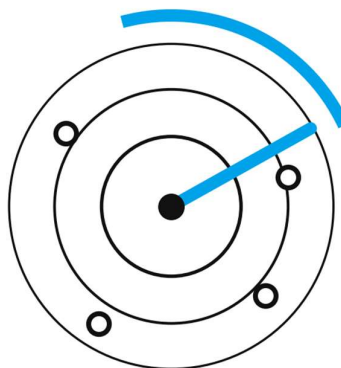




NIGERIA PEACE AND HUMAN SECURITY

2026 MID-YEAR REVIEW

Reviewing H1 human-security trends and priority actions for H2

REVIEW PERIOD January–June 2026

A WANEP–Nigeria evidence product for government, security, education, humanitarian, civil society, research and development stakeholders.

July 2026

Executive summary

1,462	2,140	907	3,363	39
VE/OC incidents	recorded deaths	recorded injuries	people abducted	SGBV incidents

Headline NEWS records for January–June 2026.

H1 2026 confirms sustained and interconnected human-security pressures across Nigeria. **WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS)** recorded persistent abduction, lethal armed violence and widening geographic exposure, alongside peaceful civic mobilisation, environmental shocks and gender protection concerns. The evidence broadly aligns with the principal risks identified in WANEP–Nigeria’s 2026 Outlook and highlights priorities for prevention during H2.

What H1 2026 shows

- Abduction remained a defining national protection concern. NEWS recorded 485 kidnapping incidents and 3,363 abducted people, with multi-victim events placing exceptional pressure on families, schools and communities.
- The scale of harm did not move consistently with incident frequency. May recorded the fewest violent-extremism and organised-crime incidents but 553 abducted people, while BH/ISWAP recorded 418 deaths from 61 incidents.
- Geographic burdens differed. Plateau recorded the highest number of deaths, Kaduna the highest number abducted, and Borno combined substantial death and abduction burdens. Kogi, Kwara, Edo and Ondo also indicate connected exposure beyond established hotspots.
- Civic mobilisation remained predominantly peaceful. NEWS recorded 91 peaceful demonstrations, while five violent demonstrations were identified in the months for which data were available. Peaceful mobilisation remains a legitimate democratic channel, although electoral competition, misinformation and coercive responses may heighten risk.
- Protection requires functioning systems, not infrastructure alone. Safe Schools action must connect community warning, named institutional contacts, response-time standards, drills, confidential reporting and accountability.

Priorities for H2 preventive action

H2 action should combine trigger-based monitoring with differentiated responses. Priority areas include multi-victim abduction corridors, high-severity attacks, school protection, peaceful electoral and civic engagement, flood-related vulnerability, and survivor-centred responses to SGBV and trafficking.

This review is organised around four NEWS thematic areas. The first section compares H1 2026 evidence with the 2026 Outlook, while the following sections examine violent extremism and organized crime, democracy and governance, environmental security, and gender, peace and security. The conclusion consolidates H2 priorities for stakeholders.

WANEP–NIGERIA 2026 HUMAN SECURITY OUTLOOK AT MID-YEAR

Purpose, context and the question this review answers

Nigeria entered 2026 facing overlapping risks from armed violence, organised crime, political mobilisation, environmental shocks and gendered insecurity. [WANEP–Nigeria’s Nigeria Peace and Human Security 2026 Outlook](#) drew on historical NEWS data across its four thematic areas to project how these pressures could evolve and interact during the year.

This Mid-Year Review provides a national snapshot of developments recorded from January to June 2026 through WANEP–Nigeria’s National Early Warning System (NEWS). It is intended for government and security institutions, civil society, development and humanitarian partners, researchers, media practitioners and community peace structures seeking evidence for prevention, programming and response.

The review asks: *What does NEWS reveal about Nigeria’s peace and human-security situation in H1 2026, how far do these patterns align with the 2026 Outlook, and what do they imply for preventive action in H2?* NEWS monitors four thematic areas: (1) Violent Extremism and Organised Crime; (2) Democracy and Governance; (3) Environmental Security; and (4) Gender, Peace and Security.

Projection Scorecard

“Evident” indicates a clearly established pattern, while “partly evident” indicates an emerging signal requiring continued monitoring.

Outlook proposition	Assessment	H1 2026 evidence	H2 2026 implication
Persistent abductions	Evident	485 kidnapping incidents; 3,363 people abducted	Prioritise multi-victim events and repeat corridors
High-lethality armed violence	Evident	2,140 deaths; high recorded severity	Use severity thresholds alongside incident counts
Geographic diffusion	Evident	Kwara, Kogi, Edo and Ondo in impact rankings	Strengthen cross-state anticipatory coordination
Civic mobilisation	Evident	91 peaceful demonstrations	Protect civic space and strengthen event liaison
Flood and climate-related shocks	Partly evident	27 incidents; 17 deaths; 14 injuries	Prepare for access, displacement and livelihood risks
Gendered protection pressures	Partly evident	39 SGBV incidents and trafficking-related concerns	Strengthen gender-responsive reporting and referrals

Note* : The assessment shows whether the projected pattern was present during H1. It does not suggest that every risk materialised equally across all locations.

Overall Assessment

WANEP-Nigeria's 2026 human security Outlook's principal concerns remained relevant during H1. Persistent abductions, lethal armed violence and a widening geography of recorded harm were particularly evident. Civic mobilisation remained important, while environmental and gendered protection signals require continued attention as conditions evolved during H2.

The report distinguishes what NEWS directly recorded from what the wider pattern may imply. State and zonal burdens are therefore interpreted as indicators of recorded harm and connected exposure, not as proof of actor movement or complete national prevalence.

Implications for H2 Priorities

By connecting annual foresight with evidence generated during the year, the review helps stakeholders identify risks already materialising, locations requiring closer attention and opportunities for preventive action before pressures intensify.

The evidence supports coordinated attention to multi-victim abductions, high-severity attacks, cross-state corridors, school protection, peaceful civic engagement, flood-related vulnerability and gender-responsive protection. These priorities cut across NEWS's four thematic areas and require collaboration between institutions and affected communities.

Methodology

Evidence base: H1 2026 incidents reported through NEWS by trained community monitors and civil society and community networks, complemented by credible media, official statements and relevant open-source information.

Verification and analysis: The Early Warning and Human Security team cross-checks, classifies and consolidates reports before analysing patterns across NEWS's four thematic areas.

Context: H1 patterns are considered alongside the 2026 Outlook, the Safe Schools EWER Webinar and selected public information relevant to interpretation.

Scope: NEWS is an incident-based early warning system rather than a national crime registry. Findings reflect incidents identified and verified through available reporting channels.

VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND ORGANISED CRIME

▲ The H1 violence pattern

H1 harm did not move in lockstep with incident volume

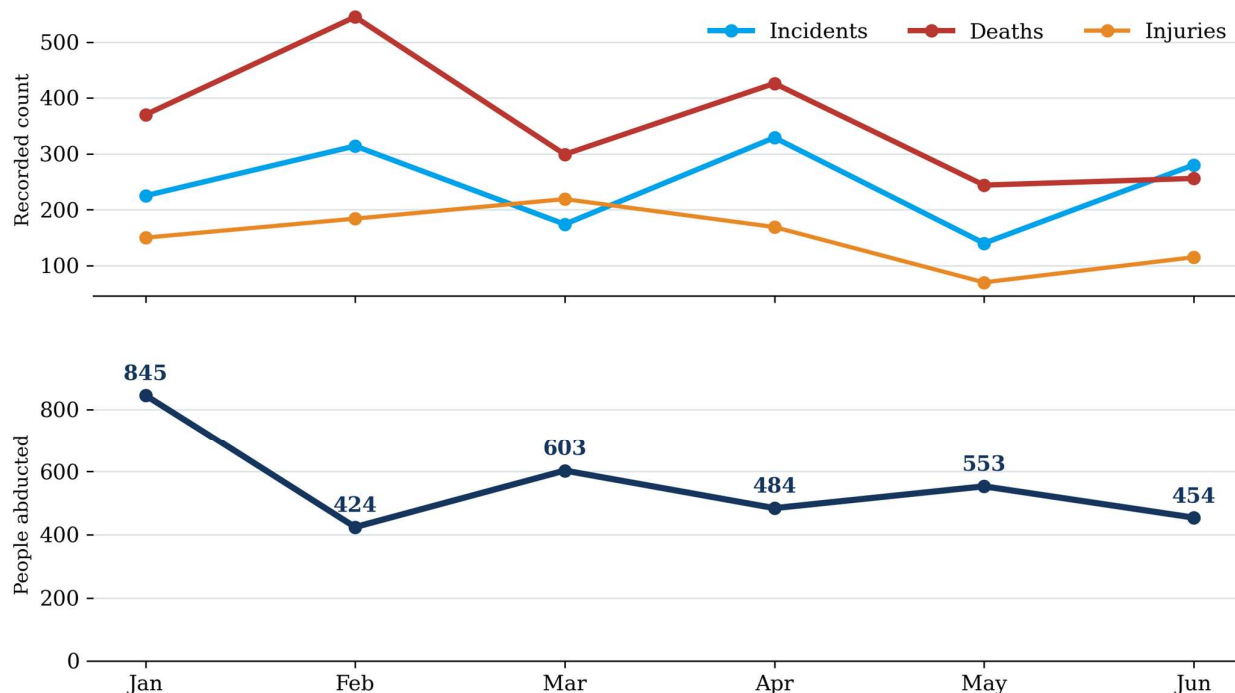


Figure 1. Monthly NEWS incident and impact records, H1 2026. Source: WANEP NEWS

As shown in **Figure 1**, NEWS recorded 1,462 violent extremism and organised crime incidents in H1 2026, resulting in 2,140 deaths, 907 injuries and 3,363 abductions. The fatalities include civilians, security personnel and members of non-state armed groups killed in attacks, clashes and security operations. Deaths peaked in February at 545, incidents in April at 329, and abductions in January at 845. **Abductions remained high**, including 603 in March and 553 in May.

Incident volume did not consistently reflect the level of harm. May recorded the fewest incidents at 140 but the third-highest number of abductions. Fewer incidents therefore do not necessarily indicate improved security, especially when attacks involve multiple victims. Their wider effects include displacement, restricted movement, disrupted education and livelihoods, psychological distress and declining confidence in security institutions.

The pattern **supports the WANEP–Nigeria 2026 Human Security Outlook**, which projected that kidnapping and lethal armed violence would remain major concerns. Figure 1 indicates sustained but changing pressures involving communities, security agencies and non-state armed groups. H2 monitoring should prioritise mass-casualty attacks, multi-victim abductions, repeat locations and emerging risk corridors.

● Threat frequency and recorded severity

Frequency and recorded deaths point to different priorities

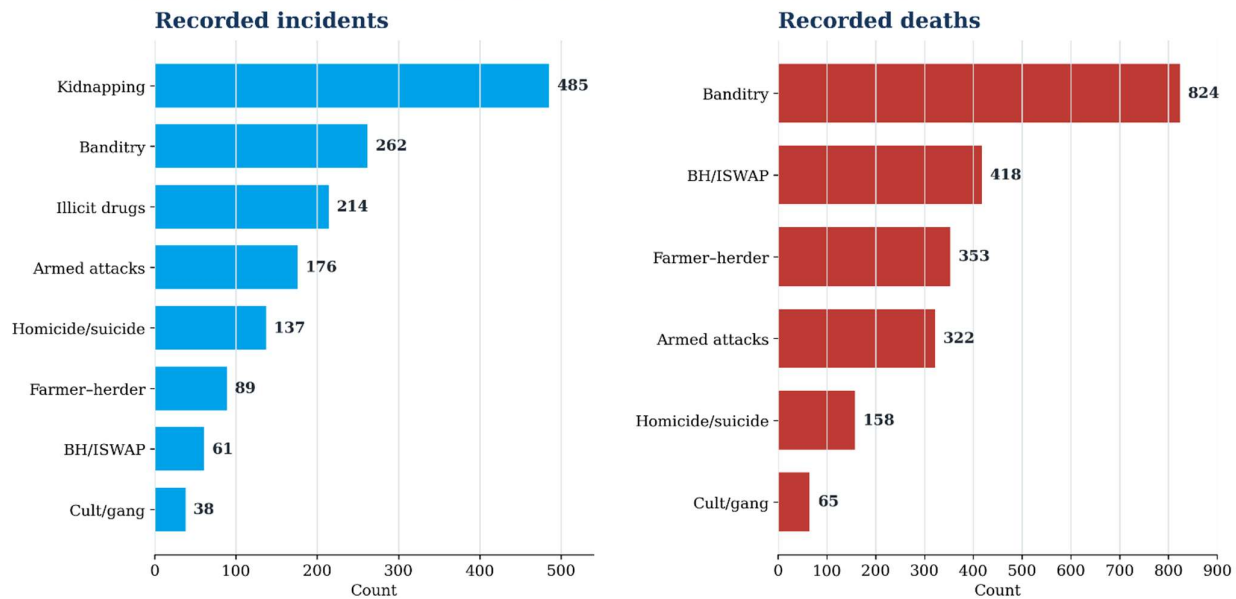
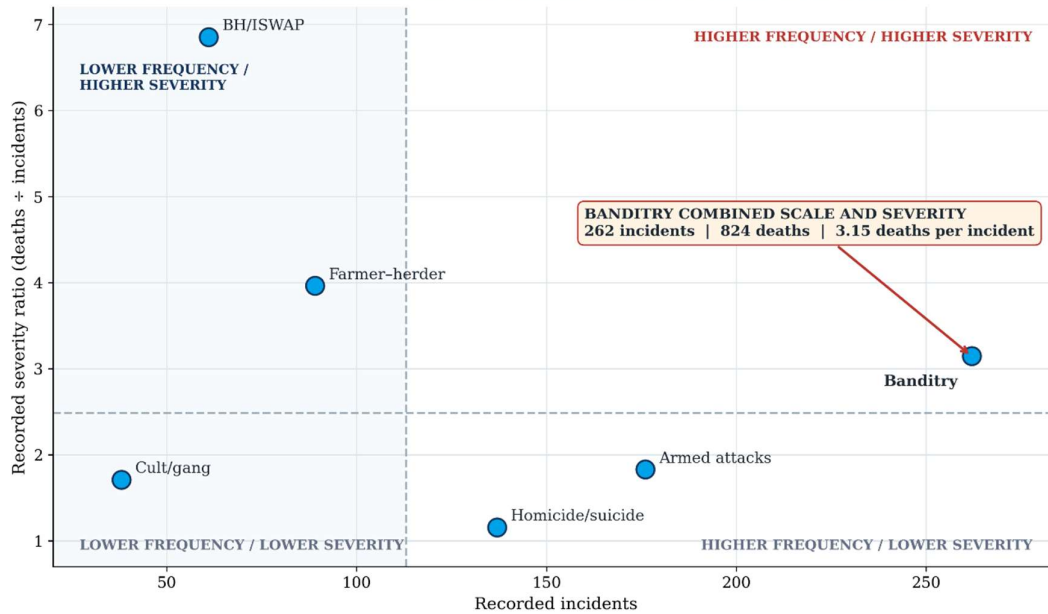


Figure 2. Recorded incidents and deaths by threat category, H1 2026. Source: WANEP NEWS

Kidnapping remained the most frequent threat, with 485 incidents, while banditry recorded the highest death burden at 824. BH/ISWAP and farmer-herder violence were less frequent but highly lethal. This supports the Outlook's warning that Nigeria's abduction economy remains prevalent nationally.

Threat-prioritisation matrix: frequency and recorded severity



HOW TO READ THE MATRIX

Points further right represent more recorded incidents; points higher up represent more recorded deaths per incident. The dashed lines show the median values for the threats included and are analytical reference points, not official risk thresholds.

Note: The severity ratio is based on aggregated records and is not a case-fatality rate. Kidnapping and illicit-drug incidents are excluded because death data were unavailable.

Figure 3. Threat frequency and recorded severity, H1 2026. Source: WANEP NEWS

HOTSPOTS AND DIFFUSION

The geography of harm

H1 2026 confirms that Nigeria's human-security burden remains concentrated in established northern hotspots, while abduction exposure is extending through the North Central–southern transition belt.

Impact hotspots overlap, but their recorded burdens differ

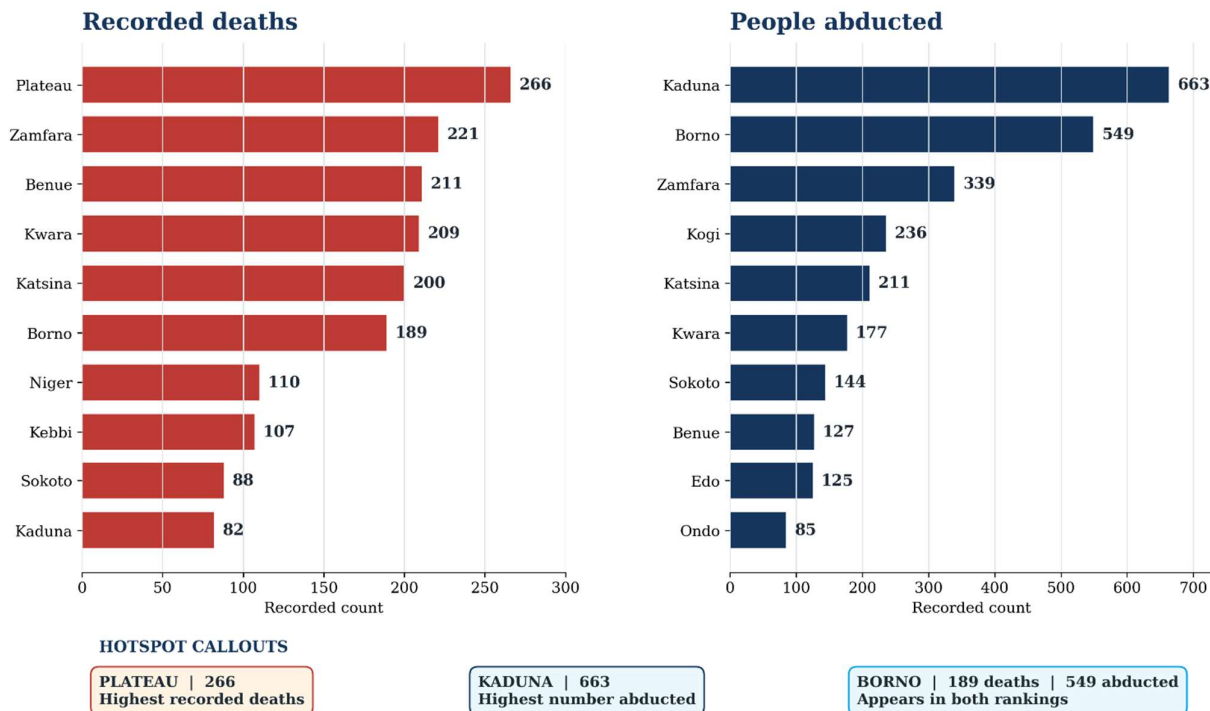


Figure 4. Top ten states by recorded deaths and abducted people, H1 2026. Source: WANEP NEWS

Persistent fragility, changing burdens

Figure 4 shows strong continuity with the WANEP–Nigeria 2026 Human Security Outlook. Every state in the H1 top ten death ranking had already been classified as Severe or High in the Outlook. Plateau recorded the highest death burden (266), while Kaduna recorded the largest number abducted (663). Borno appeared in both rankings, combining 189 deaths with 549 people abducted.

The pattern differs across regions. North Central states dominate the death ranking, while the Northwest and Northeast carry the largest abduction burdens. This requires differentiated responses: reducing lethal communal and armed violence in North Central, disrupting kidnapping economies in the Northwest, and addressing the intersection of insurgency and abduction in Borno.

OUTLOOK ALIGNMENT The fragile-state geography projected for 2026 remains evident, but H1 data show that the form of harm differs by state and corridor.

GEOPOLITICAL ZONES REVEAL CONNECTED PRESSURE CORRIDORS

Aggregating recorded impacts by geopolitical zone clarifies the relationship between entrenched hotspots and the Outlook's warning of wider geographic diffusion.

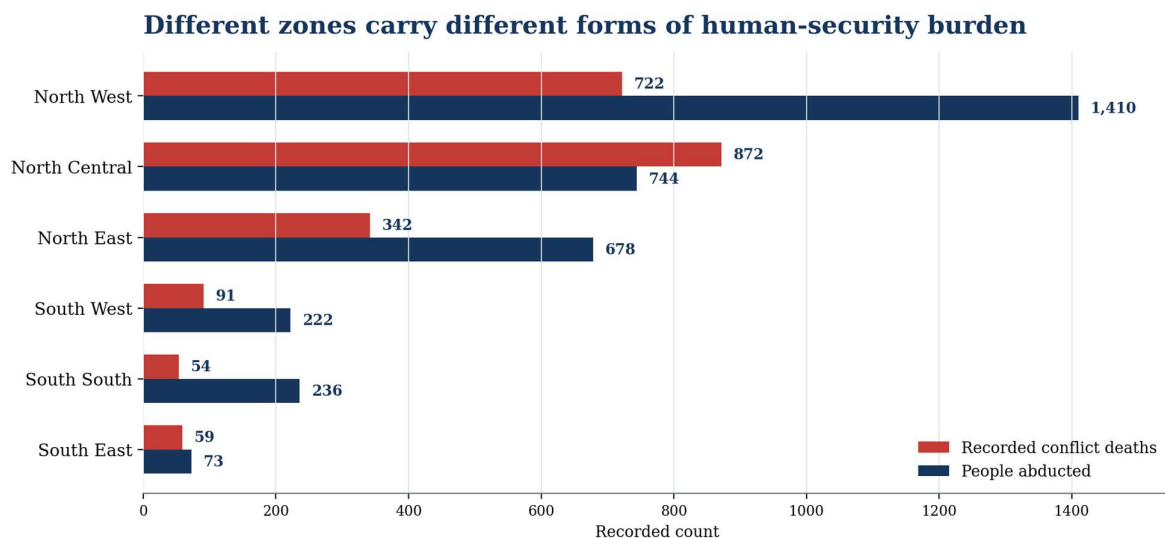


Figure 5. Recorded conflict deaths and abducted people by geopolitical zone, H1 2026. Source: WANEP NEWS

Figure 5 identifies two principal centres of pressure. North Central recorded 872 deaths, the highest zonal fatality burden, reflecting the combined impact of Plateau, Benue and Kwara. The Northwest recorded 1,410 abducted people, nearly 42 per cent of the national total, confirming the continued strength of the abduction economy. The Northeast recorded 678 people abducted, largely shaped by Borno's exceptional burden.

The North Central zone functions as both a hotspot and a transmission belt. Kogi recorded 236 people being abducted and Kwara 177. Their road connections and boundaries with northern and southern states create conditions through which mobile criminal activity can widen exposure. Edo, adjoining Kogi, recorded 125 people abducted and remained prominent after being identified as Elevated in the Outlook. Ondo, adjoining Kogi, entered the H1 top ten with 85 people abducted, indicating an emerging South-West warning signal.

This does not necessarily indicate armed-group relocation. Rather, it reveals a connected geography of risk in which kidnapping exploits transport corridors, forested areas, weak rural surveillance and criminal markets. Nationally, kidnapping, banditry and armed attacks remain the principal violent organised-crime pressures, with illicit drug trafficking potentially reinforcing these criminal networks.

H2 PRIORITY Strengthen cross-state early warning and coordinated response across the Kogi–Edo–Ondo interface, while sustaining differentiated action in the Northwest, North Central and Northeast.

PROTECTING EDUCATION FROM ATTACK

■ Safe Schools spotlight

Schools are increasingly exposed to threats that travel across conflict zones, criminal corridors and digital spaces. Protecting education therefore requires more than physical security: it requires warning systems that convert local information into timely, coordinated action.



Figure 6. School protection depends on connected community warning, institutional response and trusted information.

NEWS recorded **485 kidnapping incidents, 3,363 abducted people and 317 abducted children** nationally in H1 2026. These are not school-attack totals. They establish a wider protection environment in which schools operate. Public reporting documented three major school-abduction episodes during May and June, including attacks in Borno and an unusual, coordinated assault in Oyo.

Selected publicly reported school attacks, H1 2026

Date	Location	Education site	Reported impact
May 2026	Askira-Uba, Borno	Mussa Primary and Junior Secondary School	<u>42 children reported missing</u> : 32 taken from the school and 10 from nearby homes.
May 2026	Oriire, Oyo	Schools in Yawota and Ahoro-Esinele	<u>39 pupils and seven teachers were abducted</u> ; fatal violence and subsequent school closures reported.
June 2026	Lassa, Borno	Government Day Secondary School	Students attacked while sitting examinations; at least <u>36 Students and a teacher</u> were abducted.

Table 1. Selected publicly reported school attacks, H1 2026.

THE H1 SIGNAL: Borno shows renewed insurgency-linked exposure, while the Oyo attacks demonstrate that mass school abduction is no longer confined to Nigeria's established northern hotspots.

From Early Warning to Safer Schools

As school safety became an increasingly urgent national concern, WANEP–Nigeria dedicated a session of its **EWER Webinar Series** to examining threats to education and strengthening preventive action. The discussion brought together perspectives from peacebuilding, education, security, research and civil society.

The webinar identified attacks by non-state armed groups, ransom kidnapping and organised criminal networks as interconnected threats. School vulnerability was linked to inadequate preventive investment, limited community ownership, fragmented institutional responsibilities and gaps in implementing the Safe Schools Declaration and National School Safety Framework.

A central concern was the early warning–early response gap. Communities may recognise suspicious movements or threats around schools, but institutional delays, weak communication, logistical constraints and unclear responsibilities can prevent timely action. Effective protection therefore requires connected school risk assessments, trusted community monitors, confidential reporting, designated response contacts, tested communication channels and regular drills.

Abductions also generate harm beyond the immediate victims. They can trigger school closures, displacement, reduced attendance, family separation, trauma, and heightened risks of forced marriage for girls. Reports of children being used as human shields and violence against abductees being circulated online further demonstrate how perpetrators may weaponize fear and deepen public mistrust. While abductions are often driven by criminal motives such as financial gain, some armed groups have also used abduction as a means of coercion, indoctrination, and forced radicalization of victims, including children.

These cases reinforce the need for school-safety planning to address both physical and information-related threats through timely verification, confidential communication, protection of victims' identities and responsible media engagement.

Minimum viable school-safety early warning protocol

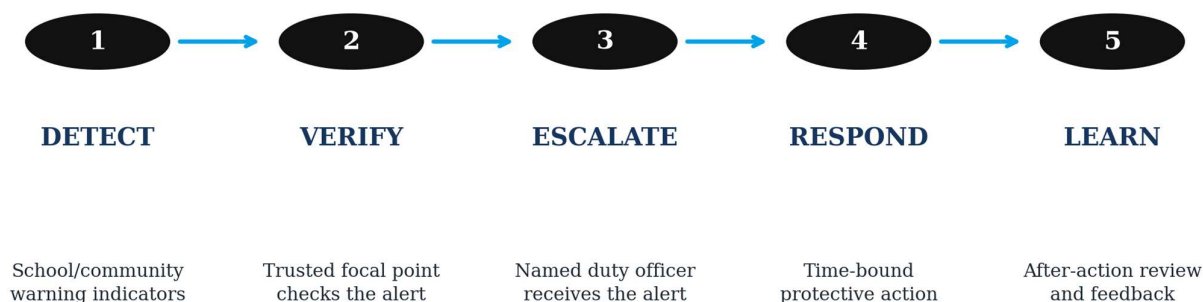


Figure 7. A practical school-safety warning and response protocol.

IMMEDIATE PRIORITY: Before the next school term, schools, particularly those in high-risk areas, should verify emergency contacts, test alert procedures, conduct scenario-based safety drills and confirm safeguarding and emergency-support arrangements.

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

Civic mobilisation and governance

Figure 8 shows a substantial and predominantly peaceful civic signal. NEWS recorded 91 peaceful demonstrations across H1 2026, peaking at 25 in June. Five violent demonstrations were recorded in the months for which data were available; March and May were not available. Demonstrations are not inherently destabilising. They are a democratic channel through which citizens, workers, communities and political actors make claims and demand accountability.

Peaceful mobilisation remained the dominant recorded pattern

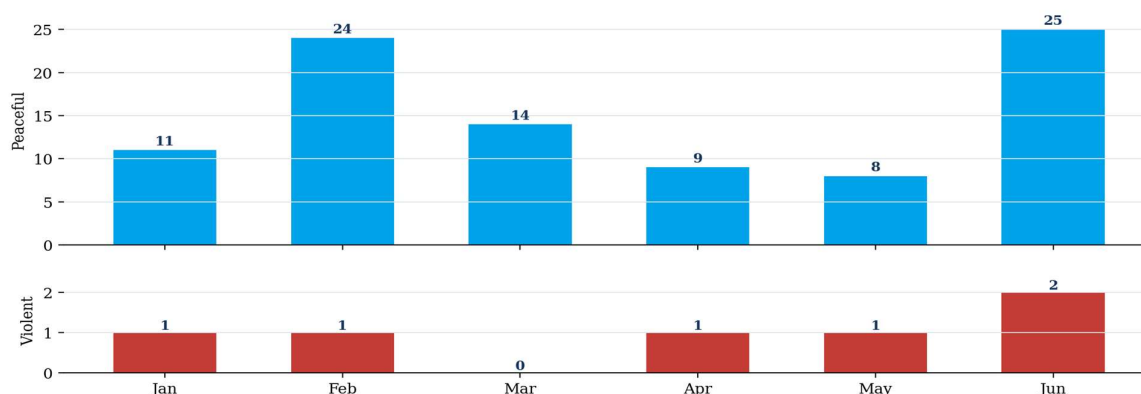


Figure 8. Recorded peaceful and violent demonstrations by month, H1 2026. Source: WANEP NEWS

The Outlook anticipated increased demonstrations ahead of the 2027 general elections and the off-cycle elections in 2026. **Although the Electoral Act 2026 sought to strengthen internal democracy, disagreements over direct primaries, consensus candidacies, candidate imposition and the exclusion of aspirants have generated legal and intra-party tensions.** The Ekiti election in H1 and the Osun election in H2 provide additional focal points for protests and litigation.

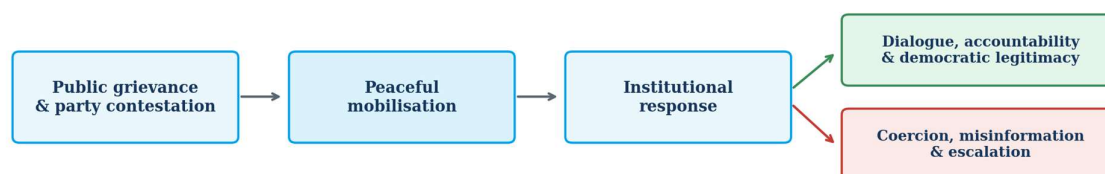


Figure 9. Civic mobilisation pathways: accountability or escalation.

However, the 91 peaceful demonstrations recorded in H1 cannot be attributed to electoral politics alone. Civic and labour-related protests also reflected wider human-security concerns, including insecurity, abductions, rising living costs, housing and rent pressures, transport costs, working conditions and weak public services. **These demonstrations represent both democratic participation and growing public pressure for more effective institutional responses.**

ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

≈ Climate risk as a conflict amplifier



A flooded street in Okota, Lagos, 2026. Photo: [Valentine Benjamin/The Guardian](#).

Available NEWS records documented 27 flood, windstorm and erosion incidents, resulting in 17 deaths and 14 injuries. **These figures signal emerging environmental risks and should be interpreted as recorded cases rather than comprehensive national estimates or evidence of year-on-year change.**

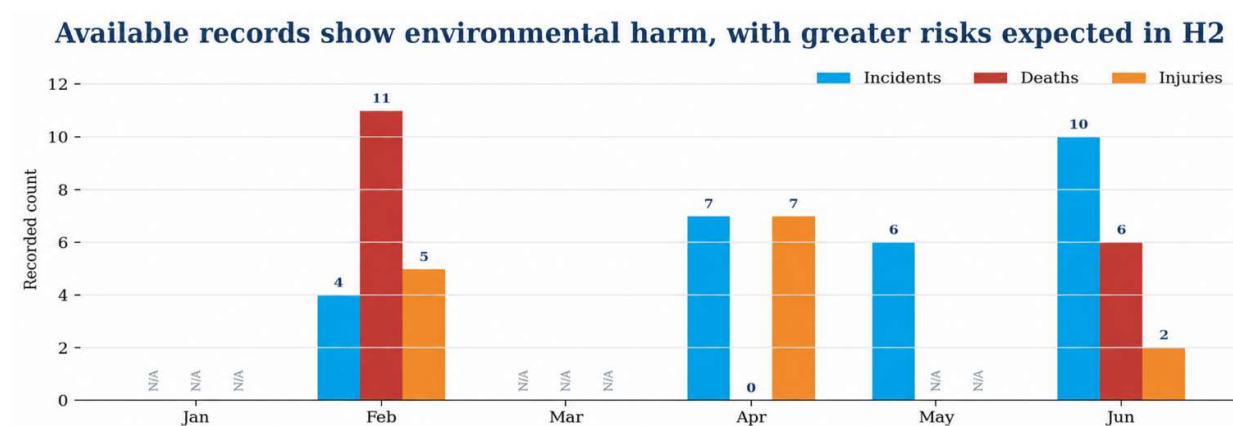


Figure 10. Available monthly environmental-security records, H1 2026.

Flooding is not only an environmental event

NiMet's 2026 outlook projected normal-to-above-normal rainfall and above-normal temperatures across much of Nigeria, while Lagos State was expected to experience above-normal rainfall. Climate change can intensify extreme rainfall and coastal exposure, but human impact is also shaped by drainage, settlement patterns, waste management, infrastructure and preparedness. Flooding becomes a conflict and humanitarian multiplier when it overlaps with insecurity, displacement, weak services and low institutional trust.

The human-security pathway is direct: floodwater can isolate settlements, close schools, interrupt work and markets, contaminate drinking water and delay access to clinics. Stagnant or contaminated water increases risks of cholera, diarrhea disease and malaria; displacement can also heighten protection risks for women, children, older people and persons with disabilities. Competition around shelter, dry land, water points or relief distribution may generate tension, although flooding does not automatically cause violence.

GENDER, PEACE AND SECURITY

♀ SGBV and conflict-related sexual violence

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is both a protection concern and an early-warning signal. NEWS recorded 39 SGBV incidents and 45 related injuries during H1 2026. June had the highest incident total (12), while February recorded the most injuries (19). These figures confirm recurring harm, but they do not represent their full prevalence.

39	45	12	19
SGBV incidents Complete H1 record	SGBV injuries Complete H1 record	June incidents Highest monthly total	February injuries Highest monthly total

Figure 11. Recorded SGBV protection signals, H1 2026.

The monthly pattern is uneven rather than steadily rising. Recorded incidents moved from four in January to nine in February, fell to three in March, rose to eight in April, returned to three in May and peaked at 12 in June. Injuries were also concentrated in February and June. This volatility requires continuous monitoring and survivor-centred response, not interpretation based on one month alone.

Recorded cases are likely to understate exposure. Stigma, fear of retaliation, insecurity, family pressure, limited confidential reporting channels and uneven access to services can prevent disclosure. Low recorded totals therefore cannot be read as low risk, especially where armed violence, displacement, abduction and weak protection systems overlap.

INTERPRETATION SAFEGUARD

NEWS records incidents identified and verified through available reporting channels. The data show recorded protection signals, not the estimated prevalence of SGBV.

Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) requires a demonstrable conflict nexus. This may involve conflict actors, conflict objectives, detention, displacement, territorial control or other conflict conditions. The present aggregate data do not establish that nexus for every SGBV incident. Stronger actor, location and context fields are therefore necessary before cases can be analysed reliably as CRSV.

Trafficking, Response and Gendered Risk

Trafficking data provides a second protection signal. NEWS recorded 341 victims rescued in the three months for which rescue data were available, alongside 50 suspects arrested across five reported months. The figures describe enforcement and protection responses; they are not estimates of trafficking prevalence.

Recorded response indicator	Available subtotal	Reporting coverage
Trafficking victims rescued	341	3 of 6 months
Trafficking suspects arrested	50	5 of 6 months

Table 2. Recorded trafficking-response indicators, H1 2026.

A gendered human-security concern

Women and girls may experience insecurity through pathways that fatality counts do not capture. These include sexual violence, exploitation, trafficking, forced marriage, displacement, loss of

livelihoods and education, and increased unpaid care responsibilities. Abduction and organised violence may intensify these risks, while stigma and weak referral systems can conceal their scale.

The findings reinforce the protection dimension of WANEP–Nigeria’s 2026 Human Security Outlook. They also show why early warning must examine who is exposed, how harm occurs and whether survivors can obtain safe assistance, rather than relying only on incident and death totals.

From warning to gender-responsive protection

WANEP–Nigeria’s localisation of UNSCR 1325 provides an operational framework for this response. Women’s participation in community warning structures can improve risk identification, while confidential reporting and survivor-centred referrals strengthen protection. WANEP–Nigeria’s capacity-building for media practitioners also supports more gender-responsive and conflict-sensitive reporting; this should complement, not replace, safe formal reporting and service pathways.

H2 PROTECTION PRIORITIES

Strengthen confidential reporting and referral pathways; capture the conflict nexus where relevant; disaggregate children and security personnel by sex; record location, actor, outcome and service referral; and include women-led organisations in warning, verification and response.

The central implication

The principal risk is not only the violence recorded, but the violence that remains unseen. A credible H2 response must combine better evidence with survivor safety, accessible services, accountability and meaningful participation in decisions affecting their security.

REVIEW INSIGHTS

Conclusion

This review shows that Nigeria’s H1 human-security environment was not defined by one national trend. Different combinations of abduction, lethal violence, civic pressure, environmental exposure and gendered harm affected locations and populations in different ways. Effective prevention must therefore respond to both the frequency of incidents and their consequences.

The evidence broadly aligns with the 2026 Outlook: persistent abduction, high-lethality violence and geographic diffusion were evident; civic mobilisation remained significant; and environmental and gendered protection risks require sustained monitoring. The value of the review lies in translating these signals into practical priorities for H2.

Priorities for stakeholders in H2

- Violent Extremism and Organised Crime: strengthen cross-state coordination, disrupt abduction networks, monitor repeat corridors and apply severity thresholds alongside incident counts.
- Democracy and Governance: protect lawful civic space, strengthen pre-event liaison, monitor election-related mobilisation and respond early to misinformation, hate speech and coercive networks.
- Environmental Security: connect weather information with community warning, protect access to schools and health services, and prepare for displacement and resource pressure in exposed locations.
- Gender, Peace and Security: expand confidential reporting and survivor-centred referrals, improve CRSV classification and include women-led organisations in warning, verification and response.

Final perspective

WANEP–Nigeria’s mid-year evidence indicates that prevention in H2 will depend on timely information, differentiated local action, institutional coordination and feedback to affected communities. NEWS provides a foundation for this work by connecting community-level reporting with national human-security analysis.

REVIEW INSIGHTS EVIDENCE, NETWORKS AND PREVENTIVE ACTION

About WANEP-Nigeria and NEWS

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding–Nigeria (WANEP–Nigeria) is a leading civil society network promoting sustainable peace, human security and conflict prevention. It connects more than 230+ member organisations across Nigeria’s six geopolitical zones and works with government institutions, communities, researchers, media, security actors and development partners to strengthen dialogue, social cohesion and preventive action.

The National Early Warning System (NEWS) is WANEP–Nigeria’s structured mechanism for monitoring conflict and human-security risks. Trained community monitors and civil society networks contribute incident information, which is reviewed, classified and analyzed to identify patterns, emerging threats and opportunities for early response.

Four NEWS thematic areas

1 Violent Extremism and Organised Crime

Armed violence, terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, drug trafficking and related organized-crime risks.

3 Environmental Security

Flooding, erosion, windstorms, fire outbreak public-health exposure, displacement and climate-related human-security pressures.

2 Democracy and Governance

Elections, civic mobilization, political tensions, governance pressures and threats to peaceful participation.

4 Gender, Peace and Security

SGBV, human trafficking, gendered exposure, women’s participation and protection concerns affecting women, girls and communities.

NEWS knowledge products

NEWS analysis is communicated through complementary products designed for different decision needs. Monthly Bulletins synthesise national trends and recommendations. Situation Updates commonly track developments across half-month reporting periods. Quick News Updates provide rapid analysis of emerging incidents. Weekly Highlights present major events across the four thematic areas, while Situation Tracking reports and Policy Briefs examine evolving risks, drivers, scenarios and response options.

MONTHLY Trend analysis	SITUATION Periodic tracking	QUICK NEWS Rapid analysis	POLICY Strategic options
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