State also featured prominently with 9 deaths, primarily linked to gunmen attacks in Kokona.

This concentration underscores the persistent insecurity in Nigeria's North West, North Central, and parts of the Middle Belt, where banditry, farmer-herder clashes, and targeted assaults remain prevalent. States such as Niger (2 deaths), Benue (2), Sokoto (3), Taraba (3), and Lagos (5) also reported incidents, though at lower magnitudes. The data illustrates that while violence remains geographically focalized, its impact is severe in high-burden states, demanding region-specific security and humanitarian interventions.

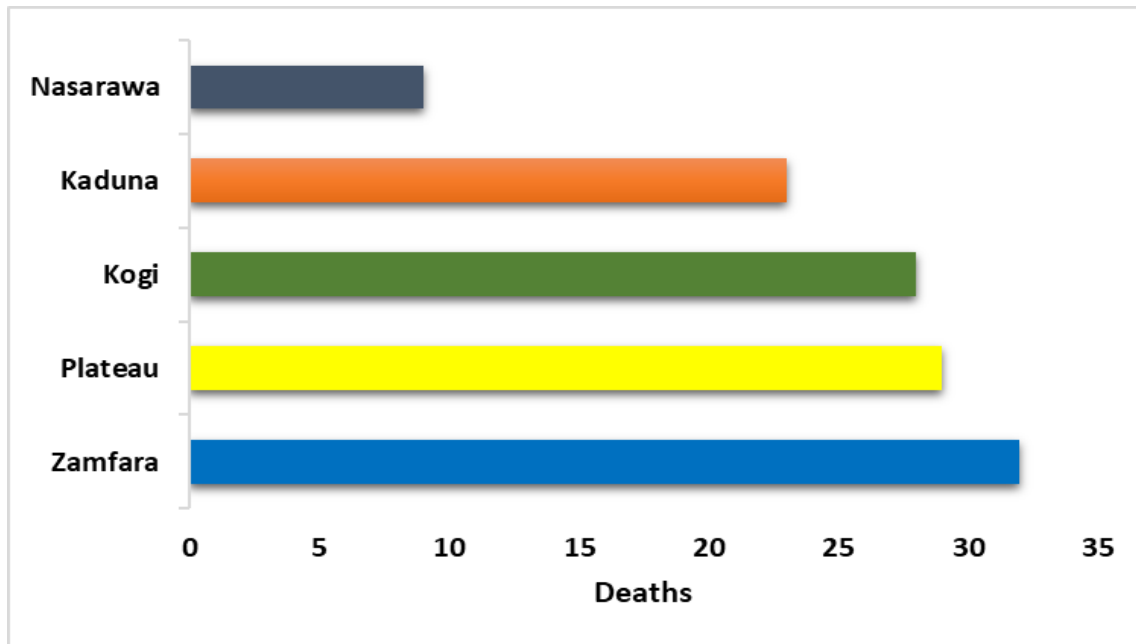


Figure 3: States with the Highest Deaths Cases in October, 2025 (Source: iNSDEC Casualty Tracker, 2025)

States with Highest Abductions

The abduction crisis in Nigeria reached alarming levels in October 2025, with incidents heavily concentrated in a few high-risk states. Zamfara State was the epicenter of kidnappings, recording 145 abductions over half of the national total for the month. This included mass abduction events such as the kidnapping of 73 local residents in Bukkuyum (Rayau) on October 18 and multiple smaller-scale incidents across Tsafe, Gusau, and Bungudu. Kaduna State followed with 66 abductions, notably including the abduction of 12 patients, a medical doctor, and a security guard from a clinic in Kujama, Chikun LGA on October 21. Kogi and Kwara States each reported 14 abductions, with Kogi experiencing incidents in Yagba West and Ofu, while Kwara saw repeated attacks in Edu and Patigi LGAs.

Other states with notable abduction figures include Niger (7 abductions), Nasarawa (6), Katsina (6), and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja (6). The concentration of cases in the North West and North Central zones underscores the operational dominance of bandit groups

in these regions, where kidnap-for-ransom remains a pervasive and lucrative enterprise. The data confirms that Zamfara and Kaduna continue to be the most critical abduction hotspots, requiring urgent and coordinated security and community-based interventions to mitigate further victimization.

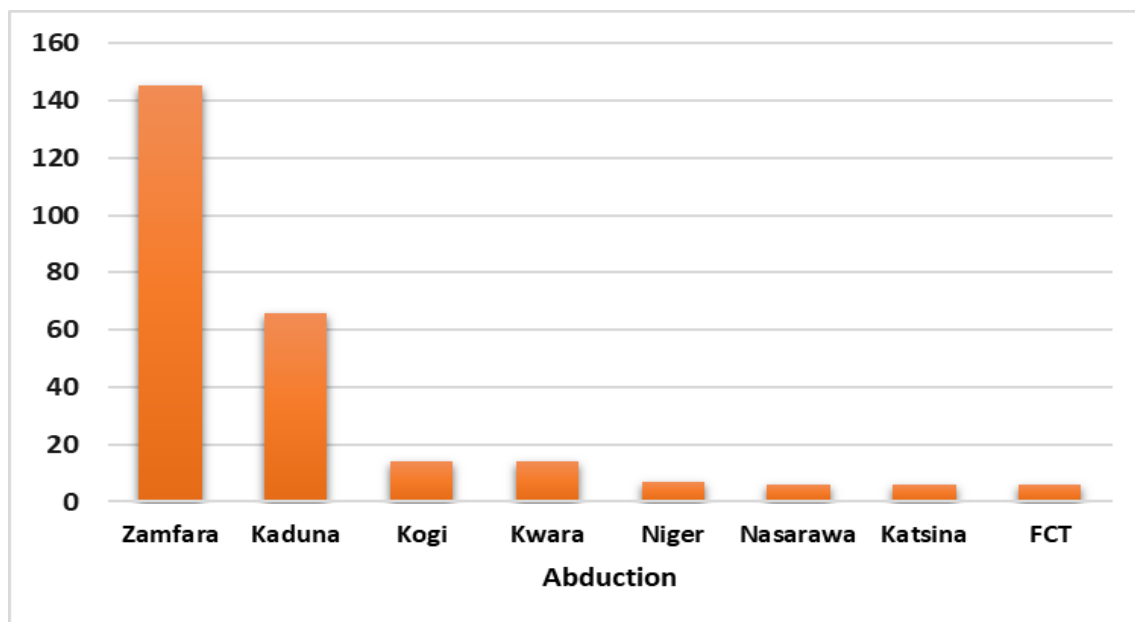


Figure 4: States with the Highest Cases of Abductions in October, 2025 (Source: iNSDEC Casualty Tracker, 2025)

Frequency of Attacks in October

In October 2025, a total of 72 distinct violent incidents were recorded nationwide, positioning the month among those with a high frequency of attacks for the year. This represents an increase from September (64 incidents) and closely mirrors the elevated activity observed in August (71 incidents). The rise in attack frequency indicates a sustained operational tempo by armed non-state actors, including bandit groups and militias, even as overall fatality figures showed relative moderation compared to peak months earlier in the year.

Within the broader January–October 2025 trend, October’s figures reflect a continued pattern of instability following the annual peak in May (140 incidents). Since June, monthly attack

frequency has remained consistently high, fluctuating between 64 and 86 incidents, suggesting that violent groups have retained both organizational capacity and geographic reach, particularly across the North West and North Central regions. This sustained level of activity underscores the persistence of the threat environment and highlights the need for continuous surveillance, proactive security deployments, and strengthened community-based resilience measures to disrupt recurring attack cycles and enhance civilian protection.

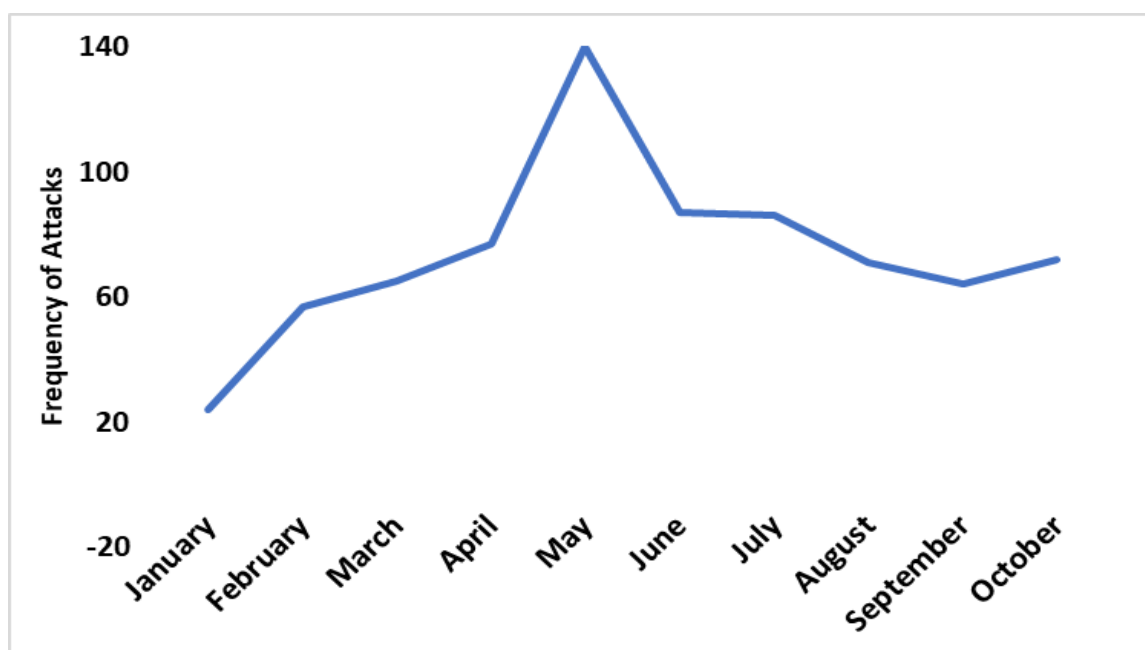


Figure 5: Frequency of Attacks across Months (Source: iNSDEC Casualty Tracker, 2025)

An analysis of insecurity indicators over the January–October 2025 period shows that the frequency of attacks does not consistently translate into proportional levels of deaths or abductions, highlighting the evolving tactics and objectives of violent actors. While May recorded the highest attack frequency (140 incidents), it also coincided with very high fatalities (615 deaths) and abductions (415 cases), indicating a period of widespread, highly lethal, and disruptive violence. Similarly, June, despite a reduced number of attacks (87), recorded the

highest death toll of the year (667 deaths), suggesting fewer but more deadly incidents, likely involving mass-casualty attacks or large-scale raids.

In contrast, other months demonstrate a divergence between attack frequency and impact. August, with a moderate number of attacks (71), recorded the highest abductions of the year (449 cases) but comparatively lower fatalities, reflecting a strategic shift toward kidnapping rather than lethal violence. October followed a similar pattern, with 72 attacks resulting in 147 deaths and 272 abductions, reinforcing the observation that sustained attack levels can coexist with reduced lethality but elevated kidnapping activity. Overall, the ten-month trend indicates that attack frequency alone is an insufficient predictor of human impact; rather, the nature, scale, and intent of attacks determine whether outcomes manifest predominantly as deaths or abductions. This underscores the need for threat assessments that integrate both incident volume and outcome severity to inform effective security responses.

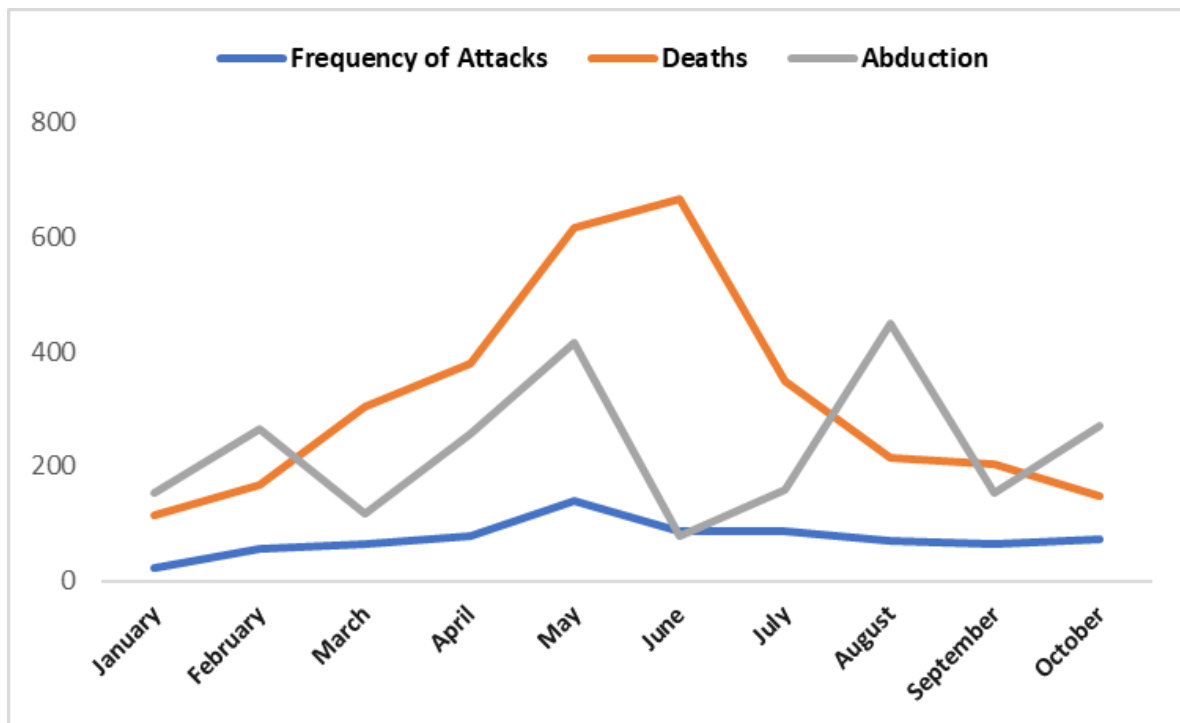


Figure 6: Interplay between Frequency of Attacks, Deaths and Abductions across Months

(Source: iNSDEC Casualty Tracker, 2025)

Geopolitical Analysis

A regional assessment of insecurity indicators for October 2025 reveals a highly uneven distribution of atrocities across Nigeria's geopolitical zones, with the North Central and North West regions bearing the greatest burden. The North Central recorded the highest number of fatalities (77 deaths), alongside 9 injuries and 47 abductions, reflecting persistent lethal violence linked to communal clashes, criminal attacks, and armed group activities. This underscores the region's continued vulnerability to deadly incidents with significant civilian impact.

The North West followed closely, recording 61 deaths, 8 injuries, and a markedly high 218 abductions, making it the epicentre of kidnapping activities during the month. The disproportionate abduction figures highlight the dominance of banditry and organised criminal networks operating across the region. In contrast, the North East recorded minimal impact, with 4 deaths and no reported injuries or abductions, indicating comparatively lower levels of insecurity during the reporting period.

Southern regions experienced significantly fewer atrocities in October. The South East recorded no deaths or injuries but 5 abductions, while the South South reported 1 abduction with no fatalities or injuries. The South West recorded 5 deaths, 1 injury, and 1 abduction, representing isolated incidents rather than widespread violence. Overall, the October regional data (Excel Sheet reference) demonstrate that violent activity remains heavily concentrated in the North Central and North West, reinforcing the need for region-specific security strategies, particularly to address mass abductions and lethal attacks in these high-risk zones.

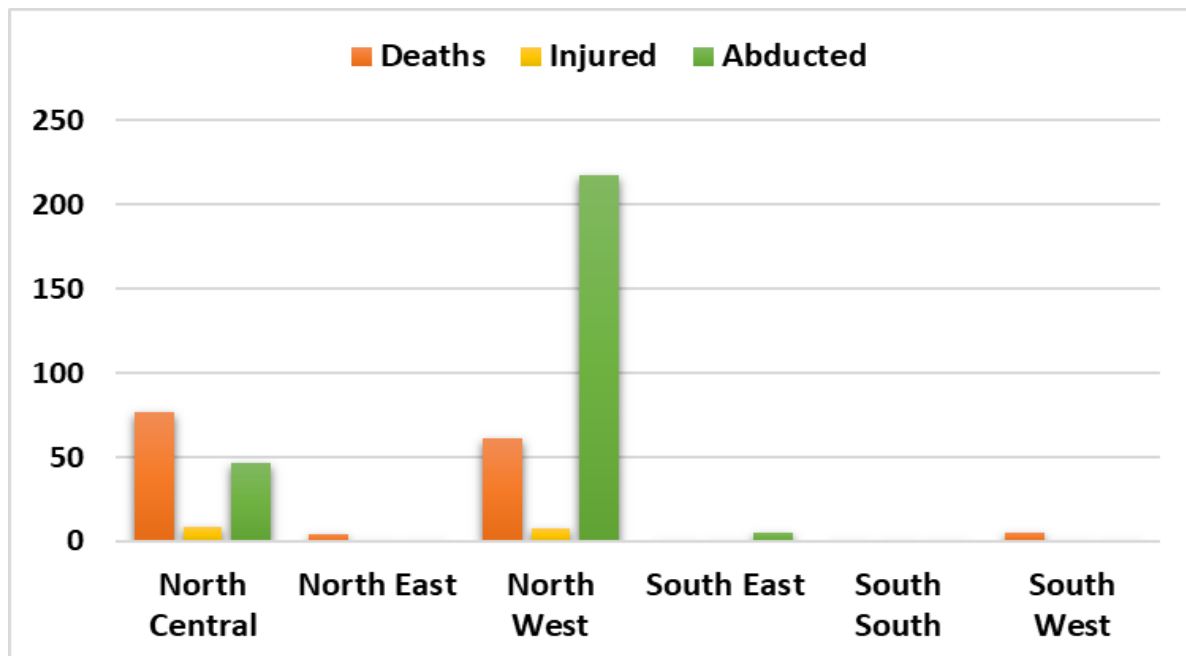


Figure 7: Regional Record of Atrocities in October, 2025 (Source: iNSDEC Casualty Tracker, 2025)

Fatalities in North West

An assessment of North West insecurity data for October 2025 shows that fatalities were concentrated in a small number of states, reflecting persistent but uneven patterns of lethal violence across the region. Zamfara State recorded the highest number of deaths (32 fatalities), reaffirming its position as the epicentre of armed banditry and violent criminal activity. This was followed by Kaduna State with 23 deaths, indicating continued exposure to deadly attacks despite sustained security operations. Kano State recorded 3 fatalities, while Sokoto State also recorded 3 deaths, representing comparatively lower levels of lethal violence during the month.

No fatalities were recorded in Kebbi, Katsina, or Jigawa States in October, according to the reviewed Excel data, suggesting either reduced violent activity or effective containment of incidents in these locations during the reporting period. Overall, the North West fatality profile for October demonstrates that lethal violence remains heavily concentrated in Zamfara and Kaduna, while other states experienced minimal or no loss of life. This uneven distribution

underscores the need for targeted, state-specific security interventions, particularly in Zamfara and Kaduna, to address the persistent drivers of deadly violence in the region.

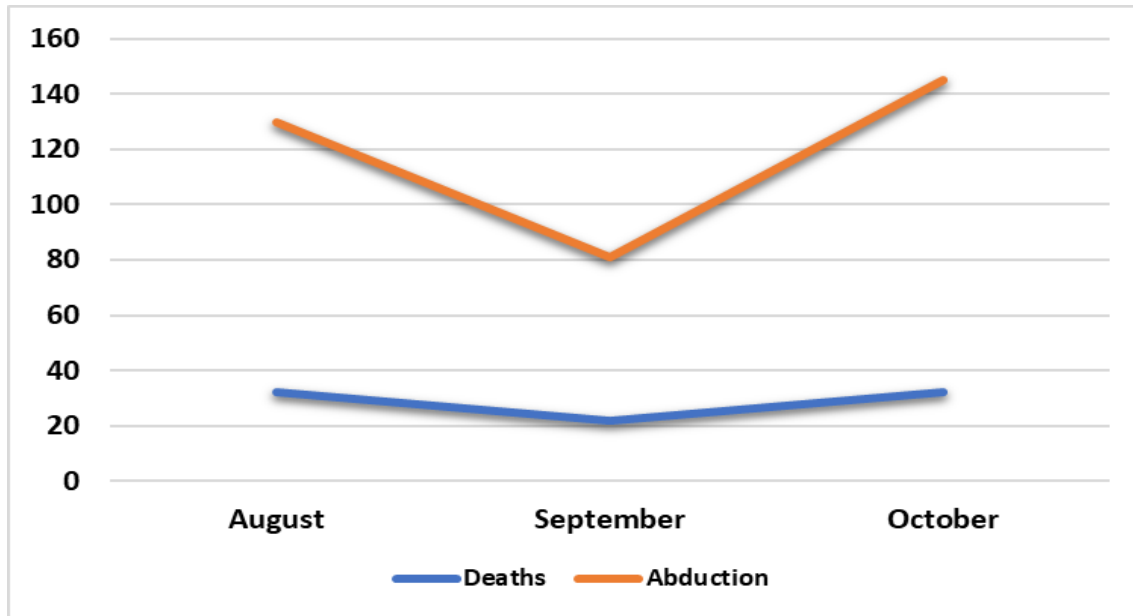


Figure 8: 3-Months Atrocity Trend in Zamfara

An analysis of the Zamfara State insecurity data for the August–October 2025 period reveals persistent and fluctuating levels of violent activity, with notable variations in both fatalities and abductions. In August, Zamfara recorded 32 deaths and 130 abductions, reflecting a period of intense violent activity characterised by both lethal attacks and widespread kidnapping incidents. This established Zamfara as one of the key insecurity hotspots during the month.

In September, there was a temporary decline in the severity of atrocities, with deaths reducing to 22 and abductions falling significantly to 81 cases, suggesting a short-term disruption of violent operations or increased security pressure. However, this improvement was not sustained. By October, fatalities rose again to 32 deaths, while abductions increased sharply to 145, marking the highest kidnapping figure across the three-month period. Overall, the trend indicates that while lethal violence fluctuated, abductions escalated markedly by October, underscoring Zamfara’s continued vulnerability to kidnapping-driven insecurity and the adaptive capacity of armed groups operating within the state.

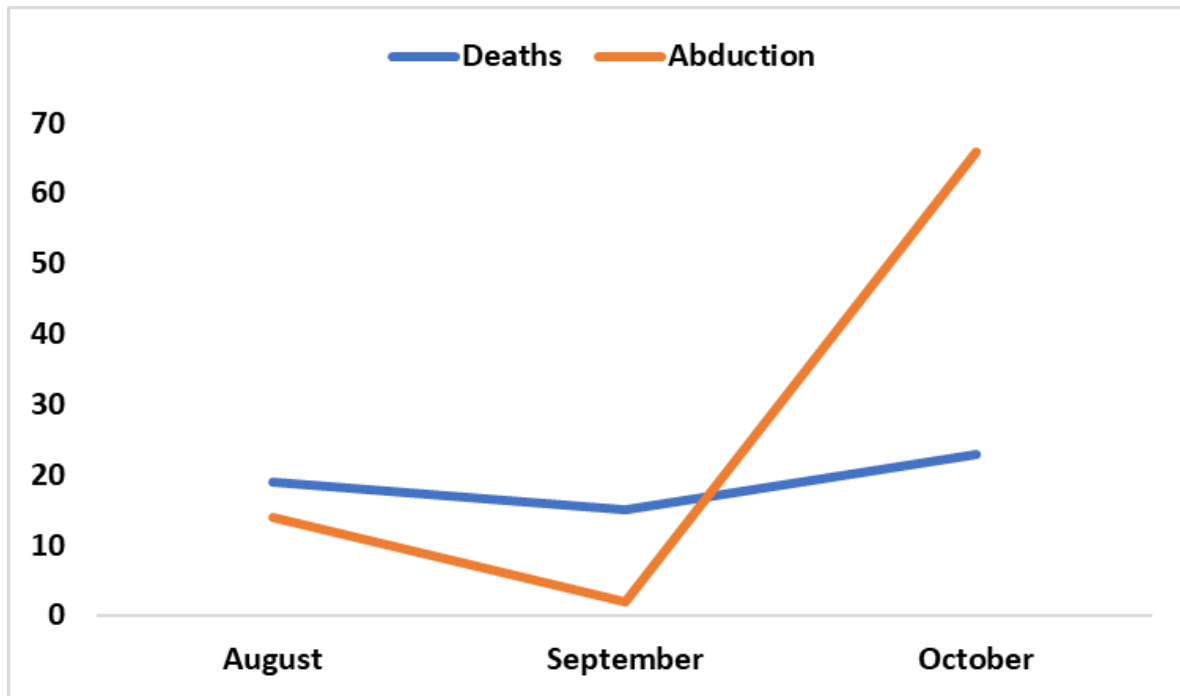


Figure 9: 3-Months Atrocity Trend in Kaduna

A review of Kaduna State’s insecurity data over the August–October 2025 period indicates a deteriorating security situation, marked by rising fatalities and a sharp escalation in abductions. In August, the state recorded 19 deaths and 14 abductions, reflecting a moderate level of violent activity. This was followed by a relative improvement in September, when fatalities declined to 15 deaths and abductions dropped significantly to 2 cases, suggesting a temporary reduction in violent incidents or short-term effectiveness of security measures.

However, this downward trend was reversed in October, with fatalities increasing to 23 deaths and abductions surging dramatically to 66 cases, the highest figures within the three-month period. The October data point to a renewed intensification of criminal activity, particularly kidnapping, indicating an adaptive shift by armed groups toward mass abductions. Overall, the three-month trend underscores Kaduna’s continued vulnerability to fluctuating but persistent insecurity, with October highlighting the urgent need for reinforced, intelligence-driven security operations and sustained community protection strategies to prevent further escalation.

North Central

In October 2025, fatalities across the North Central region were concentrated in a few states, with Plateau (29 deaths) and Kogi (28 deaths) accounting for the majority of reported fatalities, reflecting sustained lethal violence linked to communal and criminal activities. Nasarawa (9 deaths) and Kwara (6 deaths) recorded moderate levels of fatalities, while Benue and Niger States (2 deaths each) and the FCT Abuja (1 death) experienced relatively isolated incidents. Overall, the distribution of deaths indicates that lethal insecurity in the North Central remains highly localized, underscoring the need for targeted, state-specific security and conflict-prevention interventions in the worst-affected areas.

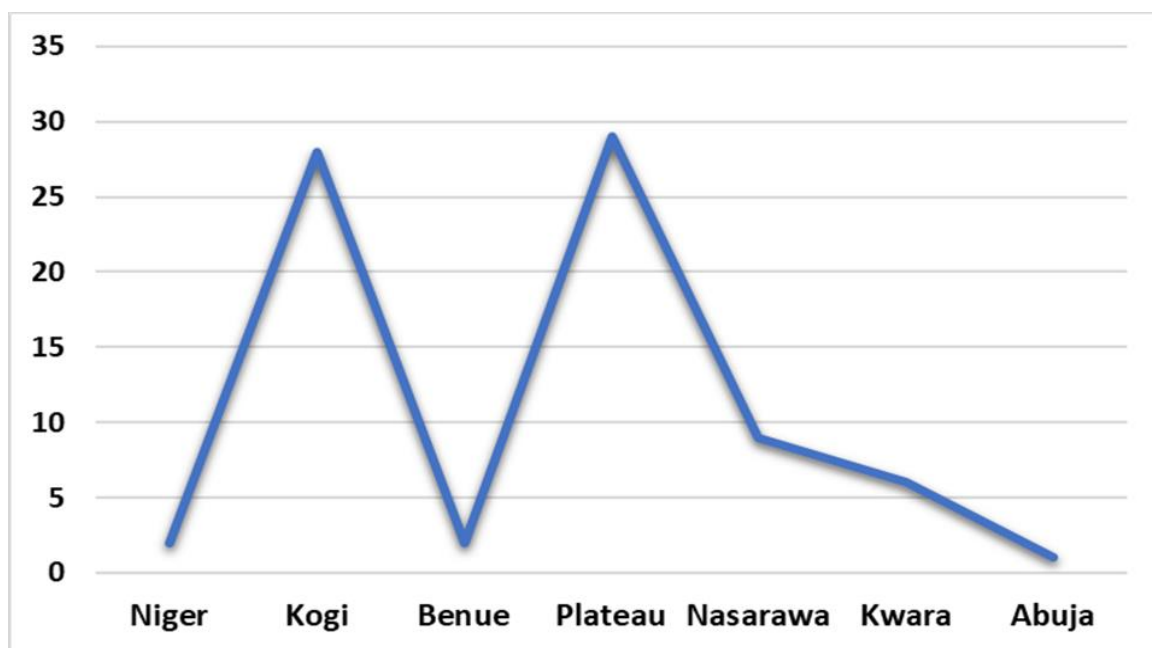


Figure 10: Deaths across North Central States

The concentration of fatalities in Plateau, Kogi, Nasarawa, Kwara, underscores targeted attacks that may disrupt communities and livelihoods. These figures reflect a region grappling with intermittent but deadly violence, emphasizing the need for strengthened security measures, rapid response capabilities, and community protection initiatives.

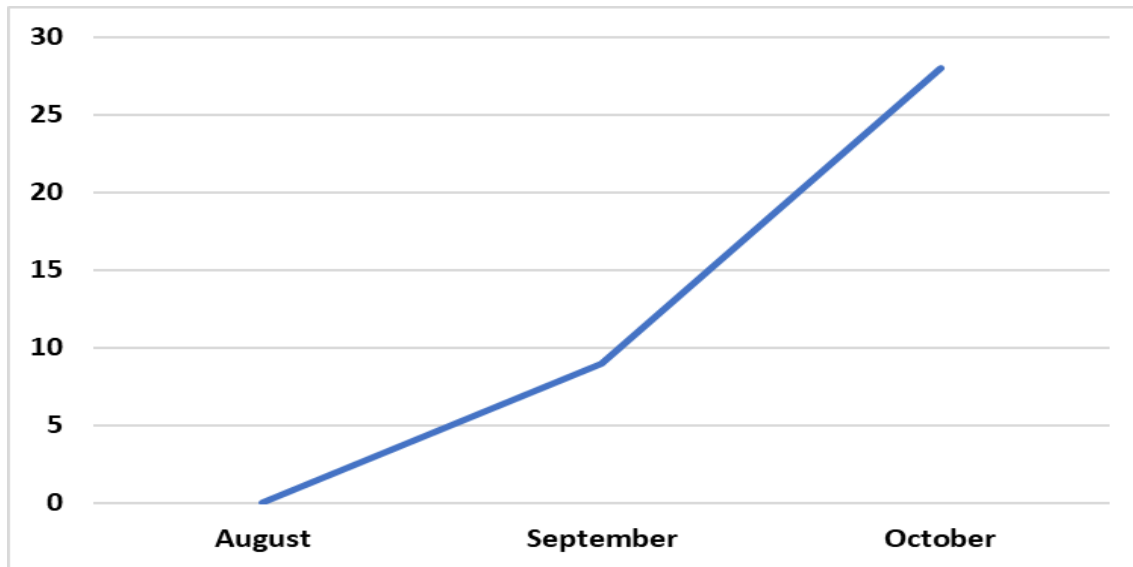


Figure 11: Death Trends in Kogi between August and October, 2025

An analysis of fatality data in Kogi State between August and October 2025 reveals a clear and concerning upward trend in lethal violence. August recorded no fatalities, indicating a period of relative calm or effective containment of violent incidents. This was followed by a moderate increase in September, with 9 deaths, suggesting the re-emergence of violent activity within the state.

The situation deteriorated sharply in October, when fatalities rose significantly to 28 deaths, representing the highest level across the three-month period. This marked escalation points to intensified attacks and a breakdown of earlier stability, likely driven by increased criminal or armed group activity. Overall, the trend demonstrates a progressive worsening of security conditions in Kogi State, underscoring the need for urgent, targeted security interventions to prevent further loss of life.

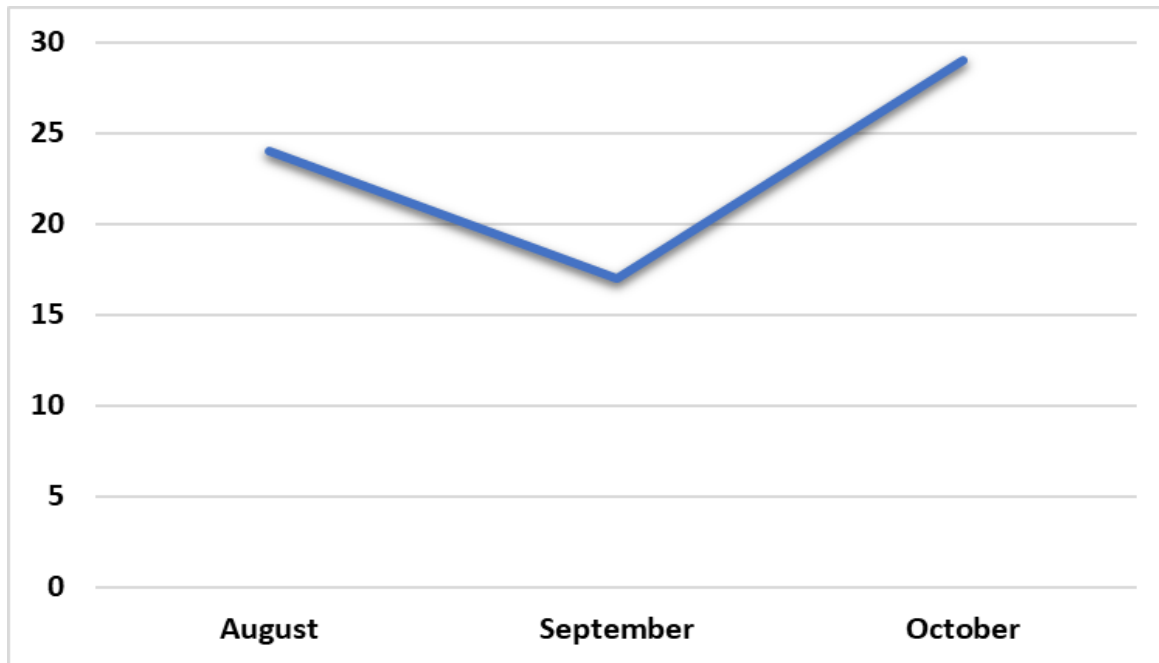


Figure 12: Death Trends in Plateau between July and September, 2025

A review of fatality data for Plateau State between August and October 2025 indicates fluctuating but persistently high levels of lethal violence. In August, the state recorded 24 deaths, reflecting significant insecurity and ongoing violent incidents. This was followed by a decline in September to 17 deaths, suggesting a temporary reduction in the intensity of attacks or short-term effectiveness of security measures.

However, this improvement was not sustained, as October recorded a sharp increase to 29 deaths, the highest figure within the three-month period. The October surge points to a renewed escalation of violent activity, likely linked to communal clashes and armed attacks. Overall, the trend highlights Plateau State's continued vulnerability to recurring lethal violence, emphasizing the need for sustained, proactive security and conflict-prevention interventions to stabilize the security situation.

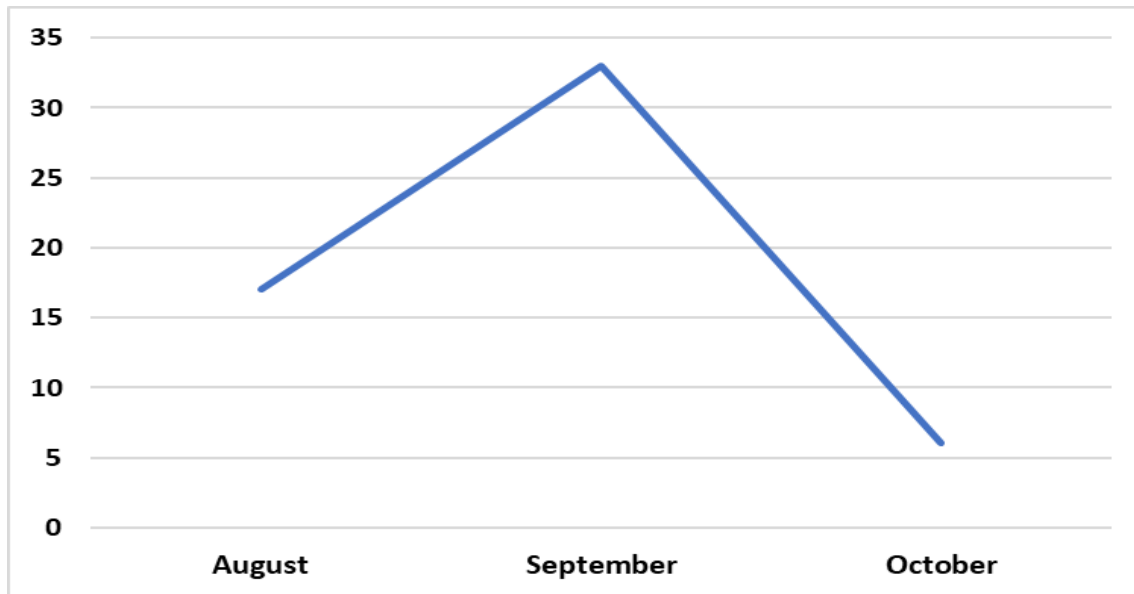


Figure 13: Death Trends in Kwara between July and September, 2025

An analysis of fatality data in Kwara State between August and October 2025 shows a marked fluctuation in lethal violence over the three-month period. In August, the state recorded 17 deaths, indicating a moderate level of insecurity. This was followed by a significant increase in September, with fatalities peaking at 33 deaths, suggesting a surge in violent incidents during the month.

In October, fatalities declined sharply to 6 deaths, pointing to a substantial reduction in lethal violence compared to the preceding months. This downward shift may reflect improved security responses, reduced attack intensity, or temporary disruption of violent activities. Overall, the trend indicates that while Kwara experienced a brief escalation in September, the October figures suggest a notable easing of fatal violence, underscoring the importance of sustaining measures that contributed to this decline.

North East

In October 2025, Nigeria’s North East region saw a marked reduction in lethal violence, with only four fatalities recorded—three in Taraba and one in Gombewhile Bauchi, Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe reported zero deaths, indicating a significant departure from the region’s historically high-intensity conflict levels. This decline likely reflects continued military pressure on insurgent groups, their possible fragmentation, or a tactical reorientation toward other regions. Nevertheless, localized violence in Taraba underscores persistent tensions such as farmer-herder clashes, reminding stakeholders that despite this positive trend, ongoing vigilance and community-focused security measures remain crucial to preventing a resurgence of instability in the region.

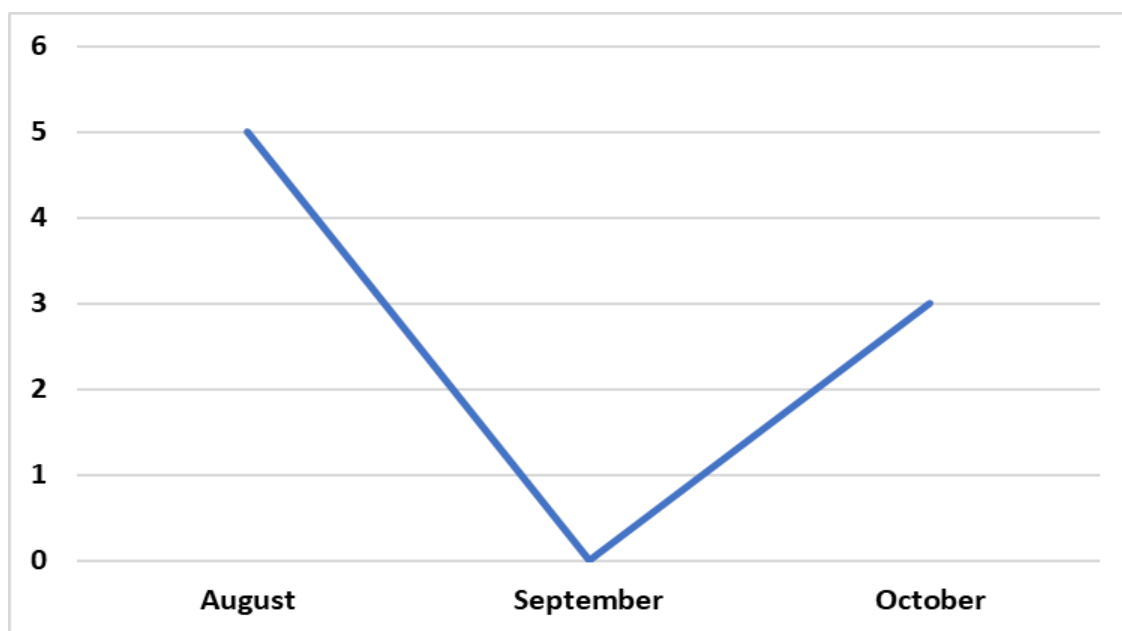


Figure 14: Death Trends in Taraba between August and October, 2025

The fatality trend in Taraba State from August to October 2025 showed notable fluctuations, beginning with 5 deaths in August, followed by a complete absence of fatalities in September, before a slight resurgence to 3 deaths in October. This pattern reflects periods of both relative calm and renewed localized violence, indicating unresolved underlying tensions such as farmer-

herder conflicts or militia activity that continue to threaten community stability despite intermittent lulls. The recurrence of fatalities in October highlights the fragile and cyclical nature of insecurity in the state, underscoring the need for sustained conflict resolution efforts and proactive security measures to prevent future escalations and protect civilian lives.

Southern Region:

In October 2025, Southern Nigeria experienced significantly lower levels of violence compared to the Northern regions, with the South East recording 5 abductions and no fatalities, the South South reporting 1 abduction and no deaths, and the South West documenting 5 fatalities and 1 abduction primarily concentrated in Lagos State. This stands in stark contrast to the North, where the North Central and North West zones collectively accounted for 138 deaths and 265 abductions, driven by intense banditry, militia clashes, and mass kidnappings in states such as Zamfara, Kaduna, Plateau, and Kogi. While the South West reported isolated lethal incidents, the overall southern fatalities (5) and abductions (7) remained minimal compared to the Northern totals, highlighting a clear regional disparity in the scale and severity of insecurity.

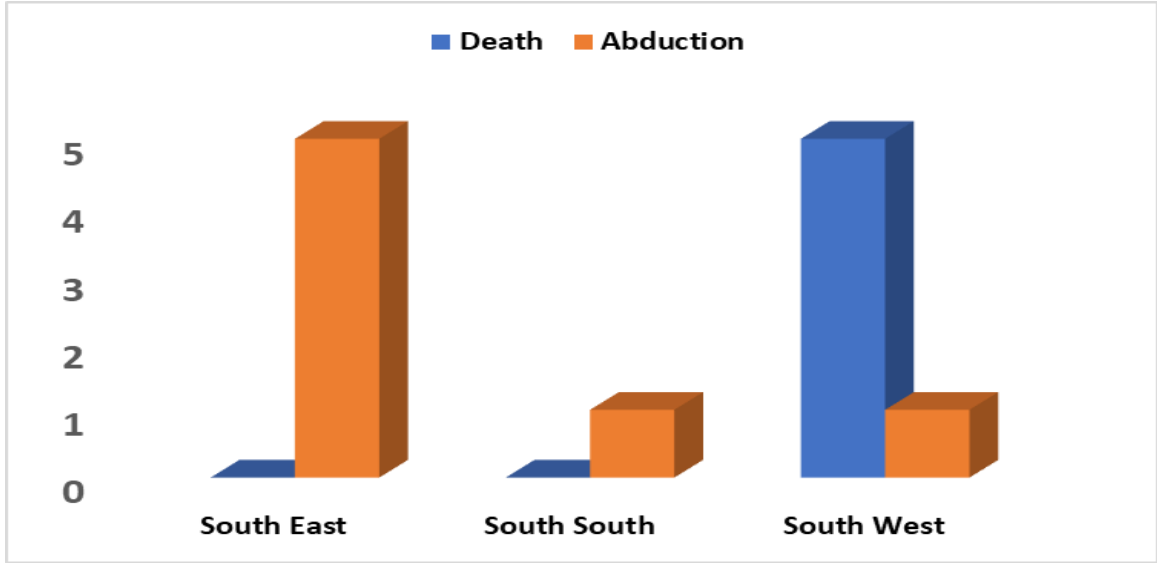


Figure 15: Atrocities in Southern Region

Fig 16 below reveals fatalities and abductions in Edo State over a three-month period from August to October 2025. While Edo is located in the South-South geopolitical zone and generally experiences lower levels of mass violence compared to conflict-prone northern regions, the data indicates shifts in the nature and intensity of insecurity over this period, particularly with regard to abduction incidents in October. This trend suggests that while lethal violence has decreased over the three-month period, the threat of abduction a prevalent tactic in Nigeria’s wider insecurity landscape has emerged as a growing concern in Edo by October.

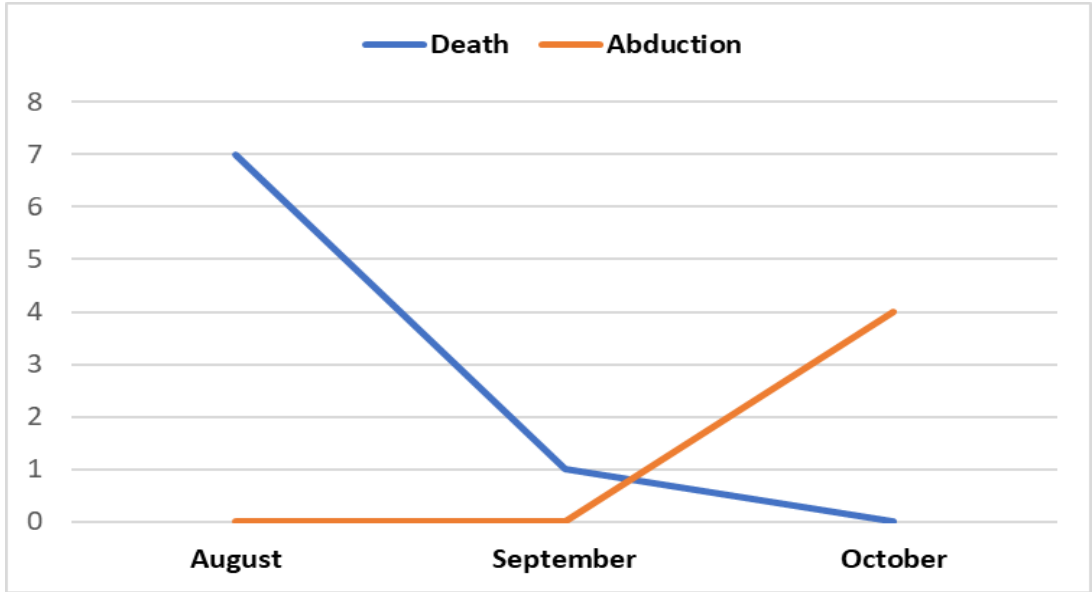


Figure 16: Deaths & Abduction Trends in Edo State from July to September

When viewed in the broader national context, Edo’s experience contrasts sharply with the persistent and severe violence in Northern Nigeria, particularly in states like Zamfara, Kaduna, and Plateau, where high fatalities and mass abductions continued throughout the period. While Southern states, including Edo, have seen relatively low fatality rates, the rise in abductions in October signals that criminality remains a serious, evolving threat. Overall, the data underscores a clear regional divide: the North remains the epicenter of large-scale, organized violence, while the South faces sporadic but growing incidents of abduction-driven insecurity, requiring continued vigilance and region-specific security strategies.

Actors:

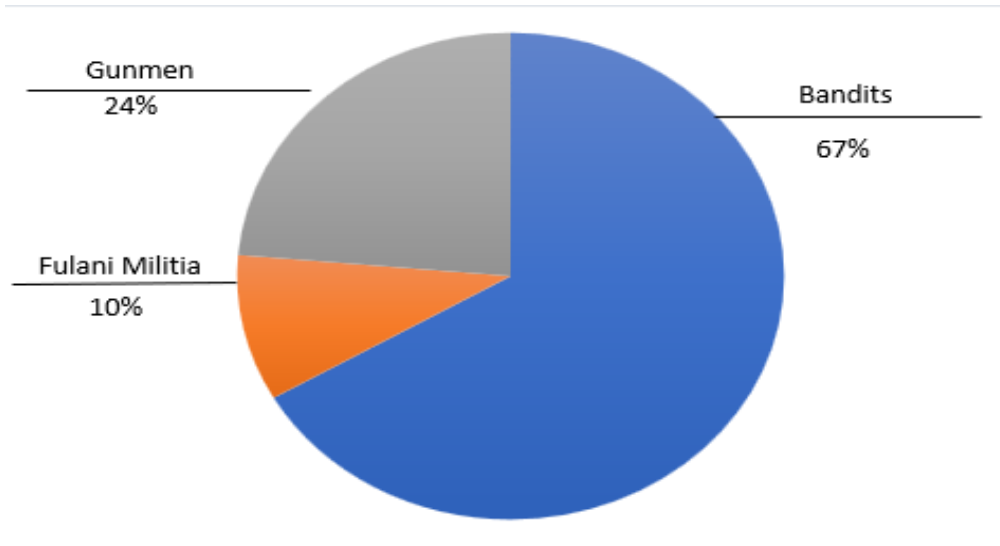


Figure 17: Actors of Atrocities in October 2025 (Source: iNSDEC Casualty Tracker, 2025)

An assessment of incident attribution for October 2025 indicates that bandit groups were the dominant perpetrators of violent acts, accounting for 48 recorded incidents during the month. This underscores the continued prevalence of banditry as the primary driver of insecurity, particularly in affected rural and peri-urban areas, where these groups remain highly mobile and capable of sustaining frequent attacks. Gunmen were responsible for 17 incidents, reflecting the role of loosely organised armed actors in targeted attacks, robberies, and assaults across multiple locations.

In contrast, Fulani militia accounted for 7 recorded incidents, representing a smaller but still notable share of reported atrocities, often linked to localized communal or resource-related conflicts. Overall, the October perpetrator profile demonstrates that non-state armed groups especially bandits remain the principal actors shaping the insecurity landscape, highlighting the need for focused counter-banditry operations, improved intelligence gathering, and community-level early warning mechanisms to mitigate further violence.

Summary of Atrocities:

States	Deaths	Injured	Abducted
Anambra			1
Benue	2	2	
Edo			1
Gombe	1		
Imo			4
Kaduna	23	4	66
Kano	3		
Katsina			6
Kebbi			1
Kogi	28		14
Kwara	6	4	14
Lagos	5	1	
Nasarawa	9		6
Niger	2		7
Ondo			1
Plateau	29	3	
Sokoto	3		
Taraba	3		
Zamfara	32	4	145
Abuja	1		6
Total	147	18	272

Impact of Atrocities in October:

In October 2025, the impact of recorded atrocities reflected a serious deterioration in human security, with 147 deaths, 18 injuries, and 272 abductions nationwide. The burden of violence was heavily concentrated in the North Central and North West regions, where persistent banditry and organized criminal activity continued to drive fatalities and mass kidnappings, particularly in states such as Zamfara and Kaduna. Beyond the immediate loss of life, these incidents disrupted livelihoods, displaced communities, limited access to essential services, and imposed severe psychological and economic strain on affected populations. Overall, the October figures underscore a sustained and evolving insecurity environment, marked by high attack frequency and a strategic shift toward abductions, reinforcing the need for coordinated security, humanitarian, and stabilization responses.

Escalation of Violence and Regional Disparities:

The analysis of insecurity data for October 2025 indicates a continued escalation of violence alongside pronounced regional disparities in the distribution and impact of atrocities. During the month, 72 violent incidents were recorded nationwide, resulting in 147 deaths, 18 injuries, and 272 abductions. While the overall frequency of attacks remained high, the nature of violence increasingly reflected a shift toward mass abductions, particularly in northern regions, alongside sustained levels of lethal attacks. This pattern underscores the adaptive strategies of armed non-state actors, especially bandit groups, in response to evolving security dynamics.

Regionally, the North Central and North West zones bore the greatest burden of violence. The North Central recorded the highest fatalities (77 deaths), driven largely by severe incidents in Plateau and Kogi States, while the North West emerged as the epicentre of abductions, accounting for 218 kidnapping cases, with Zamfara and Kaduna States most affected. In contrast, the North East and southern regions experienced comparatively lower levels of

violence, with isolated incidents and minimal fatalities, highlighting a stark north–south imbalance in insecurity exposure.

Overall, the October data reveal that violence in Nigeria remains geographically uneven but intensifying in key hotspots, where communities face compounded risks of death, displacement, and economic disruption. The persistence of high-impact violence in the North Central and North West underscores the urgent need for region-specific security strategies, enhanced intelligence-led operations, and integrated humanitarian responses to address both the escalation of violence and the widening regional disparities in human security.

Impacts on Communities and Social Structures

The sustained pattern of violence recorded in October 2025 has generated far-reaching economic, social, and financial consequences for affected communities and individuals, with impacts varying significantly across regions and states. Economically, persistent attacks and mass abductions have disrupted agricultural production, local trade, and transportation networks, particularly in the North West and North Central regions, where farming communities face repeated displacement and restricted access to farmlands. This disruption threatens food security, reduces household incomes, and weakens regional supply chains, with spillover effects on markets in relatively stable southern states.

Socially, the prevalence of killings and kidnappings has eroded community cohesion and trust, undermining traditional social structures and local governance systems. Families and communities are increasingly fragmented by displacement, trauma, and fear, while access to education and healthcare continues to deteriorate in high-risk areas as schools close and health facilities operate under threat. Children, women, and the elderly remain disproportionately affected, with long-term implications for human capital development and social stability, especially in states experiencing recurrent violence such as Zamfara, Kaduna, Plateau, and Kogi.

From a financial perspective, the rise in abductions has imposed severe economic burdens on households, including ransom payments, loss of productive labor, and increased debt. At the state level, insecurity diverts limited public resources toward emergency responses and security expenditures, reducing investments in infrastructure and social services. Regionally, the unequal distribution of violence means that northern states face systemic economic erosion, while southern regions, though less directly affected, remain vulnerable to secondary pressures such as migration inflows, rising living costs, and trans-regional criminal spillover. Collectively, these dynamics threaten balanced regional development, deepen inequality, and risk entrenching cycles of poverty and insecurity if not addressed through coordinated security, economic recovery, and social protection strategies.

Policy Implications:

The scale and nature of the October atrocities demand urgent policy interventions across multiple fronts:

- **Prioritize hotspot states for immediate security intervention:** The concentration of lethal attacks and mass abductions in Zamfara, Kaduna, Plateau, Kogi, and Nasarawa States calls for intensified, state-specific security operations, including sustained troop presence, rapid response units, and improved inter-agency coordination.
- **Adopt regionally differentiated security strategies:** With lethal violence most pronounced in the North Central and abductions heavily concentrated in the North West, policy responses must be tailored to regional threat profiles rather than uniform national deployments.
- **Strengthen counter-banditry and anti-kidnapping frameworks:** Given the dominance of bandit groups in October atrocities, particularly in Zamfara and Kaduna, policies should emphasize intelligence-led counter-banditry operations, dismantling of criminal networks, and stricter enforcement against ransom economies.

- Enhance community-based early warning and protection mechanisms: States with recurrent violent attacks, such as Plateau and Kogi, require reinforced community policing, local intelligence gathering, and conflict mediation structures to prevent escalation of communal and criminal violence.
- Integrate humanitarian and victim-support responses: High-fatality and high-abduction states should be prioritized for trauma care, psychosocial support, and livelihood recovery programmes, addressing the long-term social impacts of violence on affected populations.
- Reinforce border and transit route security: The resurgence of abductions along key inter-state corridors in the North West and North Central highlights the need for improved surveillance and patrols along highways and rural transit routes.
- Prevent spillover into relatively stable regions: Although southern regions recorded fewer lethal attacks in October, proactive measures are needed to prevent the southward spread of banditry and kidnapping, including enhanced intelligence sharing and migration management.
- Align security policy with development interventions: Sustained violence in high-impact regions underscores the need to link security operations with economic stabilization, youth employment, and social investment programmes, particularly in states experiencing repeated lethal attacks.
- Improve data-driven security planning: The October patterns of violence demonstrate the importance of real-time incident tracking and state-level data analysis to guide deployment decisions and measure policy effectiveness.
- Strengthen accountability and governance at state level: States with persistent violence should be supported and held accountable for improving local governance, judicial response, and collaboration with federal security agencies to ensure durable reductions in lethal attacks.

Long-Term Strategic Considerations

Beyond immediate security responses, the October atrocities highlight structural vulnerabilities that require long-term interventions. Addressing root causes of violence such as poverty, unemployment, weak governance, land disputes, and communal tensions is critical to reducing the appeal of banditry and insurgency. Education, youth empowerment, conflict resolution mechanisms, and equitable resource distribution are key components of a sustainable policy approach.

Policy Recommendations

To stem the surge of violence and kidnappings across Nigeria, particularly in the North West, North Central, North East, and Southern regions, the following actionable recommendations are proposed:

1. **Strengthen Security and Intelligence:** Adopt UN-endorsed approaches for coordinated counterterrorism and anti-crime operations. Deploy rapid response units in hotspot areas, integrate intelligence-sharing platforms across states, and enhance surveillance using drones and early-warning systems. ECOWAS protocols on cross-border security should be applied to prevent interstate mobility of bandits and insurgents.
2. **Specialized Anti-Kidnapping Task Forces:** Following AU best practices, establish dedicated units to address mass abductions. Protect high-risk targets, including schools, highways, and vulnerable communities, while enforcing stringent anti-ransom policies. Encourage community reporting through secure hotlines and reward systems.
3. **Community-Based Policing and Vigilante Integration:** Support local vigilante structures by providing training, arms accountability, and integration with formal

security forces. This strengthens local intelligence and rapid intervention capacity while reducing civilian-targeted attacks.

4. **Socioeconomic Resilience Programs:** Implement UN and AU recommendations for conflict-affected zones, including cash transfers, microfinance, and livelihood recovery programs. Prioritize agricultural support, market rehabilitation, and youth employment schemes to reduce recruitment into criminal and insurgent networks.
5. **Humanitarian Protection and Rehabilitation:** Ensure prompt support for victims of violence, including psychosocial services, trauma care, and reintegration programs for abducted individuals. Establish safe corridors for displaced persons, consistent with UNHCR and ECOWAS humanitarian standards.
6. **Regional and Interagency Coordination:** Promote multi-state task forces for joint operations, sharing intelligence and resources. Standardize crisis response protocols across states to close jurisdictional gaps exploited by perpetrators.
7. **Long-Term Conflict Prevention:** Invest in education, governance reforms, and land dispute resolution mechanisms. Address structural drivers of violence, including poverty, unemployment, and social inequality, following AU peacebuilding guidelines.

These measures, if implemented collectively, will strengthen security, protect civilians, and foster long-term stability across Nigeria's most vulnerable regions.

Conclusion:

The findings of the October 2025 Monthly Insecurity Report reaffirm that violent insecurity in Nigeria has become both entrenched and adaptive, with shifting tactics but sustained intensity across key regions. Although the month recorded a marginal reduction in fatalities compared to peak months, the continued rise in abductions and the concentration of lethal attacks in specific states signal that underlying drivers of violence remain unaddressed. The disproportionate burden borne by the North Central and North West highlights widening regional disparities in security outcomes and development prospects.

Without decisive action, the persistence of banditry, communal violence, and kidnapping threatens to further erode public confidence, undermine economic recovery, and entrench cycles of displacement and poverty. Addressing this challenge requires more than reactive security deployments; it demands integrated policy responses that combine targeted military operations, intelligence-led policing, community engagement, socio-economic stabilization, and strong governance at both federal and state levels. As Nigeria approaches the end of 2025, the October data serves as a critical warning: failure to disrupt current violence patterns risks normalizing high-impact insecurity as a permanent feature of the national landscape.