

**RECURRENT VIOLENCE IN PLATEAU STATE: AN INTEGRATED  
ANALYSIS OF CRISIS PATTERNS IN BOKKOS, BASSA, JOS  
SOUTH AND MANGU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS**



**POLICY BRIEF**  
*April 2025*





## Executive Summary

This paper examines the pattern of violent crises in four local government areas (LGAs) in Plateau State—Bokkos, Bassa, Jos South, and Mangu. These LGAs have seen a wide range of violence, from targeted killings to armed attacks. In spite of their differences in execution, aggressive attacks reveal structural weaknesses as well as common triggers such as institutional breakdown, identity conflicts, and resource competition.

In Bokkos and Bassa, the violence has manifested in large-scale assaults involving significant loss of life and property destruction. These incidents have resulted in mass displacements, strained local economies, and eroded inter-community relations. Ethno-religious tensions, competition over land use, and delayed security responses are prominent in both areas. Survivors describe the attacks as systematic and deliberate, contributing to widespread fear and mutual suspicion among diverse community stakeholders. More recently, Jos South and Mangu have experienced targeted provocations that, although involving less casualties, show early warning signals of escalation. While the mass poisoning of cattle in Mangu (planned or accidental) points to an economic and psychological assault



The killing of a young herder and his animals in Jos South has deepened local resentment. These developments reflect a potential expansion of conflict zones and the likelihood of retaliatory violence if not addressed swiftly.

This description identifies these trends and provides recommendations for conflict prevention and resolution. These include improving early warning systems, promoting accountability, addressing land governance challenges, supporting inclusive dialogue, and providing livelihood and psychosocial support to affected populations. The findings underscore the need for coordinated, proactive, and community-centered interventions to reverse the trend of cyclical violence.



# Introduction

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Driven mostly by land, identity-based grievances, and poor government initiatives, Plateau State, in Nigeria's North-Central region, has a long history of communal and ethno-religious conflicts. The social fabric and development of the state have suffered long-lasting consequences from these conflicts. Over the years, violence has periodically resurfaced in different parts of the state, severely affecting lives, livelihoods, and local economies.

Recent violent incidents reflecting a concerning increase in frequency and intensity have occurred in the Local Government Areas of Bokkos, Bassa, Jos South, and Mangu. Targeting several villages, coordinated attacks in Bokkos, between March and April 2025 and in December 2023 resulted in hundreds of deaths and significant displacement. In April 2025, Bassa LGA also saw deadly attacks whereby entire communities were attacked in a brief span, resulting in major loss of life, damage of property, and forced displacement. Jos residents stage a protest against the constant deaths under the Christian Association of Nigeria on April 21, 2025.

Reported on April 22, 2025, new events in Jos South and Mangu LGAs included targeted killings and animal poisoning. Though their scope was less than that of Bokkos and Bassa, their character and timing imply a possible early warning of more escalation. While the Mangu case dealt with mass poisoning of cattle, a practice known to induce retaliatory violence, the attack in Jos South resulted in the death of a young herder and several animals.

This pattern of recurrent and geographically shifting violence transcends local borders. Systemic governance failures, institutional weakness in enforcing justice, and deteriorating relationships between communities and state actors are contributing factors to the persistence of violence. It is necessary to develop a comprehensive strategy that combines security reform, inclusive governance, and community-level engagement to prevent a deepening of the violence.





An analysis of conflict patterns and intervention gaps is based on primary policy briefs from WANEK-Nigeria, supported by secondary academic and media sources.

## Key Findings

### 1. Crisis Typology

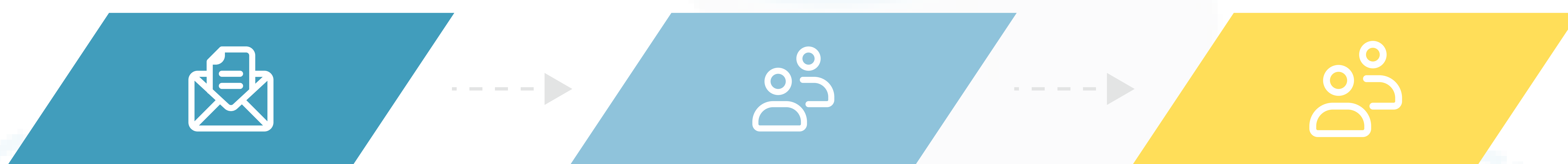


Ethno-religious conflict rooted in land and resource competition

Targeted killings, property destruction, and mass displacement

Motivated by identity-based grievances and strategic land occupation

### 2. Erosion of Social Cohesion



Ethno-religious identity divisions have deepened, with attacks increasingly framed as deliberate campaigns against specific groups, eroding trust between historically coexisting communities.

The breakdown of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms has led to greater reliance on self-defense groups, displacing communal dialogue with armed vigilance.

Perceived state inaction and selective justice have weakened citizens' confidence in public institutions, fostering alienation and inter-community resentment.



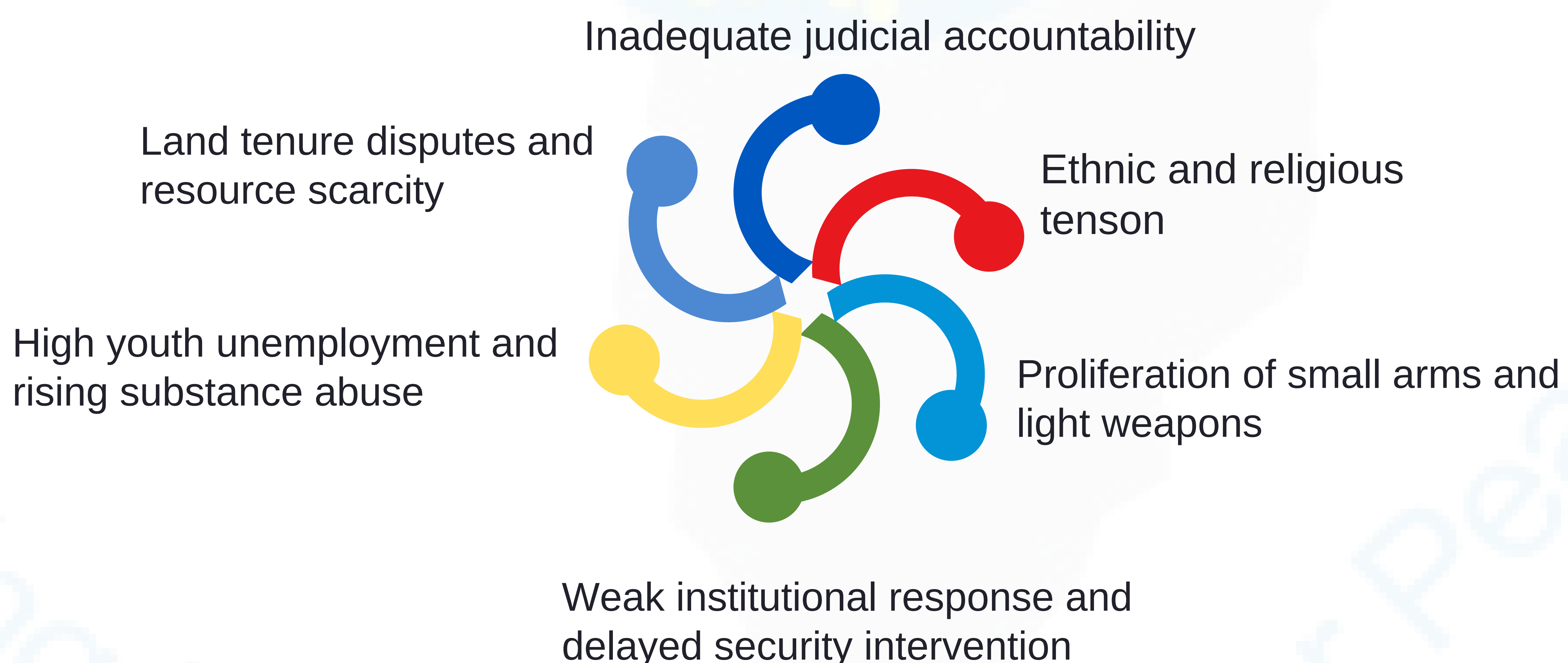
Attacks shift across LGAs with a clustered recurrence, intensifying around farming seasons and religious holidays. This suggests an opportunistic and coordinated strategy by attackers



### 3. Patterns of Violence

- **Bokkos LGA:** On March 8, 2025, a herder was killed in a community in Bokkos LGA. On 27th March, 2025, armed attackers killed 10 people in Ruwi hamlet near Mushu. The following day, 28th March, another assault in Ruwi village resulted in the deaths of 10 individuals. On the same day, arson was reported in Rwam village, Mushere district, though no fatalities occurred. On April 2, 2025, three people were killed in Manguna, and later that evening, over 30 people were killed in Hurti community. By April 3, 2025, the total number of deaths across affected communities in Bokkos LGA had risen to approximately 52.
- **Mangu LGA:** On 22 April 2025, 27 cows were poisoned near the INEC Office close to Audi Musa Private School. This act, targeting livestock, signals deepening animosity and a likely reprisal cycle.
- **Bassa LGA:** On 7 April 2025, three males were killed in an attack on Hwrra Village. On 8 April 2025, two individuals were killed during coordinated assaults on Zashi in Kperie, MODACS Hotel in Kwall District, and Twin Hill (Gyu) in Miango District. On 14 April 2025, an attack on Zike community and its surrounding areas resulted in the deaths of 51 people, including men, women, and children. concurrent attacks over several town.
- **Jos South LGA:** On 22 April 2025, Hamza Suleiman, a 20-year-old herder, was found dead along with two cows and sheep in Shen (Tintim). This unprovoked killing indicates rising localised tension with potential to escalate.

### Conflict Drivers



### 4. Local Perceptions

- In both Bokkos and Bassa LGAs, as well as in the more recent incidents in Jos South and Mangu, community narratives indicate that the affected populations perceive the attacks as not only random acts of violence but as deliberate campaigns of extermination.



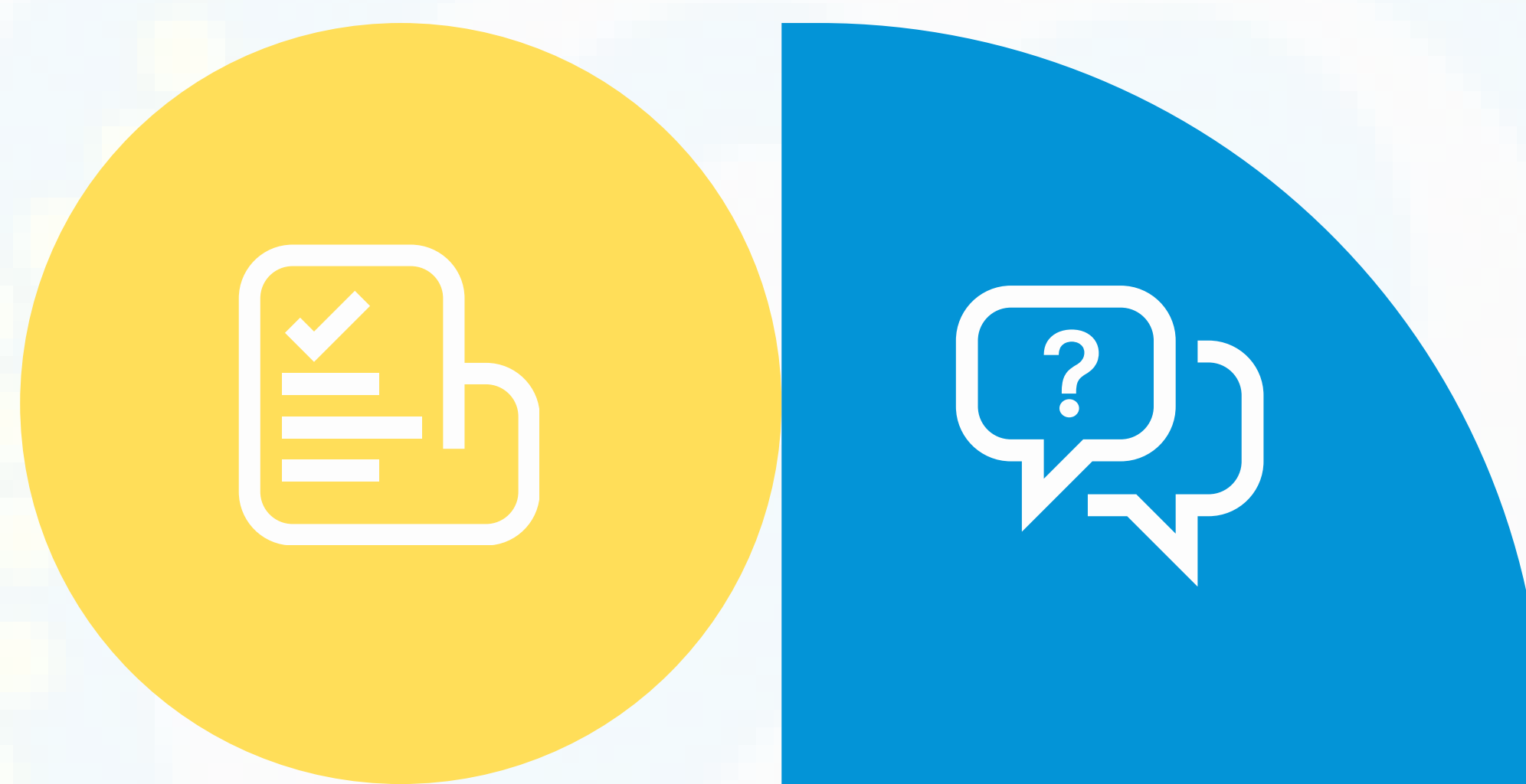
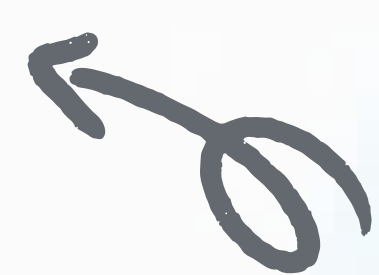
Local leaders have referred to the events as "genocide" or "terrorist-sponsored operations," particularly in the context of strategic land occupation and the scale of destruction. These perceptions reflect a deep sense of targeted elimination and contribute to inter-community hostility.

- The growing mistrust toward government institutions is compounded by the recurrent failure to prosecute perpetrators, delayed security responses, and inconsistent relief efforts. Many residents believe the state has either lost control or is complicit through inaction. As a result, affected communities have increasingly turned to self-defense arrangements, including the formation of militias. While such actions may provide immediate protection, they further entrench cycles of violence, provoke counterattacks, and fragment authority.



## IMPACT SUMMARY (IMMEDIATE AND EXPECTED)

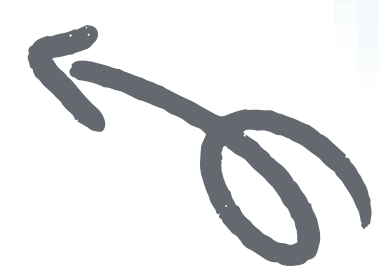
Over 100 deaths and thousands displaced in the four LGAs



Psychological trauma and disrupted education



Food insecurity and economic collapse due to abandoned farmlands



Decline in public trust towards government institutions

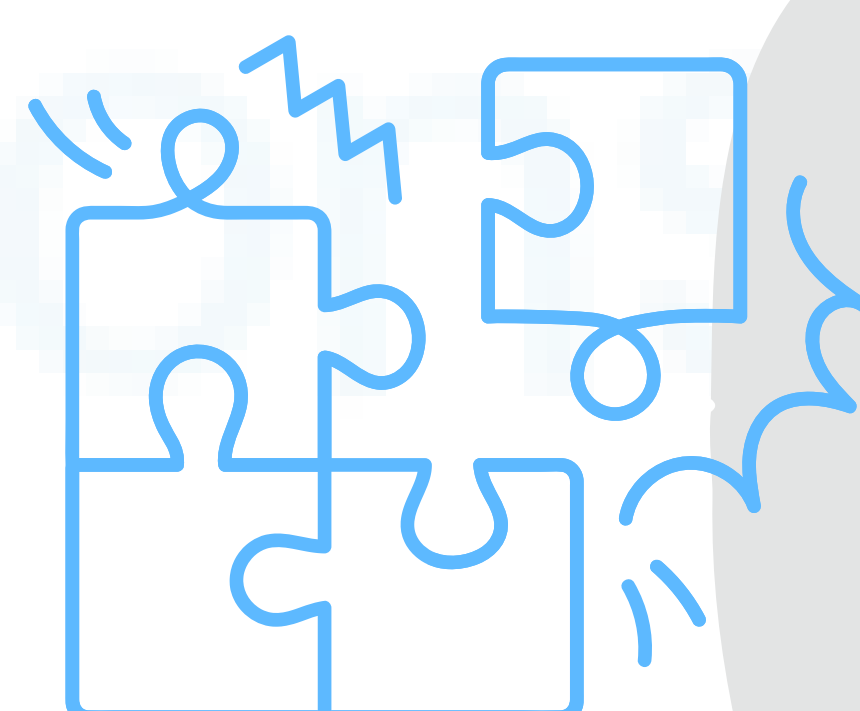


## Responses, Thus far,



The Plateau State Government, on April 15, 2025, announced a set of regulatory measures including a ban on night grazing, restrictions on motorcycle usage, and a prohibition on transporting cattle in vehicles after 7:00 PM. These measures aim to curb the mobility of suspected attackers and mitigate night-time assaults.

A multi-stakeholder consultative meeting was organized by the state government in mid-April 2025. It brought together traditional rulers, community leaders, civil society actors, security agencies, and local government representatives to evaluate ongoing responses and chart a collaborative path to peace.



The police, under the directive of the Inspector-General, deployed a counter-terrorism squad to Plateau State, bolstered by surveillance drones and helicopters, to enhance proactive security presence in conflict-prone areas.



# STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

## Security and Early Warning

- Deploy trained security personnel with community-based early warning systems
- Integrate local intelligence into national response structures
- Prioritize real-time responses to early indicators such as livestock poisoning and targeted individual attacks to prevent broader conflict



## Land and Resource Governance

- Conduct land audits and clarify ownership
- Develop mediated grazing/farming agreements at community level

## Justice and Accountability

- Ensure prosecution of perpetrators; strengthen state judicial capacity
- Review and implement relevant recommendations from past commissions of inquiry, including the Justice Niki Tobi and Solomon Lar panels, to address systemic failures and guide reforms in conflict prevention, land adjudication, and equitable governance



## Inclusive Dialogue and Reconciliation

- Institutionalize local peace committees with multi-stakeholder representation
- Support trauma recovery programs and inter-faith collaboration



## Youth and Livelihood Development

- Launch vocational training, peace education, and leadership programs
- Support small business grants and agricultural cooperatives for affected youth

## Governance and Political Safeguards

- Prevent politicization of ethnic identities
- Involve traditional and religious leaders in official peacebuilding processes
- Establish a comprehensive integrated framework of initiatives aimed at community policing, conflict prevention and peacebuilding to ensure coherence and targeted response to the threats witnessed within communities.



- The Local Government Councils (LGCs) should ensure the sustainability of local peace structures. Partners should fully contribute to sustaining grassroots structures through involvement of the right key stakeholders.



## Humanitarian Response and Resettlement

- Strengthen IDP support through joint state-NGO frameworks
- Design long-term reintegration and mental health recovery programs



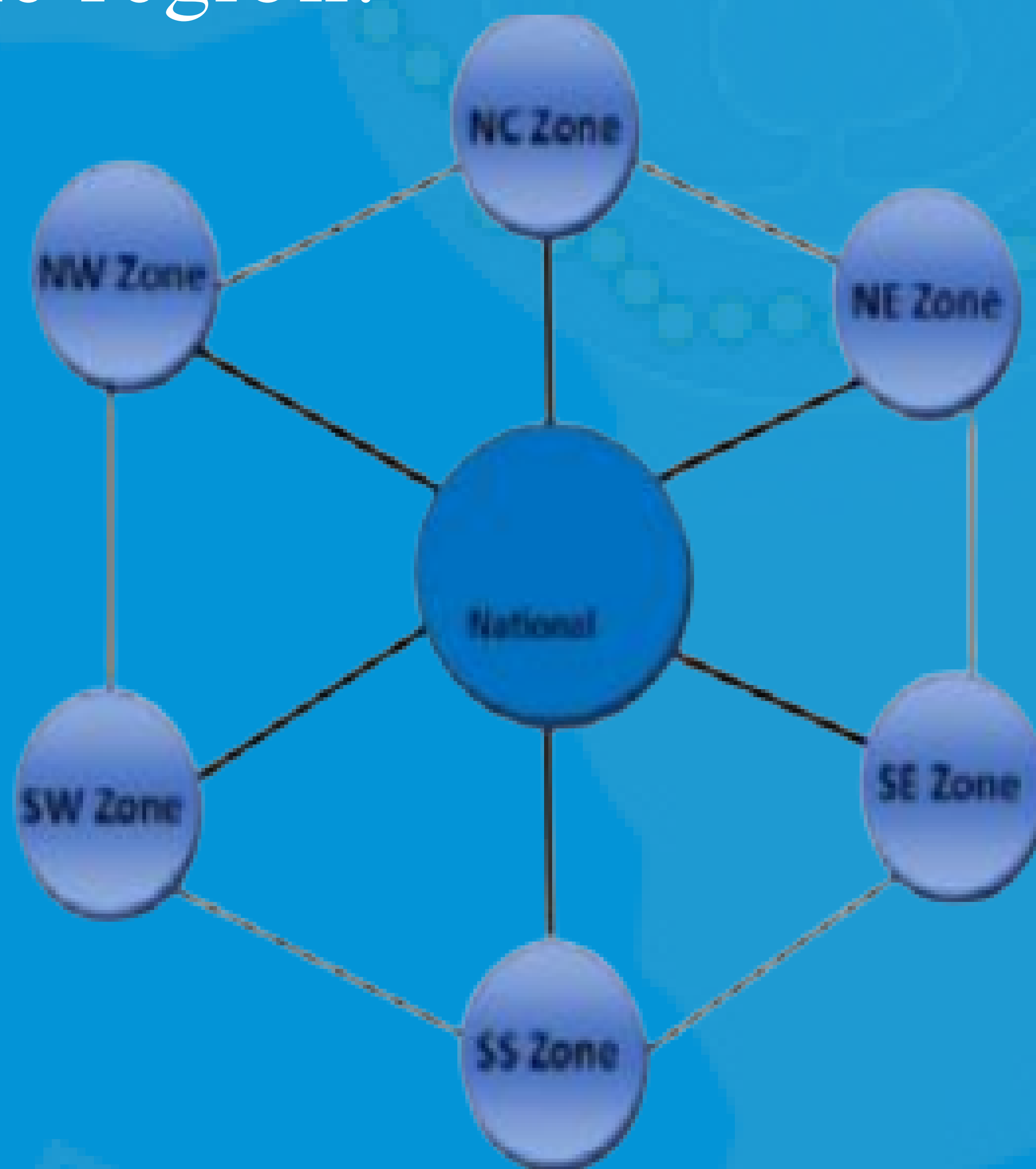
## Conclusion

Most violent in Plateau state is experience during farming season and political eras. The violence in Bokkos, Bassa, Jos South, and Mangu LGAs is a manifestation of deeper governance, resource, and identity challenges. Addressing these issues requires multifaceted approach of coordination, and inclusive strategies. This report serves as a guide for developing holistic responses by state authorities, academic institutions, and civil society actors



## About Us

WANEP Nigeria operations are structured along the geopolitical constellation of Nigeria and targets grassroots ownership of peacebuilding initiatives through its member organisations in the thirty-six (36) states of Nigeria, including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Its operational framework was designed along the visions of the regional network operating in West Africa, Chad and Cameroun with ultimate goal of building sustainable peace for growth and development in the region.



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