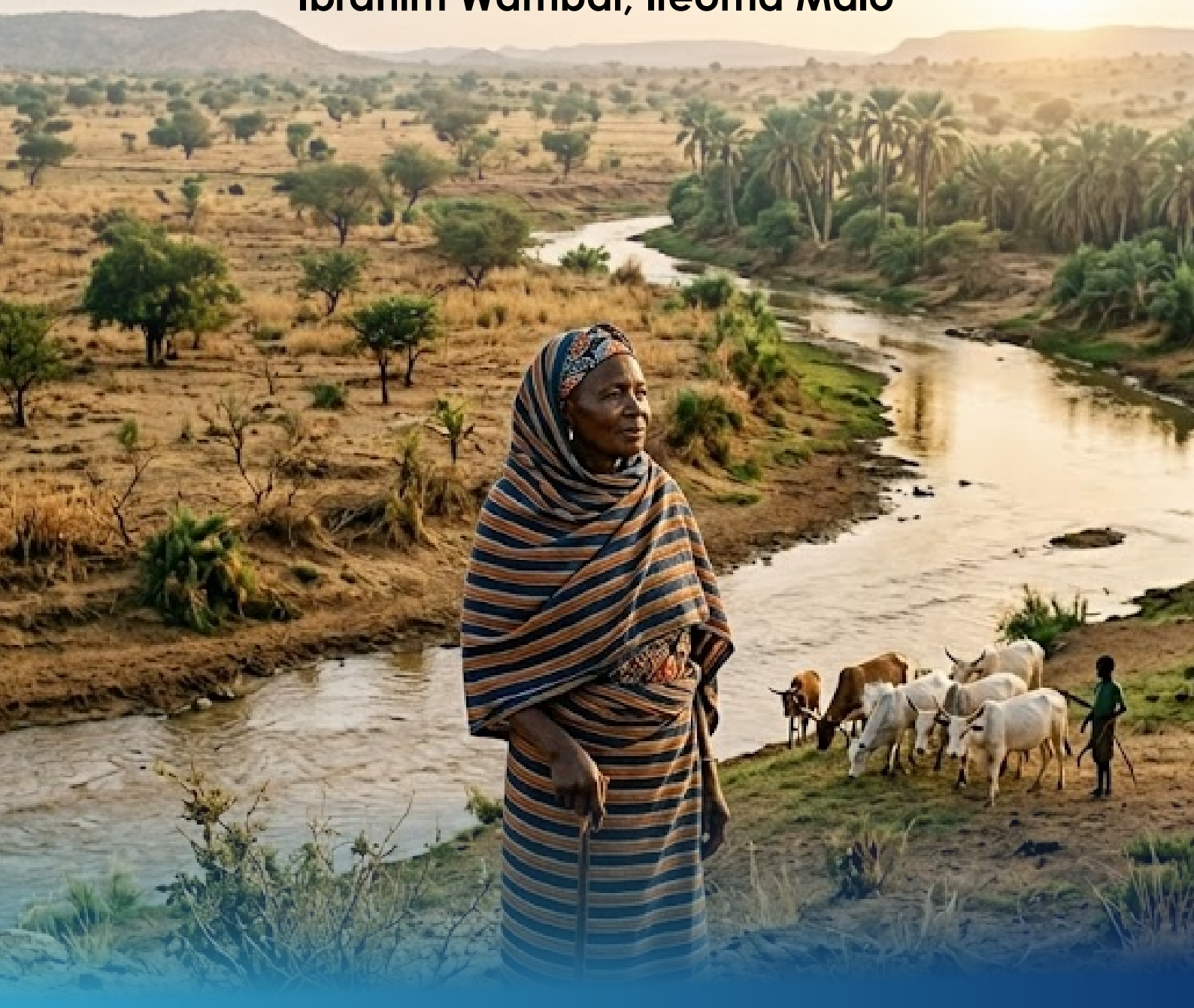
Clean Technology Hub
Energy Innovation Centre

Fact Sheet

Nigeria Climate, Peace and Security

Ibrahim Wambai, Ifeoma Malo



Nigeria

Climate, Peace and Security

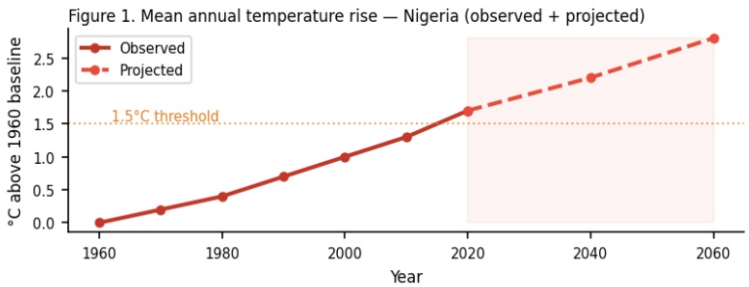
Figure 1. Key statistics

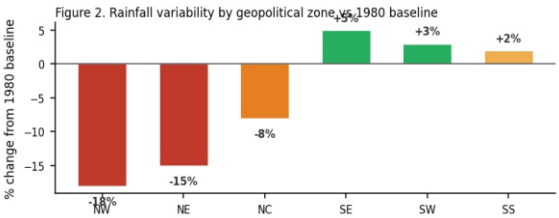
Population	~220 million (2025)	**IDP count**	2.3 million (Lake Chad Basin)
Food insecure	33 million (2025)	**HDI score**	0.548 — Low development tier
Climate risk rank	#7 globally	**Adaptation funded**	Only 15% of needs
Youth unemployment	42.5%	**Annual climate losses**	USD 15 billion/year
Projected climate migrants	9.4 million by 2050	**Temperature rise**	+1.4–1.9°C since 1960

Nigeria is highly exposed to the compounding impacts of climate change due to persistent insecurity, governance fragilities, and deep socio-ecological vulnerabilities across its six geopolitical zones. Climate change acts as a **threat multiplier** — it does not directly cause conflict but amplifies existing fault lines, undermining livelihoods, intensifying resource competition, and fuelling displacement, farmer-herder violence, insurgency, and urban fragility. Nigeria ranks 7th on the Global Climate Risk Index and receives less than 0.5% of total global climate finance, despite bearing disproportionate climate-security burdens.

This fact sheet applies the four interrelated CPS pathways framework — livelihood deterioration, migration and mobility, military and armed actors, and political and economic exploitation — to Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, generating region-specific analysis and evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and international partners.

> Climate change is contributing to more frequent and intense extreme weather — flooding, droughts, heatwaves, and coastal inundation — affecting all ecological zones.
>
> Nigeria's 33 million food-insecure people are the product of climate shocks, armed conflict, forced displacement, and macro-economic stress operating simultaneously.
>
> Farmer-herder conflicts, intensified by climate-driven changes in pasture and water availability, now claim over 1,000 lives annually in the Middle Belt alone.
>
> The Lake Chad Basin, home to over 30 million people across four countries, has lost 90% of its surface area, creating the structural conditions for insurgency and mass displacement.
>
> Nigeria has no deployed Climate Peace and Security Advisor — a critical gap given the scale and complexity of its climate-security crisis.





Temperature: Annual average temperatures have increased by approximately 1.4°C–1.9°C since the mid-20th century. Mean temperature is projected to rise by 1.8°C by 2040–2059 and potentially exceed 3°C by the 2090s under high-emission scenarios. Northern Nigeria has recorded heat extremes above 42–45°C in recent years.

Precipitation: Rainfall variability is increasing — more intense downpours in the wet season, longer dry spells in the north. The Northeast and Northwest show consistent declining trends of 15–20%. Southern zones face intensifying flood risk while the north faces compounding drought and desertification. This "geographical pincer" — desertification in the north, coastal erosion and flooding in the south — is a defining feature of Nigeria's climate vulnerability.

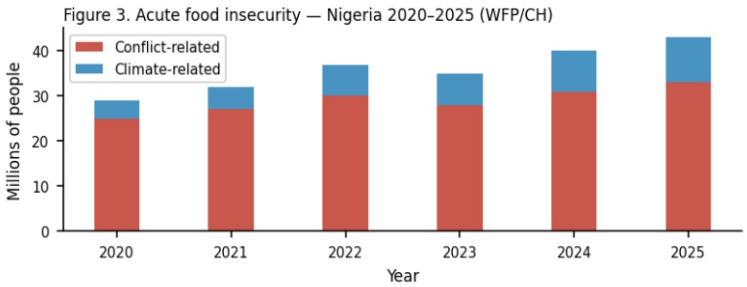
Nigeria has faced persistent governance and security challenges characterised by cycles of military rule, contested democratic transitions, and uneven state presence. Overlapping conflicts — including the Boko Haram insurgency, armed banditry in the Northwest, and separatist unrest in the Southeast — have eroded state authority and constrained adaptive governance capacities. Over 2.3 million people are internally displaced by conflict and climate-related insecurity, while nearly 35 million face acute food insecurity.

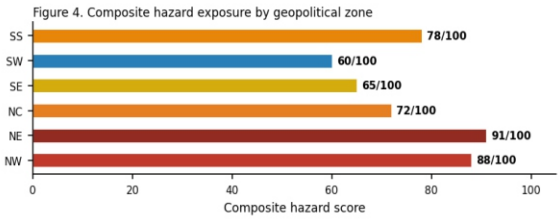
Nigeria's HDI score of 0.548 places it in the low human development tier, reflecting persistent deficits in health, education, and living standards that intersect with climate and conflict vulnerabilities. Over 70% of the workforce engages in rain-fed subsistence agriculture — directly exposed to climate variability. Pastoralists and transhumant livestock systems face intensifying pressure as climate-induced pasture degradation and water scarcity drive conflict across the Middle Belt.

Indicator	Value	Significance
HDI score	0.548	Low development tier — persistent deficits in health, education, income
Food insecure (acute)	33 million (2025)	Driven by climate shocks, conflict, and economic collapse
Workforce in agriculture	>70%	Directly exposed to climate variability and rainfall shocks
Youth unemployment	42.5%	Structural link to livelihood collapse and armed recruitment
Annual climate losses	USD 15 billion	Economic cost of climate hazards per year
Adaptation funding gap	85% unfunded	Only 15% of adaptation needs currently resourced

Research on Nigeria has identified multiple pathways through which climate change interacts with political, social, economic, and environmental stressors to intensify existing vulnerabilities. Climate change is rarely the primary driver of violent conflict in Nigeria, but acts as a powerful **risk multiplier** by undermining livelihoods, weakening development gains, amplifying competition over land and water, and exacerbating ongoing insecurity across the Northeast, Northwest, Middle Belt, Niger Delta, and coastal zones.

This fact sheet applies four interrelated pathways: (1) livelihood deterioration; (2) migration and mobility; (3) military and armed actors; and (4) political and economic exploitation and mismanagement.





(a) Livelihood deterioration

The convergence of climate stress, livelihood loss, and insecurity creates enabling conditions for recruitment into armed groups, bandit networks, and criminal economies — particularly in northern Nigeria, where environmental degradation, unemployment, and weak state presence intersect. Every 1°C rise in temperature reduces farm productivity by 12%; conflict-ridden zones are 34% more vulnerable to farm loss. Women and girls face disproportionate exposure through gendered roles in agriculture and water collection, while restrictive norms limit access to adaptive resources.

(b) Migration and mobility

In 2022, widespread floods affected 34 states and displaced over 2.4 million people. Climate change is reshaping transhumance patterns — rising temperatures and recurrent droughts push pastoralists further south, overlapping with harvest periods and intensifying farmer-herder tensions. Cross-border herders from Niger, Chad, and Cameroon compound this pressure. Climate-displaced women and girls face heightened GBV risk in overcrowded settlements. In a pessimistic scenario, 9.4 million Nigerians could become internal climate migrants by 2050.

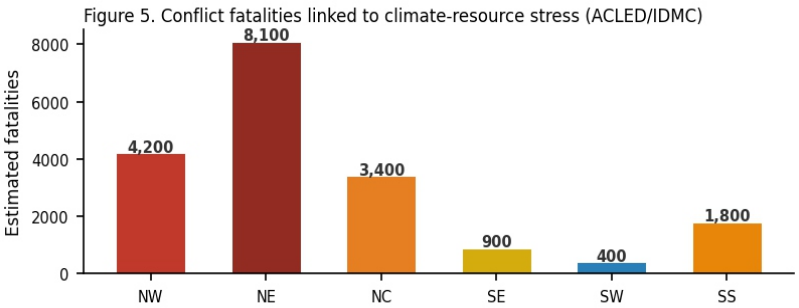
(c) Military and armed actors

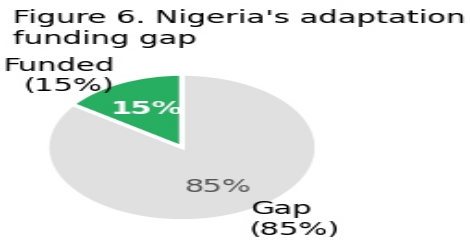
In the Northeast, Boko Haram and ISWAP have systematically capitalised on the Lake Chad Basin's environmental collapse — exploiting livelihood destruction and mass unemployment to recruit fighters. In the Northwest, drought and desertification have enlarged the pool of economically marginalised youth exploited by armed bandit networks. Climate-induced displacement and humanitarian crises also constrain Nigerian security forces — flooding and extreme heat degrade military mobility, logistics, and access in active security zones.

(d) Political and economic exploitation and mismanagement

Weak governance, corruption, and unsustainable resource extraction deepen climate vulnerability. In the Niger Delta, decades of oil-related environmental damage have degraded livelihoods, fuelling militancy. Land administration systems have failed to adapt to climate-driven settlement changes, while climate finance risks reinforcing local inequalities where accountability mechanisms are weak. Nigeria receives less than 0.5% of total global climate finance disbursed.

REGIONAL DATA — SIX GEOPOLITICAL ZONES





Zone	Risk	Population	Poverty	IDPs	Key hazard	Primary conflict
North West	Extreme	49 million	75%	1.2 million	Desertification/drought	Banditry
North East	Extreme	26 million	78%	2.5 million	Lake Chad collapse	Boko Haram/ISWAP
North Central	High	27 million	62%	600,000+	Flash floods/erosion	Farmer-herder
South East	Mod-High	22 million	58%	50,000+/yr	Gully erosion	Separatist unrest
South West	Moderate	39 million	50%	1.5M at risk	Sea-level rise/flooding	Urban disruption
South South	High	31 million	67%	200,000+/yr	Oil spills/flooding	Militancy

Table 1. Climate-security indicators by geopolitical zone. Sources: NBS, OCHA, IOM DTM, ACLED, NBS 2025.

North West — Extreme Risk

Annual rainfall decline of 15–20% over past decades; 60–70% of arable land degraded by desertification.

Rise in banditry directly linked to resource scarcity and livelihood collapse.

Over 1.2 million IDPs as of 2025; 40% decline in agricultural productivity since 2000.

Literacy rate of 47%; climate education awareness at 23% (Afrobarometer). Unemployment at 40%.

Key hazards: dust storms, desertification, drought. Conflict susceptibility: Extreme.

North East — Extreme Risk

Lake Chad has shrunk by 90% since the 1960s, affecting over 30 million people across four countries.

Temperature increases exceed the global average by 1.5°C. Fishing industry reduced by 60%.

Over 2.5 million displaced by climate-linked insurgencies. Malnutrition in children exceeds 20%.

Boko Haram and ISWAP systematically exploit environmental collapse for recruitment.

Literacy rate 40%; unemployment 45%; poverty rate 78%. GDP contribution only 10%.

North Central — High Risk

Average annual rainfall variability of 20–30%, causing flash floods and crop failures.

Farmer-herder conflicts result in over 1,000 deaths annually — the deadliest climate-linked violence.

Over 600,000 displaced due to communal violence and resource scarcity.

25% of farmland abandoned due to insecurity. Cholera outbreaks during flooding seasons.

Hosts the FCT (Abuja), which is receiving increasing climate-displaced in-migrants from other states.

South East — Moderate-High Risk

Gully erosion affects 60% of land area, displacing over 50,000 people annually.

Agricultural yield decline of 40–50% due to soil degradation and erosion.

Increased vector-borne diseases, including malaria, in flood-prone areas.

GDP contribution of 14%; relatively higher literacy (70%) but economic disruption from erosion.

Climate education awareness at 35% — highest in southern zones (Afrobarometer 2025).

South West — Moderate Risk

Coastal areas experience 3mm/year sea-level rise, placing 1.5 million people at displacement risk.

Annual economic losses from flooding estimated at USD 5 billion — highest absolute value in any zone.

Water contamination increases diarrheal diseases by 20% during flood seasons.

GDP contribution of 22% — home to Lagos, Nigeria's economic capital. Unemployment 25%.

Conflict susceptibility low-moderate, but urban flooding increasingly disrupts social stability.

South South (Niger Delta) — High Risk

Oil-induced environmental degradation compounds sea-level rise and flooding in the Niger Delta.

Militant activity directly linked to resource mismanagement and environmental injustice.

Over 200,000 displaced annually by flooding and oil spills; 70% decline in fishery yields.

High prevalence of cancer and respiratory diseases linked to oil pollution and gas flaring.

GDP contribution of 26% — highest zone — yet poverty rate 67% reflects resource governance failure.

For the Nigerian Federal Government

Integrate climate-security risk analysis into the National Security Strategy and establish a dedicated Climate, Peace and Security Coordination Unit within the National Security Adviser's office.

Accelerate implementation of the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and National Adaptation Plan (NAP) with mandatory conflict-sensitive programming requirements across all sectoral plans.

Reform land administration and grazing corridor legislation to reflect climate-altered land-use patterns — reducing the structural drivers of farmer-herder confrontations across the Middle Belt.

Increase the density and functionality of meteorological and hydrological monitoring stations to improve early warning systems at state and local government levels.

Ensure meaningful participation of women, youth, and displaced communities in climate adaptation planning and resource governance — removing structural barriers to adaptive capacity.

For the United Nations and international partners

The UN Climate Security Mechanism should prioritise deployment of a Climate, Peace and Security Advisor to Nigeria — one of only ten deployed globally — given the scale, complexity, and urgency of Nigeria's climate-security crisis.

UNOWAS and ECOWAS should expand climate-security early warning systems across Nigeria's conflict-affected zones, integrating IOM displacement tracking, FAO food security data, and ACLED conflict incidents into a unified monitoring framework.

Bilateral donors (Germany, Netherlands, UK FCDO, Norway, Sweden) and multilateral climate funds should substantially increase Nigeria's access to adaptation finance, with specific provisions to reach conflict-affected and climate-vulnerable communities systematically excluded from standard disbursement mechanisms.

UN agencies and development partners should support the integration of conflict-sensitive climate adaptation into Nigeria's national development planning processes, and help secure adequate funding for identified adaptation activities.

For civil society and research institutions

Clean Technology Hub and partner civil society organisations should systematically generate community-level climate-security evidence across Nigeria's geopolitical zones — filling the analysis gap that currently constrains evidence-based policy responses.

Nigerian academic and research institutions should build the Climate, Peace and Security advisory capacity required to support a national response, reducing dependence on international expertise for a challenge that fundamentally requires local knowledge and relationships.

Civil society should systematically connect Nigeria's climate-security evidence base to global policy forums — the UN Security Council, African Union Peace and Security Council, and ECOWAS mechanisms — ensuring that Nigerian experience shapes the global CPAS agenda.

Indicator	Value	Source / Note
Global Climate Risk Index rank	7th globally	Germanwatch / Global Climate Risk Index
Annual economic losses from climate	USD 15 billion	World Bank Nigeria Climate Profile
Projected climate migrants by 2050	9.4 million	World Bank (pessimistic scenario, 2023)
Adaptation needs funded	15% only	UNEP Adaptation Gap Report
Share of global climate finance	<0.5%	Climate Policy Initiative / ODI
IDPs (Lake Chad Basin)	2.3 million (+8% since 2023)	OCHA June 2025
Food insecure (acute, 2025)	33 million	FAO / Cadre Harmonise 2025
Youth unemployment	42.5%	NBS 2025
Farm productivity loss per +1°C	–12%	Peer-reviewed research, 2024
Lake Chad surface area lost	90% since 1963	LCBC / UNEP
Schools non-functional (Lake Chad zone)	4,600+	OCHA 2024
Security incidents in Lake Chad Basin	+23% in 2024	OCHA 2025

Sources: *FAO/Cadre Harmonise 2025; OCHA Nigeria Humanitarian Snapshot June 2025; WFP; IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM); ACLED; IDMC; UNDP Human Development Report; NBS Nigeria; World Bank Climate Risk Profile Nigeria 2021; IPCC AR6; Germanwatch Global Climate Risk Index; Afrobarometer 2025; UNEP Adaptation Gap Report; Climate Policy Initiative; Germanwatch; LCBC; SIPRI/NUPI CPS Fact Sheet methodology (Mobjork, Krampe & Tarif, 2020). This fact sheet applies the four interrelated CPS pathways framework developed by SIPRI/NUPI. Zone boundaries follow Nigeria's official geopolitical zone classifications. All data accurate to latest available at time of publication.*

About Clean Technology Hub: *Clean Technology Hub (CTH) is Nigeria's pioneer hybrid hub for clean energy research, innovation, and climate advocacy, based in Abuja. CTH's Climate, Peace and Security programme, led by Ibrahim Wambai (Interfaith, Climate Health & Migration Lead), generates community-level evidence and advocacy on the climate-security nexus in Nigeria. This fact sheet is produced in the spirit of the SIPRI/NUPI Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheet series, applying that methodology to the Nigerian context.*