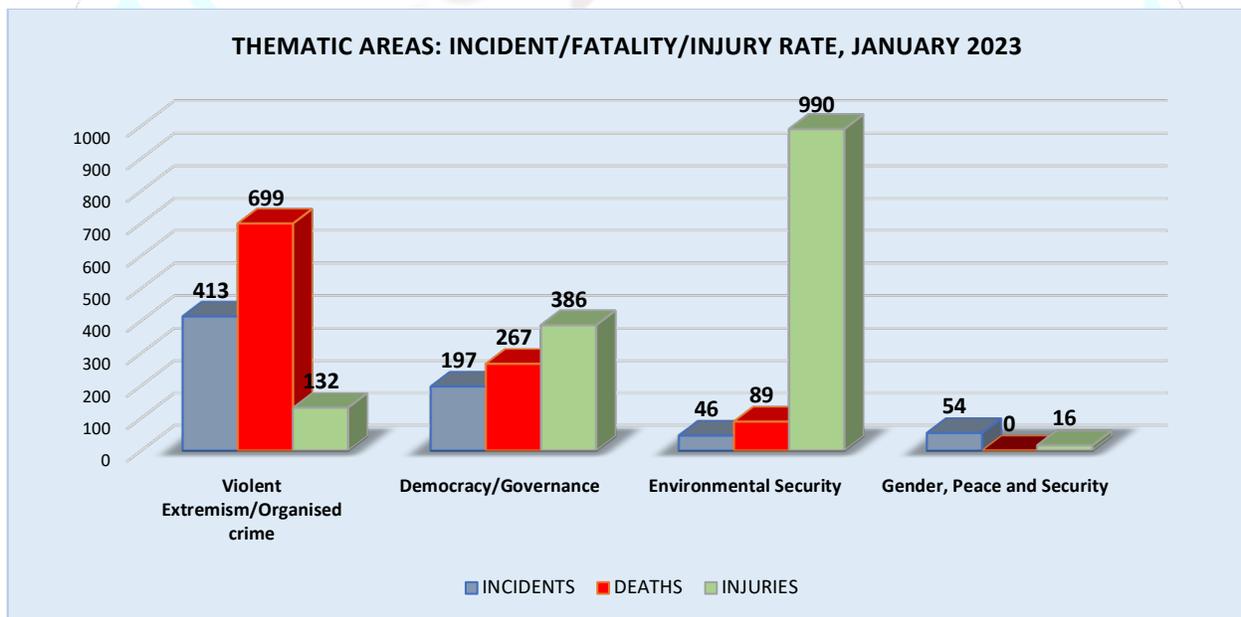




**I. INTRODUCTION**

As of January 2023, 710 incidents were recorded in the *Monthly Conflict Census* from the WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS).<sup>1</sup> A cumulative fatality of 1,055 and 1,524 injuries/infected cases emanating from criminal attacks, road accidents and incidents of environmental security including COVID-19, Lassa Fever, Cholera and Diptheria were recorded in January 2023<sup>2</sup>.

As shown in the thematic graph below, Violent Extremism and Organised Crime recorded a total fatality of 699, accounting for the highest of the total number of fatalities (1,055) recorded in the reporting period, while Democracy and Governance theme recorded 267 deaths<sup>3</sup>. Also, Environmental Security theme recorded 89 deaths and Gender, Peace and Security thematic area recorded no fatality in the reporting period.<sup>4</sup> (see annex for the monthly census).



Source: WANEP-NEWS<sup>5</sup>.

The *Monthly Bulletin* presents an analysis of the security challenges identified from monitoring trends of incidents through the WANEP NEWS and the mass media. It also offers recommendations for stakeholders’ interventions and mitigation.

**2. ORGANISED CRIME AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

Criminal attacks by Boko Haram and the Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP) terrorist groups continues to affect human security in the North-East region of Nigeria. The reporting

<sup>1</sup> Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/)

<sup>4</sup> Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/)

<sup>5</sup> Source : WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/)

month recorded incidents of armed attack and supremacy tussle between terrorist groups (Boko Haram & ISWAP) in Borno State, resulting in 36 deaths including 35 ISWAP terrorists and one civilian<sup>6</sup>. Besides, the operational successes of the Nigerian Army in countering violent extremism remain commendable with over 159 terrorists neutralised<sup>7</sup>, while a total of 644 Boko Haram/ISWAP terrorists and their family members surrendered to military troops at different locations in the North-East.<sup>8</sup> Out of total surrendered (644) in the month, 74 were males, 254 females and 316 children.

Another critical human security concern is the frequency in **Organised Crimes** that has fractured social cohesion amongst the populace. Incidents of human/drug trafficking, kidnapping, banditry, separatist agitations and election-related violence, amongst other crimes remain prominent ahead of the forthcoming general election in Nigeria. In the month, a total of 497 fatalities (including 24 females, 13 children and 29 security operatives) were recorded due to 392 armed violence incidents<sup>9</sup>.

Out of the total recorded fatalities (497) under **Organised Crimes** in January 2023, **armed violence/murder** accounted for the highest fatality of 104<sup>10</sup>, while the killing of 77 people (including 56 pastoralists) by an **unidentified aircraft/drone** in Nasarawa and Niger States accounted for the second highest fatality in the month<sup>11</sup>. There have been conflicting reports about circumstances that led to the death of the 77 people with reports alleging that they were killed in a military airstrike or by drone. Accidental airstrikes by the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) resulting in the killing of innocent populations in vulnerable communities continues to generate concerns among the civil society. Between September 2021 and January 2023, there have been at least 9 incidents of miscalculated airstrikes by the NAF which resulted in the death of 147 people with 72 others injured in Zamfara, Yobe, Katsina, Kaduna, Niger and Nasarawa States<sup>12</sup>. Also, **armed banditry attacks** in Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto (North-West) and Niger State in the North-Central region recorded the third highest fatality of 46 in the reporting month<sup>13</sup>. Compared to the December 2022 statistics of fatalities (423) emanating from **armed banditry attacks**, there is a significant decline in the fatalities as recorded in the WANEP NEWS in January 2023<sup>14</sup>. In addition to the ongoing counter offensive operations by the Nigerian Army in the North-West, the reduction in banditry attacks may likely be attributed to the levies paid to bandits by communities in exchange for protection against attacks on their settlements.

The reporting month also recorded series of violent clashes between **communities and armed herders**, which led to the death of 41 people in Kwara, Ondo, Benue and Delta States with several farmlands destroyed during cattle grazing activities in Ondo and Enugu States<sup>15</sup>, while **cult/gang-related violence** resulted in 24 deaths in Anambra, Delta, Lagos, Rivers, Edo, Osun and Bauchi States<sup>16</sup>. The WANEP NEWS also recorded the fatalities of non-state armed groups

<sup>6</sup> Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/)

<sup>7</sup> Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/)

<sup>8</sup> <https://pmiigeria.com/2023/01/12/terrorists-quit-boko-haram-2/> ; <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/578082-nigerian-military-kills-84-terrorists-in-north-east-north-west-in-two-weeks.html>

<sup>9</sup> Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/)

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

<sup>11</sup> Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/)

<sup>12</sup> <https://punchng.com/accidental-airstrikes-innocent-civilians-pay-deadly-price-as-naf-intelligence-wobbles/#:~:text=A%20tally%20from%20media%20reports,September%202021%20and%20January%202023.>

<sup>13</sup> Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/)

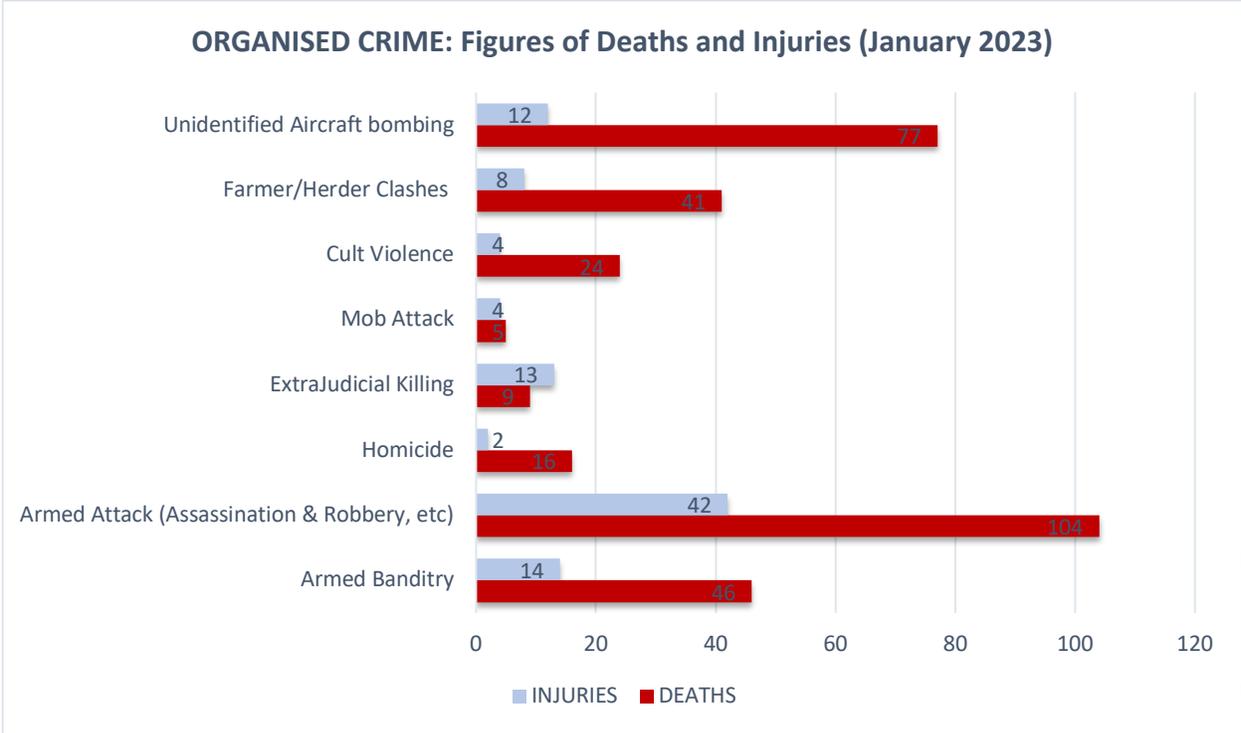
<sup>14</sup> Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/)

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*

<sup>16</sup> Source: WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/)

arising from shoot-outs with security operatives. An estimated 154 deaths were recorded across 18 States in the month.

The graph below highlights armed violence incidents and the resultant fatalities and injuries recorded in the month.



Source: WANEP-NEWS<sup>17</sup>.

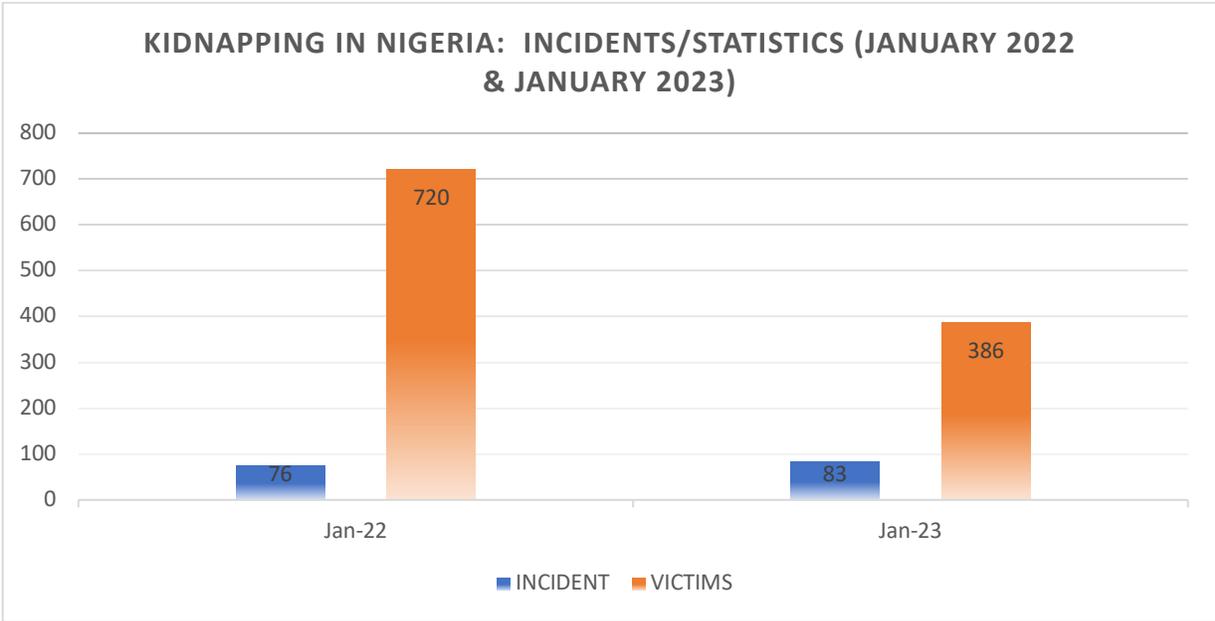
Ethnic-induced communal violence further compounded the already volatile security climate in the affected States and strained peaceful relations. Inherent in these clashes are skirmishes over chieftaincy title, leadership supremacy tussle and land disputes in Ondo, Enugu, Adamawa and Kano States. A total of 5 deaths and 6 injuries were recorded across the affected States<sup>18</sup>.

In addition to the security concerns, a total of 83 kidnapping incidents were documented by the WANEP NEWS across 24 States in Nigeria. The month recorded 386 abducted victims, out of which 71 were females and 42 children.

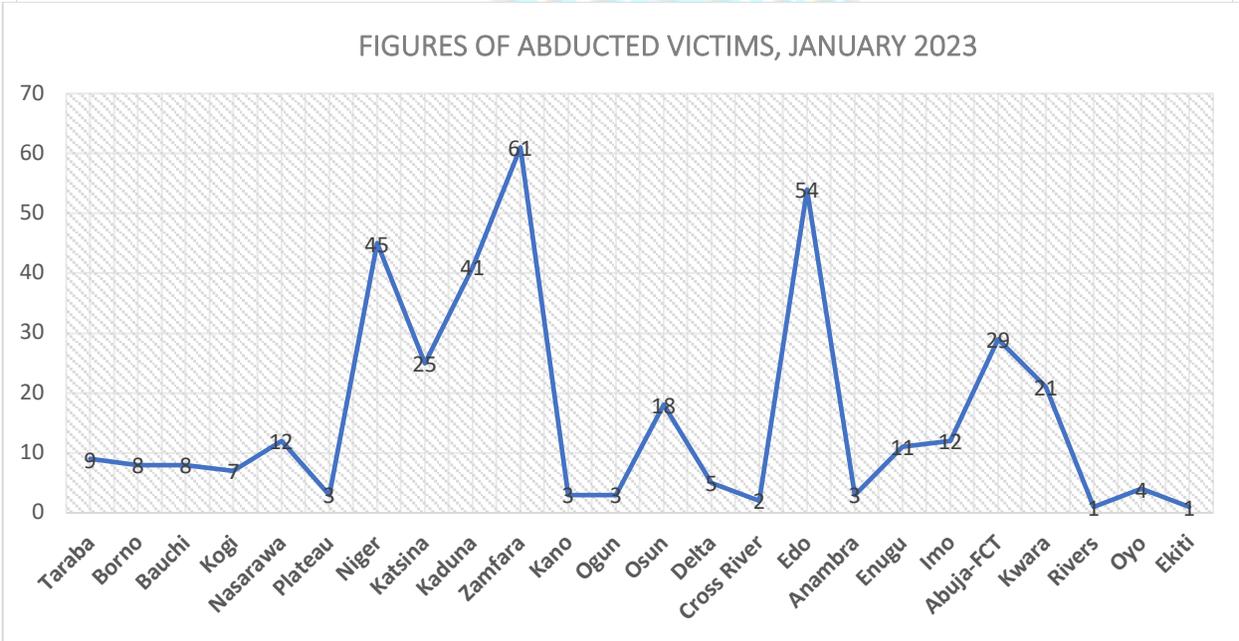
Compared to January 2022 which recorded 720 kidnapped victims, the statistics of kidnapped victims in January 2023 as highlighted above is relatively low. The statistics of kidnapped victims per State in January 2023 and the comparative statistical analysis of kidnapped victims in January 2022 and 2023 is highlighted in the graph below.

<sup>17</sup> Source : WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/)

<sup>18</sup> Source : WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/)



Source: WANEP-NEWS<sup>19</sup>



Source: WANEP-NEWS<sup>20</sup>.

The NEWS also recorded 85 incidents of arrest across States in the period.<sup>30</sup> The arrest in the month cuts across several cases of armed violence, armed robbery, fraud/cyber crime, election-related violence, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), human/drug trafficking, murder and violent demonstrations, amongst others.

<sup>19</sup> Source : WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/)  
<sup>20</sup> Source : WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/)

### 3. DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE:

As the nation prepares towards the February 25 presidential election, the multifaceted security challenges evident across the six geo-political zones of Nigeria has potential consequences for election security. Attacks on government/security infrastructure and facilities of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in the South-East<sup>21</sup> has heightened concerns about limited participation of citizens in the electoral process.

The political landscape remains rife with incidents of election-related violence, assassination, propaganda, intimidation, destruction of political parties' facilities and campaign materials, amongst others. The recurring election-related violence goes to discredit political parties' commitment to the peace accord agreement signed with the National Peace Committee in September 29, 2022. In the reporting month, the WANEP NEWS recorded 15 election-related deaths in Ebonyi, Edo, Imo, Lagos, Jigawa, Enugu, Zamfara, Osun, Bauchi and Sokoto States while Rivers, Ebonyi, Edo, Lagos, Zamfara, Bauchi, Kogi and Anambra accounted for several injured victims. According to CLEEN Foundation on its '*2023 Election Security Threat Assessment*', 13 States comprising Sokoto, Kebbi, Niger, Benue, Gombe, Bauchi, Plateau, Nasarawa, Taraba, Edo, Delta, Akwa Ibom and Abia are prone to violence, while the remaining 21 States of the federation are currently engulfed in one form of violence or another.<sup>22</sup>

The current cash shortage in the country occasioned by the redesigning of the naira notes and currency swap policy of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has generated public concerns and demonstrations due to its ripple effect on the economy and livelihoods. The attendant difficulties in cash withdrawals at commercial banks despite depositing old naira notes ahead of the February 10, 2023 deadline for the circulation of old currency by the CBN remain a major source of concern ahead of the election. Besides the increasing vulnerabilities to hunger, revenue losses of traders/business owners, the naira scarcity has the potential to aggravate security fragility in the country and worsen vote- buying during the elections.

The WANEP NEWS recorded 35 incidents of public demonstrations in the month, out of which one (1) deteriorated into violence in Niger State, resulting in the death of one (1) person. The untimely intervention of security operatives following attacks by armed bandits that led to the death of a Christian cleric (priest) in Niger State resulted in the violent demonstration. Other recorded peaceful demonstrations in the month include; protest over unpaid workers/lecturer salaries at the Moshood Abiola Polytechnic (MAPOLY) in Ogun State<sup>23</sup> and the Taraba State University in Taraba; protest by community youths over alleged killings and arson in Imo State; the non-payment of over 25 months' salary arrears of medical doctors in Abia State<sup>24</sup> and the non-payment of 33 months pension arrears for pensions in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Also, demonstrations over the protracted fuel scarcity and the hike in the price of the product

<sup>21</sup> Source : WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/) (Four (4) police stations burnt down in Imo and Anambra State with INEC facilities vandalized in Enugu.

<sup>22</sup> <https://dailytrust.com/only-abuja-2-states-safe-for-elections-cleen-foundation/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://dailypost.ng/2023/01/04/mapoly-workers-protest-non-payment-of-salaries/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://punchng.com/abia-doctors-protest-25-months-salary-arrears/>

were evident across most States.<sup>25</sup> These instances suggest rising citizens discontent against socio-economic challenges and dwindling state-citizens relations ahead of the elections.

The WANEP NEWS also recorded 233 deaths and 377 injuries from road accidents in the month<sup>26</sup>. The multiple risk factors attributed to these accidents include; mechanical faults, violation of traffic signals, overloading of vehicles, speed, fatigue and bad roads arising from poor maintenance culture, amongst others. Also, boat mishaps in Kebbi State and building collapses in Lagos, Kano, Rivers and Plateau States accounted for 20 and 8 deaths respectively.

**4. ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY:**

THE WANEP NEWS documented cases of Lassa Fever, Cholera, Diptheria and COVID-19 in the month. The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) confirmed 82 infected COVID-19 cases, with a total of 66,293,218 people fully vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccines in Nigeria<sup>27</sup>. The statistics of deaths and infected cases emanating from epidemics (Lassa Fever, Cholera, Diptheria) in Nigeria is highlighted on the template below, as recorded in the WANEP NEWS<sup>28</sup>.

EPIDEMICS	Deaths	Confirmed Cases	Suspected Cases
Lassa Fever	41	361	1,340
Coronavirus (COVID-19)	-	82	-
Cholera	17	-	429
Diptheria	22	111	_29

According to the NCDC, the current outbreak of diptheria in Nigeria reflects the inadequate coverage of national childhood immunization programmes<sup>30</sup>. In the reporting month, Kano, Lagos, Yobe and Osun States recorded cases of diptheria. Out of the four (4) States with recorded cases, Kano State in the northern region confirmed the highest infected cases of 107 and 21 deaths out of the total diptheria infected cases and deaths in January 2023. Lagos, Yobe and Osun States recorded less than 4 infected cases with one (1) death. The prevalence of diseases after years of discovery questions the efficacy of responses and also reveals a gap in healthcare infrastructure, early warning systems and vaccine development.

**5. GENDER, PEACE AND SECURITY:**

The reporting month recorded 49 cases of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), particularly rape. Out of the 49 cases, 26 people were charged for rape and sexual offences in January 2023<sup>31</sup>. Also, of the 26 accused persons, 4 were juveniles<sup>32</sup>. Some of the States with documented rape cases include Kwara, Kaduna, Ondo, Delta, Lagos, Oyo, Osun and Bauchi States.

<sup>25</sup> Source : WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/)  
<sup>26</sup> Source : WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/)  
<sup>27</sup> [www.ncdc.gov.ng](http://www.ncdc.gov.ng)  
<sup>28</sup> Source : WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/)  
<sup>29</sup> <https://thenationonlineng.net/ncdc-reports-111-confirmed-diphtheria-cases-22-deaths/>  
<sup>30</sup> <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/01/gaps-in-vaccination-coverage-fueling-diphtheria-outbreak-says-ncdc/>  
<sup>31</sup> <https://www.pressreader.com/fiji/fiji-sun/20230204/281586654746322>  
<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

The WANEP NEWS also documented cases of human trafficking in Jigawa, Rivers and Kwara States. A total of 59 human trafficking victims were rescued in the States with 3 suspected human traffickers arrested in Kwara State<sup>33</sup>. Despite the existing legal frameworks (Child Rights and Violence Against Persons Prohibition laws), States continue to grapple with inaccurate statistics of rape victims. The fear of stigma continues to discourage targets of sexual violence from formalising the reports of incidents<sup>34</sup>. This has been attributed to the rise in a culture of impunity on the part of the perpetrators<sup>35</sup>.

### **Implications for Peace and Security in Nigeria**

The political climate in the lead up to the February 25 and March 11 general elections is tense, as political parties trade accusations on alleged plots by the Nigerian Government led by the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) to postpone the 2023 elections<sup>36</sup>. The protracted security and socio-economic challenges facing the nation as highlighted above also poses an existential threat to the peaceful conduct of elections and political transition in Nigeria. The security situation is fraught with enduring porous border, which continues to enhance terrorism and banditry, economic sabotage, as well as illicit flow of arms and ammunition, as indicated by the President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari<sup>37</sup>. All these challenges portend significant threat to human and state security ahead of the upcoming elections.

Moreover, the continuous agitation for a separate Yoruba and Biafra nation by groups in the South-West and South-East raises concerns around the geo-political and regional imbalance in the nation and threatens national cohesion ahead of the polls. An instance of violent incident by Yoruba nation agitators was recorded in the month of January 2023, resulting in the death of 2 people with 2 police operatives injured in Lagos State<sup>38</sup>. Nevertheless, the increased political awareness and readiness of young Nigerians to cast a ballot, especially post EndSARS nationwide demonstrations of 2020, may be key to achieving democratic reforms in the country. Out of the 93,469,008 million eligible voters for the general election, youths constitute the highest number of registered voters with 48 million<sup>39</sup>.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

In view of the human security threats and the analysis highlighted, the following recommendations are proposed for response and mitigation by stakeholders:

- The recurrent of violence and insecurity in some States increases the possibilities of political and electoral violence. Thus, the commitment of CSOs in collaboration with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), security agencies, media, political parties and other relevant state institutions in promoting peace through sensitization programmes on non-violence pre-during and post electioneering period is

<sup>33</sup> Source : WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS) : [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/)

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2023/01/20/tackling-the-rising-rape-cases/>

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.thecable.ng/blackmail-senseless-conjecture-pdp-apc-trade-words-over-alleged-plot-to-postpone-polls>

<sup>37</sup> <https://tribuneonline.ng/porous-borders-fueling-terrorism-economic-sabotage-%E2%80%95-buhari/>

<sup>38</sup> <https://dailytrust.com/2-killed-as-yoruba-nation-agitators-police-clash-in-lagos/>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/01/48-million-out-of-93-5-million-eligible-voters-are-youths-inec/>

commendable and should be intensified considering the surge in arson, political thuggery, intimidation/threats, among other crimes as the general elections approaches.

- The Federal, State and Local Governments should enhance collaboration with traditional and religious institutions, Civil Society Organisations and the media on the enforcement of Government’s health and immunization programs across States and communities; to increase public health awareness among population to mitigate the outbreak and spread of epidemics.
- To forestall occurrences that could disrupt the electoral cycle scheduled for February 25 and March 11 general elections, INEC should ensure its contingency/management plans in collaboration with security agencies is effective in preventing adverse actions that could sabotage INEC’s efforts in ensuring peaceful elections in 2023.
- The ECOWAS, African Union (AU), United Nations (UN) and other relevant international partners should intensify preventive diplomatic engagements with the Federal Government and political stakeholders to ensure political parties are committed to promoting peaceful and credible elections.

**CONCLUSION:**

The surge in insecurity, political and socio-economic challenges and its attendant impact on populations pose significant risks to participation and peaceful conduct of the 2023 general elections. However, there is a need for continuous community sensitisation on non-violence and tolerance by critical stakeholders to mitigate the threats ahead of the elections. Though this remedial effort is necessary to safeguarding citizens’ participation and election security, what is critically important is the need for major State and traditional/religious actors to strengthen engagements with political parties and the INEC to sustain dialogue aimed at managing and responding to potential disputes and threats that could mar transparency and credibility of the 2023 elections.

**CENSUS OF INCIDENTS FOR JANUARY 2023**

THEMATIC AREA	NO of Attacks.	VICTIMS	
		DEATHS	INJURIES
<b>VIOLENT EXTREMISM:</b> Boko Haram/ISWAP attacks  -Inter-rivalry clash: Boko Haram and ISWAP Terrorists  - Counter-Terrorist Attacks	14	- 1 civilian  - 35 terrorists  - 159 terrorists	-  -  -
<b>ORGANISED CRIME:</b> (Armed-robbery, assassination, armed violence, armed bandits, mob attack, arson and cult/gang clash)	161	256	76

Armed Action/Shoot-out between security operatives and members of criminal gangs	43	154	1
Abduction (evident across 24 States)	83	-	-
Cybercrime/Fraud	9	-	-
Election-related violence	29	15	13
Extra-Judicial killing	9	9	13
Physical/Armed Assault	14	2	15
Herder-Community Conflict	13	41	8
<b>Violent Clash</b>			
• Police Operatives and Yoruba Nation in Lagos State	3	4	4
• Violent Clashes in Niger and Abuja-FCT			
Drug Trafficking	13		-
Homicide	15	16	2
Suicide	7	7	-
<b>DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE:</b>			
Demonstration (peaceful)	34	-	-
Demonstration (violent)	1	1	-
Intimidation and Threats	9	-	-
Industrial Strike Action	1	-	-
Arrest/Detention	85	-	-
Road Accident	60	233	377
Building Collapse	4	8	9
Boat Accident in Kebbi State	1	20	-
Electrocution (Kaduna, Enugu States)	2	5	-
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY:</b>			
Communal conflict	8	5	6
Drowning in Lagos States	1	1	-
<b>Pandemic/Epidemics:</b>			<b>Confirmed/Infected Cases</b>
a. Coronavirus (COVID-19)	1	0	COVID: 82
b. Lassa Fever	1	41	Lassa Fever: 361
c. Cholera	1	17	Cholera: 429
d. Diphtheria	1	22	Diphtheria: 111

Fire Outbreak	32	3	1
Rainstorm	1	-	-

Through its National Early Warning System (NEWS), the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP- Nigeria) develops and disseminates a monthly bulletin on Human Security at the end of each month to inform the different actors and / or partners and formulates recommendations to different decision-makers for targeted responses to the given alerts. This monthly monitoring is based on information gathered from the field by the WANEP-NIGERIA field monitors, and also information gathered from the various national and international media.

27, Adeniji Street, Adeniji Estate, off WEMPCO Road, Ogba Lagos State, Tel : +2348062072468 ; Website : [www.wanepnigeria.org](http://www.wanepnigeria.org)

<b><u>GENDER, PEACE AND SECURITY:</u></b>			
Sexual Assault/Rape	49	-	13
Human Trafficking	3	-	-
Child Abuse	2	-	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>1,055</b>	<b>1,524</b>