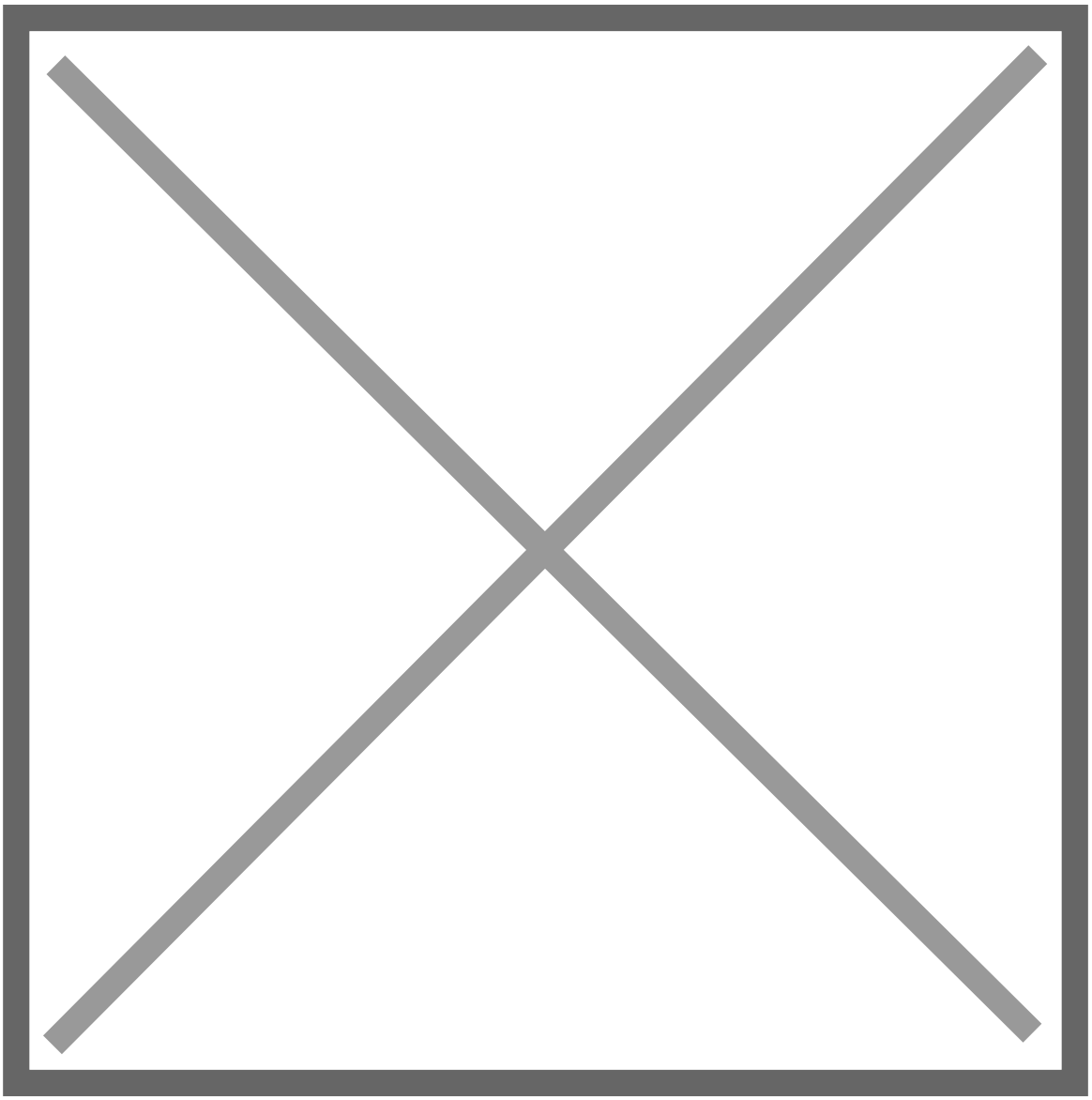
Sokoto

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: October 2021

Sokoto state is composed of 23 LGAs and its capital is Sokoto city. The state's estimated population was 4 998 090 in 2016.



Since late 2015, attacks by a variety of armed groups (herder-allies, vigilantes and criminals) spread from Zamfara to Sokoto, primarily in areas bordering Zamfara state or near the forests. The banditry violence, which began as a farmer-herder conflict, intensified between 2017 to 2018 to include cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, sexual violence and killings. The main actors in Sokoto state's conflicts are militias from herders and farmers communities, as well as

other criminal groups that mushroomed as the overall security situation has deteriorated amid a proliferation of small arms in the region. Since late 2019, Islamist terrorist groups ISWAP and Ansaru, reportedly, are building their capacity and engaging in launching attacks in the region. In addition, it is reported that Sahel-based jihadist groups are seeking a foothold in Sokoto and Zamfara states. The Nigerian authorities try to secure law and order through military responses to attacks, launching battles, air raids to destroy camps and kill or disperse militias.

Sokoto is one of the three states most affected by the violence related to herder-allied armed groups, vigilantes and criminal groups in the North-West region. Security incidents that took place in Sokoto state included kidnappings and armed attacks by unidentified gunmen against villages and local communities. In one such incident in March 2021, allegedly Fulani herdsmen attacked a village and started shooting indiscriminately and abducted over 100 people, including children and nursing mothers. Residents fleeing their houses as a result of such attacks have also been reported. Operations by the Nigerian armed forces included bombing, battles and air raids against camps of militias. As retaliation for some of operations carried out by the Nigerian forces, unidentified gunmen attacked villages resulting in civilian fatalities. In October 2020, Boko Haram claimed responsibility for an attack against Nigerian troops in Sokoto state. In addition, military forces of Niger Republic attacked a militia camp in Sabon Birni LGA where more than 100 militiamen were reportedly killed.

During 2020, ACLED reported a total of 24 security incidents (6 battle, 1 incident of remote violence/explosions, 16 cases of violence against civilians, 1 incident of riots) in Sokoto state (average of 0.5 security incidents per week). Security incidents took place in a 10 out of 23 local government areas, with the largest overall number (5) being recorded in LGA of Sabon Birni.

The abovementioned security incidents resulted in 222 deaths. Compared to the estimated population in the state, this represents approximately 4 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants.

From 1 January to 30 April 2021, ACLED reported a total of 15 security incidents (2 battles, 13 cases of violence against civilians) in Sokoto state, (average of 0.9 security incidents per week). These security incidents resulted in 77 deaths.

The total number of IDPs for Sokoto state by December 2020 was 45 402, which represent an increase of 24 % compared to data recorded in July 2020. No specific data were found for Sokoto state with regard to the number of returnees.

A new humanitarian crisis is emerging in the state of Sokoto. In 2018, the Gusau-Sokoto highway was reportedly notorious for kidnappings. However, information on kidnappings in roads in 2020 could not be found.

Looking at the indicators, it can be concluded that in the state of **Sokoto** there is, in general, **no real risk** for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD.

Main COI reference: Security situation 2021, 2.6

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