

Nigerian Social Violence Project Summary

The Nigerian Social Violence Project is based at the African Studies Program at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). The project catalogues and analyzes incidents of lethal social violence in Nigeria from 1998 (just prior to the inauguration of the current electoral Fourth Republic in May 1999) until the present day.

The Nigeria Social Violence Project has constructed a dataset from domestic and international news reports of “non-criminal” violence in the country. This excludes lethal violence that is attributable to criminal actions or conflict between police and criminal suspects, as well as deaths associated with so-called “ritual” events as reported in local media.

The data is drawn from a comprehensive database of media reports covering the period January 1998-August 2014, with regular updates. Media reports (especially those from Nigeria’s domestic outlets, reported by local staff) provide an opportunity sample that offers the most extensive coverage of violent incidents in the country. This can be supplemented by credible (and often more precise) reporting from non-governmental organizations, particularly human rights monitors. However, such reports are episodic and not consistent in method, and should be treated cautiously.

The data collected includes dates of violence, location information, perpetrators of violence, and the number of casualties, injuries, and internally displaced persons resulting from violence. As emphasized below, we have taken care to avoid “double-counting” of events or fatalities.

The data is coded according to the type of actor or evident division involved in the violence. We have also sorted by geo-political region in which the violence occurred (using the standard definition of “zones” in Nigeria). The actors/divisions are:

- Communal
- Political
- Herder/Farmer
- State
- State, Non-Boko Haram
- Boko Haram

The regions are:

- Northwest (NW)
- Northeast (NE)
- North Central (NC)
- South-South (S-S)
- Southwest (SW)
- Southeast (SE)

Methodology

The project used a consistent search string to systematically cover news headlines for fatalities resulting from social violence in Nigeria since 1998.

An individual ‘violent’ event, in which there was at least one reported fatality, comprises the core observation in the dataset. For each individual violent event, we used various news sources available to code the date in which the violence began, location(s), actors and/or divisions framing the violence, number of deaths, number of injuries (if available), a brief description of the events, and news source(s) used.

Most events involve multiple identities and complicated motivations. We have defined categories that identify the leading protagonists or visible divisions that frame specific incidents. These categories also reflect modes of violence commonly recognized in Nigeria. Many categories are comparable across countries and regions.

In cases with discrepancies among sources in the numbers of casualties recorded, we entered in the highest and lowest estimates from news reports on the event, and entered a *minimum reasonable estimate* of casualties based on consultation of a variety of sources. The minimum reasonable casualty estimate is NOT usually the same as the minimum number of casualties reported in the news, as numbers from major casualty events tend to go up as more deaths are confirmed.

Definition and Description of Variables

Year (Column A) is the calendar year in which the event took place.

Quarter (Column B) is the quarter in which the event took place. Quarter 1 comprises all events from January 1st – March 31st, Quarter 2 from April 1st – June 30th, Quarter 3 from July 1st – September 31st, and Quarter 4 from October 1st – December 31st.

Boko Haram fatalities are those attributed to Boko Haram or as a direct result of the state response to the Boko Haram insurgency.

Political fatalities are those attributed to actors evidently divided by reasons of partisan rivalry, political dissension, or committed by or against politicians.

Communal fatalities are those attributed to actors primarily divided by cultural, ethnic, or religious communities and identities. This category is not mutually exclusive with *Boko Haram*.

Herder-Farmer fatalities are those attributed to herders (in particular the Fulani or Hausa) or farmers (in particular the Tiv or Tarok), typically involving disputes over land and/or cattle.

State fatalities are those attributed to state actors; police or military killing of insurgents or civilians falls into this category. Police violence during the normal course of their duties (i.e. killing a bank robber during a shootout) was not included in this category. This category is not mutually exclusive with *Boko Haram*.

State, Non-Boko Haram fatalities are those attributed to state actors not related to the Boko Haram insurgency.

These categories provide the basis for analyzing the relative scope and variation of different forms of violence in Nigeria. In the left-hand columns displayed on the accompanying spreadsheet, casualties are sorted within classes or categories of violence. Since categories overlap, deaths may be counted in more than one category. Consequently, the fatalities listed by category exceed the actual total number of fatalities and should not be used to estimate aggregates.

The number of fatalities, sorted by zone in the right side of the spreadsheet, is the estimate that accurately aggregates all recorded deaths from social violence.

Violence sorted by Geo-political zone:

Northwest (NW) fatalities are those occurring in Katsina, Kano, Kaduna, Zamfara, Sokoto or Kebbi states.

Northeast (NE) fatalities are those occurring in Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Kano, Bauchi, Gombe or Taraba states.

North Central (NC) fatalities are those occurring in Plateau, Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa, Kwara or Niger states, as well as the Federal Capital Territory.

South-South (S-S) fatalities are those occurring in Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Cross River, Edo or Akwa Ibom states. This zone encompasses the Niger delta.

Southeast (SE) fatalities are those occurring in Enugu, Anambra, Ebyoni, Abia or Imo states.

Southwest (SW) fatalities are those occurring in Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo or Ekiti states.

TOTAL fatalities are those occurring in each quarter, regardless of regional or topographical categorization.