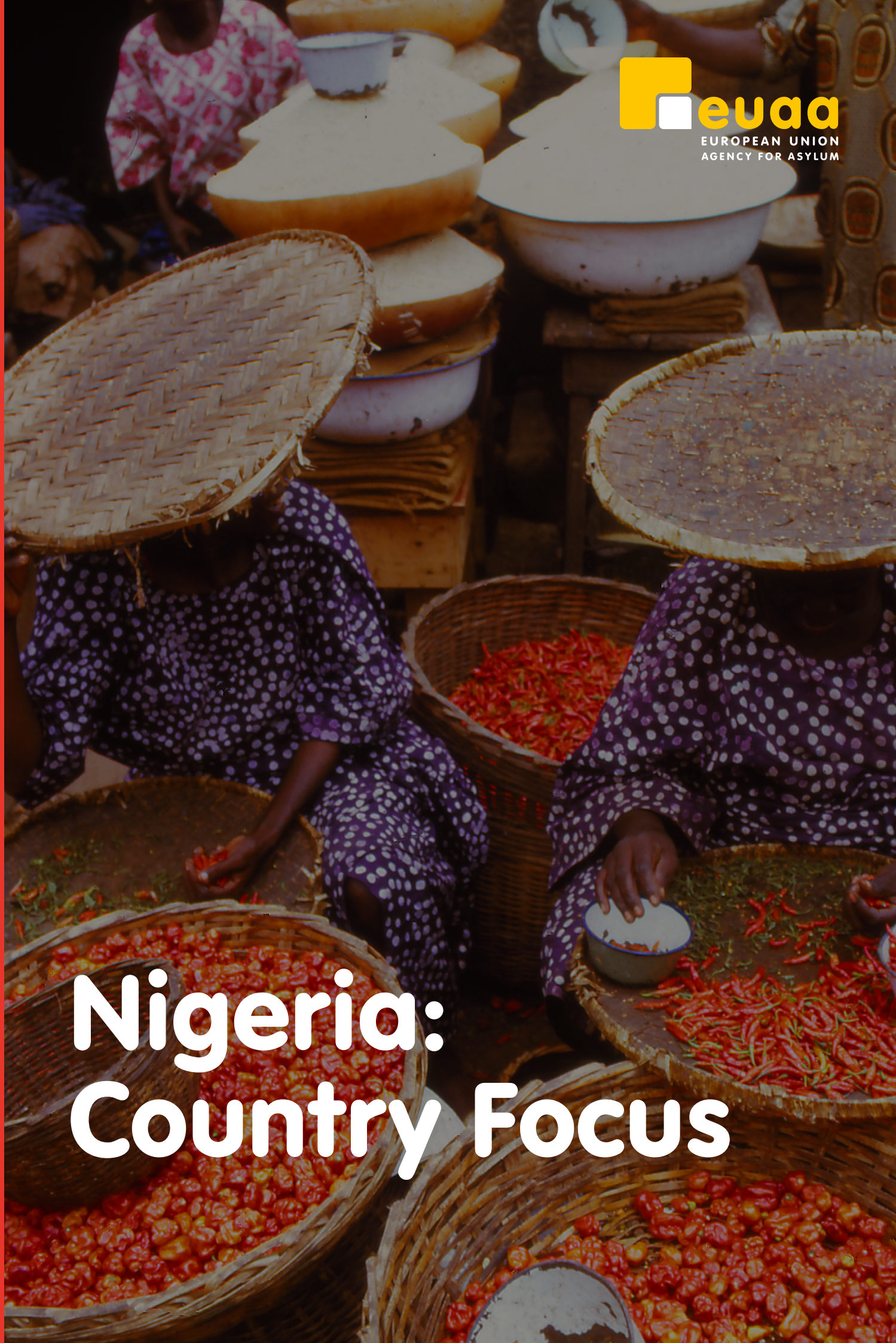


Nigeria: Country Focus



Nigeria:

Country Focus

November 2025



Manuscript completed in October 2025

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- The Netherlands, Immigration and Naturalisation Service, Ministry of Asylum and Migration

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Disclaimer

This report was written according to the [EUAA COI Report Methodology \(2023\)](#). The report is based on carefully selected sources of information. All sources used are referenced.

The information contained in this report has been researched, evaluated and analysed with utmost care within a limited timeframe. However, this document does not claim to be exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist.

Furthermore, this report is not conclusive as to the determination or merit of any particular application for international protection. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

‘Refugee’, ‘risk’ and similar terminology are used as generic terminology and not in the legal sense as applied in the EU Asylum Acquis, the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

Neither EUAA nor any person acting on its behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained in this report.

On 19 January 2022, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) became the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). All references to EASO, EASO products and bodies should be understood as references to the EUAA.

The drafting of this report was finalised on 5 September 2025. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this report. More information on the reference period for this report can be found in the Methodology section of the Introduction.



Glossary and abbreviations

Term	Definition
APC	All Progressives Congress party
AVRR-IOM	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (<i>Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung</i>)
BRGIE	Biafra Republic Government in Exile
CAT	International Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
CCPR-OP2-DP	Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
CEDAW	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CRC	International Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ESN	Eastern Security Network





Term	Definition
ETAHT	Edo State Task Force Against Human Trafficking
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
GHI	Global Hunger Index
GIZ	German Society for International Cooperation (<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit</i>)
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
ILGA	International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPOB	Indigenous People of Biafra
ISWAP	Islamic State West Africa Province
JAS	Jama'tu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad
Juju	A term commonly used to describe a spiritual belief system that involves the use of objects like amulets and the casting of spells ¹
LGA	Local Government Area
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (persons)

¹ Counter Trafficking Network, Tutorial: Juju & Witchcraft, 2020, [url](#), p. 1





Term	Definition
MPRR-SSA	Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa funded by the European Union (EU)
NACTAL	Network of Civil Society Organisations Against Child Trafficking, Abuse and Labour
NAPTIP	National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NCFRMI	National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons
NIS	Nigerian Immigration Service
NPF	Nigeria Police Force
ORFA	Observatory for Religious Freedom in Africa
PDP	People's Democratic Party
SAM	Severe acute malnutrition
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centres
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SOP	Guidelines for Facilitating the Safe, Dignified and Voluntary Return, Readmission and Reintegration of Migrants in Nigeria Standard Operating Procedures
THB	Trafficking in Human Beings
VAPP Act	Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act
WOCON	Women's Consortium of Nigeria





Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide relevant information for the assessment of applications for international protection, including refugee status and subsidiary protection. This report is to be read in conjunction with the [EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Security Situation, November 2025](#). Both COI reports are for use in updating of EUAA's Country Guidance on Nigeria (2026).

The report provides up-to-date information on key political and human rights developments in Nigeria, including the treatment of selected profiles of the population by state and non-state actors, as well as key aspects of the country's socio-economic situation. It builds on previous EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) reports on Nigeria, in particular the [EUAA, Country of Origin Information Report – Nigeria: Country Focus, July 2024](#), and the [EUAA Country of Origin Information Report – Nigeria: Trafficking in Human Beings, April 2021](#).

Methodology

This COI report was written in line with the [EUAA COI Report Methodology \(2023\)](#)² and the [EUAA COI Writing and Referencing Style Guide \(2023\)](#).³

Defining the terms of reference

The terms of reference (ToR) for this COI report draw on previous EUAA COI reports on Nigeria and on internal consultations. The ToR were developed with careful consideration of country of origin information deemed most relevant to the intended users of the report. In addition, as part of the country guidance development process, national asylum authorities from EU+ countries within the Country Guidance Network on Nigeria were surveyed to assess their needs in relation to their respective national caseloads. Their input was incorporated into the design of these terms of reference, with the consolidated feedback and suggestions reflected in the final version presented in Annex 2: Terms of Reference.

The reference period for this report covers from 1 January 2024 to 31 August 2025 and also includes general background information to contextualise the current situation. Drafting was completed on 5 September 2025, followed by peer review (8–19 September 2025) and a quality review process, during which additional information was incorporated until 10 October 2025. The report then underwent internal final review and proofreading by the EUAA prior to publication.

Collecting information

This report is based on publicly available information from both electronic and print sources gathered through desk-based research, complemented by interviews with oral sources. All

² EUAA COI Report Methodology, February 2023, [url](#)

³ EUAA COI Writing and Referencing Guide, February 2023, [url](#)





sources used are referenced. To address information gaps identified during the research, the EUAA conducted interviews with experts on selected topics. All interviewed and written sources are referenced in Annex 1: Bibliography. Where information could not be obtained within the drafting timeframe, this is clearly noted in the relevant sections of the report.

Quality control

In line with the EUAA COI Report Methodology (2023) and the EUAA COI Writing and Referencing Style Guide (2023), the report underwent peer review by COI experts from national authorities from EU+ countries (as noted in the [Acknowledgments](#)) as well as internal peer review by the EUAA COI Sector. All comments provided by the reviewers were duly considered, and most were incorporated into the final draft, which was completed on 10 October 2025.

Sources

As per EUAA COI research principles,⁴ a broad range of published documentary sources was consulted on topics relevant to this report. These include academic publications, think tank analyses, specialised sources on Nigeria, COI reports issued by governmental bodies, information from civil society and NGOs, reports produced by various United Nations entities, locally and regionally based media outlets. In addition, oral sources were interviewed, including scholars, international experts, government officials, and NGO representatives working on the ground in Nigeria. Some interviewees requested anonymity for security and operational reasons. All sources were assessed for their background, publication history, reputability, and current ground-level expertise. The interviews were conducted between July and September 2025, and all oral sources are described in [Annex 1: Bibliography](#).

Structure and use of the report

The report is structured into three main parts. The first section presents a country overview, including key information on Nigeria's state structure, demographics and significant political developments. The second section focuses on the human rights situation and the treatment by state and non-state actors of specific population profiles. It should be noted that these profiles do not constitute an exhaustive list of all population groups but were selected based on considerations outlined during the development of the terms of reference (see [Defining the terms of reference](#)). The third and final section provides an overview of key socio-economic indicators at the national level, with particular focus on the cities of Lagos and Abuja.

Terminology

When addressing topics related to Boko Haram, it is important to note that the term serves as an umbrella definition for an armed group comprising internal factions. Most sources do not

⁴ EUAA COI Report Methodology, 2023, [url](#)



explicitly differentiate between the two main factions: Jamaatu Ahlis-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wal-Jihad (JAS) and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), which may affect the specificity of information related to their activities, structures and areas of control.

When reporting on issues involving especially cult groups, herder-farmer conflicts, banditry (and in some instances, vigilante groups, separatist armed groups, Islamist groups), sources often use broad labels such as 'criminals', 'gunmen', 'bandits', 'terrorists' to describe perpetrators. Such terminology, at times, creates challenges in distinguishing between different groups and incidents, particularly as some actors overlap. Given the complex nature of these phenomena in Nigeria, it is not always possible to provide precise or clear-cut information about the actors involved.

Further, it is to be noted that some sources use the terms 'human rights defenders' and 'activists' interchangeably.

Map



NIGERIA Reference Map

As of 29 Oct. 2020



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
Update date: 29 Oct. 2020 Sources: UNCS, NGA, DCW, Natural Earth, Gov, ESRI, WFP, OCHA. Feedback: ocharowca@un.org www.unocha.org www.reliefweb.int

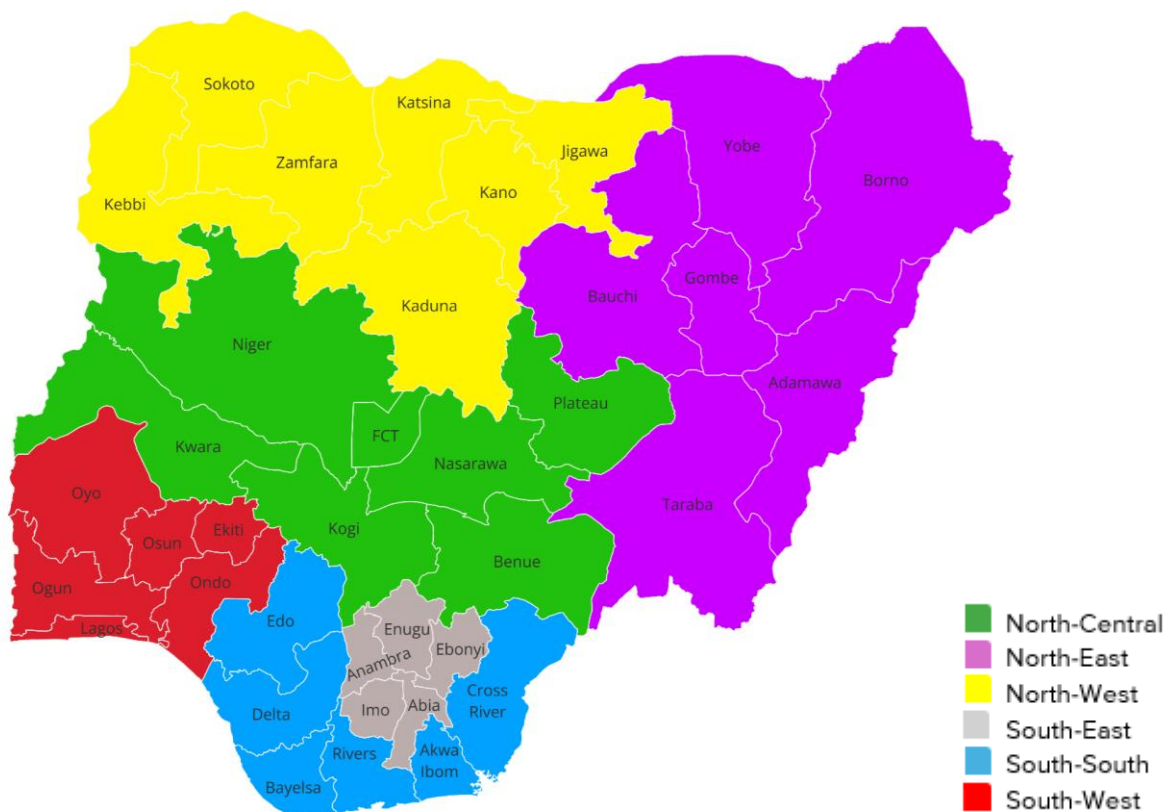
Map 1. Nigeria UN OCHA⁵

⁵ UN OCHA, Nigeria: Reference Map, 29 October 2020, [url](https://www.unocha.org/nigeria/reference-map)

1. Country overview

1.1. Historical background and state structure

The current territorial configuration of the Nigerian state is the result of British colonial rule in the 19th century. The country gained independence in 1960 and experienced a civil war between 1967 and 1970, following the declaration of independence by the secessionist state of Biafra. The war officially ended on 15 January 1970 with Biafra's surrender. In the years that followed, Nigeria underwent a series of military regimes and civilian administrations, before transitioning to a more stable democratic system with the 1999 presidential elections.⁶



Map 2. EUAA visualisation based on publicly available information by Federal Government of Nigeria⁷ and publicly available data on administrative boundaries sourced from the Office for the Surveyor General of the Federation of Nigeria (OSGOF), Ehealth, United Nations Cartographic Section (UNCS) on UN OCHA and The Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX).⁸ The visualisation has been generated using QGIS 3.44.⁹

⁶ BBC News, Nigeria Country Profile, 28 July 2023, [url](#); LSE blog, Navigating Nigerian Politics: Democratisation and Development, 23 April 2024, [url](#); BBC News, Remembering Nigeria's Biafra war that many prefer to forget 15 January 2020, [url](#)

⁷ Nigeria, About Nigeria, States, n.d., [url](#)

⁸ OSGOF, UNCS, UN OCHA, HDX, n.d., latest modified 4 April 2023, [url](#)

⁹ QGIS 3.44, n.d., [url](#)



Nigeria is a federal republic with three levels of government: federal, state, and local.¹⁰ It is administratively divided into 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The 36 states and the FCT are grouped into six geopolitical regions:

- North-Central (Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau and the FCT)
- North-East (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, Yobe)
- North-West (Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Jigawa, Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara)
- South-East (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo)
- South-West (Lagos, Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo)
- South-South (Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Rivers).¹¹

The bicameral National Assembly in Nigeria is composed of the Senate, with 109 members, and the House of Representatives, with 360 members. All members are elected for four-year terms.¹² The president is limited to two four-year terms and is elected through a qualified majority vote.¹³

Although the local government system is constitutionally recognised, it remains largely under the administrative and financial control of state governments.¹⁴ Each state has its own legislation. The basic functions of local government are outlined in the Constitution; however, states can expand these duties further through their own laws.¹⁵ Key challenges at local government level include limited autonomy, irregular revenue allocation, corruption, and political interference. These issues have undermined service delivery, slowed decision-making, deepened societal divisions, and contributed to public dissatisfaction.¹⁶ In July 2024, the Supreme Court affirmed the autonomy of Nigeria's 774 local governments, confirming their right to manage budgets without state interference.¹⁷

1.2. Functioning of government and political situation

Nigeria's political landscape is partly dominated by the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) party, which holds control of the executive branch, maintains a majority in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, and governs most of the country's states¹⁸ (20).¹⁹

In February 2023, Bola Tinubu won the presidential election with approximately 37 % of the national vote. Tinubu was formally inaugurated in May 2023. The election process was

¹⁰ Ata-Agboni, J. U. et al., Federalism and Local Government System in Nigeria: A Critical Assessment, January 2023, [url](#), p. 1

¹¹ UNFCCC, Nigeria's First Biennial Transparency Report under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 26 December 2024, [url](#), p. 2; Nigeria, About Nigeria, States, n.d., [url](#)

¹² Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

¹³ World Bank, The World Bank in Nigeria, last updated 10 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴ Ata-Agboni, J. U. et al., Federalism and Local Government System in Nigeria: A Critical Assessment, January 2023, [url](#), pp. 23-25

¹⁵ CLGF, Local Government System in Nigeria, 2019, [url](#), p. 161

¹⁶ Ata-Agboni, J. U. et al., Federalism and Local Government System in Nigeria: A Critical Assessment, January 2023, [url](#), pp. 23-25

¹⁷ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸ World Bank, The World Bank in Nigeria, last updated 10 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹ APC, APC Elected Members (2023 – 2027), n.d., [url](#); Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)



marked by widespread irregularities. Incidents of violence were reported at multiple polling stations, alongside serious allegations of vote buying, voter suppression, and both technical and procedural failures. These issues contributed to delays in poll openings and in the announcement of official results. Domestic and international election observers raised concerns regarding the conduct of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), citing poor performance and a lack of transparency. Public confidence in the electoral process was low, and voter turnout reached a historic low of 27 %.²⁰

Elected officials in Nigeria are tasked with making and implementing policy, though their capacity to do so is often limited by factors such as corruption, political polarisation, and limited governmental control in areas affected by militant activity. Observers noted that the legislature frequently aligns with the executive branch and has not consistently acted as an independent check on executive authority.²¹

Since the late 2000s, Nigeria's regional influence has declined. Successive governments have experienced major domestic issues including political instability, economic downturns, and escalating security threats.²² The Nigerian government has continued to face significant challenges in consolidating democratic governance and implementing reforms in a petroleum-dependent economy, amid persistent issues of corruption and criminality.²³ The government has taken steps to combat corruption, particularly in the oil and security sectors, though corruption remains widespread. Between May 2023 and May 2024, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) secured over 3 000 convictions and recovered millions of dollars. High-profile prosecutions in 2024 included those of former Kogi State Governor Yahaya Bello and former Central Bank Governor Godwin Emefiele.²⁴ Both trials were ongoing by the time of drafting this report.²⁵

Although progress has been made in combating corruption, the phenomenon has remained a major barrier to Nigeria's development, undermining democracy, governance, and public trust. Efforts over the past 25 years have been uneven, hindered by politicisation, weak institutions, and double standards, leading to clientelism, impunity, and weak accountability.²⁶ Corruption is also reported as endemic in the petroleum industry.²⁷ In April 2024, President Tinubu dismissed the entire leadership of Nigeria's state-run oil company, the National Petroleum Company (NNPC). The restructuring is part of broader reforms aimed at addressing persistent corruption, political interference, and mismanagement in the oil sector. Despite past attempts at reform, the industry continues to face challenges undermining efficiency and public trust.²⁸

²⁰ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

²¹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

²² International Crisis Group, Restoring Nigeria's Leadership for Regional Peace and Security, 11 December 2024, [url](#)

²³ LSE blog, Navigating Nigerian Politics: Democratisation and Development, 23 April 2024, [url](#)

²⁴ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

²⁵ Nigeria, EFCC, Yahaya Bello's Alleged N80.2bn Fraud: How N1.09bn Vanished from Kogi Government's Account in Three Days-Witness, 26 June 2025, [url](#); Nigeria, EFCC, Alleged ₦7.8bn Fraud: EFCC Arraigns Emefiele for Unlawful Possession of 753 Housing Units, 16 June 2025, [url](#)

²⁶ Chatham House, Taking action against corruption in Nigeria – Summary, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

²⁷ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

²⁸ France24, Nigerian president sacks board of state oil company, 2 April 2025, [url](#)



President Bola Tinubu has been facing growing criticism within the country for allegedly favouring individuals from his Yoruba ethnic group for top-level appointments. Although the constitution mandates regional representation in cabinet positions, traditionally, federal appointments have followed an informal practice of balancing ethnic and religious representation to ensure national cohesion. Since assuming office in May 2023, Tinubu has appointed Yorubas to all eight of the most influential positions in government, from financial to security institutions. This concentration has sparked criticism, especially from the north, where many feel marginalised. Defenders of the president argue that he is choosing the most qualified candidates, regardless of ethnicity.²⁹

Nigeria has continued to experience ‘an unprecedented wave of overlapping crises,’ including widespread insecurity and significant social and economic challenges.³⁰ The North-West region has remained affected by persistent incidents of banditry and kidnappings, while the North-East continues to experience insurgent activities carried out by armed groups, like Boko Haram. In addition, the South-East is marked by ongoing separatist agitations, further contributing to national instability.³¹ In the North-West, increasing incidents of farmer-herder violence, criminal activity, and the effects of climate change (such as flooding and drought) have further aggravated the situation. Similarly, in the North-Central region, including Benue State, intercommunal tensions over land and water resources, compounded by recurrent flooding, have continued to drive instability and humanitarian need.³² For more information see [EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Security Situation November 2025](#).

The country has also continued to face a protracted humanitarian crisis, particularly affecting the North-East, North-Central, and North-West regions, with millions impacted over the past 13 years. In the North-East, conflict involving non-state armed groups and ongoing military operations has resulted in large-scale displacement and widespread human rights violations.³³

Rising living costs, especially for fuel and food, combined with human-made and natural disasters, have impacted millions of Nigerians. Extreme events, including record floods, alongside protracted crises, have exacerbated food insecurity, displacement, child malnutrition, and limited access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and sanitation. Over 133 million Nigerians feel the impact of multidimensional poverty, the highest number recorded globally.³⁴ For more information see [3. Key socio-economic indicators](#).

²⁹ BBC News, Could Nigeria's careful ethnic balancing act be under threat?, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

³⁰ EEAS, 2024 Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World, 22 May 2025, [url](#), p. 127

³¹ World Bank, The World Bank in Nigeria, last updated 10 April 2025, [url](#)

³² IOM, Nigeria Crisis Response, 2024-2025, [url](#), p. 4

³³ IOM, Nigeria Crisis Response, 2024-2025, [url](#), p. 4

³⁴ EEAS, 2024 Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World, 22 May 2025, [url](#), p. 127



1.3. Demographics

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa³⁵ with an estimated population of 237 million.³⁶ The country is a culturally diverse and multi-ethnic federal state,³⁷ with a population comprising over 250 ethnic groups, each with distinct languages, cultures, religions, and beliefs. The main three ethnic groups are the Hausa-Fulani in the North, the Yoruba in the South-West, and the Igbo in the South-East. The Hausa and Fulani have largely integrated, with most members practising Islam; the urban Fulani intermarry and hold administrative roles in Hausa regions, while rural Fulani remain distinct and speak Fula. The Yoruba, predominantly farmers living in urban areas, maintain a structured chieftaincy system led by influential figures. The Igbo live in decentralised, democratic communities governed by councils of elders, with limited centralised authority. Other notable groups include the Ibibio and Edo in the South, and the Tiv and Nupe in the ethnically diverse Middle Belt (North-Central zone³⁸).³⁹

56.1 % of Nigeria's population identifies as Muslim, while 43.4 % identifies as Christian.⁴⁰ Other religious minorities include individuals practicing African traditional religions (8 %),⁴¹ individuals with no religious affiliation, small communities of Buddhists, Hindus, and Jews. In general, Muslims predominantly reside in the northern regions of the country, whereas Christians are primarily concentrated in the south.⁴² While religious and cultural diversity is a defining feature of Nigeria's social landscape, it has also been a source of longstanding tension, especially in areas where religious groups coexist or overlap.⁴³

³⁵ BBC News, Nigeria Country Profile, 28 July 2023, [url](#); Nigeria, NHRC, Freedom Of Religion And Belief In Nigeria: A Survey 2024, [url](#), p. 6

³⁶ Population figures are based on estimates and projections from World Population Prospects 2024 and Model-based Estimates and Projections of Family Planning Indicators 2024 (UNFPA, Population Division). See UNFPA, State of the World Population Report 2025 'The Real Fertility Crisis: The pursuit of reproductive agency in a changing world', 16 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 139, 142

³⁷ World Bank, The World Bank in Nigeria, last updated 10 April 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch Nigeria 2024 -2025, [url](#)

³⁸ Ojewale, O., Violence is endemic in north central Nigeria: what communities are doing to cope, The Conversation, 23 June 2021, [url](#); The term 'Middle Belt' usually refers to the following States: Benue, FCT, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau. Source: Oasdom, List of Middle Belt States in Nigeria, 1 June 2020, [url](#); But some would also add Adamawa and Taraba, as well as 'the southern parts of Kaduna State, Kebbi State, Bauchi State, Gombe State, Yobe State and Borno State. Source: Legit, List of Middle Belt states in Nigeria: which ones are they?, 19 September 2022, [url](#)

³⁹ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Nigeria – People, last updated 4 July 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁰ Pew Research Center, How the Global Religious Landscape Changed from 2010 to 2020, 9 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 49, 56

⁴¹ USCIRF, USCIRF–Recommended For Countries Of Particular Concern (Cpc), Nigeria, May 2024, [url](#)

⁴² Pew Research Center, How the Global Religious Landscape Changed from 2010 to 2020, 9 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 49, 56, 113, 193

⁴³ Nigeria, NHRC, Freedom Of Religion And Belief In Nigeria: A Survey 2024, [url](#), p. 5



2. Human rights and treatment of specific profiles

2.1. General situation

Nigeria has ratified several of the core⁴⁴ international human rights treaties, including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).⁴⁵ The country has also ratified the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.⁴⁶ However, Nigeria has not ratified the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming to the abolition of the death penalty (CCPR-OP2-DP).⁴⁷

The country has continued to face significant human rights challenges.⁴⁸ Despite constitutional safeguards, ongoing human and civil rights violations point to systemic deficiencies in rights protection. Main challenges include insecurity, limited access to justice, restrictions on freedom of expression, and discrimination against marginalised groups.⁴⁹ Women and Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) individuals face ‘pervasive discrimination.’⁵⁰ Journalists, protesters, and government critics were subject to arbitrary arrest and detention.⁵¹ Particularly, journalists who cover politically sensitive topics have been targeted by criminal defamation laws as well as frequent harassment and arrest.⁵² Security forces frequently used excessive force in response to demonstrations, resulting in casualties.⁵³

Insurgencies, kidnappings, and communal violence have continued⁵⁴ to threaten the basic rights of millions of Nigerians.⁵⁵ Crime (including cultism, rural banditry, kidnappings, and farmers-herders violence) represented a primary cause of violence.⁵⁶ While insurgency led by Boko Haram and related al-Qaeda and Islamic State affiliates was long seen as the most significant threat to the country’s stability, by early 2024 violence arising from banditry had

⁴⁴ UN OHCHR, The Core International Human Rights Instruments and their monitoring bodies, n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁵ UN OHCHR, UN Treaty Body Database, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁶ UNTC, Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 28 July 1951, Status at 22 September 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁷ UN OHCHR, UN Treaty Body Database, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁸ AI, The State of the World's Human Rights; Nigeria 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2025 (Events of 2024), Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#); EEAS, 2024 Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World, 22 May 2025, [url](#), p. 127

⁴⁹ PLAC, Nigeria Annual Human Rights Report 2024, December 2024, [url](#), p. 5

⁵⁰ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

⁵¹ AI, The State of the World's Human Rights; Nigeria, 29 April 2025, [url](#); PLAC, Nigeria Annual Human Rights Report 2024, December 2024, [url](#), p. 5

⁵² Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#); FIJ, Highlighting Monthly Attacks on Nigerian Journalists Since World Press Freedom 2024, 6 May 2025, [url](#)

⁵³ AI, The State of the World's Human Rights; Nigeria, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁴ HRW, World Report 2025 (Events of 2024), Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁵ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁶ Nigeria Watch, Fourteenth Report on Violence 2024, [url](#), pp. 8-12



become more lethal and widespread. Perpetrated by groups described as ‘highly fragmented’ and diverse in terms of their capabilities and degree of organisation,⁵⁷ banditry was reported in the country’s North-West⁵⁸ and North-Central zones,⁵⁹ as well as in Lagos and other areas of the South-West.⁶⁰ Banditry appeared in a variety of forms such as armed robbery, murder, rape, kidnapping,⁶¹ cattle rustling, armed attacks, and raids targeting local communities.⁶² For more information see [EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Security Situation November 2025](#).

Mob violence led to numerous deaths, with many victims tortured or killed following accusations of theft, witchcraft, or blasphemy. Only few of these incidents were investigated or prosecuted, indicating the authorities’ failure to prevent and respond to such violence.⁶³ Victims of Boko Haram, including abducted girls (some of whom remain in captivity), received limited access to justice and support.⁶⁴ Cases of abuses committed by security forces have been reported,⁶⁵ including extrajudicial killings, torture, and other violations by military and law enforcement agencies⁶⁶ (for more information see [EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Security Situation November 2025](#)).

Religious freedom is constitutionally protected.⁶⁷ According to Freedom House, the government, however, has reportedly carried out crackdowns against ‘religious groups that have questioned its authority.’⁶⁸ No other sources could be found to corroborate this information. Sources also indicated that local governments have been known to *de facto* endorse official religions in their territory, and placing limits on other religious activity.⁶⁹ For more information see [2.11 Christians in areas where they are a minority](#) and [2.12. Muslims in areas where they are a minority](#).

Northern Nigeria operates under a dual justice system (see [2.18.1 Justice system](#) for more detailed information) in which the secular provisions of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution coexist with sharia law in 12 states.⁷⁰ Although sharia law had traditionally been applied in the region to matters of personal status and civil law, since 2000 its application was expanded to criminal

⁵⁷ Wiehler, C. and Malefakis, M., Time to Make ‘Peace’ with the Bandits, CSS, April 2024, [url](#), p. 1

⁵⁸ International Crisis Group, Restoring Nigeria’s Leadership for Regional Peace and Security, 11 December 2024, [url](#), p. 8

⁵⁹ HumAngle, What Is The Real Cause Of Attacks In Nigeria’s Middle Belt?, 4 February 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁰ Conversation (The), Nigeria’s growing security crisis: 6 essential reads, 22 April 2025, [url](#)

⁶¹ Badiora, A.I., Terror attacks and kidnappings spread in Nigeria: why Lagos could be a target, The Conversation, 25 June 2024, [url](#)

⁶² Conversation (The), Nigeria’s growing security crisis: 6 essential reads, 22 April 2025, [url](#)

⁶³ AI, The State of the World’s Human Rights; Nigeria, 29 April 2025, [url](#); AI, Nigeria: Escalation of mob violence emboldens impunity, 28 October 2024, [url](#); DW, How Nigeria can stop rising ‘jungle justice’, 14 April 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁴ HRW, World Report 2025 (Events of 2024), Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#); AI, The State of the World’s Human Rights; Nigeria, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁵ HRW, World Report 2025 (Events of 2024), Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁶ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#); Guardian (The), Reports of extrajudicial killings, sexual violence setback to counter-insurgency operations, 13 September 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁷ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025– Nigeria, 2025, [url](#); USDOS, 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom: Nigeria, 26 June 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁸ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025– Nigeria, 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025– Nigeria, 2025, [url](#); USDOS, 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom: Nigeria, 26 June 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁰ Ishola, A. V., Religious blasphemy, jungle justice, and legal pluralism in Northern Nigeria: A comparative analysis of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution and Sharia Law, 29 August 2024, [url](#), p. 61



justice, raising significant human rights concerns.⁷¹ The states where sharia law has been adopted as both civil and criminal law are: Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara.⁷² This parallel legal framework has created ongoing tensions⁷³ between constitutional human rights protections and religious legal principles, particularly in cases involving alleged blasphemy.⁷⁴

In a resolution adopted in February 2025, the European Parliament (EP) urged Nigerian authorities to abolish provisions on religious insults in criminal law as well as the death penalty, pointing out that these provisions are in violation of international law, Nigerian constitutional rights and human rights. The EP resolution also urged the country to combat false blasphemy accusations, mob violence, and bring perpetrators to justice.⁷⁵

2.1.1. Blasphemy laws

Nigeria's blasphemy laws, particularly in Northern states under sharia jurisdiction, has remained a source of significant human rights violations⁷⁶ (see [2.18.1. Justice system](#) for more information on legal pluralism). The 1999 Nigerian Constitution⁷⁷ guarantees key fundamental rights, including freedom of thought, conscience, religion (Section 38), and freedom of expression (Section 39), allowing individuals to express their beliefs. Although the Constitution does not criminalise blasphemy,⁷⁸ it permits the application of sharia and traditional law courts for noncriminal proceedings at the state level – but it does not compel all citizens to abide by them.⁷⁹ In contrast, sharia law explicitly criminalises blasphemy. Particularly in Kano State,⁸⁰ Sharia Penal Code (Section 382) prescribes harsh penalties for blasphemy, including death sentence for insulting the Prophet Muhammad. This legal divergence has resulted in

⁷¹ HRW, "Political Shari'a"? Human Rights and Islamic Law in Northern Nigeria, 21 September 2004, [url](#)

⁷² West Africa Weekly, Explainer: Sharia Expansion in South-West Nigeria – Should Citizens be Concerned?, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

⁷³ Guardian (The), Group demands removal of Sharia provisions from 1999 constitution, 9 June 2025, [url](#); West Africa Weekly, Explainer: Sharia Expansion in South-West Nigeria – Should Citizens be Concerned?, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁴ Ishola, A. V., Religious blasphemy, jungle justice, and legal pluralism in Northern Nigeria: A comparative analysis of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution and Sharia Law, 29 August 2024, [url](#), p. 61; Guardian (The), Group demands removal of Sharia provisions from 1999 constitution, 9 June 2025, [url](#); West Africa Weekly, Explainer: Sharia Expansion in South-West Nigeria – Should Citizens be Concerned?, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁵ EP, Human rights breaches in Türkiye, Nicaragua and Nigeria, 13 February 2025, [url](#); EP, European Parliament resolution of 13 February 2025 on continuing detention and risk of the death penalty for individuals in Nigeria charged with blasphemy, notably the case of Yahaya Sharif-Aminu (2025/2548(RSP)), 13 February 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁶ CFR, An Obnoxious Legislation, 22 January 2025, [url](#); BBC News, Nigerian atheist freed from prison but fears for his life, 8 January 2025, [url](#); Ishola, A. V., Religious blasphemy, jungle justice, and legal pluralism in Northern Nigeria: A comparative analysis of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution and Sharia Law, 29 August 2024, [url](#), p. 61; UN OHCHR, Nigeria: UN experts demand release of Yahaya Sharif-Aminu, 16 May 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁷ Nigeria, The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 Updated with the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Alterations (2010), 4th Alteration (2017) and 5th Alteration (2023), September 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁸ Ishola, A. V., Religious blasphemy, jungle justice, and legal pluralism in Northern Nigeria: A comparative analysis of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution and Sharia Law, 29 August 2024, [url](#), p. 71

⁷⁹ USCIRF, Country Update Nigeria, August 2024, [url](#), p. 2

⁸⁰ ECOWAS, ECOWAS Court Rules Nigerian Blasphemy Laws Violate International Human Rights Standards, 9 April 2025, [url](#), XIII (153.iii)



conflicting jurisdictional overlaps between secular and sharia courts in the aforementioned 12 states where sharia law is implemented.⁸¹

Nigerian authorities, in northern states,⁸² have continued to imprison individuals accused of blasphemy and have frequently failed to act against perpetrators of violence related to blasphemy allegations.⁸³ In 2024, Mubarak Bala, a prominent Nigerian atheist, was released after over four years in prison for blasphemy accusations related to a 2020 Facebook post. Convicted under both sharia law and secular law in Kano, he had originally been sentenced to 24 years, later reduced on appeal. Following his release, Bala is reported to live in a safe house due to ongoing threats to his life.⁸⁴

Yahaya Sharif-Aminu, a 25-year-old musician, was sentenced to death by hanging in August 2020 on charges of blasphemy after posting a song on WhatsApp. His case remains unresolved, with an appeal submitted to Nigeria's Supreme Court in November 2022 still pending a hearing date.⁸⁵ In February 2025, the European Parliament passed a resolution urging Nigerian authorities to release Yahaya Sharif-Aminu, drop all charges, and ensure his rights and safety, along with the release of others facing blasphemy allegations. It notes that blasphemy laws, including those under sharia law in some northern states, violate international human rights obligations and Nigeria's Constitution.⁸⁶ In April 2025, a landmark ruling by the Community Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) judged that the blasphemy provisions in Kano State law are inconsistent with Nigeria's regional and international human rights obligations, particularly with regard to freedom of expression. The case was filed by the Incorporated Trustees of Expression Now Human Rights Initiative, a Nigerian NGO which documented instances of individuals arbitrarily arrested, detained, or sentenced to death for allegedly blasphemous expressions. The case also detailed incidents of vigilante violence,⁸⁷ including mob killings of accused persons carried out with apparent impunity.⁸⁸

Incidents of mob violence and vigilante justice related to alleged religious blasphemy in Northern Nigeria have been reported, with significant impacts on social stability, human rights, and the rule of law. The prevalence of vigilante justice in the region reportedly reflects

⁸¹ Ishola, A. V., Religious blasphemy, jungle justice, and legal pluralism in Northern Nigeria: A comparative analysis of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution and Sharia Law, 29 August 2024, [url](#), p. 71

⁸² BBC News, Nigerian atheist freed from prison but fears for his life, 8 January 2025, [url](#); CFR, An Obnoxious Legislation, 22 January 2025, [url](#)

⁸³ USCIRF, Country Update Nigeria, August 2024, [url](#), p. 2

⁸⁴ BBC News, Nigerian atheist freed from prison but fears for his life, 8 January 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁵ AI, Nigeria: Singer on death row denied medical care, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁶ EP, European Parliament resolution of 13 February 2025 on continuing detention and risk of the death penalty for individuals in Nigeria charged with blasphemy, notably the case of Yahaya Sharif-Aminu (2025/2548(RSP)), 13 February 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁷ Vigilante violence refers to unlawful acts by community-based security groups who take 'the law into their own hands', often carrying out extra-judicial killings, torture, or punishments without due process. See Guardian (the), How vigilante groups constitute danger to life despite role in security, 24 May 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁸ ECOWAS, ECOWAS Court Rules Nigerian Blasphemy Laws Violate International Human Rights Standards, 9 April 2025, [url](#)



widespread distrust of formal judicial institutions and a preference for swift, community-based resolution.⁸⁹

2.1.2. Death penalty

In Nigeria, the death penalty is a ‘lawful punishment’ imposed nationwide,⁹⁰ including for offences that do not meet the threshold of ‘most serious crimes’ under international law. Although no executions have been carried out since 2016, courts across the country still regularly issue death sentences.⁹¹ In 2023, Nigerian courts issued over 246 new death sentences, raising the total number of individuals on death row to more than 3 413.⁹² According to a representative of the Nigeria Correctional Service (NCoS), as of 15 April 2024, Nigeria had a total of 3 504 inmates on death row, comprising 73 females and 3 431 males.⁹³

In May 2024, the Nigerian Senate introduced a bill to increase the maximum penalty for drug trafficking, replacing life imprisonment with the death penalty. The proposed amendment, which has not yet become law,⁹⁴ was forwarded to the House of Representatives for further consideration. The bill faced opposition from various stakeholders, including some legislators, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) country representative, as well as activists and legal professionals.⁹⁵ Such proposal has reignited debate over the continued use of the death penalty in the country, with some authorities questioning the sustainability of retaining capital punishment. The Nigeria Correctional Service, for instance, raised concerns about the financial and logistical burden of maintaining over 3 500 death row inmates nationwide. Further, although legal provisions allow for commutation of sentences by governors or chief judges after extended incarceration, inconsistencies in application have left many inmates in legal limbo.⁹⁶

The African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) has issued various resolutions urging States Parties to the African Charter – including Nigeria – to implement a *moratorium* on executions as a step towards abolishing the death penalty. Its most recent resolution was adopted in November 2024.⁹⁷ The EU and the UN have also called on Nigeria to impose a *moratorium* on the death penalty.⁹⁸

⁸⁹ Ishola, A. V., Religious blasphemy, jungle justice, and legal pluralism in Northern Nigeria: A comparative analysis of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution and Sharia Law, 29 August 2024, [url](#), p. 61

⁹⁰ AI, Grave Health Concerns for Singer on Death Row, 17 February 2025, [url](#), p. 2

⁹¹ EEAS, 2024 Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World, 22 May 2025, [url](#), p. 127

⁹² AI, Nigeria: Singer on death row denied medical care, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

⁹³ Guardian (The), Long-term imprisonment as political compromise for death penalty, 12 March 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁴ Premium Times, Senate passes bill prescribing death sentence for drug traffickers, 9 May 2024, [url](#); Reuters, Nigeria’s Senate proposes death penalty for drug trafficking, 9 May 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁵ Harm Reduction International, The Death Penalty For Drug Offences: Global Overview 2024, 12 March 2025, [url](#); AI, 2025 World Drug Day: UNODC and CND must take urgent action to end unlawful use of the death penalty for drug-related offences, 25 June 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁶ Guardian (The), Long-term imprisonment as political compromise for death penalty, 12 March 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁷ AI, Urgent Action: Grave Health Concerns For Singer On Death Row, 17 February 2025, [url](#); ACHPR, Resolution on the United Nations General Assembly Biannual Vote Calling For a Moratorium on the Use of the Death Penalty – ACHPR/Res.614 (LXXXI) 2024, 14 November 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁸ UN OHCHR, Nigeria: UN experts demand release of Yahaya Sharif-Aminu, 16 May 2024, [url](#); EP, European Parliament resolution of 13 February 2025 on continuing detention and risk of the death penalty for individuals in Nigeria charged with blasphemy, notably the case of Yahaya Sharif-Aminu (2025/2548(RSP)), 13 February 2025, [url](#)



2.1.3. Prison conditions and treatment of detainees

Detention conditions in Nigeria are described as ‘harsh’, with provisions for food, healthcare, and other basic needs failing to meet the minimum standards established by the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and other international guidelines.⁹⁹ In September 2024, the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture conducted its second visit to Nigeria to evaluate the treatment of detainees. The Subcommittee inspected various locations, including detention centres for men, women, and children, police stations, criminal investigation departments, and facilities operated by agencies addressing drug and human trafficking. Their assessment described conditions in most detention facilities as ‘abysmal’. Additionally, Nigeria had not yet established a National Preventive Mechanism as required under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, which Nigeria ratified in 2009. The Subcommittee called on Nigeria to urgently implement measures to prevent torture and ill-treatment, improve detention conditions - particularly in police stations and similar facilities - and enforce legal safeguards to end impunity for perpetrators of torture.¹⁰⁰ As of March 2025, Nigeria's 240 prisons hold approximately 77 800 inmates, with two-thirds awaiting trial.¹⁰¹

Over the past decade, Nigeria has experienced a pattern of prison jailbreaks, resulting in thousands of inmates escaping correctional facilities nationwide. A recent incident in March 2025, at Koton Karfe Medium Security Custodial Centre in Kogi State, saw 12 inmates escape, with only six recaptured. This marked the fourth jailbreak at this facility in 13 years, where nearly 700 inmates have fled, including about 100 freed during a 2012 Boko Haram attack. Some observers attribute the repeated jailbreaks to security gaps, together with possible insider complicity, which exacerbate the prisons’ vulnerabilities, especially amid attacks by armed groups like Boko Haram. They also point to systemic issues such as overcrowding, outdated infrastructure, poor inmate conditions, slow judicial processes, and widespread corruption.¹⁰²

2.2. Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings (THB)

2.2.1. Legal framework and prevalence

Nigeria ratified the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children in 2001.¹⁰³ The country also ratified several UN conventions on elimination of forced labour, such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No.29) and the ILO Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957

⁹⁹ AI, Urgent Action: Grave Health Concerns For Singer On Death Row, 17 February 2025, [url](#); ACHPR, Resolution on the United Nations General Assembly Biannual Vote Calling For a Moratorium on the Use of the Death Penalty – ACHPR/Res.614 (LXXXI) 2024, 14 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰ UN OHCHR, Nigeria: Urgent measures needed to end torture and ill-treatment, says experts, 23 September 2024, [url](#); EEAS, 2024 Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World, 22 May 2025, [url](#), p. 127

¹⁰¹ DW, What’s behind Nigeria’s increase in jailbreaks?, 4 March 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰² DW, What’s behind Nigeria’s increase in jailbreaks?, 4 March 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰³ UNDOC, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2024, 11 December 2024, [url](#), p. 34



(No.105).¹⁰⁴ In 2003, Nigeria enacted its first anti-trafficking legislation with the passage of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act, which was later amended in 2015. The Act also established the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) to enforce the law and coordinate efforts to combat human trafficking and related offences.¹⁰⁵ The current legislation covers all forms of trafficking indicated in the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol.¹⁰⁶

Trafficking in human beings remains a persistent and serious humanitarian issue in Nigeria.¹⁰⁷ The country represents a major source, transit point, and destination for trafficked individuals.¹⁰⁸ Comprehensive data on THB in Nigeria relevant for the reference period of this report was not available among all sources consulted.¹⁰⁹ According to the latest available data from the 2023 Global Slavery Index,¹¹⁰ an estimated 1.6 million people were living in modern slavery in Nigeria on any given day in 2021. This corresponds to a prevalence rate of 7.8 per 1 000 people. Within Africa, Nigeria ranks 5th out of 51 countries, and 38th out of 160 countries globally in terms of prevalence. Such an estimate does not account for children recruited into armed conflict by non-state armed groups such as Boko Haram.¹¹¹ In 2023, about 1.4 million Nigerians were subjected to forced labour or sexual exploitation, with many trafficked domestically or abroad, especially to Italy and Libya.¹¹²

2.2.2. Domestic and cross-border trafficking

Trafficking in human beings occurs internally within Nigeria as well as transnationally, with individuals taken from Nigeria to African and European countries.¹¹³

Domestically, traffickers predominantly recruit victims - often children and women - from rural areas in southern regions for sex trafficking, forced labour in cities,¹¹⁴ and for the purpose of

¹⁰⁴ ILO, Nigeria Forced Labour Survey 2022, 2024, [url](#), p. 12

¹⁰⁵ Amune, M. S., Control and Regulation of Human Trafficking in Nigeria: A Legal Framework Analysis, 13 January 2025, [url](#), p. 31; Nigeria, Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition), Enforcement and Administration Act N. 4, 2015, [url](#), Part II, 5

¹⁰⁶ UNDOC, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2024, 11 December 2024, [url](#), p. 34

¹⁰⁷ Ukhami, E. I. et al., The Role of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), in Combating Human Trafficking in Nigeria, June 2024, [url](#), pp. 174, 181; Punch, Harrowing tales of survivors trapped in the web of trafficking, 14 July 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸ IOM, Final Evaluation Workshops Shed Light on Increased Support for Survivors of Trafficking in West Africa, 24 September 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹ See Bibliography. For previous data see EUAA 2024 Nigeria Country Focus Report and 2021 EUAA Nigeria Trafficking in Human Beings Report.

¹¹⁰ Walk Free Foundation uses the term 'modern slavery' to refer to different phenomena such as: 'forced labour, forced or servile marriage, debt bondage, forced commercial sexual exploitation, human trafficking, slavery-like practices, and the sale and exploitation of children'. Walk Free Foundation, The Global Slavery Index 2023, 16 June 2023, [url](#), p. 2

¹¹¹ Walk Free Foundation, The Global Slavery Index 2023, 16 June 2023, [url](#), p. 78

¹¹² IOM, Final Evaluation Workshops Shed Light on Increased Support for Survivors of Trafficking in West Africa, 24 September 2024, [url](#)

¹¹³ Lawal S. A. and Yekini, A., The Legal and Institutional Frameworks Aimed at Curbing Human Trafficking in Nigeria, 18 February 2025, [url](#), p. 2; IOM, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking since 2017, 31 March 2024, [url](#), p. 3

¹¹⁴ USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report 2024 – Nigeria, (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#)



the so-called 'baby-factories',¹¹⁵ but victims can also originate from other regions.¹¹⁶ Traffickers also exploit foreign nationals, including individuals originating from West and Central Africa (including Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Mali, and Senegal) and to a lesser extent, East and Southern Africa, in forced labour agriculture within Nigeria. Traffickers also operate in refugee and displacement settings, recruiting vulnerable Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees for exploitation across Nigeria and abroad.¹¹⁷ In the North-East region, extremist groups like Boko Haram forcibly recruit, abduct, and exploit children and women as labourers, soldiers, or sex slaves.¹¹⁸

Organised trafficking networks, both international and domestic traffickers, transport Nigerian women and girls to other parts of Africa as well as to Europe, mainly for sexual exploitation and domestic servitude, often using deception and coercion, including ritual oaths¹¹⁹ (for more information see [2.2.3. Traffickers, recruitment and modus operandi](#) and [2.2.4. Women victims of trafficking](#)). Globally, Africa continues to be the continent with the highest rates of cross-border trafficking. Sub-Saharan African victims have been detected in multiple countries across the world, with primary concentrations within the region itself, as well as in Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. In recent years, the identification of Sub-Saharan African victims in Western and Southern Europe has declined, while detections in the Middle East have shown an upward trend.¹²⁰

As per latest available data, the European Commission (EC) reported that Nigerians rank first among the top five nationalities of trafficking victims identified within the European Union. Most of the victims are women primarily trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.¹²¹ Between 2017 and the first quarter of 2024,¹²² the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) facilitated the voluntary return of 4 877 Nigerian victims of trafficking. Individuals were returned from 37 host or transit countries, mostly from Libya (54 %) and Mali (25 %). Of these, 86 % originated from the southern part of Nigeria, mostly from Lagos, Edo and Delta.¹²³

¹¹⁵ Guardian (The), HURIWA seeks emergency action on baby factories, child trafficking, 28 May 2025, [url](#); Vanguard, NAPTIP decries surge in baby factories, sale of children across Nigeria, 20 May 2024, [url](#)

¹¹⁶ IOM, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking since 2017, 31 March 2024, [url](#), p. 6; USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report 2024 – Nigeria, (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#)

¹¹⁷ USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report 2024 – Nigeria, (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#);

¹¹⁸ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2025 (Events of 2024), Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁹ USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report 2024 – Nigeria, (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#); CTDC, Country Profile: Victims originating in Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁰ UNODC, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2024, 11 December 2024, [url](#), p. 57

¹²¹ EC, Report from the commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the progress made in the European Union in combating trafficking in human beings (Fifth Report), {SWD(2025) 4 final}, 20 January 2025, [url](#)

¹²² IOM conducted an analysis of the profiles of Nigerian victims of trafficking based on data they collected from 2017 until Q1 2024 and derived from individuals assisted by the IOM, who have been identified as victims of trafficking. See IOM, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking since 2017, 31 March 2024, [url](#), p. 3

¹²³ IOM, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking since 2017, 31 March 2024, [url](#), pp. 4, 6, 7



2.2.3. Traffickers, recruitment and *modus operandi*

Many actors are involved in trafficking, including family and community members, or individuals in religious settings.¹²⁴ Organised criminal groups are among the main actors involved in trafficking of human beings in Nigeria.¹²⁵ In the context of migration routes, actors involved in migrant smuggling may also engage in trafficking, either by collaborating with trafficking networks or by directly exploiting migrants themselves.¹²⁶

Trafficking networks exploit Nigerian victims in Europe, the Middle East (including the Gulf countries) mostly in sex trafficking and domestic servitude. Criminal groups, some linked to cults or confraternities (for more information see [EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Security Situation November 2025](#)), are highly structured and play a central role also in international trafficking.¹²⁷ Nigerian confraternities involved in sex trafficking, such as Black Axe, Supreme Viking Confraternity, Arobaga Vikings, the Maphite, and the Eiye syndicate, are becoming increasingly organised, violent, and sophisticated. These groups have expanded their networks, collaborating with European mafias and other organised criminal groups, and are shifting their focus towards a broader range of criminal activities, with human trafficking becoming less central to their operations.¹²⁸ Between April and July 2024, police units across 21 countries conducted a series of coordinated operations targeting the Black Axe, one of West Africa's most notorious and secretive criminal networks involved in global trafficking, prostitution, and killing operations. The operation led to the arrest of 300 individuals.¹²⁹

In January 2025, the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) uncovered a sect in Kaduna State, Northwestern Nigeria, allegedly linked to trafficking in human beings' activities. The group, known as ACHAD Life Mission International, is reported to promote the revival of African traditions and operates independently of any mainstream religion. Its leader, identified as Yokana, is based in Jos, Plateau State, an area recently classified as a human trafficking hotspot, particularly for cases involving the trafficking of children. According to authorities, more than 100 victims were rescued in Plateau State over the past year.¹³⁰

Trafficking is often facilitated through personal and communal networks, and in some contexts, it is viewed not as exploitation but as a voluntary and viable path to economic and social advancement.¹³¹ Especially in Edo State, trafficking victims are often familiar with their traffickers, who are typically part of their community and perceived as 'sponsors' offering

¹²⁴ Nwoha R., online interview with EUAA, 18 July 2025; Punch, Harrowing tales of survivors trapped in the web of trafficking, 14 July 2024, [url](#)

¹²⁵ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#); USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report 2024 – Nigeria, (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#)

¹²⁶ UNODC, Chapter 2 – Trafficking in persons in and from Africa; a global responsibility, 2024, [url](#), p. 72

¹²⁷ USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report 2024 – Nigeria, (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#)

¹²⁸ INTERPOL, Sex trafficking in women in West and North Africa and towards Europe, June 2025, [url](#), p. 16

¹²⁹ BBC News, World's police in technological arms race with Nigerian mafia, 28 August 2024, [url](#); Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Black Axe—Nigeria's Most Notorious Transnational Criminal Organization, 29 October 2024, [url](#)

¹³⁰ HumAngle, New Sect Linked to Human Trafficking Emerges in Nigeria, 20 January 2025, [url](#)

¹³¹ BBC News, Nigeria's Miracle Baby Scammers – BBC Africa Eye Documentary [Online video], 25 November 2024, [url](#); Okorie, M. M., and Okeja, U., Prosecuting human traffickers in Nigeria: victim-witnessing and community-oriented challenges, 8 October 2024, [url](#), p. 9



assistance in traveling abroad.¹³² Traffickers are often perceived not as criminals, but as business associates or migration agents, comparable to recruiters of professionals like doctors and nurses.¹³³ As explained by Roland Nwoha, director at IRARA Nigeria,¹³⁴ most people do not recognise the criminal nature of trafficking: ‘some victims even view traffickers as saviours, as people who have come to rescue them from harsh economic conditions.’¹³⁵ Most victims of trafficking who have been returned through IOM programmes from 2017 to the first quarter of 2024 reported to have been trafficked by their friend and acquaintance, while other reported having been trafficked by family members or relatives.¹³⁶

Corruption and official complicity in trafficking¹³⁷ have remained widespread in Nigeria, undermining law enforcement and enabling impunity. Corrupt officials, security officers, and aid workers are reported to have committed sexual exploitation and trafficking crimes, particularly in IDP camps.¹³⁸

Within trafficking networks, multiple actors play distinct and critical roles throughout the exploitation process. It often begins with an individual presenting a seemingly promising opportunity to vulnerable persons. These individuals are then connected to a central figure known as the ‘Connection Man’ or ‘Border,’ who coordinates the logistics of the trafficking operation. The ‘Connection Man’ arranges travel for the victims and connects them with overseas ‘Buyers’ who provide financial backing for the victims’ journey. ‘Buyers’, commonly referred to as ‘Madams’ or ‘Masters’, cover the travel expenses to reduce the amount owed to the ‘Connection Man’ upon the victims’ arrival. Once in the hands of the ‘Buyers’, victims may be resold or leased to ‘Users’ for various forms of exploitation.¹³⁹

Sex trafficking networks operate through decentralised, specialised criminal groups involving various actors across all stages of the trafficking cycle, from recruitment to exploitation. Recruiters, including women and online agents, lure victims with false promises of jobs or education. Traditional religious figures, such as *juju* priests, perform oath ceremonies to control victims, while community leaders may issue threats. Family members may also be complicit, either through deception or financial gain. Fraudulent intermediaries and brokers in both rural and urban areas recruit victims under the pretence of legitimate opportunities. During transport, ‘movement facilitators’ use bribery to bypass law enforcement, while ‘escorting traffickers’ (also called ‘Trolleys’ or ‘Coyotes’) maintain physical control over victims. ‘Logisticians’ arrange travel, and ‘migrant smugglers’ (some of whom exploit or sell victims) support with the movement across borders. Corrupt officials may also enable transit in exchange for bribes or sexual acts. Recruitment methods continue to prey on victims’ hopes

¹³² Okorie, M. M., and Okeja, U., Prosecuting human traffickers in Nigeria: victim-witnessing and community-oriented challenges, 8 October 2024, [url](#), p. 12

¹³³ UN Women, Assessment of national responses and strategies to combat and eliminate trafficking in persons and forced migration in Africa, January 2024, [url](#), pp. 14-15

¹³⁴ IRARA Nigeria is an NGO with headquarters in Benin city (Edo State) that supports returnees by providing temporary accommodation and reintegration assistance. IRARA Nigeria is also an implementing partner of the Frontex Reintegration Programme. See IRARA, Reintegration, n.d., [url](#); IRARA Nigeria, Joint Reintegration Services, n.d., [url](#)

¹³⁵ Nwoha R., online interview with EUAA, 18 July 2025

¹³⁶ IOM, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking since 2017, 31 March 2024, [url](#), pp. 11, 12

¹³⁷ INTERPOL, Sex trafficking in women in West and North Africa and towards Europe, June 2025, [url](#), pp. 13, 14

¹³⁸ USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report 2024 – Nigeria, (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#)

¹³⁹ Punch, Harrowing tales of survivors trapped in the web of trafficking, 14 July 2024, [url](#)



for a better life by offering fraudulent opportunities. These often include false promises of well-paid jobs abroad, such as in beauty parlours, shops, salons, or as waitresses, models, nurses, teachers, hairdressers, nannies, and receptionists, as well as false study programs and fake immigration offers to Europe, countries in the North African and Middle Eastern region, or the Americas. Deceptive tactics, such as fake marriage proposals, trick victims into willingly accepting these arrangements or coerce migrant women into prostitution under the pretence of repaying fabricated debts.¹⁴⁰

IOM reported that the top five means of control traffickers use against Nigerian victims are physical abuse, deception, psychological abuse, threat, and withholding wages.¹⁴¹ The role of *juju*¹⁴² oath-taking in Nigerian trafficking networks has been well documented.¹⁴³ Traffickers use *juju* oath-taking as a means of control to keep victims obedient and bound to their captors. Before victims begin their journey abroad, traffickers often take them to shrines where they are forced to swear oaths. Belief holds that breaking the oath will result in severe consequences, including diseases, mental illness, and various forms of misfortune or harm. These oaths typically include promises to repay the traffickers for the cost of the journey and vows never to reveal the identities or whereabouts of their traffickers.¹⁴⁴ The *juju* ceremonies are typically conducted in Nigeria, but they also occur in Libya and Europe. In certain instances, the community's religious leader is responsible for both initiating contact with the victim and issuing threats.¹⁴⁵ Victims are usually trapped in debts, which may range from 20 000€ to 50 000€.¹⁴⁶

In 2018, the Oba of Benin kingdom (Southern Nigeria), the traditional religious ruler who has moral authority over all *juju* priests in Edo State¹⁴⁷, cursed human trafficking, as well as all priests who perform oaths between traffickers and their victims, and nullified all previous *juju* oaths sworn by trafficking victims.¹⁴⁸ As noted by scholar Dr Sarah Adeyinka¹⁴⁹ in an interview with the EUAA, the Oba of Benin's declaration was 'remarkable' and had ripple effects both in

¹⁴⁰ INTERPOL, Sex trafficking in women in West and North Africa and towards Europe, June 2025, [url](#), pp. 6, 13

¹⁴¹ IOM, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking since 2017, 31 March 2024, [url](#), pp. 11, 12

¹⁴² *Juju* is a term commonly used to describe the traditional spiritual practices of the Yoruba people. It is a belief system that involves the use of objects like amulets and the casting of spells, often associated with witchcraft. *Juju* is prevalent in West Africa, particularly among communities in Nigeria. See Counter Trafficking Network, Tutorial: Juju & Witchcraft, 2020, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁴³ EUAA, Nigeria Trafficking in Human Beings, April 2021, [url](#); Forced Migration Review, Trafficking, ritual oaths and criminal investigations, n.d., [url](#); Adeyinka, S. et al., The role of Juju rituals in human trafficking of Nigerians: A tool of enslavement, but also escape, 22 November 2023, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴ Adeyinka, S. et al., The role of Juju rituals in human trafficking of Nigerians: A tool of enslavement, but also escape, 22 November 2023, [url](#)

¹⁴⁵ INTERPOL, Sex trafficking in women in West and North Africa and towards Europe, June 2025, [url](#), p. 13

¹⁴⁶ OCCRP, Nigeria Nabs Trafficking, Robbery Syndicate Leaders, 7 May 2025, [url](#); Belgium, MYRIA, Rapport annuel d'évaluation 2024 Traite et trafic des etres humains, [Annual Evaluation Report Human Trafficking 2024], 18 December 2024, [url](#), p. 98

¹⁴⁷ Edo state, in particular, Benin City has been the central hub for sex trafficking from Nigeria to Europe for the last decades. See EUAA, Nigeria Trafficking in Human Beings, April 2021, [url](#), p. 16

¹⁴⁸ Reuters, Black magic ban dents sex trafficking in Nigeria, 19 September 2018, [url](#); TIME, An Ancient Curse Kept Nigerian Women Bound to Sex Slavery. Now, It's Been Reversed, 17 April 2018, [url](#)

¹⁴⁹ Dr Sarah Adeyinka is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Amsterdam, with extensive expertise on human trafficking and sexual and gender-based violence research among people in situations of vulnerability, particularly refugees and asylum seekers. She is also the founder and board chair of CoCreate VZW (Belgium) and CoCreate Humanitarian Aid Foundation (Nigeria), NGOs that provide training and consultancy services to anti-trafficking organisations, caregivers, and first-line responders in Belgium and Nigeria. CoCreate also provides support victims of trafficking in partnership with organisations on ground in Nigeria and Italy.



Nigeria and abroad. Delivered in a culturally resonant manner and in local language, the declaration was actively used by law enforcement in EU countries in anti-trafficking efforts between 2018 and 2020. According to the same source, during this period, there were reports of trafficked women in Italy choosing to return to Nigeria, while within Nigeria some victims reportedly left their traffickers. Some traffickers themselves also contacted victims, urging them to break off ties, fearing consequences from the curse.¹⁵⁰

Despite its initial impact, the influence of the Oba's declaration has diminished over time.¹⁵¹ Also, some traffickers who do not originate from Edo State believed the Oba of Benin's 2018 curse did not apply to them. As a result, some have continued trafficking activities with little fear of spiritual consequences.¹⁵² Dr Adeyinka stated that recruitment by traffickers has not stopped, noting that 'even though, reaching Italy has become very difficult, if not impossible, many are still recruited daily, unaware that common routes are blocked or of the journey's risks, often even without realising where they are going.'¹⁵³ The same source mentioned reports indicating that *juju* rituals and blood oaths continue to be used, reflecting the enduring role of traditional beliefs in trafficking practices. In addition, traffickers have also become more sophisticated in their tactics, for instance, increasingly turning to 'sextortion'. Before a victim travels, traffickers often force them to strip naked, record videos and threaten to release footage to their family or the public if the agreed costs are not repaid, intensifying the victim's fear and control.¹⁵⁴ The Director at IRARA Nigeria stated that there are signs of a gradual resurgence in previous trafficking patterns, with traffickers becoming increasingly bold, using familiar tactics such as deception and false promises.¹⁵⁵

2.2.4. Women victims of trafficking

Women and girls are trafficked for sexual exploitation throughout countries in Europe, including Austria, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, Malta and Denmark.¹⁵⁶ Black Axe has been involved in the trafficking of Nigerian women for sex exploitation in Italy and France.¹⁵⁷ Organised crime networks also transport Nigerian women and girls to mining regions within Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Cote d'Ivoire for sexual exploitation.¹⁵⁸

Between 2017 and the first quarter of 2024, IOM facilitated the voluntary return of 4 877 Nigerian victims of trafficking; women and girls accounted for nearly 88 % of returnees across various age groups. In the first quarter of 2024, 167 victims were returned to Nigeria under the IOM programme, of whom 81 % were women and 19 % men. Of these 4 877 returned

¹⁵⁰ Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025

¹⁵¹ Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025; Nwoha R., online interview with EUAA, 18 July 2025

¹⁵² Nwoha R., online interview with EUAA, 18 July 2025

¹⁵³ Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025

¹⁵⁴ Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025

¹⁵⁵ Nwoha R., online interview with EUAA, 18 July 2025

¹⁵⁶ EC, Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the progress made in the European Union in combating trafficking in human beings (Fifth Report), 20 January 2025, [url](#); CoE, Fourth Evaluation Rounder Measures to prevent and detect vulnerabilities to human trafficking – Evaluation Report Austria, 11 March 2025, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁵⁷ Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Black Axe—Nigeria's Most Notorious Transnational Criminal Organization, 29 October 2024, [url](#)

¹⁵⁸ USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report 2024 – Nigeria, (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#); CTDC, Country Profile: Victims originating in Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

individuals, 86 % were from the Southern part of Nigeria, mostly from Lagos (1 125), Edo (938), and Delta (425). These women were mostly subjected to sexual exploitation and forced labour. Without providing further details, IOM also pointed out that states such as Kano show a reverse pattern, with a higher number of male victims; however, the overall figures in these areas remain relatively low compared to other states.¹⁵⁹

Domestically, traffickers recruit and force women, particularly from rural Southern regions into sex trafficking and forced labour into urban centres.¹⁶⁰ During the reference period, sources reported on a surge in the phenomenon of so-called ‘baby-factories’¹⁶¹ – facilities disguised as orphanages, religious centres, maternity homes¹⁶² or private medical clinics, where young women are lured, impregnated and held until they give birth to infants, who are then sold¹⁶³ and trafficked.¹⁶⁴ (For more information see [2.2.5. Children victims of trafficking](#)). Citing data issued by a local human rights association, media outlets reported that over 200 underground so-called ‘baby factories’ have been discovered and shut down by security agencies in the last five years; however new facilities have opened to replace the closed ones. The practice is especially prevalent in southern states such as Abia, Lagos, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo.¹⁶⁵

Most of the victims of the so-called ‘baby-factories’ are minors,¹⁶⁶ teenage girls, unmarried young women.¹⁶⁷ Poverty, ignorance, dysfunctional family structures, social stigma on childlessness, and weak law enforcement are identified among the root causes of this phenomenon.¹⁶⁸ Traffickers often kidnap victims and keep them¹⁶⁹ against their will,¹⁷⁰ rape and force them to carry and deliver children.¹⁷¹ Victims often receive money or something else for giving birth to a child.¹⁷² In some cases, families facilitate the involvement of girls, while in other cases victims themselves engage voluntarily for financial reasons.¹⁷³ Some victims of so-called ‘baby-factories’ are recruited by traffickers through online platforms.¹⁷⁴ Behind this industry there is an ‘organised and highly coordinated commercial network of criminal

¹⁵⁹ IOM, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking since 2017, 31 March 2024, [url](#), pp. 4-7

¹⁶⁰ USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report 2024 – Nigeria, (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#)

¹⁶¹ Guardian (The), HURIWA seeks emergency action on baby factories, child trafficking, 28 May 2025, [url](#);

Vanguard, NAPTIP decries surge in baby factories, sale of children across Nigeria, 20 May 2024, [url](#)

¹⁶² USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report 2024 – Nigeria, (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#);

¹⁶³ DW, Why Nigeria’s ‘baby factories’ continue to thrive, 18 March 2024, [url](#); BBC News, ‘Pregnant’ for 15 months: Inside the ‘miracle’ fertility scam, 25 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴ Eziechine, A. O. and Esene. Q. O., Baby Factory Syndicate: An Emerging Trends of Trafficking in Agunloye’s Disposable Womb, June 2024, [url](#), p. 165

¹⁶⁵ DW, Why Nigeria’s ‘baby factories’ continue to thrive, 18 March 2024, [url](#); Guardian (The), HURIWA seeks emergency action on baby factories, child trafficking, 28 May 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶⁶ Vanguard, NAPTIP decries surge in baby factories, sale of children across Nigeria, 20 May 2024, [url](#); DW, Why Nigeria’s ‘baby factories’ continue to thrive, 18 March 2024, [url](#); BBC News, ‘Pregnant’ for 15 months: Inside the ‘miracle’ fertility scam, 25 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷ Eziechine, A. O. and Esene. Q. O., Baby Factory Syndicate: An Emerging Trends of Trafficking in Agunloye’s Disposable Womb, June 2024, [url](#), p. 166

¹⁶⁸ Guardian (The), HURIWA seeks emergency action on baby factories, child trafficking, 28 May 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶⁹ Cable (The), NAPTIP rescues ‘nine pregnant women’ from Abuja baby factory, 23 January 2025, [url](#); USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report 2024 – Nigeria, (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰ DW, Why Nigeria’s ‘baby factories’ continue to thrive, 18 March 2024, [url](#); BBC News, ‘Pregnant’ for 15 months: Inside the ‘miracle’ fertility scam, 25 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷¹ USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report 2024 – Nigeria, (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷² Adegbite, A., Baby-Making Factories in Nigeria: A ‘Crime’ Begging for Legal Identity?, 14 June 2024, [url](#), p. 71

¹⁷³ BBC, Nigeria’s Miracle Baby Scammers – BBC Africa Eye Documentary [Online video], 25 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷⁴ Cable (The), NAPTIP rescues ‘nine pregnant women’ from Abuja baby factory, 23 January 2025, [url](#)

activities'.¹⁷⁵ Various raids were conducted during 2024¹⁷⁶ and 2025, uncovering so-called 'baby factories' and trafficking syndicates across the country.¹⁷⁷ A thriving market exists for infants among couples experiencing difficulties with childbearing. These individuals are often willing to pay between 1 million naira (576 EUR) and 2 million naira (1 152 EUR) to acquire a baby. Demand is generally higher for male infants, who are typically sold at a higher price compared to female infants.¹⁷⁸

In general, young women victims of trafficking in Nigeria – as in other African countries - are recruited into sex work through forced abduction, by pressure from their parents and through deceptive agreements between their parents and traffickers, including 'unrecognized representatives' of criminal groups. In some cases, Nigerian women victims of trafficking often do not see themselves as victims. Some actively seek out traffickers or are introduced by relatives or friends in pursuit of economic opportunity. Poverty, conflict, poor education, social pressure and cultural norms are key factors that make women vulnerable to traffickers.¹⁷⁹

2.2.5. Children victims of trafficking

An 'alarming prevalence' of child trafficking, abduction, and forced labour has been reported in Nigeria during the reference period.¹⁸⁰ According to NAPTIP, the average age of trafficked children in Nigeria is 15.¹⁸¹ Children are exploited in activities like illegal mining,¹⁸² domestic servitude, begging, street vending and forced labour in areas like textile manufacturing and agriculture.¹⁸³ Recruitment often occurs via criminal networks or trafficking groups that exploit vulnerable families, sometimes operating under the pretext of offering support or charitable assistance.¹⁸⁴ Children may also be abducted or unlawfully acquired, particularly from socio-economically disadvantage backgrounds, for purposes like illegal adoption or forced labour.¹⁸⁵ Within the phenomenon of so-called 'baby-factories', minor girls are exploited,¹⁸⁶ while infants are trafficked and sold¹⁸⁷ to infertile couples.¹⁸⁸

¹⁷⁵ Eziechine, A. O. and Esene. Q. O., Baby Factory Syndicate: An Emerging Trends of Trafficking in Agunloye's Disposable Womb, June 2024, [url](#), p. 165

¹⁷⁶ PLAC, Nigeria Annual Human Rights Report 2024, December 2024, [url](#), p. 53

¹⁷⁷ Cable (The), NAPTIP rescues 'nine pregnant women' from Abuja baby factory, 23 January 2025, [url](#); Punch, Police bust Lagos baby factory, rescue 10 victims, 8 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷⁸ DW, Why Nigeria's 'baby factories' continue to thrive, 18 March 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷⁹ UN Women, Assessment of national responses and strategies to combat and eliminate trafficking in persons and forced migration in Africa, January 2024, [url](#), pp. 5, 8

¹⁸⁰ PLAC, Nigeria Annual Human Rights Report 2024, December 2024, [url](#), p. 50

¹⁸¹ Nigeria, FMWASD, National Beijing +30 review, November 2024, [url](#), p. 62

¹⁸² AP, In Nigeria's lithium boom, many mines are illegal and children do much of the work, 12 December 2024, [url](#)

¹⁸³ UNODC, Human trafficking, n.d., [url](#); USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report 2024 – Nigeria, (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴ OCCRP, Nigerian authorities Take Down Child Trafficking Syndicates, 23 January 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵ OCCRP, Nigerian Pastor Arrested in Major Child-Trafficking Bust, 13 Children Rescued, 7 January 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶ Vanguard, NAPTIP decries surge in baby factories, sale of children across Nigeria, 20 May 2024, [url](#); DW, Why Nigeria's 'baby factories' continue to thrive, 18 March 2024, [url](#); BBC News, 'Pregnant' for 15 months: Inside the 'miracle' fertility scam, 25 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁸⁷ Guardian (The), HURIWA seeks emergency action on baby factories, child trafficking, 28 May 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸ Eziechine, A. O. and Esene. Q. O., Baby Factory Syndicate: An Emerging Trends of Trafficking in Agunloye's Disposable Womb, June 2024, [url](#), p. 166



Many children are being forced into street begging also by their Quranic school teachers¹⁸⁹ known as *mallams*. They exploit mostly boys from rural areas through forced labour in street begging and seasonal agricultural work, including across borders in Cameroon and Chad. These children often reside in unregulated, makeshift boarding facilities where they face unsanitary conditions, neglect, and exposure to disease. Reports also indicate cases of physical and sexual abuse by some *mallams* and older students. Observers note that rising poverty levels may be contributing to increased enrolment in these schools and heightened vulnerability to forced labour.¹⁹⁰

In December 2024, law enforcement authorities dismantled a child trafficking syndicate led by Pastor Dayo Bernard of the End Time Army Ministry, based in the Jos-Bukuru area (in Jos LGA of Plateau State). During the operation, five children between the ages of 2 and 4 were rescued. According to police reports, the pastor allegedly used evangelism as a means to persuade parents to release their children under the false promise of educational sponsorship. He later confessed to abducting and selling a total of 13 children.¹⁹¹ In January 2025, authorities rescued more than 200 children and dismantled several gangs and human trafficking networks as part of a series of nationwide operations focused on combating child exploitation.¹⁹² Arrests of ‘armed bandits’ were carried out in Kogi, Katsina and Ondo states.¹⁹³

The Chairperson of the Plateau State Gender and Equal Opportunities Commission attributed the increase in trafficking to ongoing insecurity, the rise in orphaned children, and the presence of IDP camps. She noted that some parents, due to lack of awareness, inadvertently hand over their children to traffickers posing as aid workers. A representative of the National Coordinator of the Christian Women for Excellence and Empowerment in Nigerian Society (CWEENS), reported that children are typically sold for between 350 000 and 750 000 naira (about 195 Euros and 420 Euros).¹⁹⁴

Armed groups, including Boko Haram, subject children to forced labour and sex slavery.¹⁹⁵ For more information see also [2.4. Children](#) and [2.10. Individuals targeted by Boko Haram](#).

2.2.6. Men victims of trafficking

Domestically, Nigerian men, including teenagers, are exploited in illegal mining¹⁹⁶ and forced labour.¹⁹⁷ In March 2025, Nigerian police arrested 130 people, including 113 foreign nationals, for alleged involvement in cyber-scams, like online casino and investment fraud. Nigerian authorities reported that some individuals working in these scam centres may also be victims of human trafficking, forced or coerced into criminal activities.¹⁹⁸ In April 2025, Nigerian

¹⁸⁹ UN Women, Assessment of national responses and strategies to combat and eliminate trafficking in persons and forced migration in Africa, January 2024, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁹⁰ USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report 2024 – Nigeria, (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#)

¹⁹¹ HumAngle, New Sect Linked to Human Trafficking Emerges in Nigeria, 20 January 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹² Nigeria Police Force, [Twitter], posted on: 20 January 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹³ OCCRP, Nigerian Authorities Take Down Child Trafficking Syndicates, 23 January 2025, [url](#); Nigeria Police Force, [Twitter], posted on: 20 January 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹⁴ HumAngle, New Sect Linked to Human Trafficking Emerges in Nigeria, 20 January 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵ Freedom House, Freedom in the world 2025, Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹⁶ Vanguard, How illegal miners wreak havoc on Nigeria — Investigation, 17 February 2024, [url](#)

¹⁹⁷ ILO, Forced Labour in Nigeria - At a glance, April 2024, [url](#)

¹⁹⁸ INTERPOL, More than 300 arrests as African countries clamp down on cyber threats, 24 March 2025, [url](#)



authorities repatriated 231 young Nigerians, mostly men, from Ghana who had been rescued from a human trafficking network involved in cybercrime. Ghanaian authorities uncovered 219 victims confined in 25 rooms within a residential estate in Accra, where they were allegedly forced to work under coercive and abusive conditions. Some victims showed signs of physical abuse, with reports of beatings and injuries linked to failure to meet financial targets. The trafficking ring had reportedly lured the victims with false job offers.¹⁹⁹

In parts of Africa, including Nigeria, young aspiring footballers²⁰⁰ often pursue international opportunities as a means of escaping poverty, unemployment, and political instability. Young men are approached by traffickers posing as agents or scouts who promise professional contracts with football clubs in Europe. Victims are requested to make a payment before their journey, only to discover they have been deceived and must take up low-paying jobs, including cleaning or hospitality, once overseas.²⁰¹

Recruitment and trafficking of Nigerian men has continued, particularly into Libya for labour exploitation.²⁰² Nigerian men, especially from Edo State, are systematically exploited in Libya through forced labour, extortion, and even sexual violence. Driven by poverty, social pressure, and poor livelihoods, some Nigerian men become both victims and participants in the trafficking economy as some are drawn into smuggling activities as a survival strategy.²⁰³

2.2.7. Return and long-term reintegration of victims of trafficking

Actors involved

Multiple actors - including government bodies, international organisations, and NGOs - are involved in the reintegration governance of Nigerian returnees. In 2019, the Nigerian government led the development of the Guidelines for Facilitating the Safe, Dignified and Voluntary Return, Readmission and Reintegration of Migrants in Nigeria Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), which entered implementation in 2020. The National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) is the designated agency responsible for coordinating reintegration efforts and for the implementation of the SOP. The SOP contains guidance for reintegration processes, in alignment with international legal standards, and is intended to enhance coordination among stakeholders involved in the reintegration of returnees.²⁰⁴ These stakeholders include the Nigeria Immigration Service, which is tasked with documenting and processing returnees; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose diplomatic missions support the return of stranded migrants; and NAPTIP, which delivers rehabilitation support to returned victims of trafficking. NAPTIP also engages with regional and local authorities, international organisations, and community-based organisations

¹⁹⁹ Punch, Over 200 trafficked Nigerians in Ghana to return Friday, 24 April 2025, [url](#)

²⁰⁰ Sports and Crime Briefing, Fake Agents Traffic Thousands of Players from Africa a Year – Super – Agent Speaks Out, 16 January 2025, [url](#); Info Migrants, Africa's young soccer players exploited, abandoned to their fate in Spain, 25 April 2024, [url](#)

²⁰¹ New Lines Magazine, They Dreamed of Making It Big in Soccer. They Were Trafficked Instead, 9 October 2024, [url](#)

²⁰² Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025

²⁰³ Chatham House, Tracing the 'continuum of violence' between Nigeria and Libya, 5 August 2024, [url](#)

²⁰⁴ Adeyinka, S., & Kuschminder, K., Reintegration Governance in Nigeria. Reintegrate Project, University of Amsterdam, 2025, [url](#), pp. 3-4; Senior representative at NCFRMI, online interview with EUAA, 6 August 2025



in the implementation of the SOP. At the regional level, the Edo State Task Force Against Human Trafficking (ETAHT) - which became the Edo State Migration Agency (EDMA) in 2024 - has played a leading role in reintegration governance.²⁰⁵ Also, the Nigerian government collaborates with the Network of Civil Society Organisations Against Child Trafficking, Abuse and Labour (NACTAL) to ensure referral of victims.²⁰⁶

As part of the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme, IOM provides support to Nigerian returnees, including returned victims of trafficking.²⁰⁷ Since 2016, IOM has implemented the EU-IOM Joint initiative²⁰⁸ for Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa (MPRR-SSA) funded by the European Union (EU). Since October 2022, IOM has supported the voluntary return of over 20 970 Nigerian migrants under the MPRR-SSA,²⁰⁹ primarily from Libya and Niger.²¹⁰ IOM also runs the Enhanced Reintegration Support for Survivors of Trafficking (ERS) project in Nigeria aiming at equipping survivors with business development skills, also offering them small business grants.²¹¹

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have been critical partners in addressing and managing return migration in Nigeria. In Edo State, several NGOs operate as a network of CSOs to provide psycho-social support to victims of trafficking, legal assistance and counselling, advocacy, case reporting to the authorities, and community sensitisation.²¹² Religious organisations also provide counselling and shelter services to trafficking victims for reintegration purposes.²¹³

Victim identification and access to support

As explained by Dr Sarah Adeyinka, in most cases, the modality of return determines the type of support that returned victims receive. This is largely because, in the case of EU-funded reintegration schemes, the available support and eligibility criteria are set by the donor. Individuals return to Nigeria through three main ways: forced return, self-funded or family-funded return, and assisted return through IOM's AVRR programmes. When people return through the AVRR, there is usually some form of reintegration support and assistance. This also means that returnees are officially registered, and both NCFRMI and NAPTIP are informed. When people return spontaneously, using their own or their family's money, they often come back through the same migration routes they used when leaving. In these cases,

²⁰⁵ Adeyinka, S., & Kuschminder, K., Reintegration Governance in Nigeria. Reintegrate Project, University of Amsterdam, 2025, [url](#), pp. 3-4

²⁰⁶ NACTAL, NACTAL participates in stakeholders meeting to discuss issues affecting the girl child in Nigeria, 24 September 2024, [url](#); NACTAL, Kwara NACTAL organized stakeholders' consultative meeting to combating human trafficking, 7 June 2023, [url](#)

²⁰⁷ IOM Nigeria, Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration, n.d., [url](#)

²⁰⁸ IOM, About the EU-IOM Joint Initiative, n.d., [url](#)

²⁰⁹ IOM, IOM Facilitates Voluntary Return of Stranded Migrants from Chad to Nigeria under EU-Funded Programme, 23 July 2025, [url](#)

²¹⁰ Adeyinka, S., & Kuschminder, K., Reintegration Governance in Nigeria. Reintegrate Project, University of Amsterdam, 2025, [url](#), p. 4

²¹¹ IOM, Reintegration and Empowerment: IOM Launches Reintegration Business Training for Human Trafficking Survivors in Nigeria, 18 April 2024, [url](#)

²¹² Uzomah, N. L. et al., Navigating the Complexities of Return Migration and Reintegration, 2024, [url](#), pp. 14-15

²¹³ Vatican News, Nigeria Conference of Women Religious against Human Trafficking commemorate Bahkita Day, 8 February 2025, [url](#); Our Sunday Visitor, Introducing the sisters who are rescuing victims of human trafficking in Nigeria, 17 April 2024, [url](#)



neither NAPTIP nor NCFRMI are aware that they are back in the country (or even left). As a result, ‘many victims of trafficking return completely under the radar.’²¹⁴

NAPTIP reported to have rescued and received 6 162 trafficking victims from September 2021 until August 2024.²¹⁵ Between 2017 and the first quarter of 2024,²¹⁶ IOM facilitated the voluntary return of 4 877 Nigerian victims of trafficking, comprising 4 261 females (87 %) and 616 males (13 %). IOM informed that, in coordination with relevant government agencies, civil society organisations and non-governmental partners, they supported the reception and reintegration of these individuals upon their return, providing safe and secure shelter, family tracing and reunification services.²¹⁷

Access to reintegration services for returnees is typically facilitated through various pathways. These include automatic referrals, when individuals are identified as survivors at border entry points; self-referral, when returnees independently seek assistance from NGOs, the Ministry of Women Affairs, or NAPTIP offices; community or family reporting, when relatives or community members alert NAPTIP; and referrals through IOM’s AVRR programmes.²¹⁸

Victims who return through their own or family means may seek support from organisations but are often told they cannot be assisted because they did not return through an assisted programme. Reintegration assistance provided by the Federal Government through the NCFRMI is accessible to all returnees but remains very limited due to inadequate funding. Also, while NCFRMI, some churches, and NGOs - such as Media Coalition & Awareness to Halt Trafficking (MeCAHT) - offer help regardless of return modality, most returnees are unaware of this. After being turned away a few times, they assume no support is available. The same applies to those forcibly returned. Dr Adeyinka noted how, in such cases, the risk of re-trafficking increases, as traffickers may approach returnees offering help to return abroad. ‘This creates a cycle of vulnerability and allows human trafficking to continue and thrive.’²¹⁹

According to Dr Adeyinka, despite ongoing efforts, gaps in victim identification persist. In some cases, even victims of trafficking returning to Nigeria through the IOM’s AVRR programme are not identified as victims upon arrival at the airport - and as a result, they receive no support at all. For her Reintegrate Study, Dr Adeyinka interviewed 69 returnees; 41 were victims of trafficking, but only four had been recognised by NAPTIP, while the remaining 39 victims - many of whom returned through the IOM scheme - arrived at the airport without being identified.²²⁰

²¹⁴ Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025

²¹⁵ Nigeria, NAPTIP, Director-General’s Year Three Performance Report & Three Years Performance Overview, September 2023 – August 2024, 4 November 2024, [url](#), p. 47

²¹⁶ IOM conducted an analysis of the profiles of Nigerian victims of trafficking based on data collected by IOM from 2017 to Q1 2024. Most of this data is derived from individuals assisted by IOM, who have been identified as victims of trafficking. See IOM, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking since 2017, 31 March 2024, [url](#), p. 3

²¹⁷ IOM, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking since 2017, 31 March 2024, [url](#), pp. 4, 6, 7, 12

²¹⁸ Omaiboje M., email communication with EUAA, 8 July 2025

²¹⁹ Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025

²²⁰ Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025



Shelter

NAPTIP operates 14 shelters across the country (in FCT, Lagos, Benin, Enugu, Sokoto, Uyo, Kano, Maiduguri, Osogbo, Ekiti, Yobe, Makurdi, Katsina, Ondo).²²¹ Services provided at the shelters include food, clothing, hygiene products, and basic educational courses. Victims in NAPTIP shelters are hosted for a maximum of six-week, and referred to NGOs-run shelters if longer stay is needed.²²² Usually, people may stay longer than six weeks, if they are under protection, or cooperate with NAPTIP to prosecute their traffickers.²²³ As noted by Dr. Adeyinka, the number of trafficking victims exceeds the available shelter capacity. As a result, NAPTIP is struggling to accommodate everyone in need. The same source added that representatives of the Lagos State Neighbourhood Agency (LSNA) reported frequent interception of trafficking cases at the Nigeria-Benin border. A key challenge they face is the lack of accommodation for victims. Although referrals are made to NAPTIP, overcrowding often prevents intake. As a result, LSNA is left with the options of either sending victims home or placing them in police cells overnight, despite the victims not being criminals. Many choose to leave, increasing the risk of re-trafficking. When victims are intercepted by NAPTIP and their shelters are full, they are referred to verified NGOs for support. NAPTIP maintains collaboration with many NGOs and regularly makes referrals. For example, many victims are referred to MeCAHT in Abuja.²²⁴ NAPTIP has a 'closed shelter' policy, meaning that individuals living at the shelter are not allowed to receive visitors or leave the premises freely.²²⁵ Observers raised concerns about the restrictive shelter environment potentially re-traumatising victims and reported instances where victims and suspects were housed within the same compound due to space constraints.²²⁶

Besides NAPTIP shelters, there are other state-run shelters, including in Lagos State and in Benin City (Edo State). In Lagos State, there are also IOM and Lagos State-run 'transit' shelters, where individuals may stay for a certain period - depending on how long the evacuation process takes and when they plan to travel back to their state of origin.²²⁷ Various NGOs and faith-based organisations also provide shelters for trafficking victims.²²⁸ Most of the shelters available, whether run by civil society, government, or international partners, are female-only shelters. The only shelters for male returnees at country level are the Patriotic Citizens Initiative (PCI), located in Lagos and run by a civil society organisation (it can accommodate around 20 beneficiaries);²²⁹ one operated by the NGO Society for the Empowerment of Young Persons (SEYP) in Benin city (Edo state) and another one run by Caritas Nigeria also based in Benin city.²³⁰

²²¹ Nigeria, NAPTIP, Director-General's Year Three Performance Report & Three Years Performance Overview, September 2023 – August 2024, 4 November 2024, [url](#), p. 10

²²² Nigeria, NAPTIP, Counselling & Rehabilitation Department, n.d., [url](#)

²²³ Nwoha R., online interview with EUAA, 18 July 2025

²²⁴ Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025

²²⁵ Nwoha R., online interview with EUAA, 18 July 2025; USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report 2024 – Nigeria, (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#)

²²⁶ USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report 2024 – Nigeria, (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#)

²²⁷ Nwoha R., online interview with EUAA, 18 July 2025

²²⁸ Nwoha R., online interview with EUAA, 18 July 2025

²²⁹ Senior representative at NCFRMI, online interview with EUAA, 6 August 2025

²³⁰ SEYP, email communication with EUAA, 25 September 2025



Lack of funding, including for NAPTIP shelters, affects the ability of these shelters to operate effectively.²³¹ Roland Nwoha, director at IRARA Nigeria, noted that some shelters remain unused. Despite ongoing efforts by the operators to improve them – the source added – many of these shelters were not originally designed for trafficking victims and lack appropriate facilities, such as childcare, maternal care, or psychological support. Stigma also plays a role, as staying in a shelter can label individuals as trafficking victims. Additionally, strict rules, such as restricted movement and no visitors, discourage use, especially for returnees who experienced similar confinement abroad.²³² The same source informed that returnees within Frontex Reintegration projects²³³ – of which IRARA is an implementing partner – are entitled to on-arrival support, which allows them to stay in a hotel for about five days while they plan their next steps. During this time, some choose to join friends or relatives, or return to their families if the environment is supportive. However, many prefer not to go back to their families due to stigma or a desire for independence. The hotel-stay gives them space to decide, while the NGO arranges long-term accommodation and activates the reintegration package to support them in renting a permanent place.²³⁴

Effective reintegration

Nigerian returnee victims of trafficking face various obstacles to reintegrate, mainly due to financial pressures, challenges reconnecting with family, and stigma.²³⁵ Women returnees especially experience significant reintegration challenges, including lack of family support, financial instability, and unemployment.²³⁶ Women who return pregnant or with children may experience additional difficulties, including family rejection and economic hardship.²³⁷ UN Women stated that promised reintegration support has often failed to materialise for returnees and widespread perceptions persist that institutions, including the United Nations, have failed to adequately support victims and survivors.²³⁸ At the same time, IOM reported that, out of the total 4 261 trafficked victims they have assisted to return between 2017 and the first quarter of 2024, 3 122 (64 %) had been ‘completely reintegrated into the society’, 34 % remained in the process of reintegration, 2 % had the ‘reintegration deactivated’.²³⁹

Reintegration services for trafficking victims, including trainings, are primarily provided by under-resourced NGOs and faith-based organisations. These actors face significant capacity and access limitations, which hinder their ability to effectively address the scale of trafficking.²⁴⁰ NGOs and international organisations offer varied reintegration trainings, such as

²³¹ Nwoha R., online interview with EUAA, 18 July 2025

²³² Nwoha R., online interview with EUAA, 18 July 2025

²³³ IRARA Nigeria, Joint Reintegration Services, n.d., [url](#)

²³⁴ Nwoha R., online interview with EUAA, 18 July 2025

²³⁵ UN Women, Assessment of national responses and strategies to combat and eliminate trafficking in persons and forced migration in Africa, January 2024, [url](#), p. 10; Adewumi, S., Negotiating access and belonging, 8 May 2024, [url](#), pp. 18-19; Uzomah, N. L. et al., Navigating the Complexities of Return Migration and Reintegration, 2024, [url](#), p. 15; Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025

²³⁶ Uzomah, N. L. et al., Navigating the Complexities of Return Migration and Reintegration, 2024, [url](#), p. 15

²³⁷ IOM, Nigerian women defying stigma upon return, n.d., [url](#)

²³⁸ UN Women, Assessment of national responses and strategies to combat and eliminate trafficking in persons and forced migration in Africa, January 2024, [url](#), pp. 14-15

²³⁹ IOM, Profile of Nigerian Victims of Human Trafficking since 2017, 31 March 2024, [url](#), pp. 4, 6, 7, 12; EUAA did not receive further details and clarification from IOM on these topics.

²⁴⁰ UN Women, Assessment of national responses and strategies to combat and eliminate trafficking in persons and forced migration in Africa, January 2024, [url](#), p. 10



business or entrepreneurship skills development. As noted by Dr Adeyinka, while the training is a very good initiative, the financial barriers remain a major challenge. Participants often cannot afford transport or food during multi-week programmes, especially when reimbursements are delayed. NAPTIP provides live-in training options for individuals residing in its shelters, arranging transportation to and from the training location, while some NGOs provide daily allowances. However, most victims still face cost-related obstacles. The same source added that 'even when reintegration support is provided, it can come with its own complications.' For instance, a returnee might be helped by an EU-funded IOM programme or NCFRMI to set up a business, but instead of using the proceeds for themselves, some are forced to give the money to traffickers to finally be free of their debt. 'So, they are left with nothing, forced to start from scratch again.'²⁴¹

Limited availability of psychosocial and social support services in Nigeria poses a major challenge, especially given the severity of the psychosocial impact many victims have experienced. Psycho-social support training is often not covered by reintegration programmes, 'reinforcing perceptions that it is less important than economic assistance.'²⁴² Some shelters have staff trained in psychological first aid and trauma counselling; however, Nigeria's mental health system remains under-resourced. Training on disability inclusion varies across regions and NGOs, while access to specialised services - such as those for individuals with intellectual disabilities - is still relatively limited.²⁴³

2.2.8. Social attitude towards returnee victims of trafficking

Returnees often face stigma²⁴⁴ from both family and the wider community, resulting in a hostile environment. In some cases, stigma is coupled with the financial burden of repaying debts, which can make safe resettlement in their home communities difficult or even impossible.²⁴⁵

Family attitudes towards returnees vary widely. Some welcome them with compassion and recognise them as victims of crime, particularly in more informed or urban settings. Others, however, reject or disown them to avoid communal shame, blaming them for leaving or for 'bringing shame' through experiences of rape or sexual exploitation. In some cases, returnees are sent away to live elsewhere.²⁴⁶

Male returnees - often trafficked for forced labour or petty crime - may face less sexual stigma than women but are still ridiculed as failures or criminals. Male survivors of sexual exploitation often remain silent due to extreme²⁴⁷ and deep-rooted stigma and a lack of adequate support. Prevailing gender norms discourage men from expressing vulnerability or acknowledging trauma, resulting in many cases going unreported and unaddressed. The consequences of

²⁴¹ Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025

²⁴² Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025

²⁴³ Omaiboje M., email communication with EUAA, 8 July 2025

²⁴⁴ Uzomah, N. L. et al., Navigating the Complexities of Return Migration and Reintegration, 2024, [url](#), p. 15;

Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025

²⁴⁵ Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025

²⁴⁶ Omaiboje M., email communication with EUAA, 8 July 2025

²⁴⁷ Omaiboje M., email communication with EUAA, 8 July 2025



this neglect can be serious. There have been reports of male returnees taking their own lives, while others have been re-recruited into criminal activity, including robbery.²⁴⁸

Women face harsher stigma (especially around ‘sexual shaming, marriageability, and respectability’), which often manifests as social shaming, gossip, and moral judgment directed at survivors. Many returnees from abroad are labelled as sex workers, viewed as having brought dishonour to their families, and are culturally excluded from being considered suitable for marriage.²⁴⁹ Such stigma also negatively affects their access to employment.²⁵⁰ In the Nigerian socio-cultural context, high expectations are placed on individuals living abroad. When returnees, especially women, fail to meet these expectations, they may face resentment, alienation, and even rejection from their families. These culturally driven expectations place added pressure on returnees, contributing to psychological trauma, hindering sense of belonging and their social reintegration.²⁵¹

Dr Adeyinka noted that ‘there is persistent and culturally embedded stigma surrounding sex in Nigerian society.’ The academic reported that many trafficked women she interviewed were raped, got pregnant and returned to Nigeria with a baby, but they could not disclose that the child was conceived through rape, as the stigma attached to it could ruin both their lives. Instead, ‘they must constantly lie, saying the father is in Libya or has left them.’ Many victims fear that sharing such experiences could later be used against them during conflicts or disputes. The same source added that ‘this complex situation, where families may depend on returnees for support while simultaneously stigmatising them, shows the contradictory social dynamics surrounding reintegration.’²⁵²

Survivors must navigate both social rejection and strong cultural expectations around family loyalty. As explained by Dr Adeyinka, based on findings of her joint research study,²⁵³ even after being trafficked by their own parents, victims continued to send financial support to those same family members. ‘This reflects a deeply ingrained cultural obligation to honour and support family, regardless of past harm.’ Even when returnees achieve financial success, the stigma may still persist. Individuals who return through forced means often come back empty-handed. In cases where families have taken loans to fund the migration or entered into financial agreements with traffickers, the return results in deeper economic hardship. The burden of repayment falls on the returnees, who are under pressure to find ways to repay debts, often without any resources or support.²⁵⁴ The Director at Women's Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON),²⁵⁵ Morenike Omaiboje, informed that they documented cases in which four families had confined their returning relatives - either siblings or children - upon their arrival. In

²⁴⁸ Senior representative at NCFRMI, online interview with EUAA, 6 August 2025

²⁴⁹ Omaiboje M., email communication with EUAA, 8 July 2025

²⁵⁰ Uzomah, N. L. et al., Navigating the Complexities of Return Migration and Reintegration, 2024, [url](#), p. 15

²⁵¹ Adewumi, S., Negotiating access and belonging, 8 May 2024, [url](#), pp. 18-20

²⁵² Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025

²⁵³ Derluyin I., et al., ChildMove: The impact of flight experiences on the psychological wellbeing of unaccompanied refugee minors, Ghent University, 2022, [url](#)

²⁵⁴ Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025

²⁵⁵ The Women's Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON) is an NGO with headquarters in Lagos, providing support to women survivors of violence and trafficking, including returnees. See WOCON, About us, n.d., [url](#)



three other instances, particularly involving siblings, returnees were pressured to repay the money their relatives had contributed towards their initial departure.²⁵⁶

2.2.9. Re-trafficking

Nigeria does not have a centralised system that monitors long-term reintegration or provides ongoing follow-up for victims of trafficking. As such, there is no consistent way to track reintegration outcomes nationwide and understand how these might impact re-trafficking.²⁵⁷

Sources indicated that for most returnees, lack of adequate reintegration measures, economic hardship and social stigma are the primary factors contributing to vulnerability to re-trafficking.²⁵⁸ In fact, returnees often find themselves back to the same conditions of poverty, deprivation, and conflict they initially sought to escape,²⁵⁹ which make them vulnerable to re-exploitation.²⁶⁰

According to Roland Nwoha, Country Director at IRARA Nigeria, 'it's very common that returnees want to go back and very common that many of them are being re-trafficked.' The source said that the constant economic, emotional, and social pressure compounded with lack of support from family or community, and persistent stigma, often pushes returnees to consider re-migrating. Some try to leave on their own, while others reconnect with Madams. 'When they look back at the life they had in Europe - even if they were undocumented and lacked the freedom they desired - they still had access to decent shelter, regular meals, and sometimes stipends to support themselves and their children. For many, even living under those conditions feels more manageable than returning home to face daily struggles.' Those who return with children – the source added - face additional pressure, struggling to provide education, nutrition, and care while also trying to survive themselves. Nwoha informed that many returnees usually start out hopeful upon coming back, but once they are confronted with the realities - often within the first year – they feel overwhelmed, and many end up wanting to leave again. 'We have seen this happen with quite a number of returnees.'²⁶¹

WOCON reported documenting over 100 cases of victims being re-trafficked after their return within the past five years. In some cases, women openly confess to the NGO their intention to leave again, while others ask to no longer be contacted. In many instances, the women give advance notice before cutting off communication. When no such warning is given and contact is lost, the organisation often assumes they have returned abroad.²⁶²

Out of the 69 returnees interviewed by Dr Adeyinka in 2024 for her research study, five had returned to Libya by 2025. When the academic met some of those still in Nigeria in April 2025, several mentioned they were considering going back, despite not wanting to, as they

²⁵⁶ Omaiboje M., email communication with EUAA, 8 July 2025

²⁵⁷ Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025

²⁵⁸ Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025; Nwoha R., online interview with EUAA, 18 July 2025

²⁵⁹ UN Women, Assessment of national responses and strategies to combat and eliminate trafficking in persons and forced migration in Africa, January 2024, [url](#), pp. 14-15

²⁶⁰ This Day, Bringing Trafficked Girls Back Not Enough, There Must Be Reintegration and Rehabilitation 21 May 2025, [url](#)

²⁶¹ Nwoha R., online interview with EUAA, 18 July 2025

²⁶² Omaiboje M., email communication with EUAA, 8 July 2025





felt that returning offered at least some income to support their families. For most, the decision was not solely about themselves, but about providing for children, elderly parents, or other dependents. The same source stated to be aware of specific cases where traffickers contacted returned victims requesting them to provide a certain number of girls in exchange for payment for each girl 'sent their way' and adding that if the person wished to return abroad, they could facilitate that as well.²⁶³

There are also returnees who feel strongly they would never want to go back, having gone through very difficult experiences in Europe. As noted by Roland Nwoha, many in this group managed to save some money, secure decent accommodation, and return with some stability. For them, the reintegration package served more as a supplement to what they had already prepared. This group tends to include more older returnees. In contrast, younger returnees are often more desperate to go back, feeling restless and disillusioned with life at home.²⁶⁴

According to UN Women, despite significant progress has been made in raising awareness about trafficking for sexual exploitation and, to some extent, its links to forced labour and forced migration, a general sense of optimism about success abroad persists, often outweighing awareness of the associated risks. In Edo State, for instance, this is largely driven by returnees who display signs of financial prosperity, such as owning large homes and luxury vehicles. Their remittances have led to visible socio-economic improvements for previously disadvantaged families and communities. Individuals also frequently return with accounts of improved living standards and higher incomes abroad, reinforcing community belief in the benefits of migration and downplaying the associated risks. After returning, as time passes, the perception of danger and risk diminishes, and some returnees express a renewed desire to attempt the journey again. UN Women stated that there is evidence that many individuals in some African countries continue to raise funds to pay agents for migration and that many deported or forced returnees continue in the search for 'green pastures' in countries where prostitution is legal and lucrative, despite the risks.²⁶⁵

2.2.10. State response in combating THB

Within the region, Nigeria is reported as the country that has taken most actions to improve the response to modern slavery in the past few years.²⁶⁶ However, challenges in the effective enforcement of anti-trafficking laws persist, primarily due to severe underfunding of government agencies, lack of expertise in the monitoring, investigation, and victim support.²⁶⁷ NAPTIP - the main agency responsible for combating human trafficking in Nigeria - collaborates with other law enforcement bodies, including the Nigeria Police, Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigeria Customs Service, various NGOs,²⁶⁸ international agencies - such

²⁶³ Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025

²⁶⁴ Nwoha R., online interview with EUAA, 18 July 2025

²⁶⁵ UN Women, Assessment of national responses and strategies to combat and eliminate trafficking in persons and forced migration in Africa, January 2024, [url](#), pp. 14-15

²⁶⁶ Walk Free Foundation, The Global Slavery Index 2023, 16 June 2023, [url](#), pp. 76, 81

²⁶⁷ Amune, M. S., Control and Regulation of Human Trafficking in Nigeria: A Legal Framework Analysis, 13 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 31-32

²⁶⁸ Amune, M. S., Control and Regulation of Human Trafficking in Nigeria: A Legal Framework Analysis, 13 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 31-32





as IOM,²⁶⁹ UNHCR,²⁷⁰ INTERPOL,²⁷¹ as well as with EU-funded projects.²⁷² The agency reported ongoing efforts to combat human trafficking by strengthening its collaboration also with the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) and other law enforcement bodies. Several raids and arrests of traffickers were carried out in 2024, including major operations in Kano²⁷³ and Borno states,²⁷⁴ and in 2025, leading to the rescue of several victims.²⁷⁵ Some of the victims were intercepted at Abuja's Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport.²⁷⁶

According to Roland Nwoha, NAPTIP tends to operate more reactively than proactively, often waiting for complaints before acting. Its effectiveness is further constrained by inadequate funding.²⁷⁷ A senior representative at NCFRMI told the EUAA that, although funding is as a challenge in reintegration efforts, a broader issue lies in the lack of collaboration and the fragmentation of efforts across stakeholders.²⁷⁸ Sources also indicated that corruption has hindered investigations and prosecutions of traffickers.²⁷⁹ Director at WOCON noted that court proceedings are often slow, with few successful prosecutions. Access to justice and convictions remain major challenges, largely due to poor implementation and corruption, despite existing legal structures and a trained judiciary.²⁸⁰

These issues are further exacerbated by the reluctance of victims and their families to provide information about traffickers and their networks.²⁸¹ Dr Adeyinka explained that many victims are discouraged from reporting trafficking or engaging with law enforcement due to both practical and systemic challenges. The process is often perceived as overly complicated and inaccessible. 'Victims are frequently sent from one office to another, with no clear guidance. For instance, they may be told that their case does not qualify as trafficking, or they are redirected repeatedly without receiving support.' This endless referral cycle leads many to abandon the process altogether.²⁸² Similarly, the Director at WOCON observed that families often discourage returned victims from reporting or cooperating with prosecutions, preferring out-of-court settlements. This is also largely due to a prevailing culture of silence, driven by fear of stigma and community embarrassment.²⁸³ There is also a 'widespread, though not always accurate, perception' that law enforcement will not act, with many victims believing police are corrupt and traffickers can buy influence. As a result, victims rarely report directly

²⁶⁹ IOM, Nigeria Crisis Response Plan 2024-2025, 17 December 2024, [url](#), p. 7

²⁷⁰ UNHCR, Where we work, n.d., [url](#)

²⁷¹ INTERPOL, How INTERPOL supports Nigeria to tackle international crime, n.d., [url](#)

²⁷² EMN, Trafficking in human beings – the international dimension, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 22, 32, 88

²⁷³ Premium Times, Kano: NAPTIP rescues 285 victims, arrests 22 human traffickers in 2024, 9 January 2025, [url](#)

²⁷⁴ Daily Post, NAPTIP rescues 253 victims, obtained 9 convictions in 2024, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

²⁷⁵ Nigeria, NAPTIP, DIA Operatives Bust Transnational Organized Human Trafficking Syndicate in Nigeria: Arrest Three Suspects, Rescue 20 Foreign Victims, 13 June 2025, [url](#)

²⁷⁶ Nigeria, NAPTIP, NAPTIP blows hot! Scuttles Trafficking of Recruited Nigerians to Iraq; Intercepts 13 Victims at Naia, Abuja, 19 February 2025, [url](#)

²⁷⁷ Nwoha R., online interview with EUAA, 18 July 2025

²⁷⁸ Senior representative at NCFRMI, online interview with EUAA, 6 August 2025

²⁷⁹ ICIR, Corruption among law enforcement agencies slowing fight against human trafficking, NAPTIP says, 25 July 2024, [url](#); USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report 2024 – Nigeria, (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#); Omaiwoje M., email communication with EUAA, 8 July 2025

²⁸⁰ Omaiwoje M., email communication with EUAA, 8 July 2025

²⁸¹ Amune, M. S., Control and Regulation of Human Trafficking in Nigeria: A Legal Framework Analysis, 13 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 31-32

²⁸² Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025

²⁸³ Omaiwoje M., email communication with EUAA, 8 July 2025



and typically engage the justice system through NGOs or NAPTIP, who often act on their behalf.²⁸⁴

Additionally, both victims and their families often fear retaliation from traffickers.²⁸⁵ Roland Nwoha stated that ‘the fear of retaliation from traffickers is very real,’ especially for those who swore oaths of secrecy, through rituals performed by *juju* priests. These individuals live with constant fear, not just of physical harm but also of psychological and spiritual consequences. Many of them believe deeply in the power of these oaths and see the threats tied to them as real and dangerous.²⁸⁶ Dr Adeyinka noted that although oath-taking plays a role (as victims are often forced to swear secrecy, reinforced by threats), fear goes beyond the oath. Traffickers often know where victims’ families live, raising concerns for their safety. In addition, fear is compounded by a lack of trust in law enforcement.²⁸⁷ Particularly in Edo State, trafficking victims are often familiar with their traffickers, who may be part of the larger community where remittances continue to sustain families. In this context, victim-witnessing remains a significant challenge for Nigeria’s criminal justice system, as victims often perceive their exploiters as closely tied to their material wellbeing.²⁸⁸

As noted by the director at IRARA Nigeria, Roland Nwoha, the government, with international support, has made efforts to raise awareness about the dangers of irregular migration and trafficking. However, the approach remains largely ineffective, as many actors still rely on outdated, top-down methods developed without meaningful community input, resulting in limited local relevance and ownership. In Edo State, especially, the economy heavily relies on remittances, including money sent by trafficking victims, often earned through exploitation and invested locally. ‘This economic dependence makes it difficult to convince those benefiting, directly or indirectly, that trafficking is wrong and must stop.’²⁸⁹

A senior representative at NCFRMI told the EUAA that Nigeria takes the issue of human trafficking ‘very seriously’, with efforts undertaken to link international partners with national agencies and avoid a fragmented response.²⁹⁰ The Nigerian government has prosecuted individuals involved in human trafficking, both in Nigeria and overseas. In its first mutual legal assistance case with a foreign government, Nigeria collaborated with Belgian authorities to prosecute a trafficker, who was sentenced to 12 years’ imprisonment and fined for recruiting and exploiting Nigerian victims in Belgium.²⁹¹ NAPTIP reported that 190 convictions took place from January 2022 to August 2024, representing 27.94 % of total convictions for trafficking in human beings secured by NAPTIP in 21 years.²⁹²

²⁸⁴ Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025

²⁸⁵ Amune, M. S., Control and Regulation of Human Trafficking in Nigeria: A Legal Framework Analysis, 13 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 31-32; Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025; Nwoha R., online interview with EUAA, 18 July 2025; Senior representative at NCFRMI, online interview with EUAA, 6 August 2025

²⁸⁶ Nwoha R., online interview with EUAA, 18 July 2025

²⁸⁷ Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025

²⁸⁸ Okorie, M. M. and Okeja U., Prosecuting human traffickers in Nigeria: victim-witnessing and community-oriented challenges, 8 October 2024, [url](#), pp. 1, 12, 14

²⁸⁹ Nwoha R., online interview with EUAA, 18 July 2025

²⁹⁰ Senior representative at NCFRMI, online interview with EUAA, 6 August 2025

²⁹¹ USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report 2024 – Nigeria, (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#); Premium Times, Nigerian woman jailed for trafficking 12 girls abroad for sexual exploitation, 4 October 2023, [url](#)

²⁹² Nigeria, NAPTIP, Director-General’s Year Three Performance Report & Three Years Performance Overview, September 2023 – August 2024, 4 November 2024, [url](#), p. 46



2.3. Women and girls

2.3.1. Legal and social status

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria²⁹³ prohibits gender-based discrimination, and several laws have been enacted to promote the rights and improve the status of women.²⁹⁴ Nigeria is a signatory to several international and regional treaties on gender equality and women's rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)²⁹⁵ and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol).²⁹⁶ However, as of 2025, Nigeria has not yet incorporated the CEDAW into national law.²⁹⁷ Despite legal commitments, Nigerian women have continued to face widespread discrimination in both law and practice.²⁹⁸ Many existing legal frameworks either condone or fail to adequately address critical issues such as domestic violence and gender inequality. Discriminatory elements can be found in various legal sources, including the Labour Act, customary law, sharia law, and even within the Constitution.²⁹⁹ Some of these legal provisions discriminate women with regards to nationality, citizenship, health, education, marital and parental rights, employment,³⁰⁰ inheritance and property rights.³⁰¹

Gender equality has remained a challenge in the country, with reports of widespread sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including child marriage and prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C).³⁰² Lack of effective implementation of legal provisions, insufficient public awareness, and cultural traditions are among the key obstacles for achieving progress.³⁰³ Religion, tradition, and culture are frequently used to justify violations of

²⁹³ Nigeria, The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 Updated with the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Alterations (2010), 4th Alteration (2017) and 5th Alteration (2023), September 2024, [url](#)

²⁹⁴ Kehinde, O. J. and Abdulraheem, M., Prohibition of Discriminatory Laws and Practices Against Women's Rights in Nigeria, 29 November 2024, [url](#)

²⁹⁵ UN OHCHR, Ratification Status for Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

²⁹⁶ Kehinde, O. J. and Abdulraheem, M., Prohibition of Discriminatory Laws and Practices Against Women's Rights in Nigeria, 29 November 2024, [url](#)

²⁹⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – Nigeria, 26 March 2024, [url](#), paragraph 152.23; Alita, E. C. et al., The United Nations and the Pursuit of Gender Equality in Nigeria: A Critical Analysis of CEDAW Implementation and Challenges, 12 December 2024, [url](#)

²⁹⁸ Njila, M. M., An analysis of the Legal Framework for the Protection of Women Against Discriminatory Practices in Nigeria, 8 September 2024, [url](#), p. 82; Kehinde, O. J. and Abdulraheem, M., Prohibition of Discriminatory Laws and Practices Against Women's Rights in Nigeria, 29 November 2024, [url](#)

²⁹⁹ For instance, Chapter III, Section 26 of the Constitution limits a Nigerian woman's ability to confer citizenship on her foreign spouse. See Nigeria, The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 Updated with the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Alterations (2010), 4th Alteration (2017) and 5th Alteration (2023), September 2024, [url](#), Chapter III, Section 26; Kehinde, O. J. and Abdulraheem, M., Prohibition of Discriminatory Laws and Practices Against Women's Rights in Nigeria, 29 November 2024, [url](#)

³⁰⁰ Kehinde, O. J. and Abdulraheem, M., Prohibition of Discriminatory Laws and Practices Against Women's Rights in Nigeria, 29 November 2024, [url](#)

³⁰¹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#); Kehinde, O. J. and Abdulraheem, M., Prohibition of Discriminatory Laws and Practices Against Women's Rights in Nigeria, 29 November 2024, [url](#)

³⁰² EEAS, 2024 Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World (country profiles), 22 May 2025, [url](#), p. 127; Initiative for Equal Rights, 2024 Human Rights Violations Report, January 2025, [url](#), pp. 33-34

³⁰³ Ayamba, I. et al., U. S., National Gender Policy in Nigeria: Uncovering the Core Issues, October 2024, [url](#), p. 89; Njila, M. M., An analysis of the Legal Framework for the Protection of Women Against Discriminatory Practices in Nigeria, 8 September 2024, [url](#), p. 82



women's rights, particularly in areas such as education, marriage, inheritance, property ownership, and protection from gender-based violence and harmful practices.³⁰⁴

Nigerian women face widespread discrimination also in areas such as access to education, employment and political representation.³⁰⁵ Levels of female participation in the labour force as well as in political and economic decision-making roles have remained low.³⁰⁶ In 2024, only four women secured seats in the Senate and 14 in the House of Representatives. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) reported that women made up just 8 % of all candidates in the 2023 elections.³⁰⁷ Women's representation in ministerial roles dropped from 17.6 % in 2024 to 8.8 % in 2025.³⁰⁸

The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) reported that, as of February 2025, about 8 million people in Nigeria, including 1.95 million women of reproductive age, were in need of humanitarian assistance due to conflict, food insecurity, lack of sexual and reproductive health services, limited education.³⁰⁹ Abortion is only legally permitted when the woman's life is at risk, leading many to seek unsafe, illegal procedures that often result in medical complications. Those who suffer such complications frequently lack access to adequate follow-up care.³¹⁰ Women and girls with disabilities face discrimination in accessing health, including sexual, reproductive health and maternal health.³¹¹ For more information see [3.7 Healthcare](#).

2.3.2. Situation of unmarried, widowed, divorced women and women without support network

Within the phenomenon of so-called 'baby-factories', teenage girls or unmarried young women have been forced into sex-slavery and trafficked as 'baby-making machines' across the country.³¹² For more information see [2.2.4. Women victims of trafficking](#).

A 2024 study indicated a high incidence of poverty among unemployed and unmarried women in North Central Nigeria, due to limited access to education and training, and difficulties supporting themselves.³¹³ The director of WOCON told the EUAA that single women often face severe barriers to accessing housing, employment, education, healthcare, and other essential services. Most belong to low-income backgrounds, have not attended school

³⁰⁴ Kehinde, O. J. and Abdulraheem, M., Prohibition of Discriminatory Laws and Practices Against Women's Rights in Nigeria, 29 November 2024, [url](#)

³⁰⁵ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

³⁰⁶ Nigeria, FMWASD, National Beijing +30 review, November 2024, [url](#), p. 36; Conversation (The), Nigerian children don't imagine women as political leaders: what shapes their view 3 June 2025, [url](#)

³⁰⁷ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

³⁰⁸ WEF, Global Gender Gap Report 2025: Nigeria, Economic profiles, 11 June 2025, [url](#), p. 40

³⁰⁹ UNFPA, Situation Report – Armed conflict in North-East Nigeria continues to place lives at risk, 5 February 2025, [url](#), p.1

³¹⁰ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

³¹¹ Nigeria Health Watch, Nigeria's Health System Must Eliminate Obstacles to Maternal Care for Women with Disabilities, 17 March 2025, [url](#); Global Disability Fund, Situational Analysis on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria, Country Full Report, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 49-50; BBC Media Action, Using radio drama to tackle attitudes towards family planning in Northern Nigeria, November 2024, [url](#), p. 1

³¹² Eziechine, A. O. and Esene, Q. O., Baby Factory Syndicate: An Emerging Trend of Trafficking in Angunloye's Disposable Womb, June 2024, [url](#), p. 166

³¹³ Marwa, Z. and Mainoma, H. M., Evaluating the incidence of poverty among unemployed and unmarried women in North Central Nigeria, February 2024, [url](#), p. 113



and have limited awareness of their rights or available support systems. There is also a clear urban-rural divide: in urban centres, even if people are unaware of their rights, they might still receive information or guidance from neighbours. In rural areas, by contrast, overall awareness is lower, and communities often lack such information or support. Further, single women who lack support network, including divorced women and victims of trafficking, are often perceived by society and even their families as ‘morally questionable’ or ‘loose.’ This perception leads to deep stigma and social exclusion.³¹⁴ Landlords often view single women as financially unreliable,³¹⁵ or assume they are sex workers.³¹⁶ For more information see [2.2.8. Social attitude towards returnee victims of trafficking.](#)

Divorced women face significant challenges due to limited economic independence and the stigma associated with being single. This combination often leaves them vulnerable to isolation, financial hardship, and emotional strain. As reported by the Guardian, ‘Nigerian society often views a woman who is no longer in her husband’s home as unworthy of marriage, regardless of the circumstances.’³¹⁷

Widows may face abuse,³¹⁸ social exclusion, and accusations after their husbands’ deaths.³¹⁹ Deprived of spousal income, many descend into poverty and struggle to secure basic needs such as food and shelters.³²⁰ Moreover, disposal of the estate in Nigeria is governed by customary law,³²¹ which often forbid widows from inheriting their late husband’s assets.³²² This may leave them in extreme poverty, isolated from friends and family, and vulnerable to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. Customs and traditions have continued to ‘encourage gender-based violence against widows’. Traditional leaders, church groups, and government agencies enable these abuses through inaction and a lack of political will, while victims’ silence further reinforced their vulnerability.³²³ Widowhood cultural practices were described as ‘inhumane or unfair’. Examples included ‘shaving of hair including private parts, wearing only black clothing throughout the mourning period from six months to one year,

³¹⁴ Omaiwoje M., email communication with EUAA, 8 July 2025

³¹⁵ Daily Trust, Stereotypes, Biases Women Face In Quest For Accommodation, 14 December 2024, [url](#); HumAngle, What It Costs to Rent a House As A Single Woman in Nigeria, 28 August 2024, [url](#)

³¹⁶ HumAngle, What It Costs to Rent a House As A Single Woman in Nigeria, 28 August 2024, [url](#)

³¹⁷ Guardian (The), Female Genital Mutilation: Action, not words, needed to end menace, 7 March 2025, [url](#)

³¹⁸ Anuforo, P. et al., Influences of Widowhood Cultural Practices, Values, and Beliefs on the Health and Well-being of Nigerian Women: An Integrative Review, 6 October 2024, [url](#); Punch, Heartrending tales of vulnerable widows battling for survival amid soaring cost of living, 1 June 2024, [url](#)

³¹⁹ Punch, Heartrending tales of vulnerable widows battling for survival amid soaring cost of living, 1 June 2024, [url](#); Uroko, F., ‘Plead the case of the widow’ (Isaiah 1:17): The stigma of widowhood in eastern Nigeria and the needed faith-based interventions, 7 November 2024, [url](#), p. 43

³²⁰ This day, From Struggle to Strength: Nigerian Widows Find Hope, 25 September 2024, [url](#)

³²¹ Cookey, M., A legal appraisal of the Inheritance rights of women in Nigeria, October 2024, [url](#), p. 1

³²² Vivian, A. E., Challenges of Women Inheritance Rights Under the Act and the Various Customs in Nigeria, 18 January 2025, [url](#), p. 42

³²³ Uroko, F., ‘Plead the case of the widow’ (Isaiah 1:17): The stigma of widowhood in eastern Nigeria and the needed faith-based interventions, 7 November 2024, [url](#), p. 43



isolation/alienation, drinking water used to bathe the corpse, levirate marriage,³²⁴ dispossession from husband's property, and ritualised weeping³²⁵.³²⁶

2.3.3. Violence against women and girls

Legal framework

Domestic legal provisions criminalising some forms of violence against girl-child are contained in the Child's Rights Act of 2003, prohibiting child marriage, sexual abuse and exploitation, the use of children in criminal activities, child labour, and other forms of exploitation.³²⁷ Southern states apply the Criminal Code,³²⁸ while the Northern states rely on the Penal Code Act as their principal criminal legislation.³²⁹ Although both codes address gender-based violence, they contain significant limitations,³³⁰ including the exclusion of marital rape from criminal liability.³³¹ For instance, Section 55(1)(d) of the Penal Code³³² allows forms of domestic violence.³³³ Further, under sharia law applied in the aforementioned 12 northern states, 'beating of the wife is not a crime so long that the beating does not inflict serious injury or grievous harmful'.³³⁴

In 2015, Nigeria enacted The Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) (VAPP) Act,³³⁵ which is described as the most comprehensive legislation addressing various forms of violence against

³²⁴ Levirate marriage is a custom or law requiring a widow to marry her deceased husband's brother or a close male relative to ensure the deceased's lineage and property continue. See Encyclopaedia Britannica, Levirate, n.d., [url](#)

³²⁵ In some Yoruba communities, widows are expected to keep vigils and demonstrate intense sorrow through ritualised wailing and profuse crying; failure to do so is believed to risk mental illness or loss of entitlements. See Dijeh A. E. et al., Cultural Challenges of Widows and Widowers' Coping Strategies in SouthSouth Geo Political Zone, Nigeria, 2 February 2025, [url](#), p. 551

³²⁶ Anuforo, P. et al., Influences of Widowhood Cultural Practices, Values, and Beliefs on the Health and Well-being of Nigerian Women: An Integrative Review, 6 October 2024, [url](#), p. 189

³²⁷ Grace, O. T., and Tolulope, J. S., The legal framework for protecting the rights of the girl child in Nigeria: How effective?, 2024, [url](#), pp. 85-87; Nigeria, NHRC, Child Rights, n.d., [url](#); Nigeria, Child Right's Act, 2003, [url](#), Art. 21, 23, 28, 28, 31, 32, 33

³²⁸ Nigeria, Criminal Code Act, 1 June 1916, [url](#), Section 1A. The Criminal Code applies in Nigeria's 17 southern states: Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Rivers, Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo.

³²⁹ Nigeria, Act No. 25 of 1960, Penal Code (Northern State) Federal Provisions Act, 30 December 1960, [url](#), Section 3(1). The Penal Code applies in Nigeria's 19 northern states: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, Yobe, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Jigawa, Zamfara, Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, and Plateau.

³³⁰ Lawyard, Women's Rights and Gender-Based Violence: Legal Reforms Needed in Nigeria by Grace Sunday-Ayegba, 14 January 2025, [url](#)

³³¹ Lawyard, Women's Rights and Gender-Based Violence: Legal Reforms Needed in Nigeria by Grace Sunday-Ayegba, 14 January 2025, [url](#); Al, "Help Us Build Our Lives": Girl Survivors of Boko Haram and Military Abuses in North-East Nigeria, 1 June 2024, [url](#), p. 20. Nigeria, Criminal Code Act, 1916, [url](#), sections 6, 357; Nigeria, Penal Code, section 281(1)

³³² Section 55(1)(d) of the Penal Code reads 'Nothing is an offence which does not amount to the infliction of child, pupil, grievous hurt upon a person and which is done-(d) by a husband for the purpose of correcting his wife such husband and wife being subject to any customary law in which the correction is recognized as lawful'. Nigeria, Act No. 25 of 1960, Penal Code (Northern State) Federal Provisions Act, 30 December 1960, [url](#), Section 55(1)(d)

³³³ Lawyard, Women's Rights and Gender-Based Violence: Legal Reforms Needed in Nigeria by Grace Sunday-Ayegba, 14 January 2025, [url](#); Kehinde, O. J. and Abdulraheem, M., Prohibition of Discriminatory Laws and Practices Against Women's Rights in Nigeria, 29 November 2024, [url](#)

³³⁴ Kehinde, O. J. and Abdulraheem, M., Prohibition of Discriminatory Laws and Practices Against Women's Rights in Nigeria, 29 November 2024, [url](#)

³³⁵ Nigeria, Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015 (VAPP), 14 May 2015, [url](#)



women,³³⁶ including domestic violence, rape, FGM/C and child marriage.³³⁷ Kano state has not enacted the VAPP Act, while Ekiti and Lagos have enacted separate laws on SGBV. In Taraba State, the VAPP Act was passed by the Assembly but has not been assented.³³⁸ In August 2024, a bill to repeal the VAPP Act 2015, advanced to its second reading in the Senate,³³⁹ raising concerns and opposition from women rights' groups.³⁴⁰ By the time this report was finalised, the proposed bill to repeal the Act was still pending. Implementation of the VAPP Act remains, however, uneven across states.³⁴¹ Obstacles to full implementation include lack of awareness, inadequate funding, weak legal enforcement,³⁴² social norms, poor coordination among authorities,³⁴³ as well as inadequate protection for survivors and witnesses.³⁴⁴

Prevalence

Women and girls in Nigeria from all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds³⁴⁵ have continued to be subjected to widespread sexual and gender-based violence,³⁴⁶ including domestic, sexual violence, FGM/C and child marriage.³⁴⁷ From January to May 2025, Nigeria's National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) documented 33 256 sexual and gender-based violence cases.³⁴⁸ In 2025, a representative from NAPTIP stated that the agency had documented over 3 000 cases of violence against women in the FCT alone.³⁴⁹ Women in conflict settings, and especially girls in conflict zones and IDPs camps,³⁵⁰ face heightened vulnerability and violence.³⁵¹ In the first half of 2024, North-East Nigeria experienced a significant rise in gender-based violence, especially involving intimate partner violence, child sexual exploitation, and forced marriages. Risks of violence against women have been

³³⁶ Lawyard, Women's Rights and Gender-Based Violence: Legal Reforms Needed in Nigeria by Grace Sunday-Ayegba, 14 January 2025, [url](#)

³³⁷ Nigeria, Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015 (VAPP), 14 May 2015, [url](#), Part I

³³⁸ Partners West Africa Nigeria, VAPP Tracker, accessed 18 June 2025, [url](#)

³³⁹ AI, The State of the World's Human Rights; Nigeria, 29 April 2025, [url](#); Cable (The), Activist petitions senate on move to repeal VAPP Act, 15 September 2024, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2025 (Events of 2024), Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

³⁴⁰ Nigerian Tribune, Activists warn against repealing VAPP Act, call for amendment, 12 September 2024, [url](#); SOAWR, #MaputoAt22: Our Rights Are Non-Negotiable, 11 July 2025, [url](#)

³⁴¹ Invictus, Beyond Enactment – A data-driven survey report on the implementation of the VAPP Act (2015) and Related State Laws, 2025, [url](#), p. 5; Izevbizua, M. O. and Omoruyi, K. P., The Role of Government in Abolishing Female Genital Mutilation in Nigeria: A Panacea for Gender-Based Violence, March 2024, [url](#), p. 228

³⁴² Invictus, Beyond Enactment – A data-driven survey report on the implementation of the VAPP Act (2015) and Related State Laws, 2025, [url](#), p. 5

³⁴³ Democracy Radio, 10 Years On, Nigeria's Anti-Violence Law Struggles to Deliver Justice, 31 May 2025, [url](#)

³⁴⁴ Ikuteyijo, O. et al., Stakeholders' engagement with law to address gender-based violence in Southwest Nigeria: a qualitative study using normalization process theory to explore implementation challenges, 19 August 2024, [url](#)

³⁴⁵ PLAC, Nigeria Annual Human Rights Report 2024, December 2024, [url](#), p. 52

³⁴⁶ EEAS, 2024 Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World, 22 May 2025, [url](#), p. 127

³⁴⁷ Nigeria, FMWASD, National Beijing +30 review, November 2024, [url](#), p. 35; Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#); Initiative for Equal Rights, 2024 Human Rights Violations Report, January 2025, [url](#), pp. 33-34

³⁴⁸ Nigeria, NHRC, January 2025 Human Rights Dashboard, 14 February 2025, [url](#); Nigeria, NHRC, February 2025 Human Rights Dashboard, 6 March 2025, [url](#); Nigeria, NHRC, March 2025 Human Rights Dashboard, 5 April 2025, [url](#); Nigeria, NHRC, NHRC May 2025 Human Rights Dashboard, 10 June 2025, [url](#); Nigeria, NHRC, NHRC April 2025 Human Rights Situation Dashboard, [url](#)

³⁴⁹ Democracy Radio, 10 Years On, Nigeria's Anti-Violence Law Struggles to Deliver Justice, 31 May 2025, [url](#)

³⁵⁰ Nigeria, Federal Government of Nigeria and UNICEF, The State of Nigeria's Children: Summary of the 2024 Situation Analysis of Children and Adolescents in Nigeria, 2025, [url](#), p. 9

³⁵¹ UNFPA, Situation Report – Armed conflict in North-East Nigeria continues to place lives at risk, 5 February 2025, [url](#), p. 1



exacerbated by the ongoing conflict, economic challenges, and the impact of flooding.³⁵² Similarly, between January and May 2025, violence against women remained one of the ‘key concerns’ identified by UNHCR across IDPs’ sites.³⁵³ Further, the majority of women in Nigeria, (around 60 %), lacks the ability to make independent decisions about their sexual and reproductive health, increasing their risk of violence and exploitation.³⁵⁴

Access to support services and state response

Shelters for women victims of violence are accessible, particularly in major cities such as Lagos and Abuja; however, their availability remains insufficient relative to the scale of need; also there is a significant lack of awareness about their existence.³⁵⁵ In November 2024, the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (FMWASD) reported that the government has increased resources to prevent and address different forms of violence against women.³⁵⁶ As part of these efforts, several states have introduced 24-hour helplines and expanded the number of shelters for survivors of violence. These shelters provide emergency housing, legal assistance, and access to counselling and health services.³⁵⁷ The Nigerian Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency reported that it was unable to meet the current level of demand.³⁵⁸ In North-East Nigeria, women survivors face additional challenges in getting support due to lack of safe spaces, inadequate referral mechanisms, limited health infrastructure,³⁵⁹ as well as access to legal assistance.³⁶⁰

While legal and institutional mechanisms for women victims of violence exist, their functioning and effectiveness remain limited. Challenges include systemic corruption, nepotism, and a lack of basic infrastructure. For example, contacting hotlines can take days due to poor network coverage, and access often depends on personal connections.³⁶¹ In North-East Nigeria, protection is often inadequate, with law enforcement unresponsive or overstretched due to limited resources or fear of reprisals.³⁶² The Nigerian Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency reported that significant gaps remain in the adequacy and timeliness of legal protection for victims and in holding offenders accountable.³⁶³

³⁵² PSNE, Protection Sector North-East Nigeria (PSNE) Annual Report 2024, 13 March 2025, [url](#), p. 15

³⁵³ CCCM Cluster and Nigeria Shelter Sector, Humanitarian Flash Appeal: CCCM, Shelter and NFI North-East Nigeria; January - May 2025, 21 May 2025, [url](#), p. 2

³⁵⁴ UNICEF, Unites to End Gender-Based Violence: 16 Days of Activism Highlights Urgent Call for Action, 2 December 2024, [url](#)

³⁵⁵ Omaiboje M., email communication with EUAA, 8 July 2025

³⁵⁶ Nigeria, FMWASD, National Beijing +30 review, November 2024, [url](#), p. 67

³⁵⁷ Nigeria, FMWASD, National Beijing +30 review, November 2024, [url](#), p. 64

³⁵⁸ Nigeria, FMWASD, National Beijing +30 review, November 2024, [url](#), p. 63

³⁵⁹ Humanitarian Action, Nigeria 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan – 3.9.1. Gender-Based Violence AoR, 22 January 2025, [url](#)

³⁶⁰ PSNE, Protection Sector North-East Nigeria (PSNE) Annual Report 2024, 13 March 2025, [url](#), p. 16

³⁶¹ Omaiboje M., email communication with EUAA, 8 July 2025

³⁶² PSNE, Protection Sector North-East Nigeria (PSNE) Annual Report 2024, 13 March 2025, [url](#), p. 16

³⁶³ Nigeria, FMWASD, National Beijing +30 review, November 2024, [url](#), p. 63

Domestic violence

Domestic violence against women and girls is a widespread phenomenon across Nigeria.³⁶⁴ According to NHRC data, a total of 84 187 cases of domestic violence were reported between January and December 2024.³⁶⁵ In the first quarter of 2025 (January to March), an additional 17 252 cases were recorded, followed by 6 135 cases in April and 3 361 in May.³⁶⁶ Northern Nigeria has seen an ‘alarming rise’ in SGBV cases, with 73 % of cases in 2024 involving intimate partner violence, up from 57 % in 2023 and 63 % in 2022.³⁶⁷ Among married or cohabiting victims, 98 % experienced abuse within the context of intimate partner violence - which is often seen as ‘a private matter’.³⁶⁸ A study on help-seeking behaviours among 31 802 women across Nigeria found that 67.1 % did not seek help after experiencing intimate partner violence, with only 1.9 % turning to formal support, and most relying on informal sources like friends or family.³⁶⁹ A 2024 study in Ogbomoso, Oyo State (South-West Nigeria) found that healthcare professionals had inadequate knowledge and attitudes towards victims of domestic violence, lacked referral resources to support them, and worked in hospitals without documented protocols for managing such cases.³⁷⁰

The NGO Femi(ni)cide Watch Platform (FWP) recorded 135 cases of femicides in 2024 and additional 70 cases as of 5 August 2025, with offenders predominantly being family members. The highest number of cases occurred in Delta, Lagos, and Ogun states.³⁷¹ Cases of domestic violence and femicides are however underreported, due to lack of trust in the system and limited inter-agency documentation.³⁷² Underreporting is further exacerbated by the absence of a legal framework specifically addressing femicide,³⁷³ as well as the lack of a comprehensive national data system for tracking such cases.³⁷⁴

³⁶⁴ Guardian (The), Activists call for state of emergency in Nigeria over gender-based violence, 25 February 2025, [url](#); Initiative for Equal Rights, 2024 Human Rights Violations Report, January 2025, [url](#), pp. 33-34; Nigeria, NHRC, The Nexus of Climate Change and Human Rights in Nigeria: Assessing the Impact of the Climate Crisis on Vulnerable Communities and Strategies for Mitigation, 2023, [url](#), p. 47; CDD West Africa, The Rising Tide of Femicide in Nigeria: A Silent War Against Women, 9 April 2025, [url](#); HiiL, Justice Needs and Satisfaction in Nigeria 2025, 2025, [url](#), p. 78

³⁶⁵ Nigeria, NHRC, January 2025 Human Rights Dashboard, 14 February 2025, [url](#); Nigeria, NHRC, February 2025 Human Rights Dashboard, 6 March 2025, [url](#); Nigeria, NHRC, March 2025 Human Rights Dashboard, 5 April 2025, [url](#)

³⁶⁶ Nigeria, NHRC, NHRC 2024 Human Rights Situation Dashboard, 28 January 2025, [url](#); Nigeria, NHRC, NHRC May 2025 Human Rights Dashboard, 10 June 2025, [url](#); Nigeria, NHRC, NHRC April 2025 Human Rights Situation Dashboard, [url](#)

³⁶⁷ Nigeria, GBV AoR Northeast Nigeria, Annual Report 2024, 21 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-9

³⁶⁸ Mbachu, C. O. et al., Multigenerational attitudes to gender norms on intimate partner violence and the sexual and reproductive health of young people in Nigeria, 2025, [url](#), p. 2

³⁶⁹ Spencer, C. M. et al., Understanding Help-Seeking Behaviour Among Intimate Partner Violence Victims in Nigeria, July 2025, [url](#), p. 3176

³⁷⁰ Olufemi A. et al., Knowledge and attitude of health care providers towards the identification and management of domestic violence victims, 26 April 2024, [url](#), p. 6

³⁷¹ DOHS Foundation, DOHS Femicide Dashboard - Track Reports and Insights on Femicide in Nigeria in 2024, 20 June 2025, [url](#); DOHS Foundation, DOHS Femicide Dashboard – Track Reports and Insights on Femicide in Nigeria in 2025, 20 June 2025, [url](#)

³⁷² Guardian (The), Activists call for state of emergency in Nigeria over gender-based violence, 25 February 2025, [url](#)

³⁷³ Chinoye, J. O., Why Nigeria Needs a Femicide Law, September 2024, [url](#), p.1; CDD West Africa, The Rising Tide of Femicide in Nigeria: A Silent War Against Women, 9 April 2025, [url](#)

³⁷⁴ Chinoye, J. O., Why Nigeria Needs a Femicide Law, September 2024, [url](#), p.1

A 30-bed government shelter (Eko Haven) for victims of domestic violence was opened in Lagos State in 2023.³⁷⁵ Alongside government initiatives, some NGOs provide support to victims of domestic violence in the country.³⁷⁶ For instance, in Abuja, the Safe Heaven Foundation provides sheltering and psychosocial support to victims of domestic violence.³⁷⁷ Significant gaps are, however, reported in the support systems available for victims of domestic violence and their dependents, particularly in areas such as shelters, healthcare services, legal frameworks for child custody, and access to financial aid.³⁷⁸

Sexual violence

According to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), almost one in four Nigerian women aged 18-24 years have experienced sexual abuse before age 18.³⁷⁹ NHRC recorded a total of 45 986 cases of sexual violence and 6 943 cases of rape between January and December 2024.³⁸⁰ From January to March 2025, an additional 2 711 sexual violence cases and 409 rape cases were recorded. In April 2025, cases of sexual violence were 2 200 and cases of rape 11; in May 2025, additional 1 152 cases of sexual violence and 5 cases of rape were documented.³⁸¹ In North-East Nigeria, rape accounted for 17 % of the total SGBV incidents in 2024, marking a 5 % increase compared to 2023, with 2 % of sexual violence incidents being related to sexual slavery. The same source indicated that 14 % of reported cases involved child sexual abuse, with children accounting for approximately one in every five reported incidents.³⁸² Women and girls with disabilities are also particularly vulnerable, with 85.3 % facing increased risks of exploitation and sexual abuse.³⁸³

As noted by NAPTIP, a significant number of sexual assault cases go unreported due to victims' psychological and social barriers, including fear, shame, stigma, and the risk of being subjected to victim-blaming, which discourage them from reporting the incident.³⁸⁴ Sources have also identified fear of reprisal and a lack of trust in the justice system as further factors that refrained victims from reporting such incidents.³⁸⁵ Reported cases of sexual violence are

³⁷⁵ Nigeria, FMWASD, National Beijing +30 review, November 2024, [url](#), p. 67; Nigeria, DSWA, Lagos opens Eko Haven; shelter for survivors of Domestic Violence, n.d., [url](#)

³⁷⁶ Wagwula, P. M. et al., Strengthening Domestic Violence Prevention in Nigeria: A Call to Action, 16 January 2024, [url](#), p. 3; Nigerian NGO, NGOs Fighting Against Domestic Violence In Nigeria, 27 April 2024, [url](#)

³⁷⁷ Safe Haven Foundation, Services, n.d., [url](#); Nigeria, FMINO, Women Affairs Ministry Empowers Survivors of Gender Based Violence (GBV), 11 April 2025, [url](#)

³⁷⁸ Wagwula, P. M. et al., Strengthening Domestic Violence Prevention in Nigeria: A Call to Action, 16 January 2024, [url](#), p. 4

³⁷⁹ Nigeria, Federal Government of Nigeria and UNICEF, The State of Nigeria's Children: Summary of the 2024 Situation Analysis of Children and Adolescents in Nigeria, 2025, [url](#), p. 11

³⁸⁰ Nigeria, NHRC, NHRC 2024 Human Rights Situation Dashboard, 28 January 2025, [url](#)

³⁸¹ Nigeria, NHRC, January 2025 Human Rights Dashboard, 14 February 2025, [url](#); Nigeria, NHRC, February 2025 Human Rights Dashboard, 6 March 2025, [url](#); Nigeria, NHRC, March 2025 Human Rights Dashboard, 5 April 2025, [url](#); Nigeria, NHRC, NHRC May 2025 Human Rights Dashboard, 10 June 2025, [url](#); Nigeria, NHRC, NHRC April 2025 Human Rights Situation Dashboard, [url](#)

³⁸² GBV Sub-Sector Nigeria, Annual Report 2024, 22 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 9-10

³⁸³ UN OCHA, Nigeria Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, January 2025, [url](#), p. 37

³⁸⁴ Nigeria, NAPTIP, National Guide for the Establishment and Management of Sexual Assault Referral Centres in Nigeria, 25 August 2024, [url](#), p.1

³⁸⁵ RFLD, Faced with the reality of gender-based sexual violence in Nigeria, RFLD has implemented practical strategies and concrete actions, 21 January 2024, [url](#); Guardian (The), Wanted: Collective action against sexual violence, 5 March 2025, [url](#)



often hindered by weak prosecution, largely due to a lack of evidence,³⁸⁶ gaps in the legal system and insufficient support services,³⁸⁷ such as medical assistance and trauma counselling.³⁸⁸ Furthermore, stigma and shame, often reinforced by family and community, discourage victims of sexual violence from seeking necessary post-assault healthcare.³⁸⁹

In 2021, NAPTIP established Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC) which offer services for survivors of sexual violence, including counselling, medical, forensic, legal as well as psychosocial support.³⁹⁰ As of October 2024, there were 47 SARC in Nigeria across 22 states.³⁹¹ The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development reported in November 2024 that the number of SARCs was insufficient, underfunded, and centres often lacked the personnel to function effectively. Government attention to shelters for victims remained inadequate.³⁹² Victims may also lack awareness about available services and ‘fear being identified as survivors’.³⁹³ NGOs and Christian organisations operate shelters for victims of sexual violence, often in partnership with public institutions.³⁹⁴

Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)

With around 20 million individuals affected,³⁹⁵ Nigeria has the largest number of women and girls who have undergone FGM/C within the West and Central African region.³⁹⁶

Comprehensive data on prevalence of FGM/C in Nigeria relevant for the reference period of this report could not be found among all sources consulted.³⁹⁷ According to UNICEF, Nigeria has the third-highest prevalence of FGM worldwide, with the highest risk occurring during a girl’s first year of life.³⁹⁸ A similar trend is reported by Plan International, indicating that although FGM/C prevalence among women aged 15–49 has declined in recent years in

³⁸⁶ Nigeria, NAPTIP, National Guide for the Establishment and Management of Sexual Assault Referral Centres in Nigeria, 25 August 2024, [url](#), p.1

³⁸⁷ Guardian (The), Wanted: Collective action against sexual violence, 5 March 2025, [url](#)

³⁸⁸ Nigeria, NAPTIP, National Guide for the Establishment and Management of Sexual Assault Referral Centres in Nigeria, 25 August 2024, [url](#), p.1

³⁸⁹ Ogedegbe, A. et al., Barriers and facilitators to accessing post sexual-based violence health services among young women attending higher education institutions in Nigeria, 19 April 2025, [url](#)

³⁹⁰ Nigeria, NAPTIP, Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015 Annual Report 2021, 9 February 2023, [url](#), p. 27

³⁹¹ The 47 SARCs are as follows: Adamawa (3), Akwa Ibom (2), Anambra (1), Bayelsa (1), Borno (1), Cross River (4), Delta (3), Ebonyi (1), Edo (1), Ekiti (3), Enugu (2), FCT Abuja (2), Jigawa (1), Kaduna (4), Kano (1), Kebbi (1), Lagos (3), Niger (1), Ogun (2), Sokoto (1), Yobe (4), and Zamfara (1). See Her Story Your Story, Directory of Sexual Assault Referral Centres in Nigeria, October 2024, [url](#), p. 1

³⁹² Nigeria, FMWASD, National Beijing +30 review, November 2024, [url](#), p. 64

³⁹³ GBV Sub-Sector Nigeria, Annual Report 2024, 22 March 2025, [url](#), p. 9

³⁹⁴ WARIF, Social Welfare Services, n.d., [url](#)

³⁹⁵ UNICEF, Unites to End Gender-Based Violence: 16 Days of Activism Highlights Urgent Call for Action, 2 December 2024, [url](#)

³⁹⁶ WHO, Female genital Mutilation and its medicalization, 9 May 2024, [url](#); UNFPA, Towards Zero Gender-based Violence and Harmful Practices in West and Central Africa, June 2024, [url](#), p. 9

³⁹⁷ See Bibliography.

³⁹⁸ UNICEF, Unites to End Gender-Based Violence: 16 Days of Activism Highlights Urgent Call for Action, 2 December 2024, [url](#)



Nigeria, rates among girls aged 0–14 have risen from 16.9 % to 19.2 % since 2013.³⁹⁹ No additional sources could be found to cross-check this data.

FGM/C is most prevalent in the South-East and South-West regions, while the North-East records the lowest prevalence.⁴⁰⁰ Historically, the practice has been more prevalent in rural areas (where more than half of Nigeria's population resides), however, latest available data show a shifting trend. Among women aged 15–49, 24.2 % living in urban areas have undergone FGM/C, compared to 15.6 % in rural areas. However, for girls aged 0–14, the pattern appears to be reversing, with 21.1 % of those in rural areas affected, compared to 16.3 % in urban areas.⁴⁰¹ Cross-border practices of FGM/C are also common, with some families travelling with girls to neighbouring countries where the practice is still permitted.⁴⁰² When looking at total numbers, the most affected states are Lagos, Kaduna, Imo, Kano, and Oyo.⁴⁰³ FGM/C occurs across all ethnic groups, with the highest prevalence among Yoruba (35 %) and lowest among Tiv and Igala women (1 % each).⁴⁰⁴

The most recent data from the 2021 Nigeria MICS show shifts in the distribution of FGM types compared to 2019. Type II (flesh removed) remains the most common form, but its prevalence has risen sharply from 41 % in 2019 to 73 % in 2021. Type I (nicking without flesh removal) has remained relatively stable, decreasing slightly from 10 % to 9.6 %. Type III (infibulation/sewn closed) increased from 6 % in 2019 to 8.6 % in 2021. In addition, the 2021 survey recorded 8.7 % of cases where the form of FGM could not be determined.⁴⁰⁵

FGM/C is traditionally performed by older community members, often women, who are assigned this role, or by traditional birth attendants.⁴⁰⁶ Midwives, nurses, and doctors operating within communities also carry out the procedure.⁴⁰⁷ Although traditional forms of FGM/C are legally banned, a 'concerning trend' of medicalisation has emerged, whereby the procedure is performed by healthcare providers in healthcare facilities, 'perpetuating the practice under the guise of safety'.⁴⁰⁸ According to estimates by UNFPA, 13 % of FGM/C cases in Nigeria were performed by health workers.⁴⁰⁹ Similarly, Plan International reported that medical professional carried out the procedure on a quarter of the total number of victims in the country.⁴¹⁰ As noted by director of WOCON, Morenike Omaiboje, medicalisation of FGM/C has been going on for a long time in Nigeria and it represents a problematic issue since - *de facto* - it legitimises the practice, curbing efforts to eradicate it. The source added that Nigeria

³⁹⁹ Plan International, From Commitment to Action – Accelerating Efforts to End Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) by 2030, February 2025, [url](#), p. 2

⁴⁰⁰ Nigeria, National Population Commission, Demographic and Health Survey 2018, October 2019, [url](#), p. 467

⁴⁰¹ FGMC Research Initiative, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁰² WHO, Female genital Mutilation and its medicalization, 9 May 2024, [url](#); IPPF, More efforts needed to end Female Genital Mutilation in Nigeria, 6 February 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁰³ FGMC Research Initiative, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁰⁴ Nigeria, National Population Commission, Demographic and Health Survey 2018, October 2019, [url](#), p. 507

⁴⁰⁵ Nigeria, National Population Commission, Demographic and Health Survey 2018, October 2019, [url](#), p. 506; Nigeria, NBS, UNICEF, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2021, Survey Findings Report, August 2022, [url](#), p. 350

⁴⁰⁶ UNFPA, Female genital mutilation (FGM) frequently asked questions, February 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁷ Omaiboje M., email communication with EUAA, 8 July 2025

⁴⁰⁸ Plan International, From Commitment to Action – Accelerating Efforts to End Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) by 2030, February 2025, [url](#), p. 2

⁴⁰⁹ UNFPA, Female genital mutilation (FGM) frequently asked questions, February 2025, [url](#)

⁴¹⁰ Plan International, From Commitment to Action – Accelerating Efforts to End Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) by 2030, February 2025, [url](#), p. 2



has legal and policy frameworks against medicalised FGM/C and collaborates with the World Health Organization (WHO) and medical associations to enforce bans and raise awareness.⁴¹¹

The practice of FGM/C in Nigeria is driven by deep-rooted cultural, religious, and social norms⁴¹² that view it as beneficial,⁴¹³ enhancing a woman's prospects for marriage⁴¹⁴ and reducing promiscuity.⁴¹⁵ The Director of WOCON explained that women and girls who refuse to undergo FGM/C often face considerable social stigma and pressure. In some cultural contexts, they may be labelled as 'unclean' or 'disobedient' and are subjected to insults, shaming, and accusations of bringing dishonour to their families or rejecting tradition. Uncut girls may be considered unsuitable for marriage and excluded from cultural rituals or peer groups. Families who choose not to subject their daughters to FGM/C also face various consequences. These include community pressure and accusations of abandoning tradition. Such refusals can result in family disputes, particularly with elders who insist on continuing the practice. Families may be ostracised or become targets of village gossip. In some cases, others may threaten to carry out the procedure themselves or coerce the girl into undergoing it. There may also be economic repercussions, such as the loss of bride price negotiations or weakened social alliances.⁴¹⁶ Traditional customs often take precedence over statutory provisions in many regions. Many victims of FGM/C experience intense pressure from family members and community groups to undergo the procedure, often without access to external support systems. In some cases, powerful individuals reportedly leverage their influence to hinder law enforcement efforts, leaving victims with little to no legal protection. Women continue to face coercion, especially from in-laws, to subject their daughters to FGM.⁴¹⁷ This coercion takes various forms, 'including physical assaults, threats, verbal harassment, and financial oppression, ultimately compelling most women to yield to the demands of their family members'.⁴¹⁸ Many of these incidents are not reported to the police, as most women fear that involving law enforcement against their husbands' families could put their marriages at risk. In the Nigerian context, such actions may lead to divorce, with serious psychological and social consequences for the women involved.⁴¹⁹

NGOs indicated inadequate funding and insufficient capacity as major challenges to maintaining their anti-FGM initiatives.⁴²⁰ In addition, institutional weaknesses, enforcement gaps, and a lack of resources and technical capacity among relevant government agencies continue to hinder efforts to eliminate the practice.⁴²¹ Despite the existence of strict laws, offences related to FGM/C (along with other forms of violence against women such as rape,

⁴¹¹ Omaiboje M., email communication with EUAA, 8 July 2025

⁴¹² EVA, Breaking the silence: Ending Female Genital Mutilation in Nigeria, 6 February 2025, [url](#)

⁴¹³ HumAngle, Female Genital Mutilation Still Prevalent In Parts of Northeastern Nigeria, 12 August 2024, [url](#)

⁴¹⁴ Punch, FGM: Urgent actions needed to end the evil, 13 March 2025, [url](#)

⁴¹⁵ Punch, FGM: Urgent actions needed to end the evil, 13 March 2025, [url](#); Nigeria Health Watch, Zero Tolerance: Stopping FGM in Nigeria and Empowering Survivors, 8 February 2025, [url](#)

⁴¹⁶ Omaiboje M., email communication with EUAA, 8 July 2025

⁴¹⁷ Punch, FGM: Urgent actions needed to end the evil, 13 March 2025, [url](#)

Punch, FGM: Urgent actions needed to end the evil, 13 March 2025, [url](#)

⁴¹⁸ Punch, FGM: Urgent actions needed to end the evil, 13 March 2025, [url](#); Guardian (The), Female Genital Mutilation: Action, not words, needed to end menace, 7 March 2025, [url](#)

⁴¹⁹ Guardian (The), Female Genital Mutilation: Action, not words, needed to end menace, 7 March 2025, [url](#)

⁴²⁰ IPPF, More efforts needed to end Female Genital Mutilation in Nigeria, 6 February 2025, [url](#)

⁴²¹ Plan International, From Commitment to Action – Accelerating Efforts to End Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) by 2030, February 2025, [url](#), p. 2



domestic violence, child marriage), remain widespread, with low rates of reporting and prosecution.⁴²² In an interview with EUAA, the director of WOCON stated that there are no shelters dedicated solely to FGM/C victims in Nigeria, but support services for victims of this practice are generally integrated into broader SGBV response systems.⁴²³ On the other hand, a confidential source interviewed by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2022 reported that the Nigerian Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development has a shelter for victims of FGM in almost every state.⁴²⁴ No other source could be found to corroborate this information.

Child and forced marriage

In Nigeria, four in ten girls are married before the age of 18, placing the country third globally, with over 24 million child brides. Despite data indicating a decrease in national prevalence (from 44 % to 30 %) progress has been slow and inconsistent.⁴²⁵ The North-West and North-East regions have the highest rates of women aged 20 to 24 who were married before the age of 18. Child marriage is particularly common among women from the Hausa ethnic group,⁴²⁶ and more prevalent among girls from low-income families, especially those living in rural regions or having limited access to education.⁴²⁷

The main factors behind child marriage include poverty, restricted access to education, political and economic pressures, religion, and cultural traditions - such as marrying girls before puberty to safeguard their perceived virginity.⁴²⁸ Security and instability have continued to influence the prevalence of child marriage in the North-East of Nigeria.⁴²⁹ Boko Haram and other armed groups forced many women and girls into marriage.⁴³⁰ In April 2024, Amnesty International reported that 82 of the 276 schoolgirls abducted by Boko Haram in the 2014 Chibok attack remain in captivity and called on the Nigerian authorities to investigate the allegations that at least 20 of the women were subjected to forced marriage.⁴³¹ Within this context, child marriage is often used by families as a protective measure against abduction, sexual abuse,⁴³² and economic insecurity.⁴³³

⁴²² Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

⁴²³ Omaiboje M., email communication with EUAA, 8 July 2025

⁴²⁴ The Netherlands, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report Nigeria, January 2023, [url](#)

⁴²⁵ UNICEF, Nigeria Takes Bold Steps to End Child Marriage and Protect the Rights of Children, 16 February 2024, [url](#)

⁴²⁶ Girls not Brides, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

⁴²⁷ Nigeria, Federal Government of Nigeria and UNICEF, The State of Nigeria's Children: Summary of the 2024 Situation Analysis of Children and Adolescents in Nigeria, 2025, [url](#), p. 9; UNICEF, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#), p. 1

⁴²⁸ Girls not Brides, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

⁴²⁹ Girls not Brides, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#); PSNE, Protection Sector North-East Nigeria (PSNE) Annual Report 2024, 13 March 2025, [url](#), p. 15

⁴³⁰ AI, "Help Us Build Our Lives": Girl Survivors of Boko Haram and Military Abuses in North-East Nigeria, 9 June 2024, [url](#); pp. 32, 36

⁴³¹ AI, Nigeria: Decade after Boko Haram attack on Chibok, 82 girls still in captivity, 14 April 2024, [url](#)

⁴³² Girls not Brides, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

⁴³³ PSNE, Protection Sector North-East Nigeria (PSNE) Annual Report 2024, 13 March 2025, [url](#), p. 15



Conflict-related violence

Conflict-related sexual violence has continued to severely impact women and girls in North-East Nigeria. Non-state armed groups have continued to abduct them, subjecting them to rape and sexual slavery as both a reward for fighters and a means of attracting new recruits. In some cases, families reportedly consented to forced marriages as a coping strategy to prevent abductions. Female-headed households and single women have been targeted and subjected to rape by former members of armed groups near displacement sites in Borno State.⁴³⁴ Most incidents in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (Bay) States were linked to abductions and attacks by non-state armed groups, who used sexual violence as a tool of control, intimidation, or punishment, often forcing women and girls into marriage.⁴³⁵ In 2024, over 900 cases of conflict-related gender-based violence were reported in the North-East, of which 65 % were children.⁴³⁶

Boko Haram has been responsible for serious violations of women's rights, including forced marriages and rape.⁴³⁷ In 2024, Boko Haram militants abducted over 400 individuals, the majority of whom were women and children, during attacks on IDPs camp in Gamboru Ngala, Borno State.⁴³⁸

Also in 2024, in Sokoto State, some armed gunmen kidnapped 17 female students from the dormitory of an all-girls boarding school.⁴³⁹ In a separate incident in Zamfara State, located in the country's Northwest, over 50 women and children were taken during a violent raid on the village of Kakin Dawa.⁴⁴⁰

Military personnel, along with other actors, have also subjected women and girls in IDP camps to sexual violence.⁴⁴¹ In the IDPs camps of Ngaranam, Ali Modu Sheriff, Bakassi, and Gubio in Borno State, harassment is the most reported SGBV issue, followed by denial of resources and sexual violence. Barriers such as stigma, lack of awareness, and poor accessibility, particularly affecting persons with disabilities, continued to hinder victims from accessing essential support services.⁴⁴²

In 2024, the Special Independent Investigative Panel on Human Rights Violations in Counter-Insurgency Operations in North-East Nigeria concluded its hearings on the 2022 Reuters' allegations against the Nigerian military.⁴⁴³ According to Reuters' investigation, since at least 2013, the Nigerian military has carried out a secret, systematic, and illegal abortion program in

⁴³⁴ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General – Conflict-related Sexual Violence, 4 April 2024, [url](#), para. 90

⁴³⁵ PSNE, Protection Sector North-East Nigeria (PSNE) Annual Report 2024, 13 March 2025, [url](#), p.5

⁴³⁶ PSNE, Protection Sector North-East Nigeria (PSNE) Annual Report 2024, 13 March 2025, [url](#), p. 5

⁴³⁷ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

⁴³⁸ AI, Nigeria: Authorities must ensure safe release and return of over 680 people abducted this week, 8 March 2024, [url](#); HRW, Daily Brief, 19 March 2024, [url](#); ISS, Nigeria's schoolchildren again targeted in mass abductions, 13 February 2025, [url](#)

⁴³⁹ Al Jazeera, Why mass kidnappings still plague Nigeria a decade after Chibok abductions, 3 April 2024, [url](#); ISS, Nigeria's schoolchildren again targeted in mass abductions, 13 February 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁰ Reuters, Gunmen kidnap at least 50 in Nigeria's Zamfara state, residents and police say, 10 December 2024, [url](#); Daily Post, Gunmen attack Zamfara community, abduct over 50 women, girls, 9 December 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁴¹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁴² Nigeria, GBV Sub-Sector Nigeria, Annual Report 2024, 22 March 2025, [url](#), p. 10

⁴⁴³ Nigeria, NHRC, SIIP North East Concludes Hearing On Reuters Report, 21 March 2024, [url](#)



the country's North-East, resulting in the termination of at least 10 000 pregnancies among women and girls. Many of the victims had been kidnapped and raped by Islamist militants. Witnesses reported that those who resisted were beaten, held at gunpoint, or drugged to force compliance.⁴⁴⁴ The human rights panel found no evidence to support the allegations reported by Reuters. The panel's investigation lasted 18 months and included 199 witness testimonies. However, the panel confirmed instances of human rights violations, including infanticide during a 2016 military operation in Borno State. Reuters stood by its reports, while some observers suggested further independent investigations might be necessary due to the complexities involved.⁴⁴⁵

2.4. Children

2.4.1. Legal and social status

Nigeria's Child Rights Act of 2003, aligned with international and regional child rights frameworks, is the main law protecting children's rights, development and well-being.⁴⁴⁶ Although all 36 states have domesticated the Act, implementation has remained uneven nationwide.⁴⁴⁷ Conflicting constitutional provisions and the partial adoption of the Child Rights Act by states applying Islamic law have impeded its full implementation.⁴⁴⁸ Enforcement is further undermined by a shortage of trained personnel, particularly within law enforcement, and the absence of statutory limitation periods - meaning there is no defined timeframe for initiating legal proceedings. Additionally, limited public awareness prevents individuals from recognising and asserting their rights.⁴⁴⁹

Moreover, Nigeria's legal framework presents conflicting provisions regarding corporal punishment of children. While the Child's Rights Act prohibits it, the Criminal Code and the Penal Code continue to permit its use, both as a method of disciplining children and as a form of judicial punishment.⁴⁵⁰ (See [2.18.1 Justice system](#) for more detailed information on legal pluralism). Nigeria has pledged to end corporal punishment in schools as part of new global commitments to tackle violence against children. The move was announced ahead of the first UN ministerial conference on the issue, amid growing concerns over the harmful effects of

⁴⁴⁴ Reuters, The Abortion Assault, 7 December 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁵ VoA, Nigeria military, Reuters at odds over reports on alleged mass abortion program, 11 November 2024, [url](#); Reuters, Nigeria rights body finds 'no evidence' military conducted secret mass abortions, 10 November 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁶ Raphael, C. V. et al., An examination of Nigeria's legal framework for the protection of children and their mental health, 6 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 24-25

⁴⁴⁷ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁸ Vergili A., Failure of International Laws in Local Contexts: The Case of the Child Rights Act in Nigeria, 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 1

⁴⁴⁹ Raphael, C. V. et al., An examination of Nigeria's legal framework for the protection of children and their mental health, 6 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 29-30

⁴⁵⁰ Nwambo, Z. D. and Ben-Eche, A., A Reassessment of Nigeria's Legal Framework Protecting Children's Rights to Dignity and Protection From Corporal Punishment, 2024, [url](#); End Corporal punishment, Corporal punishment of children in Nigeria, last updated August 2024, [url](#), pp. 3-5



corporal punishment. The pledge follows recent incidents,⁴⁵¹ including the death of a child in Nigeria after being flogged by a teacher.⁴⁵²

Children and adolescents aged 0-17 constitute nearly half of Nigeria's population, totalling approximately 105 million. The country has made significant progress in several areas, including improved birth registration rates, a reduction in child mortality, increased childhood immunisation coverage, reduced rates of FGM/C. However, persistent issues remain, such as high poverty rates, inadequate access to quality education, poor nutrition, elevated newborn mortality, and widespread violence affecting children.⁴⁵³ In fact, sources report that cultural practices affecting children, such as child marriage and FGM/C,⁴⁵⁴ forced labour,⁴⁵⁵ trafficking and forced begging,⁴⁵⁶ corporal punishment⁴⁵⁷ and child witchcraft accusations⁴⁵⁸ remain widespread across the country.⁴⁵⁹

2.4.2. Access to education

In 2024, more than 18 million children of primary and secondary school age were out of school. Significant regional disparities exist, as literacy rates reach 87 % in Lagos State but only 9.5 % in the North-West.⁴⁶⁰ Girls begin dropping out of school by the age of 14 at higher rates than boys and are less likely to enter the workforce.⁴⁶¹ Child marriage, poverty, and gender bias remain major barriers to girls' education, particularly in northern Nigeria, where cultural norms and perceptions of low-quality schooling often lead families to prioritise early marriage over continued education.⁴⁶² Nigeria has over 24 million underage brides.⁴⁶³ For more information see [Child and forced marriage](#).

Access to education in Nigeria is further hindered by child labour, as children engaged in work have lower school attendance rates compared to those not involved in labour. According to the Nigeria Child Labour Survey 2022 released in April 2024 by the National Bureau of

⁴⁵¹ Guardian (The), Eight countries pledge to ban corporal punishment in 'fundamental shift' for children, 7 November 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁵² Cable (The), Ogun school shut as student dies after corporal punishment, 29 October 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁵³ Nigeria, Federal Government of Nigeria and UNICEF, The State of Nigeria's Children: Summary of the 2024 Situation Analysis of Children and Adolescents in Nigeria, 2025, [url](#), pp. 4-10

⁴⁵⁴ EEAS, 2024 Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World, 22 May 2025, [url](#), p. 127

⁴⁵⁵ Nigeria, Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics and ILO, Nigeria Child Labour Survey 2022, 2024, [url](#), pp. x, xi

⁴⁵⁶ UN Women, Assessment of national responses and strategies to combat and eliminate trafficking in persons and forced migration in Africa, January 2024, [url](#), p. 7; USDOS, Trafficking in Persons Report 2024 – Nigeria, (covering April 2023 to March 2024), 24 June 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁷ Nwambo, Z. D. and Ben-Eche, A., A Reassessment of Nigeria's Legal Framework Protecting Children's Rights to Dignity and Protection from Corporal Punishment, 2024, [url](#); HRF, Corporal Punishment: An abuse to the dignity of a child, 16 February 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁸ Wikki Times, Flashback: Some Reported Witchcraft Cases in Bauchi 2021-2025, 14 March 2025, [url](#); BBC News Pidgin, Di children wey dem beat and troway ontop allegation say dem be winch, 25 September 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁹ Anyogu, A. A., Legal protection of children in Nigeria: Examining the extant laws and policies, July 2024, [url](#), p. 61

⁴⁶⁰ Nigeria, Federal Government of Nigeria and UNICEF, The State of Nigeria's Children: Summary of the 2024 Situation Analysis of Children and Adolescents in Nigeria, 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁴⁶¹ Nigeria, Federal Government of Nigeria and UNICEF, The State of Nigeria's Children: Summary of the 2024 Situation Analysis of Children and Adolescents in Nigeria, 2025, [url](#), p. 13

⁴⁶² Nigeria, FMWASD, National Beijing +30 review, November 2024, [url](#), p. 20

⁴⁶³ UNICEF, Nigeria Takes Bold Steps to End Child Marriage and Protect the Rights of Children, 16 February 2024, [url](#)





Statistics (NBS) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), four in ten Nigerian children (39.2 %) aged 5 to 17 are involved in child labour. The issue is most severe in rural areas (44.8 %). Most affected children work in own-use production, with over half exposed to workplace hazards.⁴⁶⁴

2.4.3. Violence against children

Conflict in North-East Nigeria has had a severe impact on children. The UN Security Council has documented six grave violations: recruitment and use of children, killing and maiming, sexual violence including rape, attacks on schools and hospitals, abductions, and the denial of humanitarian access. It further notes an increase in the number of verified violations during the current reporting period compared to the previous one.⁴⁶⁵ After escaping Boko Haram, many children in Nigeria have been unlawfully detained by the military for months or years without charge, legal counsel, or contact with their families.⁴⁶⁶ For more information see [2.13. Perceived Boko Haram members or supporters](#).

In February 2024, over 200 IDPs, mostly children, were reportedly abducted by armed groups in Borno State's Ngala Local Government Area.⁴⁶⁷ In the North-West states of Zamfara, Sokoto, and Katsina, ongoing bandit attacks, school kidnappings, and widespread community violence have led to the closure of numerous schools, interrupted education, and displaced large numbers of children and educators.⁴⁶⁸ For more information see [2.10. Individuals targeted by Boko Haram](#).

Local sources reported an increase in the recruitment of children by cult groups.⁴⁶⁹ See [2.14. Individuals targeted by student cults](#).

In Southern states, such as Akwa Ibom State, hundreds of children are being accused of witchcraft, especially in the Oron LGA, where such beliefs are said to be still common.⁴⁷⁰ For instance, in March 2024, in Alkaleri LGA in Bauchi State, a young boy was reportedly left blind following an attack that some members of the community linked to beliefs in witchcraft.⁴⁷¹ See [2.17. Individuals accused of witchcraft](#).

⁴⁶⁴ Nigeria, Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics and ILO, Nigeria Child Labour Survey 2022, 2024, [url](#), pp. x, xi

⁴⁶⁵ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and armed conflict in Nigeria, 17 July 2024, [url](#), section III

⁴⁶⁶ AI, Children and armed conflict, Submission to the UN High Commissioner for human rights for report on the rights of the child and violations of the human rights of children in armed conflicts, 2025, [url](#), pp. 4-5

⁴⁶⁷ HRW, World Report 2025 (Events of 2024), Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#); UN OCHA, Mr. Mohamed Malick Fall, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria: Statement on the reported abduction of scores of civilians in Ngala, Borno (6 March 2024), 6 March 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁸ UNICEF, Nigeria - Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1, 15 May 2025, [url](#), p. 5

⁴⁶⁹ Nation, Teen killers on the prowl: Tragic rise of Nigeria's child cultists, 8 September 2024, [url](#); Punch, Rise of child cultists turning schools into battlefields (2), 16 February 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁰ BBC News Pidgin, Di children wey dem beat and troway ontop allegation say dem be winch, 25 September 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁷¹ Wikki Times, Flashback: Some Reported Witchcraft Cases in Bauchi 2021-2025, 14 March 2025, [url](#)





2.5. LGBTIQ individuals

Nigerian laws criminalise same-sex relationships, prohibit same-sex marriages and the registration of LGBTIQ organisations.⁴⁷² Federal, state, customary or religious laws each contribute in different ways to the criminalisation of consensual same-sex sexual acts.⁴⁷³ The country experienced a rise in discriminatory laws and violent actions targeting individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.⁴⁷⁴ Those found guilty of engaging in same-sex relationships can face up to 14 years in prison,⁴⁷⁵ while 12 northern states still impose the death penalty for same-sex activity.⁴⁷⁶ For instance, in May 2024, sources reported a sharia court in Bauchi state sentenced a man to death by stoning for engaging in homosexual acts.⁴⁷⁷ Religious courts in these states have also sentenced people to flogging.⁴⁷⁸

Discrimination by both authorities and society towards LGBTIQ individuals is described as ‘pervasive’.⁴⁷⁹ Police officers often carry out abuses against LGBTIQ individuals,⁴⁸⁰ including arrests, extortion attempts, and discriminatory actions.⁴⁸¹ In 2024, the Initiative for Equal Rights (TIER)⁴⁸² documented 89 cases of extortion, 118 incidents of harassment and more than 20 unlawful detentions of LGBTIQ individuals by law enforcement officials.⁴⁸³ Victims avoid reporting such incidents or do not seek help because of stigma, fear of being ‘outed in the course of investigations’,⁴⁸⁴ ‘exploited by the police’,⁴⁸⁵ or concern that law enforcement might target,⁴⁸⁶ or prosecute them instead of their attacker.⁴⁸⁷ In January 2025, the Nigeria Police Force issued a statement ordering the arrest of individuals in a viral video who had identified as LGBTIQ, framing their self-identification as a violation of laws against ‘unnatural offences’ and same-sex marriage.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁷² HRW, World Report 2025 (Events of 2024), Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#); Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁷³ ILGA Database, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁷⁴ EPRS, LGBTIQ+ in Africa, May 2025, [url](#), p. 11

⁴⁷⁵ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁶ EPRS, LGBTIQ+ in Africa, May 2025, [url](#), p.2; HRW, World Report 2025 (Events of 2024), Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#); Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁷ Daily Post, Sharia court sentenced Bauchi man to death by stoning for homosexuality, 11 May 2024, [url](#); Daily Trust, Bauchi Man To Die By Stoning For Engaging In Homosexuality, 14 May 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁸ ILGA Database, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁷⁹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁰ Human Dignity Trust, Nigeria, 11 March 2025, [url](#); Context, LGBTQ+ Nigerians recount police abuses under ‘weaponised’ law, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁸¹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁸² The Initiative for Equal Rights (TIERs) is a Nigerian-based organisation that promotes and protects the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals in Nigeria and West Africa and have various programs including mental health initiatives. See Mental Health and Human Rights Info, The Initiative for Equal Rights (TIERs), n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁸³ TIER, 2024 Human Rights Violations Report, January 2025, [url](#), p. 24

⁴⁸⁴ Context, LGBTQ+ Nigerians recount police abuses under ‘weaponised’ law, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁵ CNN, A life in fear: The dangers of finding love online as a queer woman in Nigeria, 29 January 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁶ Vijesti, Police extortion and violence against LGBTQ+ people in Nigeria, living in fear under homophobic law, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁷ Context, Job losses, rising attacks: 10 years of Nigeria’s anti-LGBTQ law, 14 August 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁸ Nigeria, Nigeria Police Force, Press Release, Unnatural offences, same sex marriage illegal in Nigeria, 25 January 2024, [url](#)



Widespread discrimination against sexual minorities in Nigeria persists.⁴⁸⁹ Hate speech against LGBTIQ persons remains common. In June 2024, a disinformation campaign falsely claiming Nigeria had legalised same-sex relations under the EU-ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific States) Samoa Agreement sparked a wave of hate speech against LGBTIQ individuals.⁴⁹⁰ Religious and societal norms influence homophobia attitudes,⁴⁹¹ with religious institutions reportedly promoting homophobic messages.⁴⁹² LGBTIQ persons face frequent harassment by passerby, area boys and neighbourhood vigilante groups through hate speech, verbal abuse, physical and sexual assault, mob violence, and extortion'.⁴⁹³ In some instances, LGBTIQ individuals face deadly violence.⁴⁹⁴ In August 2024, Nigerian transgender TikTok star Ifeanyi Orazulike, known online as Abuja Area Mama, was found dead with signs of beating, months after alleging a stabbing by an unidentified person.⁴⁹⁵ In July 2025, two students at a Kano boarding school were killed after being violently attacked by senior classmates who accused them of engaging in 'unnatural offences', a term often used to imply homosexuality.⁴⁹⁶

LGBTIQ individuals are also subjected to attacks - mostly by non-state actors - through a practice known as *Kito*.⁴⁹⁷ Victims of such practice are lured via social media or dating apps into meetings only to be attacked, extorted, and assaulted, sometimes filmed for blackmail.⁴⁹⁸ TIER reported 84 *Kito* incidents against LGBTIQ people across Nigeria in 2024.⁴⁹⁹ However, actual figures on *Kito* incidents are likely much higher across Nigeria, especially among queer women, who face greater stigma for defying societal expectations around marriage and motherhood.⁵⁰⁰

LGBTIQ individuals are also facing discrimination when accessing private and public services,⁵⁰¹ including healthcare, justice, employment and housing.⁵⁰² In healthcare settings,

⁴⁸⁹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#); Alabi, O. J. and Adebisi, T., Navigating shadows: the lived experiences of sexual minorities in Nigeria, 10 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

⁴⁹⁰ BBC News, Nigeria-EU deal sparks false claims over LGBT rights, 11 July 2024, [url](#); EEAS, 2024 Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World, 22 May 2025, [url](#), p. 127

⁴⁹¹ CNN, A life in fear: The dangers of finding love online as a queer woman in Nigeria, 29 January 2024, [url](#); TIER, 2024 Human Rights Violations Report, January 2025, [url](#), p. 12

⁴⁹² No Strings, Gay-obsessed Nigerian pastor calls homosexuality a propaganda, 20 February 2024, [url](#); Peace, A. E., A discursive attempt toward the political economy of homophobia in Nigeria, 12 November 2024, [url](#), p. 5

⁴⁹³ TIER, 2024 Human Rights Violations Report, January 2025, [url](#), p. 22

⁴⁹⁴ EEAS, 2024 Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World (country profiles) 22 May 2025, [url](#), p. 127

⁴⁹⁵ CNN, Nigerian transgender TikTok star found dead, 9 August 2024, [url](#); VOA, Fear grips Nigeria's LGBTQ+ community after popular cross-dresser killed, 9 August 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁶ Tribune, Kano govt to probe death of two students, 16 July 2025, [url](#); Daily Trust, Alleged Homosexuality: 11 Arrested Over Killing Of 2 Students in Kano School, 17 July 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁷ TIER, 2024 Human Rights Violations Report, January 2025, [url](#), p. 22. *Kito* is a term in Nigerian internet slang referring to an individual who pretends to be queer, typically on social media platforms or dating applications, with the intent of luring others into meeting in person. The encounter is not genuine but rather a scheme designed to extort money, inflict physical harm, or otherwise exploit the targeted individual. See Mail & Guardian, What it means to be a kitoed, 28 May 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁸ CNN, A life in fear: The dangers of finding love online as a queer woman in Nigeria, 29 January 2024, [url](#); TIER, 2024 Human Rights Violations Report, January 2025, [url](#), p. 22

⁴⁹⁹ TIER, 2024 Human Rights Violations Report, January 2025, [url](#), p. 24

⁵⁰⁰ CNN, A life in fear: The dangers of finding love online as a queer woman in Nigeria, 29 January 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁰¹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁰² TIER, 2024 Human Rights Violations Report, January 2025, [url](#), p. 23; Alabi, O. J. and Adebisi, T., Navigating shadows: the lived experiences of sexual minorities in Nigeria, 10 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7



provider bias and legal barriers can result in denied or substandard care.⁵⁰³ Transgender people, in particular, turn to self-prescription due to the lack of access to specialised medical support.⁵⁰⁴ Gender-affirming care remains scarce due to criminalisation, discrimination⁵⁰⁵ and stigma.⁵⁰⁶ Practices to change a person's sexual orientation are reportedly common in Nigeria,⁵⁰⁷ including medical and religious therapies.⁵⁰⁸ TIER noted that family members may subject their LGBTIQ relatives to conversion practices, including forced confinement, starvation, torture, sexual assault, or 'talk therapy'.⁵⁰⁹ Reports indicated that surgeries have occasionally been performed on intersex children without their consent.⁵¹⁰

2.6. Journalists and media workers

Nigeria's media landscape is described as 'rich and diverse',⁵¹¹ including both traditional and digital platforms.⁵¹² In the 2025 World Press Freedom Index,⁵¹³ Nigeria ranked 122nd out of 180 countries (where 1 represents the highest level of press freedom and 180 the lowest), a ten-place decline from the previous year. Governmental interference in the news media remains 'significant', taking the form of pressure, harassment of journalists and outlets, and, in some cases, censorship. Despite the large number of media organisations, few are financially stable. Salary delays make journalists vulnerable to corruption, while politicians, businesses, and advertisers influence editorial content.⁵¹⁴

The Nigerian Constitution provides for the right to freedom of expression and the press under Section 39.⁵¹⁵ Certain laws - such as the provision on defamation in the Penal Code⁵¹⁶ and the

⁵⁰³ TIER, 2024 Human Rights Violations Report, January 2025, [url](#), p. 35

⁵⁰⁴ DNB Stories Africa, Surviving Nigeria as a transgender woman: Boma's experience, 21 May 2024, [url](#); ICIR, LGBTQ+: walking the tightrope of social exclusion in Nigeria, 19 June 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁵ Folayan, M. O. et al., Socioeconomic inequality, health inequity and well-being of transgender people during the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria, 12 August 2023, [url](#).

⁵⁰⁶ Afya na Haki, A Human Rights Framework for addressing barriers to Gender-Affirming Care for transgender and Gender Diverse Adults in Selected African Countries, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 28; Folayan, M. O. et al., Socioeconomic inequality, health inequity and well-being of transgender people during the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria, 12 August 2023, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁷ CNN, A life in fear: The dangers of finding love online as a queer woman in Nigeria, 29 January 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁸ CNN, A life in fear: The dangers of finding love online as a queer woman in Nigeria, 29 January 2024, [url](#); CHEVs and TIER, Rights Under Arrest, Impact of the SSMPA on LGBTQ+ Individuals and Organisations (A Decade of Resilience), 2024, [url](#), p. 6

⁵⁰⁹ TIER, 2024 Human Rights Violations Report, January 2025, [url](#), p. 23

⁵¹⁰ Outright International, Embracing Realities of Sex Development: Challenges and Achievements of Intersex Activism in Nigeria and Beyond, 28 October 2024, [url](#); RM Times, In Nigeria, Intersex Newborns Leave Parents in Dilemma Over Gender Choice, 6 January 2024, [url](#)

⁵¹¹ Reporters without Borders, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

⁵¹² Reuters Institute, University of Oxford, Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2024, 17th June 2024, [url](#), p. 160

⁵¹³ The purpose of the World Press Freedom Index is to compare the level of freedom enjoyed by journalists and media in 180 countries and territories. Source: RSF, Methodology used for compiling the World Press Freedom Index 2025, n.d., [url](#)

⁵¹⁴ Reporters without Borders, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

⁵¹⁵ Nigeria, The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 Updated with the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Alterations (2010), 4th Alteration (2017) and 5th Alteration (2023), September 2024, [url](#), Section 39

⁵¹⁶ Reporters without Borders, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#); SERAP (Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project), 'End use of Cybercrime Act against journalists, release those in custody', SERAP, NGE tell Tinubu govt, others, 5 May 2025, [url](#)



2015 Cybercrime Act – have, however, been used to obstruct the work of journalists.⁵¹⁷ In February 2024, the 2015 Cybercrime Act was amended to narrow the definition of cyberstalking under Section 24,⁵¹⁸ a provision said to be frequently used to arrest journalists.⁵¹⁹ Although such amendment was defined as a ‘timid attempt to promote press freedom’, the legislation has continued to endanger investigative journalism,⁵²⁰ as it retains heavy penalties⁵²¹ and vague wording.⁵²² According to the Nigeria Human Rights Commission, Section 24 in its current form has been applied arbitrarily against individuals for publishing or disseminating content on digital platforms.⁵²³ From February 2024 to September 2024, Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) reported that at least eight journalists were arrested, prosecuted, or detained under Nigeria’s 2015 Cybercrimes Act since the amendment.⁵²⁴

In 2024, authorities, citing national security concerns,⁵²⁵ have intensified a crackdown on journalists and critical voices.⁵²⁶ A local NGO – as reported by media sources – found that in 2024, security agencies, including the military and intelligence services were responsible for more attacks on journalists than any other actors. Between January and October 2024, 69 incidents targeting journalists were documented, and law enforcement or security agencies were accountable for 45 % of them.⁵²⁷

The International press Institute (IPI) reported that the highest number of incidents occurred to journalists covering the 10-day #EndBadGovernance protests in August 2024.⁵²⁸ (For more information on these protests see [2.7. Protesters](#)). Various sources documented arrests and physical attacks against journalists during the protests.⁵²⁹ Media workers have been targeted by both law enforcement officers and unidentified assailants.⁵³⁰ On 1 August 2024, hoodlums

⁵¹⁷ Nigeria, NHRC, Protection of the Right to Freedom of Expression in Nigeria, 4 April 2025, [url](#)

⁵¹⁸ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#); See: Section 24. Section 24(1) is amended by substituting for paragraphs (a) and (b) new paragraphs ‘(a)’ and ‘(b)’ – ‘(a) is pornographic; or (b) he knows to be false, for the purpose of causing a breakdown of law and order, posing a threat to life, or causing such message to be sent’. Source: Nigeria, Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, Etc) (Amendment) Act, 2024, 28 February 2024, [url](#), p. 3

⁵¹⁹ Freedom House, Freedom on the Net 2024 – Nigeria, 16 October 2024, [url](#); RSF, Nigeria: at least eight journalists prosecuted under cybercrime law despite new amendment, 9 September 2024, [url](#)

⁵²⁰ Reporters without Borders, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

⁵²¹ RSF, Nigeria: at least eight journalists prosecuted under cybercrime law despite new amendment, 9 September 2024, [url](#); Freedom House, Freedom on the Net 2024 – Nigeria, 16 October 2024, [url](#)

⁵²² RSF, Nigeria: at least eight journalists prosecuted under cybercrime law despite new amendment, 9 September 2024, [url](#); SERAP, ‘End use of Cybercrime Act against journalists, release those in custody’, SERAP, NGE tell Tinubu govt, others, 5 May 2025, [url](#)

⁵²³ Nigeria, NHRC, Protection of the Right to Freedom of Expression in Nigeria, 4 April 2025, [url](#)

⁵²⁴ RSF, Nigeria: at least eight journalists prosecuted under cybercrime law despite new amendment, 9 September 2024, [url](#)

⁵²⁵ IJNET, Citing ‘national security’, Nigerian authorities are cracking down on journalists, 28 October 2024, [url](#)

⁵²⁶ HRW, World Report 2025 (Events of 2024), Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

⁵²⁷ Vanguard, Security agencies identified as major threats to media freedom in Nigeria, 17 December 2024, [url](#); Premium Times, Security operatives behind attacks against journalists in 2024 – Report, 18 December 2024, [url](#)

⁵²⁸ IPI, 2024 IPI Africa monitoring annual round-up, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

⁵²⁹ CPJ, Nigerian security forces attack, arrest journalists covering protests, 6 August 2024, [url](#); RSF, Nigeria: RSF sounds the alarm after journalists attacked and arrested while covering protests, 9 August 2024, [url](#); Premium Times, REPORTER’S DIARY : How this police officer’s men attacked me on protest ground, 4 August 2024, [url](#)

⁵³⁰ RSF, Nigeria: RSF sounds the alarm after journalists attacked and arrested while covering protests, 9 August 2024, [url](#)



attacked a ChannelsTV vehicle carrying around 11 journalists covering the protest in Kano.⁵³¹ In Abuja, despite wearing a press jacket, a Premium Times journalist was approached by police officers, who seized his phone, hit him on the head with a gun, and threw him into a police van, from which he was eventually released.⁵³² In Maiduguri, nine journalists working for Radio Ndarason Internationale, including its programme director and editor-in-chief, were arrested at the radio station after ‘reporting on the current protests throughout the country’,⁵³³ and were released later the same day.⁵³⁴ Between 31 July and 3 August 2024, at least 31 journalists were attacked across the country.⁵³⁵

Frequent arrests under the 2015 Cybercrimes Act for online activities have led to growing self-censorship.⁵³⁶ Security agencies ‘intimidated journalists, including editors and media owners’,⁵³⁷ particularly in response to coverage perceived as critical of the government.⁵³⁸ For instance, in September 2024, Haruna Mohammed Salisu and Yawale Adamu, journalists for the WikkiTimes, faced charges of criminal defamation, injurious falsehood and mischief over a report alleging that a federal lawmaker and a businessman conspired to divert public funds.⁵³⁹ Daniel Ojukwu, a journalist with the Foundation for Investigative Journalism who reported on corruption implicating senior Nigerian officials, was abducted by the Intelligence Response Team of the Inspector General of Police on 1 May 2024. Police only confirmed his detention on 3 May 2025, when he was accused of violating the 2015 Cybercrimes Act; he was released on 10 May 2024.⁵⁴⁰ In September 2024, four journalists, editors, and publishers – Olurotimi Olawale, Precious Eze Chukwunonso, Rowland Olonishuwa, and Seun Odunlami – were arrested and later charged with violating sections 24(1)(b) and 27 of the 2015 Cybercrimes Act in connection with reports they had published concerning alleged fraud involving the Chief Executive Officer of Guaranty Trust Bank.⁵⁴¹ The police forced the journalist to take down the reports from their various platforms.⁵⁴² In March 2025, police arrested and detained for three

⁵³¹ Punch, #EndBadGovernanceIn Nigeria Protest: Hoodlums attack journalists in Kano, 1 August 2024, [url](#);

Guardian, Hoodlums attack, injure reporters in Kano, 2 August 2024, [url](#)

⁵³² Premium Times, REPORTER’S DIARY : How this police officer’s men attacked me on protest ground, 4 August 2024, [url](#)

⁵³³ Radio Ndarason International, Statement to media, 1 August 2024, [url](#); CPJ, In Nigeria, at least 56 journalists attacked and harassed as protests roil region, 21 August 2024, [url](#)

⁵³⁴ David L. Smith, [Twitter], posted on 1 August 2024, [url](#); RSF, Nigeria: RSF sounds the alarm after journalists attacked and arrested while covering protests, 9 August 2024, [url](#)

⁵³⁵ Premium Times, 31 journalists face brutality of police, security forces during #EndBadGovernance protests, 4 August 2024, [url](#)

⁵³⁶ Freedom House, Freedom on the Net 2024 – Nigeria, 16 October 2024, [url](#)

⁵³⁷ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Nigeria, 23 April 2024, [url](#)

⁵³⁸ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Nigeria, 23 April 2024, [url](#); Freedom House, Freedom on the Net 2024 – Nigeria, 16 October 2024, [url](#)

⁵³⁹ CPJ, WikkiTimes publisher reporter face criminal charges over reporting on alleged corruption, 16 September 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁰ FIJ, Highlighting Monthly Attacks on Nigerian Journalists Since World Press Freedom 2024, 6 May 2025, [url](#); NPR, Nigeria has detained a journalist who reported on corruption in a widening crackdown, 9 May 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁴¹ CPJ, 4 Nigerian journalists face fresh charges over report tying bank CEO to fraud claims, 18 October 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁴² MFWA, Four journalists detained after corruption reporting, denied bail, 6 October 2024, [url](#)



hours two journalists on the order of Kano's State's information commissioner after they published an article accusing him of abusing his power.⁵⁴³

Sources reported a lack of mechanisms to protect journalists⁵⁴⁴ and a 'culture of impunity',⁵⁴⁵ with authorities 'rarely' investigating violations of press freedom.⁵⁴⁶

2.7. Protesters

Freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association rights are guaranteed under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), and Sections 39 and 40 of the Nigerian Constitution. Although the Public Order Act⁵⁴⁷ requires police approval for protests, the Court of Appeal of Nigeria ruled this unconstitutional in 2007, yet authorities continued to enforce the requirement.⁵⁴⁸

Federal and state governments frequently ban public events perceived as security threats, particularly those tied to political, ethnic, or religious tensions, such as protests linked to groups like the separatist Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).⁵⁴⁹

Between August 2024 and April 2025, Nigerian security forces reportedly used excessive force to disperse protests across Nigeria.⁵⁵⁰ Between 1 and 10 August 2024, protests organised by a coalition of various activist groups and known by the hashtag #EndBadGovernance took place across Nigeria, driven by public outrage over soaring inflation, corruption, and the removal of fuel subsidies.⁵⁵¹ According to Amnesty International, at least 24 protesters were killed during the protests, many of them shot with live ammunition at close range by security forces. The organisation also documented the detention of over 1 200 individuals, including minors,⁵⁵² activists and journalists.⁵⁵³ In the aftermath, authorities charged 146 protesters.⁵⁵⁴ Dozens of protesters, including minors, were charged with treason,

⁵⁴³ Kano Times, ASKOJ Condemns Persecution of Journalists, Seeks End to Press Suppression, 25 March 2025, [url](#); Premium Times, Kano State Commissioner Orders Police Arrest of Journalist over 'Critical' Article, 25 March 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁴ Reporters without Borders, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁴⁵ Premium Times, Security operatives behind attacks against journalists in 2024 – Report, 18 December 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁶ International Press Institute (IPI), 2024 IPI Africa monitoring annual round-up, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁷ Nigeria, Public Order Act, Chapter 382 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1979, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁸ AI, Bloody August: Nigerian government's violent crackdown on #EndBadGovernance protests [AFR 44/8780/2024], November 2024, [url](#), p. 10

⁵⁴⁹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁵⁰ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#); AI, Nigeria: Police used excessive force to violently quash #Endbadgovernance protesters, 28 November 2024, [url](#); Civicus, 2025 State of Civil Society Report, March 2025, [url](#), p. 26

⁵⁵¹ AI, Bloody August: Nigerian Government's Violent Crackdown on #EndBadGovernance Protests, November 2024, [url](#), p. 8

⁵⁵² AI, Nigeria: Police used excessive force to violently quash #Endbadgovernance protesters, 28 November 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁵³ AI, Bloody August: Nigerian Government's Violent Crackdown on #EndBadGovernance Protests, November 2024, [url](#), p. 9

⁵⁵⁴ AI, Nigeria: Police used excessive force to violently quash #Endbadgovernance protesters, 28 November 2024, [url](#)



facing a possible death sentence.⁵⁵⁵ In November 2024, the high court in Abuja arraigned 114 #EndBadGovernance protesters, most of them minors, who spent over two months in detention under ‘appalling conditions’.⁵⁵⁶ Outrage over court images of the children showing their poor conditions, including signs of malnutrition,⁵⁵⁷ led Nigeria’s president to order the release of more than 29 children facing the death penalty and launch an investigation into the officials responsible.⁵⁵⁸ In Katsina State, 12 children under 16 also faced unfair trials, many ‘arrested simply for being on the streets during the protests’, according to Amnesty International.⁵⁵⁹

Labour unions were also involved in the #EndBadGovernance protests.⁵⁶⁰ In August 2024, security forces raided the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) headquarters in Abuja, allegedly searching for protest-related materials.⁵⁶¹ The following month, the NLC’s President was arrested after criticising fuel price hikes and threatening a national strike,⁵⁶² then was later released.⁵⁶³

On 29 March 2025, Nigerian security forces used live ammunition against a peaceful pro-Palestinian procession by the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) in Abuja, killing and arresting protesters.⁵⁶⁴ On 7 April 2025, Nigerians in different states participated in protests organised by the Take It Back Movement, opposing the misuse of the Cybercrime Act and worsening economic conditions. Police used tear gas in Abuja, Lagos, and Port Harcourt to disperse demonstrators and restricted access to public spaces.⁵⁶⁵ Authorities claimed the organisers attempted to discredit the Nigeria Police Force by holding the protest on the same day designated to celebrate its contributions to national security.⁵⁶⁶

2.8. Human rights defenders and activists

Nigeria’s civil society is active and diverse, with NGOs generally free to form and operate.⁵⁶⁷ Civil society organisations have played important roles during elections and public protests, including the August-September 2024 protests. However, civic space in Nigeria has continued to decline throughout 2024, with increasing restrictions on public dissent, freedom of

⁵⁵⁵ HRW, Nigeria: Protesters Charged with Treason, 6 September 2024, [url](#); Reuters, Nigeria charges 76, including minors, with treason after August protests, 1 November 2024, [url](#); CNN, 29 children may be sentenced to death for protesting against cost-of-living crisis in Nigeria, 3 November 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁵⁶ AI, The State of the World’s Human Rights; Nigeria, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁵⁷ BBC News, Nigeria drops treason charges against children after outcry, 5 November 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁵⁸ AP News, Nigeria’s president orders the release of 29 children facing death penalty over protests, 4 November 2024, [url](#); BBC News, Nigeria drops treason charges against children after outcry, 5 November 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁵⁹ AI, The State of the World’s Human Rights; Nigeria, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁰ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁶¹ Channels TV, Security Operatives Raid NLC Headquarters, Cart Away Documents, 8 August 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁶² Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁶³ Vanguard, Ajaero released as outrage trails arrest, 10 September 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁴ AP News, Clash between Nigerian security forces and members of pro-Palestinians group kill 6, 29 March 2025, [url](#); AI, Nigeria: Violent crackdown on IMN Protests Must End, 30 March 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁵ AA, Nigerians protest over cybercrime act, economic conditions, 7 April 2025, [url](#); BBC News, ‘Take it Back’ protest across Nigeria – wetin e dey about?, 7 April 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁶ Nigeria, NPF, Nationwide protest: NPF Cautions Against Ill-Timed Protest across the Country, 7 April 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁷ Freedom House, Freedom on the World 2025– Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#); ICNL, Nigeria, 4 June 2025, [url](#)



expression, and civil society activities,⁵⁶⁸ particularly through state surveillance and protest suppression.⁵⁶⁹ Statistics from a DataPhyte report show that between 2016 and 2024,⁵⁷⁰ civic space actors and institutions faced major crises, including physical violence as well as restrictive legislation and policies.⁵⁷¹ National security is cited as a key factor driving restrictions on civic rights in Nigeria, based on 14 years of civic space data from a Kimpact Development Initiative (KDI) report.⁵⁷²

The North-Central region recorded the highest levels of civic space restrictions, driven by communal clashes, heavy military presence, and suppression of dissent, followed by the North-West, where insecurity and state-imposed measures have led to widespread arrests and shutdowns of communication services. The North-East faced ongoing restrictions due to insurgency, though civil society remains somewhat resilient. The southern regions reported relatively lower restrictions due to stronger civic institutions and greater media freedom.⁵⁷³ However, a Nigerian senior security advisor⁵⁷⁴ told the EUAA that, in the South-East region, the right to free speech by citizens, including traditional and religious leaders, has been severely curtailed by fears of arrests, abductions and killings by both government security forces and by pro-Biafra armed groups.⁵⁷⁵ For more information see [2.9. Members and perceived supporters of political parties and separatist movements](#).

Civil groups' members 'face intimidation and physical harm', especially when speaking out against Boko Haram or probing military abuses.⁵⁷⁶ In January 2025, 67 Nigerian civil society organisations publicly denounced an escalation of crackdown on civic space, citing threats and harassment by security forces against activists, journalists, and NGOs.⁵⁷⁷ The government reportedly used the 2015 Cybercrimes Act to curb online publications and to arrest and detain activists and journalists for their online activity.⁵⁷⁸ For more information see [2.6 Journalists and media workers](#).

Illustrative examples of incidents of harassment, detention, and criminalisation of activists include:

⁵⁶⁸ Primorg News, Nigerians To Tinubu: Shrinking Civic Space Threatening Democracy, 29 May 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁹ Kimpact Development Initiative, Protecting the Civil Space, Trends, Challenges, and Future Outlook in Nigeria, 2025, [url](#), p. 15

⁵⁷⁰ Dataphyte, Media Reports of Threats to Civic Space Actors and Institutions in Nigeria, February 2025, [url](#), pp. 46, 70, 75, 76, 87.

⁵⁷¹ Dubawa, Civic space actors, institutions under severe threat in Nigeria – Report, 4 March 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁷² Kimpact Development Initiative, Protecting the Civil Space, Trends, Challenges, and Future Outlook in Nigeria, 2025, [url](#), p. 8, 15

⁵⁷³ Kimpact Development Initiative, Protecting the Civil Space, Trends, Challenges, and Future Outlook in Nigeria, 2025, [url](#), pp. 79, 80

⁵⁷⁴ The source is a Nigerian senior security advisor, working for an international research organisation that monitors conflict dynamics across the world. The source wished to remain anonymous for security and operational reasons.

⁵⁷⁵ Nigerian Senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025

⁵⁷⁶ Freedom House, Freedom on the World 2025– Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁷ Daily Trust, 67 CSOs to Tinubu: End Crackdown on Activists, Journalists, Others, 16 January 2025, [url](#); Business Day, #EndBadGovernance Protest Report: CSOs urge Tinubu to halt police harassment of Amnesty International, 16 January 2025, [url](#); Vanguard, 67 CSOs to Tinubu: End crackdown on activists, journalists, others, 15 January 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁷⁸ Freedom House, Freedom on the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)



- In May 2024, a 33-year-old man in Adamawa State was arrested for allegedly misusing social media by posting an unsubstantiated TikTok video criticising public officials, which police said could incite unrest and damage reputations.⁵⁷⁹
- On 20 October 2024, during the #EndSARS⁵⁸⁰ memorial protest in Lagos, a nurse and activist was allegedly assaulted by police dispersing demonstrators with tear gas and force. She later posted a video online criticising top government figures, which led to her arrest on 13 December 2024. Authorities charged her under the Cybercrime Act for allegedly using the post 'to bully, threaten, and harass the person of Seyi Tinubu.'⁵⁸¹
- In December 2024, a Nigerian lawyer and activist was released on bail after spending 20 days in detention over criminal defamation and cybercrime charges related to a book that alleged judicial corruption. The arrest followed a petition citing 31 allegedly defamatory excerpts from the publication.⁵⁸²
- On 23 May 2025, a coalition of civil society organisations (CSOs) demanded the immediate release and protection of an 18-year-old activist detained after criticising Sokoto Governor Ahmed Aliyu. She had faced repeated harassment, abduction, and detention, allegedly including physical abuse and being forcibly injected with unknown substances. She was initially abducted in November 2024, allegedly beaten and left injured, then rearrested and charged in a sharia court.⁵⁸³

2.9. Members and perceived supporters of political parties and separatist movements

The legal framework guarantees the right for Nigerians to organise in different political parties as well as the equal participation in political life for all cultural, religious, and ethnic groups.⁵⁸⁴ The 1999 Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, and of the press.⁵⁸⁵ In practice, legislation relating to sedition, criminal defamation, and the dissemination of false information have constrained these rights (see also [2.6 Journalists and media workers](#)). In some cases, authorities have banned online content; and occasionally, internet service providers have blocked access to websites, particularly those promoting separatist agendas, such as pro-Biafra platforms, following directives from the Nigerian Communications Commission.⁵⁸⁶ In April 2025, for instance, authorities prohibited radio stations from airing a song that criticises President Bola Tinubu and his administration's policies.⁵⁸⁷ While the Constitution guarantees the right to peaceful assembly, federal and state authorities routinely prohibit or disperse

⁵⁷⁹ Freedom House, Freedom on the Net 2024 – Nigeria, 16 October 2024, [url](#); Leadership, Police Arrest 'TikToker' for Alleged Abuse of Social Media in Adamawa, May 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁰ On 4 October 2020, a viral video showing Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) officers allegedly shooting two men sparked the #EndSARS protests on 8 October; the nationwide demonstrations lasted several days, left at least 56 people dead, and led to the disbandment of the unit by Nigerian authorities. See: AI, #EndSARS movement: from Twitter to Nigerian streets, 8 February 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁸¹ Punch, How Nigerian authorities use Cybercrime Act to harass, detain journalists, activists, 9 March 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁸² Premium Times, Dele Farotimi leaves prison after 20 days of detention, 24 December 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁸³ Cable (The), CSOs demand release, protection of woman arrested for 'criticising' Sokoto governor, 23 May 2025, [url](#); Premium Times, Coalition demands release, protection of woman detained after criticising Sokoto Governor, 24 May 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁴ Freedom House, Freedom on the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁵ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report Nigeria, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 9

⁵⁸⁶ Freedom House, Freedom on the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁷ AP, A song critical of Nigeria's president is barred from airwaves, 11 April 2025, [url](#)



public gatherings deemed to pose a threat to national security or likely to provoke political, ethnic, or religious unrest.⁵⁸⁸ See also [2.7 Protesters](#).

In Nigeria, political actors, parties (and separatist movements⁵⁸⁹) frequently mobilise support along ethnic and religious lines. According to Freedom House, some communities may experience underrepresentation or neglect, particularly in regions where they constitute a minority or where their affiliated political parties do not hold power.⁵⁹⁰ Separatist groups in the South-East as well as militant factions in the Niger Delta advocating for regional autonomy have continued to enjoy varying levels of local support.⁵⁹¹ These movements are particularly active in areas where communities perceive themselves as politically, economically, and culturally marginalised.⁵⁹²

In an interview with the EUAA, a senior security advisor⁵⁹³ described the attitude by the Nigerian government and its agents towards separatist agitation as ‘very negative, combative and repressive’. The same source noted that authorities are especially sensitive towards the Biafran agitation given its longer history and the consequences that led to the war between 1967 and 1970.⁵⁹⁴

Local and international organisations reported that the Nigerian army has perpetrated various abuses, including extrajudicial killings and torture, particularly during operations against insurgent groups in the North and separatist movements in the South-East.⁵⁹⁵ (See also [EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Security Situation November 2025](#)).

2.9.1. Treatment by authorities of pro-Biafran separatists and perceived pro-Biafran supporters

For background information on pro-Biafran separatist groups, including their goals, capacity, *modus operandi*, areas of operation and violations perpetrated by them see [EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Security Situation November 2025](#).

While pro-Biafra groups, inspired by the 1967–1970 secessionist movement, share the goal of secession, they differ in approach.⁵⁹⁶ IPOB,⁵⁹⁷ a splinter faction from the Movement for Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), has been the most active group in the agitation for restoration of an independent Republic of Biafra for the past decade.⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁸⁸ Freedom House, Freedom on the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁹ Demarest, L. and Langer, A., Managing Diversity in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic National Assembly: Integrated Parties versus Ethno-Regional Balancing, 7 April 2023, [url](#); Eze, O. J. et al., Ethnic-Based Violence: Nigeria Perspectives, 25 August 2023, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁰ Freedom House, Freedom on the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁹¹ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report Nigeria, 19 March 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁹² Mezie-Okoye, C. C., The Marginalization of Igbo and The Emergence of IPOB in Nigeria, 20 March 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁹³ The source is a Nigerian senior security advisor, working for an international research organisation that monitors conflict dynamics across the world. The source wished to remain anonymous for security and operational reasons.

⁵⁹⁴ Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025

⁵⁹⁵ Freedom House, Freedom on the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁶ Conversation (The), A breakdown of Biafra separatist and where Kanu fits into the picture, 18 August 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁷ IPOB, About us, n.d., [url](#)

⁵⁹⁸ Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025



Founded in 2012 by Nnamdi Kanu,⁵⁹⁹ IPOB has been the most militant expression of post-war Igbo nationalism.⁶⁰⁰ Citing long-standing grievances of marginalisation,⁶⁰¹ the group has gained significant support both domestically and in the diaspora.⁶⁰² While conservative Igbo nationalists have advocated for gradual, diplomatic efforts towards fair political and economic inclusion within Nigeria, Kanu's interpretation of Igbo nationalism has been grounded in radical separatism, aligning with the confrontational faction of the movement. In 2014, Kanu first introduced the idea of armed struggle, followed by an open call for weapons in 2015.⁶⁰³ In 2020, he founded the Eastern Security Network (ESN),⁶⁰⁴ allegedly in response to rising security threats, particularly those posed by Fulani herdsmen. IPOB claims the ESN has played a key role in reducing attacks, killings, and farm invasions across the region.⁶⁰⁵ As the armed paramilitary wing of IPOB, some ESN members include former soldiers who served in the Nigerian army, while others are civilians trained in basic combat skills. Many are armed with military-grade rifles.⁶⁰⁶

In 2017, the Nigerian Federal Government and South-East Governors proscribed IPOB as a terrorist organisation.⁶⁰⁷ His leader, Nnamdi Kanu, who has also British nationality, was arrested in Nigeria in 2015 but disappeared while on bail in 2017.⁶⁰⁸ In 2021, he was detained in Kenya and later reappeared in a Nigerian court that same year, facing seven charges of terrorism, which he denies in his ongoing trial.⁶⁰⁹ Kanu's trial has faced repeated delays, judicial recusals, and two rejected bail applications.⁶¹⁰ In October 2023, the Enugu High Court ruled the designation of IPOB as terrorist group unconstitutional;⁶¹¹ a ruling which was however overturned by Nigeria's Supreme Court the same year.⁶¹² In January 2025, a unanimous three-member panel of the Court of Appeal upheld the proscription, ruling that the government acted lawfully.⁶¹³ In response, IPOB filed a notice of appeal at the Supreme Court on 7 February 2025, challenging the decision.⁶¹⁴

The Nigerian senior security advisor stated that, while initially IPOB backed armed struggle - with its leader urging loyalists to take up arms against the Nigerian state and 'take down'

⁵⁹⁹ Mezie-Okoye, C. C., The Marginalization of Igbo and The Emergence of IPOB in Nigeria, 20 March 2025, [url](#); Ibukuntomiwa, F. G. et al., Federalism and Agitation of Self-Determination in Nigeria: A Study of the Indigenous People of Biafra, March 2025, [url](#), pp. 37-38

⁶⁰⁰ Conversation (The), A breakdown of Biafra separatist and where Kanu fits into the picture, 18 August 2021, [url](#)

⁶⁰¹ Sun (The), Igbo marginalisation in Nigeria: A deepening divide, 24 February 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁰² Ibukuntomiwa, F. G. et al., Federalism and Agitation of Self-Determination in Nigeria: A Study of the Indigenous People of Biafra, March 2025, [url](#), p. 38

⁶⁰³ Conversation (The), A breakdown of Biafra separatist and where Kanu fits into the picture, 18 August 2021, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁴ Guardian (The), Why IPOB formed Eastern Security Network, by Kanu, 16 December 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁵ EONS Intelligence, IPOB Celebrates 4th Anniversary of Eastern Security Network, Commends Operatives for Bravery and Sacrifices, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁶ Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025

⁶⁰⁷ Premium Times, Appeal Court affirms IPOB's proscription as terrorist group, 30 January 2025, [url](#); Round Check, Uncovering Pro-IPOB Accounts Using Foreign Faces to Promote Secession With Propaganda On Elon Musk's X, 14 December 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁸ Reuters, Separatist Kanu faces new trial in Nigeria under fourth judge, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁹ Reuters, Fact Check: Kenya has not demanded Nigeria return separatist leader, 19 June 2025, [url](#)

⁶¹⁰ Reuters, Separatist Kanu faces new trial in Nigeria under fourth judge, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

⁶¹¹ Premium Times, Appeal Court affirms IPOB's proscription as terrorist group, 30 January 2025, [url](#); Round Check, Uncovering Pro-IPOB Accounts Using Foreign Faces to Promote Secession With Propaganda On Elon Musk's X, 14 December 2024, [url](#)

⁶¹² AP, Nigeria's Supreme Court reinstates terrorism charges against separatist leader, 15 December 2023, [url](#)

⁶¹³ Punch, Appeal court upholds IPOB's proscription, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

⁶¹⁴ Business Day, IPOB challenges proscription ruling at Supreme Court, 8 February 2025, [url](#)



security personnel - in recent years, the group has shifted to a non-violent approach, calling for the realisation of Biafra through peaceful means, particularly through a *referendum*. The source added that such a change in messaging must be seen more as a tactical rather than an ideological shift, namely as a legal strategy tied to Kanu's trial, aimed at softening his image and gaining international support.⁶¹⁵

Following the re-arrest of Kanu in 2021, Finland-based Simon Ekpa, a self-proclaimed disciple of Kanu, gained prominence as the new lead broadcaster for Radio Biafra.⁶¹⁶ Ekpa was however removed within a few months after refusing to sign the Radio's rules of engagement.⁶¹⁷ In July 2021, Simon Ekpa declared that the Biafra movement had entered an 'autopilot phase'⁶¹⁸ and in 2022 he announced the establishment of the Biafra Republic Government in Exile (BRGIE).⁶¹⁹ His faction began recruiting fighters, including from the ESN, who became known as 'Autopilot'. BRGIE, a diaspora-led separatist group, is now considered as a more violent group than IPOB, which has distanced itself from it. Since 2023, fighters under Ekpa's rebranded BRGIE group have been linked to rising violence in the region.⁶²⁰

In November 2024, Ekpa was arrested in Finland by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) on suspicion of inciting terrorism and spreading violent separatist propaganda online.⁶²¹ In March 2025, Nigeria's Sanctions Committee designated Simon Ekpa, several IPOB members, and affiliated businesses as terrorism financiers, citing their role in funding and inciting attacks linked to IPOB's armed wing, the ESN. Ekpa was accused of organising 49 international fundraising campaigns between October 2023 and September 2024, allegedly used to support violence in southeastern Nigeria.⁶²² These actions were reportedly coordinated through social media, particularly X, and linked to a broader digital propaganda strategy,⁶²³ also aimed at spreading disinformation and amplifying calls for civil disobedience.⁶²⁴

⁶¹⁵ Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025

⁶¹⁶ Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025. A central instrument in Biafra's propaganda strategy during the civil war, Radio Biafra has remained an important communication channel to disseminate official narratives, often biased and falsified. See Wolff, R., *Visual Propaganda and Biafran National Identity: Artists Constructing a Nation During Wartime*, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

⁶¹⁷ Sun (The), IPOB sacks Kanu's successor in Radio Biafra, 22 July 2021, [url](#)

⁶¹⁸ Sahara Reporters, IPOB Counters Nnamdi Kanu's Disciple, Simon Ekpa, Says Group Not On Autopilot, 18 August 2021, [url](#); Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025

⁶¹⁹ Sahara Reporters, Nnamdi Kanu's Self-professed Disciple, Simon Ekpa Declares Full Biafran Government In Exile, Says No Going Back On Separation From Nigeria, 2 August 2022, [url](#)

⁶²⁰ Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025

⁶²¹ VOA, Nigeria hopes for extradition of separatist leader, but analysts are skeptical, 22 November 2024, [url](#); HumAngle, Simon Ekpa Has Benn Imprisoned. What Does it Mean for IPOB Agitation?, 21 November 2024, [url](#)

⁶²² Premium Times, Nigerian govt designates Simon Ekpa, IPOB members, Lakurawa, firms as terrorist financiers, 7 March 2025, [url](#)

⁶²³ Dubawa, How disinformation fuels pro-Biafran agenda on social media while undermining democracy, 18 March 2025, [url](#); FIJ, Simon Ekpa's BRGIE Enjoys Uninterrupted Broadcast on X Despite Terrorism Financing Case, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

⁶²⁴ Round Check, Uncovering Pro-IPOB Accounts Using Foreign Faces to Promote Secession With Propaganda On Elon Musk's X, 14 December 2024, [url](#); AFP Fact Check, Video of Musk saying Trump will secure Nigerian separatist's freedom is deepfake, 20 March 2025, [url](#); Reuters, Fact Check: No evidence Trump called for Nigerian separatist's release; audio synthetic, experts say, 6 December 2024, [url](#)



IPOB and ESN members were killed by Nigerian security forces during special operations⁶²⁵ (see [EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Security Situation November 2025](#)). State repression against separatist movements and their perceived sympathisers is described as ‘frequent’ and ‘excessive’.⁶²⁶ Nigerians living in the South-East have been at risk of arbitrary arrests amid the government’s campaign against IPOB’s armed wing.⁶²⁷ National media reported cases where government security raided communities in the South-East states, harassing and arresting individuals, who were later released,⁶²⁸ as well as cases of harassment and extortion of Igbos at checkpoints in the South-East.⁶²⁹ A 2024 report by local NGO International Society for Civil Liberties and the Rule of Law (Intersociety)⁶³⁰ indicated that Nigerian security forces were accused of committing extensive human rights violations in Eastern Nigeria under the pretext of combating ‘IPOB/ESN/Biafra terrorism’. These included arbitrary arrests, prolonged detentions without trial, secret abductions, torture, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and destruction of civilian property. Intersociety further alleged that the security operations affected unarmed Igbo civilians and reported that state forces were responsible for over twice as many civilian deaths (32 300) compared to those attributed to armed non-state actors (14 500) in the region.⁶³¹ Similarly, a Nigerian senior security advisor told the EUAA that real or suspected supporters of pro-Biafran agitation are often arrested and detained, sometimes for years and without formal charges or trial. Many are held in military facilities under harsh, inhumane conditions. Often, security forces carry out mass, indiscriminate arrests. According to the same source, Nigerian security forces are ‘negatively disposed’ to any expression of support, endorsement, or sympathy with the Biafran cause – and not just against the armed groups. ‘Hundreds - if not thousands - of young people are frequently stopped at the numerous checkpoints across the South-East, and if anything linked to Biafra is found, such as content on their phones, it is treated as an offense, and they are arrested, detained or otherwise asked to bail themselves – another word for extortion.’⁶³²

The Nigerian senior security advisor added that most prominent individuals who are strongly supportive of the Biafran cause - considered ‘individuals of concern’ by the security system - are being monitored very closely online and offline. However, the state does not have the capacity to track the large number of people who support the cause. ‘Therefore, it is unlikely that all supporters are being monitored.’⁶³³

⁶²⁵ Nigeria Watch, Fourteenth Report on Violence 2024, [url](#), p. 14; Premium Times, Soldiers’ Killing: Nigerian troops kill six suspected IPOB members in Abia forest, 9 June 2024, [url](#); Premium Times, IPOB: About 200 security agents killed in South East – SSS Witness, 18 June 2025, [url](#)

⁶²⁶ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report Nigeria, 19 March 2024, [url](#), p. 9

⁶²⁷ Freedom House, Freedom on the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

⁶²⁸ Premium Times, Abia killing: Tension as soldiers arrest several people, harass residents, 1 June 2025, [url](#); The Cable, Troops ‘raid Abia communities, arrest residents’, over killing of soldiers, 2 June 2024, [url](#);

⁶²⁹ Vanguard, We’re being treated like evil, slaves at road checkpoints – South East road users, 28 August 2024, [url](#)

⁶³⁰ Intersociety is a local NGO whose declared aim is to promote and protect democracy, rule of law, and human rights through research, documentation, advocacy, and public engagement. See Intersociety, About us, n.d., [url](#)

⁶³¹ Intersociety, Nigeria’s leading human rights group releases two special international reports on rights abuses and violations in the East, 22 December 2024, [url](#), p. 5

⁶³² Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025

⁶³³ Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025



During election periods, there have been reports of instances of voter suppression and intimidation targeting Igbo communities,⁶³⁴ including violence against Igbo voters, online and public hate speech, destruction of Igbo-owned businesses and physical attacks.⁶³⁵ At times, the media has portrayed Igbo individuals in ways that reinforce negative stereotypes, associating them with criminality or economic greed. Some Nigerian politicians and social media influencers have reportedly used inflammatory language to incite hostility and violence against the Igbo population.⁶³⁶

2.9.2. Treatment by pro-Biafran armed groups of Igbos in the South-East perceived as non-supporting the cause

Civic space in the South-East is reported as increasingly shrinking, also due to actions linked to separatist groups, such as use of propaganda, labelling, cyberbullying, forced restrictions (such as sit-at-home orders), various forms of intimidation, violence and the suppression of basic civil rights.⁶³⁷ Open criticism of the separatist movement within the South-East has become rare, and the general climate is one of intimidation and silence. According to the Nigerian senior security advisor, 'self-censorship is pervasive, with many Igbos feeling held hostage by separatist narratives and by actors operating in the region.' Igbo individuals who are critical to separatist groups are often accused of being collaborators with the Nigerian state, planted to infiltrate and undermine the movement from within. Many, particularly public figures, such as traditional leaders, clerics, journalists, and civil society representatives, feel they are under constant surveillance, face potential repercussions for expressing dissenting views, and fear being targeted or labelled as enemies of the cause. There have been documented instances in which traditional rulers and religious leaders who publicly advocated for moderation and non-violence received threatening messages; but also, some cases of violence, including the killing of traditional rulers and others perceived as unsupportive of the agitation.⁶³⁸ In October 2024, when Bianca Ojukwu, widow of the late Biafran leader Chukwuemeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu, accepted President Tinubu's appointment as junior minister for foreign affairs,⁶³⁹ a US-based Biafra supporter accused her of betraying the Igbos by 'joining the enemy'; another 'independent Biafra media activist', warned Ojukwu that 'no one has ever served Nigeria and retired without shame and disgrace.'⁶⁴⁰

The same source informed that Simon Ekpa is reported to have issued a public warning in August 2024 indicating that the struggle had entered a new phase, whereby the movement was no longer focused solely on resisting the Nigerian state but was now also targeting internal collaborators. These included politicians, religious figures, and traditional authorities who were perceived to be obstructing or weakening the separatist effort.⁶⁴¹

⁶³⁴ Sun (The), Igbo marginalisation in Nigeria: A deepening divide, 24 February 2025, [url](#)

⁶³⁵ Mezie-Okoye, C. C., The Marginalization of Igbo and The Emergence of IPOB in Nigeria, 20 March 2025, [url](#)

⁶³⁶ Ivorgba, E. A., Historical analysis of Igbo-phobia and its impact on national integration in Nigeria, April 2025, [url](#), pp. 1109-1110

⁶³⁷ Amaechi K. J. and Jackson T. J., From Civil to 'Uncivil' Society? Separatist Social Movements and the Shrinking Civil Space in South-East, Nigeria, May 2024, [url](#), pp. 1, 8-12

⁶³⁸ Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025

⁶³⁹ Vanguard, Why Bianca Ojukwu's appointment is beyond politics, 31 October 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁴⁰ Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025

⁶⁴¹ Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025



A report by intelligence consultancy SBM Intel revealed that a sit-at-home order enforced by IPOB in the South-East has resulted in the deaths of over 700 people in Nigeria's South-East over the past four years. Such a sit-at-home order - consisting in imposing a shutdown of business and services every Monday - was originally intended as a symbolic act of solidarity to demand the release of IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu. The weekly Monday shutdowns have since transformed into a prolonged crisis, characterised by widespread fear, violence against those who disregard the order, and severe economic disruption. Between 2021 and the beginning of May 2025, over 700 people were killed in 'IPOB-related violence', including in retaliatory attacks by IPOB on civilians who defied sit-at-home orders. The group's enforcement methods include setting fire to vehicles, looting, and targeted killings of individuals who defy the order.⁶⁴² As noted by the senior security advisor, the sit-at-home lockdowns have had a significant economic impact, further deepening regional disparities. As a result, there has been a clear shift in public sentiment. While many Igbos remain frustrated with their political marginalisation, there is growing disillusionment with the tactics of IPOB, ESN, and other separatist groups, seen by many as harming the region, without achieving any political objective. Despite this, public criticism is rare due to threats, intimidation and the fear of being misunderstood as siding with the Nigerian state. Igbos who question the legitimacy, methods, or direction of the agitation are frequently labelled as traitors or betrayers of the cause.⁶⁴³

IPOB actively discourages Igbo youth from joining Nigerian security forces,⁶⁴⁴ issuing statements that imply harsh consequences for those who do. According to the Nigerian senior security advisor, the group spread narratives claiming Igbo youths are used as sacrificial lambs in a fight that doesn't concern them, fighting against religious extremists that they don't understand (i.e. Boko Haram), defending a country that often discriminates against them, while 'they should save their energy for the Biafran army that will come.'⁶⁴⁵ Beyond the psychological pressure, Igbo individuals serving in the Nigerian military have been specifically targeted and killed by armed groups in the South-East.⁶⁴⁶ The same source mentioned the example of a retired Major General,⁶⁴⁷ an Igbo from the South-East who was abducted in September 2023 and eventually killed, even after his family had paid a 50 000 USD ransom; the three killers, arrested by police in May 2024, reportedly confessed that they were IPOB members. Another incident involved an army couple from Imo State,⁶⁴⁸ who was stopped at an illegal checkpoint, murdered and dismembered; then a video of the killing was circulated online with a warning: 'this is what happens to those associated with the Nigerian army.' There have been other killings of Igbos serving in the Nigerian army, police and other security agencies. Although it is often difficult to establish precisely who is behind the killings - whether IPOB, the pro-Biafra government-in-exile, or criminal groups exploiting the name of

⁶⁴² SBM Intel, Four Years of Disruption: Unmasking the Impact of IPOB's Sit-at-Home Order in Southeast Nigeria, 26 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 3-8, 23

⁶⁴³ Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025

⁶⁴⁴ Punch, Army warns IPOB to stop discouraging Igbo youths from its recruitment exercise, 8 October 2024, [url](#); Public Watch, IPOB Warns Igbo Youths: Do Not Join Nigerian Army Or Be Killed Cheaply By Northern Terrorists, 8 April 2025, [url](#); Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025

⁶⁴⁵ Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025

⁶⁴⁶ Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025

⁶⁴⁷ Punch, Criminal gang which killed abducted Imo retired general arrested, 17 May 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁴⁸ Premium Times, IPOB denies responsibility for the murder of army couple in Imo, 4 May 2022, [url](#)





IPOB - the impact is the same: it discourages young Igbo people from joining the Nigerian military or police, knowing they or their families in the South-East could be targeted.⁶⁴⁹

2.10. Individuals targeted by Boko Haram

For background information on Boko Haram and its splinter groups, including their capacity, *modus operandi*, areas of operation and violations perpetrated by them see [EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Security Situation November 2025](#).

Boko Haram mainly operates in North-East Nigeria.⁶⁵⁰ The major point of contention between the two main Boko Haram factions - Jama'tu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS) and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) - is rooted in a fundamental disagreement over how civilians should be treated. JAS views civilians as legitimate targets, operating through extreme violence and sectarianism, including suicide attacks, massacres, and the enslavement of those it labels 'infidels' or 'apostates'. ISWAP, on the other hand, distinguishes between Muslims and non-Muslims, seeking to build support among Muslim communities by imposing taxes and enforcing its own governance system, rather than relying on indiscriminate plunder. While ISWAP limits violence against Muslim civilians, non-Muslims remain unprotected under its rule.⁶⁵¹

JAS considers unaffiliated Muslim civilians to be apostates and targets them accordingly. Lower-level fighters frequently conduct raids independently, risking punishment if apprehended. JAS raids go beyond merely looting goods or money; they also involve the abduction of girls and women. JAS commanders have reportedly rewarded loyal fighters by permitting forced marriages with these captives, a practice prohibited by ISWAP.⁶⁵²

ISWAP has carried out massacres of civilians accused of breaching its rules. Justifications include refusal to pay taxes, suspected cooperation with government forces, or defiance of its authority. In accordance with Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)⁶⁵³ ideology, ISWAP considers the killing and enslavement of non-Muslims to be permissible.⁶⁵⁴ Media sources noted that ISWAP have increasingly targeted farmers, fishermen, loggers, herders, and metal scrap collectors, accusing them of spying and relaying information to the military and local militias opposing them.⁶⁵⁵ In September 2024, ISWAP militants attacked Mafa town in Yobe State,

⁶⁴⁹ Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025

⁶⁵⁰ Reuters, ISWAP claims responsibility for deadly attacks in Nigeria, 21 April 2025, [url](#); AP, At least 7 members of Nigerian security force missing after insurgents ambush convoy, 20 November 2024, [url](#); UNIDIR, Boko Haram - Mapping an evolving armed constellation, September 2024, [url](#), pp. 14-19

⁶⁵¹ International Crisis Group, JAS vs. ISWAP: The War of the Boko Haram Splinters, 28 March 2024, [url](#); Foucher, V., Boko Haram: Mapping an Evolving Armed Constellation, UNIDIR, 16 September 2024, [url](#), pp. 16-19

⁶⁵² International Crisis Group, JAS vs. ISWAP: The War of the Boko Haram Splinters, 28 March 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁵³ In 2015, Boko Haram's leader Abubakar Shekau pledged allegiance to the ISIS, leading the movement to adopt the name Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). However, internal divisions soon emerged, and in 2016, dissenting members broke away. This splinter group retained the ISWAP name and gained formal recognition from ISIS. Meanwhile, Shekau and his loyalists formed a separate faction, returning to the original designation of Jama'tu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS). See Crisis Group, JAS vs. ISWAP: The War of the Boko Haram Splinters, 28 March 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁴ International Crisis Group, JAS vs. ISWAP: The War of the Boko Haram Splinters, 28 March 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁵ Defense Post, Jihadists Kill at Least 40 Farmers in Northeast Nigeria, 14 January 2025, [url](#); Vanguard, Boko Haram massacre farmers, fishermen in Borno for supporting ISWAP, 17 May 2025 [url](#)





killing dozens and destroying the town. While authorities confirmed 34 deaths, locals report over 100 burials across multiple sites. The attack was reportedly carried out as retaliation for the community's refusal to pay extortion levies.⁶⁵⁶ In a similar attack in January 2025, ISWAP militants killed some 40 farmers in Borno state, allegedly for trespassing on its territory without permission and failing to pay required levies.⁶⁵⁷

Schoolchildren have been significantly impacted by Boko Haram's campaign against secular education. Attacks on schools and widespread abductions by Boko Haram and other armed groups have led to the closure or destruction of thousands of educational institutions at all levels. Student kidnappings for ransom remain a major threat, particularly in northern Nigeria.⁶⁵⁸ In February 2024, suspected Boko Haram fighters abducted over 200 IDPs, mostly children, in Ngala Local Government Area of Borno State.⁶⁵⁹

Boko Haram's attacks on women have been especially severe, with kidnapped victims frequently subjected to forced marriage, sexual violence, and other abuses.⁶⁶⁰ (for more information see [Conflict-related violence](#) under [2.3.3. Violence against women and girls](#)). Members of civil society organisations have faced threats and physical violence for speaking out against Boko Haram.⁶⁶¹ Armed groups such as JAS, ISWAP and Bakura have continued to carry out attacks against civilians, including humanitarian workers.⁶⁶²

2.11. Christians in areas where they are a minority

43.4 % of Nigeria's population identifies as Christian (while 56.1 % as Muslim). In general, Christians are primarily concentrated in the southern regions of the country, whereas Muslims predominantly reside in the northern regions⁶⁶³ (for more information see [2.12 Muslims in areas where they are a minority](#)). The USDOS International Religious Freedom (IRF) report covering 2023 indicated that Christianity is dominant in the South-South, South-West, (including Lagos), and the South-East region, with Catholics, Anglicans, and Methodists, constituting the majority.⁶⁶⁴ The same source indicated that Evangelical Christians are growing rapidly in the North-Central, South-East, South-South, and South-West.⁶⁶⁵ Christians are a minority in northern Nigeria where Islam is predominant and sharia law is applied.⁶⁶⁶ The states where

⁶⁵⁶ HumAngle, ISWAP Attack Devastates Mafa in Northeast Nigeria, Leaving A Grim Toll of Death, 4 September 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁷ Defense Post, Jihadists Kill at Least 40 Farmers in Northeast Nigeria,

⁶⁵⁸ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#); UN, Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and armed conflict in Nigeria, 17 July 2024, [url](#), paras. 3, 5

⁶⁵⁹ HRW, World Report 2025 (Events of 2024), Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁰ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁶¹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁶² UN, Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and armed conflict in Nigeria, 17 July 2024, [url](#), para. 3

⁶⁶³ Pew Research Center, How the Global Religious Landscape Changed from 2010 to 2020, 9 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 49, 56, 113, 193

⁶⁶⁴ USDOS, 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom: Nigeria, 26 June 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁵ USDOS, 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom: Nigeria, 26 June 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁶ ICC, Christians in Northern Nigeria Prepare for Christmas Violence, 11 December 2024, [url](#); Daily Trust, Muslim North, Christian North, 14 April 2025, [url](#)



sharia law has been adopted as both civil and criminal law⁶⁶⁷ are Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara.⁶⁶⁸ The USDOS IRF report indicated that even though Islam is the dominant religion in the North-West and North-East regions, 'significant Christian populations reside there as well', and that Christians and Muslims 'reside in approximately equal numbers in the North Central Region'.⁶⁶⁹

Without providing further details, some sources indicated that, in northern states under sharia law, Christians are discriminated against⁶⁷⁰ and reportedly treated as 'second-class citizens'.⁶⁷¹ In the North-East of the country, where Boko Haram predominantly operates, non-Muslims, including Christians, have been subjected to extreme violence by the group. See for more detailed information [2.14 Individuals targeted by Boko Haram](#).

Violent attacks against Christians as well as nonreligious individuals have been reported in recent years.⁶⁷² Violence against Christians included forced displacement, indiscriminate killings, and the destruction of homes, churches and livelihoods.⁶⁷³ Christians, particularly men, are killed in attacks, and women often kidnapped and targeted for sexual violence.⁶⁷⁴ According to a 2024 report by the Observatory for Religious Freedom in Africa (ORFA) on religious persecution in Nigeria,⁶⁷⁵ Christian captives are more likely to be executed by their captors than Muslim ones; while the later are released if they cannot afford a ransom, Christian captives are murdered even after ransom is paid.⁶⁷⁶

Although Christians have been more vulnerable in northern states,⁶⁷⁷ violence against them is spreading into the Middle Belt and further south.⁶⁷⁸ Christians have faced attacks within the context of intercommunal violence⁶⁷⁹ between the mostly Muslim herders and largely

⁶⁶⁷ West Africa Weekly, Explainer: Sharia Expansion in South-West Nigeria – Should Citizens be Concerned?, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁸ ILGA World, ILGA Database: Nigeria, n.d., [url](#); HRW, World Report 2025 (Events of 2024), Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#); West Africa Weekly, Explainer: Sharia Expansion in South-West Nigeria – Should Citizens be Concerned?, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁹ USDOS, 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom: Nigeria, 26 June 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁰ Open Doors, World Watch List 2025: Nigeria, 2025, [url](#); ADF International, Challenging Nigeria university bans against Christian fellowship on campus, 18 March 2024, [url](#); Daily Post, Religious persecution threatens national stability – Northern CAN, 25 September 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁷¹ Open Doors, World Watch List 2025: Nigeria, 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁷² Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025– Nigeria, 2025, [url](#); ORFA, ORFA data reveals the scale of abductions and the targeting of Christian communities, 28 August 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁷³ NPR, 'We are being driven from the land.' Nigerian village buries its dead after a massacre, 26 July 2025, [url](#); Genocide Watch, Fulani Jihadists massacre over 200 Christians in Nigeria, 14 June 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁴ Open Doors, World Watch List 2025: Nigeria, 2025, [url](#); ORFA, Countering the myth of religious indifference in Nigerian terror (10/2019 – 9/2023), 29 August 2024, [url](#), pp. 30-31

⁶⁷⁵ The report covers the period from 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2023. Information was collected through five types of sources, including a local partner organization, which collected information on the ground via their network on an ongoing basis; other local partners who also monitor violent incidents; two external sources reporting violent incidents to compare their data against ORFA's database; and Desk Research / Local Media / NGO reports. For more information, see: ORFA, Nigeria violence incidents – methodology, July 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁶ ORFA, Countering the myth of religious indifference in Nigerian terror (10/2019 – 9/2023), 29 August 2024, [url](#), p. 30

⁶⁷⁷ Open Doors, World Watch List 2025: Nigeria, 2025, [url](#); ORFA, Countering the myth of religious indifference in Nigerian terror (10/2019 – 9/2023), 29 August 2024, [url](#), p. 26

⁶⁷⁸ Open Doors, World Watch List 2025: Nigeria, 2025, [url](#); BBC, What is behind the wave of killings in central Nigeria?, 19 June 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁹ Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights, Nigeria 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#); FT, Nigeria's spiralling rural violence heaps pressure on president, 27 April 2025, [url](#)



Christian farming communities.⁶⁸⁰ While the conflict between farmers and herders was resurging over the first half of 2025, there was disagreement among sources over the nature and categorisation⁶⁸¹ of this complex and under-researched phenomenon.⁶⁸² While some sources attribute the reasons for this conflict to religious differences between the mostly Muslim herders and largely Christian farming communities, and to disputes between herders and farmers over land use,⁶⁸³ others observers linked the clashes to pressures on herders induced by climate change⁶⁸⁴ and competition over ever-dwindling resources,⁶⁸⁵ while others labelled the violence as manifestations of organised criminality led by armed groups.⁶⁸⁶ For more detailed information see [EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Security Situation, November 2025](#).

The main perpetrators of violence against Christians are jihadist armed groups,⁶⁸⁷ including Fulani (jihadist) armed groups,⁶⁸⁸ which some sources indicated as the main threat to Christians in Nigeria.⁶⁸⁹ Similarly, ORFA indicated that the main actors responsible for the killing of Christians are Armed Fulani Herdsmen, which are part of the Fulani Ethnic Militia (FEM), 'Other Terrorist Groups', an actor the source also refer to 'Fulani bandits' (and allegedly connected to the FEM); as well as Boko Haram,⁶⁹⁰ including its splinter faction ISWAP.⁶⁹¹ The Nigerian government has denied allegations that Christians are deliberately targeted in Nigeria and has deemed such claims as 'misleading'.⁶⁹² According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Nigeria is battling multiple threats—banditry, terrorism, and organized crime—which

⁶⁸⁰ BBC, What is behind the wave of killings in central Nigeria?, 19 June 2025, [url](#); Ojewale, O. and Onuoha, F., Nigeria's North Central violence reveals systemic state failure, ISS, 26 June 2025, [url](#); ICC, 9 Killed in Attacks on Nigeria's Christian Farming Communities, 6 August 2025, [url](#); BISI, The Growth of Farmer-Herder Violence in Nigeria, 26 May 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁸¹ DW, Nigeria's farmer-herder conflicts: Where is the end? [Video], 21 June 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁸² Nana, S.S., How to stop Nigeria's worsening farmer-pastoralist violence, TNH, 5 May 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁸³ Ojewale, O. and Onuoha, F., Nigeria's North Central violence reveals systemic state failure, ISS, 26 June 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁴ DW, Nigeria's farmer-herder conflicts: Where is the end? [Video], 21 June 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁵ FT, Nigeria's spiralling rural violence heaps pressure on president, 27 April 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁶ DW, Nigeria's farmer-herder conflicts: Where is the end? [Video], 21 June 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁷ Genocide Watch, Fulani Jihadists massacre over 200 Christians in Nigeria, 14 June 2025, [url](#); ORFA, ORFA data reveals the scale of abductions and the targeting of Christian communities, 28 August 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁸ Intersociety, Nigeria Headquartering 22 Islamic Terror Groups in Africa Seeking to Obliterate Christianity And Indigenous Cultural Heritage, August 2025, [url](#), pp 2, 4; Hudson Institute, Conflict and Persecution in Nigeria: The Case for a CPC Designation, 12 March 2025, [url](#); Catholic Register (The), Nigeria's government complicit in Christian slaughter, priest says, 27 June 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁹ ORFA, How Fulani Militias Became Nigeria's Deadliest Group While Escaping Global Notice, 14 July 2025, [url](#); Hudson Institute, Conflict and Persecution in Nigeria: The Case for a CPC Designation, 12 March 2025, [url](#); Catholic Register (The), Nigeria's government complicit in Christian slaughter, priest says, 27 June 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁰ On 11 December 2020, the International Criminal Court had indicated that 'Boko Haram and its splinter groups have committed the following acts constituting crimes against humanity and war crimes: murder; rape, sexual slavery, including forced pregnancy and forced marriage; enslavement; torture; cruel treatment; outrages upon personal dignity; taking of hostages; intentionally directing attacks against the civilian population or against individual civilians not taking direct part in hostilities; intentionally directing attacks against personnel, installations, material, units or vehicles involved in a humanitarian assistance; intentionally directing attacks against buildings dedicated to education and to places of worship and similar institutions; conscripting and enlisting children under the age of fifteen years into armed groups and using them to participate actively in hostilities; persecution on gender and religious grounds; and other inhumane acts'. ICC, Statement of the Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, on the conclusion of the preliminary examination of the situation in Nigeria, 11 December 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁹¹ ORFA, Countering the myth of religious indifference in Nigerian terror (10/2019 – 9/2023), 29 August 2024, [url](#), pp. 6-7. See also: ICC, 9 Killed in Attacks on Nigeria's Christian Farming Communities, 6 August 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁹² Pulse, Christians not targeted for killings in Nigeria - FG replies US, 15 March 2025, [url](#); Leadership, Federal Gov't Dismisses Targeted Persecution Of Nigerian Christians, 12 April 2025, [url](#)



cut across religious and ethnic lines ... [and it] firmly rejects the portrayal of the situation as an Islamist extermination of Christians.”⁶⁹³

Based on its monitoring, ORFA indicated that, between October 2019 and September 2024, 2.4 Christians were killed in the country for every Muslim, and that in states where attacks against Christians occurred, the rate increases to 5.2.⁶⁹⁴ According to Nigerian human rights NGO Intersociety, at least 7 087 Christians were killed in Nigeria and 7 800 abducted between 1 January and 10 August 2025. The North-Central Benue State was identified as the hardest hit area (with at least 1 100 deaths), followed by North-Central Plateau State (806 deaths), and Kaduna State in North-West region (620 deaths).⁶⁹⁵ Such data could not be corroborated by other sources. For more detailed information on security incidents at national and state level (including those affecting Christians within the context of farmers and herders’ conflict and ‘banditry’ related violence, see [EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Security Situation, November 2025](#)).

Some sources stated that violence against Christians, particularly by Fulani armed groups, continue with impunity,⁶⁹⁶ with the government reportedly failing to effectively protect Christian communities and punish perpetrators.⁶⁹⁷ According to International Christian Concern (ICC), a US-based Christian organisation that provides advocacy and assistance to persecuted Christians worldwide, although Christian leaders have ‘repeatedly’ called for the government to provide greater protection and investigate attacks, poor road conditions, the difficulty of the terrain, and ‘the lack of rapid response mechanisms, hinder the ability of security agencies to prevent or contain violence against Christians’.⁶⁹⁸

2.12. Muslims in areas where they are a minority

Nigeria’s Muslim population accounts for 56.1 %, predominantly residing in the northern regions of the country, whereas Christians are primarily concentrated in the south⁶⁹⁹ (see [2.11 Christians in areas where they are a minority](#)).

Within the context of intercommunal violence,⁷⁰⁰ various incidents targeting Fulani Muslims have been reported during the reference period, including killings.⁷⁰¹

⁶⁹³ Pulse, FG tackles US over claims of Christian persecution by 2 Nigerian Catholic priests, 13 April 2025, [url](#). See also: Leadership, Federal Gov’t Dismisses Targeted Persecution Of Nigerian Christians, 12 April 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁴ ORFA, How Fulani Militias Became Nigeria’s Deadliest Group While Escaping Global Notice, 14 July 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁵ Intersociety, Nigeria Headquartering 22 Islamic Terror Groups in Africa Seeking to Obliterate Christianity And Indigenous Cultural Heritage, August 2025, [url](#), pp. 2, 3

⁶⁹⁶ Hudson Institute, Conflict and Persecution in Nigeria: The Case for a CPC Designation, 12 March 2025, [url](#); Catholic Register (The), Nigeria’s government complicit in Christian slaughter, priest says, 27 June 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁷ Open Doors, World Watch List 2025: Nigeria, 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁸ ICC, 9 Killed in Attacks on Nigeria’s Christian Farming Communities, 6 August 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁹ Pew Research Center, How the Global Religious Landscape Changed from 2010 to 2020, 9 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 49, 56, 113, 193

⁷⁰⁰ Amnesty International, The State of the World’s Human Rights, Nigeria 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#); FT, Nigeria’s spiralling rural violence heaps pressure on president, 27 April 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁰¹ This Day, Bauchi Gov Pays Condolence Visit To Victims of Bandits’ Attack, Donates N100m, 17 May 2025, [url](#); SBM Intelligence, A threat to national stability, 27 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 18-19, 32



In 2024, the Eastern Security Network (ESN) launched a campaign against Fulani and criminal groups in South-East forests, reportedly dislodging more than 70 settlements. While many Igbos hailed the operation, it has faced criticism for targeting Muslim Fulani communities indiscriminately.⁷⁰² See for more information the [EUAA COI Report - Nigeria Security Situation November 2025](#). A Nigerian senior security advisor told the EUAA that many Igbos view the cultural and religious differences between the predominantly Christian South-East and the largely Muslim north as irreconcilable, and that a ‘united Nigeria is unachievable.’ The same source noted that Igbos also view increasing southward migration of Fulani herders, driven by climate change and conflicts in the North, and ‘their deadly attacks on farming communities, as an existential threat.’⁷⁰³

In January 2025, sources reported that intentions to establish ‘Sharia panels’⁷⁰⁴ in Ekiti and Oyo, South-West,⁷⁰⁵ were met with resistance.⁷⁰⁶ Vanguard reported that, according to Muslim leaders, these panels are part of their ‘right to self-determination’, while non-Muslim groups have expressed concerns about the ‘potential implications’.⁷⁰⁷ The governor of Oyo, for example, indicated that the state will ‘uphold the laws and the Constitution of Nigeria’ and that the establishment of a sharia court in Oyo would require a bill by the House of the Assembly.⁷⁰⁸ The Ekiti state Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice indicated that the state did not recognise sharia law and that the current legal system based on customary law already handles legal issues in the state, including Islamic, Christian, and customary marriages.⁷⁰⁹

Punch reported that, according to the chief imam of Imo state, ‘activities of bandits and Boko Haram insurgents in the north are influencing various misconceptions held by the Igbo about Muslims’ in the South-East and that instances of discrimination in employment with state institutions reportedly occur.⁷¹⁰ The chief imam also indicated, without providing further details, that “[t]he Igbo don’t like marrying Muslims and they discourage anyone who wants to marry Muslims”.⁷¹¹ The chief imam, however, ‘praised’ the governor of Imo state for sponsoring the trip to Mecca for 200 people for the 2023 *Hajj* pilgrimage.⁷¹²

⁷⁰² Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025

⁷⁰³ Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025

⁷⁰⁴ A ‘Sharia panel’ is not a court but an ‘arbitration committee’ that handles civil matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, and disputes over contractual agreements between Muslims. Vanguard, Sharia row rages in South-West as supporters expand scope of demand from panel to court, 12 January 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁵ The Guardian, Sultan backs Sharia law in Oyo, Ekiti, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁶ West Africa Weekly, Explainer: Sharia Expansion in South-West Nigeria – Should Citizens be Concerned?, 27 January 2025, [url](#); Daily Trust, Why Sharia panels are generating controversy in South-West, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁷ Vanguard, Sharia row rages in South-West as supporters expand scope of demand from panel to court, 12 January 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁸ Vanguard, Sharia row rages in South-West as supporters expand scope of demand from panel to court, 12 January 2025, [url](#); Nigerian Tribune, EXPLAINER: ‘No religious group can create Sharia Court in South-West’, 30 December 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁹ Daily Trust, Sharia panels: Discrimination against southern Muslims worries NSCIA, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

⁷¹⁰ Punch, Imo chief imam: Igbo Muslims battling discrimination in south-east — nobody wants to marry us, 23 March 2024, [url](#)

⁷¹¹ Punch, Imo chief imam: Igbo Muslims battling discrimination in south-east — nobody wants to marry us, 23 March 2024, [url](#)

⁷¹² Punch, Imo chief imam: Igbo Muslims battling discrimination in south-east — nobody wants to marry us, 23 March 2024, [url](#)



2.13. Perceived Boko Haram members or supporters

Hundreds of Boko Haram/ISWAP fighters were killed in battles following insurgent attacks on military sites⁷¹³ or during security operations.⁷¹⁴ Within the context of the ongoing armed conflict in North-East Nigeria since 2009,⁷¹⁵ and within the context of ‘counterterrorism operations’, serious human rights violations perpetrated by the Nigerian security forces have been reported, including the use of ‘excessive force’, ‘extrajudicial killings, rape, torture and arbitrary detentions’ against suspected Boko Haram members.⁷¹⁶ Amnesty International also reported numerous deaths occurring in military custody.⁷¹⁷ Among those affected were elderly civilians escaping Boko Haram-controlled areas.⁷¹⁸ In December 2024, Amnesty International submitted a legal filing to the International Criminal Court (ICC) on behalf of several victims’ networks, urging an end to the ICC Prosecutor’s indefinite delay in opening a formal investigation into war crimes and crimes against humanity in Nigeria. The filing reiterated allegations against the Nigerian military, including attacks on civilians, extrajudicial executions, torture, rape and enforced disappearances.⁷¹⁹ For more information on Nigerian security forces, including their *modus operandi* and violations see [EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Security Situation November 2025](#).

The Nigerian Security Forces have continued to detain children during security operations, screening procedures, and military raids, including outside IDP camps. Arrests were often based on alleged association with armed groups and information provided by informants. Some of these children were held with their mothers due to the mothers’ alleged links to ISWAP. All children arrested were subsequently released and systematically handed over to the Borno State Ministry of Women’s Affairs and Social Development and received at the Bulumkutu transit centre in Maiduguri. From there, they were provided interim care and support prior to family reunification and reintegration into their communities.⁷²⁰ Some of the children detained for alleged links to Boko Haram were as young as five, with infants also held alongside their mothers in harsh detention conditions. Boys returning from association with

⁷¹³ International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Nigeria: January 2024 – August 2025, n.d., [url](#); AA, Nigerian army kills 60 Boko Haram terrorists after repelling attack on military base, 30 May 2025, [url](#); AA, Nigerian military says it killed 16 Boko Haram terrorists in northeastern Borno state, 24 May 2025, [url](#)

⁷¹⁴ Al Jazeera, Nigeria says troops kill dozens of gunmen in northwest and northeast, 10 July 2025, [url](#); SARI Global, Weekly Update: Nigeria (July 4 - 10, 2025), 11 July 2025, [url](#), p. 3

⁷¹⁵ AI, Nigeria: Amnesty International petitions ICC judges to end Prosecutor’s delaying of justice for atrocity crimes, 2 December 2024, [url](#)

⁷¹⁶ Okoye I. and Adejoh P., Human Rights Violations in Counter-Terrorism Efforts: A Qualitative Study of Victims Experiences in Nigeria, 13 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 78, 13-17

⁷¹⁷ AI, Nigeria: Amnesty International petitions ICC judges to end Prosecutor’s delaying of justice for atrocity crimes, 2 December 2024, [url](#)

⁷¹⁸ In 2020, Amnesty International reported that since 2011, over 10 000 civilians have died in military custody, many at Giwa Barracks in Maiduguri, due to overcrowding, poor sanitation, lack of food, water, and medical care. The organisation noted that even elderly civilians fleeing Boko Haram-controlled areas have been unlawfully detained or killed without evidence of involvement in violence. AI, Nigeria: Older people often an invisible casualty in conflict with Boko Haram, 8 December 2020, [url](#)

⁷¹⁹ AI, Nigeria: Amnesty International petitions ICC judges to end Prosecutor’s delaying of justice for atrocity crimes, 2 December 2024, [url](#); AI, Nigeria: Submission to the International Criminal Court (ICC), 2 December 2024, [url](#)

⁷²⁰ UN, Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and armed conflict in Nigeria, 17 July 2024, [url](#), paras. 19, 20, 23



Boko Haram are reported to face greater discrimination than girls, due to the belief that they joined the group more willingly.⁷²¹

Former Boko Haram affiliates face severe challenges to reintegrate. Many, especially women, have limited access to land, resources, and support; they remain displaced, unable to return home, and often experience multiple displacements. Lacking community support, they resort to negative coping strategies like food restriction, sex work, or selling firewood. Former affiliates are also targeted by Boko Haram as traitors, with men at risk of killing and women at risk of abduction and sexual violence. Insecure conditions force women to take dangerous risks to support their families, while gender-based violence remains a significant threat. Insecurity has also pushed former associates and communities across international borders, with some Nigerian former associates relocating to Cameroon to join family members in the Minawao refugee camp, amid ongoing security force scrutiny in Nigeria.⁷²²

In a 2024 report, Amnesty International revealed that between 2015 and mid-2023, girls and young women who escaped Boko Haram in North-East Nigeria suffered further abuse, including unlawful military detention due to their real or perceived association to Boko Haram. After fleeing captivity, many were detained by the Nigerian military, while others were left in overcrowded displacement camps with limited aid. Some were later 'reunited' with former Boko Haram captors in government transit camps, placing them at renewed risk of abuse.⁷²³

2.14. Individuals targeted by student cults

For background information on the phenomenon of 'cultism' in Nigeria, including the presence of student cults or confraternities across the country, their *modus operandi* and violations committed by these groups see [EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Security Situation November 2025](#).

Several communities in Nigeria have been affected by violent conflict linked to groups such as Black Axe, Eiye Confraternity, and Vikings, among others.⁷²⁴ Originally formed as university-based confraternities, these groups have evolved into complex criminal networks operating well beyond campus environments. Their activities now include extortion, drug trafficking, cybercrime, and politically motivated violence. The South-South and South-West are the main hubs of gang violence in Nigeria. Northcentral states like Benue face violence from groups like Scavengers and Chain, while the North- East and North-West report few gang-related deaths.⁷²⁵

⁷²¹ Ladue, M. et al., Child-Inclusive and Gender-Responsive Reintegration Programmes, June 2025, [url](#), pp. 37, 75

⁷²² UNIDIR, Climate, Insecurity and Displacement: Triple Barriers to the Reintegration of Former Boko Haram Associates, March 2025, [url](#), pp. 2, 23

⁷²³ AI, "Help Us Build Our Lives": Girl Survivors of Boko Haram and Military Abuses in North-East Nigeria, 9 June 2024, [url](#), pp. 7-12

⁷²⁴ Africa Report, Nigerian cult mafia groups and how they wreak havoc on society, 28 February 2025, [url](#); SBM Intel, Gangstar's Paradise. Nigeria's restive youth gang crisis, 2020-2025, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 3, 4, 12, 14; Guardian (The), Bayelsa community live in fear as cult war intensifies. 23 January 2025, [url](#)

⁷²⁵ SBM Intel, Gangstar's Paradise. Nigeria's restive youth gang crisis, 2020-2025, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 3, 4, 12, 14



Nigeria Watch reported that, in 2024, cult-related violence resulted in 328 fatalities, marking a slight decline from the 371 deaths recorded in 2023. Anambra State experienced the highest number of cult-related deaths with 88 reported cases, followed by Lagos and Rivers states. Confraternities such as Eiye and Aiye were active in Lagos, while groups including Debam, Deewell, Greenlanders, and Icelanders operated predominantly in the Niger Delta region. In Anambra State, cult activity was concentrated in the capital, Awka. On 31 March 2024, a cult clash in the Okpuno, Eke Akwa, and Obinagu areas of Awka led to the deaths of 13 individuals, including a staff member of the Anambra State Judiciary. Similarly, on 20 October 2024, another confrontation in the Nibo and Nodu-Okpuno communities of Awka South LGA resulted in 13 additional fatalities. Victims of student cults included not only rival cult members but also students and security personnel.⁷²⁶

Gang violence is mainly directed at rival members; however, civilians are often unintentionally affected, typically due to proximity, mistaken identity, or ties to intended targets. According to an analysis by SBM Intel, civilian fatalities represent 4.6 % of the total gang-related deaths between January 2020 and March 2025, indicating an unwritten rule among Nigerian gangs to refrain from killing non-combatants. Gang-related violence against civilians in Nigeria is largely concentrated in the southern region, with Rivers, Edo, and Lagos states being the most affected.⁷²⁷ According to SBM Intel, most civilian casualties are incidental, rather than the result of deliberate targeting. Some groups, such as the Black Axe (Aiye) and the Icelanders have shown a particularly high rate of civilian fatalities.⁷²⁸

Cult groups typically recruit new members from universities and secondary schools.⁷²⁹ Recruitment of youth and young adults is often driven by peer pressure, group dynamics and through the use of fear-based tactics, especially within educational institutions. High levels of poverty, unemployment, and social inequality in Nigeria have created a fertile environment for cult groups to thrive. For many individuals, joining a cult becomes a survival strategy in a society where legitimate pathways to success are limited.⁷³⁰ Cult groups exploit the vulnerability of unemployed Nigerian and other African youths, who are easily susceptible to peer influence. They reportedly enforce permanent membership, with resistance punished by death.⁷³¹ For instance, Black Axe exploits vulnerable populations in Nigeria, as well as vulnerable members of the Nigerian diaspora (see also [2.2.6. Men victims of trafficking](#)), particularly young men. It employs young, low-level gang members, known as 'streets', to fight over territory, control illicit markets, and steal oil from pipelines.⁷³²

⁷²⁶ Nigeria Watch, Fourteenth Report on Violence 2024, [url](#), p. 8

⁷²⁷ SBM Intel, Gangstar's Paradise. Nigeria's restive youth gang crisis, 2020-2025, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 3, 4, 12, 14

⁷²⁸ SBM Intel, Gangstar's Paradise. Nigeria's restive youth gang crisis, 2020-2025, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 3, 4, 12, 14

⁷²⁹ Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Black Axe—Nigeria's Most Notorious Transnational Criminal Organization, 29 October 2024, [url](#)

⁷³⁰ Odesanmi A. F, et al., Sociocultural Perspective of Cultism in Nigeria: A Social Vulture of Individuals and Societies, October 2024, [url](#), pp. 158, 175

⁷³¹ Africa Report (The), Nigerian cult mafia groups and how they wreak havoc on society, 28 February 2025, [url](#)

⁷³² Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Black Axe—Nigeria's Most Notorious Transnational Criminal Organization, 29 October 2024, [url](#)



National media sources reported on a rise in the recruitment of children by cult groups during the reference period.⁷³³ During a public event that took place in Kwara State in 2024, the Kwara State Commissioner of Police said that a student had been ‘recently’ killed for refusing to join cultism.⁷³⁴ Groups reportedly use aggressive tactics to recruit students, with an increasingly early age at which they are being drawn into cultism. States such as Rivers, Bayelsa, Ogun, Delta, and Edo have become hotspots for cult-related activities, with secondary schools increasingly serving as breeding grounds for future cult members.⁷³⁵

2.15. Individuals refusing chieftaincy titles

National media reported that traditional rulers hold various titles according to their respective ethnic groups. Among the Yoruba, prominent titles include Ooni of Ife, Alaafin of Oyo, and Oba of Lagos, each symbolising spiritual leadership and ancestral authority. The Oba of Benin in the Edo State leads the Edo people and is revered for preserving the heritage of the ancient Benin Kingdom. The Olu of Warri is the monarch of the Itsekiri people in Delta State, while the Igbo recognise leaders such as the Obi of Onitsha and the Obi of Nnewi. In the South-East, the Obong of Calabar heads the Efik Kingdom and plays a significant role in cultural and community affairs. Each title carries not only ceremonial value but also social and cultural influence within Nigerian society. In northern Nigeria, Islamic titles such as Sultan of Sokoto and Emir of Kano denote religious and traditional leadership within the Hausa-Fulani communities.⁷³⁶ National media widely announced new chiefs during 2024 and 2025.⁷³⁷ Although ‘women are rarely given chieftaincy titles by traditional rulers’, a cultural shift is taking place with recent nominations, including in Abba in 2023⁷³⁸ and in Lagos in 2025.⁷³⁹

On 21 June 2024, the Supreme Court of Nigeria addressed a dispute over traditional chieftaincy rankings in Erinmope-Ekiti, affirming that a chieftaincy declaration can be set aside if it conflicts with tradition, lacks legal basis, or results from bias or procedural unfairness.⁷⁴⁰

While most individuals in Nigeria accept chieftaincy titles with pride, some decline them due to religious convictions, personal or professional obligations, or incompatibility with modern lifestyles. Although refusal is generally permitted without legal or formal repercussions, social pressure may arise within families or communities, particularly in hereditary cases, with rare

⁷³³ Nation (The), Teen killers on the prowl: Tragic rise of Nigeria’s child cultists, 8 September 2024, [url](#); Punch, Rise of child cultists turning schools into battlefields (2), 16 February 2025, [url](#). In 2021, the death of a 12-year-old student at a Lagos school, allegedly tortured by senior students for refusing to join a cult group, reignited discussions about the spread of cultism in secondary schools. See Punch, Rise of child cultists turning schools into battlefields (2), 16 February 2025, [url](#)

⁷³⁴ Daily Trust, Cultists having a field day in Kwara, 22 June 2024, [url](#)

⁷³⁵ Punch, Rise of child cultists turning schools into battlefields (2), 16 February 2025, [url](#)

⁷³⁶ Punch, 10 most powerful Kings in Nigeria and their titles, 6 March 2025, [url](#)

⁷³⁷ Premium Times, Oba of Benin, Ewuare II, installs new chiefs, 9 June 2025, [url](#); Nigeria, Osun State Government, Osun Govt Approves new king of Olojudo of Ido Ajegunle and Five Others, Elevates Seven to Part Two Chiefs, 29 January 2025, [url](#); Vanguard, Agadangba Kingdom honours Dorsey as Yeye Oge, 26 July 2025, [url](#)

⁷³⁸ Punch, Chimamanda’s chieftaincy title signifies cultural revolution, 23 January 2023, [url](#)

⁷³⁹ NAN, First Lady receives chieftaincy title in Lagos, pledges continued service, August 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁴⁰ LawPavilion, Chieftaincy Declaration Can Be Set Aside, 6 August 2024, [url](#)



instances of coercion or social exclusion.⁷⁴¹ In southern and central Nigeria, refusing a chief priest or shaman title when hereditary or spiritually conferred, may lead to social or spiritual consequences, such as exclusion from community life, family pressure, or fear of offending deities. However, physical coercion is 'rare', and many refusals, especially by Christians and Muslims, are increasingly accepted due to the decline of traditional religions.⁷⁴² In Edo state, in South South Nigeria, when an heir refuses to ascend the throne automatically forfeits both his right to the throne and his entitlement to inherit the property of his late father, the Onojie. In such cases, the selection of a new Onojie is entrusted to the discretion of the kingmakers (designated quarters or families whose elders traditionally serve as the kingmakers).⁷⁴³

In correspondence with EUAA, Prof. David Pratten⁷⁴⁴ explained that refusing chieftaincy titles is uncommon in Nigeria. While some cases exist, the expert had not documented any cases. Given the status and remuneration of such roles, there are usually multiple willing candidates. Known consequences for refusal tend to be limited to rumour or social shaming. Individuals usually refuse chieftaincy titles due to religious convictions. In Southern Nigeria, this often concerns Pentecostal Christians rejecting roles like village headship, which may involve rituals such as libation to ancestral spirits. In South-Eastern Igbo-speaking communities, churches frequently oppose traditional practices, contributing to tensions. Nonetheless, many Christians have accepted chieftaincy roles and sought compromises on ceremonial elements. Tensions between Christianity and traditional office-holding are longstanding, and recent shifts appear minimal. In most communities, refusal is likely to be respected, and sometimes even admired.⁷⁴⁵

Prof. Pratten further noted that chieftaincy roles can be risky, however dangers - such as accusations of embezzlement or conflict with local youth - typically follow acceptance, rather than refusal of office.⁷⁴⁶ The source added that different set of pressures to accept the titles may apply to roles associated with shrines or deities, rather than the more bureaucratic forms of office tied to administrative units such as villages, clans, local government areas, or ethnic groups. In such cases, individuals may be viewed as predestined to hold positions that might be translated in English as 'shrine priest', and therefore subject to greater expectations to

⁷⁴¹ Canada, IRB, Nigeria: Chieftaincy in Yorubaland and rituals, including human sacrifice and blood rituals upon initiation to chieftaincy or during chieftaincy; reaction of state ministries of chieftaincy affairs to Yoruba chief rituals, including whether reaction varies by state; prevalence and consequences of refusing a Yoruba chieftaincy title; protection available to those who refuse such a title (2019–October 2021), 12 November 2021, [url](#)

⁷⁴² Canada, IRB, Nigeria: Consequences for a person refusing a chief priest or a shaman [also called fetish priest] title for which they have been selected in south and central Nigeria; state protection (2019–October 2021) [NGA200792.FE], 12 November 2021, [url](#)

⁷⁴³ Itua, P. O., Succession Under Customary Law in Nigeria. The Rule of Primogeniture versus the Deposition of a Traditional Ruler (Onojie) in Edo State: A critique of the Provisions of the Traditional Rulers and Chiefs Edicts No 16 of 1979, 25 September 2019, [url](#), pp. 20, 50

⁷⁴⁴ David Pratten is an Associate Professor in the Social Anthropology of Africa at University of Oxford. His research is based on a long-term engagement with Annang villagers in south-eastern Nigeria and focuses on themes of history, violence and the state. The focus of his initial work was an historical ethnography of colonialism which focused on the events surrounding a series of mysterious deaths in south-eastern Nigeria during the late 1940s. More recently his research has examined issues of youth, democracy and disorder in post-colonial Nigeria with a particular focus on vigilantism and new masquerade performances.

⁷⁴⁵ Pratten D., email communication with EUAA, 29 July 2025

⁷⁴⁶ Pratten D., email communication with EUAA, 29 July 2025



accept the role. However, the extent of the pressure involved - beyond mild social sanctions - remains unclear in the absence of further evidence.⁷⁴⁷

Recent examples of individuals refusing chieftaincy titles in Nigeria include Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State, who declined such honours in June 2025 during his tenure to allow for unbiased public assessment of his performance.⁷⁴⁸ Similarly, Valentine Chineto Ozigbo, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) governorship candidate in Anambra State, declined the title 'Enyi Oma Anaocha' offered by the Anaocha Traditional Ruling Council, citing concerns over potential politicisation and a desire to uphold the integrity of the traditional institution.⁷⁴⁹ No consequences were reported for refusal.⁷⁵⁰

2.16. Individuals with disabilities, especially mental health illness

The Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018⁷⁵¹ prohibits disability-based discrimination and imposes penalties including fines and prison sentences for violations.⁷⁵² However, its enforcement is weak, driven by limited public awareness.⁷⁵³ As of July 2025, 23 out of 36 states have enacted their own disability laws.⁷⁵⁴ Persons with disabilities, especially those in rural⁷⁵⁵ or conflict-affected areas,⁷⁵⁶ face significant marginalisation, with limited access to essential services like education, health, employment and transportation, compounded by stigma and discrimination.⁷⁵⁷ Women and girls with disabilities face discrimination in accessing health –including sexual, reproductive health and

⁷⁴⁷ Pratten D., email communication with EUAA, 29 July 2025

⁷⁴⁸ Nation (The), Why I don't take chieftaincy titles – Makinde, 1 June 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁴⁹ Authority (The), Why I rejected chieftaincy title – Ozigbo, 7 October 2023, [url](#)

⁷⁵⁰ Authority (The), Why I rejected chieftaincy title – Ozigbo, 7 October 2023, [url](#); Nation (The), Why I don't take chieftaincy titles – Makinde, 1 June 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁵¹ Nigeria, Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018, 21 January 2019, [url](#)

⁷⁵² HRW, Nigeria Passes Disability Rights Law, 25 January 2019, [url](#)

⁷⁵³ Premium Times, INVESTIGATION: Nigerians with disabilities experience discrimination despite existing laws, 3 April 2024, [url](#); Global Disability Fund, Situational Analysis on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria, Country Brief, July 2025, [url](#), p. 7

⁷⁵⁴ Global Disability Fund, Situational Analysis on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria, Country Brief, July 2025, [url](#), p. 3; Dialogue Earth, In northern Nigeria, floods impact disabled people most, 19 February 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁵⁵ Ofuani-Sokolo, A. I. and Monye, O., Engendering financial inclusion for persons with disabilities in Nigeria, March 2025, [url](#), p. 119, 125; Cable (The), Mohammed Isa seeks inclusive programmes for PWDs in rural areas, 11 April 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁵⁶ DRC, How DRC supports Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria to reclaim their rights and dignity, 12 March 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁵⁷ Global Disability Fund, Situational Analysis on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria, Country Full Report, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 48-49;



maternal health—⁷⁵⁸ and education.⁷⁵⁹ They are at higher risk of gender-based violence,⁷⁶⁰ and encounter significant barriers to justice due to stigma, poverty and inaccessible services.⁷⁶¹

For more information on access to healthcare systems, including for specific profiles, see [3.7 Healthcare](#). For information regarding access and availability of medical treatment, see [EUAA Medical Country of Origin Information \(MedCOI\) Report: Nigeria, April 2022](#).

In January 2023, the National Mental Health Act 2021⁷⁶² passed into law, replacing the 1958 Lunacy Act.⁷⁶³ The new law introduces certain safeguards for individuals with mental health conditions, such as granting them the ability to take part in decisions about their treatment.⁷⁶⁴ It also prohibits the use of chains on individuals with mental health issues and seeks to enhance access to care by expanding services available within communities. However, the law still allows involuntary treatment and other coercive practices, including physical restraints and isolation.⁷⁶⁵

Nigeria is currently facing a ‘mental health crisis’⁷⁶⁶ due to a lack of access to mental healthcare services, exacerbated by factors like social stigma, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of mental health professionals.⁷⁶⁷ Mental health system in the country remains under-resourced.⁷⁶⁸ Despite a population of over 200 million, Nigeria has around 150 psychiatrists,⁷⁶⁹ with many considering or actively planning to emigrate due to poor working conditions, low income, limited career prospects, and societal stigma surrounding mental health.⁷⁷⁰ In addition, there is a shortage of neurologists, with many newly trained professionals leaving to work abroad. There are approximately five psychiatric nurses per 100 000 people, and even fewer other mental and neurological health professionals, such as clinical psychologists, social

⁷⁵⁸ Nigeria Health Watch, Nigeria’s Health System Must Eliminate Obstacles to Maternal Care for Women with Disabilities, 17 March 2025, [url](#); Global Disability Fund, Situational Analysis on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria, Country Full Report, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 49-50

⁷⁵⁹ Edugist, The Forgotten Girls: Addressing the Educational Needs of Girls with Disabilities in Nigeria, 23 October 2024, [url](#); Inclusive News Network, 61% of women and girls with disabilities in Nigeria lack basic computer skills, 18 October 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁰ Centre for Disability and Inclusion Africa, Gender-based violence against women with disabilities in Nigeria, 13 February 2024, [url](#); Global Disability Fund, Situational Analysis on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria, Country Full Report, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 49-50

⁷⁶¹ Global Disability Fund, Situational Analysis on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria, Country Full Report, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 49-50

⁷⁶² Nigeria, National Mental Health, 30 December 2022, [url](#)

⁷⁶³ HRW, World Report 2024 – Nigeria, 11 January 2024, [url](#); Adepoju, V. A., Breaking the Chains: Nigeria’s New Mental Health Law and its Impacts on Care and Rights, 11 May 2023, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁴ Premium Times, Buhari signs mental health bill after two failed attempts, 11 January 2023, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2024 - Nigeria, 11 January 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁵ HRW, World Report 2024 - Nigeria, 11 January 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁶ Center for Policy Impact in Global Health (The), Exploring common mental health problems among Nigerian adolescents: identified challenges and recommendations for the future, 3 September 2024, [url](#); Nweke, S. C. et al., Problems and critical reforms in mental health care: an examination of Nigeria’s situation, November 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁷ Nweke, S. C. et al., Problems and critical reforms in mental health care: an examination of Nigeria’s situation, November 2024, [url](#); Medical Research Foundation, Urgent action needed to address migration of psychiatrists out of Nigeria, 10 June 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁸ Omaiboje M., email communication with EUAA, 8 July 2025

⁷⁶⁹ Chijioke, O. C. et al., Barriers and Attitudes towards Mental Health Services in Nigeria: A Systematic Review, 15 July 2024, [url](#), p. 12; Premium Times, Less than 200 psychiatrists attend to all Nigerians, 28 November 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁰ Medical Research Foundation, Urgent action needed to address migration of psychiatrists out of Nigeria, 10 June 2024, [url](#)



workers, neuro-physiotherapists, and occupational therapists.⁷⁷¹ Infrastructures for mental health patients are inadequate, struggling to cope with increasing demand and chronic underfunding.⁷⁷²

In response to limited access, digital health platforms are emerging as lifelines. Initiatives like Awadoc, MindMentor, Mentally Aware Nigeria Initiative (MANI), and She Writes Woman⁷⁷³ provide virtual therapy, peer support, and mental health education. However, challenges such as poor internet access, high data costs, and the lack of national policy integration limit their reach, particularly in underserved communities.⁷⁷⁴

Prevailing stigma associated with mental illness⁷⁷⁵ prevent individuals from seeking treatment.⁷⁷⁶ People with mental health conditions are often targeted by mobs ‘that use their disabilities to make false accusations against victims and to justify lynching them’.⁷⁷⁷ The Advocacy for Alleged Witches (AfAW)⁷⁷⁸ raised alarm about the frequent accusation of witchcraft or demonic possession against people with mental illness. When accused of such acts, people with mental health challenges are often ‘shunned, beaten, tortured, or killed.’⁷⁷⁹ See [2.17. Individuals accused of witchcraft](#) for more information.

Furthermore, a 2024 study on stigma and healthcare in Nigeria found that the widespread stigma associated with mental illness contributes significantly to the underreporting of cases and the chronic underfunding of mental health services. Misconceptions and cultural myths about mental disorders further fuel rising rates of suicide, substance abuse, and long-term psychiatric conditions across the country.⁷⁸⁰

Trafficking victims in Nigeria face severe psychosocial impacts, but support services are limited and often overlooked in reintegration programs.⁷⁸¹ For more information see [2.2.7. Return and long-term reintegration of victims of trafficking](#).

⁷⁷¹ Chijioke, O. C. et al., Barriers and Attitudes towards Mental Health Services in Nigeria: A Systematic Review, 15 July 2024, [url](#), p. 12

⁷⁷² BMJ Global Health, Mind the widening gap: A trauma-driven mental health crisis in Nigeria, 26 May 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁷³ She Writes Woman is a Nigerian women-led movement that challenges stigma, advocates for rights, and creates safe support for people with mental health conditions. See She Writes Woman, Nothing About Us Without Us, n.d., [url](#)

⁷⁷⁴ Nation (The), Nigeria’s youth mental health crisis in numbers, 11 July 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁵ BMJ Global Health, Mind the widening gap: A trauma-driven mental health crisis in Nigeria, 26 May 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁶ Chijioke, O. C. et al., Barriers and Attitudes towards Mental Health Services in Nigeria: A Systematic Review, 15 July 2024, [url](#), p. 15; IACAPAP, Bulletin, June 2025, [url](#), p.32

⁷⁷⁷ Al, Nigeria: Escalation of Mob Violence Emboldens Impunity, 29 October 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁸ AfAW, About, 21 June 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁹ This Day, Mental Health, Witchcraft and Demonic Possession, 12 October 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁰ Ogbonna, C. K. et al., Addressing stigma to achieve healthcare equity and universal health coverage in Nigeria, 11 October 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁸¹ Adeyinka S., online interview with EUAA, 16 July 2025



2.17. Individuals accused of witchcraft

Nigeria's Criminal Code (Sections 210–213)⁷⁸² and Penal Code (Sections 207–209)⁷⁸³ prohibit witchcraft-related acts, including self-identification as a witch, accusations of witchcraft, and use of charms or *juju*.⁷⁸⁴ A recent witchcraft-related case in Bauchi State sparked legal debate over the treatment of such cases under state law. During judicial proceedings, the Chief Judge of Bauchi State expressed concerns about the growing number of witchcraft accusations, stating that such cases are difficult to prove and often rely on confession. The Chief Judge remarked that 'If you are not a witch, you cannot identify as one'.⁷⁸⁵ Prominent human rights advocate Leo Igwe⁷⁸⁶ criticised the statement as legally baseless and harmful, warning it could promote witch-hunting. Igwe noted that ambiguity surrounding witchcraft in Nigerian law continues to fuel harmful beliefs and practices. He clarified that Nigerian law does not criminalise witchcraft itself but instead prohibits accusations under laws such as Section 210 of the Criminal Code, urging the judiciary to rely on evidence-based reasoning and reject superstition to uphold justice and human rights.⁷⁸⁷

Amnesty International found that incidents involving individuals accused of witchcraft revealed consistent patterns of discrimination against women and children.⁷⁸⁸ In 2024, the same source documented an escalation of mob violence against individuals accused of witchcraft, many of whom were 'beaten, tortured, or killed', including numerous cases involving women.⁷⁸⁹ Individuals with mental health conditions or psychosocial disabilities were more exposed to mob violence, often accused of witchcraft or labelled as wizards. Their behavioural symptoms, such as confusion or silence, were frequently misinterpreted as signs of guilt, making them easy targets for attacks.⁷⁹⁰ According to National media, widows experiencing mental health challenges following the loss of their spouses were particularly vulnerable to witchcraft accusations.⁷⁹¹ The UN Security Council reported cases of women with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, in particular older women, being killed in North-East Nigeria due to accusations of witchcraft.⁷⁹²

Epilepsy in many African communities, especially in Nigeria and Cameroon, is often associated with witchcraft, demonic possession, or curses.⁷⁹³ These superstitions result in people with epilepsy, particularly women, being stigmatised, isolated, and subjected to traditional rituals

⁷⁸² Nigeria, Criminal Code Act, 1 June 1916, [url](#)

⁷⁸³ Nigeria, Act No. 25 of 1960, Penal Code (Northern State) Federal Provisions Act, 30 December 1960, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁴ 247ureports, Witchcraft Law and Jurisprudence in Anambra State by Mr. Enemu CC, Esq., 3 March 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁵ Sun (The), Alkassim backs Bauchi Chief Judge, says Nigerian laws recognise witchcraft, 4 March 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁶ AfAW, About, 21 June 2024, [url](#); Humanists International, Leo Igwe, 6 December 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁷ Modern Ghana, Is Witchcraft Justiciable Under Nigerian Law?, 18 April 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁸ AI, Instantly killed! How law enforcement failures exacerbate Nigeria's wave of mob violence, October 2024, [url](#), p. 13

⁷⁸⁹ AI, Nigeria: Escalation of mob violence emboldens impunity, 28 October 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁰ AI, Instantly killed! How law enforcement failures exacerbate Nigeria's wave of mob violence, October 2024, [url](#), p. 26

⁷⁹¹ Punch, Echoes of village widows lynched over witchcraft allegation, 30 November 2024, [url](#); Nation (The), Witch-hunt of widows, 13 December 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁹² UN, Security Council, Protection of civilians in armed conflict; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2024/385], 14 May 2024, [url](#), p. 8

⁷⁹³ Guardian (The), The 'epilepsy warriors' breaking down the barriers in Cameroon, 3 April 2024, [url](#); IPS, Epilepsy Patients in Africa Fight Stigma and Neglect, 19 March 2025, [url](#)



instead of receiving medical care. Widespread belief in witchcraft deters families from seeking medical help, reinforcing stigma and discrimination. The stigma is so severe that some are denied education, employment, or marriage, and many women face abuse or rejection within their families and communities.⁷⁹⁴

Witch-related accusations often lead to humiliation as well as assault, or death. In April 2024, a teenage girl and her father in Benue State were accused of witchcraft and forced by a community mob to sit near a fire until she falsely confessed. The victim was eventually rescued, and legal proceedings were initiated, although one alleged perpetrator remained at large.⁷⁹⁵ In July 2024, a 75-year-old widow in Edo State was publicly assaulted by a traditional leader over witchcraft allegations. The attack caused serious facial injuries, while bystanders did not intervene and a witness's attempt to film it was suppressed.⁷⁹⁶ In August 2024, a 33-year-old man was beaten by a mob in Benue State after being accused of making a boy's penis disappear through witchcraft. The victim lost his job due to the stigma, and a video of the attack later circulated on social media.⁷⁹⁷ Such claims are often linked to Koro syndrome, a psychiatric condition involving the fear of genital disappearance.⁷⁹⁸

Religious beliefs and cultural practices also contribute significantly to the persistence of witchcraft accusations.⁷⁹⁹ On 30 August 2024, a church in Imo State advertised a deliverance service with the slogan 'That Witch Must Die.' Despite efforts to stop the event, including petitions and media articles, the event took place.⁸⁰⁰

Although Nigerian law prohibits accusing someone of witchcraft, prosecutions and convictions are rare.⁸⁰¹ Nigerian authorities have reportedly failed to carry out effective investigations or implement safeguards, especially in rural areas where women are often targeted to settle personal or family disputes.⁸⁰² On 4 December 2024, the Jigawa State High Court sentenced four relatives to death for the murder of a neighbour they had accused of practicing witchcraft.⁸⁰³ In 3 February 2025, five men in Kano State were sentenced to death for killing a 67-year-old woman they accused of witchcraft.⁸⁰⁴ These cases drew national attention and highlighted the dangers of superstition-driven violence,⁸⁰⁵ 'with many expressing mixed feelings about the cultural and legal implications'.⁸⁰⁶

⁷⁹⁴ IPS, Epilepsy Patients in Africa Fight Stigma and Neglect, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁵ Daily Trust, How We Were Forced To Confess To Witchcraft – Victims, 22 March 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁶ Punch, Echoes of village widows lynched over witchcraft allegations, 30 November 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁷ BBC News, The man battling Nigeria's 'witch-hunters', 26 October 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁸ HumAngle, Separating Fact from Fiction In Nigeria's Genital Theft Frenzy, 2 January 2024, [url](#); BBC News, The man battling Nigeria's 'witch-hunters', 26 October 2024, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁹ Punch, Echoes of village widows lynched over witchcraft allegations, 30 November 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁰⁰ BBC News, The man battling Nigeria's 'witch-hunters', 26 October 2024, [url](#); Nation (The), Imo's 'That witch must die' event, 19 August 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁰¹ BBC News, The man battling Nigeria's 'witch-hunters', 26 October 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁰² AI, Nigeria: Escalation of mob violence emboldens impunity, 28 October 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁰³ Premium Times, Court sentences four family members to death for killing alleged witch, 5 December 2024, [url](#); ChannelsTV, Jigawa Court Sentences Four to Death For Culpable Homicide, 4 December 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁰⁴ Punch, Five sentenced to death for killing woman accused of witchcraft, 3 February 2025, [url](#); BBC NEWS, Five sentenced to death in Nigeria over 'witchcraft' murder, 4 February 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁰⁵ BBC News, Five sentenced to death in Nigeria over 'witchcraft' murder, 4 February 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁰⁶ ChannelsTV, Jigawa Court Sentences Four to Death For Culpable Homicide, 4 December 2024, [url](#)



2.18. State response towards human rights violations

2.18.1. Justice system

Nigeria's legal system is a mix of English common law, law in northern states, and traditional law.⁸⁰⁷ The highest court is the Supreme Court, which consists of the chief justice and a number of justices not exceeding 21.⁸⁰⁸ The subordinate courts consist of the Court of Appeal, the Federal High Court, state High Courts, Sharia Court of Appeal, Customary Court of Appeal, and state court system similar in structure to federal system.⁸⁰⁹ Sharia courts are only located in the 12 Northern states where sharia law is applied (Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara).⁸¹⁰ Most southern states use the provisions of the Criminal Code Act as their state law.⁸¹¹ In the 12 Northern states where sharia law is applied, the Sharia Penal Code is applied.⁸¹²

Judicial independence is constitutionally and legally enshrined, and while the judiciary has some degree of independence and professionalism, political interference, corruption, and lack of equipment and training remain key problems.⁸¹³ Sources indicated that the judiciary was susceptible to pressure from the executive and legislative branches,⁸¹⁴ and business interests.⁸¹⁵

Corruption is a serious problem in Nigeria's justice system.⁸¹⁶ A July 2024 report by UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on corruption in Nigeria indicated that the largest cash bribes paid to public officials were for judges and magistrates, with an average of 31 000 Naira (17 Euros), followed by customs or immigration officials (17 800 Naira or 10 Euros), and members of the armed forces (16 600 Naira or 9 Euros).⁸¹⁷ According to the same source, bribes in Nigeria are usually requested by public officials either explicitly, indirectly, or through third parties who convey the expectation of a bribe.⁸¹⁸ Bribes are also offered voluntarily to 'expedite' a process or to express 'appreciation if they feel that [it] would help them get the required services faster'.⁸¹⁹ Nigerian newspaper The Guardian reported that it is common

⁸⁰⁷ US, CIA, The World Factbook: Nigeria, 13 August 2025, [url](#); Miles, J., Customary and Islamic Law and its Development in Africa, 2006, [url](#), p. 105

⁸⁰⁸ Nigeria, FJSC, The Nigerian Supreme Court, n.d., [url](#); see also: US, CIA, The World Factbook: Nigeria, 13 August 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁰⁹ US, CIA, The World Factbook: Nigeria, 13 August 2025, [url](#); Commonwealth Governance, Judicial System of Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

⁸¹⁰ ILGA World, ILGA Database: Nigeria, n.d., [url](#); HRW, World Report 2025 (Events of 2024), Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#); Guardian (The), MURIC advocates Shari'ah courts for Muslims in southern Nigeria, 8 August 2025, [url](#)

⁸¹¹ ILGA World, ILGA Database: Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

⁸¹² ILGA World, ILGA Database: Nigeria, n.d., [url](#); HRW, World Report 2025 (Events of 2024), Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

⁸¹³ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025– Nigeria, 2025, [url](#); USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 22 April 2024, [url](#)

⁸¹⁴ HEDA, Nigeria's Judiciary Faces Credibility Crisis: HEDA's Latest LAR Report Calls for Urgent Reform, 10 June 2025, [url](#); USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 22 April 2024, [url](#)

⁸¹⁵ USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 22 April 2024, [url](#)

⁸¹⁶ UNODC, Corruption in Nigeria: Patterns and trends, July 2024, [url](#), p. 72; Guardian (The), NBS-UNODC Report: When corruption stench taints temple of justice, 7 October 2024, [url](#)

⁸¹⁷ UNODC, Corruption in Nigeria: Patterns and trends, July 2024, [url](#), p. 72

⁸¹⁸ UNODC, Corruption in Nigeria: Patterns and trends, July 2024, [url](#), p. 78

⁸¹⁹ UNODC, Corruption in Nigeria: Patterns and trends, July 2024, [url](#), p. 78



practice for judicial workers to solicit a ‘gratification’ at different points of the judicial case, from filing a case to the assignment to a judge.⁸²⁰ The same source reported that ‘[h]ardly a court clerk or registrar locates a file for a litigant, or lawyer without being gratified’, and that judicial clerks are reported to deliberately delay the filing of cases or misplace files and exhibits with the aim of extorting parties, as well as to solicit bribes under the false pretext of acting on behalf of judges.⁸²¹ In an effort to combat bribery in the justice system, in October 2024, President Tinubu signed legislation to increase judicial officers’ salaries by 300 %.⁸²²

A 2025 poll by the Africa Polling Institute (API) indicated that 79 % of respondents have ‘little to no trust’ in the judicial system.⁸²³ Similarly, a 2025 nationwide survey of 1 357 Nigerians published by the Human and Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA), an NGO that promotes human rights and conducts research on human development issues, indicated that corruption, inaccessibility to the justice system, and political interference in the judiciary are ‘widespread’, and that only 12 % of the respondents rated the judiciary as ‘highly accessible’.⁸²⁴

Federal and state authorities are accused of disregarding due process.⁸²⁵ In some cases, people are detained without being informed of the charges against them or allowing them access to counsel, and those who are detained by the military under terrorism charges are not accorded the right to legal representation, due process, or be heard by a judicial authority.⁸²⁶ The prolonged pretrial detention of suspects sometimes continue even after courts have ordered their release on bail.⁸²⁷ Also, some individuals whose cases are dismissed by the courts reportedly remain in detention without clear legal justification.⁸²⁸

Sharia courts accord less weight to the testimony of women and non-Muslims, and to prove adultery or fornication, some sharia courts allow different evidentiary requirements for women and men defendants.⁸²⁹ Similarly, Akinwale Victor Ishola, researcher at the Department of Peace, Security and Humanitarian Studies at the University of Ibadan, indicated that ‘gender inequality under Sharia law impacts women’s rights and social status adversely, hindering progress towards gender equality and women’s empowerment in Northern Nigeria’.⁸³⁰

⁸²⁰ Guardian (The), NBS-UNODC Report: When corruption stench taints temple of justice, 7 October 2024, [url](#)

⁸²¹ Guardian (The), NBS-UNODC Report: When corruption stench taints temple of justice, 7 October 2024, [url](#)

⁸²² Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025– Nigeria, 2025, [url](#)

⁸²³ API, API Releases 2025 Social Cohesion Report, 8 July 2025, [url](#)

⁸²⁴ HEDA, Nigeria’s Judiciary Faces Credibility Crisis: HEDA’s Latest LAR Report Calls for Urgent Reform, 10 June 2025, [url](#)

⁸²⁵ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025– Nigeria, 2025, [url](#); USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 22 April 2024, [url](#)

⁸²⁶ USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 22 April 2024, [url](#)

⁸²⁷ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025– Nigeria, 2025, [url](#); USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 22 April 2024, [url](#)

⁸²⁸ USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 22 April 2024, [url](#)

⁸²⁹ USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 22 April 2024, [url](#)

⁸³⁰ Ishola, A. V., Religious Blasphemy, Jungle Justice, and Legal Pluralism in Northern Nigeria: A Comparative Analysis of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution and Sharia Law. African Journal of Law, Political Research and Administration, 2024, 2024, [url](#), p. 73



2.18.2. Overview of legal framework and mechanisms in place

Chapter IV of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution guarantees the fundamental rights of citizens,⁸³¹ including the rights to 'life', 'dignity of human person', 'personal liberty', 'fair hearing', 'private and family life', 'thought, conscience and religion', and 'acquire and own immovable property anywhere in Nigeria', as well as freedom of 'expression and the press', 'peaceful assembly and association', 'movement', and from 'discrimination'.⁸³²

A variety of domestic and international human rights groups monitoring or investigating human rights conditions or cases and publishing their findings generally operated without government restriction.⁸³³ However, sources indicated that members of some organisations faced intimidation and physical harm for speaking out against Boko Haram,⁸³⁴ or encountered obstacles when investigating alleged human rights violations committed by security forces.⁸³⁵

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

In 2010, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) was established through the National Human Rights Commission (Amendment) Act, 2010, which conferred on the NHRC

'additional independence and strengthened the Commission's power with respect to promotion and protection of human rights, investigation of alleged violation of human rights and enforcement of decisions. The Amendment Act has also widened the scope of the Commission's Mandate to include vetting of legislations at all levels to ensure their compliance with human rights norms'.⁸³⁶

Complaints can be filed by 'individuals whose rights have been violated or threatened, or by a proxy, acting on their joint behalf'.⁸³⁷ The NHRC also initiates investigations of its own accord when it has knowledge of an abuse or human rights violation.⁸³⁸ The NHRC website indicated that complaints can be filed by individuals or a group of individuals, via online, a mobile application, email, WhatsApp, telephone, or physically at any of the NHRC's helpdesks located in each state.⁸³⁹

In 2024, the NHRC received over 2.08 million complaints,⁸⁴⁰ and in June 2025, it received 327 154 complaints, mostly related to 'law enforcement and human dignity' (84 333 complaints), 'freedom from discrimination' (81 147), and 'rule of law and access to justice'

⁸³¹ Nigeria, The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 Updated with the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Alterations (2010), 4th Alteration (2017) and 5th Alteration (2023), September 2024, [url](#)

⁸³² Nigeria, The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (amended 2023), [url](#)

⁸³³ USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 22 April 2024, [url](#); Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025– Nigeria, 2025, [url](#)

⁸³⁴ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025– Nigeria, 2025, [url](#)

⁸³⁵ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025– Nigeria, 2025, [url](#); USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 22 April 2024, [url](#)

⁸³⁶ Nigeria, NHRC, NHRC mandate, n.d., [url](#); See also: Nigeria, National Human Rights Commission (Amendment), Act 2010, 2010, [url](#), Part II

⁸³⁷ Nigeria, NHRC, 2022 Annual Report, May 2023, [url](#), 35

⁸³⁸ Nigeria, NHRC, 2022 Annual Report, May 2023, [url](#), 35

⁸³⁹ Nigeria, NHRC, Make a complaint, n.d., [url](#)

⁸⁴⁰ Nigeria, NHRC, NHRC 2024 Human Rights Situation Dashboard, 28 January 2025, [url](#)



(30 542).⁸⁴¹ Most complaints were filed in the North Central (137 179 complaints), North West (67 220), and North East (63 743).⁸⁴² The USDOS 2023 report indicated that the NHRC has investigated ‘allegations of human rights abuses and published periodic reports detailing its findings, including torture and poor prison conditions’, and that observers have considered the NHRC as ‘independent and somewhat effective, but the commission could not compel the government to prosecute perpetrators of human rights abuses’.⁸⁴³ Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted within the time constraints of this report.

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Community Court of Justice (CCJ)

The ECOWAS CCJ, of which Nigeria is a part, ‘has jurisdiction to hear human rights cases and expands the admissibility rules to include disputes between individuals and their own member states’.⁸⁴⁴ Decisions made by the CCJ are ‘final and binding’ and member states are required ‘to execute the judgment according to its national courts’.⁸⁴⁵ Sources indicated, however, that CCJ rulings are largely disregarded by members states, including Nigeria.⁸⁴⁶

In July 2024, the CCJ ruled that the federal government violated the rights of protesters during the 2020 EndSARS demonstrations against the police, and ordered compensation for claimants whose rights had been breached.⁸⁴⁷ On 9 April 2025, the CCJ delivered a ruling against blasphemy laws in Nigeria, declaring certain provisions of the Kano State Penal Code and the Kano State Sharia Penal Code Law (2000) in violation of international human rights standards, particularly the right to freedom of expression, and ordered the federal government to repeal or amend the law to comply with its international obligations.⁸⁴⁸ Additional information on the status of these cases could not be found among the sources consulted within the time constraints of this report.

2.18.3. Law enforcement

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is the principal law enforcement agency in the country; it is deployed in all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.⁸⁴⁹ The NPF is under the Ministry of Police Affairs.⁸⁵⁰ Police abuse is investigated by a number of agencies within the force:

- the Police Public Complaints Committee (PPCC), which investigates complaints of human rights abuses by police officers and forwards reports to the Police Service Commission for appropriate disciplinary action;⁸⁵¹

⁸⁴¹ Nigeria, NHRC, NHRC June 2025 Human Rights Situation Dashboard, June 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁴² Nigeria, NHRC, NHRC June 2025 Human Rights Situation Dashboard, June 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁴³ USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 22 April 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁴ Open Society Foundations, ECOWAS Community Court of Justice, n.d., [url](#)

⁸⁴⁵ Open Society Foundations, ECOWAS Community Court of Justice, n.d., [url](#); Punch, ECOWAS Court faults member states over poor compliance with rulings, 26 June 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁶ Punch, Concerns over relevance of ECOWAS Court as member nations disregard judgments, 23 December 2024, [url](#); Guardian (The), Concerns over 22% enforcement of ECOWAS Court judgments, 24 June 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁷ JuristNews, ECOWAS court rules Nigeria violated human rights during October 2020 protests, 11 July 2024, [url](#); Amnesty International, The State of the World’s Human Rights: Nigeria, April 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁸ Open Doors, Nigeria’s blasphemy laws must be repealed, orders court, 23 April 2025, [url](#); ICC, Court Declares Nigeria’s Blasphemy Laws Violate International Human Rights Standards, 14 April 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁹ Nigeria, POSSAP, About, n.d., [url](#)

⁸⁵⁰ Nigeria, Ministry of Police Affairs, About us, n.d., [url](#)

⁸⁵¹ Nigeria, PPCC, About PPCC, n.d., [url](#)



- the Police Complaint Response Unit (CRU), which receives and resolves complaints against police officers including cases of abuse, corruption, and unethical behaviour;⁸⁵² and
- the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID), which investigates and prosecutes ‘serious and complex criminal cases’, including those involving misconduct within the force.⁸⁵³

The NPF has between 370 000 and 400 000 police officers, which is considered well below the UN recommended number for the size of the population.⁸⁵⁴ According to the Inspector General of the Police, the NPF needs at least 190 000 additional officers, although the proper number for ‘effective policing’ is around 2.5 million personnel.⁸⁵⁵

Sources reported the existence of quasi-security forces which have become the *de facto* security providers in a number of states.⁸⁵⁶ These groups are generally composed of members from the same geographic area or ethnic community, and in some instances benefit from state facilitation, while operating with minimal accountability and near impunity.⁸⁵⁷ Groups include the Yan Sakai, in Zamfara; the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), in the North-East; and Lakurawa, in North-West.⁸⁵⁸ For more information see [EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Security Situation, November 2025](#).

While the government has attempted to reduce corruption in public institutions, the problem remains ‘pervasive’, particularly in the security sector.⁸⁵⁹ There are allegations of extortion and bribe-taking within the police force.⁸⁶⁰ The police has also been accused of using excessive force against participants in anti-government demonstrations⁸⁶¹ (for more information see [2.7. Protesters](#)). The military has been accused of extrajudicial killings, torture, and other abuses, including during counterinsurgency efforts in the north and operations against separatist movements in the South-East⁸⁶² (for more information see [EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Security Situation, November 2025; 2.13](#). Perceived Boko Haram members or supporters and [2.9. Members and perceived supporters of political parties and separatist movements](#)).

⁸⁵² Oyakhirome, Iruebafa Lily, Police accountability: The role of the police complaint response unit, Nigeria, 8 July 2025, [url](#); UNODC, Experienced police misconduct and no justice served? Not anymore with the Nigeria Police Complaint Response Unit (CRU)!, 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁵³ Nigeria, NPF, Force Criminal Investigation Department, n.d., [url](#)

⁸⁵⁴ Business Day, Still on state police, 17 December 2024, [url](#); Vanguard, 400,000 policemen too small to police 200 million Nigerians – Oyo Chief, 7 July 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁵⁵ Business Day, Still on state police, 17 December 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁵⁶ Cable (The), Vigilantes, guns and governance: Nigeria’s dangerous security gamble, 8 July 2025, [url](#); USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 22 April 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁵⁷ Cable (The), Vigilantes, guns and governance: Nigeria’s dangerous security gamble, 8 July 2025, [url](#); USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 22 April 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁵⁸ Cable (The), Vigilantes, guns and governance: Nigeria’s dangerous security gamble, 8 July 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁵⁹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025– Nigeria, 2025, [url](#); USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 22 April 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁶⁰ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025– Nigeria, 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁶¹ Amnesty International, Nigeria: Police used excessive force to violently quash #Endbadgovernance protests, 28 November 2024, [url](#); Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025– Nigeria, 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁶² Amnesty International, Nigeria: Thousands killed, hundreds forcibly disappeared in two years in South-East region, 13 August 2025, [url](#); Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025– Nigeria, 2025, [url](#)



Nigerian newspaper Premium Times reported that a 2024 survey⁸⁶³ among workers in the criminal justice system, on compliance with the Administration of Criminal Justice Act, found the following:

- compliance with the Act regarding arrest procedures: ‘compliance’ (54.5 %), ‘non-compliance’ (18.9 %), ‘indifference’ (26.7 %);
- treatment of defendants and accused individuals: ‘respectful’ (50.2 %), ‘disrespectful’ (40.1 %);
- compliance on provisions for obtaining confessions: ‘mostly compliant’ (43.4 %), ‘rare or total non-compliance’ (37.8 %);
- about 67 % of respondents indicated that Nigeria’s police lack ‘modern investigative methods’; and
- about 56 % identified corruption among investigators and prosecutors as ‘one of the most critical problems with the criminal justice system’s performance’.⁸⁶⁴

Sources indicated that the Nigerian Police have inadequate infrastructure, personnel, and resources,⁸⁶⁵ and that law enforcement agencies, in general, ‘still rely on outdated tools, undermining their ability to gather and preserve evidence effectively’.⁸⁶⁶

⁸⁶³ The survey was carried out by the CLEEN Foundation and consisted of the interview of 1 658 workers in the criminal justice system, including the police, judiciary, and correctional services, in Edo, Delta, Bauchi, Sokoto, Katsina, Jigawa, Kwara, and Cross River states. Premium Times, Study highlights inadequate compliance with Nigeria’s criminal justice act, 13 December 2024, [url](#). CLEEN Foundation is an NGO that promotes public safety, security and accessible justice through research, legislative advocacy, and publications, in partnership with government, civil society and the private sector. CLEEN Foundation, Overview, n.d., [url](#)

⁸⁶⁴ Premium Times, Study highlights inadequate compliance with Nigeria’s criminal justice act, 13 December 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁶⁵ Premium Times, Study highlights inadequate compliance with Nigeria’s criminal justice act, 13 December 2024, [url](#); Business Day, Still on state police, 17 December 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁶⁶ Premium Times, Study highlights inadequate compliance with Nigeria’s criminal justice act, 13 December 2024, [url](#). See also: iTelemedia, 2025 Outlook: Police Reform and What It Means for Nigerians, 27 May 2025, [url](#)



3. Key socio-economic indicators

3.1. Economic situation

Nigeria is facing the worst economic crisis in a generation, with high poverty and hardship levels due to - among other reasons - the slow growth of the economy, high inflation,⁸⁶⁷ and the recent implementation of economic policies by the government.⁸⁶⁸ For more information see [3.3. Poverty](#).

Nigeria is one of the largest market economies in Africa⁸⁶⁹ and a major oil exporter.⁸⁷⁰ The gross domestic product (GDP) growth for 2024 was 3.4 %.⁸⁷¹ In addition to crude oil, the country's main industries include coal, tin,⁸⁷² columbite, rubber, wood, textiles, food products, footwear, chemicals, fertilisers, and steel.⁸⁷³ Its high dependency on crude oil, however, makes Nigeria vulnerable to fluctuations in oil prices and production.⁸⁷⁴ Nigeria is also becoming a leading exporter in liquified gas.⁸⁷⁵

The financial sector and telecommunications are 'very dynamic', and the banking industry is one of the largest and most sophisticated in Africa.⁸⁷⁶ Services such as finance, construction, entertainment, hospitality, and government are concentrated in urban areas.⁸⁷⁷ The construction sector is growing rapidly due to rising demand for new infrastructure, including housing, commercial buildings, roads, airports, and railways.⁸⁷⁸ The agricultural sector is vital for Nigeria's economy.⁸⁷⁹ Nigeria is the world's largest producer of cassava and the third-largest of tomatoes and groundnuts.⁸⁸⁰ The country relies heavily on imports to meet the needs of its rapidly growing population.⁸⁸¹

Nigeria's economy declined between 2015 and 2022 due to policy missteps, distortion of the monetary and exchange policies, lack of confidence in the economy, lower oil production, the

⁸⁶⁷ World Bank (The), The World Bank in Nigeria: Overview, 10 April 2025, [url](#); AP, Nigeria's independence anniversary is marked by protests and frustration over economic hardship, 1 October 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁶⁸ World Bank (The), The World Bank in Nigeria: Overview, 10 April 2025, [url](#); AP, Nigeria more than doubles the minimum wage for government workers after strikes and negotiations, 19 July 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁶⁹ Nigeria, High Commission to the United Kingdom, Economy, n.d., [url](#); US, CIA, The World Factbook: Nigeria, 12 August 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁷⁰ Lloyds Bank, Nigeria: Economic and Political Overview, May 2025, [url](#); US, CIA, The World Factbook: Nigeria, 12 August 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁷¹ World Bank (The), Building Momentum for Inclusive Growth, May 2025, [url](#), p. ix

⁸⁷² OPEC, Nigeria: Facts and figures, , n.d., [url](#); US, CIA, The World Factbook: Nigeria, 12 August 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁷³ US, CIA, The World Factbook: Nigeria, 12 August 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁷⁴ Germany, BMZ, Economic situation: High dependency on oil, 2 February 2024, [url](#); Lloyds Bank, Nigeria: Economic and Political Overview, May 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁷⁵ Lloyds Bank, Nigeria: Economic and Political Overview, May 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁷⁶ Lloyds Bank, Nigeria: Economic and Political Overview, May 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁷⁷ Conversation (The), Nigeria's economy in 2025 doesn't look bright – analyst explains why, 6 January 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁷⁸ Lloyds Bank, Nigeria: Economic and Political Overview, May 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁷⁹ Jobberman, Nigeria's informal sector: A Pathway to Sustainable Economic Transitions for Young People, 2024, [url](#), p. 45

⁸⁸⁰ Lloyds Bank, Nigeria: Economic and Political Overview, May 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁸¹ Week (The), Nigeria's economic woes: what went wrong for African nation, 29 February 2024, [url](#); SBM Intelligence, The SBM Jollof Index: Staple under stress, 23 April 2025, [url](#)



COVID-19 pandemic, high global food prices following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and floods.⁸⁸² The administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who took office in May 2023, enacted several economic measures to bring price stability, including the elimination of a gasoline subsidy and the parallel exchange rate, and a tightening of monetary policy.⁸⁸³ Sources indicated that the removal of the gasoline subsidy led to a significant increase in fuel prices, which in turn caused various other costs to rise as companies transferred the increased transportation and energy costs to the consumer.⁸⁸⁴ Additionally, the elimination of the parallel exchange rate led to the depreciation of the Naira between 70 % and 100% against the US dollar and a sharp increase in the cost of imported goods.⁸⁸⁵ In 2024, public debt increased by 34 % from 2023 due to the depreciation of the Naira and new borrowings, making the country vulnerable to fiscal constraints.⁸⁸⁶

The inflation rate has been increasing over the years, reaching 33.2 % in 2024.⁸⁸⁷ In 2024, the rise in inflation was driven by food (up by 43 %, due to rising transport costs, insecurity in food-producing regions, and dependency on imports), transportation (up by 35.3 %, due to high oil prices), and utilities (up by 31.6 %, due to 'seasonal factors' and increased energy and electricity costs).⁸⁸⁸ A survey by the Central Bank of Nigeria indicated that the major drivers of inflation for households in May 2025 were energy (e.g., fuel and electricity) (85.7 %), transportation (85 %), the exchange rate (82 %), and insecurity (80 %).⁸⁸⁹ In an effort to control rising inflation, the Central Bank of Nigeria increased the interest rate from 15.5 % in October 2023 to 27.25 % in September 2024,⁸⁹⁰ and the government temporarily suspended tariffs on imported goods.⁸⁹¹

The gross domestic product (GDP) for 2024 was 3.4 %, the highest since 2014.⁸⁹² Economic growth was due in part to a continued recovery of the oil and gas sector and information technology,⁸⁹³ as well as the growth in the financial and insurance sectors.⁸⁹⁴ The agricultural sector, on the other hand, remained weak (1.2 % growth) due to high input costs and insecurity.⁸⁹⁵ Additionally, there has been a lack of political commitment to implement plans for

⁸⁸² World Bank (The), The World Bank in Nigeria: Overview, 10 April 2025, [url](#); Lloyds Bank, Nigeria: Economic and Political Overview, May 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁸³ World Bank (The), The World Bank in Nigeria: Overview, 10 April 2025, [url](#); AP, Nigeria more than doubles the minimum wage for government workers after strikes and negotiations, 19 July 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁸⁴ Week (The), Nigeria's economic woes: what went wrong for African nation, 29 February 2024, [url](#); Punch, Nigeria now reaching stability, after fuel subsidy removal — Minister, 13 June 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁸⁵ Week (The), Nigeria's economic woes: what went wrong for African nation, 29 February 2024, [url](#); Conversation (The), Nigeria's economy in 2025 doesn't look bright — analyst explains why, 6 January 2025, [url](#); Chatham House, Nigeria's economy needs the naira to stay competitive, 4 March 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁸⁶ PwC, 2025 Nigeria Budget and Economic Outlook, 2025, [url](#), p. 5

⁸⁸⁷ IMF, Nigeria: Country Data, n.d., [url](#)

⁸⁸⁸ PwC, 2025 Nigeria Budget and Economic Outlook, 2025, [url](#), p. 10

⁸⁸⁹ Proshare, CBN Releases Inflation Expectations Survey for May 2025, 5 June 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁹⁰ Conversation (The), Nigeria's economy in 2025 doesn't look bright — analyst explains why, 6 January 2025, [url](#); PwC, 2025 Nigeria Budget and Economic Outlook, 2025, [url](#), p. 5

⁸⁹¹ Conversation (The), Nigeria's economy in 2025 doesn't look bright — analyst explains why, 6 January 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁹² World Bank (The), Building Momentum for Inclusive Growth, May 2025, [url](#), p. ix

⁸⁹³ World Bank (The), Building Momentum for Inclusive Growth, May 2025, [url](#), p. ix; PwC, 2025 Nigeria Budget and Economic Outlook, 2025, [url](#), p. 6

⁸⁹⁴ PwC, 2025 Nigeria Budget and Economic Outlook, 2025, [url](#), p. 5

⁸⁹⁵ World Bank (The), Building Momentum for Inclusive Growth, May 2025, [url](#), p. ix



economic diversification and agricultural expansion.⁸⁹⁶ For the third quarter of 2024, the highest-contributing industries to the real GDP included crop production (26.51 %), trade (14.78 %), telecommunication and information services (13.94 %), oil and natural gas (5.57 %), and real estate (5.43 %).⁸⁹⁷ The annual GDP per capita has decreased since 2014, from 3 700 US dollars in 2014 to 824 US dollars in 2024.⁸⁹⁸

Obstacles to economic growth include insecurity, unreliable energy supply, deficient transportation infrastructure, high inflation, an inefficient judicial system, widespread corruption,⁸⁹⁹ and lack of available foreign exchange, which makes it difficult for manufacturers to import required inputs for production.⁹⁰⁰ Foreign direct investment is weak,⁹⁰¹ with less than 1 % of the GDP in 2024, and long term foreign investment continues to be affected by structural constraints of Nigerian economy.⁹⁰²

Lagos state is a main economic hub in Africa, largely driving economic activity in West Africa.⁹⁰³ In 2024, Lagos had a GDP growth of 5.26 % and contributed with 22.36 % to Nigeria's national GDP. Lagos' size of the economy in 2025 is expected to be around 51 trillion Naira [28.1 billion Euros]. Lagos' key economic sectors are trade and information and communication technology.⁹⁰⁴ In 2024, the industrial and service sectors grew by 2.86 % and 5.19 %, respectively. The agricultural sector, however, experimented low growth (0.8 %) due to insecurity, floodings, and logistic issues.⁹⁰⁵ In an effort to address the impact of the 2024 economic reforms, the government of Lagos introduced several programs to ease the cost of living, including a 25 % discount on food staples and a 25 % fare reduction for public transportation.⁹⁰⁶

3.1.1. Infrastructure

Nigeria is a regional leader in critical infrastructure.⁹⁰⁷ Investment for the development and modernisation of roads, railways, ports, airports, electrification infrastructure, pipelines, and dams has been increasing.⁹⁰⁸ The country, however, presents major infrastructure gaps,⁹⁰⁹

⁸⁹⁶ Germany, BMZ, Economic situation: High dependency on oil, 2 February 2024, [url](#); Punch, Poor policies, infrastructure stall economic diversification – Economists, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁹⁷ Nigeria, NBS, Nigerian Gross Domestic Product Report Q3 2024, November 2024, [url](#), p. 3

⁸⁹⁸ IMF, Nigeria: Country Data, n.d., [url](#)

⁸⁹⁹ Lloyds Bank, Nigeria: Economic and Political Overview, May 2025, [url](#); Germany, BMZ, Economic situation: High dependency on oil, 2 February 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁰⁰ Conversation (The), Nigeria's economy in 2025 doesn't look bright – analyst explains why, 6 January 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁰¹ World Bank (The), Building Momentum for Inclusive Growth, May 2025, [url](#), p. 7; AP, Nigeria's independence anniversary is marked by protests and frustration over economic hardship, 1 October 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁰² World Bank (The), Building Momentum for Inclusive Growth, May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

⁹⁰³ Nigeria, Lagos, Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget, Lagos Economic Development Update (LEDU) 2025, 2025, [url](#), p. 19

⁹⁰⁴ Nigeria, Lagos, Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget, Lagos Economic Development Update (LEDU) 2025, 2025, [url](#), pp. ix-x

⁹⁰⁵ Nigeria, Lagos, Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget, Lagos Economic Development Update (LEDU) 2025, 2025, [url](#), pp. 14-15

⁹⁰⁶ Nigeria, Lagos, Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget, Lagos Economic Development Update (LEDU) 2025, 2025, [url](#), p. 30

⁹⁰⁷ US, CIA, The World Factbook: Nigeria, 12 August 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁰⁸ Germany, BMZ, Economic situation: High dependency on oil, 2 February 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁰⁹ Germany, BMZ, Economic situation: High dependency on oil, 2 February 2024, [url](#); World Bank (The), Building Momentum for Inclusive Growth, May 2025, [url](#), p. ix



most notably in electricity, transportation,⁹¹⁰ and manufacturing.⁹¹¹ The lack of oil refineries in the country leads to regular fuel shortages.⁹¹² Additionally, the Nigerian oil industry is ‘inefficient and costly’, and the domestic oil price per barrel is the second highest among oil-producing countries, after Iran.⁹¹³ Government-owned refineries reportedly operate at 5 to 25 % annual capacity.⁹¹⁴

In 2023, the electricity grid covered 61 % of the population,⁹¹⁵ and 80 % of those connected could access electricity for a maximum of six hours per day.⁹¹⁶ The electrification of urban and rural areas is 89 % and 27 %, respectively.⁹¹⁷ A survey by Nigeria’s National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on household welfare, income activities, and socio-economic outcomes,⁹¹⁸ indicated that access to electricity is higher in urban areas (82.2 % of households) than in rural areas (40.4 %).⁹¹⁹ The same source indicated that Nigerian households experience in average 6.7 blackouts per week.⁹²⁰

The World Bank indicated in December 2024 that 80 % of Nigeria’s road network was in ‘poor condition’ due to insufficient funding and weather events, such as high temperatures and rainfalls that damage the roads.⁹²¹ According to the Ministry of State for Works, insecurity is the major obstacle hindering road construction.⁹²² Large parts of Nigeria remain poorly connected to major economic centres, and these centres are not well integrated to each other.⁹²³ Additionally, fees at the inter-state level and roadblocks hinder the ability to move cargo within the country.⁹²⁴

Nigeria’s railway network has about 4 332 track kilometres, most of it in disrepair due to vandalism and conversion of some stretches of the network into farms and residential buildings.⁹²⁵ Daily Trust reported that the Nigerian railway network runs diagonally from the South West (Lagos) to North East (Nguru), and from the South South (Port Harcourt) through Kafanchan to the North East (Maiduguri).⁹²⁶ Urban rapid transit railway projects were

⁹¹⁰ World Bank (The), Building Momentum for Inclusive Growth, May 2025, [url](#), p. ix

⁹¹¹ Lloyds Bank, Nigeria: Economic and Political Overview, May 2025, [url](#)

⁹¹² Germany, BMZ, Economic situation: High dependency on oil, 2 February 2024, [url](#)

⁹¹³ ILO, ILO Brief: Navigating Nigeria’s economic and labour market challenges: Pathways to inclusive growth and structural transformation, November 2024, [url](#), p. 3

⁹¹⁴ ILO, ILO Brief: Navigating Nigeria’s economic and labour market challenges: Pathways to inclusive growth and structural transformation, November 2024, [url](#), p. 3

⁹¹⁵ World Bank (The), Building Momentum for Inclusive Growth, May 2025, [url](#), p. 31; US, CIA, The World Factbook: Nigeria, 12 August 2025, [url](#)

⁹¹⁶ World Bank (The), Building Momentum for Inclusive Growth, May 2025, [url](#), p. 31

⁹¹⁷ US, CIA, The World Factbook: Nigeria, 12 August 2025, [url](#)

⁹¹⁸ The survey was conducted between July 2023 and March 2024 and had a sample of 4 715 households nationally. Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024): Tracking Nigerian Households to Understand Their Resilience Over Time, 2024, [url](#), p. xi

⁹¹⁹ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 23

⁹²⁰ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 23

⁹²¹ World Bank (The), Nigeria to Enhance Road Infrastructure to Benefit Four Million in Rural Communities, 13 December 2024, [url](#)

⁹²² Vanguard, Nigeria’s Infrastructure Push: FG targets legacy projects, 260 already completed – Minister, 11 June 2025, [url](#)

⁹²³ World Bank (The), Building Momentum for Inclusive Growth, May 2025, [url](#), p. 31

⁹²⁴ World Bank (The), Building Momentum for Inclusive Growth, May 2025, [url](#), p. 31

⁹²⁵ Daily Trust, Inside Nigeria’s Dormant Railway Networks, 14 January 2024, [url](#). See also: US, CIA, The World Factbook: Nigeria, 12 August 2025, [url](#)

⁹²⁶ Daily Trust, Inside Nigeria’s Dormant Railway Networks, 14 January 2024, [url](#)



inaugurated in Lagos and Abuja in 2023 and 2024, respectively.⁹²⁷ The 157-kilometre Lagos-Ibadan railway was completed in 2021, and the 186-kilometre Abuja-Kaduna railway, in 2016.⁹²⁸

The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) website indicated that there are five international and 11 domestic airports⁹²⁹ in the country.⁹³⁰ For additional information see [3.9. Mobility and freedom of movement](#).

Nigeria has 28 seaports, with two of them considered 'large', and 23 of the ports have oil terminals.⁹³¹ In 2023, Nigeria ranked 25th among Sub-Saharan African countries for artificial intelligence (AI) preparedness.⁹³² As Nigeria's economic hub, Lagos faces significant energy challenges, including an electricity deficit, high energy costs, reliance on fossil fuels, and infrastructure vulnerabilities.⁹³³

3.2. Employment

Labour force participation rates vary among sources. Out of an estimated population of 237 million⁹³⁴ (of which approximately 105 million are children and adolescents aged 0-17⁹³⁵), labour force participation rate was estimated by ILO at 80.7 % for females and 84.4 % for males in 2024,⁹³⁶ with over 3.5 million Nigerians entering the job market every year.⁹³⁷ In the lower-middle income bracket, the rates were 40.9 % for females and 76.5 % for males.⁹³⁸ Nigeria's NBS indicated that the 2024 labour participation rate was 'nearly the same' for both females (79.9 %) and males (79.1 %).⁹³⁹ The same source indicated that 85.6 % of workers are self-employed and 14.4 % are employees, with females representing 88.3 % of those self-employed and males, 82.2 %.⁹⁴⁰ Employment is predominantly informal,⁹⁴¹ with estimates of

⁹²⁷ Business Day, Five rail transport projects that can shape Nigeria's economy, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

⁹²⁸ Business Day, Five rail transport projects that can shape Nigeria's economy, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

⁹²⁹ The 'Domestic airports' webpage indicates that there are 16 'domestic airports'; however, 4 out of the 16 airports are domestic terminals in the international airports of Lagos, Abuja, Kano, and Port Harcourt. Nigeria, FAAN, Domestic Airports, n.d., [url](#)

⁹³⁰ Nigeria, FAAN, Our Airports, n.d., [url](#)

⁹³¹ US, CIA, The World Factbook: Nigeria, 12 August 2025, [url](#)

⁹³² PwC, 2025 Nigeria Budget and Economic Outlook, 2025, [url](#), p. 68

⁹³³ Nigeria, Lagos, Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget, Lagos Economic Development Update (LEDU) 2025, 2025, [url](#), p. 75

⁹³⁴ Population figures are based on estimates and projections from World Population Prospects 2024 and Model-based Estimates and Projections of Family Planning Indicators 2024 (UNFPA, Population Division). See UNFPA, State of the World Population Report 2025 'The Real Fertility Crisis: The pursuit of reproductive agency in a changing world', 16 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 139, 142

⁹³⁵ Nigeria, Federal Government of Nigeria and UNICEF, The State of Nigeria's Children: Summary of the 2024 Situation Analysis of Children and Adolescents in Nigeria, 2025, [url](#), pp. 4-10

⁹³⁶ In World Bank (The), Nigeria: Featured indicators, n.d., [url](#)

⁹³⁷ World Bank (The), The World Bank in Nigeria: Overview, 10 April 2025, [url](#); Germany, BMZ, Nigeria – Social situation: Pervasive poverty and corruption, 2 February 2024, [url](#)

⁹³⁸ World Bank (The), Nigeria: Featured indicators, n.d., [url](#)

⁹³⁹ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria Labour Force Survey (NLFS) Report, Q2 2024, November 2024, [url](#), p. 4

⁹⁴⁰ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria Labour Force Survey (NLFS) Report, Q2 2024, November 2024, [url](#), p. 7

⁹⁴¹ The Jobberman report defined 'informality' as 'all economic activities (excluding illicit activities) by workers and economic units that are in law or practice not covered or insufficiently covered by formal institutional arrangements. Conventional views use the term 'informal sector' to describe a group of industries and occupations characterised



about 93 % of people being informally employed in the country as of 2024.⁹⁴² For more information see [3.2.1 Informal employment](#). According to WEF, the 2025 part-time employment rate among those who are employed is 2.03 %.⁹⁴³

The rapid population growth is creating an ‘immense pressure for job creation’.⁹⁴⁴ Most of the labour force is ‘lower middle income’ and primarily agrarian.⁹⁴⁵ Employment is divided by sector as follows: services (47.8 %), agriculture (34.3 %), and industry (17.9 %).⁹⁴⁶ Nigeria’s NBS household survey indicated that 71.6 % of Nigerian households are engaged in agriculture, being more predominant in male-headed households (75.7 %) than female-headed (57.1 %).⁹⁴⁷ The same source indicated that most cultivated crops use household labour (96.8 %), signalling a ‘strong household production structure’.⁹⁴⁸ Nigeria’s NBS indicated that 3.7 % of the working-age population was in subsistence agriculture.⁹⁴⁹ The International Labour Organization (ILO) indicated that the concentration of employment in agriculture and commerce makes the economy less productive and hinders its ability to diversify.⁹⁵⁰ Additionally, according to Germany’s Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, BMZ), the government’s focus on the extractive sector creates relatively fewer jobs, and sectors such as construction, digital industry, and agriculture, which could generate more employment, receive less support.⁹⁵¹

About 10 % of the labour force is enrolled in the Contributory Pension Scheme.⁹⁵² In an effort to increase pension enrolment in the population, the government introduced a micro pension plan in 2019; enrolment rates, however, are low, with about 84 000 people enrolled as of November 2022.⁹⁵³ A 2024 report by Jobberman Nigeria, a Nigerian employment agency, based on a survey of 2 684 employers and 5 622 employees in several regions including Lagos and Abuja, indicated that labour laws often do not protect workers because their workplaces are unregistered, and that many workers are practically unprotected by labour regulations because the laws are not adapted to current working conditions.⁹⁵⁴

by the absence of, or noncompliance to, regulatory frameworks that make jobs, enterprises and workers visible to the state’. Jobberman, Nigeria’s informal sector: A Pathway to Sustainable Economic Transitions for Young People, 2024, [url](#), p. 22

⁹⁴² Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria Labour Force Survey (NLFS) Report, Q2 2024, November 2024, [url](#), p. 2. See also: ILO, ILO Brief: Navigating Nigeria’s economic and labour market challenges: Pathways to inclusive growth and structural transformation, November 2024, [url](#), p. 1

⁹⁴³ WEF, Global Gender Gap Report 2025: Nigeria, Economic profiles, 11 June 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁴⁴ ILO, ILO Brief: Navigating Nigeria’s economic and labour market challenges: Pathways to inclusive growth and structural transformation, November 2024, [url](#), p. 1

⁹⁴⁵ US, CIA, The World Factbook: Nigeria, 12 August 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁴⁶ Lloyds Bank, Nigeria: Economic and Political Overview, May 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁴⁷ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 61

⁹⁴⁸ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 61

⁹⁴⁹ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria Labour Force Survey (NLFS) Report, Q2 2024, November 2024, [url](#), p. 2

⁹⁵⁰ ILO, ILO Brief: Navigating Nigeria’s economic and labour market challenges: Pathways to inclusive growth and structural transformation, November 2024, [url](#), p. 1

⁹⁵¹ Germany, BMZ, Nigeria, Improving training and employment opportunities, 2 February 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁵² Jobberman, Nigeria’s informal sector: A Pathway to Sustainable Economic Transitions for Young People, 2024, [url](#), p. 37

⁹⁵³ Jobberman, Nigeria’s informal sector: A Pathway to Sustainable Economic Transitions for Young People, 2024, [url](#), p. 37

⁹⁵⁴ Jobberman, Nigeria’s informal sector: A Pathway to Sustainable Economic Transitions for Young People, 2024, [url](#), p. 61



In July 2024, the minimum wage was increased from 30 000 [16.78 Euros] to 70 000 Naira [39.15 Euros] per month after labour unions threatened with further strikes due to the rising cost of living.⁹⁵⁵ The increase in the minimum wage, however, benefitted 4.1 % of Nigerians (3.2 % in the private sector and 0.9 % in the public sector).⁹⁵⁶ Additionally, the purchasing power in Nigeria has depleted over the years due to inflation, which constantly overcomes employment income.⁹⁵⁷

Sources indicated that Nigeria has a shortage of skilled and educated labour,⁹⁵⁸ and that vocational schools teach ‘only few’ of the skills relevant for the labour market.⁹⁵⁹ In 2019, the government launched the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy (NDEPS) to develop Nigeria’s digital economy and diversify away from its dependence on oil and gas,⁹⁶⁰ by providing training to over one million Nigerians.⁹⁶¹ The NDEPS and other plans implemented by foreign companies such as Microsoft and Google, however, are ‘insufficient’ given the rising demand for training.⁹⁶²

Nigeria’s NBS household survey indicated that approximately seven out of ten nonfarm enterprises are engaged in the retail area, including food, beverages, and tobacco (37.1 %), sales of other products (31.8 %), and restaurants (12.6 %), and that only 13.1 % of nonfarm enterprises were registered.⁹⁶³ The same source indicated that the most common obstacles to starting a nonfarm enterprise were problems with electricity supply (19.7 %), inability to obtain funding (19.3 %), and transportation problems (17 %).⁹⁶⁴

3.2.1. Informal employment

Sources indicated that employment is predominantly informal⁹⁶⁵ and with low productivity, and that wage-paying jobs were rare and concentrated for the most educated.⁹⁶⁶ According to Nigeria’s NBS, in June 2024, about 93 % of employment in the country was informal,⁹⁶⁷

⁹⁵⁵ Reuters, Nigerian lawmakers pass minimum wage bill, ending labour dispute, 23 July 2024, [url](#); AP, Nigeria more than doubles the minimum wage for government workers after strikes and negotiations, 19 July 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁵⁶ PwC, 2025 Nigeria Budget and Economic Outlook, 2025, [url](#), p. 45

⁹⁵⁷ World Bank (The), Building Momentum for Inclusive Growth, May 2025, [url](#), p. 6

⁹⁵⁸ Germany, BMZ, Nigeria, Improving training and employment opportunities, 2 February 2024, [url](#); Business Day, Widening skills gap keeps millions of Nigerians jobless, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁵⁹ Germany, BMZ, Nigeria, Improving training and employment opportunities, 2 February 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁶⁰ Nigeria, Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy, National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy (2020-2030), 2020, [url](#), p. 7

⁹⁶¹ Business Day, Widening skills gap keeps millions of Nigerians jobless, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁶² Business Day, Widening skills gap keeps millions of Nigerians jobless, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁶³ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), pp. 56-57

⁹⁶⁴ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 59

⁹⁶⁵ The Jobberman report defined ‘informality’ as ‘all economic activities (excluding illicit activities) by workers and economic units that are in law or practice not covered or insufficiently covered by formal institutional arrangements. Conventional views use the term ‘informal sector’ to describe a group of industries and occupations characterised by the absence of, or noncompliance to, regulatory frameworks that make jobs, enterprises and workers visible to the state’. Jobberman, Nigeria’s informal sector: A Pathway to Sustainable Economic Transitions for Young People, 2024, [url](#), p. 22

⁹⁶⁶ ILO, ILO Brief: Navigating Nigeria’s economic and labour market challenges: Pathways to inclusive growth and structural transformation, November 2024, [url](#), p. 1; Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria Labour Force Survey (NLFS) Report, Q 2024, November 2024, [url](#), p. 2

⁹⁶⁷ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria Labour Force Survey (NLFS) Report, Q2 2024, November 2024, [url](#), p. 2. See also: ILO, ILO Brief: Navigating Nigeria’s economic and labour market challenges: Pathways to inclusive growth and structural transformation, November 2024, [url](#), p. 1

meaning that ‘a vast majority of the country’s workforce is engaged in jobs or businesses that are not formally registered, regulated, or taxed by the government’.⁹⁶⁸ Women are more likely than men to be in informal employment (96 % compared to 90 %).⁹⁶⁹ Informality rates are higher in rural areas (97.5 %) than in urban areas (90%).⁹⁷⁰ With respect to disability in informal employment, 96.4 % of individuals with disabilities who were employed worked in the informal sector, in contrast to 93 % of non-disabled individuals.⁹⁷¹ Informal jobs include activities such as street vending, small-scale farming, artisanship, and other small businesses that operate without formal contracts, protections, or access to social security benefits. Labour market experts interviewed by Nigerian news source Business Day indicated that underemployment and informality obscure the actual extent of joblessness in the country, noting that these factors impact government efforts to broaden the tax base for revenue shortfalls and present challenges related to job security, access to credit, and economic vulnerability.⁹⁷²

The Jobberman report indicated that the informal market is largely regulated by ‘gatekeepers’ such as trade associations and cooperatives, which provide financial, administrative, and political support; oversee market operations; and ‘maintain order, safety, and security’. They also act as intermediaries between trade groups and the government at state and local levels. According to the same source, many young people refrain from engaging with ‘gatekeepers’ due to their resistance to innovation and the perception that they serve as vehicles for extortion through ‘membership levies and fees’. The Jobberman report indicated that although these associations are considered ‘exploitative, many local traders and service providers are indebted to them due to their credit facilities, training, apprenticeships, and protection support’.⁹⁷³ Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted within the time constraints of this report.

The Jobberman report indicated that survivalist⁹⁷⁴ workers and enterprises are the most vulnerable in the informal labour force, suffering from poverty, limited education, and few opportunities; often facing precarious employment with long hours, poor pay, and hazardous conditions. They commonly work in public spaces and include casual labourers, unskilled service providers, recyclers, street vendors, industrial outworkers, hawkers, and waste pickers.⁹⁷⁵

⁹⁶⁸ Business Day, Jobless rate rises on multinationals’ exit, factory closures, 25 September 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁶⁹ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria Labour Force Survey (NLFS) Report, Q2 2024, November 2024, [url](#), p. 10. See also: ILO, ILO Brief: Navigating Nigeria’s economic and labour market challenges: Pathways to inclusive growth and structural transformation, November 2024, [url](#), p. 1

⁹⁷⁰ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria Labour Force Survey (NLFS) Report, Q2 2024, November 2024, [url](#), p. 11. See also: Jobberman, Nigeria’s informal sector: A Pathway to Sustainable Economic Transitions for Young People, 2024, [url](#), p. 45

⁹⁷¹ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria Labour Force Survey (NLFS) Report, Q2 2024, November 2024, [url](#), p. 11

⁹⁷² Business Day, Widening skills gap keeps millions of Nigerians jobless, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁷³ Jobberman, Nigeria’s informal sector: A Pathway to Sustainable Economic Transitions for Young People, 2024, [url](#), p. 36

⁹⁷⁴ The Jobberman report defines ‘survivalist workers and enterprises’ as ‘the most vulnerable segment of the informal labour force based on social indicators like poverty, access to education and skills, and available opportunities. Survivalist workers are prone to the most precarious and discriminatory forms of employment. They engage in long hours of laborious work with discriminatory payment systems in hazardous working conditions, usually public spaces’. Jobberman, Nigeria’s informal sector: A Pathway to Sustainable Economic Transitions for Young People, 2024, [url](#), pp. 22, 25

⁹⁷⁵ Jobberman, Nigeria’s informal sector: A Pathway to Sustainable Economic Transitions for Young People, 2024, [url](#), p. 25

3.2.2. Unemployment

In April 2023, the government changed the unemployment rate calculation methodology to follow ILO guidelines. The new methodology, which started to be applied in the fourth quarter of 2022, counts people working 20 hours per week or less as ‘employed’, thus dropping the unemployment rate from 33.3 % in 2020 to 4.1 % in 2023.⁹⁷⁶ Under the new methodology, the unemployment rate decreased from 5.3 % in the fourth quarter of 2022, to 4.2 % in the second quarter of 2023, but increased to 4.3 % in the second quarter of 2024.⁹⁷⁷ In urban areas, the unemployment rate was reported higher than in rural areas (5.2 % compared to 2.8 %).⁹⁷⁸ The unemployment rate for 2025 is estimated at 3.16 %.⁹⁷⁹

Nigeria’s revamp of economic indicators sparked debate, as observers pointed out that the sharp drop in unemployment is not due to job creation but rather a change in the National Bureau of Statistics’ methodology.⁹⁸⁰

Analysts consulted by Nigerian newspaper Business Day indicated that the exiting of multinationals from Nigeria and the closure of several factories due to rising production costs and shifts in consumer spending due to the high cost of living, led to job cuts across various industries. Industries included manufacturing companies and major companies such as GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Nigeria Ltd, Sanofi-Aventis Nigeria Ltd, and Equinox Nigeria.⁹⁸¹ The same source reported that high energy costs and foreign exchange losses led to the implementation of ‘cost cutting measures’, including downsizings and layoffs, to adapt to the new environment. According to the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), about 767 manufacturing companies shut down in 2023, while 335 experienced ‘distress’.⁹⁸²

3.2.3. Employment for specific groups

Youth

Sources indicated that youth unemployment in Nigeria is a national ‘crisis’.⁹⁸³ They also indicated that high youth unemployment is due to a significant skills gaps, and that industries struggle to find trained workers for key roles, especially in technical and vocational fields.⁹⁸⁴ Many young Nigerians lack the specific skills that employers need, resulting in unfilled

⁹⁷⁶ Cable (The), EXPLAINER: The new NBS methodology behind Nigeria’s 4.1% unemployment figure, 26 August 2023, [url](#); African Business, Nigeria’s revamp of economic indicators sparks debate, 13 February 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁷⁷ US, CIA, The World Factbook: Nigeria, 12 August 2025, [url](#); World Bank (The), Human Capital, Country Brief: Nigeria, October 2024, [url](#); Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria Labour Force Survey (NLFS) Report, Q2 2024, November 2024, [url](#), p. 2

⁹⁷⁸ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria Labour Force Survey (NLFS) Report, Q2 2024, November 2024, [url](#), p. 2

⁹⁷⁹ WEF, Global Gender Gap Report 2025: Nigeria, Economic profiles, 11 June 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁸⁰ Cable (The), EXPLAINER: The new NBS methodology behind Nigeria’s 4.1% unemployment figure, 26 August 2023, [url](#); African Business, Nigeria’s revamp of economic indicators sparks debate, 13 February 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁸¹ Business Day, Jobless rate rises on multinationals’ exit, factory closures, 25 September 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁸² Business Day, Jobless rate rises on multinationals’ exit, factory closures, 25 September 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁸³ African Liberty, Nigeria in Crisis Due to Youth Unemployment, 11 December 2024, [url](#); Vanguard, Youth unemployment: Reps move to establish vocational centres in 774 LGAs, 27 June 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁸⁴ Business Day, Widening skills gap keeps millions of Nigerians jobless, 19 March 2025, [url](#); African Liberty, Nigeria in Crisis Due to Youth Unemployment, 11 December 2024, [url](#)



positions.⁹⁸⁵ The Human Capital Index for Nigeria indicated that 27 % of children aged 5 to 17 are engaged in the labour market, and that 14 % of young people with ages between 15 and 24, are neither employed, nor in school, nor in training.⁹⁸⁶ According to the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Factbook, the 2024 unemployment rate for individuals aged 15 to 24 was 5.1 %, with males at 3.7 % and females at 6.5 %.⁹⁸⁷ Nigeria's NBS survey indicated that the youth unemployment rate for the second quarter of 2024 was 6.5 %, a decrease from 8.4 % in the previous quarter.⁹⁸⁸ For more information see [3.6 Education](#).

In June 2024, the unemployment rate for people with secondary education was 7.6 %.⁹⁸⁹ However, the Nigeria Education News, a news website on education issues in Nigeria, indicated, that the unemployment rate for Nigerian youth was about 53 % in 2023.⁹⁹⁰ According to Germany's BMZ, the growing young generation 'has very little prospect of getting access to formal jobs, housing or basic social protection' due to low economic growth, high levels of population growth, and high levels of informal employment.⁹⁹¹

Sources reported that Nigerian companies are unable to find qualified workers due to a disconnection between local universities' curriculum and the reality on the ground, which leave young Nigerians with significant skills gaps after graduation and render them unable to compete in the job market.⁹⁹² Daily Trust reported that, according to local research, about 55 % of young people in Nigeria remain unemployed or underemployed, not due to a lack of education, but 'because of a shortage of practical, digital, and cognitive skills demanded by today's labour market'.⁹⁹³ Sources reported that firms in sectors such as technology, agriculture, manufacturing, and services are increasingly hiring workforce from other African countries due to local shortages and technical expertise.⁹⁹⁴

Women

The Jobberman report noted that women encounter educational disparities, patriarchal work environments, and cultural barriers impacting their participation in the labour market.⁹⁹⁵ The World Bank indicated that, according to ILO statistics, the 2023 rate of 'vulnerable employment'⁹⁹⁶ for females in Nigeria was 78.9 % compared to 54.3 % for males, down from the 2018 rates of 78.9 % and 54.9 %, respectively.⁹⁹⁷ A 2025 report on women in the

⁹⁸⁵ Business Day, Widening skills gap keeps millions of Nigerians jobless, 19 March 2025, [url](#); African Liberty, Nigeria in Crisis Due to Youth Unemployment, 11 December 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁸⁶ World Bank (The), Human Capital, Country Brief: Nigeria, October 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁸⁷ US, CIA, The World Factbook: Nigeria, 12 August 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁸⁸ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria Labour Force Survey (NLFS) Report, Q2 2024, November 2024, [url](#), p. 12

⁹⁸⁹ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria Labour Force Survey (NLFS) Report, Q2 2024, November 2024, [url](#), p. 2

⁹⁹⁰ Daily Trust, Bridging the Gap: Why Nigeria Needs Skills-Based Education for Its Youth, 27 June 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁹¹ Germany, BMZ, Nigeria – Social situation: Pervasive poverty and corruption, 2 February 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁹² Business Day, Nigeria's youth face skills gap as employers struggle to fill roles, 27 June 2025, [url](#); Daily Trust, Bridging the Gap: Why Nigeria Needs Skills-Based Education for Its Youth, 27 June 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁹³ Daily Trust, Bridging the Gap: Why Nigeria Needs Skills-Based Education for Its Youth, 27 June 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁹⁴ Business Day, Nigeria's youth face skills gap as employers struggle to fill roles, 27 June 2025, [url](#); Daily Trust, Bridging the Gap: Why Nigeria Needs Skills-Based Education for Its Youth, 27 June 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁹⁵ Jobberman, Nigeria's informal sector: A Pathway to Sustainable Economic Transitions for Young People, 2024, [url](#), p. 62

⁹⁹⁶ The World Bank defined 'vulnerable employment' as the 'least likely to have formal work arrangements, social protection, and safety nets to guard against economic shocks; thus [being] more likely to fall into poverty'. In World Bank (The), Nigeria: Featured indicators, n.d., [url](#)

⁹⁹⁷ World Bank (The), Nigeria: Featured indicators, n.d., [url](#)



workplace in India, Nigeria, and Kenya, by McKinsey & Company, a New York City-based consulting firm that offers financial and operational services to corporations, governments and other organisations, showed that despite constituting half of the national workforce, women occupy just one in three entry-level positions within the formal private sector.⁹⁹⁸ According to the same source, private sector beliefs about gender roles in the workplace are commonplace, with roles in engineering and technical services, for example, being male-dominated.⁹⁹⁹ In healthcare, in contrast, women and men have the same representation at the entry level, but the rate of women drops to 10 % in management positions.¹⁰⁰⁰

Labour migration and IDPs

The Lagos Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget indicated that between 2022 and 2024, the state experienced an unprecedented increase in labour migration and internally displaced persons (IDPs), resulting in a net daily population growth of approximately 3 000 individuals, a surge that has led to a significant impact on infrastructure, housing, and public services.¹⁰⁰¹ The same source explained that Lagos state faces challenges in accommodating the rapid population growth, which is leading to ‘widespread homelessness’ and the expansion of slums, and that migrants and IDPs, especially those with limited resources, frequently settle in peripheral areas where informal housing and inadequate amenities are common.¹⁰⁰² The Borgen Project, a US-based nonprofit organisation dedicated to addressing global poverty, similarly indicated that while most analysts concentrate on Lagos, other cities such as Ibadan, Kano, and Abuja are also experiencing rapid population growth, and although rapid urbanisation can stimulate local economic growth, it is also straining social services and infrastructure, particularly impacting the poor.¹⁰⁰³

Other groups

Nigeria’s NBS survey indicated that 80 % of persons without disabilities participate in the labour market, compared to 36.7 % of people with disabilities.¹⁰⁰⁴ The 2025 unemployment rate for those 15 to 64 years of age was 4.15 % among women and 2.14 % among men.¹⁰⁰⁵

3.2.4. Lagos and Abuja

The Lagos State Commissioner for Economic Planning and Budget indicated that businesses face challenges in finding suitable candidates with the appropriate skills and education.¹⁰⁰⁶ The Jobberman report indicated that traditional informality is prevalent outside urban centres like Lagos due to the dominance of traditional markets, and that in Lagos in particular, informality persists due to poor market organisation and digital awareness, high cost of living,

⁹⁹⁸ McKinsey & Company, Women in the Workplace 2025: India, Nigeria, and Kenya, 2025, [url](#), p. 34

⁹⁹⁹ McKinsey & Company, Women in the Workplace 2025: India, Nigeria, and Kenya, 2025, [url](#), p. 34

¹⁰⁰⁰ McKinsey & Company, Women in the Workplace 2025: India, Nigeria, and Kenya, 2025, [url](#), p. 38

¹⁰⁰¹ Nigeria, Lagos, Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget, Lagos Economic Development Update (LEDU) 2025, 2025, [url](#), p. 79

¹⁰⁰² Nigeria, Lagos, Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget, Lagos Economic Development Update (LEDU) 2025, 2025, [url](#), p. 79

¹⁰⁰³ Borgen Project (The), Urban poverty in Nigeria: Addressing the plight of the poor, 28 April 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰⁴ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria Labour Force Survey (NLFS) Report, Q2 2024, November 2024, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁰⁰⁵ WEF, Global Gender Gap Report 2025: Nigeria, Economic profiles, 11 June 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰⁶ Business Day, Widening skills gap keeps millions of Nigerians jobless, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

market fragmentation, and local disruptions.¹⁰⁰⁷ The Lagos Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget indicated that, for 2025, monthly salaries in Lagos state vary according to the occupation:

- management positions, with the highest monthly salary, earn an average of 215 000 Naira [120.5 Euros];
- accounting, information technology, legal, health, engineering, finance, and technician positions, earn average salaries ranging between 100 000 [56 Euros] and 200 000 Naira [112 Euros];
- occupations in areas such as transportation, administration, sales, and education, earn an average salary below 100 000 Naira [56 Euros].¹⁰⁰⁸

The unemployment rate by state for the reference period of this report could not be found among the sources consulted within the time constraints. Nigeria's NBS provided the following statistics for 2023:

	National	Federal Capital Territory	Lagos
Unemployment	5.4 %	14.1 %	5.5 %
Labour force participation rate¹⁰⁰⁹	76.3 %	64.9 %	74.3 %
Time-related underemployment rate¹⁰¹⁰	11.1 %	6 %	4.4 %
Informal employment	92.2 %	76.5 %	76.3 %

Source: Nigeria, Nigeria Labour Force Survey Annual Report 2023, 2024, [url](#), pp. ii, 13, 128, 189

No additional information on employment, specifically regarding Abuja and relevant for the reference period of this report, could be found among all source consulted.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Jobberman, Nigeria's informal sector: A Pathway to Sustainable Economic Transitions for Young People, 2024, [url](#), p. 35

¹⁰⁰⁸ Nigeria, Lagos, Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget, Lagos Economic Development Update (LEDU) 2025, 2025, [url](#), p. 64

¹⁰⁰⁹ Labour force participation rate is 'the proportion of a country's working-age population that engages actively in the labour market, either by working or looking for work. It indicates the size of the supply of labour available to engage in the production of goods and services relative to the working-age population. It is defined as the ratio of the labour force to the working-age population expressed in percentage terms'. Nigeria, Nigeria Labour Force Survey Annual Report 2023, 2024, [url](#), p. 13

¹⁰¹⁰ The time-related underemployment rate is defined as 'the share of employed people who are working less than 40 hours per week, but who would be willing and available to do more hours of work'. Nigeria, Nigeria Labour Force Survey Annual Report 2023, 2024, [url](#), p. 32

3.3. Poverty

Even though Nigeria is one of the top oil producers in Africa, the country remains one of the poorest in the world.¹⁰¹¹ By the end of 2024, about 50 % of Nigerians were living under the poverty line of 2.15 US dollars per day.¹⁰¹² Over 133 million Nigerians feel the impact of multidimensional poverty, the highest number recorded globally,¹⁰¹³ with the number of people living below the poverty line expected to rise by about 13 million by the end of 2025.¹⁰¹⁴ According to Germany's BMZ, if poverty is measured by additional factors such as health, education, employment and standard of living, more than 60 % of people in Nigeria are considered 'poor'.¹⁰¹⁵

Data from 2022 show that most deprivations included cooking fuel (50.6 % of people), sanitation (46.5 %), healthcare (38.7 %), food insecurity (38.6 %), housing materials (38.6 %), and water (29.3 %).¹⁰¹⁶ According to Nigeria's NBS household survey, wood is the most common cooking fuel in Nigeria (used by 70.2 % of households), followed by liquefied petroleum gas (23.2 %).¹⁰¹⁷ In 2022, Nigeria's NBS indicated that about half of the population who were multidimensionally poor cooked with dung, wood or charcoal, and that high deprivations were also present in sanitation, healthcare, food insecurity, and housing.¹⁰¹⁸

Nigeria's economic growth is hindered by low state capacity, poor service delivery, corruption, infrastructure gaps, trade protectionism, extreme weather events, widespread insecurity and violence,¹⁰¹⁹ gender inequality, 'adverse social norms', and economic non-diversification.¹⁰²⁰ Inadequate urban planning policies, combined with other contributing factors, have resulted in rising levels of urban poverty in Nigeria.¹⁰²¹ Insecurity is another factor that exacerbates poverty levels due to the impact on investor confidence, business operations, and agricultural productivity, particularly in Northern producing states, leading to higher food prices, increase in food imports, and higher unemployment and poverty levels.¹⁰²²

In response to high poverty rates, the government implemented a temporary cash transfer program for 15 million households, considered the 'poorest and most economically at-risk'.¹⁰²³

¹⁰¹¹ AP, Nigeria more than doubles the minimum wage for government workers after strikes and negotiations, 19 July 2024, [url](#); Germany, BMZ, Nigeria – Social situation: Pervasive poverty and corruption, 2 February 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰¹² World Bank (The), Building Momentum for Inclusive Growth, May 2025, [url](#), p. 6; Lloyds Bank, Nigeria: Economic and Political Overview, May 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰¹³ EEAS, 2024 Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World, 22 May 2025, [url](#), p. 127

¹⁰¹⁴ PwC, 2025 Nigeria Budget and Economic Outlook, 2025, [url](#), p. 43

¹⁰¹⁵ Germany, BMZ, Nigeria – Social situation: Pervasive poverty and corruption, 2 February 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰¹⁶ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria Multidimensional Poverty Index (2022), 2023, [url](#), p. 23

¹⁰¹⁷ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 23

¹⁰¹⁸ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria Multidimensional Poverty Index (2022), 2023, [url](#), p. xiv

¹⁰¹⁹ World Bank (The), The World Bank in Nigeria: Overview, 10 April 2025, [url](#); BASIC Research, Poverty Dynamics and Social Assistance Amidst Intersecting Crises in Nigeria, February 2025, [url](#), p. 9

¹⁰²⁰ BASIC Research, Poverty Dynamics and Social Assistance Amidst Intersecting Crises in Nigeria, February 2025, [url](#), p. 9

¹⁰²¹ Borgen Project (The), Urban poverty in Nigeria: Addressing the plight of the poor, 28 April 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰²² PwC, 2025 Nigeria Budget and Economic Outlook, 2025, [url](#), p. 59

¹⁰²³ World Bank (The), The World Bank in Nigeria: Overview, 10 April 2025, [url](#); Nigeria, High Commission to the United Kingdom, Economy, n.d., [url](#)



The implementation process, however, has encountered delays, resulting in only 5.6 million households benefitting due to issues with the digital identification verification mechanism.¹⁰²⁴

Nigeria's NBS household survey indicated that only 4 % of households received assistance from the government, mostly comprising cash (54 % of households) and food (49.3 %).¹⁰²⁵ Assistance is more prevalent in the South-South (6.7 % of households) and North-West (5.6 %), and less common in North-Central (2.6 %) and South East (1.5 %).¹⁰²⁶ A report on poverty dynamics in Nigeria by Better Assistance in Crises Research (BASIC Research), a UK Foreign Office-funded program that produces research on poverty and development assistance, indicated that social assistance was frequently viewed in southern areas as 'politicised' given that it reportedly reaches more often politically-connected people.¹⁰²⁷ The same source also indicated that, according to locals, the distribution of government assistance is 'unreliable' and 'unfair' as benefits are reportedly paid to non-eligible individuals, including local leaders and intermediaries.¹⁰²⁸ Punch reported in June 2025 that, according to the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Nigeria is 'reaching stability' after the removal of the fuel subsidy and parallel foreign exchange rate.¹⁰²⁹

Nigeria is also one of Africa's 'worst performers' in tackling inequality, being surpassed only by war-torn countries such as South Sudan and Somalia.¹⁰³⁰ The World Inequality Database for 2023 indicated that, for Nigeria, the total national income consisted of 42.1 % earned by the top 10 % of earners, 11.4 % by the top 1 %, while the bottom 50 % of the population earned 16.7 % of the total income.¹⁰³¹ Regarding wealth, the same source indicated that the top 10 % owned 60.4 % of the wealth, the top 1 % owned 26.9 %, while the bottom 50 %, 3.9 %.¹⁰³² Similar to the causes of poverty in Nigeria above, drivers of inequality in the country include inadequate access to social services, corruption, insecurity, gender disparities, and the high operational costs of governance in Nigeria.¹⁰³³

In response to living conditions in Nigeria, anti-government protests took place in August 2024.¹⁰³⁴ Protests were mostly led by young people,¹⁰³⁵ and state response left over 20 protesters dead and hundreds arrested.¹⁰³⁶ For more information see [2.7. Protesters](#).

¹⁰²⁴ World Bank (The), Building Momentum for Inclusive Growth, May 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁰²⁵ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 50

¹⁰²⁶ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 50

¹⁰²⁷ BASIC Research, Poverty Dynamics and Social Assistance Amidst Intersecting Crises in Nigeria, February 2025, [url](#), p. 30

¹⁰²⁸ BASIC Research, Poverty Dynamics and Social Assistance Amidst Intersecting Crises in Nigeria, February 2025, [url](#), p. 30

¹⁰²⁹ Punch, Nigeria now reaching stability, after fuel subsidy removal — Minister, 13 June 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰³⁰ Oxfam, Income and wealth inequality in Nigeria: Trends and drivers, 15 October 2024, [url](#), p. 11

¹⁰³¹ World Inequality Database, Nigeria: Income inequality, 2023, [url](#)

¹⁰³² World Inequality Database, Nigeria: Income inequality, 2023, [url](#)

¹⁰³³ Oxfam, Income and wealth inequality in Nigeria: Trends and drivers, 15 October 2024, [url](#), pp. 53-69

¹⁰³⁴ Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, Nigeria's Fight to #EndBadGovernance, 26 August 2024, [url](#); AP, Nigeria's independence anniversary is marked by protests and frustration over economic hardship, 1 October 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰³⁵ Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, Nigeria's Fight to #EndBadGovernance, 26 August 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰³⁶ AP, Nigeria's independence anniversary is marked by protests and frustration over economic hardship, 1 October 2024, [url](#)



3.3.1. Children, women, IDPs

Nigeria's NBS indicated that, in 2022, 83.5 % of children under five years of age, or 22.9 million, were multidimensionally poor, with the average national rate being about 50 %, and over 95 % in Bayelsa, Sokoto, Gombe, and Kebbi.¹⁰³⁷ The same source indicated that, out of the 29 % of all school-aged children who were not attending school, 94 % were poor and with no major gender disparity identified (27.3 % for boys and 26.8 % for girls).¹⁰³⁸ According to Oxfam, net wealth in Nigeria in 2024 had a positive correlation with age, with the youngest age group (18-24 years old) having an average net wealth of one million Naira [555 Euros], followed by the 25-34 age group with two million Naira [1 110 Euros], the 45-54 age group with six million Naira [3 328 Euros], and the 65 and over age group with ten million Naira [5 547 Euros].¹⁰³⁹

The World Inequality Database indicated that, in 2023, female income was 26.8 % out of the total labour income in Nigeria.¹⁰⁴⁰ The World Bank indicated that in 2021, 35 % of females and 55.5 % of males had a bank account, representing a large gap when compared to the average rates in Sub-Saharan Africa (49 % for females and 61 % for males).¹⁰⁴¹ A study on poverty in Nigeria¹⁰⁴² financed by BASE Research, a UK Foreign Office sponsored organisation that assist poor and vulnerable populations, indicated that gender-related constraints such as divorce, (dis-)inheritance rights, household responsibilities, and the 'gendered segregation of women' into low-wage jobs prevent the upward mobility of women. The same source further indicated that the death of a spouse can severely impoverish a household since women would have to cover all costs associated with the household in a context of gender discrimination and lower salaries for women. According to the study, women across Nigeria share similar challenges related to social norms, such as barriers to education, gender-based violence, and marriage customs, but these challenges are accentuated depending on the region.¹⁰⁴³ For example, social norms that preclude women from inheriting property are still prevalent in the south, particularly the South East, where women do not have the same rights as their counterparts in the North; and early and forced marriages remain common, especially in the north, and the majority of those without schooling are women, regardless of location.¹⁰⁴⁴ As a result, women face a double disadvantage as they are often more affected by crises because of social norms that disadvantage them disproportionately, and these norms amplify the impact of these crises and deprivations.¹⁰⁴⁵

¹⁰³⁷ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria Multidimensional Poverty Index (2022), 2023, [url](#), p. xvi

¹⁰³⁸ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria Multidimensional Poverty Index (2022), 2023, [url](#), p. 21

¹⁰³⁹ Oxfam, Income and wealth inequality in Nigeria: Trends and drivers, 15 October 2024, [url](#), p. 27

¹⁰⁴⁰ World Inequality Database, Nigeria: Income inequality, 2023, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴¹ World Bank (The), Nigeria: Featured indicators, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁴² The study was based on quantitative and qualitative data collected between July and September 2023 across six states in the six regional zones. BASE Research, Poverty Dynamics and Social Assistance Amidst Intersecting Crises in Nigeria, February 2025, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁰⁴³ BASE Research, Poverty Dynamics and Social Assistance Amidst Intersecting Crises in Nigeria, February 2025, [url](#), pp. 28-29

¹⁰⁴⁴ BASE Research, Poverty Dynamics and Social Assistance Amidst Intersecting Crises in Nigeria, February 2025, [url](#), p. 28. See also: UNFPA, The Real Fertility Crisis: The pursuit of reproductive agency in a changing world, 16 June 2025, [url](#), p. 91

¹⁰⁴⁵ BASE Research, Poverty Dynamics and Social Assistance Amidst Intersecting Crises in Nigeria, February 2025, [url](#), p. 28



3.3.2. Lagos, Abuja and other regional differences

The World Bank noted that regional inequality is significant, with the best-performing regions comparable to upper middle-income countries, while the worst-performing states sitting below the average of low-income countries.¹⁰⁴⁶

The NBS household survey indicated that, in 2022, multidimensional poverty was higher in rural areas (72 %), compared to urban settings (42 %).¹⁰⁴⁷ The same source indicated that in Lagos, 29.4 % of people were multidimensionally poor, while in the Federal Capital Territory, the rate was 48.3 %.¹⁰⁴⁸

Germany's BMZ indicated that living conditions in northern Nigeria are worse compared to other parts of the country due to less attention from the central government.¹⁰⁴⁹ According to Oxfam, 60 % of the poorest population in Nigeria is concentrated in the northern regions.¹⁰⁵⁰ The average household income in the north is around 50 000 Naira [27.73 Euros] per month, while in the south a salary can exceed 75 000 Naira [41.6 Euros] per month.¹⁰⁵¹ Net wealth¹⁰⁵² is also higher in the southern region, with an average of six million Naira [3 328 Euros]; followed by the western region, with an average of five million Naira [2 774 Euros]; and the northern region, with an average of 2.5 million Naira [1 387 Euros].¹⁰⁵³ Women in the north face greater barriers and challenges due to socio-cultural norms and practices that discourage attending formal education and, as such, are relegated to household chores.¹⁰⁵⁴

According to a report on poverty in Lagos published by The Conversation,¹⁰⁵⁵ despite being Nigeria's economic powerhouse, Lagos has some of the worst slums in the country, with Makoko and Iwaya experiencing high rates of deprivation in education and healthcare.¹⁰⁵⁶ In these slums, for example, toilet facilities and waste management were precarious, with waste often disposed of in waterways.¹⁰⁵⁷ The Borgen Project indicated that most residents of Makoko work in the informal economy, earning less than 1.25 US dollars per day.¹⁰⁵⁸ Additionally, the report indicated that the 'prevalence of both serious and minor illnesses, coupled with insufficient medical care, contributed to high mortality rates'.¹⁰⁵⁹

Regarding Abuja, The Borgen Project reported that more than 50 % of people living in Abuja experience poverty, and that 'low-income earners, including cleaners and security guards, are

¹⁰⁴⁶ World Bank (The), The World Bank in Nigeria: Overview, 10 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴⁷ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria Multidimensional Poverty Index (2022), 2023, [url](#), p. 24

¹⁰⁴⁸ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria Multidimensional Poverty Index (2022), 2023, [url](#), p. 101

¹⁰⁴⁹ Germany, BMZ, Nigeria – Social situation: Pervasive poverty and corruption, 2 February 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵⁰ Oxfam, Income and wealth inequality in Nigeria: Trends and drivers, 15 October 2024, [url](#), p. 22. See also: Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria Multidimensional Poverty Index (2022), 2023, [url](#), p. xiv

¹⁰⁵¹ Oxfam, Income and wealth inequality in Nigeria: Trends and drivers, 15 October 2024, [url](#), p. 22

¹⁰⁵² 'Net wealth represents the total value of an individual's or household's assets minus their liabilities (debts).' See Oxfam, Income and wealth inequality in Nigeria: Trends and drivers, 15 October 2024, [url](#), p. 28

¹⁰⁵³ Oxfam, Income and wealth inequality in Nigeria: Trends and drivers, 15 October 2024, [url](#), p. 28

¹⁰⁵⁴ Oxfam, Income and wealth inequality in Nigeria: Trends and drivers, 15 October 2024, [url](#), p. 66

¹⁰⁵⁵ The report is based on a survey of 400 inhabitants in five Lagos' slums: Makoko, Iwaya, Ilaje, Ijora Badia and Amukoko. Conversation (The), Poverty in Lagos isn't just about money – here's why, 21 October 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵⁶ Conversation (The), Poverty in Lagos isn't just about money – here's why, 21 October 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵⁷ Conversation (The), Poverty in Lagos isn't just about money – here's why, 21 October 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵⁸ Borgen Project (The), Urbanization in Lagos: Impacting poverty in Nigeria, 9 May 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵⁹ Conversation (The), Poverty in Lagos isn't just about money – here's why, 21 October 2024, [url](#)



the most vulnerable'.¹⁰⁶⁰ Wealth inequality in Abuja is 'striking', with upscale areas like Asokoro and Maitama exhibiting luxury cars and smooth roads, while nearby communities like Mpape and Dakibiyu are struggling with poor infrastructure, scarce clean water and unreliable electricity.¹⁰⁶¹ Sources also reported on the increasing number of beggars on Abuja's streets, mostly coming from Northern states.¹⁰⁶² Nigerian newspaper Daily Trust reported on the increasing number of school-age girls who are exploited into child labour, street trading, and other menial jobs in Abuja. According to the same source, these girls include girls from Abuja whose families cannot pay for education; IDP girls, mostly from Northern states fleeing insecurity and terrorism; and girls brought to Abuja for child labour exploitation, mainly as domestic servants, in restaurants, or in shopping malls.¹⁰⁶³

3.4. Food security

Around 70 % of the population is food insecure.¹⁰⁶⁴ The 2024 Global Hunger Index (GHI) ranked Nigeria 110th out of 127 countries on 'hunger severity', which is considered 'serious', with undernourishment reaching 18 % of the population in 2024.¹⁰⁶⁵ According to Nigeria's NBS household survey, about two out of three households reported being unable to eat healthy or nutritious food due to lack of money, with 72.2 % and 64 % of female- and male-headed households, respectively, experiencing food insecurity and being unable to eat healthy.¹⁰⁶⁶ A quantitative socio-economic survey commissioned by the Country of Origin Information Unit of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum to Nigerian polling company NOIPolls Limited,¹⁰⁶⁷ indicated that 16 % of those surveyed managed to afford 'sufficient food for their family', a decrease from 21 % in 2023; whereas 49 % 'hardly managed', and 8 % could not manage.¹⁰⁶⁸ The UN World Food Programme (WFP) indicated that in 2025, 29.4 million and 1.2 million Nigerians were in Phase 3 and Phase 4, respectively, of acute food insecurity.^{1069, 1070} Rising food prices due to rising inflation is also exacerbating the cost of living.¹⁰⁷¹

¹⁰⁶⁰ Borgen Project (The), The divide between wealth and poverty in Abuja, 27 June 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶¹ Borgen Project (The), The divide between wealth and poverty in Abuja, 27 June 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶² Daily Trust, Weak and vulnerable: A disturbing oversight in FCT governance, 28 May 2025, [url](#); Guardian (The), Poverty amid plenty: Growing nation of destitute as homeless kids invade Abuja, S'West, 7 June 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶³ Daily Trust, Out-of-school girls in Abuja: Lost dream of education and the burden of survival, 25 October 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶⁴ Germany, BMZ, Nigeria – Social situation: Pervasive poverty and corruption, 2 February 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶⁵ GHI, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁶⁶ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 42

¹⁰⁶⁷ The survey took place between 22 July and 2 August 2024 and had a sample of 608 respondents between the ages of 16 and 35 in Lagos (196 residents), Auchi (206), and Benin (206). Austria, Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, and NOIPolls, Nigeria: Socio-Economic Survey 2024, [url](#), pp. 3, 15

¹⁰⁶⁸ Austria, Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, and NOIPolls, Nigeria: Socio-Economic Survey 2024, [url](#), pp. 6, 11

¹⁰⁶⁹ WFP defines 'acute food insecurity' as the inability of a person 'to consume adequate food puts their lives or livelihoods in immediate danger'. WFP, Global Report on Food Crises: acute hunger remains persistently high in 59 countries with 1-in-5 people assessed in need of critical urgent action, 24 April 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷⁰ WFP and FAO, Hunger Hotspots. FAO–WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity: June to October 2025 outlook, 2025, [url](#), p. 9

¹⁰⁷¹ HRW, Rising Food Prices Deepen Nigeria's Poverty Crisis, 15 May 2025, [url](#)



Constraints in the supply of food include insecurity, low productivity, high transportation costs, depreciation of the Naira, the Russian invasion of Ukraine,¹⁰⁷² and floodings.¹⁰⁷³ FEWS NET indicated that flooding in Nigeria usually peaks between July and August each year, and if widespread and above-average flooding occurs, cropped areas, livestock, and infrastructure are negatively impacted, particularly farmland along major floodplains.¹⁰⁷⁴ Flooding events can also lead to detours, increased transportation costs, and higher staple food prices.¹⁰⁷⁵

SBM Intelligence indicated that the national average cost of cooking jollof rice, a main staple and culturally significant dish in Nigeria, increased by 19.7 % between September 2024 and March 2025, and that protein remains the most costly item of the food basket, with the price of turkey, for example, increasing by over 500 % since 2016.¹⁰⁷⁶ Nigeria's NBS household survey indicated that the average consumption rate of meat, fish, and other animal proteins in Nigerian households was 3.2 days per week, with regions in the South having higher consumption rates (South East, 3.5 days per week; South West, 3.9; South South, 4.9) than regions in the North (North Central, 3.4; North-East, 2.4; North-West, 1.6), and urban households having a higher rate (3.5 days per week) compared to rural ones (3.1 %).¹⁰⁷⁷

Germany's BMZ indicated that exposure to poor health and nutrition frequently start at birth.¹⁰⁷⁸ In 2024, about 43.5 % of women of reproductive age consumed a diet that met the standards for minimum dietary diversity.¹⁰⁷⁹ In the first quarter of 2025, the nutrition situation deteriorated 'sharply', with an estimated 3 million children suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM) (an increase from 2.6 million in 2024).¹⁰⁸⁰ In June 2024, UNICEF indicated that one out of three children under the age of five in Nigeria, or around 11 million children, experience 'severe child food poverty', making them 50 % more likely to experience wasting.¹⁰⁸¹ According to the GHI, for children under the age of five, 31.5 % were stunted, 6.5 % wasted, and 10.7 % died before the fifth birthday.¹⁰⁸²

Northern Nigeria is particularly affected by food insecurity.¹⁰⁸³ According to Food Security Cluster, an initiative established by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and WFP to coordinate food security emergencies, '[f]ood systems in the northeast region remain under severe strain due to insecurity, climate change, economic crisis, and poor infrastructure. Farmers face immense challenges, including land abandonment, loss of livelihoods, and restricted market access, all exacerbated by soaring inflation'.¹⁰⁸⁴ The survey by the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum and NOIPolls Limited showed that about 52 % of

¹⁰⁷² Conversation (The), Nigeria's economy in 2025 doesn't look bright – analyst explains why, 6 January 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷³ FEWS NET, Nigeria - Food Security Outlook, June 2025 – January 2025, 9 July 2024, [url](#), pp. 12-13

¹⁰⁷⁴ FEWS NET, Nigeria - Food Security Outlook, June 2025 – January 2025, 9 July 2024, [url](#), pp. 12-13

¹⁰⁷⁵ FEWS NET, Nigeria - Food Security Outlook, June 2025 – January 2025, 9 July 2024, [url](#), p. 13

¹⁰⁷⁶ SBM Intelligence, The SBM Jollof Index: Staple under stress, 23 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷⁷ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 40

¹⁰⁷⁸ Germany, BMZ, Nigeria – Social situation: Pervasive poverty and corruption, 2 February 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷⁹ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 40

¹⁰⁸⁰ UNICEF, Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1, January-April 2025, 15 May 2025, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁰⁸¹ Wasting is defined as 'a life-threatening form of malnutrition'. See UNICEF, 1 in 3 children in Nigeria experiences severe child food poverty due to conflict, climate crises, and inequity, 7 June 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸² GHI, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁸³ Food Security Cluster, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#); Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), pp. 38-39

¹⁰⁸⁴ Food Security Cluster, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)



those surveyed in Lagos indicated that they ‘hardly managed’ to afford food, while 11 % indicated that they could not.¹⁰⁸⁵

In Lagos, between 5 and 10 % are food insecure, whereas in Abuja the percentage range is between 20 and 30 %.¹⁰⁸⁶ According to FEWS NET, in October 2024, Lagos and Abuja had an ‘acute food insecurity’ classification of 1, ‘minimal’,¹⁰⁸⁷ in contrast to states like Borno, Zamfara, and Katsina where a number of areas were classified as 3, in ‘crisis’.¹⁰⁸⁸ The website of the IPC indicated that, for the period between June and August 2025, both Lagos and Abuja were classified as ‘stressed’.¹⁰⁸⁹

3.4.1. Refugees, asylum seekers, and IDPs

In 2024, UNHCR reported that, after screening more than 8 000 refugees and 20 000 IDPs, it found 94 refugees and 113 IDPs with severe acute malnutrition (SAM), and 280 refugees and 408 IDPs with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM).¹⁰⁹⁰

FEWS NET indicated that the conflict in the North-East, especially in Borno state, ‘has led to depleted food stocks, reduced purchasing power, and restricted food access for IDPs, returnees, and households in inaccessible areas’.¹⁰⁹¹ Populations that live in areas less impacted by the conflict are usually able to meet basic food but not non-food needs.¹⁰⁹² The same source indicated that about one million IDPs receive food assistance in the North-East, and that assistance accounts to about 70 % of their monthly caloric needs.¹⁰⁹³ FEWS NET further indicated that, in the North-East, food assistance to IDP camps decreased 28 % between 2023 and 2024 due a drop in funding and the closure of some IDP camps in Borno state. In the North and Central regions, most IDPs live in makeshift camps, and the size of assistance and beneficiaries is ‘limited’ due to lack of funding.¹⁰⁹⁴

¹⁰⁸⁵ Austria, Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, and NOI Polls, Nigeria: Socio-Economic Survey 2024, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁰⁸⁶ WFP, HungerMap: Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁸⁷ FEWS NET classifies food insecurity into five phases: Phase 1, minimal, Households are able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical and unsustainable strategies to access food and income; Phase 2, Stressed, Households have minimally adequate food consumption but are unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in stress-coping strategies; Phase 3, Crisis, Households either have food consumption gaps that are reflected by high or above-usual acute malnutrition; or are marginally able to meet minimum food needs but only by depleting essential livelihood assets or through crisis-coping strategies; Phase 4, Emergency, Households either have large food consumption gaps which are reflected in very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality; or are able to mitigate large food consumption gaps but only by employing emergency livelihood strategies and asset liquidation; and Phase 5, Famine, households have an extreme lack of food and/or other basic needs even after full employment of coping strategies. Starvation, death, destitution, and extremely critical acute malnutrition levels are evident. FEWS NET, What is the IPC?, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁸⁸ FEWS NET, Nigeria acute food insecurity, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁸⁹ IPC, Cadré harmonisé, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁹⁰ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 21

¹⁰⁹¹ FEWS NET, Nigeria - Food Security Outlook, June 2025 – January 2025, 9 July 2024, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁰⁹² FEWS NET, Nigeria - Food Security Outlook, June 2025 – January 2025, 9 July 2024, [url](#), p. 12

¹⁰⁹³ FEWS NET, Nigeria - Food Security Outlook, June 2025 – January 2025, 9 July 2024, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁰⁹⁴ FEWS NET, Nigeria - Food Security Outlook, June 2025 – January 2025, 9 July 2024, [url](#), pp. 7-8



3.5. Housing and living conditions

The aforementioned survey by the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum and NOIPolls Limited indicated that 75 % of those interviewed were renting and 24 % owned the house or apartment they were living in. In Lagos, 26 % of respondents own their homes and 72 % rent accommodation.¹⁰⁹⁵ Nigeria's NBS 2024 household survey reported that seven out of ten households reported owning the dwelling they live in, with higher ownership rates in rural areas (80.1 %) compared to urban settings (49.1 %).¹⁰⁹⁶

According to Nigeria's NBS household survey, the main roofing materials are zinc sheets (60.3 % of houses) and corrugated iron sheets (19.6 %), the main material for flooring is smooth cement (67.2 %), and the walls are mostly made of concrete (61.5 %), except in the North-East and North-West where around 56.6 % of houses' walls are made of mud. The same source noted that one in four households in Nigeria do not have access to toilet facilities.¹⁰⁹⁷ Most Nigerian households obtain drinking water from tube wells or boreholes (40.6 % in the dry season and 37.9 % in the rainy season), followed by dug wells (12.9 % in dry season and 13.6 % in rainy season), and surface water.¹⁰⁹⁸

According to FEWS NET, 19 % of those interviewed managed to afford housing costs, including electricity, heating, water, and rent, a decrease from 26 % in 2023; whereas 45 % 'hardly managed', and 6 % could not manage to afford housing costs.¹⁰⁹⁹ About 53 % of those interviewed in Lagos indicated that they 'hardly managed' to afford the costs, while 6 % indicated that they could not.¹¹⁰⁰ The survey by the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum and NOIPolls Limited indicated that there was a 'deterioration' in the ability to provide for basic consumer goods, with 9 % of respondents indicating that they could do so in 2024, a decrease from 17 % in 2023.¹¹⁰¹

Regarding access to the necessary hygiene products, the survey by the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum and NOIPolls Limited indicated that 30 % indicated 'always' having access (a decrease from 40 % in 2023), 33 % 'just about', 27 % 'hardly', and 7 % 'never'. In Lagos, about 24 % indicated that they 'always' had access, while 10 % indicated that they 'did not'.¹¹⁰²

Regarding access to clean drinking water, the survey by the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum and NOIPolls Limited indicated that 68 % of those interviewed 'always have access', 20 % 'sometimes', 7 % 'seldom', and 5 % 'never'.¹¹⁰³ Germany's BMZ indicated

¹⁰⁹⁵ Austria, Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, and NOIPolls, Nigeria: Socio-Economic Survey 2024, [url](#), p. 28

¹⁰⁹⁶ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 23

¹⁰⁹⁷ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 23

¹⁰⁹⁸ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 30

¹⁰⁹⁹ Austria, Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, and NOIPolls, Nigeria: Socio-Economic Survey 2024, [url](#), pp. 6, 11

¹¹⁰⁰ Austria, Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, and NOIPolls, Nigeria: Socio-Economic Survey 2024, [url](#), p. 6

¹¹⁰¹ Austria, Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, and NOIPolls, Nigeria: Socio-Economic Survey 2024, [url](#), p. 12

¹¹⁰² Austria, Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, and NOIPolls, Nigeria: Socio-Economic Survey 2024, [url](#), pp. 8, 12

¹¹⁰³ Austria, Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, and NOIPolls, Nigeria: Socio-Economic Survey 2024, [url](#), p. 7



that around 30 % of the population has access to safe drinking water, and most people do not have access to basic sanitation.¹¹⁰⁴

Regarding access to internet and Wi-Fi, the survey by the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum and NOI Polls Limited indicated that 49 % of those interviewed ‘always’ had access, 29 % ‘sometimes’, 10 % ‘seldomly’, and 11 % ‘never’.¹¹⁰⁵ In Lagos, about 45 % ‘always’ had access, while 12 % indicated that they ‘did not’.¹¹⁰⁶

3.5.1. Refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs

UNHCR indicated that, at the end of 2024, over 60 % of IDPs lived in host communities, and 40 % in camps with limited basic services.¹¹⁰⁷ In Borno state, for example, there were over two million IDPs, with 900 000 lacking electricity, clean water, shelter, and other essential services. Although Borno aided around 3 200 IDP households with cash, food, and shelter, inflation and currency devaluation hindered these state efforts.¹¹⁰⁸ According to UNHCR, 46 % of IDP sites in the North-East are located in flood-prone and overcrowded areas, and IDPs often lack land tenure agreements, leaving them vulnerable to eviction.¹¹⁰⁹ In the South-South, 78 % of refugees live in host communities, ‘integrating with ease and able to work’.¹¹¹⁰ The same source indicated that about 1 900 refugees were enrolled in social protection policies and 500 in health insurance plans in Cross River State and Akwa Ibom.¹¹¹¹

UNHCR indicated that the proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements in 2024, with access to basic facilities, was 2.08 % among IDPs and 100 % among refugees and asylum seekers.¹¹¹² The proportion of people living in habitable and affordable housing in 2024 was 62.1 % for IDPs, 28.43 % for refugees and asylum seekers, and 98.11 % of returnees. The same source indicated that 5.12 % of IDPs and 11.82 % of refugees and asylum seekers had access to electricity. Additionally, 45 830 IDPs and 27 400 refugees and asylum seekers received shelter and housing assistance.¹¹¹³ In Borno state, the government and UNHCR provided, in 2024, 110 ‘sustainable housing units’ to returnees, and over 2 900 ‘vulnerable’ households were supported with emergency shelter.¹¹¹⁴ In the South-South, 104 internally displaced families received assistance to repair their homes.¹¹¹⁵ UNHCR also trained over 15 500 refugee households on water treatment and safe storage; supported the deployment of real-time monitoring devices and data collection for 15 water facilities across refugee settlements in Benue and Cross River States; and built 500 latrines and 566 handwashing facilities, benefitting approximately 10 000 people.¹¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰⁴ Germany, BMZ, Nigeria – Social situation: Pervasive poverty and corruption, 2 February 2024, [url](#)

¹¹⁰⁵ Austria, Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, and NOI Polls, Nigeria: Socio-Economic Survey 2024, [url](#), p. 9

¹¹⁰⁶ Austria, Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, and NOI Polls, Nigeria: Socio-Economic Survey 2024, [url](#), p. 9

¹¹⁰⁷ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹¹⁰⁸ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹¹⁰⁹ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 20

¹¹¹⁰ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 27

¹¹¹¹ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 27

¹¹¹² UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 5

¹¹¹³ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 19-20

¹¹¹⁴ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 20

¹¹¹⁵ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 20

¹¹¹⁶ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 23



FEWS NET noted that most urban IDPs in the North-West, particularly in Sokoto, Katsina, and Zamfara states, resort to ‘negative livelihood coping strategies’ including begging and prostitution to deal with food insecurity, and the worst-off households rely on food-based coping strategies, including skipping meals or going days without eating’.¹¹¹⁷

3.5.2.Lagos and Abuja

According to a report by The World Bank and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs of Switzerland, ‘[w]hile Lagos has the smallest landmass among Nigeria’s 36 states (at 3,500 per square km), Lagos is the most densely populated state, with approximately 8,000 persons per square km, which is 40 times Nigeria’s average of 200 persons per square km’.¹¹¹⁸ Sources indicated that the rising sea-level is making it harder to find suitable building grounds.¹¹¹⁹ Coastal areas are particularly affected, and the local government has advised residents of Ikoyi, Lekki, Victoria Island, and the coastal areas of Epe and Badagry to be wary of backflow due to the high tide in the Lagos lagoon.¹¹²⁰ The Sun reported, however, that Lagos has undertaken land reclamation initiatives to restore land areas and transform submerged or waterlogged lands into inhabitable areas.¹¹²¹

Sources blame the floodings to shoreline erosion as a consequence of waterfront development.¹¹²² Sources indicated that Lagos is facing a housing crisis.¹¹²³ According to a report by the Roland Igbinoba Real Foundation for Housing and Urban Development (RIRFHU),¹¹²⁴ Lagos has about 2.58 million housing units and a housing deficit of 3.3 million units.¹¹²⁵ Sources reported that residents of Lagos are choosing co-living spaces due to unaffordability and housing deficits.¹¹²⁶ The RIRFHU report indicated that over 618 000 units are ‘either structurally unsafe, severely overcrowded, or lacking essential services such as clean water, proper sanitation, and electricity’.¹¹²⁷ In January 2024, Punch reported that rents in Lagos increased by 91.32 % over the previous five years, with a two-bedroom apartment in Epe, one of the cheapest areas in the state, renting for as low as 350 000 Naira [197 Euros] per year.¹¹²⁸

¹¹¹⁷ FEWS NET, Nigeria - Food Security Outlook, June 2025 – January 2025, 9 July 2024, [url](#), p. 12

¹¹¹⁸ World Bank (The) and Switzerland, Lagos Multi-Sector Analytical Review and Engagement Framework, June 2023, [url](#), p. 3

¹¹¹⁹ DW, Lagos' housing crisis and a vision for the future, 26 November 2024, [url](#)

¹¹²⁰ Guardian (The), Rising sea levels, illegal sand mining hurt Lagos homes, coastal communities, 10 June 2014, [url](#); Republic (The), The luxury apartment complex in Lagos, 21 February 2025, [url](#)

¹¹²¹ Sun (The), Land Reclamation in Lagos 2010 – 2024, 29 July 2024, [url](#)

¹¹²² Guardian (The), Rising sea levels, illegal sand mining hurt Lagos homes, coastal communities, 10 June 2014, [url](#); Republic (The), The luxury apartment complex in Lagos, 21 February 2025, [url](#)

¹¹²³ Guardian (The), Lagos housing deficit hits 3.4m, over 70% residents remain renters, 7 July 2025, [url](#); okayafrica, Young Nigerians Turn to Shared Living as Lagos Faces a Housing Crisis, 10 July 2025, [url](#)

¹¹²⁴ RIRFHU is a corporate social responsibility effort and a non-governmental initiative aimed at providing information and analytics to the development of the housing market in Nigeria. RIRFHU, About us, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹²⁵ Punch, Lagos delivers 2.5m housing units amid 3.4m deficit – Report, 7 July 2025, [url](#). See also: Guardian (The), Lagos housing deficit hits 3.4m, over 70% residents remain renters, 7 July 2025, [url](#)

¹¹²⁶ Guardian (The), Lagos housing deficit hits 3.4m, over 70% residents remain renters, 7 July 2025, [url](#); okayafrica, Young Nigerians Turn to Shared Living as Lagos Faces a Housing Crisis, 10 July 2025, [url](#)

¹¹²⁷ Punch, Lagos delivers 2.5m housing units amid 3.4m deficit – Report, 7 July 2025, [url](#)

¹¹²⁸ Punch, Lagos rents soar by 91% in five years, 22 January 2024, [url](#)



Regarding Abuja, The Nation reported that rents in Abuja increased by over 50 % ‘in recent times’, and that the city is facing a shortage of over 1.7 million housing units.¹¹²⁹ Sources indicated that housing costs are ‘exorbitant’,¹¹³⁰ with rents for studio apartments ranging from 1 000 to more than 1 300 US dollars per year, considering that the average annual salary is less than 1 000 US dollars, forcing many into overcrowded slums or makeshift housing.¹¹³¹ Nairametrics, a Nigerian news source, similarly reported that, according to locals, rent in Abuja is ‘outrageous’, with an apartment costing between 400 and 800 US dollars, plus agent fees and ‘other expenses’.¹¹³² The Nation reported that, since most landlords rely on rental income, the rising cost of living leads to higher rent increases in a ‘vicious circle’ that affects the ‘financially strained’ who are forced into overcrowded and inadequate accommodations.¹¹³³

3.6. Education

Literacy rates vary according to the source, the age range, and the year. The 2020 Human Capital Index, updated in October 2024, indicated that the literacy rate among young Nigerians aged 15 to 24 is 75 %.¹¹³⁴ The World Bank’s most recent statistics on adult literacy indicated that, in 2021, 53.3 % of females was literate in comparison to 73.7 % of males, and that in the lower-middle income class, the rates were 71.4 % for females and 83.7 % for males.¹¹³⁵ Other sources indicated that illiteracy rate stands at around 40 %.¹¹³⁶ Latest UNICEF available data from 2021 indicated that around 73 % of children between the ages of 15 and 24 are literate, although rates also vary according to gender, geographical area, wealth, and ethnicity:

- gender: Male (79 %), female (71 %);
- area: Urban (92 %), rural (59 %);
- wealth: Wealthiest (97 %), poorest (32 %);
- ethnicity: Igbo (97 %), Edo (95 %), Ibibio (94 %), Yoruba (92 %), and Ijaw (90 %).¹¹³⁷

Nigeria’s NBS household survey provided the following regarding literacy rates for 2024:

- national rate: 60.9 %, females (56 %), males (65.8 %);
- urban, total (78.5 %), females (76.2 %), males (81 %);
- rural, total (54 %), females (48 %), males (60 %).¹¹³⁸

¹¹²⁹ Nation (The), Abuja residents groan under high rent, 21 May 2025, [url](#)

¹¹³⁰ Borgen Project (The), The divide between wealth and poverty in Abuja, 27 June 2025, [url](#). See also: Nation (The), Abuja residents groan under high rent, 21 May 2025, [url](#)

¹¹³¹ Borgen Project (The), The divide between wealth and poverty in Abuja, 27 June 2025, [url](#). See also: Nation (The), Abuja residents groan under high rent, 21 May 2025, [url](#)

¹¹³² Nairametrics, Scarcity of affordable housing options in Abuja traps poor Nigerians in slums, 4 November 2024, [url](#)

¹¹³³ Nation (The), Abuja residents groan under high rent, 21 May 2025, [url](#)

¹¹³⁴ World Bank (The), Human Capital, Country Brief: Nigeria, October 2024, [url](#)

¹¹³⁵ World Bank (The), Nigeria: Featured indicators, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹³⁶ Germany, BMZ, Nigeria – Social situation: Pervasive poverty and corruption, 2 February 2024, [url](#); Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 12

¹¹³⁷ UNICEF, Nigeria Education Fact Sheets, 2023, [url](#), pp. 17-18

¹¹³⁸ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 13



Primary education is free and compulsory.¹¹³⁹ Nigeria's annual per capita spending in education increased from 4 739 Naira [2.66 Euros] in 2023 to 6 447 Naira [3.62 Euros] in 2024, or 0.6 % of the GDP.¹¹⁴⁰ Despite an increased spending in education, Nigeria's expenditure overall is far below the global benchmark of 4-6 % of GDP.¹¹⁴¹ According to PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), the 'current spending levels remain grossly inadequate to address the challenges of access and quality in education'.¹¹⁴²

The number of out-of-school children varies according to the source. The UNICEF website indicated that 10.5 million children aged 5-14 were not in school, 61 % of children aged 6-11 attended primary school regularly, and 35.6 % of children aged 36-59 months received early childhood education.¹¹⁴³ UNICEF noted that in the north the situation is 'bleaker', with a net attendance rate of 53%.¹¹⁴⁴ PwC indicated that over 18 million children were out-of-school in 2024, which was considered the 'highest number globally'.¹¹⁴⁵ The survey by the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum and NOI Polls Limited indicated that, according to those surveyed by August 2024 and who had children aged 15 years old or younger, 88 % indicated that all their children were able to attend school, 10 % that 'some' of their children were able to attend school, and 1 % that they were not able to send their children to school.¹¹⁴⁶

The UNICEF website indicated that gender, geography, and poverty contributed to educational marginalisation, particularly affecting girls in the North-East and North-West, where female primary net attendance rates were around 47 %.¹¹⁴⁷ In north-eastern and north-western states, 29 % and 35 % of Muslim children, respectively, received Qur'anic education, 'which does not include basic skills such as literacy and numeracy'; the government considered children attending such schools 'to be officially out-of-school'.¹¹⁴⁸ In north-eastern Nigeria, at least 802 schools were closed, 497 classrooms destroyed, and another 1 392 damaged but repairable.¹¹⁴⁹

3.6.1. Higher education

Sources indicated that many young Nigerians see a university degree as the 'only' path to success.¹¹⁵⁰ Vocational education is seen in Nigeria as a 'second-class' option, chosen when admission to university fails, which discourages talented people from pursuing college education.¹¹⁵¹ Over 60 % of Nigerians in tertiary education are enrolled in technical and

¹¹³⁹ UNICEF, The challenge, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁴⁰ PwC, 2025 Nigeria Budget and Economic Outlook, 2025, [url](#), p. 60

¹¹⁴¹ PwC, 2025 Nigeria Budget and Economic Outlook, 2025, [url](#), pp. 59-60

¹¹⁴² PwC, 2025 Nigeria Budget and Economic Outlook, 2025, [url](#), p. 60

¹¹⁴³ UNICEF, The challenge, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁴⁴ UNICEF, The challenge, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁴⁵ PwC, 2025 Nigeria Budget and Economic Outlook, 2025, [url](#), p. 60

¹¹⁴⁶ Austria, Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, and NOI Polls, Nigeria: Socio-Economic Survey 2024, [url](#), pp. 9-10

¹¹⁴⁷ UNICEF, The challenge, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁴⁸ UNICEF, The challenge, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁴⁹ UNICEF, The challenge, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁵⁰ Business Day, Five rail transport projects that can shape Nigeria's economy, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁵¹ Daily Trust, Bridging the Gap: Why Nigeria Needs Skills-Based Education for Its Youth, 27 June 2025, [url](#); Business Day, National development through vocational education, 25 June 2025, [url](#)



vocational training.¹¹⁵² Sources noted, however, that industries such as technology, renewable energy, and manufacturing struggle to find qualified professionals, forcing them to recruit from abroad or invest heavily in staff training.¹¹⁵³

Nigerian newspaper Punch reported that, according to the Director-General of the National Power Training Institute, skills in Nigeria are disappearing ‘at an alarming rate’.¹¹⁵⁴ The same source reported that six out of ten graduating Nigerians lack the necessary competencies required in the job market, and that tradespeople graduating in other countries in the region such as Benin, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Togo, are more qualified than their Nigerian counterparts.¹¹⁵⁵ Business Day reported that ‘many’ Nigerian graduates in business, for example, find their academic knowledge ‘insufficient’ for the labour market, and that in fields that require specialised training such as software developers, cybersecurity, and data analysis, prospective candidates do not meet the required competencies.¹¹⁵⁶ Daily Trust reported that common deficiencies in tertiary education include communication, information technology, and decision-making skills, which force businesses to invest in costly retraining initiatives.¹¹⁵⁷ The cost of some programs is also out of reach for many Nigerians, with a standard boot camp on coding costing between 200 000 [110 Euros] and one million Naira [554 Euros].¹¹⁵⁸

According to Nigerian media source Business Day, the university curriculum has not changed much in decades and focuses less on practical or digital skills.¹¹⁵⁹ While some private universities and other tertiary institutions are adding more industry-relevant courses, public institutions lag behind due to bureaucratic constraints.¹¹⁶⁰ Daily Trust similarly reported that higher education institutions focus heavily on theory and less on applied learning, which leaves students unable to compete in the labour market.¹¹⁶¹ The same source noted that the private sector is not very involved in shaping academic curricula, ‘resulting in a disconnect between what students learn and what employers need’.¹¹⁶²

In April 2024, the President signed into law the Student Loan (Access to Higher Education) Act of 2024 to ‘guarantee sustainable higher education and functional skill development for all Nigerian students and youths’.¹¹⁶³ Under the Act, eligible Nigerian students can access zero interest loans to pay for higher education within Nigeria.¹¹⁶⁴

In April 2024, the government launched an initiative through its Industrial Training Fund (ITF) to train five million Nigerian artisans per year in an effort to ‘empower’ them with practical

¹¹⁵² Jobberman, Nigeria’s informal sector: A Pathway to Sustainable Economic Transitions for Young People, 2024, [url](#), p. 58

¹¹⁵³ Business Day, Five rail transport projects that can shape Nigeria’s economy, 24 March 2025, [url](#); Punch, Nigeria’s shrinking skills gaps, 17 June 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁵⁴ Punch, Nigeria’s shrinking skills gaps, 17 June 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁵⁵ Punch, Nigeria’s shrinking skills gaps, 17 June 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁵⁶ Business Day, Widening skills gap keeps millions of Nigerians jobless, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁵⁷ Daily Trust, Bridging the Gap: Why Nigeria Needs Skills-Based Education for Its Youth, 27 June 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁵⁸ Business Day, Widening skills gap keeps millions of Nigerians jobless, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁵⁹ Business Day, Five rail transport projects that can shape Nigeria’s economy, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁶⁰ Business Day, Five rail transport projects that can shape Nigeria’s economy, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁶¹ Daily Trust, Bridging the Gap: Why Nigeria Needs Skills-Based Education for Its Youth, 27 June 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁶² Business Day, Five rail transport projects that can shape Nigeria’s economy, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁶³ Nigeria, The State House, In Detail: The Student Loan (Access to Higher Education) Act, 2024, 4 April 2024, [url](#)

¹¹⁶⁴ Nigeria, NELFUND, Frequently Asked Questions, n.d., [url](#)



knowledge in trades such as welding, plumbing, and information technology.¹¹⁶⁵ On 27 June 2024, Punch reported that the training would be conducted in ‘batches’ of 100 000, starting with a ‘pilot phase’ of 100 000.¹¹⁶⁶ In May 2025, sources reported that the ITF had trained 29 000 Nigerians since 2024.¹¹⁶⁷ Other programs include N-Power, which offers training in areas such as agriculture and hardware maintenance, and Three Million Technical Talent (3MTT), which offers training in information technology.¹¹⁶⁸ Daily Trust reported, however, that limited funding, inconsistent monitoring, and high dropout rates continue to affect the long-term impact of these initiatives.¹¹⁶⁹ The same source reported that the private sector and local NGOs also have training programs in areas such as design, coding, entrepreneurship, and digital skills, but with limited budgets.¹¹⁷⁰

Daily Trust reported that many training centres lack qualified instructors and essential infrastructure, such as modern tools, digital equipment, and adequate classroom space.¹¹⁷¹

3.6.2. Refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs

According to UNHCR, the proportion of child and young refugees, and asylum seekers, enrolled in primary and secondary education in Southern states in 2024 was 53.66 % and 39.2 %, respectively.¹¹⁷² The enrolment rate in primary education increased from 49 % to 54 % in 2024, while the rate for secondary education was at 39 %.¹¹⁷³ The enrolment rate in tertiary and higher education for refugees and asylum seekers was 1.78 %.¹¹⁷⁴

The same source indicated that factors such as language, affordability, and school fees prevented full access and retention of child and young refugees in schools.¹¹⁷⁵ In 2024, UNHCR enrolled around 3 500 refugee children in public schools in Benue, Cross River, and Tabara, and provided assistance to cover school fees, examination costs, and educational materials.¹¹⁷⁶ UNHCR also provided, through local funded programs, training in digital services to over 2 000 student refugees, and granted over 150 university scholarships.¹¹⁷⁷ UNHCR indicated that vocational training benefitted 1 250 refugee women, 900 received microfinance to start businesses, and 20 childcare centres were open to support women's participation in leadership and economic activities.¹¹⁷⁸

Without providing further information, a senior representative at NCFRMI indicated that returnees arriving through assisted return programmes usually receive some form of

¹¹⁶⁵ News Reservoir, Industrial Training Fund set to empower five million Nigerians artisans annually – DG, 24 April 2024, [url](#); People's Gazette, FG launches initiative to empower five million artisans yearly, 24 June 2024, [url](#)

¹¹⁶⁶ Punch, FG begins training for 5 million youths, 26 June 2024, [url](#)

¹¹⁶⁷ NAN, ITF trained 29,000 youths in various skills in 2024, says D-G., 24 May 2025, [url](#); Peoples' Gazette, ITF trained 29,000 youths in various skills in 2024: Official , 24 May 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁶⁸ Daily Trust, Bridging the Gap: Why Nigeria Needs Skills-Based Education for Its Youth, 27 June 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁶⁹ Daily Trust, Bridging the Gap: Why Nigeria Needs Skills-Based Education for Its Youth, 27 June 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁷⁰ Daily Trust, Bridging the Gap: Why Nigeria Needs Skills-Based Education for Its Youth, 27 June 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁷¹ Daily Trust, Bridging the Gap: Why Nigeria Needs Skills-Based Education for Its Youth, 27 June 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁷² UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹¹⁷³ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹¹⁷⁴ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 22

¹¹⁷⁵ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

¹¹⁷⁶ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 22

¹¹⁷⁷ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 22

¹¹⁷⁸ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7



reintegration support, and in cases of forced returns, the NCFRMI typically refer the case to the Ministry of Education; children of elementary school age can be enrolled in Nigeria's universal basic education system, which is free. The same source indicated, however, that 'children of returnees who return unnoticed or without formal documentation often fall through the cracks and miss out on this support'.¹¹⁷⁹

3.6.3. Lagos and Abuja

In Lagos, about 84 % indicated that all their children were able to attend school, while 4 % indicated that 'none' of their children were able to do so.¹¹⁸⁰ UNHCR indicated that in 2021 in Lagos, the out-of-school rate was 3 % in primary education, 4 % for junior secondary, and 23 % for senior secondary.¹¹⁸¹ In Abuja, the out-of-school rates were 9 % for primary education, 11 % for junior secondary, and 20 % for senior secondary.¹¹⁸² The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) indicated in 2024 that Nigeria was facing a 'learning crisis' due to the inability of most children at age 10 to read and understand an age appropriate text.¹¹⁸³

3.7. Healthcare

For detailed information on healthcare system in Nigeria, including access and availability of medical treatment, see [EUAA Medical Country of Origin Information \(MedCOI\) Report: Nigeria, April 2022](#).

Nigeria's NBS household survey indicated that by August 2024, the most common medical consultation facilities used by Nigerians are chemist shops (36.6 % of females and 40.7 % of males), which are widespread relied upon, followed by hospitals (22 % of females and 25.7 % of males).¹¹⁸⁴ The least visited facilities were consultants' homes, patients' homes, and traditional and faith-based healers. The NBS survey also pointed out that not seeking medical attention is an increasing tendency in Nigeria (9.9 % of females and 9.7 % of males), particularly in rural areas, with main reasons including that the illness was not serious enough (70.3 % of cases) and the cost associated with a medical visit (21.6 %). The same source indicated that in 63.9 % of visits to a health practitioner, dentist, or traditional healer, patients were not charged, while those who had to pay, paid an average of 2 473 Naira per visit [1.4 Euros].¹¹⁸⁵ The average out-of-pocket hospitalisation costs per person was 44 189 Naira [24.6 Euros], and the average out-of-pocket cost for medications was 5 083 Naira [2.8 Euros].¹¹⁸⁶

According to PwC, Nigeria's per capita expenditure in healthcare in 2024 was 6 361 Naira [3.53 Euros], which represented 0.6 % of the GDP, far below the 6 % recommended by the

¹¹⁷⁹ Senior representative at NCFRMI, online interview with EUAA, 6 August 2025

¹¹⁸⁰ Austria, Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, and NOI Polls, Nigeria: Socio-Economic Survey 2024, [url](#), pp. 9-10

¹¹⁸¹ UNICEF, Nigeria Education Fact Sheets, 2023, [url](#), p. 27

¹¹⁸² UNICEF, Nigeria Education Fact Sheets, 2023, [url](#), p. 27

¹¹⁸³ UNESCO, Nigeria: Education Country Brief, January 2024, [url](#)

¹¹⁸⁴ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 18

¹¹⁸⁵ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 18

¹¹⁸⁶ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 18



World Health Organization (WHO). Also, out-of-pocket payments accounted for over 70 % of total healthcare spending, particularly affecting low-income households. The same source pointed out that due to poor healthcare, productivity losses amount to 1 % of GDP annually.¹¹⁸⁷

According to the UNFPA, Nigeria's average life expectancy for 2025 was 55 years for women and 54 years for men.¹¹⁸⁸ Germany's BMZ indicated that the average life expectancy in 2024 was 53 years, one of the lowest in the world.¹¹⁸⁹

Cases of HIV¹¹⁹⁰ and tuberculosis are common in Nigeria.¹¹⁹¹ and infant mortality is 'high'.¹¹⁹² UNICEF indicated that between January and April 2025, cholera outbreaks led to 1 149 suspected cases and 28 reported deaths in 25 states, with a fatality rate of 2.4 %.¹¹⁹³ Nigeria's NBS household survey indicated that, by August 2024, the most common illness reported by people in Nigeria is malaria, with 66.8 % of reports, followed by typhoid (18.4 %).¹¹⁹⁴ The survey also indicated that the prevalence of disability increases significantly after the age of 50, reaching its highest level at 65 years-old.¹¹⁹⁵

3.7.1. Women

The maternal mortality ratio was 993 per 100 000 live births in 2023, compared to 197.3 in the world and 442.1 in Africa.¹¹⁹⁶ In 2024, the maternal mortality rate was 512 deaths per 100 000 live births,¹¹⁹⁷ a reduction from 1 344 in 2000 and 993 in 2023.¹¹⁹⁸ Maternal mortality rates are more prevalent in Northern Nigeria, in rural areas, and among the poorest households.¹¹⁹⁹ The WHO 2023 report on Trends in Maternal Mortality from 2000-2020 revealed that nearly 28.5% of global maternal deaths occur in Nigeria, with women in Nigeria having 1 in 19 lifetime risk of dying during pregnancy, childbirth, or postpartum compared to the 1 in 4 900 in most developed countries.¹²⁰⁰ The high rate of maternal mortality rate is the result of, among other things, the criminalisation of abortion, which pushes women into illegal and unsafe abortions,¹²⁰¹ and the limited access to reproductive and sexual health services.¹²⁰² Access to quality health services and emergency obstetric care is not widely available¹²⁰³ due to

¹¹⁸⁷ PwC, 2025 Nigeria Budget and Economic Outlook, 2025, [url](#), pp. 59, 61

¹¹⁸⁸ UNFPA, State of the World Population Report 2025 'The Real Fertility Crisis: The pursuit of reproductive agency in a changing world', 16 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 139

¹¹⁸⁹ Germany, BMZ, Nigeria – Social situation: Pervasive poverty and corruption, 2 February 2024, [url](#)

¹¹⁹⁰ Lloyds Bank, Nigeria: Economic and Political Overview, May 2025, [url](#); UNICEF, Health & HIV, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁹¹ Lloyds Bank, Nigeria: Economic and Political Overview, May 2025, [url](#); New South Wales, Ministry of Health, List of countries where tuberculosis (TB) is common, 28 November 2024, [url](#)

¹¹⁹² Lloyds Bank, Nigeria: Economic and Political Overview, May 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁹³ UNICEF, Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1, January-April 2025, 15 May 2025, [url](#), p. 2

¹¹⁹⁴ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 18

¹¹⁹⁵ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 5

¹¹⁹⁶ WHO, Maternal mortality ratio (per 100 00 live births), 7 April 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁹⁷ PwC, 2025 Nigeria Budget and Economic Outlook, 2025, [url](#), p. 61

¹¹⁹⁸ World Bank (The), Nigeria: Featured indicators, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁹⁹ Nigeria, Federal Government of Nigeria and UNICEF, The State of Nigeria's Children: Summary of the 2024 Situation Analysis of Children and Adolescents in Nigeria, 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹²⁰⁰ WHO, Trends in maternal mortality 2000 to 2020, 2023, [url](#), p. 35

¹²⁰¹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025– Nigeria, 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁰² USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 22 April 2024, [url](#)

¹²⁰³ USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 22 April 2024, [url](#)



underfunding and mismanagement of the healthcare system, and poor maintenance of healthcare infrastructure.¹²⁰⁴

Family planning is ‘often unavailable or inaccessible’, particularly for those living in poverty.¹²⁰⁵ According to UNFPA, Nigeria is well below the global average of women using modern contraceptives (16 % in Nigeria, 44 % worldwide), and that many women do not use contraceptives for several reasons, mainly because they do not know how to use them or because their husbands and partners forbid them, in addition to common misconceptions such as the belief that contraceptives cause sterilisations or that they should be used after the third or fourth child.¹²⁰⁶ The USDOS report indicated that in some states, ‘health-care workers frequently required women to provide proof of spousal consent prior to accessing contraceptives’ and that ‘unmarried women were denied emergency contraceptives by health-care providers’.¹²⁰⁷ The same source indicated that in northern Nigeria, where sharia law prevails, ‘societal and cultural norms prevented women from leaving the house unaccompanied, making reproductive health services less accessible’.¹²⁰⁸

3.7.2. Refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs

UNHCR indicated that in 2024, the South-South region, UNHCR and its partners provided support to 37 primary healthcare centres in the delivery of free services to refugees and host communities.¹²⁰⁹ In urban areas, UNHCR facilitated free consultations at Primary Health Care facilities for over 900 IDPs and managed over 200 referrals for secondary or tertiary care.¹²¹⁰ The same source indicated that the proportion of asylum seekers and refugees with access to healthcare services in Nigeria in 2024 was 86.76 %.¹²¹¹

3.7.3. Lagos and Abuja

In 2024, the Lagos government issued an Executive Order to mandate compulsory health insurance for all residents of the state, domesticating the National Health Insurance Authority Act of 2022.¹²¹² The Ministry of Health of the aforementioned state indicated that a first phase of the healthcare plan would be focused on the formal sector; a second phase, on the informal sector; and a third phase, on ‘other population groups’.¹²¹³

In an effort to increase healthcare capacity in the Federal Capital Territory Minister announced the hiring of 34 resident doctors from a total of 60 that are expected to cover different areas

¹²⁰⁴ WHO, Country Health Systems and Services Profiles Nigeria, 2025, [url](#), p. 327

¹²⁰⁵ UNFPA, The Real Fertility Crisis: The pursuit of reproductive agency in a changing world, 16 June 2025, [url](#), p. 90

¹²⁰⁶ UNFPA, The Real Fertility Crisis: The pursuit of reproductive agency in a changing world, 16 June 2025, [url](#), p. 90

¹²⁰⁷ USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 22 April 2024, [url](#)

¹²⁰⁸ USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 22 April 2024, [url](#)

¹²⁰⁹ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹²¹⁰ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹²¹¹ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹²¹² Nigeria, Lagos, Ministry of Health, Lagos Inaugurates Implementation Team For Mandatory Health Insurance, 22 June 2025, [url](#)

¹²¹³ Nigeria, Lagos, Ministry of Health, Lagos Inaugurates Implementation Team For Mandatory Health Insurance, 22 June 2025, [url](#)

including internal medicine, surgery, anaesthesiology, ophthalmology, obstetrics, and gynaecology.¹²¹⁴ In several Abuja's poorest communities, service providers provide family planning contraceptives.¹²¹⁵ No additional information on this topic, specifically regarding Abuja and relevant for the reference period of this report, could be found among all source consulted.

3.8. Availability of state support mechanism for individuals without social network

Nigeria's NBS indicated that by August 2024, about 40 % of Nigerians had a National Identity Number (NIN) or National Identity Card.¹²¹⁶ TVCNews reported in September 2025 that, according to the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), over 123 million Nigerians 'have been captured in the National Identity database'.¹²¹⁷

ILO's ILOSTAT provided the following data from 2022 for Nigeria:

- population covered by at least one social protection benefit: 14.8 %
- persons above retirement age receiving a pension: 19.6 %
- unemployed receiving unemployment benefits: 0 %
- employed covered in the event of work injury: 10.1 %
- poor persons covered by social protection systems: 22.9 %
- vulnerable persons covered by social assistance: 10.1 %¹²¹⁸

The Jobberman report indicated that social networks are 'indispensable pillars' in economic activities and community cohesion, and that in Nigeria's informal sector, familial bonds extend beyond kinship, establishing a foundation of trust and economic exchange. The same source indicated that while family networks support knowledge sharing, financial pooling, and stability for entrepreneurs, community associations promote collaboration and solidarity, facilitating collective action and market access. Ethnic affiliations influence economic interactions through shared cultural norms, aiding in niche market access. Informal social networks, however, can be exclusive, often limiting participation of women, youth, and marginalised groups.¹²¹⁹

3.8.1 Women and children

Nigeria's NBS household survey indicated that 22.3 % of households are headed by females - a 3.7 % increase from the previous survey of 2019.¹²²⁰ The region with most households

¹²¹⁴ Punch, FCT minister approves employment of 34 resident doctors, 2 April 2025, [url](#); Nation (The), Wike approves employment of 34 doctors, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

¹²¹⁵ UNFPA, The Real Fertility Crisis: The pursuit of reproductive agency in a changing world, 16 June 2025, [url](#), p. 90

¹²¹⁶ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 5

¹²¹⁷ TVCNews, 123m Nigerians Captured In National Identity Database – NIMC, 16 September 2025, [url](#)

¹²¹⁸ ILO, ILOSTAT data explorer: Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

¹²¹⁹ Jobberman, Nigeria's informal sector: A Pathway to Sustainable Economic Transitions for Young People, 2024, [url](#), p. 60

¹²²⁰ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 5

headed by females is the South-East (34.4 % of households), followed by South-South (30.8 %), and South-West (29.7 %).¹²²¹

Despite legal commitments, Nigerian women have continued to face widespread discrimination in both law and practice.¹²²² Discriminatory elements can be found in various legal sources, including the Labour Act, customary law, sharia law, and even within the Constitution.¹²²³ Some of these legal provisions discriminate women with regards to nationality, citizenship, health, education, marital and parental rights, employment,¹²²⁴ inheritance and property rights.¹²²⁵ For more information see [2.3. Women and girls](#). The 2025 Global Gender Gap Report indicated that women in Nigeria have ‘near equal-rights’ as men in terms of access to financial services, and land and no-land assets, but they have ‘unequal rights’ compared to men in terms of inheritance rights for widows and daughters.¹²²⁶ The USDOS country report indicated that while there are no laws that prohibit women from owning land, ‘customary land tenure systems allowed only men to own land, with women gaining access to land only via marriage or family. Many customary practices did not recognise a woman’s right to inherit property, and many widows became destitute when their in-laws claimed the deceased husband’s property’.¹²²⁷

Information on support services for females’ heads of households relevant for the reference period of this report, could not be found among all sources consulted within the time constraints of this report. A 2021 report by Canada’s IRB on female heads of households indicated that, according to academics who have researched social issues in Nigeria, there are no social support services or programmes for females heads of households.¹²²⁸ When asked about the availability of public services, including health, education, public transportation, childcare services and social assistance for females heads of households in Lagos, Ibadan, Port Harcourt or Abuja, sources consulted by the IRB indicated that there is no public subsidy to cover these costs and that these services are not free.¹²²⁹ For more

¹²²¹ Nigeria, NBS, Nigeria General Household Survey - Panel (GHS-Panel) Wave 5 (2023/2024), 2024, [url](#), p. 7

¹²²² Njila, M. M., An analysis of the Legal Framework for the Protection of Women Against Discriminatory Practices in Nigeria, 8 September 2024, [url](#), p. 82; Kehinde, O. J. and Abdulraheem, M., Prohibition of Discriminatory Laws and Practices Against Women’s Rights in Nigeria, 29 November 2024, [url](#)

¹²²³ For instance, Chapter III, Section 26 of the Constitution limits a Nigerian woman’s ability to confer citizenship on her foreign spouse. See Nigeria, The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 Updated with the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Alterations (2010), 4th Alteration (2017) and 5th Alteration (2023), September 2024, [url](#), Chapter III, Section 26; Kehinde, O. J. and Abdulraheem, M., Prohibition of Discriminatory Laws and Practices Against Women’s Rights in Nigeria, 29 November 2024, [url](#)

¹²²⁴ Kehinde, O. J. and Abdulraheem, M., Prohibition of Discriminatory Laws and Practices Against Women’s Rights in Nigeria, 29 November 2024, [url](#)

¹²²⁵ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, [url](#); Kehinde, O. J. and Abdulraheem, M., Prohibition of Discriminatory Laws and Practices Against Women’s Rights in Nigeria, 29 November 2024, [url](#)

¹²²⁶ WEF, Global Gender Gap Report 2025: Nigeria, Economic profiles, 11 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 287-288

¹²²⁷ USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 22 April 2024, [url](#). See also: NAN, Girls have equal rights to inheritance as boys, 12 August 2025, [url](#)

¹²²⁸ Canada, IRB, NGA200797.E - Nigeria: Situation and treatment of single women and of women who head their own households, including their ability to live on their own and access housing, income, education, health care, and support services, particularly in Port Harcourt, Abuja, Ibadan and Lagos; impact of COVID-19 (2019–October 2021), 10 November 2021, [url](#)

¹²²⁹ Canada, IRB, NGA200797.E - Nigeria: Situation and treatment of single women and of women who head their own households, including their ability to live on their own and access housing, income, education, health care, and support services, particularly in Port Harcourt, Abuja, Ibadan and Lagos; impact of COVID-19 (2019–October 2021), 10 November 2021, [url](#)



information see [2.3.2. Situation of unmarried, widowed, divorced women and women without support network](#).

Sources indicated that there are about 17.5 million orphans and vulnerable children nationwide,¹²³⁰ the world's second highest after India, with 30 million orphans.¹²³¹ Christianity Today indicated that Nigeria has about 278 listed orphanages, and that the main causes of orphanhood are Nigeria's high mortality rate, violence and armed conflicts, teenage pregnancies, and the 'broken system' of adoption in Nigeria which, despite the low cost for Nigerian citizens (932 US dollars), it is underutilised and marred with cultural and bureaucratic barriers.¹²³² See also [2.4 Children](#) .

3.8.2. Refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs

UNHCR indicated that by the end of 2024, Nigeria hosted over 127 000 refugees and asylum-seekers from 41 countries, with 19 % in settlements and 81 % in host communities, along with 3.5 million IDPs.¹²³³ According to UNHCR, the country maintained strong protection standards for refugees, offering access to jobs, education, healthcare, and social services; some states integrated refugees into social registers and development plans and allocated land for agricultural activities to promote economic inclusion.¹²³⁴ The same source indicated that refugees in Nigeria enjoy various rights, such as access to education for refugee children, freedom of movement and the right to live and work, although they occasionally face challenges like employment discrimination.¹²³⁵ 48.41 % of refugees and asylum seekers were employed at the end of 2024.¹²³⁶

UNHCR indicated that Nigeria has not incorporated into domestic law the Kampala Convention,¹²³⁷ a regional instrument for the protection of IDPs.¹²³⁸ However, Nigeria has an IDP policy, which is aligned with the Kampala Convention, to assist IDPs.¹²³⁹ The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), a website of information and analysis on food insecurity created by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the US Department of State, indicated that in the Northwest and Central states, most IDPs lived in makeshift camps and worked mostly in menial jobs to earn a limited income; others resorted to begging, prostitution and foraging.¹²⁴⁰ According to FEWS Net, in the North-East, the purchasing power among displaced households has plummeted due to increasing staple food prices and high reliance on market purchases.¹²⁴¹ At the same time, growing competition for income-generating opportunities is pushing more households into urban areas, where they

¹²³⁰ Nairametrics, Nigerian Orphanages to consider supporting this Christmas season, 22 December 2024, [url](#); Christianity Today, Their Families Abandoned Them. Emeagwali Took Them In., 21 May 2025, [url](#)

¹²³¹ Christianity Today, Their Families Abandoned Them. Emeagwali Took Them In., 21 May 2025, [url](#)

¹²³² Christianity Today, Their Families Abandoned Them. Emeagwali Took Them In., 21 May 2025, [url](#)

¹²³³ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 4

¹²³⁴ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 4

¹²³⁵ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 12

¹²³⁶ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 6

¹²³⁷ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 12

¹²³⁸ African Union, Kampala Convention: African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internationally Displaced Persons in Africa, 2012, [url](#), Art. III

¹²³⁹ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 13

¹²⁴⁰ FEWS NET, Nigeria - Food Security Outlook, June 2025 – January 2025, 9 July 2024, [url](#), p. 8

¹²⁴¹ FEWS NET, Nigeria - Food Security Outlook, June 2025 – January 2025, 9 July 2024, [url](#), p. 11



continue to face significant consumption gaps.¹²⁴² Some households engage in limited agricultural labour to earn limited income and increase food access.¹²⁴³

In 2024, Boko Haram activity in the border between Nigeria and Cameroon led to the displacement into Adawama state of over 27 000 asylum-seekers; Nigerian authorities granted a three-year Temporary Protection Status (TPS) to over 10 000 claimants, and a two-year TPS to over 4 000 claimants.¹²⁴⁴

UNHCR indicated that in Benue and other southern states, the limited presence of UN agencies and humanitarian actors hindered protection delivery to Cameroonian refugees and IDPs as access remained difficult due to insecurity, poor roads, mountainous terrains, and limited resources, worsened by floods. Additionally, economic inflation in 2024 reduced purchasing power and affected project delivery. The same source indicated that the proportion of people that received cash transfers and/or non-food items in 2024 was 35.71 % among IDPs and 47.84 % among refugees and asylum seekers.¹²⁴⁵ Additionally, 69 443 IDPs and 55 855 refugees and asylum seekers received cash assistance, an overall increase of 85 % from 2023 (from 34 000 people in 2023 to over 63 000 in 2024). Around 58 700 IDPs and 32 500 refugees and asylum seekers received non-food items.¹²⁴⁶ UNHCR indicated that the proportion in 2024 of people with a bank account among IDPs was 0.42 % and refugees and asylum seekers, 29.22 %.¹²⁴⁷

UNHCR indicated that in 2024 the proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority was 29.7 % for IDPs and 40.23 % for refugees and asylum seekers, and that the proportion of people with legally recognised identity documents or credentials was 51.78 % for IDPs and 46.01 % for refugees and asylum seekers.¹²⁴⁸ About 94 % of returnees in 2024 had legally recognised identity documents.¹²⁴⁹ As of December 2024, the government issued around 126 000 civil status documents in the North-East, including 52 000 birth certificates, 37 000 national identity cards, as well as marriage, divorce, and death certificates.¹²⁵⁰ In the South-South region, around 1 950 refugees were enrolled in state social registers, granting them access to services such as the Nigerian Identification Number (NIN) and bank accounts.¹²⁵¹ In Benue state, over 39 000 IDPs were assisted with civil registration status; however, only about 13 000 certificates could be issued due to technical issues with digital registration.¹²⁵² UNHCR indicated that the proportion of refugees and asylum seekers undergoing asylum procedures who have access to legal representation was 84.18 %.¹²⁵³ The same source noted, however, that the proportion of people undergoing

¹²⁴² FEWS NET, Nigeria - Food Security Outlook, June 2025 – January 2025, 9 July 2024, [url](#), p. 11

¹²⁴³ FEWS NET, Nigeria - Food Security Outlook, June 2025 – January 2025, 9 July 2024, [url](#), pp. 11-12

¹²⁴⁴ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 11

¹²⁴⁵ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 18

¹²⁴⁶ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 18-19

¹²⁴⁷ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 24

¹²⁴⁸ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 10

¹²⁴⁹ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 25

¹²⁵⁰ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 10

¹²⁵¹ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 11

¹²⁵² UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 11

¹²⁵³ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 11



asylum procedures who have access to an effective appeal mechanism after first instance rejection of their claim was 0.3 %.¹²⁵⁴

3.9. Mobility and freedom of movement

As enshrined in Article 41 of the 1999 Constitution, '[e]very citizen of Nigeria is entitled to move freely throughout Nigeria and to reside in any part thereof (...).'¹²⁵⁵ No information on specific administrative requirements needed by Nigerian nationals to move/relocate across the country could be found among all sources consulted.¹²⁵⁶

Sources reported that, in fact, checkpoints, insecurity and infrastructure gaps in some areas hinder freedom of movement in the country.¹²⁵⁷ Checkpoints are set up by both security forces and armed groups.¹²⁵⁸ State security forces reportedly mount checkpoints to collect illegal tolls, extort truckers,¹²⁵⁹ and in some areas, as part of curfews to address security-related events.¹²⁶⁰ Business Day reported that, according to the Nigerian Association of Road Transport Owners, 53 checkpoints by security forces are located on the corridor that connects Lagos and Seme, Benin, making the travel longer and exposing travellers and truckers to extortion by security officials.¹²⁶¹ Nigerian newspaper The Sun similarly reported that between Lagos and Onitsha, Anambra, commuters pass through over 60 security checkpoints, locally dubbed "collection checkpoints", where interrogations, extortions, and mistreatment, including floggings, harassment, beatings, and humiliations, by security forces have been reported.¹²⁶² The same source also reported the existence of security forces' checkpoints in Imo, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Anambra states.¹²⁶³

The US Country Reports on Nigeria indicated that in areas under the influence or presence of Boko Haram, ISWAP, or Islamist groups associated with them, 'residents often found themselves subject to roadblocks, searches, and other restrictive security measures by authorities and other armed groups'.¹²⁶⁴

For more information on road and travel security at county and state level see [EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Security Situation, November 2025](#).

In 2024, the government of Nigeria, in collaboration with UNHCR, facilitated the voluntary return of 50 households (242 Nigerian refugees) from Minawao Camp in Cameroon to Bama,

¹²⁵⁴ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 11

¹²⁵⁵ Nigeria, The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 Updated with the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Alterations (2010), 4th Alteration (2017) and 5th Alteration (2023), September 2024, [url](#), Art 41

¹²⁵⁶ See Bibliography

¹²⁵⁷ World Bank (The), The World Bank in Nigeria: Overview, 10 April 2025, [url](#); Business Day, Multiple checkpoints on Nigerian roads hindering trade growth – Experts, 25 June 2024, [url](#)

¹²⁵⁸ The Sun, S-o-u-t-h-e-a-s-t: Outcry as roadblocks turn to cashpoints, 12 January 2025, [url](#); Business Day, Multiple checkpoints on Nigerian roads hindering trade growth – Experts, 25 June 2024, [url](#)

¹²⁵⁹ The Sun, S-o-u-t-h-e-a-s-t: Outcry as roadblocks turn to cashpoints, 12 January 2025, [url](#); Business Day, Multiple checkpoints on Nigerian roads hindering trade growth – Experts, 25 June 2024, [url](#)

¹²⁶⁰ The Guardian, 24-hour curfew hits Kaduna residents hard, markets, shops closed, 6 August 2024, [url](#); Daily Trust, Insecurity: Zamfara govt Imposes curfew along Sokoto, Katsina borders, 2 April 2024, [url](#)

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¹²⁶² The Sun, S-o-u-t-h-e-a-s-t: Outcry as roadblocks turn to cashpoints, 12 January 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁶³ The Sun, S-o-u-t-h-e-a-s-t: Outcry as roadblocks turn to cashpoints, 12 January 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁶⁴ USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 22 April 2024, [url](#)





Borno state.¹²⁶⁵ UNHCR also implemented ‘border monitoring’ with Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) with 11 000 families (39 000 individuals) who were granted ‘safe access, mostly spontaneous refugee returnees’.¹²⁶⁶

The website of the Nigeria Immigration Service indicated that all passengers entering or leaving Nigeria need to produce Landing or Exit Cards,¹²⁶⁷ which are obtained online on the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) website within 96 hours before the travel.¹²⁶⁸ Nigerians returning with an expired passport can enter the country.¹²⁶⁹

The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) website indicated that there are five international and 11 domestic airports¹²⁷⁰ in the country.¹²⁷¹

3.9.1. International flights

Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA), Lagos

MMIA (IATA¹²⁷² code: LOS) is located in Ikeja, Lagos state, and is the major airport of the country.¹²⁷³ Originally known as Lagos Airport, MMIA consists of an international and a domestic terminal (MMA2),¹²⁷⁴ located one kilometre from each other, and is the main base for Nigeria’s largest airline, Air Peace.¹²⁷⁵ Flights to and from MMIA and MMA2, as provided by FlightRadar24 in August 2025, included:

Domestic flights:

- Abuja (Air Peace, Arik Air, Ibom Air, Nomad Aviation, United Nigeria Airlines)
- Akure (Green Afrtica)
- Asaba (Air Peace, United Nigeria Airlines)
- Benin (Air Peace, Green Africa)
- Calabar (Ibom Air)
- Enugu (Air Peace, Ibom Air, United Nigeria Airlines)
- Ilorin (Overland Airways)
- Jos (Arik Air, ValueJet)
- Kano (Aero, Air Peace, Nomad Aviation)

¹²⁶⁵ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 25

¹²⁶⁶ UNHCR, Annual Results Report 2024: Nigeria, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 25

¹²⁶⁷ Nigeria, NIS, Landing and Exit Cards, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁶⁸ Business Day, Explainer: New immigration rules you must know before travelling in, out of Nigeria, 13 June 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁶⁹ Punch, Nigerians with expired passports can return home, says FG, 24 December 2024, [url](#); Business Day, Explainer: New immigration rules you must know before travelling in, out of Nigeria, 13 June 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁷⁰ The ‘Domestic airports’ webpage indicates that there are 16 ‘domestic airports’; however, 4 out of the 16 airports are domestic terminals in the international airports of Lagos, Abuja, Kano, and Port Harcourt. Nigeria, FAAN, Domestic Airports, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁷¹ Nigeria, FAAN, Our Airports, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁷² The International Air Transport Association (IATA) code is used to uniquely identify locations like airports . See IATA, homepage, nd. [url](#)

¹²⁷³ Nigeria, FAAN, MMIA, Lagos, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁷⁴ Nigeria, FAAN, MMIA, Lagos, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁷⁵ Nigeria, FAAN, MMIA, Lagos, n.d., [url](#)





- Minna (Overland Airways)
- Owerri (United Nigeria Airlines)
- Port Harcourt (Arik Air, Ibom Air, ValueJet)
- Uyo (Ibom Air)
- Warri (Arik Air, Overland Airways)

International flights:

- Abidjan (Air Peace)
- Accra (Air Peace)
- Addis Ababa (Ethiopian Airlines)
- Amsterdam (KLM)
- Atlanta (Delta Airlines)
- Banjul (ValueJet)
- Beirut (MEA)
- Cairo (Egyptair)
- Casablanca (Royal Air Maroc)
- Doha (Qatar Airways)
- Dubai (Emirates)
- Frankfurt (Lufthansa)
- Istanbul (Turkish Airlines)
- Johannesburg (South African Airways)
- Kigali (RwandAir)
- Lome (ASKY Airlines, Jeju Air)
- London (Air Peace, British Airways)
- Luanda (TAAG Angola Airlines)
- Malabo (Jeju Air)
- Nairobi (Kenya Airways)
- Paris (Air France)
- Santiago de Chile (Ethiopian Airlines)
- Sao Paulo (Ethiopian Airlines)
- Washington (United Airlines)¹²⁷⁶

Nnamdi Azikwe International Airport (NAIA), Abuja

NAIA (IATA code: ABV) is Nigeria's second busiest airport and is located about 12 kilometres west of Abuja.¹²⁷⁷ Flights to and from NAIA, as provided by FlightRadar24 in August 2025, included:

¹²⁷⁶ FlightRadar24, LOS/DNMM, Lagos Murtala Mohammed Airport, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁷⁷ Nigeria, FAAN, NAIA, Abuja, n.d., [url](#)



Domestic Flights:

- Asaba (United Nigeria Airlines)
- Bauchi (Rano Air)
- Lagos (Arik Air, Green Africa, Ibom Air, United Nigeria Airlines, ValueJet)
- Uyo (Ibom Air)
- Benin (Nomad Aviation)
- Port Harcourt (Arik Air, NG Eagle)
- Katsina (Rano Air)
- Yola (Aero)
- Sokoto (Rano Air)
- Kano (Air Peace)
- Maiduguri (Nomad Aviation)
- Enugu (Air Peace)
- Owerri (United Nigeria Airlines)
- Ilorin (Overland Airways)

International flights:

- Algiers (Air Algerie)
- Accra (Africa World Airlines)
- Casablanca (Royal Air Maroc)
- Addis Ababa (Ethiopian Airlines)
- Maasai Mara (United Nigeria Airlines)
- Abidjan (Air Côte d'Ivoire)
- Douala (Air Côte d'Ivoire)
- Doha (Qatar Airways)
- Frankfurt (Lufthansa)
- Niamey (ASKY Airlines)
- Lomé (ASKY Airlines)
- Paris (Air France)
- Istanbul (Turkish Airlines)
- N'Djamena (ASKY Airlines)
- London (British Airways)¹²⁷⁸

Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport (MAKIA), Kano

MAKIA (IATA code: KAN) is located in Kano (the second largest city in Nigeria), Kano state, in the North West, and is the main airport serving Kano and Northern Nigeria in general.¹²⁷⁹ Most

¹²⁷⁸ FlightRadar24, Abuja routes and destinations, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁷⁹ Nigeria, FAAN, Makia, Kano, n.d., [url](#)



international flights serve the large Sudanese community in the country as well as Muslim pilgrimages to Mecca, Saudi Arabia.¹²⁸⁰ Flights to and from MAKIA, as provided by FlightRadar24 in August 2025, included:

Domestic Flights:

- Abuja (Air Peace, Rano Air)
- Lagos (Cally Air, Nomad Aviation, Rano Air, United Nigeria Airlines,)
- Sokoto (Rano Air)

International flights:

- Addis Ababa (Ethiopian Airlines)
- Jeddah (Saudia)
- Cairo (Egyptair)
- Sharjah (Ethiopian Airlines)¹²⁸¹

Port Harcourt International Airport (PHIA), Port Harcourt

PHIA (IATA code: PHC) is located in Omagwa, a suburb of Port Harcourt, the capital and largest city of Rivers State, and is the third-busiest airport in Nigeria.¹²⁸² PHIA is well connected with major cities worldwide due to its proximity to Nigeria's oil and gas industry.¹²⁸³ Flights to and from PHIA, as provided by FlightRadar24 in August 2025, included:

Domestic Flights:

- Abuja (Air Peace, Arik Air, Ibom Air)
- Lagos (Air Peace, Arik Air, United Nigeria Airlines)

International flights:

- Libreville (Afrijet)
- Malabo (ValueJet)¹²⁸⁴

Akanu Ibiam International Airport (ENU), Enugu

ENU is located in Enugu, the capital of Enugu State, southeastern Nigeria.¹²⁸⁵ It serves Enugu and nearby cities, such as Abakaliki, Awka, Onitsha, Nnewi, Afikpo, Okigwe, Nsukka, Ugep, Orlu, Idah, Otukpo and Ogoja.¹²⁸⁶ Flights to and from ENU, as provided by FlightRadar24 in August 2025, included:

¹²⁸⁰ Nigeria, FAAN, Makia, Kano, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁸¹ FlightRadar24, Kano routes and destinations, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁸² Nigeria, FAAN, PH International Airport, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁸³ Nigeria, FAAN, PH International Airport, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁸⁴ FlightRadar24, Port Harcourt routes and destinations, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁸⁵ Nigeria, FAAN, Akanu Ibiam International Airport. (Enugu), n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁸⁶ Nigeria, FAAN, Akanu Ibiam International Airport. (Enugu), n.d., [url](#)



Domestic Flights:

- Abuja (Air Peace, Ibom Air, United Nigeria Airlines)
- Lagos (Air Peace, Ibom Air, United Nigeria Airlines)

International flights:

- Addis Ababa (Ethiopian Airlines)¹²⁸⁷

3.9.2. Domestic flights

The website of the FAAN indicated that, in addition to the domestic terminals in the international airports of Lagos, Abuja, Kano, and Port Harcourt, Nigeria has domestic airports in Ilorin (Ilorin International Airport, ILR), Sokoto (Sultan Abubakar III International Airport, SKO), Yola (Yola Airport, YOL), Ibadan (Ibadan Airport, IBA), Kaduna (Kaduna International Airport, KAD), Katsina (Katsina Airport, DKA), Maiduguri (Maiduguri International Airport, MIU), Makurdi (Makurdi Airport, MDI), Minna (Minna Airport, MXJ), Akure (Akure Airport, AKR), Calabar (Calabar Margaret Ekpo International Airport, CBQ).¹²⁸⁸

The Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) website indicated that as of August 2025, 23 domestic airlines were active and 22 foreign air carriers had permission to operate in the country.¹²⁸⁹ Nigerian airlines serving domestic and international destinations included Arik Air, Air Peace, Overland Airways, Ibom Air, United Nigeria Airlines, Green Africa, and ValueJet.¹²⁹⁰

¹²⁸⁷ FlightRadar24, Enugu routes and destinations, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁸⁸ Nigeria, FAAN, Domestic airports, n.d., [url](#)

¹²⁸⁹ Nigeria, NCAA, Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority, n.d., [url](#)

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Annex 2: Terms of Reference

Country overview

Key information on the country

State structure, system of government and political situation

Demographics

Human rights overview and treatment of specific profiles

General situation

- International and nation legal instruments
- Death penalty
- Extra-judicial execution, corporal punishments and other violations
- General prison conditions

Treatment of specific profiles and groups of the population

Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings (THB)

- Latest developments on legal framework and prevalence
- Women victims of trafficking
- Children victims of trafficking
- Men victims of trafficking
- Traffickers and modus operandi
- Reintegration of returnees
- Treatment by family and society
- Re-trafficking

Women and girls

- Legal framework and its implementation
- Situation of single women without support network
- Violence against women and girls

Children

LGBTIQ individuals

Journalists and media workers

Protesters, activists and human rights defenders

Members and perceived supporters of political parties and separatist movements



Individuals targeted by Boko Haram

Christians in areas where they are a minority

Muslims in areas where they are a minority (up to 3 pages)

Perceived Boko Haram members or supporters

Individuals targeted by student cults

Individuals refusing chieftaincy titles

Individuals with disabilities, especially mental health disabilities

Individuals accused of witchcraft

State response towards human rights violations

Key socio-economic indicators

General trends at country level (and geographical variation where relevant) with a focus on the cities of Lagos and Abuja.

Economic situation

Employment

Poverty

Food security

Housing and living conditions

Education

Healthcare

Availability of state support mechanism for individuals without social network (women; orphans; IDPs and returnees)

Mobility and internal travel (international and domestic flights)

Access to airports and freedom of movement





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