



# Situational Update

## Nigeria: 2019 Presidential and Legislative Elections

Country of Origin Information Services Section (COISS)

Humanitarian Program Capabilities Branch

Effective from 18 April 2019



<sup>1</sup> 'Nigeria elections 2019: All you need to know', Aljazeera, 16 February 2019, 20190320114848

## Background

The two major competing political parties at Nigeria's 2019 presidential elections were the centre-right leaning People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the left-leaning All Progressive Congress (APC). In September and October of 2018 the APC and PDP held primary elections to select a party leader and candidate for the 2019 presidential elections. The main presidential contenders were APC leader Muhammad Buhari and PDP leader Atiku Abubakar, both Muslims who originate from the northern states of Nigeria. Although the PDP remained the ruling party throughout Nigeria's Fourth Republic after the fall of Sani Abacha's dictatorial regime in 1998, the PDP was defeated by the APC at the 2015 national elections. The APC was formed on 6 February 2013 through an alliance of Nigeria's largest three opposition parties and current APC leader, General Muhammadu Buhari, is the country's incumbent president.

Internal displacement resulting from internal conflicts posed serious security and logistical challenges. The 2019 presidential elections were scheduled to occur on 16 February 2019.<sup>2</sup> The election of Governors (Gubernatorial elections) in each of Nigeria's 36 states was scheduled to occur on 2 March 2019. Hours before polling opened on 16 February the Independent Electoral Commission announced that polling would be postponed due to logistical challenges. Presidential and legislative elections were rescheduled to 26 February 2019. Buhari and the APC retained their majority on polling day and were re-elected despite the lowest voter turnout recorded in the country's history.

The APC also retained a majority of states in the Gubernatorial elections which were rescheduled to 9 March 2019. Although there were widespread reports of violence, rigging and intimidation throughout the election process, observers noted fewer deaths arising from electoral violence. A legal challenge to the presidential elections and pending supplementary elections for inconclusive Gubernatorial results in seven states remains unresolved.

## Key contenders and their campaigns

### Presidential candidates



Muhammadu  
**BUHARI**  
*Incumbent*  
**ALL PROGRESSIVES CONGRESS (APC)**



Atiku  
**ABUBAKAR**  
*Main opposition candidate*  
**PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)**

A candidate requires a simple majority and at least a quarter of the votes in two-thirds of the states to win.  
A runoff is held between the top two candidates if neither meets the requirements.

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<sup>2</sup> 'Nigeria Country Profile', CLGF, 30 January 2019, 20190410151856

<sup>3</sup> 'Nigeria elections 2019: All you need to know', Aljazeera, 16 February 2019, 20190320114848



Observers noted that the outcome of the 2019 general elections would be determined by the three main areas of contention: corruption, insecurity and the economy.<sup>4</sup>

In terms of corruption, Buhari was elected in 2015 on a wave of hope that he would live up to his image of “unimpeachable character” and take a hard line to tackle the country’s notorious and staggering levels of corruption.<sup>5</sup> Despite falling short of expectations during his term, Abubakar’s reputation had been plagued by allegations of his involvement in several international money laundering scandals.<sup>6</sup>

In terms of security, Nigeria is rife with crime and seriously affected by violent insurgencies against which Buhari had failed to deliver any resolutions, despite a decreased rate of attacks from Boko Haram in the northern states throughout 2017 and 2018.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, in terms of the economy, Nigeria is the largest African country in terms of population size and economic revenue, however figures released in 2018 revealed that the country is home to the largest proportion of people living in extreme poverty worldwide.<sup>8</sup> Buhari’s term as president had been hindered for the large part by recession when commodity prices fell in 2016 and Abubakar’s campaign was largely based on privatisation and commercial enterprise.<sup>9</sup>

There were 71 presidential hopefuls keen to challenge Nigeria’s two party political establishments.<sup>10</sup> An important legal development in 2018 was that the required legal age of a president that had been lowered from 40 to 35 years after Buhari signed the #NotTooYoungToRun Bill on 31 May 2018.<sup>11</sup> However both presidential candidates pinned to win the elections are older than 70 years of age<sup>12</sup> and a significant influencing factor is the role that the so-called “godfathers” play in the election process.<sup>13</sup> “Godfathers” are not candidates, but political sponsors who use money and influence to win support for their preferred candidate.<sup>14</sup> Their preferred candidate or “godson” is chosen based on their ability to repay and enrich their “godfather” rather than for their political aptitude.<sup>15</sup> Godfather influence made it unlikely that any other candidate outside the two party establishment could win.<sup>16</sup>

The lead female candidate, former Government Minister Obiageli Ezekwesili, quit the presidential race on 24 January 2019 to help build a coalition which might become a viable alternative to the country’s

<sup>4</sup> '2019 Nigeria election: What you need to know', Deutsche Welle, 14 February 2019, 20190313112219; 'Nigeria's Election Brings Dual Crises Back to the Polls: Corruption and Boko Haram', New York Times, The, 12 February 2019, 20190320103934

<sup>5</sup> 'Nigeria election: 'Mr Honesty' tainted by failure to tackle corruption', The Guardian, 11 February 2019, 20190318135052; and '2019 Nigeria election: What you need to know', Deutsche Welle, 14 February 2019, 20190313112219

<sup>6</sup> 'Nigerian candidate's U.S. visit was temporary reprieve from graft ban', Reuters, 4 February 2019, 20190318144331

<sup>7</sup> 'Nigeria's Election Brings Dual Crises Back to the Polls: Corruption and Boko Haram', New York Times, The, 12 February 2019, 20190320103934; and '2019 Nigeria election: What you need to know', Deutsche Welle, 14 February 2019, 20190313112219;

<sup>8</sup> 'Nigeria overtakes India in extreme poverty ranking', CNN, 26 June 2018, 20190410152532

<sup>9</sup> '2019 Nigeria election: What you need to know', Deutsche Welle, 14 February 2019, 20190313112219; and 20190416172848

<sup>10</sup> 'Nigeria's 2019 presidential polls: 72 aspirants on ballot - Official', Africa News, 18 January 2019, 20190318143343

<sup>11</sup> 'The young politicians aiming to consign Africa's old guard to history', CNN, 9 February 2019, 20190318135356

<sup>12</sup> 'Nigeria's election: young voters, old candidates', Reuters, 13 February 2019, 20190318133032

<sup>13</sup> 'Godfathers in Nigeria that would shape 2019 general election', Business Insider, 27 November 2017, 20190320114457

<sup>14</sup> 'Nigeria election 2019: How 'godfathers' influence politics', BBC News, 4 February 2019, 20190318140321

<sup>15</sup> 'Nigeria election: Muhammadu Buhari re-elected as president', BBC News, 27 February 2019, 20190315153411; and 'Muhammadu Buhari, Nigeria's 'new broom' president in profile', BBC News, 27 February 2019, 20190410153843

<sup>16</sup> 'Godfathers in Nigeria that would shape 2019 general election', Business Insider, 27 November 2017, 20190320114457

two main parties.<sup>17</sup> Obiageli Ezekwesili was known for her involvement in an international campaign to raise awareness over 200 school girls abducted by Boko Haram in 2014.<sup>18</sup>

**Muhammad Buhari**, a former military figure, is known to have been ruthless in his fight against corruption.<sup>19</sup> During his rule, he was accused of jailing political actors without trial and committing widespread human rights abuses.<sup>20</sup> Buhari made a political comeback when he won the 2015 presidential elections on a pledge to tackle insecurity and corruption<sup>21</sup>. As the incumbent for Nigeria's 2019 presidential elections, Buhari retained his leadership of the APC at the party's primary election which were held on 29 September 2018.<sup>22</sup>

Buhari's public image is one of being an incorruptible disciplinarian based on his 20 month stint as military leader in the 1980s<sup>23</sup>. Although Buhari was Nigeria's first opposition leader to win a democratic presidential election, his failure to deliver on his 2015 campaign promises has cast doubts over his effectiveness as a future leader.<sup>24</sup>

Whilst Buhari had taken notable steps to tackle corruption, much remains to be achieved.<sup>25</sup> He has been accused of being too lenient towards his allies, whilst focusing his efforts on targeting those outside of his circle.<sup>26</sup> Corruption cases against some prominent officials were only acted upon after pressure from the media and the public.<sup>27</sup>

Throughout the 2018-2019 campaign Buhari was widely criticised for his inaction towards the rise in violent clashes between Christian farmers and Muslim Herdsmen in the Middle Belt<sup>28</sup>. Furthermore, he has been criticised over his failure to defeat Boko Haram despite a decrease in number of attacks since 2017<sup>29</sup>. Questions also remained unanswered about the 170 days of medical leave Buhari has taken during his presidential term to receive treatment abroad, raising concerns about his health.<sup>30</sup> In December 2018, Buhari was forced to publicly deny online rumours claiming he died and was replaced by a body double from Sudan called "Jubril".<sup>31</sup>

<sup>17</sup> 'Nigerian Chibok girls' champion Ezekwesili quits presidential race', Reuters, 24 January 2019, 20190318141729

<sup>18</sup> 'Nigerian Chibok girls' champion Ezekwesili quits presidential race', Reuters, 24 January 2019, 20190318141729

<sup>19</sup> 'Muhammadu Buhari, Nigeria's 'new broom' president in profile', BBC News, 27 February 2019, 20190410153843

<sup>20</sup> <sup>20</sup> 'Nigeria election: Muhammadu Buhari re-elected as president', BBC News, 27 February 2019, 20190315153411; and 'Muhammadu Buhari, Nigeria's 'new broom' president in profile', BBC News, 27 February 2019, 20190410153843

<sup>21</sup> <sup>21</sup> 'Nigeria election: Muhammadu Buhari re-elected as president', BBC News, 27 February 2019, 20190315153411; and 'Muhammadu Buhari, Nigeria's 'new broom' president in profile', BBC News, 27 February 2019, 20190410153843

<sup>22</sup> 'Nigeria election: Muhammadu Buhari re-elected as president', BBC News, 27 February 2019, 20190315153411; and 'Muhammadu Buhari, Nigeria's 'new broom' president in profile', BBC News, 27 February 2019, 20190410153843

<sup>23</sup> 'Nigeria election: Muhammadu Buhari re-elected as president', BBC News, 27 February 2019, 20190315153411; and 'Muhammadu Buhari, Nigeria's 'new broom' president in profile', BBC News, 27 February 2019, 20190410153843

<sup>24</sup> '2019 Nigeria election: What you need to know', Deutsche Welle, 14 February 2019, 20190313112219

<sup>25</sup> 'Nigeria election: 'Mr Honesty' tainted by failure to tackle corruption', The Guardian, 11 February 2019, 20190318135052

<sup>26</sup> 'Nigeria's Election Brings Dual Crises Back to the Polls: Corruption and Boko Haram', New York Times, The, 12 February 2019, 20190320103934; and 'Nigeria election: 'Mr Honesty' tainted by failure to tackle corruption', The Guardian, 11 February 2019, 20190318135052

<sup>27</sup> 'Nigeria election: 'Mr Honesty' tainted by failure to tackle corruption', The Guardian, 11 February 2019, 20190318135052

<sup>28</sup> '2019 Nigeria election: What you need to know', Deutsche Welle, 14 February 2019, 20190313112219

<sup>29</sup> '2019 Nigeria election: What you need to know', Deutsche Welle, 14 February 2019, 20190313112219

<sup>30</sup> 'Buhari's Health Re-emerging as a Factor in 2019 Nigerian Elections', Council on Foreign Relations, 09 May 2018, 20190410153132

<sup>31</sup> 'Nigerian President Buhari denies death and body double rumours', BBC News, 03 December 2018, 20190410153403 and 'Muhammadu Buhari, Nigeria's 'new broom' president in profile', BBC News, 27 February 2019, 20190410153843

Without deviating from his 2015 election promises, Buhari's campaign for 2019 (symbolised by the traditional broom) remained centred on reviving the economy, continuing in his efforts to root out corruption, and take more measures to defeat the extremist militant groups in the north.<sup>32</sup>

**Atiku Abubakar**, former Nigerian Vice President when the PDP held Government from 1999 to 2007, was elected party leader on 5 October 2018 to challenge Buhari at the 2019 presidential elections<sup>33</sup>.

Abubakar's nomination was plagued by controversy in view of him being implicated in international money laundering scandals.<sup>34</sup> In 2009 former US Representative William Jefferson was convicted of bribing Abubakar for business expansion in Nigeria.<sup>35</sup> In a separate matter, in 2010 US Senate investigators alleged that one of Abubakar's four wives helped him transfer more than \$40 million in "suspected funds" into the United States from offshore shell companies for which at least \$1.7 million had been used by German tech company Siemens to pay in bribes.<sup>36</sup> Siemens pleaded guilty to the bribery charges in 2008.<sup>37</sup>

Prior to the election campaign, Abubakar had been unable to travel to the United States. However, in view of the possibility that he may become Nigeria's head of state, Abubakar's travel ban to the United States was temporarily lifted enabling him to meet with top US diplomats and lawmakers in January 2019<sup>38</sup>. Abubakar's supporters claimed that his visit to the United States was evidence that the allegations made against him were baseless<sup>39</sup>. However, *Reuters* reported that sources indicate Abubakar's visit to Washington was arranged with the help of US lobbying firms 'Holland & Knight' and 'Ballard Partners'<sup>40</sup>.

Both firms were hired by Abubakar and subsequently paid large sums in order to help him secure a visa, in part by enlisting members of Congress to request one on his behalf.<sup>41</sup> Abubakar's 2019 campaign pledges remain more centred towards privatisation, adopting market friendly policies, restructuring the oil sector's Nigerian National Petroleum Corp and raising fuel prices<sup>42</sup>.

Abubakar also declared that he would consider an amnesty for corruption suspects to recover funds from politicians who stashed billions of dollars abroad.<sup>43</sup> He claimed the amnesty program would encourage looters to voluntarily return stolen funds needed for infrastructure.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>32</sup> 'Muhammadu Buhari, Nigeria's 'new broom' president in profile', BBC News, 27 February 2019, 20190410153843

<sup>33</sup> 'PDP Presidential Primaries last-minute intrigues', Vanguard Media, 07 October 2018, 20190416174905

<sup>34</sup> 'Nigerian candidate's U.S. visit was temporary reprieve from graft ban', Reuters, 4 February 2019, 20190318144331

<sup>35</sup> 'Nigerian candidate's U.S. visit was temporary reprieve from graft ban', Reuters, 4 February 2019, 20190318144331

<sup>36</sup> 'Nigerian candidate's U.S. visit was temporary reprieve from graft ban', Reuters, 4 February 2019, 20190318144331

<sup>37</sup> 'Nigerian candidate's U.S. visit was temporary reprieve from graft ban', Reuters, 4 February 2019, 20190318144331

<sup>38</sup> 'Nigerian candidate's U.S. visit was temporary reprieve from graft ban', Reuters, 4 February 2019, 20190318144331

<sup>39</sup> 'Nigerian candidate's U.S. visit was temporary reprieve from graft ban', Reuters, 4 February 2019, 20190318144331

<sup>40</sup> 'Nigerian candidate's U.S. visit was temporary reprieve from graft ban', Reuters, 4 February 2019, 20190318144331

<sup>41</sup> 'Nigerian candidate's U.S. visit was temporary reprieve from graft ban', Reuters, 4 February 2019, 20190318144331

<sup>42</sup> 'Nigerian opposition candidate to consider amnesty for corruption suspects', Reuters, 31 January 2019, 20190318140813

<sup>43</sup> 'Nigerian opposition candidate to consider amnesty for corruption suspects', Reuters, 31 January 2019, 20190318140813

<sup>44</sup> 'Nigerian opposition candidate to consider amnesty for corruption suspects', Reuters, 31 January 2019, 20190318140813



# Security concerns

Security remained an issue of concern and featured prominently throughout the campaign. Nigeria remains seriously affected by a number of local conflicts, which threaten the security of voters across various regions.<sup>45</sup> The displacement of populations in regions affected by conflict increases the possibility of vote rigging and creates significant challenges in terms of voter registration, access and logistics<sup>46</sup>:

**Delta conflict:** Due to a spike in attacks from insurgent groups operating in on the oil-rich southern Niger Delta region, Nigeria's crude oil output was cut by more than half after the 2015 elections. The Niger Delta Avengers, a militant group fighting for a greater share in oil revenue, were behind a wave of attacks in 2016 which further exacerbated the conditions that led to the country's recession.<sup>47</sup> Referring to a proposed policy by PDP candidate Abubakar's, dubbed "restructuring", oil-rich states in the south may retain a greater share of the revenue generated from crude production. The Niger Delta Avengers subsequently proclaimed that Abubakar was "the sole candidate to be voted for by all the people of the Niger Delta". The group further stated that the "restructuring of Nigeria" had to commence within six months of Abubakar being elected president in order to forestall further attacks.<sup>48</sup> The Niger Delta Avengers have not carried out any substantial attacks since January 2017.

**North West Conflict:** Despite a decrease in attacks since 2017, the extremist Islamic militant group Boko Haram continues to threaten the country's Northern states with regular assaults.<sup>49</sup> There has been a sharp rise in systematic attacks throughout 2018-19 perpetrated by Boko Haram's offshoot, the Islamic State West African Province (ISWP).<sup>50</sup> Both militant groups pledged to disrupt the election by conducting attacks.<sup>51</sup> In late December (year), the IS-affiliated group briefly took over the town of Baga near Lake Chad seizing weapons and vehicles from a multinational unit of 500 soldiers.<sup>52</sup>

An estimated 59,000 people fled attacks in the north between November 2018 and February 2019 resulting in the loss or destruction of many of the victims' voter cards.<sup>53</sup> Although polling booths were to be set up in displacement camps, only those with voter cards could cast ballots<sup>54</sup>. Disorderly conditions in the camps could create an environment for vote-rigging and other irregularities..<sup>55,56</sup>

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as many as 39 attacks were recorded in Borno and Yobe states throughout the month of January 2019.<sup>57</sup> The town of Rann was hit twice emptying the area of all civilians and aid workers.<sup>58</sup> In January 2019, attacks perpetrated by

<sup>45</sup> ['Nigeria: Election in Times of Terrorism'](#), Bertelsmann Stiftung, 9 February 2019, 20190315145549

<sup>46</sup> ['Insecurity throws Nigeria's election preparations into disarray'](#), Reuters, 2 February 2019, 20190318140112

<sup>47</sup> ['It's Not Getting Better': Nigeria Braces for Election Day as Frustrations Boil'](#), New York Times, The, 14 February 2019, 20190218095101

<sup>48</sup> ['Nigeria 'Delta Avengers' militants vow to cripple economy if Buhari re-elected'](#), Reuters, 18 February 2019, 20190218100624

<sup>49</sup> ['Nigeria election: 'Mr Honesty' tainted by failure to tackle corruption'](#), The Guardian, 11 February 2019, 20190318135052; and ['2019 Nigeria election: What you need to know'](#), Deutsche Welle, 14 February 2019, 20190313112219

<sup>50</sup> ['It's Not Getting Better': Nigeria Braces for Election Day as Frustrations Boil'](#), New York Times, The, 14 February 2019, 20190218095101

<sup>51</sup> ['Insecurity throws Nigeria's election preparations into disarray'](#), Reuters, 2 February 2019, 20190318140112

<sup>52</sup> ['Nigeria: Election in Times of Terrorism'](#), Bertelsmann Stiftung, 9 February 2019, 20190315145549; and ['Islamic militants' deadly resurgence threatens Nigeria polls'](#), ABC News (USA), 12 February 2019, 20190320103735

<sup>53</sup> ['Insecurity throws Nigeria's election preparations into disarray'](#), Reuters, 2 February 2019, 20190318140112

<sup>54</sup> ['Nigeria: The challenges of registering to vote'](#), Deutsche Welle, 18 February 2019, 20190218100942

<sup>55</sup> ['Insecurity throws Nigeria's election preparations into disarray'](#), Reuters, 2 February 2019, 20190318140112 use 59 as well

<sup>56</sup> ['Nigeria: Election in Times of Terrorism'](#), Bertelsmann Stiftung, 9 February 2019, 20190315145549

<sup>57</sup> ['Islamic militants' deadly resurgence threatens Nigeria polls'](#), ABC News (USA), 12 February 2019, 20190320103735

<sup>58</sup> ['Islamic militants' deadly resurgence threatens Nigeria polls'](#), ABC News (USA), 12 February 2019, 20190320103735

the Islamic Militant group Jamaat Ahlis Sunna liDawatti wal Jihad left as many as 60 people killed and two humanitarian workers were also abducted in the Rann.<sup>59</sup> The town of Baga was also captured by ISWP who overran the nearby military camp.<sup>60</sup> Early in January 2019, Buhari pledged to boost the nation's security and equip the military to "overcome the insurgency".<sup>61</sup> The National Assembly approved a record \$147 million for security measures during the 2019 elections.

**Central Belt Conflict:** An intensifying conflict between Fulani Muslim nomadic herders and Christian farmers across the country's North West and Central states significantly added to the number of those affected by displacements.<sup>62</sup> Buhari, himself an ethnic Fulani Muslim from the north, had long been criticised for his inaction and failure to stop the violence across the Middle Belt where over the last year 2,000 people had been killed in series of attacks and counter attack between herders and farmers who have come into increased proximity due to climate change.<sup>63</sup>

## Events and incidents

- In mid-January 2019, the country's Chief Justice, Walter Onnoghen who is from the Christian south,<sup>64</sup> was asked by the Buhari government to step down whilst he faced charges on six counts of failing to declare assets related to offshore accounts.<sup>65</sup> This event set off an uproar as the Chief Justice would play a key role in any legal challenge to the election<sup>66</sup>. On 26 January 2019, the PDP halted their campaign for 72 hours calling on Nigerians to "rise in defence of democracy" and save the nation from an "imminent slide in to tyranny".<sup>67</sup> On 28 January 2019, the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) who called the suspension an "assault, intimidation and desecration of the judiciary" by government agencies<sup>68</sup> directed its members to boycott courts across the country from 29 to 30 January to protest against the suspension.<sup>69</sup>
- After Onnoghen did not show up to his initial hearings before the country's code of conduct tribunal<sup>70</sup> on 14 and 22 January, he was issued an arrest warrant to appear on 15 February.<sup>71</sup> Onnoghen did not receive the summons and claimed the panel lacked jurisdiction.<sup>72</sup> Days

<sup>59</sup> 'Nigeria: Election in Times of Terrorism', Bertelsmann Stiftung, 9 February 2019, 20190315145549

<sup>60</sup> 'Islamic militants' deadly resurgence threatens Nigeria polls', ABC News (USA), 12 February 2019, 20190320103735

<sup>61</sup> 'Nigerian President Plans to Do More on Security Over Boko Haram', Bloomberg.com, 8 January 2019, 20190318144606

<sup>62</sup> 'Guns, religion and climate change intensify Nigeria's deadly farmer-herder clashes', Los Angeles Times, 21 February 2019, 20190315161426

<sup>63</sup> 'Guns, religion and climate change intensify Nigeria's deadly farmer-herder clashes', Los Angeles Times, 21 February 2019, 20190315161426

<sup>64</sup> 'Nigerian govt asks chief justice to step down', Anadolu News Agency, 22 January 2019, 20190318142946

<sup>65</sup> 'US, EU Express Concern after Nigeria Chief Justice Suspended', ABC News (USA), 27 January 2019, 20190320103043

<sup>66</sup> 'US, EU Express Concern after Nigeria Chief Justice Suspended', ABC News (USA), 27 January 2019, 20190320103043; and 'Opposition Slams Trial of Nigerian Chief Justice Before Vote', Bloomberg, 16 January 2019, 20190116104056

<sup>67</sup> 'Nigeria's main opposition PDP party halts campaign over suspended chief justice', Africa News, 26 January 2019, 20190318141350

<sup>68</sup> 'Opposition Slams Trial of Nigerian Chief Justice Before Vote', Bloomberg, 16 January 2019, 20190116104056

<sup>69</sup> 'Nigeria lawyers announce nationwide strike over Chief Justice's removal', Africa News, 28 January 2019, 20190318141100

<sup>70</sup> 'Opposition Slams Trial of Nigerian Chief Justice Before Vote', Bloomberg, 16 January 2019, 20190116104056

<sup>71</sup> 'Nigeria tribunal issues arrest warrant for top judge before elections', Reuters, 14 February 2019, 20190320105544

<sup>72</sup> 'Nigeria's top judge absent from his corruption trial', News24, 17 January 2019, 20190117133511

later a Nigerian appeals court issued an interim order stopping the Tribunal from charging the Chief of Justice.<sup>73</sup>

- In a 22 January 2019 article published by *Aljazeera*, Ex-president Olusegun Obasanjo attacked Buhari stating that he could not hold fair elections and that he had failed to secure the country against Boko Haram.<sup>74</sup> The Buhari Government's attempt to remove the Chief Justice only weeks before polling was also criticized by foreign allies such as the United States, Britain and the European Union<sup>75</sup> as well as the United Nations special rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, Diego Garcia-Sayan, who said that it broke international human rights standards related to judiciary independence and the separation of powers.<sup>76</sup>
- There is no requirement to renew voter registration cards in Nigeria however reports of administrative inefficiencies created barriers and obstacles do exist in reobtaining one once lost.<sup>77</sup> This affects internally displaced persons (IDPs), often residing in a state which is different to the one they were initially registered in and who as a result are only permitted to cast a ballot for the presidential round of elections.<sup>78</sup> IDPs who reside in the same state may participate in voting at state level and, in theory, voters can re-register when they move to a different polling area. However reports also indicated that some were doubly registered owning two voter cards.<sup>79</sup>
- On 13 February, Buhari and Abubakar pledged peaceful presidential and legislative elections whilst signing a peace agreement in the capital Abija, calling on supporters to refrain from violence and acts that might jeopardize a 'collective vision of free, fair and credible elections'.<sup>80</sup>
- An office for Nigeria's election commission (INEC) in Plateau state was burned down destroying ballot boxes and voting slips only six days before the date of the elections.<sup>81</sup> Sources indicate that INEC offices were also set alight in Abia state and in Anambra state throughout the month of February.<sup>82</sup>
- Five APC members were killed in clashes with opposition members near the oil city of Warri (located in Nigeria's southeast Delta state) which resulted in a revenge attack.<sup>83</sup> On 13 February, the *BBC News* reported that a campaign rally for Buhari in the southern city of Port Harcourt ended in a stampede killing multiple APC supporters.<sup>84</sup>
- An election motorcade was ambushed by jihadist insurgents in Nigeria's Borno state on 12 February killing four people.<sup>85</sup> APC state governor Kashim Stettima who was campaigning for a seat in the Senate and Babagana Umaru who was campaigning for the Governorship both

<sup>73</sup> ['Nigerian court gives order to stop trial of top judge'](#), Reuters, 25 January 2019, 20190318142031

<sup>74</sup> ['Nigeria leader says President Buhari 'can't hold fair election'](#), Aljazeera, 22 January 2019, 20190318143116

<sup>75</sup> ['US, EU Express Concern after Nigeria Chief Justice Suspended'](#), ABC News (USA), 27 January 2019, 20190320103043

<sup>76</sup> ['UN: Suspension of Nigeria's top judge breaches human rights'](#), Aljazeera, 11 February 2019, 20190318134723

<sup>77</sup> ['Nigeria: The challenges of registering to vote'](#), Deutsche Welle, 18 February 2019, 20190218100942

<sup>78</sup> ['Nigeria: The challenges of registering to vote'](#), Deutsche Welle, 18 February 2019, 20190218100942

<sup>79</sup> ['Nigeria: The challenges of registering to vote'](#), Deutsche Welle, 18 February 2019, 20190218100942

<sup>80</sup> 20190410155209

<sup>81</sup> ['Nigeria election: Election office burnt down six days before polls'](#), BBC News, 10 February 2019,

20190318135816

<sup>82</sup> ['Winning Back Trust in Nigeria's Rescheduled Elections'](#), International Crisis Group (ICG), 19 February 2019,

20190327160617

<sup>83</sup> ['Five killed in pre-election violence in Nigeria: police'](#), Agence France-Presse, 12 February 2019,

20190318134513

<sup>84</sup> ['Nigeria stampede: Deaths at Buhari rally in Port Harcourt'](#), BBC News, 13 February 2019, 20190318133425

<sup>85</sup> ['Nigeria: Deadly Attack on Borno Governor's Election Convoy'](#), Deutsche Welle, 14 February 2019,

20190320105854



survived the attack.<sup>86</sup> ISWAP fighters claimed to have killed 42 people although an official statement put the casualties at two.<sup>87</sup>

- On 14 February, Nigeria was featured among a list of 23 countries blacklisted by the European Commission over a weakness or absence of measures to counter money laundering and terrorism financing.<sup>88</sup> Earlier in February, president Buhari had publicly stated that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission had issued concerns over laundered money 'being funnelled into vote buying'.<sup>89</sup>
- On 15 February, the eve of the general elections, violence erupted in the country's North West state of Kaduna killing 66 people in attacks across eight settlements.<sup>90</sup> The region had been plagued by armed bandits and religious zealotry, however statements made by the governor's spokesmen suggested the violence may have been communal.<sup>91</sup> The attacks in Borno, combined with deadly clashes in Kaduna and Zamafra states, raised questions on voting suspension in some areas.<sup>92</sup> That same evening media reports revealed that polling material 'had not been delivered in parts or all of several states, including Ekiti, Oyo, Taraba, Edo, Niger, Ogun and River states'.<sup>93</sup>

## Election postponed

At 2:40 AM on the morning of 16 February, just over five hours before the polling was scheduled to commence, the Electoral Commission (INEC) announced a postponement of the vote until 23 February, one week later, citing logistical challenges in delivering electoral materials to polling stations on time.<sup>94</sup> The INEC's chairman also stated that Gubernatorial and State legislative votes would be rescheduled from the 3 to 9 March. Whilst expressing his disappointment, president Buhari appealed to all Nigerians to "refrain from all civil disorder and remain peaceful, patriotic and united".<sup>95</sup>

Later that morning the State Emergency Management agency announced that a bomb blast had killed six people in Maiduguri.<sup>96</sup> Figures in an article by *Africa Confidential* however indicated that the incident involved a Mosque suicide bombing in the Kushari district of Maiduguri killing 11 people.<sup>97</sup>

Whilst the last minute nature of the postponement raised certain suspicions, it also outraged voters many of whom had travelled long distances and shut down their businesses for the weekend.<sup>98</sup> The APC's spokesman called it a national embarrassment whilst and the PDP stated it was "dangerous for

<sup>86</sup> 'It's Not Getting Better': Nigeria Braces for Election Day as Frustrations Boil', New York Times, The, 14 February 2019, 20190218095101

<sup>87</sup> 'Drama in the delay', Africa Confidential, 22 February 2019, 20190320114220

<sup>88</sup> 'EU blacklists Nigeria, Libya over money laundering, terrorism financing', Africa News, 14 February 2019, 20190320110148

<sup>89</sup> 'Nigeria election: Election office burnt down six days before polls', BBC News, 10 February 2019, 20190318135816

<sup>90</sup> '66 killed in Nigeria's northwest ahead of polls', Anadolu News Agency, 15 February 2019, 20190327160936

<sup>91</sup> '66 killed in Nigeria's northwest ahead of polls', Anadolu News Agency, 15 February 2019, 20190327160936

<sup>92</sup> 'Drama in the delay', Africa Confidential, 22 February 2019, 20190320114220

<sup>93</sup> 'Winning Back Trust in Nigeria's Rescheduled Elections', International Crisis Group (ICG), 19 February 2019, 20190327160617

<sup>94</sup> 'Winning Back Trust in Nigeria's Rescheduled Elections', International Crisis Group (ICG), 19 February 2019, 20190327160617

<sup>95</sup> 'Nigerian presidential election postponed, all sides appeal for calm', Reuters, 16 February 2019, 20190410155914

<sup>96</sup> 'Nigerian presidential election postponed, all sides appeal for calm', Reuters, 16 February 2019, 20190410155914

<sup>97</sup> 'Drama in the delay', Africa Confidential, 22 February 2019, 20190320114220

<sup>98</sup> 'Drama in the delay', Africa Confidential, 22 February 2019, 20190320114220; and 'Winning Back Trust in Nigeria's Rescheduled Elections', International Crisis Group (ICG), 19 February 2019, 20190327160617

democracy” whilst requesting the resignation of the INEC’s chairman.<sup>99</sup> Both parties then went on to accuse each other of orchestrating the delay<sup>100</sup> without however producing any evidence to support their claims.<sup>101</sup> An article published by *Voice of America* observed that across the continent, one in every four elections have faced delays; Nigeria has not held a presidential election without a delay since 2007 and 27 of the 102 presidential elections held across Africa since 2009 have been delayed.<sup>102</sup> *BBC News* noted that the delay cost the Nigerian economy \$1.5 billion.<sup>103</sup>

In the days following the delay, Buhari threatened that all person found disrupting or interfering in the voting process would “do so at the expense of their life” and ordered the military to be “ruthless”.<sup>104</sup>

Only 24 hours later, the military stated that they had uncovered a plot to disrupt the process in the Niger Delta region.<sup>105</sup> Buhari defended the military’s role in the country’s “complex security setup”, especially in regions affected by terrorism, and he reaffirmed his orders for the military and police to be ruthless in preventing any disruptions or interferences during the elections.<sup>106</sup> Voters, many of whom are impoverished, would have to travel back to their area of registration on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and struggle to afford making arrangements a second time.<sup>107</sup> Over the week leading up to the rescheduled vote, businesses and the government introduced measures to avoid a low turnout such as declaring the eve of the vote a “work-free” day as well as companies offering free bus services, discounted airline tickets and lower fuel prices.<sup>108</sup>

Polling went ahead as scheduled on Saturday 23 February however civil society groups reported that most polling stations did not open until hours after the official starting time.<sup>109</sup> Numerous incidents were reported throughout the day which included failures in technical equipment, violence and allegations of vote buying. According to a head researcher at SBM intelligence, much of the violence played out in the South of the country, in opposition strongholds where the election is particularly contested.<sup>110</sup> On the first polling day, four people including two APC leaders were shot dead by thugs in separate incidents in Rivers state.<sup>111</sup> In North eastern Yobe, an attack by ISWAP forced hundred to flee Geidam. Many were alerted by sounds of heavy gun fire in Maiduguri North east of Borno.<sup>112</sup>

According to civil society groups, by the second day of polling as many as 39 people had been killed, a number considerably lower than at previous Nigerian elections (800 were killed in post-election violence in 2011 and 100 deaths were recorded in 2015).<sup>113</sup> The Nigerian Police claimed to have made up to 128 arrests for election related offences.<sup>114</sup> Crimes included ballot snatching, vote trading and impersonation. Authorities also stated that a “cache of explosives” which included 38 “assorted

<sup>99</sup> 'Winning Back Trust in Nigeria's Rescheduled Elections', International Crisis Group (ICG), 19 February 2019, 20190327160617

<sup>100</sup> 'Nigeria's Candidates Blame Each Other in Surprise Vote Delay', PBS, 16 February 2019, 20190320111431b

<sup>101</sup> 'Winning Back Trust in Nigeria's Rescheduled Elections', International Crisis Group (ICG), 19 February 2019, 20190327160617

<sup>102</sup> 'In 1 in 4 Elections, African Voters Face Delays', Voice of America (VOA), 18 February 2019, 20190320110521

<sup>103</sup> 'Nigeria election 2019: Who benefits from poll delay?', BBC News, 20 February 2019, 20190315161911

<sup>104</sup> 'Nigeria's opposition urges military to stay away from vote', News24, 19 February 2019, 20190315162309

<sup>105</sup> 'After Buhari's ruthless order, Nigeria army uncovers 'unholy' political plan', Africa News, 19 February 2019, 20190320111143

<sup>106</sup> 'After Buhari's ruthless order, Nigeria army uncovers 'unholy' political plan', Africa News, 19 February 2019, 20190320111143

<sup>107</sup> 'Nigeria rallies disillusioned voters after postponed polls', CNN, 21 February 2019, 20190315161020

<sup>108</sup> 'Nigeria rallies disillusioned voters after postponed polls', CNN, 21 February 2019, 20190315161020

<sup>109</sup> 'Dozens Dead in Nigeria as Election Results Are Delayed', New York Times, The, 25 February 2019, 20190410160220

<sup>110</sup> 'Dozens Dead in Nigeria as Election Results Are Delayed', New York Times, The, 25 February 2019, 20190410160220

<sup>111</sup> '#NigeriaDecides2019: Four shot dead in Rivers', Premium Times, 23 February 2019, 20190410160711

<sup>112</sup> '#NigeriaDecides2019: Four shot dead in Rivers', Premium Times, 23 February 2019, 20190410160711

<sup>113</sup> 'Roots of Nigeria's election violence', Institute for Security Studies, 4 March 2019, 20190315145114

<sup>114</sup> 'Nigeria: Dozens dead in election violence', Deutsche Welle, 25 February 2019, 20190410161646

weapons" was found.<sup>115</sup> According to a 25 February article published by *Aljazeera*, ballot stations in Southern Nigeria were attacked overnight as results started to come in.<sup>116</sup>

Although there was only a brief pause in the ballot count, it became apparent on Sunday and Monday that election violence had been worse than originally reported. Election workers and police officers were taken hostage in Rivers state and later released unharmed.<sup>117</sup> Violence broke out in polling places in the capital, Lagos, where ballot boxes had been set on fire, shots fired and where election materials did not arrive on time riots broke out amongst voters.<sup>118</sup>

International observers noted however that prior elections had been worse and Hailemariam Desalegn, the former prime minister of Ethiopia, stated that "overall, generally the process was peaceful and orderly".<sup>119</sup> When results were announced a total of 130 people had been taken into custody under suspicion of electoral related offences.<sup>120</sup> Nigerian research groups however estimated that the death toll from election related violence from the start of campaigning in November 2018 until February 2019 amounted to 600 people.<sup>121</sup>

## Outcome

Early results were released on Monday 25 February indicating that Buhari had taken the lead, winning votes in at least six states, which the opposition contested.<sup>122</sup> Abubakar had won the in the Federal Capital Territory and the Chairman of the PDP stated that there were irregularities in Nasarawas state and the Capital Abuja.<sup>123</sup>

Counting finished on the Tuesday night and on Wednesday 27 February the INEC officially declared Buhari victorious after he polled 15,191,847 votes (56 percent), against the PDP's Abubakar who received 11,262,978 (41 percent) according to official INEC figures.<sup>124</sup> Abubakar had gained only 17 states including the capital Abija whereas Buhari had won in 19 of Nigeria's 36 states.<sup>125</sup>

Abubakar immediately released a statement rejecting the result declaring the election a sham and refusing to congratulate Buhari.<sup>126</sup> Abubakar subsequently stated he would challenge these results in court, arguing that the government made use of the military to harass citizens in two PDP stronghold

<sup>115</sup> 'Nigeria: Dozens dead in election violence', Deutsche Welle, 25 February 2019, 20190410161646

<sup>116</sup> "Dozens killed' in Nigeria poll violence, counting under way', Aljazeera, 25 February 2019, 20190320112005

<sup>117</sup> zens Dead in Nigeria as Election Results Are Delayed', New York Times, The, 25 February 2019, 20190410160220

<sup>118</sup> zens Dead in Nigeria as Election Results Are Delayed', New York Times, The, 25 February 2019, 20190410160220

<sup>119</sup> Dozens Dead in Nigeria as Election Results Are Delayed', New York Times, The, 25 February 2019, 20190410160220

<sup>120</sup> 'Nigeria election: Muhammadu Buhari re-elected as president', BBC News, 27 February 2019, 20190315153411

<sup>121</sup> 'Nigeria's ruling party takes close lead in governor elections, but balance could tip', Reuters, 13 March 2019, 20190318144803

<sup>122</sup> 'Nigeria's Buhari Takes Election Lead; Opposition Rejects Results', Voice of America (VOA), 25 February 2019, 20190315154144

<sup>123</sup> 'Nigeria's Buhari Takes Election Lead; Opposition Rejects Results', Voice of America (VOA), 25 February 2019, 20190315154144

<sup>124</sup> 'Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari reelected, but opponent rejects results', CNN, 27 February 2019, 20190313111449

<sup>125</sup> 'Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari reelected, but opponent rejects results', CNN, 27 February 2019, 20190313111449

<sup>126</sup> 'Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari reelected, but opponent rejects results', CNN, 27 February 2019, 20190313111449



regions across the south east and south-south where voting turnout numbers were very low.<sup>127</sup> However, the Supreme Court of Nigeria has historically never overturned a presidential election.<sup>128</sup>

The legal challenge was issued on 18 March to the presidential tribunal, appointed by the Supreme Court, which is required to issue a ruling within 180 days.<sup>129</sup> According to a 6 April article published by *Africanews*, Nigeria's suspended chief of Justice Walter Onnoghen submitted his resignation<sup>130</sup> and Abubakar's legal challenge remains ongoing. Meanwhile Buhari's inauguration day for his second term as president is set for 29 May.<sup>131</sup>

According to a 4 March article published in the *Times Live*, Abubakar's lawyer and son in law, Alhaji Babalele Abdullahi, who lost in the election polls, were arrested.<sup>132</sup> An official from the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) stated that Abdullahi was being 'investigated over an alleged case of money laundering' for a sum involving '150 million Euros (\$169 million)'.<sup>133</sup> Abdullahi was also Abubakar's director of finance for the presidential campaign.<sup>134</sup>

Figures from the INEC indicate that it had been the lowest voter turnout in 20 years where just 27 million votes had been cast out of the 84 million registered.<sup>135</sup> Figures listed in a *BBC News* article published the same day listed the turn out figure at just 35.6 percent and no independent observer cited any instance of electoral fraud.<sup>136</sup>

According to the figures, Buhari's strongest support came from the country's northern and most impoverished states and some of his success was also accredited to his running mate, Yemi Osinbajo, a popular pastor from the largely Christian south.<sup>137</sup> Of the two northern regions lost by Buhari was Adamawa from where Abubakar hails.<sup>138</sup>

In terms of the Senate and House of Representatives, numbers revealed on 28 February that Buhari's APC had won 47 seats to the PDP's 26 seats in the 109 seat senate, indicating a comfortable majority despite votes still being counted.<sup>139</sup> In the 360 seat House, numbers also revealed that the APC had thus far won 75 seats against 28 seats won by the PDP.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>127</sup> 'Nigeria's Vote: the Numbers, the Surprises, the Market Reaction', Bloomberg, 28 February 2019, 20190315151456

<sup>128</sup> 'Nigeria's President Buhari defends election win as challenger takes him to court', Deutsche Welle, 27 February 2019, 20190315151106

<sup>129</sup> 'Atiku Appeals Buhari's Election Victory in Nigeria', Council on Foreign Relations, 19 March 2019, 20190410162548

<sup>130</sup> 'Nigeria's chief justice resigns', Africa News, 06 April 2019, 20190410162350

<sup>131</sup> 'Atiku Appeals Buhari's Election Victory in Nigeria', Council on Foreign Relations, 19 March 2019, 20190410162548

<sup>132</sup> 'Nigeria election: Defeated candidate's relative and lawyer arrested', Times Live, 4 March 2019, 20190315150806

<sup>133</sup> 'Nigeria election: Defeated candidate's relative and lawyer arrested', Times Live, 4 March 2019, 20190315150806

<sup>134</sup> 'Nigeria election: Defeated candidate's relative and lawyer arrested', Times Live, 4 March 2019, 20190315150806

<sup>135</sup> 'Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari reelected, but opponent rejects results', CNN, 27 February 2019, 20190313111449

<sup>136</sup> 'Nigeria election: Muhammadu Buhari re-elected as president', BBC News, 27 February 2019, 20190315153411

<sup>137</sup> 'Muhammadu Buhari, Nigeria's 'new broom' president in profile', BBC News, 27 February 2019, 20190410113527

<sup>138</sup> 'Nigeria's Vote: the Numbers, the Surprises, the Market Reaction', Bloomberg, 28 February 2019, 20190315151456

<sup>139</sup> 'Nigeria's Vote: the Numbers, the Surprises, the Market Reaction', Bloomberg, 28 February 2019, 20190315151456

<sup>140</sup> 'Nigeria's Vote: the Numbers, the Surprises, the Market Reaction', Bloomberg, 28 February 2019, 20190315151456

# Governor elections

The second set of elections for the Gubernatorial (state Governorship) were rescheduled to 9 March for voters to choose 29 Governors and lawmakers for 36 state legislatures.<sup>141</sup> As the Governors wield power over their states in Nigeria's Federal system, the 36 Governors are considered by some to be more politically powerful than the president himself.<sup>142</sup> Governorship elections hinge mostly on candidates' ability to 'rally state powerbrokers, religious leaders, traditional leaders and local organisations to their side'.<sup>143</sup>

Polling remained peaceful despite the destruction of some election materials'.<sup>144</sup> The INEC stated that staff had been 'abducted by thugs in the southern states of Rivers and Akwa Ibom'.<sup>145</sup> Seven deaths had been recorded by civil society monitoring organisations and similar to the February 23<sup>rd</sup> general elections there were reports of 'voter intimidation, buying and sabotage'.<sup>146</sup>

On 11 March, the INEC announced that the APC's Babajide Sanuwo-Olu won the Governorship of Lagos, the capital.<sup>147</sup> On 12 March the INEC announced that due to violence and other irregularities 'voting had been cancelled in some areas of Kano and Sokoto, in the northwest, Bauchi and Adamawa in the northwest, and the central states of Benue and Plateau'.<sup>148</sup> Elections were concluded in 22 states, however, six states remained inconclusive including the state of Rivers.<sup>149</sup>

Also on 11 March, the INEC revealed that the APC had won 13 states whereas the PDP had won in nine states, mostly situated in the Delta region.<sup>150</sup> use both sources<sup>151</sup> On 13 March it was announced that the APC had taken the lead in Governorships despite the number of inconclusive state results increasing to seven.<sup>152</sup> Re-runs in those states with inconclusive results had to be held within 21 days with the exception of Rivers where voting had been suspended.<sup>153</sup> On 23 March, an election petition tribunal declared that the PDP had won the southwest Osun state for the 22 September ballot, cancelling a vote from a supplementary election on 27 September that declared the APC victorious.<sup>154</sup> On 23 March, ballots were also cast in Kano state and APC incumbent Abdullahi Umar Ganduje was declared victorious despite reports of massive vote rigging, manipulation and obstruction of independent observers.<sup>155</sup> PDP candidate Nyeson Wike retained the oil state of Rivers for a second

<sup>141</sup> ['Nigerians Head to the Polls Again for State Elections'](#), ReliefWeb, 7 March 2019, 20190321102209

<sup>142</sup> ['Nigeria's governorship elections peaceful despite voter buying and ballot box sabotage'](#), RFI, 9 March 2019, 20190315150429

<sup>143</sup> ['Governors get set'](#), Africa Confidential, 22 February 2019, 20190320114000

<sup>144</sup> ['Nigeria's governorship elections peaceful despite voter buying and ballot box sabotage'](#), RFI, 9 March 2019, 20190315150429

<sup>145</sup> ['Nigeria's governorship elections peaceful despite voter buying and ballot box sabotage'](#), RFI, 9 March 2019, 20190315150429

<sup>146</sup> ['Nigeria's governorship elections peaceful despite voter buying and ballot box sabotage'](#), RFI, 9 March 2019, 20190315150429

<sup>147</sup> ['Nigeria's Ruling Party Wins Lagos State in Gubernatorial Poll'](#), Bloomberg.com, 11 March 2019, 20190315150138

<sup>148</sup> ['Nigeria says governorship vote 'inconclusive' in six states'](#), Mail & Guardian Africa, 12 March 2019, 20190318145059

<sup>149</sup> ['Nigeria says governorship vote 'inconclusive' in six states'](#), Mail & Guardian Africa, 12 March 2019, 20190318145059

<sup>150</sup> ['Nigeria's ruling party takes close lead in governor elections, but balance could tip'](#), Reuters, 13 March 2019, 20190318144803

<sup>151</sup> ['Check list of all winners in Governorship elections across Nigeria'](#), Pulse (Nigeria), 12 March 2019, 20190313105634

<sup>152</sup> ['Nigeria's ruling party takes close lead in governor elections, but balance could tip'](#), Reuters, 13 March 2019, 20190318144803

<sup>153</sup> ['Nigeria's ruling party takes close lead in governor elections, but balance could tip'](#), Reuters, 13 March 2019, 20190318144803

<sup>154</sup> ['Court declares winner in governor's poll'](#), Anadolu News Agency, 23 March 2019, 20190415171236

<sup>155</sup> ['Violence and fraud in Nigeria's gubernatorial elections'](#), Deutsche Welle, 27 March 2019, 20190417102029

term.<sup>156</sup> The outcome of the remaining inconclusive state Governorships has yet to be determined in supplementary elections.

The following is a map released by the *BBC News* based on official figures regarding Nigeria's general elections as released from the INEC<sup>157</sup>:

### Nigerian election results

Winning party in each state

■ APC ■ PDP



Source: INEC

BBC

<sup>156</sup> 'Nigeria's opposition party retains key oil state of Rivers', Reuters, 4 April 2019, 20190417101858

<sup>157</sup> 'Nigeria election: Muhammadu Buhari re-elected as president', BBC News, 27 February 2019, 20190315153411





## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: CI180302114833474 – Traditional Marriage – Lagos – Registration – Legal Age – Birth Registration – Child Custody – Domestic Violence – Support Services – Hospitals – Reporting

Date of Report

13 March 2018

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#### Background

[Information deleted]

#### Questions

1. [Can you provide information on “traditional marriage” in Nigeria and Lagos in particular? What is involved and how common are they in Lagos? Are they registered and the couple issued with certificates? What is the current legal age of marriage?](#)
2. [Please provide information on the registration of the births of children and the custody of children whose parents separate in Nigeria.](#)
3. [Are there agencies for victims of domestic violence in Lagos and what services do they offer?](#)
4. [Do hospitals in Lagos have reporting requirements in respect of victims of domestic violence?](#)

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## Answers

### 1. Can you provide information on “traditional marriage” in Nigeria and Lagos in particular? What is involved and how common are they in Lagos? Are they registered and the couple issued with certificates? What is the current legal age of marriage?

Customary law marriages are reported to be legally binding and recognised as one of the types of marriages in Nigeria.<sup>1</sup> There are varying marriage customs among the different ethnic groups in Nigeria, although there are some generally accepted customs common to most of them. Customary marriage creates a relationship not only between the couple, but also between the two families involved. Some local governments in Nigeria are reported to have by-laws for the registration of customary law marriages, and Nigeria's *Births, Deaths, etc. (Compulsory Registration) Act* provides for the registration of a customary marriage within a specific period. The current legal age of marriage is 18 years of age, but most states, especially northern states, are reported to not uphold the federal official minimum age of marriage.

Since before it gained independence in 1960, Nigeria is reported to have 'always had three systems of law in the realm of family and personal status (concerning marriage, divorce, child custody, inheritance and the like). These were general (sometimes referred to as secular or civil law), Muslim laws, and customary laws'.<sup>2</sup>

An article in the June 2014 edition of *The Lawyers Chronicle*<sup>3</sup> about different types of marriage under Nigerian law refers to the three types of marriage in Nigeria as statutory marriage, customary marriage and Islamic marriage. In relation to customary marriage, the article indicates that '[t]here are various ethnic communities in Nigeria and the various ethnic groups have their different marriage customs', although there were 'some generally accepted customs common to most of them'.

Customary marriage 'creates a relationship not only between a man and woman but also between the two families involved', with the wife regarded by the husband's family as having married 'into the family and therefore a member of their family'.<sup>4</sup> The article further states:

Marriage under Customary Law is largely polygamous. A polygamous marriage is the union of one man with several wives. There is no limit to the number of wives a man can marry under customary law. It must be noted however that many couples initially get married under customary law and thereafter marry under the [Marriage] Act. This is valid provided the marriage is between the same persons. The legal implication of the marriage is that it would have to remain a monogamous marriage. Section 47 of the Marriage Act provides that where a man is married under customary law with one woman and subsequently marries another different woman under the Marriage Act, the second marriage is void.<sup>5</sup>

A copy of Nigeria's *Marriage Act* is attached.<sup>6</sup> Section 35 of the Act states that '[a]ny person who is married under this Act, or whose marriage is declared by this Act to be valid, shall be incapable, during the continuance of such marriage, of contracting a valid marriage under customary law; but, save as aforesaid, nothing in this Act contained shall affect the validity of any marriage contracted under or in accordance with any customary law, or in any manner apply to marriages so contracted'.<sup>7</sup>

The June 2014 article in *The Lawyers Chronicle* notes that for customary marriage, once intentions to marry have been communicated between the two parties concerned and between their families, 'discreet inquiries may be carried out by each of the families in order to discover facts about the

<sup>1</sup> 'Country of Origin Information (COI) Report – Nigeria', UK Home Office, 14 June 2013, OGC0D145413, p.254

<sup>2</sup> 'Women, Muslim Laws and Human Rights in Nigeria', Wilson Center, 7 July 2011, CXBD6A0DE9751

<sup>3</sup> *The Lawyers Chronicle* describes itself as 'a pan-African online publication for lawyers, scholars, students and policy makers. It surveys the main trends of legal and socio-political issues on the African continent'. See: 'About Us – Overview', *The Lawyers Chronicle*, n.d., Accessed 8 March 2018

<sup>4</sup> 'Types of Marriages under Nigerian Law', *The Lawyers Chronicle*, June 2014, CISA447F084845

<sup>5</sup> 'Types of Marriages under Nigerian Law', *The Lawyers Chronicle*, June 2014, CISA447F084845

<sup>6</sup> 'Marriage Act', Government of Nigeria, 31 December 1914, CIS7B83941423

<sup>7</sup> 'Marriage Act', Government of Nigeria, 31 December 1914, CIS7B83941423

parties. These facts may sometimes be based on the family's social and health background as well as the character of the party'.<sup>8</sup>

According to the article, generally, the pre-requisites for a valid customary marriage are betrothal, capacity of the parties, consent of the parties and parents, marriage consideration/bride price, solemnisation of the marriage and consummation of the marriage. In relation to betrothal, the article indicates that:

When the families concerned are convinced that there are no facts that could hinder the marriage, the betrothal, which is the formal engagement of the parties will now take place. The engagement usually consists of a formal process of agreement to marry between the prospective spouses, the giving of consents by their parents or guardians and the giving of gifts (in money and/or kind) by the man to the woman and her family. After the betrothal then actual marriage takes place.<sup>9</sup>

In relation to the capacity of the parties, the article notes that most customary laws in Nigeria 'do not prescribe any age for the solemnization of customary-law marriage. This lacuna in the rule of customary law has to a large extent encouraged a high incidence of child marriage'. The article indicates that child betrothal was rampant in some areas, but marriage did not take place until the parties had reached puberty. There was 'no doubt that there were a lot of child marriages under customary law because there was no law against child marriage (most of which occur in the northern part of the country) but since the passing of the Child's Rights Act 2003, no marriage of persons below the age of eighteen is allowed under Nigerian Law – section 21 of the Act'.<sup>10</sup>

Both the couple involved and the parents must consent to a customary marriage. Nigeria's Supreme Court, in the case of *Osamwonyi v. Osamwonyi* 1973 NMLR 26, 'held that under Bini Native Law and Customs, the consent of the parties was necessary for a valid marriage under customary law'. Also, in *Okpanum v. Okpanum* 1972 2 ECSLR 561, the High Court of East Central State of Nigeria held that a valid customary marriage required 'parental consent and mutual agreement between the parties'. Also, 'under section 361 of the Criminal Code Act, it is an offence punishable with seven years imprisonment for any person who with the intent to marry a female person of any age or to cause her to be married by any other person takes her away or detains her against her will'.<sup>11</sup>

An essential requirement of a valid customary marriage is '[m]arriage consideration otherwise called bride price'. This 'includes any gift or payment in the form of money, natural produce or any kind of property given by an intending husband and his family to the parents or guardian of a female person on account of the marriage'.<sup>12</sup>

In relation to solemnisation of the marriage, it is stated in the article:

Solemnization or celebration is an essential ingredient of a valid customary law marriage. It generally involves breaking kola, pouring libation, sharing drinks and other activities. The bride is invariably handed over to the bridegroom and his family. In the case of *Omoga v. Badejo* 1985 NCNLR 1075, the Court held that there must be a formal handing over of the bride to the groom in the presence of the two families and witnesses and the acceptance and taking away of the bride to her husband's house for marriage under Yoruba Native Law and Custom, to be valid.<sup>13</sup>

Consummation of the marriage under Native Law and Custom is also essential.<sup>14</sup>

In relation to registration of customary marriages in Nigeria, a June 2017 European Asylum Support Office country of origin information report on Nigeria refers to a 1982 article about marriage laws in Nigeria, the author of which noted 'that there is no systematic registration of customary marriages' in

<sup>8</sup> '[Types of Marriages under Nigerian Law](#)', The Lawyers Chronicle, June 2014, CISA447F084845

<sup>9</sup> '[Types of Marriages under Nigerian Law](#)', The Lawyers Chronicle, June 2014, CISA447F084845

<sup>10</sup> '[Types of Marriages under Nigerian Law](#)', The Lawyers Chronicle, June 2014, CISA447F084845

<sup>11</sup> '[Types of Marriages under Nigerian Law](#)', The Lawyers Chronicle, June 2014, CISA447F084845

<sup>12</sup> '[Types of Marriages under Nigerian Law](#)', The Lawyers Chronicle, June 2014, CISA447F084845

<sup>13</sup> '[Types of Marriages under Nigerian Law](#)', The Lawyers Chronicle, June 2014, CISA447F084845

<sup>14</sup> '[Types of Marriages under Nigerian Law](#)', The Lawyers Chronicle, June 2014, CISA447F084845

Nigeria.<sup>15</sup> More recently, however, a February 2013 letter from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the UK Border Agency, provided by the British High Commission in Abuja, Nigeria, following consultation with their honorary legal adviser, notes that:

One of the functions of local governments in Nigeria is to register all marriages. This is provided for in the Fourth Schedule to the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. As a result, some local governments have bye-laws for the registration of customary law marriages.

Some of these bye-laws make registration of customary law marriages compulsory and prescribe a penalty for failure to register such marriage. In addition to the foregoing, the Birth, Deaths etc (Compulsory Registration) Act Cap.B9, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 (the "Act") also stipulates that a customary law marriage be registered within a specific period after its celebration. Specifically, section 30 of the Act provides as follows:

"Notwithstanding anything contained in any enactment every customary marriage is to be registered within sixty (60) days in the area court or customary court where the marriage was contracted."<sup>16</sup>

A copy of Nigeria's *Births, Deaths, etc. (Compulsory Registration) Act* of 1992 is attached. Section 30 of the Act is as follows:

(1) Notwithstanding anything contained in any enactment, every customary marriage contracted in or dissolved in Nigeria shall immediately after the commencement of this Act, be registered within sixty days in the area court or customary court where the marriage was contracted or dissolved.

(2) Every court registrar shall keep a marriage registrar and such books as may be prescribed by the Registrar – General and as soon as practicable after the end of each month deliver to the Chief Registrar such returns and in such form as the Registrar – General may require.<sup>17</sup>

In relation to the current legal age of marriage, a recently released Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) country information report on Nigeria dated 9 March 2018 indicates that '[b]oth federal and state legislation govern marriage in Nigeria. At the federal level, the Child Rights Act prohibits the marriage of a female under the age of 18 years of age. As of March 2014, 26 of 36 states had adopted corresponding legislation at state level'.<sup>18</sup> A Thomson Reuters Practical Law Q&A guide to family law in Nigeria also indicates that 'under the Child Rights Act, the age of marriage is stated as 18 years, for both sexes'.<sup>19</sup> The US Department of State (USDOS) report on human rights practices in Nigeria for 2016 notes that '[t]he law sets a minimum age of 18 years for marriage for both boys and girls'.<sup>20</sup>

Section 21 of Nigeria's *Child's Rights Act, 2003* states that '[n]o person under the age of 18 years is capable of contracting a valid marriage, and accordingly a marriage so contracted is null and void and of no effect whatsoever'.<sup>21</sup>

Lagos is one of the states that has adopted the *Child's Rights Act, 2003*. Most states in the northern part of the country are yet to adopt it.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>15</sup> ['EASO Country of Origin Information Report – Country Focus Nigeria'](#), European Asylum Support Office (EASO), June 2017, CISED50AD4813, p.42

<sup>16</sup> ['Country of Origin Information \(COI\) Report – Nigeria'](#), UK Home Office, 14 June 2013, OGC0D145413, pp.254-255

<sup>17</sup> ['Births, Deaths, etc. \(Compulsory Registration\) Act'](#), 1992 No.69, Government of Nigeria, 14 December 1992, CIS3C899D2852

<sup>18</sup> 'DFAT Country Information Report: Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, CIS7B83941414, p.24

<sup>19</sup> ['Family law in Nigeria: overview'](#), Thomson Reuters Practical Law, 1 October 2017, CISED50AD8265

<sup>20</sup> ['Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2016 – Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 3 March 2017, OGD95BE926898, Section 6, p.34

<sup>21</sup> ['Child's Rights Act, 2003'](#), Government of Nigeria, 31 July 2003, CISA125423545

<sup>22</sup> ['Family law in Nigeria: overview'](#), Thomson Reuters Practical Law, 1 October 2017, CISED50AD8265; See also ['Nigerian child and the Child Rights Act'](#), Vanguard, 29 June 2010, CX744258517360



A November 2013 report by a UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Nigeria notes that '[e]ffective implementation of the Child Rights Act has been a challenge, especially in terms of huge diversity of ethnicity, religion and traditional practices to be found across the country. To date, only 26 out of 36 states have passed the Act into law'. The Act was 'not being effectively enforced however, and many children remain inadequately protected against a variety of abuses and lack access to education'. The report refers to 'the Islamic and customary legal systems, which allow marriage under the age of 18', existing 'alongside the civil system, which prohibits it'.<sup>23</sup>

The March 2018 DFAT country information report on Nigeria also notes that '[t]he United Nations Population Fund reports that 20 per cent of girls are married by the age of 15 in Nigeria and 40 per cent are married by the age of 18. Child marriage is particularly prevalent in northwest Nigeria, where 48 per cent of girls were married by the age of 15, and 78 per cent were married by the age of 18'.<sup>24</sup> The USDOS report on human rights practices in Nigeria for 2016 states that '[a]ccording to UNICEF's *State of the World's Children 2016*, 43 percent of girls were married before age 18, and 17 percent were married before age 15. The prevalence of child marriage varied widely between regions, with figures ranging from 76 percent in the Northwest to 10 percent in the Southeast. Only 24 state assemblies adopted the Child Rights Act of 2003, which sets the minimum marriage age, and most states, especially northern states, did not uphold the federal official minimum age for marriage'.<sup>25</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil

## **2. Please provide information on the registration of the births of children and the custody of children whose parents separate in Nigeria.**

One source indicates that the government does not require birth registration in Nigeria, while another source refers to a legal obligation to register the birth of a child. Nigeria's *Births, Deaths, etc. (Compulsory Registration) Act* of 1992 provides a legal framework for the registration of births. In relation to child custody following the dissolution of a marriage, the primary consideration in awarding custody under Nigeria's *Matrimonial Causes Act* and *Child's Rights Act, 2003* is the welfare and interest of the child.

### **Birth Registration**

The USDOS report on human rights practices in Nigeria for 2016 indicates that '[t]he government does not require birth registration for either girls or boys, and the majority of births were unregistered'.<sup>26</sup>

Information on birth registration in Nigeria on the UNICEF website indicates, however, that there is a legal obligation to register the birth of a child in Nigeria. A legal framework for birth registration was in Nigeria's *Births, Deaths, etc. (Compulsory Registration) Act* of 1992.<sup>27</sup> Section 7 of that Act is as follows:

Subject to the provisions of this Part of this Act, the birth of every child born in Nigeria shall be registered by the registrar of births and deaths for the area in which the child was born by entering in a register kept for that area such particulars concerning the birth as maybe prescribed and different registers shall be kept and different particulars maybe prescribed for live births and still births respectively:

Provided that, where a living new-born child is found exposed and no information as to the place of birth is

<sup>23</sup> ['Too many to count? Human rights, justice and accountability in Nigeria - 2013 country visit report of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Nigeria'](#), All Party Parliamentary Group on Nigeria, November 2013, CIS27719, pp.9-10

<sup>24</sup> 'DFAT Country Information Report: Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, CIS7B83941414, p.24

<sup>25</sup> ['Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2016 – Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 3 March 2017, OGD95BE926898, Section 6, pp.34-35

<sup>26</sup> ['Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2016 – Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 3 March 2017, OGD95BE926898, Section 6, p.33

<sup>27</sup> ['Nigeria: Birth Registration'](#), UNICEF, n.d., Accessed 8 March 2018, CIS7B83941412

available, the birth shall be registered by the registrar of births and deaths for the area in which the child is found.<sup>28</sup>

Section 5(2) of Nigeria's *Child's Rights Act, 2003* also states that '[t]he birth of every child shall be registered in accordance with the provisions of the Birth, Death, etc. (Compulsory Registration) Act, 1992'.<sup>29</sup>

The USDOS report on human rights practices in Nigeria for 2016 notes, however, that '[t]he 2013 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS), the most recent data available, found that only 30 percent of births of children under age five were registered'.<sup>30</sup>

### Child Custody

Nigeria is a federation of 36 states, with a Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.<sup>31</sup> The Thomson Reuters Practical Law Q&A guide to family law in Nigeria indicates that it is 'the National Assembly (federal law)' which 'makes the laws governing matrimonial causes. Therefore, the 36 constituent states and the Federal Capital Territory cannot legislate on dissolution of marriage and the welfare of children consequent upon dissolution'.<sup>32</sup> It is stated in the guide to family law:

The Matrimonial Causes Act enacted in 1970 (now Cap. M7 Laws of the Federation 2004) mainly governs marriages, marital breakdown and the welfare of children in Nigeria. In 1983, the Matrimonial Causes Rules were made pursuant to the Matrimonial Causes Act. These Rules set out the procedure for instituting actions for the dissolution of marriage and custody and maintenance matters following the dissolution of marriage.

In 2003, Nigeria enacted the Child's Rights Act pursuant to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This law has been adopted by 24 states including Lagos, Enugu, Plateau, and Rivers states. Most of the states in the northern part of the country are yet to adopt it. The law sets out provisions on the welfare and adoption of children. In 2012, Lagos State enacted the Family Law Rules pursuant to the Child's Rights Law. The Rules have greatly simplified procedures on adoption, custody, guardianship and welfare of children generally in Lagos State.<sup>33</sup>

Although matrimonial causes are regulated by federal laws through the Matrimonial Causes Act, 'jurisdiction is given to the high courts of the states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory. There are no separate family courts'. Lagos State, however, 'has created a family court to deal with disputes relating to guardianship, custody and adoption not related to matrimonial causes in its Child Rights Law 2007'.<sup>34</sup>

A copy of the Lagos State *Child's Rights Law 2007* is attached.<sup>35</sup> Also attached is a copy of the *Family Court of Lagos State (Civil Procedure) Rules 2012* of Lagos State.<sup>36</sup>

In relation to the legal position regarding custody/parental responsibility following the breakdown of a relationship or marriage in Nigeria, the guide to family law indicates that '[u]nder the Matrimonial Causes Rules, a party who seeks the dissolution of marriage or other relief must state the number and age of the children and the arrangement for their maintenance, education and most importantly, custody. The issue of custody must therefore feature from day one. The court can raise the issue on

<sup>28</sup> ['Births, Deaths, etc. \(Compulsory Registration\) Act'](#), 1992 No.69, Government of Nigeria, 14 December 1992, CIS3C899D2852

<sup>29</sup> ['Child's Rights Act, 2003'](#), Government of Nigeria, 31 July 2003, CISA125423545

<sup>30</sup> ['Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2016 – Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 3 March 2017, OGD95BE926898, Section 6, p.33

<sup>31</sup> ['Family law in Nigeria: overview'](#), Thomson Reuters Practical Law, 1 October 2017, CISED50AD8265

<sup>32</sup> ['Family law in Nigeria: overview'](#), Thomson Reuters Practical Law, 1 October 2017, CISED50AD8265

<sup>33</sup> ['Family law in Nigeria: overview'](#), Thomson Reuters Practical Law, 1 October 2017, CISED50AD8265

<sup>34</sup> ['Family law in Nigeria: overview'](#), Thomson Reuters Practical Law, 1 October 2017, CISED50AD8265

<sup>35</sup> ['Child's Rights Law 2007'](#), Law No.11 2007, Lagos State of Nigeria, 28 May 2007, CIS1ACBC921069

<sup>36</sup> ['Family Court of Lagos State \(Civil Procedure\) Rules 2012'](#), Lagos State of Nigeria, 6 June 2012, CIS961F9402863

its own where the parties refuse to and cannot grant a decree absolute until arrangements for children are determined'.<sup>37</sup> The guide further states:

The court may order joint custody or award custody to one of the parties with visitation rights for the other party. The primary consideration in awarding custody under the Matrimonial Causes Act and Child's Rights Act is the welfare and interest of the child. The factors considered by the courts are not exhaustive. The following factors among others are key in determining who should have custody:

- Emotional attachment to a particular parent.
- Degree of familiarity and wishes of the child.
- Adequacy of facilities (educational, social, emotional, and so on).
- Respective incomes of the parties.
- If one of the parties lives with a third party.
- The age of the child.
- The sex of the child. (Custody of a female child is usually given to the mother and male children to their father. However, this is subject to the overriding interest of the child).
- Opportunities for a proper upbringing.
- Conduct of the parties.

(*Alabi v Alabi* (2007) and *Olowofoye v Olowofoye* (2011) 1 NWLR (pt. 1227) 177).

Custody is not awarded as a punitive measure on a party guilty of matrimonial offences, nor as reward for the other party. In *Odusote v Odusote*..., the court held that where a mother does not suffer from moral misconduct, infectious diseases, insanity, lack of reasonable means, or is not cruel to the children, custody of children of tender age and female children should be given to the mother.

Custody for married couples may be sought under the Matrimonial Causes Act or the Child's Rights Act. For unmarried couples, only the Child's Rights Act applies. In states where the law has not been adopted, customary or Islamic laws will apply. The considerations for grant of custody for unmarried couples are largely the same because the interest of the child is the most important factor.<sup>38</sup>

Section 114(6) of Nigeria's *Matrimonial Causes Act* indicates that '[n]othing in this Act shall have effect in relation to a marriage which is not a monogamous marriage or which is entered into in accordance with Muslim rites or with any customary law in force in Nigeria'.<sup>39</sup>

Nigeria's 'constitution provides that, in addition to common law courts, states may establish courts based on sharia or customary (traditional) law'. There are Sharia courts in 12 northern states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), and '[c]ustomary courts functioned in most of the 36 states. The nature of a case and the consent of the parties usually determined what type of court had jurisdiction'. The constitution specifically recognises sharia courts for 'civil proceedings', although 'they do not have the authority to compel participation by non-Muslims'. Sharia courts were reported to provide women 'increased access to divorce, child custody, and alimony'.<sup>40</sup>

In relation to child custody following the dissolution of a customary marriage in Nigeria, a July 2017 paper by Bright E Oniha, who is 'President 1 (Special Grade) Area Customary Court, Edo State Judiciary', indicates that there can be either non-judicial or judicial dissolution of a marriage contracted under customary law. Non-judicial dissolution of customary marriage 'is carried out informally without the formalities of any judicial process', and 'may be executed unilaterally or by mutual agreement of both parties'.<sup>41</sup> Judicial dissolution brings customary marriage 'to an end by the instrumentality of the judicial process'. It is increasing in popularity as 'it provides recorded evidence of divorce, provides an avenue for the return of bride price in circumstances that would otherwise

<sup>37</sup> ['Family law in Nigeria: overview'](#), Thomson Reuters Practical Law, 1 October 2017, CISED50AD8265

<sup>38</sup> ['Family law in Nigeria: overview'](#), Thomson Reuters Practical Law, 1 October 2017, CISED50AD8265

<sup>39</sup> ['Matrimonial Causes Act'](#), 1970 No.18, Government of Nigeria, 17 March 1970, CIS7B83941422

<sup>40</sup> ['Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2016 – Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 3 March 2017, OGD95BE926898, Section 1(e), pp.12 & 14

<sup>41</sup> ['Dissolution of Marriage and Custody of Children under Customary Law in Nigeria'](#), Oniha, B E, 24 July 2017, CISED50AD8275, p.7

have been difficult or impossible as well as presents an impartial judicial platform for the just determination of ancillary issues such as custody of the children of the marriage'. Customary courts in Nigeria have 'jurisdiction to dissolve customary marriages'.<sup>42</sup>

In relation to child custody, the paper indicates that '[u]nder the Customary Courts Law of the various states where customary courts have been established, provisions have made [sic] relating to custody of children in the event of dissolution of customary law marriages by customary courts'. In most systems of customary law, generally, 'the father has absolute right to custody of the children of the marriage. Upon his death, the male head of the father's family is vested with the right. Although the day to day care of the children may be the responsibility of the mother'.<sup>43</sup> Where the children are very young, they stay 'in the custody of their mother until they can be properly and safely separated from their mother and returned to their father'. Most judicial decisions by courts interpreting this aspect of customary marriage 'have generally upheld this principle', although 'the strict application of this custom is fast waning'.<sup>44</sup>

Different factors were 'now taken into consideration in determining the issue of custody of the children of a customary marriage'. The Nigerian Supreme Court, in the case of *Okwueze v. Okwueze*, 'held that whilst it recognizes the superior rights of the father, this right will not be enforced where it will be detrimental to the welfare of the children'.<sup>45</sup> There had also 'been statutory intervention in this area in cases of judicial dissolution of marriage', with '[t]he primacy of the "best interest and welfare" principle in custody of children contestation' having 'become the prevailing general legal road map that customary court in Nigeria adopt in the determination of this prime issue. This is also true of statutory marriages conducted under the Nigeria Marriage Act by the various High Courts where jurisdiction is reposed'.<sup>46</sup> According to the paper, 'the legal principles governing dissolution customary marriages and custody of children under customary law and under statutory marriages conducted under the Act are significantly similar and well developed. Where differences exist, there have been statutory interventions'.<sup>47</sup>

Another paper on divorce proceedings in customary law by Hon. Justice O'Connell Ogbonna, President Ebonyi State Customary Court of Appeal, Abakaliki, indicates that in relation to a divorce arising from a customary marriage, '[w]here recourse is made to judicial divorce, due regard is usually had to the duration of the marriage, conduct of the parties and the sexes of the children born of the marriage. Such reliefs come in the form of court orders, disobedience of which materialises into committal proceeding in contempt'. However, 'where the divorce procedure is non-judicial and unilateral, the above considerations are most unlikely to apply, at least, as a rule binding on parties'.<sup>48</sup> The paper also indicates that 'the dominant position of the Nigerian man in both domestic and economic spheres ensures that the husband enjoys custodial rights over the children of the marriage', and 'the welfare of the principles applicable in statutory custody cases is not a necessary issue for consideration in customary divorce'.<sup>49</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil

### **3. Are there agencies for victims of domestic violence in Lagos and what services do they offer?**

<sup>42</sup> ['Dissolution of Marriage and Custody of Children under Customary Law in Nigeria'](#), Oniha, B E, 24 July 2017, CISED50AD8275 p.8

<sup>43</sup> ['Dissolution of Marriage and Custody of Children under Customary Law in Nigeria'](#), Oniha, B E, 24 July 2017, CISED50AD8275, p.17

<sup>44</sup> ['Dissolution of Marriage and Custody of Children under Customary Law in Nigeria'](#), Oniha, B E, 24 July 2017, CISED50AD8275, p.17

<sup>45</sup> ['Dissolution of Marriage and Custody of Children under Customary Law in Nigeria'](#), Oniha, B E, 24 July 2017, CISED50AD8275, pp.17-18

<sup>46</sup> ['Dissolution of Marriage and Custody of Children under Customary Law in Nigeria'](#), Oniha, B E, 24 July 2017, CISED50AD8275, p.18

<sup>47</sup> ['Dissolution of Marriage and Custody of Children under Customary Law in Nigeria'](#), Oniha, B E, 24 July 2017, CISED50AD8275, p.23

<sup>48</sup> ['Divorce Proceedings: Customary Law Perspective'](#), Ogbonna, O, 30 July 2017, CISED50AD8276, p.17

<sup>49</sup> ['Divorce Proceedings: Customary Law Perspective'](#), Ogbonna, O, 30 July 2017, CISED50AD8276, p.19



Limited information was located on agencies providing services for victims of domestic violence in Lagos.

The March 2018 DFAT country information report on Nigeria notes generally that:

A number of NGOs [non-governmental organisations] provide support to women in violent relationships, including through the provision of shelters. Shelters are predominantly located in southern Nigeria. The government provides a small number of state-run shelters across Nigeria; however, DFAT understands the government shelters are poorly equipped and do not provide adequate protection. Police often turn away domestic violence victims if they report the offence, continuing to view the issue as a private matter that should remain within the boundaries of the marital home.<sup>50</sup>

The website of Project Alert,<sup>51</sup> a women's rights organisation with its headquarters in Lagos, indicates that it provides 'counseling, legal aid, shelter, skill acquisition and medical support' to abused women and girls. Project Alert also 'gives loans to women and families, who need some assistance to either enable them rent a new place away from the abusive environment or start a small business'.<sup>52</sup> In relation to a women's shelter the organisation runs in Lagos, it is stated on the website:

Our shelter project, known as **Sophia's Place** is the first battered women's shelter in Nigeria. Set up in May 2001, it is home away from home, and located in a suburb of Lagos (the location of which cannot be made public due to the nature of cases received). A resident Shelter Administrator, sees to the day to day running of the shelter, responds to the needs of the residents; and reports back to the office. Full capacity, the shelter can admit six (6) families. Shelter stay is for one month and during this period, it is free. Thereafter if a resident wants to extend and stay longer, she or her referring organization would have to pay monthly. Till date, the shelter has accommodated over 600 women/families.<sup>53</sup>

In February 2016, *The Guardian* reported that 'Nigeria, home to an estimated 170 million people, has just a handful of facilities dedicated to the care and support of survivors' of rape and sexual abuse. According to the article, '[t]he first in the country, the Mirabel Centre in Lagos, was set up in 2013. Since then, a former Miss Nigeria winner established the Eight Foundation Centre, which also offers crisis support for women'. The Mirabel had 'treated and supported more than 1,100 survivors of rape and sexual assault'. It 'is a modest two-room building located within the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital'. Joy Onoriose, a counsellor at the centre, said '[w]e are, more than anything, a client-centred organisation whose primary concern is to help the victims understand and deal better with what they are going through... Depending on what they need, we point them in the right direction'. The centre also 'covers the cost of medical tests for sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy, as well as drugs and contraceptives. As part of its regular activities, it also organises sexual assault sensitisation programmes across secondary schools in the state to create awareness about the dangers of rape'. When its international funding came to an end in 2015, 'the centre was forced to look to the public to stay afloat'.<sup>54</sup>

A November 2014 Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response to information request also includes information from sources regarding the Mirabel Centre and Project Alert in Lagos. The response to information request also provides the following further information from sources in relation to shelters in Lagos:

According to the representative of LEDAP [Legal Defence Assistance Project of Nigeria], in Lagos State, there are three shelters for abused women: a church-run shelter, a Ministry of Women's Affairs shelter and

<sup>50</sup> 'DFAT Country Information Report: Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, CIS7B83941414, p.22

<sup>51</sup> Project Alert describes itself as 'a non-governmental women's rights organisation set up in January 1999 to promote and protect the rights of women and young girls. The headquarters [sic] of Project Alert is in Lagos while Abuja has a branch office'. '[About PROJECTALERT](#)', Project Alert, n.d., Accessed 8 March 2018

<sup>52</sup> '[Support Services Programme – SSP](#)', Project Alert, n.d., Accessed 8 March 2018, CIS7B83941394

<sup>53</sup> '[Support Services Programme – SSP](#)', Project Alert, n.d., Accessed 8 March 2018, CIS7B83941394

<sup>54</sup> '[Welcome to Mirabel: the first centre supporting rape survivors in Nigeria](#)', *The Guardian*, 25 February 2016, CX6A26A6E20498

the ProjectAlert shelter...

The Executive Director of ProjectAlert stated that its shelter, Sophia's Place in Lagos, is the group's only shelter... The shelter can accommodate up to 20 women and their children, in several rooms large enough for 3 or 4 people... Sources report that women can stay at the ProjectAlert shelter for free for several weeks, after which they must pay to stay... The Executive Director of ProjectAlert explained that women can stay up to 6 months and, the cost they must pay to stay is approximately 20,000 Nairas per month [about C\$136]...

There is one government-run shelter in Lagos State... Sources report that to qualify for shelter at the facility the woman's case must be reviewed and accepted by the Ministry of Women's Affairs... The LEDAP representative indicated that the Ministry of Women's Affairs has shelters in other parts of the country, but that the shelters in the cities of Lagos and Abuja have "better capacity" than those in "other less advanced parts of the country"... The Executive Director of ProjectAlert indicated that the Ministry shelter in the city of Lagos has a capacity of approximately 100 beds...<sup>55</sup>

The response to information request also mentions 'the Women's Human Rights Clinic in Lagos, which provides alternative dispute resolution to victims of domestic violence', and 'BAOBAB for Women's Rights, a Lagos-based non-profit NGO "committed to the promotion and protection of women's rights"'.<sup>56</sup>

The response to information request indicates that:

According to Justice for All, a partnership between the Nigerian government and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) formed to build the capacity, accountability and responsiveness of policing, justice, and anti-corruption institutions in coordination with civil society and oversight institutions..., there is a model police station in Lagos, which incorporates a Family Support Unit to "eradicate gender inequality in police services" and that the model is being replicated in four states due to a reported increase in "satisfaction with police response rates".<sup>57</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- A June 2017 European Asylum Support Office country of origin information report on Nigeria provides information on protection and shelters for victims of domestic violence in Nigeria. '[EASO Country of Origin Information Report – Country Focus Nigeria](#)', European Asylum Support Office (EASO), June 2017, CISED50AD4813, pp.34-37
- An August 2016 UK Home Office report on women fearing gender-based harm or violence in Nigeria includes information on non-government assistance available to women who face domestic violence. '[Country Information and Guidance: Nigeria: Women fearing gender-based harm or violence](#)', UK Home Office, August 2016, OGD7C848D59, pp.39-40

#### **4. Do hospitals in Lagos have reporting requirements in respect of victims of domestic violence?**

In Lagos State, it is reported that health care providers have no clear reporting obligations in relation to gender-based violence, although legislation allows a health provider to apply for a protection order for certain victims.

A 2016 paper on violence against women in Nigeria indicates that '[i]n Nigeria, there are provisions extant in certain pieces of legislation requiring health care providers, such as doctors, nurses, and

<sup>55</sup> '[Nigeria: Domestic violence, including Lagos State; legislation, recourse, state protection and services available to victims \(2011-October 2014\)](#)', Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, NGA104980.E, 10 November 2014, OG61C530226

<sup>56</sup> '[Nigeria: Domestic violence, including Lagos State; legislation, recourse, state protection and services available to victims \(2011-October 2014\)](#)', Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, NGA104980.E, 10 November 2014, OG61C530226

<sup>57</sup> '[Nigeria: Domestic violence, including Lagos State; legislation, recourse, state protection and services available to victims \(2011-October 2014\)](#)', Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, NGA104980.E, 10 November 2014, OG61C530226

midwives, to report to police or other law enforcement authorities. For example, the VAPP [Violence against Persons Prohibition] Act allows voluntary organizations working to help victims to record a violence incident report, and forward it to the police or to the magistrate'.<sup>58</sup>

In relation to Lagos, the paper states that '[i]n Lagos State, there are no clear reporting obligations, although it does allow the health provider to apply for a protection order for certain victims'.<sup>59</sup> The paper further states that:

Under the VAPP Act, Lagos' domestic violence law, and Jigawa's law, a health service provider can bring an application for a protection order for a victim of domestic violence. This allows a health service provider, to intervene, where she or he has knowledge of abuse, and take concrete action that will help the victim. Further, the law in Lagos State goes on to state that the health service provider can bring such an application for a protective order, without the consent of the victim where such victim is "(a) a minor; (b) mentally retarded; (c) unconscious; (d) incapable to consent for fear of refusal; or (e) a person whom the court is satisfied [is] unable to provide the required consent."<sup>60</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil

<sup>58</sup> ['Intersections of Violence Against Women and Health: Implications for Health Law and Policy in Nigeria'](#), Onyemelukwe, C, William & Mary Journal of Women and the Law, 2016, vol. 22, iss. 3, CIS38A80128118, pp.609-653, at p.644

<sup>59</sup> ['Intersections of Violence Against Women and Health: Implications for Health Law and Policy in Nigeria'](#), Onyemelukwe, C, William & Mary Journal of Women and the Law, 2016, vol. 22, iss. 3, CIS38A80128118, pp.609-653, at p.645

<sup>60</sup> ['Intersections of Violence Against Women and Health: Implications for Health Law and Policy in Nigeria'](#), Onyemelukwe, C, William & Mary Journal of Women and the Law, 2016, vol. 22, iss. 3, CIS38A80128118, pp.609-653, at p.644



## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: CI18042012183718 – Ogboni Society – State protection

Date of Report

1 May 2018

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#### Background

[redacted]

#### Questions

1. [Please provide any information about the Ogboni confraternity, a secret sect in Nigeria.](#)
2. [Please provide information on the availability of state protection for someone who fears harm from members of a secret society.](#)
3. [What information is available about whether or not members of the Ogboni Society would pursue someone who refused to join the Society and would harm or kill them?](#)

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## Answers

### 1. Please provide any information about the Ogboni confraternity<sup>1</sup>, a secret sect in Nigeria.

Note: According to information reported in the UK Home Office December 2013 Operational Guidance Note on Nigeria, the use of the term 'cult' is freely used in the country to refer to any organised group of people where there is some sort of secrecy around purpose or operations, and the Ogboni Society would be included in this category.<sup>2</sup>

The Ogboni Society, or cult, appears to be a type of political organisation that is known to have existed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a means of maintaining law and order in Yorubaland towns. Within Nigeria today, Yoruba live predominantly in the contemporary states of Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Lagos, Kwara, Osun, Ekiti, Edo and parts of Kogi.<sup>3</sup>

The Ogboni cult in traditional Yoruba society was an instrument of government, and carried out legislative, executive and judicial functions and also functioned as a court of appeal.<sup>4</sup>

As noted by Oladiti Akeem in a 2006 journal article,

The *Ogboni* performed legal and indicial roles in Yoruba society up to the period of the introduction of native court system under colonial rule in the early decades of the twentieth century...

They often maintained law and order and also ensured solidarity by keeping their proceedings secrete [sic] and binding on their members by blood oath. This cohesion made them to be a formidable force in Egba government...At best, the *Ogboni* cult remained a secret cult to which prominent chief sought initiation in order to promote social harmony, peace, justice and cooperation for the overall affairs of the people.<sup>5</sup>

A 2009 paper written by a lecturer in the Department of Religion at University of Ilorin refers to another writer's depiction of Ogboni as connoting 'maturity, discipline and truth'.<sup>6</sup> In addition, he also comments that,

...Okonko and Ogboni are organized in lodges, branches, and do have representative government with a hierarchy of elected officers and a special ritual for the election and initiation of new members. They are not societies of evil or darkness even though they carry a burden of secrecy. They are essentially ancestral organizations that emphasize good fellowship, coexistence, mutual aid and philanthropy. Many presidents, senators, governors and supreme court justices are members. By their very nature, Okonko and Ogboni tend to draw their members from the more privileged groups of citizens, in which the young are well provided with the advantages that lead them towards success. However, in recent times, the influence of Okonko in community affairs is diminishing. And Awolalu and Dopamu (2005:250)

<sup>1</sup> This is a separate society, not to be confused with the Reformed Ogboni Fraternity which was formed in 1918. See e.g. Nigeria: The Reformed Ogboni Fraternity (ROF), including the nature of its belief system and its purpose; whether membership is compulsory, especially for children of members, and consequences for refusing to join the ROF; whether positions within the ROF are inherited, NGA1041054.E, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 13 April 2012, OG32EAFEB186

<sup>2</sup> Operational Guidance Note Nigeria, UK Home Office, 1 December 2013, p. 14, CIS36DE0BB1945

<sup>3</sup> [Yoruba Traditional Adjudicatory Systems](#), Onadeko T, African Study Monographs Vol 29, 1, p. 16  
CIS956B8881737

<sup>4</sup> [The nature of reprimand in traditional Yoruba society](#), Akeem, OA, The Social Sciences, Vol 1, 4, p. 244, CISBE8E6BE861

<sup>5</sup> [The nature of reprimand in traditional Yoruba society](#), Akeem, OA, The Social Sciences, Vol 1, 4, p. 244, CISBE8E6BE861

<sup>6</sup> The theory and practice of secrecy in Ikonko and Ogbono Societies, Nwosu, P U, 2009, p. 11, CISE1310071958

also observed that “the Ogboni society has lost much of its earlier powers... the Ogboni functions are limited to ceremonials like title taking, funerals, and sacrifices.”<sup>7</sup>

Other sources also indicate that the society today resembles more of a social club, rather than a cult or secret society. Members are said to have links to Freemasonry, Rotary Club and the Rosicrucian Brotherhood, with strong representation within the social elite, including within the police, judiciary, government and traditional institutions.<sup>8</sup> Its influence is said to have been declining since the 1990s.<sup>9</sup>

Further, more specifically localised information states that Ogboni society may have an influence on traditional administration of the cities in the Egba, Egbado and Abeokuta parts of Nigeria, roughly corresponding to areas in Ogun State and Lagos State, along with some rural villages and towns on the borders of Ogun State with Oyu, Osun and Ondo States.<sup>10</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil

## **2. Please provide information on the availability of state protection for someone who fears harm from members of a secret society.**

State protection would be available for a person who feared harm from members of a secret society.

The 1999 Nigerian Constitution provides for freedom of religion:

“Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

“No person attending any place of education shall be required to receive religious instruction or to take part in or attend any religious ceremony or observance if such instruction ceremony or observance relates to a religion other than his own, or religion not approved by his parent or guardian.

“No religious community or denomination shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for pupils of that community or denomination in any place of education maintained wholly by that community or denomination.

**Nothing in this section shall entitle any person to form, take part in the activity or be a member of a secret society.**<sup>11</sup> (emphasis added)

Part IV of the Constitution includes a list of definitions where at s. 318, secret societies are defined as follows:

<sup>7</sup> The theory and practice of secrecy in Ikonko and Ogbono Societies, Nwosu, P U, 2009, p. 11-12, CISE1310071958

<sup>8</sup> Nigeria: Ogboni society, including its history, structure, rituals and ceremonies; information on membership and the consequences of refusing to join NGA104213.E , Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 14 November 2012 CIS 3899

<sup>9</sup> [Country Focus Nigeria](#) EASO, 2 June 2017, p. 57, CISED50AD4813

<sup>10</sup> Nigeria: Ogboni society, including its history, structure, rituals and ceremonies; information on membership and the consequences of refusing to join NGA104213.E , Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 14 November 2012 CIS 3899

<sup>11</sup> Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Nigeria Law, s 38, CIS1CA3D8B434

"Secret society" includes any society, association, group or body of persons (whether registered or not)

(a) that uses secret signs, oaths, rites or symbols and which is formed to promote a cause, the purpose or part of the purpose of which is to foster the interest of its members and to aid one another under any circumstances without due regard to merit, fair play or justice to the detriment of the legitimate interest of those who are not members;

(b) the membership of which is incompatible with the function or dignity of any public office under this Constitution and whose members are sworn to observe oaths of secrecy; or

(c) the activities of which are not known to the public at large, the names of whose members are kept secret and whose meetings and other activities are held in secret;<sup>12</sup>

Nigeria's largest law enforcement agency is the National Police Force which is responsible for maintaining law and order in each of the states and Federal Capital Territory. The armed forces are also needed to control societal violence.<sup>13</sup>

According to its most recent country report on Nigeria, BTI Stiftung notes that the country faces challenges in improving the reputation of the police and strengthening its ability to protect citizens from crime.<sup>14</sup> There are reportedly insufficient police for the size of the population and an analyst for the International Crisis Group has commented that the deployment of military forces for security operations underlined the dysfunctional state of the country's public safety institutions and the ineffectiveness of police.<sup>15</sup>

In its March 2018 country report on Nigeria, DFAT notes that the Nigeria Police Force is one of the largest in the world, but 'suffers from low capacity and insufficient training.'<sup>16</sup>

A 2016 assessment by the International Police Association and the Institute for Economics and Peace ranked the Nigerian police at the lowest of 127 countries that it rated. Its low ranking was amongst other factors linked to poor police officer to population ratio (219:100,000) and its high level of political terror with a scale of 4 since 1993.<sup>17</sup> The Nigerian Police rejected the report's findings which it said ignored improvements in capacity building, training and the large recruitment drive which would contribute an additional ten thousand police personnel. Other criticisms of the report were also made.<sup>18</sup>

The EASO report on Nigeria published in June 2017 comments on the criticisms made of the Nigerian Police Force for its corruption and human rights abuses, as well as the widespread use of police officers to act as personal security guards for wealthy individuals and private commercial operations.<sup>19</sup>

The EASO report also states that that the Nigerian police would treat crime committed by secret societies and campus cults as any other kind of crime.<sup>20</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil

<sup>12</sup> Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Nigeria Law, s 38, CIS1CA3D8B434

<sup>13</sup> [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 - Nigeria](#), US Department of State, 20 April 2018, section 1d, OGD95BE927406

<sup>14</sup> [BTI 2018 Country Report Nigeria](#), Bertelsmann Stiftung, 22 March 2018, pp. 30, 24, CIS7B83941580

<sup>15</sup> [Spreading Nigerian violence draws military to policing role](#) Bloomberg.com, 4 April 2018, CXBB8A1DA25038

<sup>16</sup> DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria, DFAT, 9 March 2018, p. 29, CIS7B83941414

<sup>17</sup> [Nigeria police blows hot over ranking as world's worst](#), Daily Post, 11 November 2017, CXC90406617460

<sup>18</sup> [Nigeria police blows hot over ranking as world's worst](#), Daily Post, 11 November 2017, CXC90406617460

<sup>19</sup> [Country Focus Nigeria](#) EASO, 2 June 2017, p. 31, CISED50AD4813

<sup>20</sup> [Country Focus Nigeria](#) EASO, 2 June 2017, p. 59, CISED50AD4813

### 3. What information is available about whether or not members of the Ogboni Society would pursue someone who refused to join the Society and would harm or kill them?

By virtue of the relatively undocumented character of contemporary Ogboni Society practices,<sup>21</sup> a definitive answer was not found as to whether or not members who refused to join the Ogboni Society would be harmed. However, no sources were found of harm having been inflicted on a person who refused to join the Ogboni Society.

According to information in the 2017 EASO report on Nigeria, membership of the Ogboni is hereditary by the eldest son or daughter, who join voluntarily. As noted in the report:

In communities where chieftaincy titles are hereditary in some way, it is very unusual that refusing such a title poses a problem. First, it is unusual to refuse a title, because it implies refusing power, authority, prestige and respect (459), second, if someone would refuse, i.e. because of religious objections, there will generally be several others who are both qualified and willing to take the position (460).

According to interlocutors of the OFPRA fact-finding mission, membership of the Ogboni is hereditary by the eldest son or daughter, who join voluntarily, even Christians – although they mentioned that it is difficult to withdraw, that 'it is normal, it is my destination (461).

No information was found in the available sources reporting verifiable cases of someone who has faced threats or violence after refusing the office of traditional ruler.<sup>22</sup>

A Refugee and Immigration Board of Canada research response published in 2012 included comments by Prof Ama Mazama a professor of African religion at Temple University, about the consequences for a person if they declined to join the society. He noted that positions within the Ogboni Society are not inherited,

[i]f one person's parent was a member of the Ogboni Society, and that person had been exposed to their activities (e.g. meetings held at his or her parents' house while the child was present so that over the years the child grew up knowing the identities of the Ogboni; or, the parent deliberately pledged that his or her child would become a member; or, if the child had been used as an assassin by the Ogboni in the sense that he or she had been the "courier" who went into a target's compound and added poison to the water source or whatever), that child would be expected to join). So, in essence only someone who has had a history with them in a very close manner can be intimidated into joining. And if this were in the Egba, Egbado or Abeokuta areas of Ogun State in particular (or within that region generally), their intimidation might work. Notwithstanding, the primary means of membership is voluntary. In most situations, individuals deliberately and voluntarily join these societies because they want power, financial rewards, and success.<sup>23</sup>

Another Refugee and Immigration Board of Canada research response published in 2005 quoted an anthropology professor concerning forced recruitment:

On the other hand, the anthropology professor stated that forced membership in the Ogboni society might be possible, although it would not be common (14 Apr. 2000). She said that there was an expectation that children of members would join. If there was such an expectation, the parents could apply considerable pressure on the individual to join (ibid.). In contrast, the political science professor said that he knew of one Ogboni member who did not want his son to join, despite his son's expressed desire to do so (13 Apr. 2000). The anthropology professor also stated that the Ogboni would not typically induct children as members (14 Apr. 2000). She said that membership would normally be offered to those considered to be elder or mature, with consideration given to whether the person was married and whether he or she had

<sup>21</sup> Nigeria: Ogboni society, including its history, structure, rituals and ceremonies; information on membership and the consequences of refusing to join NGA104213.E, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 14 November 2012 CIS 3899

<sup>22</sup> [Country Focus Nigeria](#) EASO, 2 June 2017, p. 61, CISED50AD4813

<sup>23</sup> Nigeria: Ogboni society, including its history, structure, rituals and ceremonies; information on membership and the consequences of refusing to join NGA104213.E, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 14 November 2012 CIS 3899



children, as these are indicators of an individual becoming a "complete person" (ibid.).

The anthropology professor also described the only instance she could think of when the society might actively pursue a person who did not want to join (ibid.). If that person's parent(s) had "dedicated" their child to the society, sometimes before birth, then the society could go after the person and force him or her to join to ensure the fulfilment of the parents' promise. She said that the person who had been dedicated might be raised unaware that their parent(s) were Ogboni member(s). As such, they might not be approached by the society until they were thought ready to join, which could be when the individual was 30 or 40 years old. She added that she was fairly sure that the persons she lived with in Nigeria who were Ogboni did not join until they were in their late thirties.<sup>24</sup>

#### Additional reading

- Nil

<sup>24</sup> Nigeria: Ogboni society including history, structure, rituals and ceremonies; membership and consequences for refusing to join (April 2000-July 2005) NGA100180.E, 12 July 2005 CISNET – Refugee and Humanitarian Board of Canada responses



## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: CI180503102352657 – ‘Big Man’ cult

Date of Report: 3 May 2018

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#### Background

He is a Christian man from Ibadan who initially claimed that he fears an “occultic group”. He claimed that a friend helped him find a job, but a condition of the job was that he be initiated into the “occultic group”, which he refused, and he claims they have attempted to kill him.

Whilst he did not name the group in his initial claims, he has now submitted a further statement in which he claims that he fears the “Big Man Cult”. He has advanced further details about being taken to a bush location where everyone was wearing red clothing, and a body was hanging from a tree with money stuffed in its mouth, and there was blood everywhere.

Whilst there is a fair bit of information available about ‘cult’ and ‘confraternity’ groups in Nigeria (both on CISNet & the Internet), I cannot seem to find anything in relation to the “Big Man Cult”. From the limited details he has given, and his age (he is 31 yrs old), it would not appear to be a university based group, like many of the other Nigerian ‘cults’ are. I have noted that ‘Big Man’ (aka ‘Ogas’) seems to be a term used in other contexts in Nigeria, describing ruling oligarchs, or ‘king makers’.

Grateful if your team could assist in trying to locate any information about the existence and activities of the “Big Man Cult”. Of particular interest would be any information on their recruitment methods, initiation rites, colours or insignia used, areas of operations, size and influence of the group. Anything further on the authorities capacity and willingness to protect people who fear cult groups would also be of assistance.

#### Questions

1. Grateful if your team could assist in trying to locate any information about the existence and activities of the “Big Man Cult”. Of particular interest would be any information on their recruitment methods, initiation rites, colours or insignia used, areas of operations, size and influence of the group. Anything further on the authorities capacity and willingness to protect people who fear cult groups would also be of assistance.

## Answers

1. Grateful if your team could assist in trying to locate any information about the existence and activities of the “Big Man Cult”. Of particular interest would be any information on their recruitment methods, initiation rites, colours or insignia used, areas of operations, size and influence of the group. Anything further on authorities capacity and willingness to protect people who fear cult groups would also be of assistance.

COISS did not find any information on a specific ‘Big Man Cult’ in Ibadan or elsewhere in Nigeria. ‘Big Man’ (or *Oga*) is a term used to describe a figure of influence, chieftain, VIP, politician, etc. What is termed ‘big man rule’ in Nigeria is an informal patronage network.<sup>1</sup>

A House of Commons Library 2015 research paper describes it as follows:

While highly asymmetrical in terms of the power relations involved, patronage can and does involve reciprocity and is often viewed as legitimate by many Nigerians. For the poor, patronage networks can be a vital means of survival.

Wale Adebani and Ebenezer Obadare have written: “While Nigerians are general *socially* supportive of anti-corruption efforts, many are *politically* or *economically* connected to the corruption complex, directly or indirectly.”

But the biggest beneficiaries are the ‘Big Men’ – or Ogas, as they are known in Nigeria – at the top. There is an uneasy and fluid hierarchy within the ranks of the Ogas, who can be found across the military, political and business spheres.<sup>2</sup>

A 2007 Human Rights Watch report details the nexus between politicians, cults and gangs. This notes that the reach of many cults has spread far beyond university campuses and that many of these groups maintain ties to powerful politicians, ‘some of whom themselves have associations with cult organizations dating back to their days at university.’ The report mentions an Ibadan based gang with ‘ties to Oyo State political godfather Lamidi Adedibu’.<sup>3</sup>

A 2001 journal article looks at the obligations of ‘big men’ and the patron-client relationship in Nigeria, noting that the ‘recognition and acclaim of being a “big man” came from being a big patron.’ The article looks at the belief in the role of the occult and ritual murder in attaining material wealth.<sup>4</sup>

An August 2017 report by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) states:

Despite very clear and well-known laws against membership of secret cults, state level laws listing proscribed organisations, and concerted campaigns to keep the cults out of campuses, it is clear that they are as much of a problem there today as they have ever been. As they expanded so their reputations rapidly deteriorated, and although they are known as ‘cults’ they have become forms of gangs (or at least they are more like gangs than they are like religious cults following charismatic or millennial prophets and preachers).<sup>5</sup>

EASO also states:

<sup>1</sup> ‘Africa’s new big man rule? Pentecostalism and patronage in Ghana’, McCauley, JF, African Affairs. 446, 1, 2013 [EBSCOHost](#)

<sup>2</sup> [‘Nigeria 2015: analysis of election issues and future prospects’](#), House of Commons Library, Research Paper 15/02, 19 January 2015, p. 16, CISEC96CF13080

<sup>3</sup> [‘Criminal Politics: Violence, “Godfathers” and Corruption in Nigeria’](#), Human Rights Watch, October 2007, pp.23-25, CIS15439

<sup>4</sup> “The Arrow of God”: Pentecostalism, Inequality, and the Supernatural in South-Eastern Nigeria’, Smith, D, Africa (Edinburgh University Press), December 2001;71(4):587, pp.594-595, [EBSCOHost](#)

<sup>5</sup> [‘EASO COI Meeting Report: Nigeria’](#), European Asylum Support Office (EASO), 22 August 2017, p.80, CISED50AD5393

[T]here is no specific unit set up to investigate [ritual murder] crimes by the Nigerian police. They of course are treated as murders under the 1990 Criminal Code and the Northern Penal code. Possession of human body parts is a criminal offence. Trial by ordeal is also criminalised – and is liable to the death penalty. The criminal code also states that it is a misdemeanour to:

Be in possession of human remains intended to be used in connection with the worship or invocation of any juju

Illegal to make or sell or assist in making any juju, drug or charm intended to prevent or delay, compel or possess the power of causing any natural phenomenon or any disease or epidemic.

Illegal to direct, control or preside at the worship or invocation of any juju that is prohibited.

Make or use or assist in anything being or believed to be associated with human sacrifice or other unlawful practice.<sup>6</sup>

Sources consulted when researching this response include: UNHCR Refworld, The European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI), Department of Home Affairs resources including CISNET and Library, US Department of State, NGO and human rights organisations, local news sources, major international newspapers and the Google search engine.

#### Additional Reading

- For detailed background on secret cults in Nigerian Universities, see: ["Violence in the Citadel: The Menace of Secret Cults in the Nigerian Universities"](#), Nordic Association of African Studies, 14, January 2005, CIS9BE2467733.

<sup>6</sup> ["EASO COI Meeting Report: Nigeria"](#), European Asylum Support Office (EASO), 22 August 2017, p.76, CISED50AD5393)



## Nigeria: CI180615102558406 – ECOWAS – Member States – Mutual Access – Residence Visas

Date of Report

20 June 2018

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### Background

There is a large cohort of Commonwealth Games applicants from [redacted] other ECOWAS member states.

### Questions

1. [Is access to Economic Community of West African States \(ECOWAS\) member states unrestricted in all cases?](#)
2. [Are there restrictions on the 90 day visa?](#)
3. [Are there problems obtaining a 3 year Residence permit upon expiry of the initial \(automatic\) 90 day visa?](#)
4. [Are there examples of persons refused a \(temporary\) Residence visa or being deported back to their country of origin?](#)

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## Answers

### 1. Is access to Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) member states unrestricted in all cases?

COISS has previously addressed the question of travel restrictions in access to ECOWAS states – see '[Additional Reading](#)' below. In summary, as outlined in the Protocol on Free Movement (the Protocol) signed by member states, ECOWAS citizens are able to travel without visas within the ECOWAS region.<sup>1</sup> However, as noted by an October 2016 publication, border-crossers still require a travel document, such as a 'standardized regional Travel Certificate' or passport.<sup>2</sup> Further, Article 4 of the Protocol grants member states the right to refuse admission to people based on their own domestic inadmissibility laws.<sup>3</sup> Specific to the situation of Nigerians, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has stated that 'Nigerians can freely enter the fourteen member states covered by the ECOWAS Treaty with a Nigerian passport or an ECOWAS Travel Certificate'.<sup>4</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Covers issues of travel restrictions under the ECOWAS Treaty: CR837DFFB131, "Sierra Leone: CI180426115444842 – 1997 coup d'état – Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) – Politically motivated violence – ECOWAS residency and work rights", Country of Origin Information Services Section (COISS), 30 April 2018, Q.3
- Provides coverage of ECOWAS travel rights, including a section on restrictions on free movement: CR8DFDCEA219, "Ghana: CI170630174249158 – Movement under the ECOWAS Agreement", Country of Origin Information Services Section (COISS), 6 July 2017, Q.2.
- Provides background on the ECOWAS treaty, including on travel rights under the Protocol: CR0D9DEFA148, "Cape Verde: CI160504121620066 – ECOWAS travel – Treatment of Homosexuals", Country of Origin Information Services Section (COISS), 11 May 2016, Q.1

### 2. Are there restrictions on the 90 day visa?

As noted in [Question 1](#) above, while the Protocol on Free Movement (the Protocol) abolishes the need for visas for stays in member countries of up to 90 days, Article 4 of the Protocol grants member states the right to refuse admission based on inadmissibility criteria stipulated within domestic laws.<sup>5</sup>

Some ECOWAS countries' domestic migration regulations appear to place work and study restrictions on 'visitors'. For example, information posted on Ghana's Immigration website, which also appears to encompass visitors entering the country on a 90 day ECOWAS visa, states:

#### VISITORS

Having obtained the requisite visa, visitors must satisfy the Immigration officer on arrival that;

- He is genuinely seeking entry for a limited period as stated by him.
- He will leave Ghana at the end of the period granted him.

<sup>1</sup> '[Travel - Free movement of people](#)', Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), 2016, CX6A26A6E20465

<sup>2</sup> '[Regional Migration Governance in the African Continent – Current State of Affairs and the way Forward](#)', Stiftung Entwicklung und Frieden, October 2016, CIS38A80128072, p.22

<sup>3</sup> '[Immigration and Border Management Baseline Assessment](#)', International Organisation for Migration, 2013, CIS36DE0BB2751, pp.17,21

<sup>4</sup> 'DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia), 9 March 2018, CIS7B83941414, para.5.26, p.32

<sup>5</sup> '[Immigration and Border Management Baseline Assessment](#)', International Organisation for Migration, 2013, CIS36DE0BB2751, pp.17,21

- iii. He will not take up any employment while on visitor's permit.
- iv. He does not intend studying in any school.
- v. He will not be of public charge.

Before his entry is allowed at the point of entry a maximum of 60 days stay (90 days in the Case of ECOWAS nationals) is granted. The extension of the duration of the stay is allowed provided that the approving officer is convinced that conditions set above have been met.<sup>6</sup>

See [Question 1](#) above for further information around restrictions on ECOWAS travel rights.

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

### **3. Are there problems obtaining a 3 year Residence permit upon expiry of the initial (automatic) 90 day visa?**

COISS has previously addressed the question of obtaining ECOWAS residence permits, noting that while the right to reside in member state countries exists in law, it is unclear which of the ECOWAS member states actually implements this legal right (see '[Additional Reading](#)' below). More recently, DFAT has commented in relation to Nigerians that:

Nigerians can freely enter the fourteen member states covered by the ECOWAS Treaty with a Nigerian passport or an ECOWAS Travel Certificate. Nigerians also have a right of residence in all ECOWAS nations (see [www.ecowas.int](http://www.ecowas.int) for further information).

[...]

DFAT understands that movement within ECOWAS is generally free. While some countries have rules relating to residence permits, authorities rarely implement them. Porous borders, tribal links (people of the same ethnic background living in different ECOWAS countries), circular and cyclical migration, especially in the field of agriculture, and lack of knowledge of border laws allow the regular movement of Nigerians to and from other ECOWAS countries.<sup>7</sup>

A 2015 report by the UNHCR and IOM states that 'National laws and policies very often do not conform with the ECOWAS protocols, even when they have been adopted to implement commitments under the protocols. Among the challenges noted as of 2009 were that: "two of the 15 member states have not ratified the supplementary protocol on the right of residence and the right of establishment"'.<sup>8</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Outlines obstacles to the development of the residency rights component of the ECOWAS Protocol: 'Ghana: CI170630174249158 – Movement under the ECOWAS Agreement', COISS, 7 July 2017, CR8DFDCEA219, pp.4-5
- Provides information on the residential right component of the ECOWAS Protocol: 'CR0D9DEFA148, "Cape Verde: CI160504121620066 – ECOWAS travel – Treatment of Homosexuals", Country of Origin Information Section (COIS), 11 May 2016, Q1'
- Addresses the question of the right to reside in ECOWAS member countries: 'CRE6D9079104, "Liberia: CI150325110636777 – Right to enter and reside in ECOWAS countries", Country of Origin Information Section (COIS), 6 April 2015'

<sup>6</sup> '[Visa information – entry, residence and employment](#)', Ghana Immigration Service, 1 January 2015, CXBD6A0DE21306

<sup>7</sup> 'DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia), 9 March 2018, CIS7B83941414, para.5.28, p.32

<sup>8</sup> '[Nationality, Migration and Statelessness in West Africa – A Study for UNHCR and IOM](#)', UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Organisation for Migration (IOM), June 2015, CISEC96CF13653, p.86

- Addresses the question of the right to permanently reside in ECOWAS member countries: 'CRAD81550321, "Senegal: SEN41763 – The Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MDFC) – ECOWAS – Refugee Application Process in South Africa – Relocation to Dakar", Country of Origin Information Section (COIS), 27 February 2013, Q.3'

#### 4. Are there examples of persons refused a (temporary) Residence visa or being deported back to their country of origin?

Examples of persons refused residence visas have not been located.<sup>9</sup> Sources indicate that expulsions of ECOWAS citizens from ECOWAS member states have occurred.

According to the UN-IOM 2015 report referenced above, expulsions occur despite a generally tolerant attitude towards ECOWAS nationals:

At the same time, although ECOWAS Member States generally display a tolerant attitude to nationals of other ECOWAS countries with irregular migration status, expulsions do occur and frequently do not follow the requirement to be carried out "solely on strictly legal grounds". Nor did officials of Member States interviewed for this report note any coordinated efforts to "facilitate the obtaining of the correct documents by illegal immigrants", as required by the Code of Conduct.<sup>10</sup>

A July 2016 academic treatment of free movement across the ECOWAS states notes that formal protocols provide protections against individual expulsions:

The four supplementary protocols adopted between 1985 and 1990 committed member states, among other things, to provide valid travel documents to their citizens, grant Community citizens the right of residence for the purpose of seeking and carrying out income-earning employment and ensure appropriate treatment for persons being expelled. Member state are also not to expel Community citizens en masse and as well limit the grounds for individual expulsion to reasons of national security, public order or morality, public health or non-fulfillment of an essential condition of residence.<sup>11</sup>

The same article proceeds to note several instances of expulsion of ECOWAS citizens from member states:

In 1999, many ECOWAS citizens were expelled from Cote d'Ivoire. By that year, there were about four million immigrants in that country. The country's immigration policy experienced a sudden change, characterized by a groundswell of anti-immigrant sentiment which manifested in violence. The Government then ordered aliens, (including ECOWAS citizens), to leave the country. Anti-immigrant sentiment also simmered in Ghana leading the Government in March 1999, to request all aliens in the Country to get registered and obtain identify cards. The sentiments did not abate until 2010, when Globacom, a Nigerian company, threatened to close its Ghana office because of hostile economic policies aimed at alien businesses. Many aliens, (including ECOWAS citizens), were forced by the harsh development, to leave the country.<sup>12</sup>

The same source notes that in 2012, Ghana threatened to expel non-Ghanaian residents 'engaged in petty business', sparking unease among Nigerian immigrants. The Nigerian government reportedly asked ECOWAS to intervene to avert the mass expulsion.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Sources consulted include CISNET, RefWorld, ECOInet, online search engines.

<sup>10</sup> '[Nationality, Migration and Statelessness in West Africa – A Study for UNHCR and IOM](#)', UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Organisation for Migration (IOM), June 2015, CISEC96CF13653, p.86

<sup>11</sup> '[Free movement of persons, residence and right of establishment in economic community of West African State](#)', Adekola Tolulope Anthony, July 2016, CIS38A80128212, sect.4.5

<sup>12</sup> '[Free movement of persons, residence and right of establishment in economic community of West African State](#)', Adekola Tolulope Anthony, July 2016, CIS38A80128212, sect.4.2

<sup>13</sup> '[Free movement of persons, residence and right of establishment in economic community of West African State](#)', Adekola Tolulope Anthony, July 2016, CIS38A80128212, sect.4.5

A 2013 report co-authored by the IOM indicates that ECOWAS countries have closed borders and expelled ECOWAS citizens during periods of economic crisis.<sup>14</sup> Expanding on this theme, a 2016 academic article published in journal *History Compass* states:

Due to the general economic challenges that member countries of the [ECOWAS] Community are faced with, there is a general hostility against migrants from other countries within the Community. Migrants are usually blamed for all forms of criminal activities in a manner that suggests that crimes are alien to the countries concerned. Apart from the difficulties that migrants are faced with both in crossing borders and obtaining documents to stay in their host countries, there are also discriminations in employment and business policies. The fear that migrants take over few existing economic opportunities has also necessitate application of stringent business laws in home states. Until recently, Ghana imposed a minimum of US\$300,000 on Nigerian companies that wish to operate in that country.<sup>15</sup>

More recently, articles indicate instances of ECOWAS countries deporting other African nationals, though it is not clear whether these are ECOWAS citizens. A March 2018 article from *Modern Ghana* for example notes the deportation from Ghana of a hundred illegal immigrants from various African countries, with Immigration officials lamenting the ease with which Ghana's borders could be crossed under ECOWAS protocols.<sup>16</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

<sup>14</sup> 'Immigration and Border Management Baseline Assessment', International Organisation for Migration, 1 January 2013, CIS36DE0BB2751, p.18 (Original link lost; source available on CISNET)

<sup>15</sup> 'ECOWAS and Regional Integration in West Africa: From State to Emerging Private Authority', Samuel O Oluruntoba, *History Compass*, July 2016, CIS38A80128213, p.301

<sup>16</sup> '[Illegal Immigrants - Immigration Service Blames Flexible ECOWAS Policy](#)', *Modern Ghana*, 08 March 2018, CXBB8A1DA29644



## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: CI180808103810518 – Egbe Aje Secret Society – People’s Democratic Party – internal relocation for people fearing harm from influential people.

Date of Report

16 August 2018

This Q&A Report was prepared by the Country of Origin Information Services Section (COISS), Department of Home Affairs in response to a request for country information within time constraints. It is current at the time of completion. This Q&A Report should not be cited in a decision or any other document. Anyone wishing to use this information should only cite the source material contained herein.

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#### Background

[redacted]

#### Questions

1. [Please provide any information available about the: Egbe Awo Aje Secret Society, or Egbe Aje Secret Society \(EASS\).](#)
2. [Please provide any information available about, Taiwo OLADIMEJI, a possible influential member of the People’s Democratic Party.](#)
3. [Please advise on the likelihood that an individual, who is a significant figure in the PDP \(not an elected official\) and who has significant wealth, would be able to track people by exerting their influence over authorities in Nigeria.](#)

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## Answers

### 1. Please provide any information available about the: Egbe Awo Aje Secret Society, or Egbe Aje Secret Society (EASS).

No reference to any organisation or group named “Egbe Awo Aje Secret Society”, “Egbe Aje Secret Society”, “Egbe Awo Aje” or “Egbe Aje” could be found in any of the sources consulted.<sup>1</sup> Regarding secret societies in general in Nigeria, although banned under the Nigerian Constitution there are many traditional secret societies as well as university based secret ‘cults’ or fraternities, particularly in the south of the country.

The *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999* explicitly proscribes secret societies. Article 38 of the Constitution states (*inter alia*):

38. (1) Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

...(4) Nothing in this section shall entitle any person to form, take part in the activity or be a member of a secret society.<sup>2</sup>

The legal definition of what is a secret society is contained in Article 318(1) of the Constitution.<sup>3</sup>

Under the Constitution, members of secret societies are banned from election to the Senate and House of Representatives (Article 66(1)(g));<sup>4</sup> a (state) House of Assembly (Article 107(1)(g));<sup>5</sup> being elected President (Article 137(1)(h))<sup>6</sup> and being elected as a state Governor (Article 182(1)(h)).<sup>7</sup>

In addition to the prohibition of secret societies under Nigeria’s constitution, in 2004 Nigeria’s parliament passed a specific bill banning around 100 ‘secret cults’, in *the Secret Cult and Cult Related Activities (Prohibition) Bill, 2004*.<sup>8</sup>

According to a June 2017 European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report on Nigeria, the Ogboni society is perhaps the best known secret society in the country and they remain active. The report stated however that ‘many ethnic groups had similar societies, with some common traits.’<sup>9</sup>

In respect to the Ogboni, the EASO report stated:

The Ogboni society is a caste of Yoruba priests who elected and controlled the Oba, the Yoruba king. The Ogboni had great political and societal powers (they could ultimately force the Oba to withdraw or kill himself), and it used to be highly prestigious to become a member. According to interlocutors of the OFPRA fact-finding mission, membership is hereditary for the eldest son or daughter, who joins voluntarily, even Christians. However, the Ogboni’s influence has been declining since the 1990s...money is a greater means to access political power. Secret societies are not visible and members are supposed not to share their secrets with outsiders.<sup>10</sup>

Referring specifically to the Ogboni, a November 2012 Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) report noted conflicting information on the level of influence the Ogboni still wield. The IRB

<sup>1</sup> Sources consulted include CISNet, Google, Refworld, ECOI, ReliefWeb

<sup>2</sup> ‘[Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria](#)’, Nigeria Law, 29 May 1999, pp. 36-37, CIS1CA3D8B434

<sup>3</sup> ‘[Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria](#)’, Nigeria Law, 29 May 1999, p. 122, CIS1CA3D8B434

<sup>4</sup> ‘[Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria](#)’, Nigeria Law, 29 May 1999, pp. 46-47, CIS1CA3D8B434

<sup>5</sup> ‘[Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria](#)’, Nigeria Law, 29 May 1999, pp. 58-59, CIS1CA3D8B434

<sup>6</sup> ‘[Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria](#)’, Nigeria Law, 29 May 1999, pp. 67-68, CIS1CA3D8B434

<sup>7</sup> ‘[Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria](#)’, Nigeria Law, 29 May 1999, pp. 81-82, CIS1CA3D8B434

<sup>8</sup> ‘[Country Focus Nigeria](#)’, European Asylum Support Office, 02 June 2017, p. 56, CISED50AD4813

<sup>9</sup> ‘[Country Focus Nigeria](#)’, European Asylum Support Office, 02 June 2017, p. 56, CISED50AD4813

<sup>10</sup> ‘[Country Focus Nigeria](#)’, European Asylum Support Office, 02 June 2017, p. 57, CISED50AD4813

report quoted a professor of law and forensic science at the University of Leicester as saying the Ogboni:

have no real power whatsoever. The only Yoruba parts of Nigeria where they still have some real influence on the traditional administration of the cities are in the Egba, Egbado and Abeokuta parts of Nigeria. These would correspond roughly to pockets of areas in Ogun State and Lagos State. Also, in some rural villages and small towns along in the borders of Ogun State with Oyo, Osun and Ondo States, they might still be able to intimidate pockets of people.<sup>11</sup>

The IRB cited another 2009 source as stating that 'the Ogboni still have "quite significant" influence and power over the affairs of the nation.'<sup>12</sup>

In addition to traditional secret societies such as the Ogboni, since the 1950s campus based 'cults' or fraternities have formed.<sup>13</sup> These have evolved into violent criminal gangs which maintain political ties. In a 2007 report on criminal violence in Nigeria, Human Rights Watch (HRW) stated such gangs:

often operate both on and off campus, with one foot each in the criminal and political spheres. Across much of Nigeria and especially in the south, "cult" gangs are the most widely feared criminal enterprises in the country. The power and prevalence of these groups has grown steadily over the decades and especially since 1999. Many groups maintain ties to powerful politicians, some of whom themselves have associations with cult organizations...<sup>14</sup>

Regarding university 'cults', an August 2017 EASO report, citing academic David Pratten,<sup>15</sup> said:

Despite very clear and well-known laws against membership of secret cults, state level laws listing proscribed organisations, and concerted campaigns to keep the cults out of campuses, it is clear that they are as much of a problem there today as they have ever been. As they expanded so their reputations rapidly deteriorated, and although they are known as 'cults' they have become forms of gangs (or at least they are more like gangs than they are like religious cults following charismatic or millennial prophets and preachers).<sup>16</sup>

Also on the subject of campus cults, the June 2017 EASO report said such gangs were:

feared for their very violent behaviour both towards other students and university staff. To a certain extent, they have also moved into organised crime outside the universities – both through student members' criminal activities outside campus, i.e. hired as thugs by local politicians at political rallies, and when cult members continue being part of the cult and their activities even after finishing university, especially in the Niger Delta.<sup>17</sup>

Referring to cults or secret societies in Nigeria more broadly, a December 2013 UK Home Office report stated:

The term cult is very freely used in Nigeria, and may refer to any organised group of people where there is some sort of secrecy around the group members' reasons to organise and/or modes of operations. The term also implies a religious dimension, generally linked to practice of juju. Organisations ranging from the famous Ogboni secret society via ethnically based vigilante groups to university fraternities are all referred

<sup>11</sup> ['NGA104213.E: Nigeria: Ogboni society, including its history, structure, rituals and ceremonies'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 14 November 2012, p. 2, 3899

<sup>12</sup> ['NGA104213.E: Nigeria: Ogboni society, including its history, structure, rituals and ceremonies'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 14 November 2012, p. 2, 3899

<sup>13</sup> ['EASO COI Meeting Report: Nigeria'](#), European Asylum Support Office (EASO), 22 August 2017, p. 79, CISED50AD5393

<sup>14</sup> ['Criminal Politics: Violence, "Godfathers" and Corruption in Nigeria'](#), Human Rights Watch, 01 October 2007, CIS15439

<sup>15</sup> According to the EASO report, David Pratten is Associate Professor in the Social Anthropology of Africa; Fellow of St Antony's College, University of Oxford: ['EASO COI Meeting Report: Nigeria'](#), European Asylum Support Office (EASO), 22 August 2017, p. 74, CISED50AD5393

<sup>16</sup> ['EASO COI Meeting Report: Nigeria'](#), European Asylum Support Office (EASO), 22 August 2017, p. 82, CISED50AD5393

<sup>17</sup> ['Country Focus Nigeria'](#), European Asylum Support Office, 02 June 2017, p. 57, CISED50AD4813

to as cults in Nigerian media. Cults and secret organisations are common in the south of Nigeria, but considerably less so in the north. Secret brotherhoods operate all the way up to elite levels of society and it is widely believed in Nigeria that people in power form secret networks where conspiracies and abuse of occult powers are a matter of routine.<sup>18</sup>

Regarding protection from such groups, the July 2017 EASO report stated:

Formally, Nigerian police will treat crime committed by secret societies and campus cults as any other kind of crime. However, the efficiency of the police investigating such crimes depends on the practical working conditions of the police.<sup>19</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- For detailed background on secret cults in Nigerian universities, see: [‘Violence in the Citadel: The Menace of Secret Cults in the Nigerian Universities’](#), Nordic Association of African Studies, January 2005, CIS9BE2467733
- [‘Nigeria: CI180503102352657 – ‘Big Man’ cult’](#), Country of Origin Information Services Section (COISS), 03 May 2018, CR837DFFB166
- [‘Nigeria CI18042012183718 – Ogboni Society – State protection’](#), Country of Origin Information Services Section (COIS), 1 May 2018, CR239EC8167

## **2. Please provide any information available about, Taiwo OLADIMEJI, a possible influential member of the People’s Democratic Party.**

An open source search<sup>20</sup> for “Taiwo Oladimeji” found numerous individuals with that name from Nigeria. However, no information was found indicating that any of these individuals has a connection with the People’s Democratic Party.

#### Additional Reading

- Nil

## **3. Please advise on the likelihood that an individual, who is a significant figure in the PDP (not an elected official) and who has significant wealth, would be able to track people by exerting their influence over authorities in Nigeria.**

COISS is unable to provide assessments regarding the likelihood of particular scenarios.

Freedom of movement within Nigeria is guaranteed under law, and people relocate within Nigeria regularly for a range of reasons. Country information indicates that internal relocation within Nigeria for persons fearing harm from non-state actors may be a viable alternative, depending on the circumstances.<sup>21</sup>

The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT) stated in its March 2018 *Country Information Report Nigeria* that there are ‘no legal impediments to internal relocation in Nigeria. Freedom of

<sup>18</sup> [‘Operational Guidance Note Nigeria’](#), UK Home Office, December 2013, p. 14, CIS36DE0BB1945

<sup>19</sup> [‘Country Focus Nigeria’](#), European Asylum Support Office, 02 June 2017, p. 59, CISED50AD4813

<sup>20</sup> Search terms used in a Google search were “Taiwo Oladimeji”; “Taiwo Oladimeji” People’s Democratic Party; Taiwo Oladimeji People’s Democratic Party; “Taiwo Oladimeji” PDP; “Taiwo Oladimeji” politics. A search on the site LinkedIn returned at least 11 matches named Taiwo Oladimeji in Nigeria working in various industries.

<sup>21</sup> [‘Operational Guidance Note Nigeria’](#), UK Home Office, December 2013, p. 14, CIS36DE0BB1945; [‘DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria’](#), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT), 09 March 2018, p. 31, CIS7B83941414; [‘Country Information and Guidance: Nigeria: Background information, including actors of protection and internal relocation’](#), UK Home Office, August 2016, p. 5, OGD7C848D60; [‘Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 – Nigeria’](#), US Department of State, 20 April 2018, Section 2 d, p. 25, OGD95BE927406

movement is one of the fundamental rights provided in Nigeria's Constitution.<sup>22</sup> The report went on to say:

DFAT assesses that Nigerians can and do freely relocate internally. Internal moves can be more difficult for non-indigenes due to language, religious and cultural differences, particularly between northern and southern states.

The latest US State Department *Country Report on Human Rights for Nigeria* said that freedom of movement in Nigeria is legally guaranteed, however due to security issues in certain parts of the country, security officials restricted freedom of movement in these areas.<sup>23</sup>

Referring to internal relocation options within Nigeria for women fearing gender based violence, an August 2016 UK Home Office report stated:

In general, it will not be unduly harsh for a woman to internally relocate to escape localised threats from members of their family or other non-state actors, especially if single and without children to support.<sup>24</sup>

Similarly, another UK Home Office report, also published in August 2016, said:

Where the person's fear is of persecution or serious harm at the hands of non state agents (including rogue state agents), relocation to another area of Nigeria is likely to be generally viable depending on the nature of the threat from non-state agents and individual circumstances of the person, and as long as it would not be unduly harsh to expect them to do so.<sup>25</sup>

In its 2013 *Operational Guidance Note – Nigeria*, the UK Home Office stated that 'Nigeria is a large country and internal relocation will generally be a viable option for those who fear, or who have experienced ill-treatment at the hands of non state agents.'<sup>26</sup>

In considering whether someone with wealth and political connections to the PDP would have the ability to locate someone throughout the country, it is worthwhile noting that in 2015 the PDP lost power federally to the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), as it was then known (now the All Progressives Congress).<sup>27</sup> According to the March 2018 DFAT report, the CPC won the northern states and the PDP won the majority of southern and middle belt states.<sup>28</sup> An April 2018 US State Department report said that, following the 2015 elections, several opposition politicians and other high profile people linked to the PDP aligned defeated Nigerian president Goodluck Jonathan, have been investigated and arrested on corruption related charges.<sup>29</sup> That being said, influential people within the PDP still reportedly have the ability to challenge the power of the current ruling block, both at national and state level.<sup>30</sup> This change of the power dynamic in Nigeria may impact on the ability of someone with PDP connections to use their influence to locate someone throughout Nigeria.

In considering more broadly whether someone with wealth and connections could use their influence and power to co-opt state agents to act on their behalf to locate someone throughout the country, the April 2018 US State Department report noted that the 'Police and the military remained susceptible to

<sup>22</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT), 09 March 2018, p. 31, CIS7B83941414

<sup>23</sup> ['Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 – Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 20 April 2018, Section 2 d, p. 25, OGD95BE927406

<sup>24</sup> ['Country Information and Guidance: Nigeria: Women fearing gender-based harm or violence'](#), UK Home Office, August 2016, p.7, OGD7C848D59

<sup>25</sup> ['Country Information and Guidance: Nigeria: Background information, including actors of protection and internal relocation'](#), UK Home Office, August 2016, p. 5, OGD7C848D60

<sup>26</sup> ['Operational Guidance Note Nigeria'](#), UK Home Office, December 2013, p. 8, CIS36DE0BB1945

<sup>27</sup> ['Nigeria, July 2018 update'](#), House of Commons Library, Briefing Paper, 10 July 2018, p. 5, CIS7B839411678

<sup>28</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT), 09 March 2018, p. 7, CIS7B83941414

<sup>29</sup> ['Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 – Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 20 April 2018, Section 4, p. 30, OGD95BE927406

<sup>30</sup> ['BTI 2018 Country Report Nigeria'](#), Bertelsmann Stiftung, 22 March 2018, p. 8, CIS7B83941580

corruption.<sup>31</sup> A 2010 Human Rights Watch (HRW) report on policing in Nigeria also highlighted the significant issue of corruption in the Nigerian Police Force (NPF), which extends to its senior ranks. HRW reported that 'in 2009 at least 100,000 police officers were working as personal guards for the wealthy,'<sup>32</sup> and senior police siphoned off 'public funds destined for the police force...'<sup>33</sup>

However, perhaps raising questions about the security forces' ability to locate individuals throughout the country, DFAT observed in its 2018 Nigeria country report that despite being one of the largest police forces in the world, the NPF suffered from 'low capacity and insufficient training'. DFAT also assessed that the Nigerian military 'suffer from extremely low capacity and high rates of desertion. Frontline soldiers publicly complain about not receiving wages and inadequate or no equipment.'<sup>34</sup>

Similarly, a 2014 article in The Nation newspaper noted the police's inability to locate missing persons in Nigeria (including some high profile cases), asking rhetorically: 'Is the police adequately equipped to find missing persons? That is the question many are asking today.'<sup>35</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil

<sup>31</sup> ['Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 – Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 20 April 2018, Section 1 d, p. 11, OGD95BE927406

<sup>32</sup> ['"Everyone's in on the Game" Corruption and Human Rights Abuses by the Nigeria Police Force'](#), Human Rights Watch, 17 August 2010, p. 3, CIS19073

<sup>33</sup> ['"Everyone's in on the Game" Corruption and Human Rights Abuses by the Nigeria Police Force'](#), Human Rights Watch, 17 August 2010, p. 4, CIS19073

<sup>34</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT), 09 March 2018, p. 29, CIS7B83941414

<sup>35</sup> ['Missing - How Nigerians are disappearing without trace'](#), The Nation, 04 May 2014, CX1B9ECAB13235





## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: CI180824114403064 – Political Profile – Kidnapping in Nigeria

Requesting Organisation s. 22(1)(a)(ii)  
Decision-maker  
Date of Request  
Date of Report 24/09/2018  
COI Researcher

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#### Background

Applicant specific information removed.

#### Questions

1. [Is kidnapping for ransom a commonplace occurrence in Nigeria and, if so, what are the profiles of those targeted?](#)
2. [Are there reports of harm occurring to individuals where ransoms have not been paid?](#)
3. [Is state protection available to victims of kidnapping, and are criminals involved prosecuted by the Nigerian authorities?](#)

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## Answers

### 1. Is kidnapping for ransom a commonplace occurrence in Nigeria and, if so, what are the profiles of those targeted?

Country information indicates that kidnapping for ransom is common in Nigeria, across all social groups, and is a widespread phenomenon throughout the entire country.

In April 2014, the militant Islamic terrorist group 'Boko Haram' kidnapped 276 girls from their school in Chibok in North Eastern Nigeria<sup>1</sup>, sparking both worldwide attention and condemnation. More than 100 girls were kidnapped on the evening of 19 February 2018 from the Dapchi School in North Eastern Nigeria by this same group<sup>2</sup>. Kidnappings by militants continue in the northern regions<sup>3</sup>.

Notwithstanding cases related more specifically to 'Boko Haram', multiple sources reflect that there was a sharp rise in kidnapping incidents across the country between 2008 and 2010 (during the period of the delta crisis<sup>4</sup>), before decreasing somewhat between 2012 and 2013<sup>5</sup> (immediately prior to the Chibok incident in 2014).

Before the rise of 'Boko Haram', expatriate workers were particularly targeted because of wealth generated from the resources industry and instances of kidnapping appeared to mainly affect workers in the Delta region<sup>6</sup>. However, in recent years the phenomena has spread throughout the country due to complex social, economic and political reasons, and perpetrators now appear to be motivated by various and often unrelated agendas<sup>7</sup>. Today, kidnapping is therefore a common crime which can occur either for opportunistic reasons (for example, to extort the wealthy or as a result of petty crime), political reasons (for example, personal reasons such as score settling and vendettas), emotional/pathological reasons (rape and child abductions), and even traditional reasons (such as ritual killings)<sup>8</sup>. Although all persons in Nigeria can be affected by crimes related to kidnapping, it appears that women, children, and middle to upper class nationals or non-nationals continue to be particularly susceptible.

<sup>1</sup> ['The fate of the Chibok girls'](#), BBC News, 19 May 2017, CIS7B839419422; ['Nigeria. Chibok girls kidnapper jailed for 20 years'](#), Agence France Presse (AFP) - France, 13 July 2018, CXBB8A1DA31722

<sup>2</sup> ['Nigeria Dapchi school kidnappings: What we know'](#), BBC News, 26 February 2018, CIS7B839419413

<sup>3</sup> ['At least 100 people kidnapped along road in northern Nigeria'](#), Reuters, 15 May 2018, CXBB8A1DA27451; ['Residents say scores kidnapped in northern Nigeria'](#), News24, 16 May 2018, CXBB8A1DA35734

<sup>4</sup> 'Delta Crisis' commonly refers to the rise of militants in 2006 who protested against inequality in the region by kidnapping and holding expatriate workers for hostage. See ['Kidnapping in Nigeria: An emerging Social Crime and the Implications for the Labour Market'](#), International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, January 2014, pp.134, CIS36DE0BB8952

<sup>5</sup> ['Nigeria – Kidnapping'](#), World Data Atlas, Knoema.com, 2013, CIS36DE0BB8950; ['Nigeria – Kidnapping rate'](#), World Data Atlas, Knoema.com, 2013, CIS36DE0BB8951

<sup>6</sup> ['Kidnapping and National Security in Nigeria'](#), Research on Humanities and Social Science, 2014, p.140, CISD9559B12630

<sup>7</sup> ['Kidnapping and National Security in Nigeria'](#), Research on Humanities and Social Science, 2014, CISD9559B12630; ['Challenges of Hostage-taking and Kidnapping in the South Eastern Nigeria'](#), IMPACT: International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Literature, 30 June 2014, CIS7B839419420; ['Kidnapping, Hostage Taking and National Security Threats in Nigeria: A Synopsis'](#), Rivers State University of Education, Department of Social Studies, 30 January 2011, CIS7B839419421

<sup>8</sup> ['Kidnapping and National Security in Nigeria'](#), Research on Humanities and Social Science, 2014, pp.138-139, CISD9559B12630

The United States Department of State published the following observations on the OSAC webpage:

### *Kidnapping Threat*

Kidnap for ransom (KFR) continues to be a security concern nationwide and is a lucrative industry. Criminal organizations target affluent, high-profile Nigerians and expatriates throughout southern Nigeria. In 2016, as the economy declined, security personnel tracked an increase in the targeting of middle-class Nigerians previously immune to the threat of kidnapping. Targeting of average Nigerians for smaller monetary gains has increased. In late 2016, kidnappers abducted 11 students and their teacher in Lagos. All victims were released following a ransom payment, but no kidnappers were arrested.

Kidnapping incidents are under-reported, and the rate of unconfirmed kidnappings continues to grow. These usually result in the release of the victim without harm, but security personnel protecting high-level expatriates have been killed in several attempts. Seven kidnappings involving U.S. citizens were reported in 2015. While none of these incidents resulted in loss of life, substantial resources were used in their recovery. In 2016, a Nigerian American was murdered near Owerri in an incident in which he was kidnapped for a brief period before being murdered. Another American died under suspicious circumstances that indicated the possibility that he has been held for ransom. No suspects were arrested in either incident.

Kidnappings have also occurred in the more affluent areas of Lagos. In September 2014, two American expatriates were reported kidnapped in the Niger Delta.

Most KFR's last for two to three days. Some have extended into multiple weeks, but most of the events in southern Nigeria are short term. Criminals know that police are rarely contacted during a kidnapping and that families are quick to pay ransoms for the release of relatives. The methodology involves extensive planning by the kidnappers who often have a social or familial connection to the victim and are aware of the victim's movements and habits.

In early 2017, Lagos state strengthened the penalty for kidnapping. Convictions for kidnapping now carry a life sentence. The penalty rises to execution if a kidnap victim dies in captivity.<sup>9</sup>

According to the latest US Department of State 2017 Report on Human Rights practices in Nigeria:

Criminal groups abducted civilians in the Niger Delta and the Southeast, often to collect ransom payments. There was also an increase in maritime kidnappings as militants turned to piracy and related crimes to support themselves. (...) Other parts of the country experienced a significant number of abductions. Prominent and wealthy figures were often targets of abduction. For example, in May a member of the House of Representatives from Kano State, Garba Durbunde, was kidnapped on the Abuja-Kaduna highway. According to press reports, he was released after paying a ransom. ... As of

<sup>9</sup> ['Nigeria 2017 Crime & Safety Report: Lagos'](#), OSAC Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State, 04 July 2017, p.6, CIS7B839419409

September, NGO and activist allegations of thousands of enforced civilian disappearances by security forces in the Northeast remained uninvestigated by the government<sup>10</sup>.

A paper titled *Socio-Economic Implications of Kidnapping and Hostage Taking in Southern Nigeria* in 2018 states the following:

... Kidnapping and hostage taking in Nigeria has turned into a social problem which is affecting virtually every member of the Nigerian society in one way or the other. According to Uzorma and Nwanego (2014), kidnapping and hostage taking is among the terrorizing crimes in Nigeria which is mostly common in the southern part of the country (South-South, South-East and South-West). Practically, the duo entails abduction. ... According to Hiscox Group (2001), Nigeria is ranks the 6th highest recorded kidnapping cases in the world. Adetuba (2016) argues that kidnapping of foreign nationals in exchange for ransoms was most prevalent in Nigeria before militants from the Niger Delta region were granted Amnesty by the government in 2009. However, in 2014, Nigeria's kidnapping problem bounced back to glaring limelight when over 200 school girls were abducted by Islamic Jihadists in the North-East region of Nigeria. Since then, a series of high profile kidnappings have been recorded across the country. Adetuba (2016) argues further that no fewer than seven people, including five foreign expatriates were reportedly kidnapped by suspected militants in Calabar. They were said to be on their way to work at the Lafarge Holcim plant in Mfamosing to work. In the process of the kidnap, a local driver was fatally shot by the kidnappers. The above scenarios show that kidnapping and hostage taking has now turned into a business venture and a daily affair in southern Nigeria. Currently, the targets are no longer oil workers or foreigners alone; every Nigerian is now a target. In fact, the safety of persons in Nigeria and their property cannot be guaranteed owing to the near daily incidents of kidnapping. According to Efeizomor (2017), gunmen abducted a Catholic priest in-charge of St. Patricks Catholic Church, Eku in Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State, Rev. Fr. Joseph Oghenekevwe Ojakorotu and demanded for a ransom of 10 million. Edike (2009) observed that South Eastern States of Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi and Imo have been under the siege of kidnappers who have in the last one year made life unbearable for the residents especially the wealthy and foreign nationals. According to Chidi and Uche (2015), the recorded cases of kidnapping in Nigeria shows that 353 cases of kidnapping were recorded in 2008 and 512 cases of kidnapping and 30 dead persons in kidnapping den was recorded in 2009. The Nigerian Police record shows also that in 2009, kidnappers and hostage keepers got N15 million ransom and about N100 million between 2006 – 2008. Apart from this proximate impact on the victims, kidnapping exert enormous and far reaching economic and social costs. It induces and creates a palpable ambience of fear and despair for all citizens and stultify economic growth and sustainable development. It is thus one major development challenge bedevilling Nigeria today. It drives away investment, both domestic and foreign direct investments and consequently slows down growth<sup>11</sup>.

Many recent media publications mirror the information above in more detail.

According to an article published by *Vanguard*, the state Commissioner for Police in Lagos disclosed that, during 2016, 'fifty-one cases of kidnappings were recorded, with Ijede Police Area Command accounting for the highest number of 47%'.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> ['Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 – Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 20 April 2018, p.5, OGD95BE927406

<sup>11</sup> ['Socio-Economic Implication of Kidnapping and Hostage Taking in Southern Nigeria'](#), Journal of Law and Judicial System, 1, 01 January 2018, pp.51-59, CIS7B839419419.

<sup>12</sup> ['2016:Lagos records 246 murders, 51 kidnap cases in one year'](#), Vanguard Media, 14 December 2016, CX6A26A6E31119

According to an article in Owlcation<sup>13</sup> published on 3 May 2018, kidnapping remained one of Nigeria's "big challenges" as "facts and figures show that kidnapping frequency in the country is high", notwithstanding high profile kidnapping incidents perpetrated by the terrorist group Boko Haram. The article further observes:

Boko Haram's kidnappings are both political and religious, according to both to their own leaders and the Nigerian government.

The kidnappings are political because politicians who are bad eggs want to destroy the leadership of President Goodluck Jonathan. The attacks and kidnappings are at the same time religious because of the group's fundamentalist Islamism. The meaning of their name is "Western education is prohibited," which is why they continue to target school children. On the night of 14-15 April 2014, about 276 16 to 18-year-old Chibok school girls were kidnapped by the Boko Haram.

Sometimes, ordinary citizens participate in this crime in order to fill their pockets, usually youths employed by rich men who conduct kidnapping as a modern business. They target rich families and sometimes demand up to twenty million naira (\$119,047.62).

A popular Christian music singer in Nigeria, Chika Okpala, lamented that kidnappers had abducted his friend in one of his songs titled "Ndi Nto" (meaning "the kidnappers"). He stated that when they were asked why they did it, they said they needed money, and they did not have any jobs because of high unemployment in the country.

The government of the Anambra state in Nigeria recently made a new law altering the punishment any perpetrator caught in the act of kidnapping will receive. The law was made during the leadership of Governor Peter Obi of APGA and said that any person caught in the offense of kidnapping will be sentenced to death and anything bought with the ransom money, like a house or car, will be destroyed<sup>14</sup>.

An article in *Reuters* published on 16 May 2018 reported the following:

Kidnapping is also rife. In 2014, the abduction of more than 270 schoolgirls from the town of Chibok shot the Boko Haram Islamist insurgency into the spotlight, prompting the global #BringBackOurGirls campaign.

"Over 120 people were kidnapped between Friday and today, Tuesday along the Birnin Gwari-Kaduna road," said Surajo Usman, of Nigeria's National Union of Road Transport Workers, who escaped an abduction himself.

Birnin Gwari, in the northern state of Kaduna, is infamous for its lawlessness, and thick forests provide bandits with hideouts from security forces. Earlier this month, at least 45 people died in an attack on a

<sup>13</sup> [Owlcation](#) is a website with content created by educators and experts in topics related to education. It is owned by HubPages Inc.

<sup>14</sup> '[Kidnapping Overview, Causes, Effects, and Solutions](#)', Owlcation, 03 May 2018, CXBB8A1DA35183



village in the region. Those bandits have for years frustrated authorities' attempts to apprehend them. In some cases they have amassed thousands of stolen cattle and fought off security agents sent to deal with them.

Yahaya Hussaini, who works for a civil society group, said his organization's motorcade was waylaid. "On Sunday, in our entourage alone four vehicles were blocked by the kidnappers in military fatigue," he said, adding that eight of them carried assault rifles. "They kidnapped about 48 people," said Hussaini. "Many of those vehicles attacked are still left on the road and the luggage of victims still litters it." Ibrahim Aliyu's daughter was one of those abducted by kidnappers seeking the equivalent of \$16,000. "They have contacted me with a 5 million naira ransom demand," he said. "Where do I get that kind of money that I have never seen in my life?"

Kaduna state's commissioner of police, Austin Iwar, told Reuters he would have been informed if there had been reports of such attacks, adding that he would investigate.<sup>15</sup>

A 2017 article in *The Eagle Online* reported that there were 1,177 cases of kidnap in 14 months<sup>16</sup>, and a 2015 article in *The Guardian* notes:

Nigeria is currently grappling with what has become, more or less, a lucrative criminal venture that continues to attract teeming young Nigerian, male and female, both educated and uneducated, from the cities and rural communities in a country that cannot provide jobs for its youth. In recent times, there have been reported cases of kidnapping, particularly high profile ones, from all over the country.

The list is endless: The attempted kidnap of former President Good Luck Jonathan's mother shortly before the 2007 elections; the traditional ruler of Ukpo in Dunukofia Local Government Area of Anambra State, Igwe Robert Eze, who is the younger brother of the billionaire oil magnate and businessman, Prince Arthur Eze. The popular transport mogul, Chief Godwin Ubaka Okeke, Chairman, G.U.O Transport Company; former Commissioner for Higher Education in Delta State, Prof. Hope Eghagha; Queen Mother, Prof. (Mrs.) Kaneme Okonjo, mother of former Finance Minister and Co-coordinating Minister for the Economy, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala; father of the current governor of Delta State, Pa Arthur Okowa; Chief Mike Ozekhome; Chief Dan Odieta, an estate valuer and CEO of Dan Odieta and Co; an uncle of former governor Timipre Sylva, Chief Benson Eseni-Adigo; Miss Nkiru Sylvanus, an aide to Governor Rochas Okorocha; Princess Toyin Omosowon, the Regent of Akungba Akoko, Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo State.

Also, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Tai Solarin University of Education, Prof. Olukoga Olusanya; Archbishop of Diocese of Niger Delta North (Anglican Communion), Bishop Ignatius Kattey and his wife, Beatrice; former President of Nigerian Bar Association, Okey Wali; Pa Michael Obi, father of Chelsea Football Club of England midfielder, Mikel Obi; Super Eagles player, Christian Obodo; Chancellor of Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Professor Cyprian Onyeji; Professor James Adichie, the father of award winning writer, Chimamanda Adichie; former Enugu State Head of Service, Nze Dennis Eze, and the Chibok girls whisked away over a year ago by Boko Haram<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> '[At least 100 people kidnapped along road in northern Nigeria](#)', Reuters, 15 May 2018, CXBB8A1DA27451

<sup>16</sup> '[Nigeria records 1,177 cases of kidnap in 14 months](#)', The Eagle Online, 09 April 2017, CXC90406624518

<sup>17</sup> '[...Taming the menace of kidnap for ransom](#)', The Guardian, 16 October 2018, CXC90406624520

A recent article published by *CBC News* titled 'Nigerians live in fear of kidnapping for ransom' further depicts the extent of the problem:

At a private school in Lagos, Nigeria, armed security guards escort parents dropping off their children, who are prime targets for the country's kidnappers. The schoolchildren are the sons and daughters of politicians, business tycoons, foreign diplomats and senior oil and gas bosses. With kidnapping for ransom on the rise — many parents drive cars with blacked-out windows and obscured licence plates. Earlier this month, two Canadians and two Americans were seized in the northern state of Kaduna and later released. But 95 per cent of the victims of kidnapping in Nigeria are Nigerian, says a spokesperson for Control Risks, a specialist global risk consultancy. In most cases, a ransom is paid, ending the ordeal. Stories shared on WhatsApp groups from other moms, friends and family frequently warn about the need for extra security, and vigilance at school, home or work. ... Control Risks says 10 per cent of all kidnappings it recorded last year were in Kaduna — the place where two unidentified Canadian and two American investors were taken after a gunfight in which their security escorts were killed. The southern Niger Delta is still the "epicentre" of the kidnapping threat but Control Risks says there's been a "sharp increase" in kidnappings reported in the country's central states. Even the more robust security measures typically taken by most foreigners are no guarantee of total safety.<sup>18</sup>

The local Nigeria news and entertainment website *NAIJ.com* maintains a regularly updated webpage dedicated to instances related to kidnapping and which contains information about scores of individual kidnapping related cases<sup>19</sup>.

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

## **2. Are there reports of harm occurring to individuals where ransoms have not been paid?**

Country information found includes reports of instances where harm has befallen victims of kidnapping; however these do not include a breakdown of whether this is related to ransoms not being paid. Other reports indicate that when a ransom is paid victims are generally not harmed.

A 2016 research paper, *Prevalence of Lethal and Non-lethal Crimes in Nigeria*, states that, officially, from June 2006 to September 2015 across the country<sup>20</sup>. A table which breaks down these numbers by region reflects that the highest number of kidnapping fatalities occurred in the Rivers state (67), followed by Delta (55) and Abia (53). The report states:

Year 2013 was reported the most fatal with 80 deaths from 30 kidnap incidents. There were fewer kidnap fatalities and incidents in 2014 as 53 deaths were recorded in 27 incidents. In 2010, 51 people were killed in 45 kidnap incidents and another 31 people killed in 18 incidents in 2011. About 25 people were killed in 11 incidents in 2012 and 18 killed in 8 incidents in 2009; 11 killed in 2 events in 2006; 3 killed in 3 events in 2007 and 2 killed in 2 incidents in 2008. Between January and September, 2015, 24 people have been killed in 15 kidnap incidents nationwide. Security personnel were the most hit in the overall kidnap incidents in Nigeria. About 621 security personnel comprising of the police, soldiers, naval officers and secret service men were killed in the various kidnap incidents. This figure overshadowed the number of

<sup>18</sup> ['Nigerians live in fear of kidnapping for ransom'](#), CBC News, 29 January 2018, CIS7B839419564

<sup>19</sup> See [Kidnapping News in Nigeria](#)

<sup>20</sup> ['Prevalence of Lethal and Non-lethal Crimes in Nigeria'](#), Advanced Research Publications, 30 December 2016, p.15, CIS38A80129173

kidnappers and civilians killed. In Abia state, security personnel were severally targeted and killed by kidnappers and their rifles taken always for further attacks<sup>21</sup>.

According to a January 2014 report by Justice Chidi Ngwama, a lecturer at the Crawford University in Igbesa, Nigeria:

Most of the kidnapping occurs in the South-East and Niger-Delta regions which harbour the Africa's biggest oil and gas industries. Most of the hostages are released unharmed after the payment of ransom, but some are killed even after the payment of ransom or without ransom<sup>22</sup>...

... In December 2009, Police Affairs Minister, disclosed that 512 cases of kidnapping had been recorded from January 2008 to June 2009 against 353 recorded in 2008. Rundown of the statistics indicates that Abia State led the pack with a total of 110 kidnapping incidents: Imo: 58,109 arrests, 41 prosecution and one is dead, Delta recorded 44 kidnap cases, 43 releases, 27 arrests, 31 prosecuted and one death, and Akwa Ibom recorded 40 kidnap cases, 418 arrests and 11 prosecutions. The report added that between July/September 2008 and July 2009, over 600 million was lost to kidnappers. But beyond statistics being available, it is a known fact the most kidnap cases are never reported to the police authority for the fear of murder of the victims hence most families prefer to pay ransom to losing one of its own. For instance, in Kano, N80 million ransom was allegedly paid to kidnappers for the release of Kano -base multi- millionaire businessman, without a recourse to the police authorities; an industrialist in Nnewi paid 70 million to regain his freedom from his captors; another multi-millionaire businessman was kidnapped and released after he allegedly paid a ransom without recourse from the police Umejei, (2010).

The Associated Press in its report of August 27, 2008 stated that "more than 200 foreigners have been kidnapped in two years of heightened violence across Nigeria" restive South, the victims are normally released unharmed after a ransom is paid, although several have been killed during botched seizures or rescue attempts "Victims are maimed, raped and manhandled in such a manner that the stigma remains almost perpetually. The families and associates are knocked down by intractable trauma," Kupoluyi (2009). On Sunday, July 11, 2010 four journalists and a driver travelling in a convoy of buses from a conference in Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State, were kidnapped in Abia State on their way back to Lagos. From their hideout, the abductors demanded a ransom of N250 million, and later reduced it to N30 million. A torrent of protests, condemnations and threats, greeted the action of the kidnappers and they were forced to let go of their victims. However, the police did not make a clear statement whether ransom was paid or not. In Idah, Kogi State, the mother of the former President of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), was also abducted. In Kano, a businessman was forcibly abducted in the presence of his family.

The criminals were apparently looking for dollars; not finding it, they shot and injured his three children and still made off with him. In Akwa-Ibom State where as many as ten medical doctors were kidnapped, staff at the University Teaching Hospital went on an indefinite strike following the failure of kidnappers to release their latest victim, a consultant pediatric surgeon. As a consequence, medical services at the specialist hospital were paralysed and patients were stranded. Also 26 UK nationals were kidnapped in Nigeria in between 2006 and 2007.

The oil-rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria has seen an explosion in the number of foreigners kidnapped for financial or political gain. Seven foreigners were reported kidnapped in Nigeria in 2005. That figure increased to 72 in 2006 and 223 in 2007. This exponential increase has been largely the result of activity

<sup>21</sup> ['Prevalence of Lethal and Non-lethal Crimes in Nigeria'](#), Advanced Research Publications, 30 December 2016, p.11, CIS38A80129173

<sup>22</sup> ['Socio-Economic Implication of Kidnapping and Hostage Taking in Southern Nigeria'](#), Journal of Law and Judicial System, 01 January 2018, pp.51-59, CIS7B839419419

by the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and other armed militant groups. 26 of the hostages were UK nationals.

Of the 295 foreigners kidnapped in 2006 and 2007, five died as a result of injuries sustained during their abduction - including a Briton killed when the kidnappers' boat was attacked by the Nigerian Navy. One Syrian hostage died of illness very shortly after his release. If you analyse the political, economic and security issues present in the Niger Delta and then look at the terrain, which favours the militants, the conclusion must be that kidnapping will continue. Nigeria may be a special case but expatriate staff is at risk of kidnapping where judicial and police systems are weak or corrupt, there is a huge disparity between rich and poor coupled with political and economic breakdown<sup>23</sup>.

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

### **3. Is state protection available to victims of kidnapping and are criminals involved prosecuted by the Nigerian authorities?**

Whilst prosecutions for kidnappings do occur, state protection appears to be limited due to a lack of resources, underfunding and corruption within law enforcement. Furthermore, country information indicates that Nigerian authorities are under equipped to address the full scale of the country's kidnapping problem, notwithstanding the sophistication of existing kidnapping syndicates.

The March 2018 DFAT country report for Nigeria states that the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) 'suffers from low capacity and insufficient training. In addition, the centrally controlled nature of the NPF ensures resources and changes in operating procedures are slow to reach all corners of the country'<sup>24</sup>.

According to the US Department of State report on Human Rights Practices in Nigeria in 2017:

The government lacked effective mechanisms and sufficient political will to investigate and punish security force abuse and corruption. Police and the military remained susceptible to corruption, committed human rights abuses, and operated with widespread impunity in the apprehension, illegal detention, torture, and extrajudicial execution of suspects. The NPF Public Complaint and Rapid Response Unit reported dismissals of low-level police officers following public complaints of extortion. The DSS also reportedly committed human rights abuses. In some cases, private citizens or the government brought charges against perpetrators of human rights abuses, but most cases lingered in court or went unresolved after an initial investigation. In the armed forces, a soldier's commanding officer determined disciplinary action, and the decision was subject to review by the chain of command according to the Armed Forces Act. In March 2016 the army announced the creation of a human rights desk to investigate complaints of human rights violations brought by civilians, although as of November few investigations had formally commenced and reportedly none led to accountability.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> ['Kidnapping in Nigeria: An emerging Social Crime and the Implications for the Labour Market'](#), International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, January 2014, pp.135-136, CIS36DE0BB8952

<sup>24</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 29, CIS7B83941414

<sup>25</sup> ['Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 – Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 20 April 2018, p.p. 10-11, OGD95BE927406

Furthermore, a 2017 article published in *The Eagle Online* states the following:

The commitment of the present Nigerian Police management to curb the spate of kidnappings in the country is paying off as its efforts has resulted in the arrest of 1,347 suspected kidnappers in 1,177 cases recorded in about the last one year. This was revealed in a report to the Presidency. According to the report: "A total of 525 suspected kidnappers were prosecuted with 652 others under investigation while 228 cache of arms and 4, 375 assorted ammunitions of different calibre were recovered during the same period." <sup>26</sup>

A 2015 article in *The Guardian*, a Nigerian newspaper, states:

... National Coordinator, Network on Police Reforms in Nigeria, Mr. Okechukwu Nwanguma, believes that the personnel strength of the police force is a major reason for the current security situation and ascribed the current shortfall in the force to the neglect of the police during the military era.

He noted, "The personnel strength of the Nigeria police at the moment certainly has something to do with the incapacity of the force to effectively deal with crime and other internal security challenges"... In addition, Ubani blamed some kidnap cases on politics, saying that some political actors engage the services of young men in the course of protecting themselves, intimidating their opponents, electioneering, and soon after, abandon them.

"Politicians have to purge themselves; government has to take it hard on politicians who recruit and engage the kidnappers; the law has to be strong enough, we need to equip the police with training, human capacity and we also need to look at the society in terms of our value system". <sup>27</sup>

A 2018 paper titled *Socio-Economic Implications of Kidnapping and Hostage Taking in Southern Nigeria* states:

Corruption is an endemic issue in Nigeria and it has infiltrated all the nooks and crannies of the country. Security agencies have been viewed as symbols of corruption by the members of the public and it has, to an extent, hampered the security of the country. Some officers and men of security agencies negate the responsibilities entrusted on them and focus on what they will gain.

Lack of adequate information to the security agents by citizens when kidnapping incidents take place or when kidnapers have hideouts in their vicinities. This could be as a result of fear or mistrust between the people and security agencies.

Misunderstanding and poor synergy among security agencies: Misunderstanding and unhealthy interaction among security agencies has made the issue of kidnapping and hostage taking difficult to tackle. This has created a loophole among the security agencies and the criminal offenders capitalize on this loophole to perpetrate their evil.

Lack of sophisticated equipment for tracking down criminals: Security agencies lack modern equipment that aid in fast and accurate investigations of hostage-taking and kidnapping incidents. Some of the ammunitions in the various armouries of the security agencies are outdated, disused and obsolete. They cannot match the sophisticated weapons used by the dare-devil kidnappers that torment innocent citizens endlessly.

<sup>26</sup> ['2016: Lagos records 246 murders, 51 kidnap cases in one year'](#), Vanguard Media, 14 December 2016, CX6A26A6E31119

<sup>27</sup> ['...Taming the menace of kidnap for ransom'](#), The Guardian, 16 October 2018, CXC90406624520



Poor motivation of the security officers is one of the major challenges facing the combating of kidnapping and hostage taking in southern Nigeria. Officers and men of the security agencies have lost the desire and will to tackle kidnapping and other social vices due to poor motivation.<sup>28</sup>

According to a 2014 paper titled *Challenges of Hostage taking and kidnapping in the south eastern Nigeria*:

Another major horrible challenge facing the Nigeria Police Force is the failure of intelligence: That inability to identify, infiltrate, recruit and gather actionable intelligence. Operational intelligence is a necessary condition for accurate onslaught against abductors in Nigeria in general and the South-East in particular.

Nosa James-Igbinadolor remarked that 'Intelligence work is serious work, it is strategic in nature, requiring long-term investment including keeping sleeper agents in place for years. This intelligence gathering is physically, emotionally and intellectually demanding, requiring self-service, discipline of the mind and utmost dedication from operational Commanders and agent handlers'. (Daily Sun; Wednesday, June 29, 2011:20). According to a Police expert in crime onslaught strategy, Solomon Arase (2010: IX), modern policing is unarguably, intellectually-driven. This is because of the combined factors of globalisation, technological advancement, increasing dynamics of crime, etc., which necessitate the emergence of novel policing concepts that aim at achieving its statutory mandate within the ambits of the law.

The third major challenge is the lack of sophisticated equipments for tracking down criminals. The Nigeria Police Force lacks modern trackers that aid in fast and accurate investigations in hostage-taking and kidnapping incidents. The former Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Hafiz Ringim, once had this realistic confession that: 'The Police had to contend with a number of challenges ranging from inadequate logistic support and manpower'. Thus, confronted with lack of motivation and low morale aggravated by neglect of the Force by successive governments, the Nigerian Police appears somewhat incapacitated in fending off onslaught of all sorts from high-class criminals whose sophisticated arms most times overwhelm those carried by the Police. (The Source Magazine; July 10, 2006:15). This leadership confession is similar to the opinion of the former Governor of Abia State, Dr Orji Uzor Kalu, who held that such peculiar crimes as hostage-taking and kidnapping are in the increase in (some parts of) the country because of the poor state of equipment that the Police use in crime fighting and the protection of the citizens and their properties. (Saturday Sun; March 24, 2012:71). The Force is poorly equipped. Some of the ammunitions in the various armouries of the Police are outdated, disused and obsolete. They cannot match the sophisticated weapons wielded by the dare-devil robbers that torment innocent citizens endlessly. These mitigate the operational capacity and image of the Nigeria Police Force and thus become a serious challenge in the fight against organised crimes as hostage-taking and kidnapping.

Insider or collaborator's factor of some scrupulous elements in the Nigeria Police Force and other security agencies, multinational companies, banks and bureaus of finance, which makes information easily accessible for the criminals and also makes crime investigation and tracking complicated.

### **The Nigeria Police: Mitigating Abduction in the South-Eastern Nigeria**

<sup>28</sup> ['Socio-Economic Implication of Kidnapping and Hostage Taking in Southern Nigeria'](#), Journal of Law and Judicial System, 1, 01 January 2018, pp.51-59, CIS7B839419419

According to the Section 214 of the 1999, the Nigerian Police was set up as the only Police Force for the Country. By statutory provisions (of Section 4 of the Police Act Cap. 359 LFN 1990), to it is assigned various duties and roles the most important of which is the protection of lives and property, which hostage-taking and kidnapping threatens. From this arises the duty of crime prevention, its investigation and prosecution in court. The Force has a significant role to play in checking criminal activities in the country. This statutory provision notwithstanding has not held water in its realization. It is in line with this slackness that the Statesman Editorial once noted that, 'whatever the case may be, apart from few cases of gallantry, the Police and security agencies have responded poorly to the scourge (crimes in South East, notably bank robberies and kidnappings). Indeed, it seems as if there is no Police in the land whereas, in most cases, these heinous activities happen within metres of Police Stations. All the handicaps of the Police and excuses in this world will not stop the next robbery or kidnap. What will is a strategic response by the Police, a new approach to policing'. It further noted that the first response from the Police High Command was 'to introduce those ugly roadblocks to the South East, which are mere tollgates. This is the unintelligent answer to the problem. We have had cases where robbers stop at such checkpoints and massacre the officers' that they found to be sitting ducks. The Statesman Editorial suggests that, 'a more preventive approach, increased undercover activities and working with all the stakeholders like the community vigilance groups, etc, to identify the hoodlums in our midst. The bad guys are actually easy to identify especially for the trained eyes of detectives'. (Statesman; July 16-22, 2009:9). Similarly, by means of combating such peculiar crimes and devising solvent strategies out of the log-jam of hostage-taking and kidnapping in South-East Nigeria, the former Inspector-General of Police, Sir Mike Okiro, in July 2009<sup>29</sup>

According to a 2011 paper, *Kidnapping, Hostage Taking and National Security Threats in Nigeria*:

As a corollary to above, it must be noted that credible intelligence reports have shown that the political class, some retired generals, traditional rulers and even some religious leaders are part of this criminal gang of kidnappers and hostage takers in the region. While some senior political office holders profit from huge security budgets allocated to contain the activities of these criminal elements, some retired soldiers provide the arms and logistics needed and share in the booty thereafter. It has also been discovered that some supposedly highly rated Pentecostal pastors profit from these activities when they act as negotiators for ransom and the release of the victims. At the state level, governors are expected to keep the militants in check by their own devices, which always involve good money. In the event of high-grade kidnaps involving foreign nationals, the governors and oil companies put money together to pay huge ransoms to secure their release. Most times officials of the states and oil companies take their cuts leading to inflated sums and rifts between the negotiators and the militants on who takes the lion share of the booty. It has been alleged that when their relative peace in the creeks, some state officials, Joint Task Force (JTF) officials and some Niger Delta politicians encourage the militants to "strike" to make for demand for larger security budgets that could empower the security outfits in the state, including the police, navy and State Security service to be "empowered" to properly counter the threat (Tell, 2009). Some traditional rulers are not equally left out as they know the criminals and covertly support them for protection and pecuniary benefits (Defence Head Quarters, 2009; Independent Intelligence, 2007).<sup>30</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

<sup>29</sup> '[Challenges of Hostage-taking and Kidnapping in the South Eastern Nigeria](#)', IMPAIMPACT: International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Literature, 30 June 2014, CIS7B839419420

<sup>30</sup> '[Kidnapping, Hostage Taking and National Security Threats in Nigeria: A Synopsis](#)', Rivers State University of Education, Department of Social Studies, 30 January 2011, CIS7B839419421



## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: 20190513151518 – Nasarawa State – Christians – Muslims – Boko Haram – Lafia

Date of Report

24 June 2019

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#### Background

[Information deleted]

#### Questions

1. [Please provide information as to the demographic make-up as between Christians and Muslims in Nasawara State.](#)
2. [Please provide evidence of the presence of or attacks by Boko Haram or militant groups in Lafia, Nigeria, particularly in 2014. I would be particularly interested in information as to claimed attacks in 2014 on a Sunday morning with explosions and the burning down of shops, markets and homes.](#)
3. [Please provide any other information on difficulties faced by Christians in Lafia in recent years \(from 2012\).](#)

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## Answers

### 1. Please provide information as to the demographic make-up as between Christians and Muslims in Nasarawa State.

Specific information was not located on the current demographic make-up between Christians and Muslims in Nasarawa state. A report by a Christian organisation and a background paper on the Muslims of Nasarawa state provide percentage estimates of the Christian and Muslim populations in the state. A census held in Nigeria in 2006 did not include questions about citizens' religious affiliation or ethnicity.

According to the US Department of State (USDOS) religious freedom report on Nigeria for 2017, '[a] 2012 survey by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life estimated the population to be 49.3 percent Christian and 48.8 percent Muslim, while the remaining 2 percent belong to other or no religions'.<sup>1</sup> The report also indicates that 'Christians and Muslims reside in approximately equal numbers in the central part of the country and in the southwestern states'.<sup>2</sup> The northern states were 'predominantly Muslim', while Christian groups constituted the majority in the southeastern states.<sup>3</sup>

A March 2018 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) country information report on Nigeria states that '[a]n estimated fifty per cent of Nigerians are Muslim, forty per cent Christian and ten per cent follow indigenous religious beliefs'. Christianity is reported to be 'the majority religion in the southern states and Islam is the majority religion in northern states'.<sup>4</sup>

In relation to Nasarawa state, an October 2016 report by Christian organisation, Open Doors International, estimates that according to their figures, 'there are as many as 727,209 Christians in Nasarawa State with a population of 1,869,377 according to the 2006 national census'. The report also indicates that '[u]nofficial reports claim the population of Christians to have grown to 51.3% in Nasarawa State'.<sup>5</sup>

A January 2012 background paper about the Muslims of Nasarawa state, published by the Nigeria Research Network, which was based at the University of Oxford's Department of International Development,<sup>6</sup> notes that:

It is difficult to estimate the percentages of Muslims, Christians and practitioners of African Traditional Religions among the people. The 1963 Nigerian census put the percentage of Muslims in what is now Nasarawa State at about 30% of the population, while about 14% were Christian and a majority of 56% adherents of "other" religions. The percentage of "others" has no doubt been significantly reduced by now, with most people being either Muslims or Christians at least nominally. But how many belong to which group is not known with any precision.<sup>7</sup>

The authors of the paper 'made two kinds of investigation into this question. One was to determine the number of Muslims among certain categories of elected officials' in Nasarawa state. Muslims

<sup>1</sup> ['International Religious Freedom Report for 2017 – Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 29 May 2018, Section 1, p.2, OGD95BE927597

<sup>2</sup> ['International Religious Freedom Report for 2017 – Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 29 May 2018, Section 1, p.2, OGD95BE927597

<sup>3</sup> ['International Religious Freedom Report for 2017 – Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 29 May 2018, Section 1, pp.2-3, OGD95BE927597

<sup>4</sup> 'DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p.8, CIS7B83941414

<sup>5</sup> ['Nigeria: Investigating common narratives of violent conflict in Nasarawa State: An examination of the hostilities against Christians in the period January 2013 - May 2016'](#), Open Doors International, 17 October 2016, pp.42-43, 20190621163510

<sup>6</sup> See: ['Nigeria Research Network'](#), Oxford Department of International Development, n.d., Accessed 19 June 2019

<sup>7</sup> ['Muslims of Nasarawa State: A Survey'](#), Liman, S H and Wakawa, A S I, Nigeria Research Network and Oxford Department of International Development, January 2012, p.3, 20190619111121

made up 65 per cent of elected officials as at March 2011. The authors also made 'inquiries among knowledgeable residents of each of the LGAs [Local Government Areas], as to their best estimates of the percentages of Muslims living there'. According to these estimates, the percentage of Muslims living in Nasarawa state was about 61 per cent.<sup>8</sup>

Nigeria held a census in 2006, but a report by the US-based Population Reference Bureau notes that '[s]plits between Nigerian Muslims and Christians and among the country's ethnic groups' were 'so incendiary that census officials decided to not ask citizens' in 2006 'about their religious affiliation or ethnicity'.<sup>9</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil

## **2. Please provide evidence of the presence of or attacks by Boko Haram or militant groups in Lafia, Nigeria, particularly in 2014. I would be particularly interested in information as to claimed attacks in 2014 on a Sunday morning with explosions and the burning down of shops, markets and homes.**

Limited information was found about the presence of Boko Haram in Lafia, with one source noting that Nasarawa state was one of the states with the lowest frequency of attacks by that group. Other reports refer to militias operating in Nigeria's Middle Belt, including in Nasarawa state, and to incidents of ethno-religious violence occurring in Lafia.

Lafia is the state capital of Nasarawa state in Nigeria.<sup>10</sup>

A Chatham House research paper includes a map showing the number of deadly events and the number of deaths involving Boko Haram from June 2006 to October 2013 in individual states in Nigeria. There were no deadly events or deaths involving Boko Haram showing on the map for Nasarawa state.<sup>11</sup>

In April 2014, police in Lafia arrested 44 persons, who witnesses suggested were Boko Haram suspects.<sup>12</sup>

In July 2014, police in Nasarawa state said an investigation had begun 'into the alleged threat by members of the Boko Haram sect to abduct students of Government Science Secondary School in Lafia, the state capital'. A letter, allegedly written by Boko Haram, which included threats to abduct students of the school, was 'found in the office of the school principal, causing panic among teachers and students, a development that led to students deserting the school'. Soldiers and police were reported to be present on the school grounds.<sup>13</sup>

A March 2016 Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRBC) response to information request refers to information on the START Global Terrorism Database about '20 assassination attacks attributed to Boko Haram between 2013 and 2014', including an assassination attack in Nasarawa state.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> ['Muslims of Nasarawa State: A Survey'](#), Liman, S H and Wakawa, A S I, Nigeria Research Network and Oxford Department of International Development, January 2012, pp.3-4, 20190619111121

<sup>9</sup> ['In the News: The Nigerian Census'](#), Population Reference Bureau, 1 April 2006, 20190617184231

<sup>10</sup> ['Nigeria: Police Investigate Threat to Abduct Nasarawa Schoolgirls'](#), Ogwu, D, Daily Independent, 5 July 2014, 20190618144959

<sup>11</sup> ['Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency? Addressing the Boko Haram Crisis'](#), Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, Chatham House, September 2014, p.3, CISA447F082840

<sup>12</sup> ['Nigeria: Police Raid Lafia Brothel, Arrest 44 Over Boko Haram Scare'](#), Joseph, H, Daily Trust, 7 April 2014, 20190624101038

<sup>13</sup> ['Nigeria: Police Investigate Threat to Abduct Nasarawa Schoolgirls'](#), Ogwu, D, Daily Independent, 5 July 2014, 20190618144959

<sup>14</sup> ['NGA105451.E - Nigeria: The capacity of Boko Haram to pursue individuals who relocate to another region or city, such as Lagos \(2013-March 2016\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 11 March 2016, 20190620145041



In September 2016, the governor of Nasarawa state 'commended the military for decimating the Boko Haram terrorists, and in joining hands with other security agencies to curb security challenges in Nasarawa state'. He also 'said that criminal elements dislodged by recent military operation in Zamfara have infiltrated the state', and three of their hideouts had 'been identified in the state'. He 'appealed to the Army chief to also extend its operation to the state'.<sup>15</sup>

A strategic conflict assessment of Nigeria for 2016 by the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution in Abuja, Nigeria, indicates that in Nasarawa state, there were '[f]armer-herders communal conflicts, ethnic conflict, electoral/political violence and even labour conflicts. There were no terrorist attacks but it was an area for tension as suspects of Boko Haram have been arrested on some occasions'.<sup>16</sup> The report also indicates that Nasarawa state was 'one of the states with lowest frequency of attacks by the Boko Haram insurgents'.<sup>17</sup>

Other reports refer to militias operating in Nigeria's Middle Belt, including in Nasarawa state. A July 2018 International Crisis Group (ICG) report states that '[m]ilitias and vigilantes are not new phenomena in the Middle Belt. Over the last decade, some of the region's so-called indigenous groups – including the Berom and Tarok of Plateau state, the Eggon of Nasarawa state and the Jukun of Taraba state, all predominantly farming communities – reportedly formed militias and vigilante groups to fend off Fulani herders whose cattle grazed in their fields'. The report indicates that '[o]ver time, some of these groups have evolved into more deadly organisations. One of the best known is the Ombatse, a so-called spiritual organisation among the Eggon, which ambushed police and other security operatives in May 2013, killing more than 100'.<sup>18</sup> According to the USDOS report on human rights practices in Nigeria for 2013, 'as many as 50 police officers and 10 SSS [State Security Service] members' were killed in the May 2013 ambush by 'members of the outlawed Ombatse cult', which occurred 'near Lafia, Nassarawa State'.<sup>19</sup>

A 2015 UNHCR COI compilation on Nigeria mentions a source who refers to 'a pattern of worsening communal and religiously-inspired violence' emerging in Nasarawa State. The COI compilation lists violent clashes occurring in June 2012, February 2013 and August 2014.<sup>20</sup> Also, the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research *Conflict Barometer 2014* indicates that:

Several villages in Lafia LGA, Nasarawa, were hit by a series of deadly clashes between Eggon and Fulani youths in August. From August 24 to 27, some 53 people were killed in clashes and 5,000 fled Tudun-Ababu, Wamba and Akwanga. In total, clashes in Lafia LGA throughout the second half of the year resulted in some 350 fatalities'.<sup>21</sup>

A November 2014 article in Nigerian newspaper *Leadership* also indicates there was 'fighting between farmers from the Eggon ethnic group and Fulani at Alingani in Lafia local council of Nasarawa state' in August 2014. In one account, a Fulani herdsman said the 'crisis broke out at Alingani when an Eggon farmer accused a Fulani herdsman of grazing his land. At the end of the attacks and reprisals, the death toll stood at 60 according to Police accounts, with over 80 houses and properties destroyed'.<sup>22</sup>

Another article in the *Leadership* newspaper dated 19 November 2014 reported that following 'unrest in Lafia, the Nasarawa State capital which started on Sunday morning, 12 persons were reportedly

<sup>15</sup> ['Displaced criminals from Zamfara infiltrating into Nasarawa – Al-Makura'](#), Vanguard, 23 September 2016, 20190618162101

<sup>16</sup> ['2016 Strategic Conflict Assessment of Nigeria. Consolidated and Zonal Reports'](#), Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, 5 October 2017, p.128, CISED50AD8655

<sup>17</sup> ['2016 Strategic Conflict Assessment of Nigeria. Consolidated and Zonal Reports'](#), Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, 5 October 2017, p.133, CISED50AD8655

<sup>18</sup> ['Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence'](#), International Crisis Group, Africa Report No. 262, 26 July 2018, pp.4-5, 20190618172152

<sup>19</sup> ['Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013 – Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 27 February 2014, Section 6, p.46, OGD95BE926158

<sup>20</sup> ['Nigeria: COI Compilation'](#), UN High Commissioner for Refugees, October 2015, p.42, UN734088B7

<sup>21</sup> ['Conflict Barometer 2014'](#), Heidelberger Institut für Internationale Konfliktforschung, 1 March 2015, p.71, CISEC96CF11122

<sup>22</sup> ['Nigeria - The Grazing Routes to Ethnic Bloodshed'](#), Leadership, 29 November 2014, 20190619160742

killed... in communal clashes involving Eggon and Kambari youths'. Also, in the 'Farin Kasa area, over 30 houses were said to have been burnt as the Kambari and Eggon youths battled for supremacy before the arrival of soldiers'. As a result of the violence, banks were shut and '[s]chools, public offices and business premises remained largely closed'.<sup>23</sup>

A June 2016 IRBC response to information request refers to sources that provide information on clashes between the Fulani and Eggon in Nasarawa state between 2012 and 2014. These include a report of Eggon communities in the Barkin Abdullahi District of Lafia and its surroundings accusing "Fulani mercenaries" of killing 22 people and burning 139 homes, 10 shops and a hospital in multiple villages in this area in February 2013'. In September 2014, 'approximately 300 "Fulani mercenaries"' were reported to have 'attacked Gidan-Gambo, an Eggon community in Lafia LGA', where '10 people were killed and houses were burnt'. In November 2014, Fulani herdsmen reportedly 'carried out twin attacks in Likygegba, in Arikyia, and Agwan-Mangoro in Lafia LGA, killing over 32 people and injuring several others'.<sup>24</sup> The response to information request also refers to sources that provide information on a June 2012 clash between the Eggon and Alago ethnic groups in the Lafia LGA 'that killed at least 30 people, injured thousands, and destroyed property', and another clash between the Eggon and Alago in September 2013 in the Obi LGA and the Assakio area of Lafia East LGA, which resulted 'in 31 killings, the destruction by arson of 1,300 homes and the displacement of people into refugee camps'.<sup>25</sup>

The USDOS report on human rights practices in Nigeria for 2014 refers to 'military, JTF [Civilian Joint Task Force], or Special Task Force units' being 'deployed to Nassarawa in response to indigene-settler violence, after local police could not contain outbreaks of ethnoreligious violence'.<sup>26</sup>

In November 2012, members of Ombatse were suspected to be responsible for an attack on Agyaragu, a town about nine kilometres from Lafia in Nasarawa state, in which more than ten people were killed and 50 houses, shops and other businesses were burnt down. The Koro ethnic group reportedly 'appeared to be the target of attackers'. Displaced persons from Agyaragu were staying at the Evangelical Redeemed Christian Church at the Workers' Village section of Lafia.<sup>27</sup> Another report on the attack refers to the Ombatse killing 'at least ten people of the Christian and animist Koro ethnic group' and burning some 50 homes in Agyaragu. The Ombatse denied involvement in the communal violence.<sup>28</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- A January 2019 UK Home Office country policy and information note on Boko Haram in Nigeria includes information on Boko Haram's areas of operation and the levels and nature of violence committed by the group. '[Country Policy and Information Note: Nigeria: Boko Haram](#)', UK Home Office, January 2019, pp. 16-33, 20190215103954

<sup>23</sup> '[Nigeria: Latest Adamawa Village Attack - 10 Soldiers, Scores of Insurgents Killed](#)', Leadership, 19 November 2014, 20190620113833

<sup>24</sup> '[NGA105540.E - Nigeria: Situation of the Eggon ethnic group, including treatment by society, armed groups and state authorities \(2011-June 2016\)](#)', Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 8 June 2016, 20190620154507

<sup>25</sup> '[NGA105540.E - Nigeria: Situation of the Eggon ethnic group, including treatment by society, armed groups and state authorities \(2011-June 2016\)](#)', Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 8 June 2016, 20190620154507

<sup>26</sup> '[Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014 – Nigeria](#)', US Department of State, 25 June 2015, Section 1(d), p.9, OGD95BE926157

<sup>27</sup> '[Nigeria: JN1 Supports Christian Refugees As Camps Swell in Nasarawa After Gun Violence](#)', Joseph, H, Daily Trust, 25 November 2012, 20190620115714

<sup>28</sup> '[Ombatse: Nigerian Religious Cult Joins War on the State in Central Nigeria](#)', McGregor, A, Jamestown Foundation, 17 May 2013, 20190620122648; See also: '[Nigeria: Nasarawa Arson - Traditional Ruler, Sister, Burnt to Death](#)', Joseph, H, Daily Trust, 22 November 2012, 20190620131556

### 3. Please provide any other information on difficulties faced by Christians in Lafia in recent years (from 2012).

Further to the information provided in the answer to [Question 2](#) above, sources indicate that Nasarawa state is one of the states in Nigeria's Middle Belt that have been affected by conflict between mainly Christian farmers and mainly Muslim pastoralists. The conflict between farmers and herders has 'mainly revolved around issues of the control over arable land and cattle', but 'was further fueled by differences concerning political, ethnic, and religious issues between the predominantly Christian farmers of Berom and Tiv tribes, on the one hand, and the mainly Muslim Fulani nomads, on the other'.<sup>29</sup>

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom 2019 annual report states that '[v]iolence targeting groups and individuals due to their religious identity continued in 2018' in Nigeria. Sectarian conflict caused at least 2,000 deaths across the country, 'with rising numbers of fatalities in Benue, Plateau, Taraba, Adamawa, and Nasarawa states in particular'. The report notes that '[g]iven the myriad ways that religious, ethnic, and tribal identities are intertwined, it can be difficult to determine the basis or catalyst for violence'. Violence between farmer and herder communities could 'take place across – or be perceived to be due to – religious and ethnic divides, as herders are primarily Muslim, and farmers Christian'.<sup>30</sup>

In a November 2018 report by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), Dr Roudabeh Kishi, the director of the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), indicates that 'three dimensions of the conflict can be distinguished: ethnic (Fulani vs other Nigerian ethnicities), religious (Muslim herders vs Christian south), and cultural (nomadic vs sedentary)'.<sup>31</sup> The EASO report also notes that '[a]s the Boko Haram insurgency has receded, the conflict between nomadic herders and sedentary agrarian communities increased in frequency, intensity, complexity and geographic scope'.<sup>32</sup>

The previously mentioned July 2018 International Crisis Group report also notes that '[t]he conflict is fundamentally a land-use contest between farmers and herders across the country's Middle Belt. It has taken on dangerous religious and ethnic dimensions, however, because most of the herders are from the traditionally nomadic and Muslim Fulani who make up about 90 per cent of Nigeria's pastoralists, while most of the farmers are Christians of various ethnicities'.<sup>33</sup> The report also indicates that violence related to the conflict had escalated sharply, with at least 1,500 people killed since September 2017, and over 1,300 of them from January to June 2018. This was 'roughly six times the number of civilians killed by Boko Haram over the same period'. The surge of violence was 'concentrated in Plateau, Benue and Nasarawa states in the North Central geopolitical zone and in the adjoining Adamawa and Taraba states in the North East zone'.<sup>34</sup>

Nasarawa state had 'suffered an increase in violence involving both herders and farmer militias. From January to June 2018, over 260 people were killed in several incidents, mostly in the southern zone covering Doma, Awe, Obi and Keana local government areas'. Most of the killings are reported to have followed an 'influx of herders driven there by' a state government law in Benue state prohibiting open grazing.<sup>35</sup> Around 100,000 people in Nasarawa state were displaced as a result of the

<sup>29</sup> ['Conflict Barometer 2017'](#), Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, February 2018, p.90, CIS7B839411574

<sup>30</sup> ['United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2019 Annual Report'](#), US Commission on International Religious Freedom, April 2019, p.60, 20190508143726

<sup>31</sup> ['EASO Country of Origin Information Report: Nigeria: Security Situation'](#), European Asylum Support Office, November 2018, p.48, 20190109132440

<sup>32</sup> ['EASO Country of Origin Information Report: Nigeria: Security Situation'](#), European Asylum Support Office, November 2018, p. 49, 20190109132440

<sup>33</sup> ['Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence'](#), International Crisis Group, Africa Report No. 262, 26 July 2018, p.i, 20190618172152

<sup>34</sup> ['Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence'](#), International Crisis Group, Africa Report No. 262, 26 July 2018, p.1, 20190618172152

<sup>35</sup> ['Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence'](#), International Crisis Group, Africa Report No. 262, 26 July 2018, p.2, 20190618172152

violence.<sup>36</sup> The government had 'deployed more police and military units to the troubled states',<sup>37</sup> and had curbed but not stopped the violence.<sup>38</sup>

The ICG report also comments that one of the factors that had aggravated the conflict was that '[w]hile the jihadist Boko Haram indiscriminately killed both Christians and Muslims, it also heightened religious sensitivities, leading mostly Christian southerners to resent the influx of predominantly Muslim herders, which some southern and Middle Belt Christian leaders portray as an Islamising force'.<sup>39</sup>

In May 2018, the Nasarawa State chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) 'staged a peaceful protest in Lafia, the state capital, against the killings of Christians in some parts of Nigeria'. The Nasarawa state chairman of CAN, Bishop Joseph Masin, said that Christians were 'being targeted and killed in Adamawa, Plateau, Benue, Nasarawa, Taraba and other states because of their faith'. He also said that '[i]n Nasarawa State, many churches have been burnt down, including the church at Apaa, and Agwatashi Pendon', that 'no one has been arrested', and asked why the government seemed 'to be religiously biased'. He called on the government to 'ensure the security of lives and property of the citizens'.<sup>40</sup>

A September 2017 International Crisis Group report notes that information sourced from interviews with community and civil society representatives and leaders, including in Lafia, Nasarawa state, indicates that '[t]he conflicts, particularly herder attacks on farming communities, have spawned dangerous political and religious conspiracy theories. One is that the attacks are part of a longer-term Fulani plot to displace indigenous populations and seize their lands. Among Christian communities, herder attacks are widely seen as a subtle form of jihad'.<sup>41</sup>

The previously mentioned October 2016 report by Christian organisation, Open Doors International, notes that 'there is lack of agreement among scholars, researchers, policy makers and academics about the nature and the factors that motivate' violent conflicts in Nasarawa state, with some scholars linking the conflicts to ethnicity, political considerations or competition for economic resources. The report states that 'below the surface of the violent conflicts in Nasarawa State lies a strategic agenda orchestrated to persecute Christians and reduce them to the level of second class citizens including grasping their lands'.<sup>42</sup> The report lists incidents 'of violence against Christians by Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsman' between January 2013 and May 2016 in Nasarawa state, including in the Lafia LGA and the Lafia East Development Area. These include killings and the destruction of or damaging of churches and Christian property.<sup>43</sup> The report also states that '[t]he 2011 governorship elections, which saw the emergence of Governor Umaru Tanko Al-Makura of the Muslim dominated Congress for Political Change (CPC) who defeated the incumbent, Aliyu Akwe Doma of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), heralded an era of religiously motivated violent killing of Christians, particularly in the

<sup>36</sup> ['Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence'](#), International Crisis Group, Africa Report No. 262, 26 July 2018, p.12, 20190618172152

<sup>37</sup> ['Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence'](#), International Crisis Group, Africa Report No. 262, 26 July 2018, p.21, 20190618172152

<sup>38</sup> ['Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence'](#), International Crisis Group, Africa Report No. 262, 26 July 2018, p.22, 20190618172152

<sup>39</sup> ['Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence'](#), International Crisis Group, Africa Report No. 262, 26 July 2018, p.4, 20190618172152

<sup>40</sup> ['Can Protests Killings of Christians in Nasarawa'](#), Ukumba, E, Aliogo, U and Ehoche, E, This Day, 10 May 2018, 20190618154450

<sup>41</sup> ['Herders against Farmers: Nigeria's Expanding Deadly Conflict'](#), Africa Report N°252, International Crisis Group, 19 September 2017, p.8, f/n 45 & 46, CISED50AD5761

<sup>42</sup> ['Nigeria: Investigating common narratives of violent conflict in Nasarawa State: An examination of the hostilities against Christians in the period January 2013 - May 2016'](#), Open Doors International, 17 October 2016, p.5, 20190621163510

<sup>43</sup> ['Nigeria: Investigating common narratives of violent conflict in Nasarawa State: An examination of the hostilities against Christians in the period January 2013 - May 2016'](#), Open Doors International, 17 October 2016, p.15-16, 19-30, 33-34, 36, 41, 45-46 & 49, 20190621163510



Southern Senatorial District. Some informants in Tudu Adabu, Imom, Azara, Tunga, Keana, Giza and Kadarko expressed views of Governor Al-Makura's complicity in the attacks on Christians'.<sup>44</sup>

A July 2015 article in Nigerian newspaper, the *Daily Independent*, indicates, however, that the Archbishop of the Catholic Diocese of Lafia, Bishop Ishaya Audu, had said that Nasarawa State Governor, Umaru Tanko Al-Makura, had 'proved that he is leader for all irrespective of tribe or religion', and 'expressed the support of the church to the administration of Al-Makura'.<sup>45</sup>

In November 2014, Nigerian newspaper, the *Daily Independent*, reported that 'the Methodist Church and several houses at Tudun Gwandara in Lafia, the state capital, were torched' in a Sunday clash between Eggon and Fulani militia. Eight people were said to have died in the violence, although the police put the death toll at five. The article also indicates that '[s]everal houses were torched in Shabu, Lafia Council Area on Sunday and three persons lost their lives in the reprisal'. The police said they had arrested 'about 14 persons' in relation to the violence.<sup>46</sup>

Another November 2014 article in the *Leadership* newspaper refers to clashes occurring in Lafia between the 'Kambari and Eggon ethnic groups'. The article indicates that '[t]he ongoing crisis in the state, however, took a surprising and worrisome twist when the irate Kambari hoodlums set Methodist Church, Tudun Gwandara, ablaze, introducing a religious angle to the crisis which was hitherto solely seen as an ethnic conflict'.<sup>47</sup>

In August 2013, a Christian non-governmental organisation, Akyeyi Kigbu Memorial Foundation, was reported to have 'distributed assorted food items to Muslims around Lafia for their Sallah celebration'. The NGO sought 'to further unite the diverse people of Nasarawa state'.<sup>48</sup>

A May 2013 article refers to several churches being 'burnt or forced to close down' following attacks in a number of 'major northern cities and towns', including Lafia.<sup>49</sup>

As mentioned in the answer to [Question 2](#) above, in November 2012, members of Ombatse were reported to have 'killed at least ten people of the Christian and animist Koro ethnic group' and burnt some 50 homes 'in Agyaragu, a suburb of the state capital of Lafia' in Nasarawa state.<sup>50</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- An August 2013 COISS issues paper looks at potential barriers faced by Christians seeking to relocate to southern Nigeria to avoid violence in the country's northern and central states. ['Nigeria: Relocation for Christians fearing harm in Northern Nigeria and the Middle Belt'](#), COISS, 30 August 2013, CR801F5B636

<sup>44</sup> ['Nigeria: Investigating common narratives of violent conflict in Nasarawa State: An examination of the hostilities against Christians in the period January 2013 - May 2016'](#), Open Doors International, 17 October 2016, p.45, 20190621163510

<sup>45</sup> ['Nigeria: Catholic Bishop Hails Al-Makura for Detribalised Leadership'](#), Daily Independent, 17 July 2015, 20190621182841

<sup>46</sup> ['Nigeria: Again, FG Extends Emergency Rule in North East'](#), Daily Independent, 18 November 2014, 20190621140016

<sup>47</sup> ['Nigeria: Lafia Shut Down As Fighting Continues'](#), Nadi, D, Leadership, 18 November 2014, 20190621143110

<sup>48</sup> ['Nigeria: Sallah - Christian NGO Feeds Muslims in Lafia'](#), Daily Trust, 9 August 2013, 20190624103925

<sup>49</sup> ['Nigeria on Edge: Killing with impunity'](#), Edukugho, E, Vanguard, 25 May 2013, 20190624105515

<sup>50</sup> ['Ombatse: Nigerian Religious Cult Joins War on the State in Central Nigeria'](#), McGregor, A, Jamestown Foundation, 17 May 2013, 20190620122648; See also: ['Nigeria: JNII Supports Christian Refugees As Camps Swell in Nasarawa After Gun Violence'](#), Joseph, H, Daily Trust, 25 November 2012, 20190620115714; ['Nigeria: Nasarawa Arson - Traditional Ruler, Sister, Burnt to Death'](#), Joseph, H, Daily Trust, 22 November 2012, 20190620131556





## Standard Q&A Report

### **NIGERIA: 20190821145436 – Kidnapping for Ransom by Boko Haram – Activities of Boko Haram in southern Nigeria**

Date of Report

26 August 2019

This Q&A Report was prepared by the Country of Origin Information Services Section (COISS), Department of Home Affairs in response to a request for country information within time constraints. It is current at the time of completion. This Q&A Report should not be cited in a decision or any other document. Anyone wishing to use this information should only cite the source material contained herein.

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#### **Background**

The applicant is a Nigerian Christian who lived in the South Region, Imo Town, Nigeria.

He claims that in 2015 his father was kidnapped for ransom by Boko Haram and then released after the ransom was paid.

#### **Questions**

1. [Are there patterns of kidnappings for ransom by Boko Haram in the South region of Nigeria? Are people released unharmed after a ransom is paid?](#)

## Answers

### 1. Are there patterns of kidnappings for ransom by Boko Haram in the South region of Nigeria? Are people released unharmed after a ransom is paid?

COISS is not aware of kidnappings by Boko Haram occurring in the south of Nigeria.<sup>1</sup> Kidnapping for ransom is a key fundraising activity for the Boko Haram terrorist group.<sup>2</sup> More broadly, kidnapping for ransom is a commonly reported crime throughout Nigeria (see [Additional Reading](#)).

#### Background – Religious and Ethnic Demography

Boko Haram is an Islamic terrorist group that operates in a number of African countries, including Nigeria, mostly in the Lake Chad Basin region, of which northern Nigeria is a part.<sup>3</sup> The group is mostly concentrated in the north and its reach into the south is limited.<sup>4</sup> Boko Haram opposes both Christians and Muslims who do not agree with their interpretation of Islam.<sup>5</sup>

Nigeria is almost evenly split between Christian and Muslim communities.<sup>6</sup> The northern states of Nigeria are predominately Muslim, however some Christians live in small communities in the north. The central and south-western states are approximately equally split between Christians and Muslims.<sup>7</sup> The south-eastern states where the Igbo ethnic group dominates are majority Christian.<sup>8</sup> Conflict between Muslims and Christians and associated ethnic groups has long characterised politics in Nigeria and Boko Haram (and its offshoot, Islamic State in West Africa) emerged out of these conflicts.<sup>9</sup>

COISS was unable to find a location called 'Imo Town'<sup>10</sup>. Imo is the name of a state in south-eastern Nigeria, an area which is predominantly Christian.<sup>11</sup> The residents of Imo are predominantly of the Igbo ethnic group<sup>12</sup> and are predominantly Christian.<sup>13</sup>

#### Reports of Boko Haram kidnappings in southern Nigeria and against Christians

COISS was unable to find specific examples of Igbo or Imo Christians being targeted for kidnapping in the south.<sup>14</sup> DFAT reported in their 2018 report on Nigeria that Boko Haram is more likely to target Muslims for kidnapping and assassination and that individual attacks against Christians are 'highly

<sup>1</sup> COISS conducted targeted web searches and consulted several databases, NGO and government reports.

<sup>2</sup> ['Boko Haram and the Islamic State's West Africa Province'](#), United States Congress, Congressional Research Service, 28 June 2018, 20190822110412

<sup>3</sup> ['Boko Haram and the Islamic State's West Africa Province'](#), United States Congress, Congressional Research Service, 28 June 2018, 20190822110412

<sup>4</sup> ['Boko Haram and the Islamic State's West Africa Province'](#), United States Congress, Congressional Research Service, 28 June 2018, 20190822110412; ['DFAT Country Information Report - Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p 2, CIS7B83941414

<sup>5</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report - Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p 16, CIS7B83941414

<sup>6</sup> ['Nigeria 2018 International Religious Freedom Report'](#), US Department of State, 21 June 2019, p. 2, 20190625085922

<sup>7</sup> ['Nigeria 2018 International Religious Freedom Report'](#), US Department of State, 21 June 2019, p. 3, 20190625085922

<sup>8</sup> ['Nigeria 2018 International Religious Freedom Report'](#), US Department of State, 21 June 2019, p. 3, 20190625085922

<sup>9</sup> ['Boko Haram and the Islamic State's West Africa Province'](#), United States Congress, Congressional Research Service, 28 June 2018, 20190822110412; ['Nigeria's Battle With Boko Haram'](#), Council on Foreign Relations, 8 August 2018, 20190822121203

<sup>10</sup> COISS conducted web searches and used Google and Bing Maps.

<sup>11</sup> ['Nigeria 2018 International Religious Freedom Report'](#), US Department of State, 21 June 2019, p. 2, 20190625085922

<sup>12</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report - Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p 2, CIS7B83941414

<sup>13</sup> ['Nigeria 2018 International Religious Freedom Report'](#), US Department of State, 21 June 2019, p. 3, 20190625085922

<sup>14</sup> COISS conducted targeted web searches and consulted several databases, NGO and government reports.

unlikely'.<sup>15</sup> That report goes on to say that Christians and Muslims living in the southern states face an 'extremely low risk of violence from Boko Haram'.<sup>16</sup>

Kidnapping is very common in Nigeria<sup>17</sup>, including in Imo.<sup>18</sup> It has been particularly reported in the Niger River Delta region of the country, which is partly in the south-east of the country. The 'Niger Delta Crisis' which began in the early 1990s involved a large number of expatriate oil workers who were targeted and kidnapped for ransom.<sup>19</sup> These disputes were not about religion. From there, once criminals realised that kidnapping was profitable, the crime spread to different parts of the southern region and the rest of Nigeria.<sup>20</sup>

DFAT notes that religiously-motivated attacks on Christians in the north are 'opportunistic and infrequent'.<sup>21</sup> By contrast, the Niger Delta Crisis involved targeted attacks against rich expatriates.<sup>22</sup> The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada consulted with an expert in 2016 who told them that Boko Haram's ability to track down an individual was 'doubtful, even in the northeast' because of their limited intelligence capabilities.<sup>23</sup> The same report quotes a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations who said that there was no evidence of Boko Haram tracking down people outside the north-east of the country.<sup>24</sup>

There have been earlier examples of reports of Boko Haram militants attacking Igbo Christian communities in 2012, however these too have occurred in northern Nigeria.<sup>25</sup> Igbo people in the south retaliated by driving Muslims living in the south of the country out of their homes.<sup>26</sup>

More generally in relation to the activities of Boko Haram in the south, the expert consulted by the Canadian researchers said:

I suspect that the group's reach is probably weak in the Southern parts of the country mainly because (1) the South is predominately Christian; (2) the South is predominantly Igbo (the Hausa and Fulani, which are largely Muslim, dominate northern Nigeria); (3) it is not easy for one ethnic group to move to another region, as they would stick out (they would not speak the local languages, know the local customs, etc.). The principal ethnic group in Lagos are Yoruba, and there are Christian and Muslim Yorubas. (Assistant Professor 7 Mar. 2016)<sup>27</sup>

<sup>15</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report - Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 17, CIS7B83941414

<sup>16</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report - Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 17, CIS7B83941414

<sup>17</sup> ['Kidnapping and National Security in Nigeria'](#), Research on Humanities and Social Science, 2014, p. 140, CISD9559B12630

<sup>18</sup> ['Kidnapping and National Security in Nigeria'](#), Research on Humanities and Social Science, 2014, p. 140, CISD9559B12630. See also e.g. ['Police rescue 13 kidnap victims in Imo'](#), Premium Times, 8 July 2019, 20190822142443; ['Police rescue 13 kidnap victims in Imo forest after 8-hour battle with abductors'](#), Legit, July 2019, accessed 22 August 2019, 20190822143451

<sup>19</sup> ['Kidnapping and National Security in Nigeria'](#), Research on Humanities and Social Science, 2014, p. 140, CISD9559B12630

<sup>20</sup> ['Kidnapping and National Security in Nigeria'](#), Research on Humanities and Social Science, 2014, p. 140, CISD9559B12630

<sup>21</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report - Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 17, CIS7B83941414

<sup>22</sup> ['Nigeria's Boko Haram'](#), The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), 11 April 2014, 20190822131528

<sup>23</sup> ['Nigeria: The capacity of Boko Haram to pursue individuals who relocate to another region or city, such as Lagos \(2013-March 2016\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 11 March 2016, 20190620145041

<sup>24</sup> ['Nigeria: The capacity of Boko Haram to pursue individuals who relocate to another region or city, such as Lagos \(2013-March 2016\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 11 March 2016, 20190620145041

<sup>25</sup> ['Igbos the Target of Kano Bombs, Leader claims'](#), PM News, 21 January 2012, 20190822130012; ['Nigeria's Boko Haram'](#), The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), 11 April 2014, 20190822131528

<sup>26</sup> ['Boko Haram is Nigeria's enemy'](#), Guardian, 23 January 2012, 20190822130318

<sup>27</sup> ['Nigeria: The capacity of Boko Haram to pursue individuals who relocate to another region or city, such as Lagos \(2013-March 2016\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 11 March 2016, 20190620145041

The Council on Foreign Relations source quoted in the Canadian research report comes to a similar conclusion that southern activity by Boko Haram is uncommon, noting 'a few isolated incidents'.<sup>28</sup>

COISS found examples of where Boko Haram members were arrested in the south in 2014. A member of the terrorist group was identified from amongst 500 travellers who were looking for work in the south.<sup>29</sup> In another example, six members were arrested in Imo state while allegedly planting bombs in a Christian church.<sup>30</sup>

Are people released unharmed after being kidnapped?

COISS is not aware of Boko Haram kidnapping anyone in the south of Nigeria.<sup>31</sup> Most kidnappings in Nigeria are undocumented and it is difficult therefore to judge trends in the outcomes of those kidnappings.<sup>32</sup> COISS is aware of examples of kidnapped persons being released unharmed. For example, during the Niger Delta Crisis it was the successful negotiation of ransoms which made the crime popular.<sup>33</sup>

The U.S. Department of State Overseas Security Advisory Council notes in its 2019 report on Lagos (which is in the south-west of the country) that 'often, the victim [of a kidnapping]'s family pays a ransom and the kidnappers return the victim unharmed'.<sup>34</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- For general information about kidnapping in Nigeria, please see: [Nigeria: CI180824114403064 – Political Profile – Kidnapping in Nigeria](#), Country of Origin Information Services Section, 25 September 2018, CR837DFFB338

<sup>28</sup> ['Nigeria: The capacity of Boko Haram to pursue individuals who relocate to another region or city, such as Lagos \(2013-March 2016\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 11 March 2016, 20190620145041

<sup>29</sup> ['Nigerian military arrest senior Boko Haram member: police'](#), Reuters, 19 June 2014, 20190822135554

<sup>30</sup> ['Nigeria: Six Boko Haram Members Arrested in Imo Planting Bombs in Winners Chapel Church'](#), This Day, 15 June 2014, 20190822142107

<sup>31</sup> COISS conducted targeted web searches and consulted several databases, NGO and government reports.

<sup>32</sup> ['Kidnapping and National Security in Nigeria'](#), Research on Humanities and Social Science, 2014, p. 142, CISD9559B12630

<sup>33</sup> ['Kidnapping and National Security in Nigeria'](#), Research on Humanities and Social Science, 2014, p. 140, CISD9559B12630

<sup>34</sup> ['Nigeria 2019 Crime & Safety Report: Lagos'](#), Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), US Department of State, 16 August 2019, 20190822145346



## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria:– 20190829150326 – Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Date of Report

10 September 2019

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#### Background

The applicants are Christians from Edo state. They claim that their [personal information] will be subject to female genital mutilation (FGM) if they return to Nigeria. They also claim to fear being kidnapped for ransom.

DFAT reports (CIS7B83941414 Nigeria - 9/3/2018) that the Nigerian federal government publicly opposes FGM, but it has not criminalised the practice. However, a UN Report (Performance Analysis for Phase II UNFPA-UNICEF joint programme on Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 30 August 2018, 20190321163758), states that the government passed legislation criminalising FGM in 2015 and mobilized high level political figures and wives of the President and State Governors to galvanise commitment, give visibility and emphasise the need to accelerate effort towards the elimination of FGM. The same report states the traditional leaders have also signed an agreement to prohibit FGM in their areas and the report outlines significant changes in the society in this regard.

#### Questions

1. [Is FGM criminalised by the Nigerian government?](#)
2. [Do Christians residing in cities perform FGM?](#)
3. [Do girls aged over five undergo FGM?](#)
4. [Can parents refuse to perform FGM on their children and what are the consequences for the parents and the children?](#)
5. [Is there effective protection available to children or their parents?](#)
6. [Is there effective protection measures either by the government or non-state agents against criminal activities like kidnappings?](#)



## Answers

### 1. Is FGM criminalised by the Nigerian government?

Like Australia, Nigeria has a three-tiered federal system of government. There is a constitutional power-sharing arrangement between federal, state and local governments.<sup>1</sup>

Criminalisation of FGM varies from state to state and is sometimes prohibited in local government areas. The Federal government's *Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act 2015* was adopted in Ebonyi, Imo, Oyo and Ogun states. It was also adopted by the Effium community in the Ohaukwu local government area.<sup>2</sup> As a Federal law, the Act only automatically applies to the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja. Other states or local government authorities may adopt the federal law or adopt their own laws that mirror the Federal law.<sup>3</sup>

Before the VAPP Act was implemented several other states had already passed legislation prohibiting FGM, among other issues related to child abuse and protection of women and girls. These states include: Bayelsa, Cross River, Ebonyi, Enugu and Rivers State.

In Edo State the practice is prohibited by the *Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Law* (1999).<sup>4</sup> Under the Edo state legislation, the penalty for performing FGM is at least three years in prison or a fine of 3,000 Naira (about 8 US Dollars) or both.<sup>5</sup>

Female Genital Mutilation is widely practiced regardless of the law.<sup>6</sup> Even in states where laws exist to protect women and girls from the practice, enforcement is reportedly weak.<sup>7</sup> According to the US Department of State's Human Rights Report on Nigeria, the federal government took no legal action to prevent FGM<sup>8</sup> and laws in Edo state are similarly not enforced.<sup>9</sup> (See also [Questions 5 and 6](#)).

The nature of the practice is that it is carried out by traditional practitioners within communities, usually outside of medical facilities over which the government has oversight.<sup>10</sup> However, medical forms of the practice have been reported in Nigeria with 12.7 per cent of women aged 15 to 49 having been cut by a medical professional (mostly a nurse or midwife).<sup>11</sup> Civil society organisations have reported that traditional cutters rely on FGM for their income and status in the community and that criminalisation pushes the practice underground.<sup>12</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada published a COI response to a similar question in 2016. Please see ['Nigeria: Prevalence of female genital mutilation \(FGM\), including ethnic groups in which FGM is prevalent, particularly in Lagos State and within the Edo ethnic group; consequences for refusal; availability of state protection; the ability of a](#)

<sup>1</sup> 'DFAT Country Information Report - Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 10, CIS7B83941414

<sup>2</sup> 'Performance Analysis for Phase II UNFPA-UNICEF joint programme on Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change', United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 30 August 2018, 20190321163758

<sup>3</sup> 'Nigeria: The Law and FGM', 28 Too Many, Thomson Reuters Foundation, June 2018, 20190904143010;

'Nigeria urged to fix legal mess around female genital mutilation', Reuters, 15 June 2018, 20190904141607

<sup>4</sup> 'Nigeria: The Law and FGM', 28 Too Many, Thomson Reuters Foundation, June 2018, p. 3, 20190904143010

<sup>5</sup> 'Nigeria: The Law and FGM', 28 Too Many, Thomson Reuters Foundation, June 2018, p. 5, 20190904143010

<sup>6</sup> 'DFAT Country Information Report - Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 21, CIS7B83941414;

<sup>7</sup> 'Nigeria urged to fix legal mess around female genital mutilation', Reuters, 15 June 2018, 20190904141607

<sup>8</sup> 'Nigeria 2018 International Religious Freedom Report', US Department of State, 21 June 2019, p. 33, 20190625085922

<sup>9</sup> 'Prevalence and Challenges of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Edo State, Nigeria', A. A. Allen, International Journal of Innovation and Scientific Research, Vol. 9, No. 1, September 2014, pp. 70–77, 20190904153957

<sup>10</sup> 'Performance Analysis for Phase II UNFPA-UNICEF joint programme on Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change', United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 30 August 2018, pp. 83, 85, 20190321163758

<sup>11</sup> 'Nigeria: The Law and FGM', 28 Too Many, Thomson Reuters Foundation, June 2018, p. 4, 20190904143010

<sup>12</sup> 'Nigeria: The Law and FGM', 28 Too Many, Thomson Reuters Foundation, June 2018, p. 6, 20190904143010

[family to refuse a ritual practice such as FGM \(2014-September 2016\)](#)', Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 13 September 2016, 20190904150326

- The United Kingdom Home Office published a COI report on FGM in Nigeria in 2017. See ['Country Policy and Information Note – Nigeria – Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\)'](#), UK Home Office, 01 January 2017, OG6E7028815

## 2. Do Christians residing in cities perform FGM?

FGM is more common in the southern states<sup>13</sup>, parts of which are predominantly Christian or have significant Christian communities.<sup>14</sup> A 2014 Nigerian government study also identified both Christian and Muslim communities as engaging in the practice.<sup>15</sup> Many Nigerians who identify as either Christian or Muslim combine that faith with traditional practices and faiths.<sup>16</sup> FGM is widely practiced in the Edo ethnic group.<sup>17</sup>

While it is clear that FGM occurs in both rural and urban areas, the difference in prevalence is disputed. For example, FGM is reported in large cities in the south of the country, including in Lagos State. A researcher told the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRBC) that FGM prevalence was 'very high' in Ikorodu, a city in Lagos State.<sup>18</sup> However, another expert consulted by the IRBC stated that FGM was less prevalent in metropolitan areas.<sup>19</sup> 28 Too Many, an NGO that researches FGM, reports that the rate of FGM in urban areas (32.3 per cent of women aged 15 to 49) across the country is much higher than that of rural areas (19.3 per cent).<sup>20</sup>

People from rural and traditional communities often migrate to large cities such as Lagos for work. These transmigrants bring traditional practices, including FGM, with them.<sup>21</sup> The fact that people from rural areas may move to country areas makes it difficult to analyse the data, which looks at the prevalence of the practice among adult women. Another media source noted that women may be taken from urban areas to rural areas in order to undergo FGM,<sup>22</sup> but this is disputed by one of the experts consulted by the IRBC who reported that Edo women would be likely to have been subjected to the procedure in Edo State. Another expert told the IRBC that residents of Lagos (the largest city in Nigeria) are far away enough from their traditional homes that they are able to resist pressure to

<sup>13</sup> ['Performance Analysis for Phase II UNFPA-UNICEF joint programme on Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change'](#), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 30 August 2018, p. 83, 20190321163758; ['An Overview of Female Genital Mutilation in Nigeria'](#), T.C. Okeke, U.S.B. Anyaehie, C.C.K. Ezenyeaku, Annals of Medical and Health Sciences Research, Ann Med Health Sci Res. 2012 Jan-Jun; 2(1): 70–73., 20190904144906; ['DFAT Country Information Report - Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 21, CIS7B83941414

<sup>14</sup> ['Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 - Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 14 March 2019, pp. 2-3, 20190314113221

<sup>15</sup> ['Nigeria Demographic and Health Study'](#), National Population Commission, Government of Nigeria, June 2014, p. 351, 20190904155528

<sup>16</sup> ['Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 - Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 14 March 2019, pp. 2-3, 20190314113221

<sup>17</sup> ['Nigeria: Prevalence of female genital mutilation \(FGM\), including ethnic groups in which FGM is prevalent, particularly in Lagos State and within the Edo ethnic group; consequences for refusal; availability of state protection; the ability of a family to refuse a ritual practice such as FGM \(2014-September 2016\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 13 September 2016, 20190904150326

<sup>18</sup> ['Nigeria: Prevalence of female genital mutilation \(FGM\), including ethnic groups in which FGM is prevalent, particularly in Lagos State and within the Edo ethnic group; consequences for refusal; availability of state protection; the ability of a family to refuse a ritual practice such as FGM \(2014-September 2016\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 13 September 2016, 20190904150326

<sup>19</sup> ['Nigeria: Prevalence of female genital mutilation \(FGM\), including ethnic groups in which FGM is prevalent, particularly in Lagos State and within the Edo ethnic group; consequences for refusal; availability of state protection; the ability of a family to refuse a ritual practice such as FGM \(2014-September 2016\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 13 September 2016, 20190904150326

<sup>20</sup> ['Nigeria Country Profile'](#), 28 Too Many, no date, accessed 10 September 2019, 20190904162948

<sup>21</sup> ['The Nigerian refugee who saved her daughters from FGM'](#), Aljazeera, 17 June 2019, 20190904145556

<sup>22</sup> ['Nigeria: 20 million women and girls have undergone FGM'](#), Guardian, 11 October 2016, 20190904151415

perform FGM from traditional families and communities, suggesting that the practice is related to migrants to large cities.<sup>23</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

### **3. Do girls aged over five undergo FGM?**

Most women who have been subject to FGM were under five when the procedure was undertaken, however the practice is sometimes applied to older girls and women. According to a joint United Nations agency report, among women aged 15 to 49 who had undergone FGM, 82 per cent of women were aged under five when they underwent the procedure.<sup>24</sup> A 2012 study similarly notes that the practice is carried out on infants in most parts of Nigeria, including Edo.<sup>25</sup>

FGM against girls who are older than five has been reported.<sup>26</sup> According to a 2014 report, four per cent of women underwent the procedure between age five and nine, five per cent between the age of ten and fourteen, and seven per cent after the age of 15.<sup>27</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

### **4. Can parents refuse to perform FGM on their children and what are the consequences for the parents and the children?**

Whether parents can refuse to subject their daughter to FGM depends on whether they would be pressured by their families or their communities, which in turn depends on their communities and families and their motivations. The motivations of families and communities in demanding FGM vary from place to place and community to community. The motivations for FGM include preventing promiscuity, belief in a risk of health issues or the belief that the clitoris is a male part of the female body.<sup>28</sup>

Several experts consulted by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada opined that parents living in Lagos, the state which also contains the city of the same name, would be able to resist pressure to perform the practice.<sup>29</sup> The experts were referring to Edo people, but one expert noted that this would apply to Nigerians of different ethnic origins.<sup>30</sup> Another expert that was consulted said

<sup>23</sup> ['Nigeria: Prevalence of female genital mutilation \(FGM\), including ethnic groups in which FGM is prevalent, particularly in Lagos State and within the Edo ethnic group; consequences for refusal; availability of state protection; the ability of a family to refuse a ritual practice such as FGM \(2014-September 2016\)',](#) Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 13 September 2016, 20190904150326

<sup>24</sup> ['Performance Analysis for Phase II UNFPA-UNICEF joint programme on Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change',](#) United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 30 August 2018, p. 83, 20190321163758. Figures appear to be based on ['Nigeria Demographic and Health Study',](#) National Population Commission, Government of Nigeria, June 2014, p. 351, 20190904155528

<sup>25</sup> ['Prevalence and Challenges of Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\) in Edo State, Nigeria',](#) A. A. Allen, International Journal of Innovation and Scientific Research, Vol. 9, No. 1, September 2014, pp. 70–77, 20190904153957

<sup>26</sup> ['Mothers' perceptions of female genital mutilation',](#) E. L. Ahanonu and O. Victor, 10 January 2014, Journal of Health Education Research, Vol. 29, no. 4, 2014, pp. 683-689, 20190904165207

<sup>27</sup> ['Nigeria Demographic and Health Study',](#) National Population Commission, Government of Nigeria, June 2014, p. 351, 20190904155528

<sup>28</sup> ['Mothers' perceptions of female genital mutilation',](#) E. L. Ahanonu and O. Victor, 10 January 2014, Journal of Health Education Research, Vol. 29, no. 4, 2014, pp. 683-689, p. 685, 20190904165207

<sup>29</sup> ['Nigeria: Prevalence of female genital mutilation \(FGM\), including ethnic groups in which FGM is prevalent, particularly in Lagos State and within the Edo ethnic group; consequences for refusal; availability of state protection; the ability of a family to refuse a ritual practice such as FGM \(2014-September 2016\)',](#) Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 13 September 2016, 20190904150326

<sup>30</sup> ['Nigeria: Prevalence of female genital mutilation \(FGM\), including ethnic groups in which FGM is prevalent, particularly in Lagos State and within the Edo ethnic group; consequences for refusal; availability of state protection; the ability of a family to refuse a ritual practice such as FGM \(2014-September 2016\)',](#) Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 13 September 2016, 20190904150326

that because of interethnic marriage in Lagos that cultural attitudes towards practices such as FGM were moderated.<sup>31</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil

### **5. Is there effective protection available to children or their parents?**

### **6. Is there effective protection measures either by the government or non-state agents against criminal activities like kidnappings?**

Nigeria is a developing country and the standard of law enforcement reflects that status.<sup>32</sup> Police are open to bribery<sup>33</sup> and commonly employ extortion.<sup>34</sup> Responses to reports of crime are reportedly variable but are usually slow or non-existent<sup>35</sup> and may result in a demand for a bribe.<sup>36</sup> Even in Nigeria's biggest city, Lagos, police laboratories and evidence processing facilities are rare.<sup>37</sup>

In general, police deal with societal violence, including domestic terrorism and interracial and interreligious conflict, and this may limit their focus.<sup>38</sup> According to the US Department of State's 2018 human rights report, there are insufficient mechanisms or political will to punish security forces for abuse and corruption.<sup>39</sup>

Police receive reports about FGM, but are unlikely to intervene. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade says of the subject:

Despite an increase in reports received by the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), strong community support for the practice and traditional attitudes of police suggest FGM is likely to continue.<sup>40</sup>

In general, laws against FGM are not well enforced (see [question 1](#)).

Kidnapping is widespread in Nigeria. Criminals work on the premise that families of kidnapping victims rarely contact police, who are generally seen as ineffective.<sup>41</sup> Victims may need to press police

<sup>31</sup> ['Nigeria: Prevalence of female genital mutilation \(FGM\), including ethnic groups in which FGM is prevalent, particularly in Lagos State and within the Edo ethnic group; consequences for refusal; availability of state protection; the ability of a family to refuse a ritual practice such as FGM \(2014-September 2016\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 13 September 2016, 20190904150326

<sup>32</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report - Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 29, CIS7B83941414

<sup>33</sup> ['Do the Police Really Protect and Serve the Public? Police deviance and public'](#), O. M. Akinlabi, University of New England (Australia), July 2016, p. 3, 20190906163131; ['Collective Action on Corruption in Nigeria, A Social Norms Approach'](#), Chatham House Report, May 2017, p. 9, 20190906164250

<sup>34</sup> ['Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 - Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 14 March 2019, pp. 2, 6, 8, 20190314113221; ['Nigerian Police Are in Desperate Need of Reform'](#), Council on Foreign Relations, 7 December 2018, 20190906165349

<sup>35</sup> ['Nigeria 2019 Crime & Safety Report: Lagos'](#), Overseas Security Advisory Council, US Department of State, 16 August 2019, 20190906161709; ['Nigeria International Travel Advice'](#), Bureau of Consular Affairs, US Department of State, 20190906162155

<sup>36</sup> ['Nigeria 2019 Crime & Safety Report: Lagos'](#), Overseas Security Advisory Council, US Department of State, 16 August 2019, 20190906161709

<sup>37</sup> ['Nigeria 2019 Crime & Safety Report: Lagos'](#), Overseas Security Advisory Council, US Department of State, 16 August 2019, 20190906161709

<sup>38</sup> ['Nigerian Police Are in Desperate Need of Reform'](#), Council on Foreign Relations, 7 December 2018, 20190906165349; ['Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 - Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 14 March 2019, p. 11, 20190314113221

<sup>39</sup> ['Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 - Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 14 March 2019, p. 11, 20190314113221

<sup>40</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report - Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 21, CIS7B83941414

<sup>41</sup> ['Nigeria 2019 Crime & Safety Report: Lagos'](#), Overseas Security Advisory Council, US Department of State, 16 August 2019, 20190906161709

throughout the process for an investigation to take place.<sup>42</sup> Criminal groups do not fear arrest or prosecution because of the ineffectiveness of police.<sup>43</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- A recent COISS Q and A gives further information about kidnapping as a crime in Nigeria. It covers general information about kidnapping and state protection. Please see ['Nigeria: CI180824114403064 – Political Profile – Kidnapping in Nigeria'](#), Country of Origin Information Services Section (COISS), 25 September 2018, CR837DFFB338

<sup>42</sup> ['Nigeria 2019 Crime & Safety Report: Lagos'](#), Overseas Security Advisory Council, US Department of State, 16 August 2019, 20190906161709

<sup>43</sup> ['Nigeria 2019 Crime & Safety Report: Lagos'](#), Overseas Security Advisory Council, US Department of State, 16 August 2019, 20190906161709; ['Nigeria won't end kidnapping without making risks outweigh rewards'](#), The Conversation, 13 July 2017, 20190906164838





## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: 20190916121536 – Christianity – Preaching

Date of Report

24 September 2019

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#### Background

An applicant is a Nigerian national who claims that he converted from Islam to Christianity when he resided in Nigeria.

#### Questions

1. [What Christian denominations are practiced in the south of Nigeria?](#)
2. [Is Christian preaching on the streets common in the south of Nigeria?](#)

## Answers

### 1. What Christian denominations are practiced in the south of Nigeria?

The denominations of Christian groups in the south of Nigeria are evangelicals, Roman Catholics, Pentecostals, Anglicans, Baptists, Anabaptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Jehovah's Witnesses and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons).<sup>1</sup> No firm statistics were located to confirm the number of each Christian denomination for the south of Nigeria.<sup>2</sup>

#### Religious and Denominational Demography

Forty to fifty percent of the Nigerian population are Christians.<sup>3</sup> About 50 percent of the Nigerian population is Muslim. The remaining ten percent are either another form of religion (including indigenous religious beliefs) or no religion.<sup>4</sup>

Christianity is the majority religion in the south of Nigeria with Islam being the majority religion in the north<sup>5</sup>. However, there are still Christians that live in the north, Muslims that live in the south and the 'Middle Belt' that is located through the centre of Nigeria has a roughly equal number of Christians and Muslims living there.<sup>6</sup>

In the southwest states of Nigeria (where the Yoruba ethnic group predominate), including Lagos, there is an equal number of Christians (Anglicans and Protestants<sup>7</sup>) and Muslims.<sup>8</sup> In the southeast states (with a majority Igbo ethnic group), the majority of Christians are Catholics, Anglicans and Methodists<sup>9</sup>. Evangelical denominations are a growing denomination in the southern states.<sup>10</sup>

Many Nigerians mix Christianity and Islam with indigenous beliefs.<sup>11</sup> The Nigerian Constitution states that there is the freedom for individuals to change their religion and have the freedom of worship.<sup>12</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

<sup>1</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 8, CIS7B83941414. Can be retained here but you can omit colons for citations

<sup>2</sup> Sources consulted are CISNET, major government and non-government reports and a range of international Christian and Nigerian news sources.

<sup>3</sup> There are no firm figures on the number of Christians in Nigeria. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has Christians at 40 percent and the US State Department has the number at 49.3 percent.

['DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 8, CIS7B83941414: ['Nigeria 2018 International Religious Freedom Report'](#), US Department of State, 21 June 2019, p. 2, 20190625085922.

<sup>4</sup> As there are no firm figures for the number of Christians in Nigeria (see footnote 1), there is no firm 'other' or 'no religion' percentage. ['DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2019, p.8, CIS7B83941414: ['Nigeria 2018 International Religious Freedom Report'](#), US Department of State, 21 June 2019, p. 3, 20190625085922.

<sup>5</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 8, CIS7B83941414.

<sup>6</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 8, CIS7B83941414.

<sup>7</sup> ['Christianity in Nigeria'](#), Religious Literacy Project, Harvard Divinity School, 12 March 2014, 20190923124707.

<sup>8</sup> ['Nigeria 2018 International Religious Freedom Report'](#), US Department of State, 21 June 2019, p. 3, 20190625085922.

<sup>9</sup> ['Nigeria 2018 International Religious Freedom Report'](#), US Department of State, 21 June 2019, p. 3, 20190625085922.

<sup>10</sup> ['Nigeria 2018 International Religious Freedom Report'](#), US Department of State, 21 June 2019, p.3, 20190625085922.

<sup>11</sup> ['Religious Beliefs In Nigeria'](#), World Atlas, 01 August 2019, 20190923125828.

<sup>12</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 11, CIS7B83941414.

## 2. Is Christian preaching on the streets is common in the South of Nigeria?

COISS found no information about whether Christians preaching on the streets is common in the south of Nigeria.<sup>13</sup> In 2007, two members of the Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries (denomination of Christianity) were allegedly shot for their style of preaching in Lagos.<sup>14</sup> In 2015, a pastor in Lagos with the Lord Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries was killed by two gunman.<sup>15</sup> There is suggestion that this attack could have been a robbery.<sup>16</sup> Lagos, and Nigeria as a whole, is at serious risk from crime.<sup>17</sup>

The state of Kaduna (located in the northwest) *Kaduna State Religious Preaching Bill 2016* (the Bill) that makes it a requirement for all preachers to gain a preaching license, was passed in early June 2019. There was widespread opposition from both Christian and Muslim religious leaders on the introduction of this Bill. The punishment for the Bill was 'imprisonment for a term of not less than five years or a fine of not less than N100,000 or both'.<sup>18</sup> In late June 2019, a judge declared that the Bill violated fundamental human rights and that it 'was inconsistent with the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 and, therefore illegal, null and void'.<sup>19</sup> Several of the northern states in Nigeria have laws in place that require preachers to gain a license<sup>20</sup> but no information was located on whether any of the southern states had similar measures in place.<sup>21</sup>

Boko Haram (located in the north) is known to attack Christian communities but they are less likely to target an individual<sup>22</sup> and Muslims are more likely to be targeted than Christians.<sup>23</sup> For Christians living in either the Middle Belt or the southern states, DFAT has assessed that they would face an 'extremely low risk of violence from Boko Haram or ISIS-WA'.<sup>24</sup>

### Additional Reading

- Nil.

<sup>13</sup> Sources consulted are CISNET, major government and non-government reports and a range of international Christian and Nigerian news sources.

<sup>14</sup> ['Gunman shoots Lord's chosen members'](#), Daily Champion -Nigeria, 09 August 2007, CX182725.

<sup>15</sup> ['Nigeria: Lord Chosen Church's Pastor Assassinated in Lagos'](#), Daily Trust - Nigeria, 24 June 2015, 20190923174244.

<sup>16</sup> ['Nigeria: Lord Chosen Church's Pastor Assassinated in Lagos'](#), Daily Trust - Nigeria, 24 June 2015, 20190923174244.

<sup>17</sup> ['Nigeria 2019 Crime & Safety Report Lagos'](#), Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), 06 September 2019, 20190906161709.

<sup>18</sup> ['Kaduna Assembly passes controversial religious regulatory bill hours to dissolution'](#), Premium Times, 08 June 2019, 20190924110535.

<sup>19</sup> ['Nigeria: Court Nullifies Kaduna's Bill to Regulate Pastors'](#), The Guardian, 20 June 2019, 20190924105823.

<sup>20</sup> ['Nigeria 2018 International Religious Freedom Report'](#), US Department of State, 21 June 2019, p. 5, 20190625085922.

<sup>21</sup> Sources consulted are CISNET, major government and non-government reports and a range of international Christian and Nigerian news sources.

<sup>22</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 16, CIS7B83941414.

<sup>23</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 16, CIS7B83941414.

<sup>24</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 17, CIS7B83941414.



## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: 20190813150104 – Boko Haram – Christians

Date of Report

2 October 2019

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#### Background

[redacted]

#### Questions

1. [Please indicate whether there are media/independent reports that would corroborate a bombing attack on a St Peter's church in northern Nigeria on or around 29 March 2015, and other bombings on that day, killing many people?](#)
2. [Please indicate the extent of threats or harm by Boko Haram or other anti-Christian militant groups in the town of Onistha from 2015 onwards?](#)

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## Answers

### 1. Please indicate whether there are media/independent reports that would corroborate a bombing attack on a St Peter's church in northern Nigeria on or around 29 March 2015, and other bombings on that day, killing many people?

COISS was unable to find any reference to a village area called Duwqimbe (or similar) near or within Bauchi State in the north-east of Nigeria. COISS did find limited information about Boko Haram attacks in Bauchi around the date of the presidential and federal legislative elections on 28 March 2015, but was unable to locate an incident at a St Peter's church in or surrounding Bauchi.<sup>1</sup> More broadly, country information located indicates that Boko Haram were active to a limited extent in the Bauchi region during the latter part of 2014 until March 2015. During this period, Boko Haram occupied parts of the north-east but were driven out by a military campaign in the first quarter of 2015, and retreated to Sambisa forest in Borno State according to reports.

#### *Christian demography*

In its 2015 report on religious freedom in Nigeria the US Department of State provided the following overview of Nigeria's Christian population which constitutes approximately half of the country's religious population:

Christian groups include evangelicals, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), and Jehovah's Witnesses. Other groups include Jews, Bahais, and individuals who do not follow any religion.

[...]

Significant numbers of Christians also reside in the north, and Christians and Muslims reside in approximately equal numbers in central Nigeria and in the southwestern states, including Lagos, where the Yoruba ethnic group predominates. In the southeastern states, where the Igbo ethnic group is dominant, Catholics, Anglicans, and Methodists constitute the majority, although many Igbos combine traditional practices with Christianity. In the Niger Delta region, where the Ogoni and Ijaw ethnic groups predominate, Christians form a substantial majority, and a very small minority of the population is Muslim. Evangelical denominations are growing rapidly in the central and southern regions.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Boko Haram militancy in the north and north-eastern states*

A 2018 United Nations Development Programme development report on north-east Nigeria provides an overview of Bauchi State and says the state has experienced 'several' Boko Haram attacks – mainly within the metropolis:

Bauchi State was created on 3rd February, 1976 out of the former North Eastern State and occupies a total land area of 49,119 km<sup>2</sup> representing about 5.3 per cent of Nigeria's total land mass. The state is bordered by seven states of Kano and Jigawa to the north, Taraba and Plateau to the south, Gombe and Yobe to the east and Kaduna to the west. Bauchi state is one of the states in the northern part of Nigeria that spans two distinctive vegetation zones; i.e. the Sudan savannah and the Sahel savannah with the former covering the southern part where it gets richer (agriculturally), especially along water sources and the latter (also known as a semi-desert vegetation) manifest from the middle of the state as one moves to the north, comprising mainly of isolated stands of thorny shrubs. The southwestern part of the state is mountainous as a result of the continuation of the Jos Plateau, while the northern part is generally sandy. The level of illiteracy and poverty is very high in the State and it has witnessed several *Boko Haram* attacks particularly within the metropolis.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sources consulted: CISNET, government and non-governmental reports, domestic and international media outlets, and Internet searches.

<sup>2</sup> [2015 Report on International Religious Freedom - Nigeria](#), US Department of State, 10 August 2016, p.2, OGD95BE926772

<sup>3</sup> ['National Human Development Report 2018: Achieving Human Development in North East Nigeria'](#), United Nations Development Programme, 19 October, 2018, p.8, CIS7B8394110310



In its 2015 country report on terrorism, the US Department of State summarised that Boko Haram attacks during 2015 were most frequently carried out in the north-eastern states of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe – areas that had been captured by Boko Haram:

Boko Haram continued to carry out kidnappings, killings, bombings, and attacks on civilian and military targets in northern Nigeria, resulting in thousands of deaths, injuries, and significant destruction of property in 2015. The states where attacks occurred most frequently were in Nigeria's northeast, particularly Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states. Attacks were also launched in Bauchi, Gombe, Kaduna, Kano, Niger, Plateau, and Taraba states; and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). [...] Boko Haram increased its use of suicide bombings against civilian targets, including places of worship, markets, and bus stations. Throughout the year, suspected Boko Haram members killed Nigerian security officials and civilians of both the Islamic and Christian faiths.<sup>4</sup>

The report outlines some of the most notable Boko Haram attacks that occurred during 2015:

- On February 24 at a Kano bus station in Kano State, 34 persons were killed by three suicide bombers.
- On March 6 in Maiduguri in Borno State, the Baga Fish market, mosque, and bus terminal were attacked with 54 persons killed.
- On July 5 in Jos in Plateau State, 51 were killed in a bombing of a mosque.
- On November 30 in Maigumeri LGA in Borno State, Boko Haram killed seven civilians and a soldier in Bam and Gajigana villages. They also abducted an unspecified number of teenage girls.
- Also on November 30 in Kano, Kano State, Boko Haram claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing on a Shiite Muslim procession that killed 22 people.<sup>5</sup>

Likewise, in its 2015 religious freedom report on Nigeria, the US Department of State reported that 'Boko Haram killed thousands of persons, in both indiscriminate acts of violence and attacks deliberately targeting Muslims who spoke out against or opposed their radical ideology, such as the Emir of Kano, as well as Christians'.<sup>6</sup> During 2015, Boko Haram raided 'small towns and villages in remote areas of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe States',<sup>7</sup> burning down or destroying 'many churches and mosques, often in villages it raided or occupied'.<sup>8</sup> In urban areas, Boko Haram 'increasingly used suicide attacks and improvised explosive device[s] rather than raids' in the north.<sup>9</sup> Reportedly, a 'resident said suspected Boko Haram fighters burned down all 32 churches in the village of Mussa in Borno State during a July 3 [2015] attack'.<sup>10</sup> The Catholic Diocese of Maiduguri reported that 350 churches in Nigeria have been destroyed during the conflict.<sup>11</sup> The Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria said that Boko Haram had destroyed approximately 850 churches during the conflict in Nigeria.<sup>12</sup>

In its 2015 human rights report on Nigeria, the US Department of state said that Boko Haram 'conducted numerous attacks on government and civilian targets that resulted in thousands of deaths

<sup>4</sup> ['Country Reports on Terrorism 2015 - Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 2 June 2016, p.1, OGD95BE926421

<sup>5</sup> ['Country Reports on Terrorism 2015 - Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 2 June 2016, p.2, OGD95BE926421

<sup>6</sup> [2015 Report on International Religious Freedom - Nigeria](#), US Department of State, 10 August 2016, p.1 & 8, OGD95BE926772

<sup>7</sup> [2015 Report on International Religious Freedom - Nigeria](#), US Department of State, 10 August 2016, p.4 & 8, OGD95BE926772

<sup>8</sup> [2015 Report on International Religious Freedom - Nigeria](#), US Department of State, 10 August 2016, p.9, OGD95BE926772

<sup>9</sup> [2015 Report on International Religious Freedom - Nigeria](#), US Department of State, 10 August 2016, p.4 & 9, OGD95BE926772

<sup>10</sup> [2015 Report on International Religious Freedom - Nigeria](#), US Department of State, 10 August 2016, p.9, OGD95BE926772

<sup>11</sup> [2015 Report on International Religious Freedom - Nigeria](#), US Department of State, 10 August 2016, p.9, OGD95BE926772

<sup>12</sup> [2015 Report on International Religious Freedom - Nigeria](#), US Department of State, 10 August 2016, p.9, OGD95BE926772

and injuries, widespread destruction, the internal displacement of an estimated 1.8 million persons, and the external displacement of 220,000 Nigerian refugees to neighbouring counties'.<sup>13</sup>

The report says that during 2015 'Boko Haram perpetrated numerous attacks, often directly targeting civilians' such as 'bombings – including suicide bombings – and attacks on population centers in Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Kano, Plateau, and Yobe States'.<sup>14</sup> The report denotes those who were targeted in Boko Haram attacks during 2015, outlining some attacks:

Boko Haram continued its campaign of violence against secular authority and anyone perceived as disagreeing with the group's political or religious beliefs. Boko Haram conducted indiscriminate large-scale attacks on towns and villages; raided population centers; and employed IEDS and suicide bombers against civilian and military targets alike.

[...]

According to press and NGO reports, on January 3, Boko Haram attacked an NA base near Mile 4, a small village a few miles west of the town of Baga, in Borno State. After quickly overrunning it, the militants turned east to Baga and during the next four days assaulted civilians in Baga and surrounding villages. According to eyewitness reports collected by NGOs, Boko Haram indiscriminately shot and killed possibly up to 2,000 persons in what may have been the group's deadliest single massacre in its six-year insurgency.

The terrorist group continued almost daily attacks on villages and cities in the states of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe. It also carried out attacks resulting in mass casualties among civilians in Bauchi, Gombe, Kano, and Plateau States, among others. Women and girls carried out many of the attacks. On January 10, for example, a bomb strapped to a 10-year-old girl exploded in a marketplace in Maiduguri, Borno, killing 16 persons and injuring more than 20. On July 26, a 10-year-old girl carried out a bombing at the entrance to a market in Damaturu, Yobe, killing 10 persons and wounding 50 others.<sup>15</sup>

In June 2015, the UK Home Office cited a February 2015 Jane's report that discusses areas under the influence of Boko Haram. According to Janes, in mid-2014 Boko Haram began to occupy Damboa and then proceeded to take over several large towns in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. Boko Haram then gradually encircled the main north-eastern city of Maiduguri, twice launching a concerted assault on the city towards the end of January 2015. Boko Haram then 'expanded its area of operations to intensify its campaign of violence in states such as Abuja, Bauchi, Kano, Kaduna, Taraba, and gradually in Lagos'.<sup>16</sup>

The UK Home Office, citing Amnesty International's 'Boko Haram at a glance' report, wrote that by 'January 2015, the group [Boko Haram] had taken complete control of and occupied around 15 local government areas in north-eastern Nigeria. In addition, they have partial control in more than 15 local government areas'.<sup>17</sup>

#### *Military offensive*

In February 2015, a coordinated military operation conducted with regional partners launched an offensive against Boko Haram.<sup>18</sup>

The UK Home Office, citing information from a 24 March Council for Foreign Relations report, wrote that 'since postponing the national elections from February 14 to March 28 [2015], the Abuja

<sup>13</sup> ['Nigeria - Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015'](#), US Department of State, 13 April 2016, p.1, OGD95BE926295

<sup>14</sup> ['Nigeria - Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015'](#), US Department of State, 13 April 2016, p.2, OGD95BE926295

<sup>15</sup> ['Nigeria - Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015'](#), US Department of State, 13 April 2016, pp.16-17, OGD95BE926295

<sup>16</sup> ['Country Information and Guidance - Nigeria: Fear of Boko Haram'](#), UK Home Office, June 2015, p.21, OG8F59D8D19

<sup>17</sup> ['Country Information and Guidance - Nigeria: Fear of Boko Haram'](#), UK Home Office, June 2015, p.21, OG8F59D8D19

<sup>18</sup> ['Nigeria - Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015'](#), US Department of State, 13 April 2016, p.1, OGD95BE926295

government has apparently recovered most of the territory in northeast Nigeria that had been lost to Boko Haram'. Furthermore, 'of the major towns once captured, only Gwoza appears to remain under Boko Haram's control'.<sup>19</sup> By 27 March 2015, *BBC News* reported that the Nigerian army claimed it had retaken the town of Gwoza.<sup>20</sup> Then on 4 May 2015 *BBC News* reported that 'by March 2015, Boko Haram had lost all the towns under its control' following military efforts against it undertaken by a regional coalition. Reportedly, 'Boko Haram retreated to the Sambisa forest, where the Nigerian military pursued it'.<sup>21</sup> However, Boko Haram remained undefeated.<sup>22</sup>

Metropolis in the north and north-eastern states affected by Boko Haram militancy between late 2014 and early 2015 are depicted in the map below:



23

### Additional Reading

- Questions Two and Three on Boko Haram attacks in 2015. [Nigeria: CI161214144422776 – Boko Haram bomb attacks in 2015-2016 – Treatment of Christians – Targeting of churches and mosques](#), Country of Origin Information Services Section (COISS), 3 February 2017, CR8DFDCEA28
- Synopsis of military operation against Boko Haram in the north-east. [The Rise, Fall, and Rise Again of Boko Haram](#), Harvard International Review, 1 February 2017, CXC9040661059
- Boko Haram's focus on Christians during 2014 and its focus in 2015. [Nigeria – Targeting of Individuals](#), European Asylum Support Office (EASO), November 2018, pp.70-72, 20190109132440

<sup>19</sup> [Country Information and Guidance - Nigeria: Fear of Boko Haram](#), UK Home Office, June 2015, p.23, OG8F59D8D19

<sup>20</sup> [Country Information and Guidance - Nigeria: Fear of Boko Haram](#), UK Home Office, June 2015, p.23, OG8F59D8D19

<sup>21</sup> [Country Information and Guidance - Nigeria: Fear of Boko Haram](#), UK Home Office, June 2015, p.24, OG8F59D8D19

<sup>22</sup> [Country Information and Guidance - Nigeria: Fear of Boko Haram](#), UK Home Office, June 2015, p.25, OG8F59D8D19

<sup>23</sup> [Boko Haram's attacks place heavy burden on neighbors](#), Deutsche Welle, 13 May 2014, 20191002115824



- See 'Attacks on Mosques and Churches'. ['Boko Haram's Deadly Impact'](#), Council on Foreign Relations, 20 August 2018, 20191002123042
- ['Nigeria's Gombe and Bauchi cities hit by blasts'](#), BBC News, 22 December 2014, 20191002135435

## 2. Please indicate the extent of threats or harm by Boko Haram or other anti-Christian militant groups in the town of Onitsha from 2015 onwards?

COISS did not locate information about anti-Christian militancy in the south-eastern city of Onitsha in Anambra State. However, COISS located limited information about some attacks, one that occurred outside a church in Onitsha, and two others that occurred inside a churches, one in a town south of Onitsha and another in Onitsha. These attacks were not reported to be insurgency related rather appear to be other criminal acts.

On 14 August 2017, *Leadership Newspaper* reported that on 6 August 2017 an attack by an unknown gunmen occurred at a church near Onitsha. The St. Philips Catholic Church in the town of Ozubulu, south of Onitsha, was attacked leaving 11 people dead and 18 injured.<sup>24</sup>

An 8 August 2017 *Agence France Presse* report says that 'at least 12 people were killed, and 18 others injured, in a shooting during Mass at a Roman Catholic church in southeastern Nigeria'. Reportedly, the police commissioner for Anambra State said the shooting was "not unconnected to a kind of 'gang war'" between parties in Nigeria and South Africa. The commissioner said the gang war "spilled over to Anambra State". The 'authorities' said the attackers 'marched to the front of the church, near the altar [sic], and opened fire as worshipers scattered'. Reportedly, 'drug dealers exert a powerful hold on Ozubulu [large town south of Onitsha, Anambra State] and other towns in Anambra State. They are often generous donors to local political and religious figures'. The report also says that 'gang-related violence is not uncommon in towns like Ozubulu, where drug cartels are active'.<sup>25</sup>

On 6 August 2017, *Al Jazeera* reported that 'gunmen went to the church looking for the son of a local chief, and opened fire on the parishioners when they could not find him'. The report also says that 'attacks on churches are rare in southern Nigeria, which is predominately Christian'. Reportedly, 'authorities said they do not believe that the armed group Boko Haram was behind the attack'.<sup>26</sup>

On 14 August 2017, *The Guardian (Lagos)* reported that 'some gunmen yesterday killed a policeman and a commercial bike rider near the Assemblies of God Church in Onitsha'. Reportedly:

The Guardian learnt that the gunmen killed the policeman who was allegedly assigned to protect the church. An eyewitness account said they over-powered the policemen, forcing them to abandon their patrol vehicle and ran for safety.

It was further learnt that the incident took place while the church service was on, adding that the deceased policeman was the only one who was armed among his colleagues.

According to the eyewitness, two gunmen ransacked the patrol vehicle and took away the gun belonging to the killed policeman. Another source added that the attackers, who were riding a commercial motorcycle, killed the policeman and took away his gun, before killing the bike rider and wounding his passenger, while trying to escape.

While confirming the incident, the state Commissioner of Police, Mr. Garba Umar said the attack was not directed against the church. The police boss explained: "The security men were on patrol near the church, when some gunmen attacked them. It was not an attack on the church, in the real sense of it."<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> ['Ozubulu Church Re-opens A Week After Attack'](#), Leadership Newspaper, 14 August 2017, 20191002165458

<sup>25</sup> ['Pope Francis condemns Anambra church massacre'](#), Agence France Presse, 8 August 2017, 20191002165900

<sup>26</sup> ['Several Dead in Nigeria Church Shooting'](#), Al Jazeera, 6 August 2017, 20191002163120

<sup>27</sup> ['Gunmen kill policeman, bike rider near church in Onitsha'](#), The Guardian (Lagos), 7 August 2017, 20191002161945

It was reported on 19 December 2018 by *Naija Church News* that a 26 year old assistant pastor was killed by unknown gunmen at the Christ Holy church on Orumba Street, Okpoko, Onitsha. Reportedly, suspects took valuables from the apartment following the killing.<sup>28</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- '[Country Policy and Information Note on Nigeria: Boko Haram](#)', UK Home Office, 15 February 2019, 20190215103954
- '[Country policy and information note: internal relocation, March 2019](#)', UK Home Office, March 2019, 20190411105620
- '[Country Information Report: Nigeria](#)', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia), 9 March 2018, pp.16-17, CIS7B83941414

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<sup>28</sup> '[Gunmen kill pastor in Onitsha church](#)', *Naija Church News*, 19 December 2018, 20191002164943





## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: 20190925141117 – Muslim – Women – Ogun - Sharia Law

Date of Report

3 October 2019

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#### Background

The applicant is a Nigerian national who resides in Ogun state in the south of Nigeria. She claims that she and her husband were threatened because he allowed her to travel alone in Australia and because she had already been residing away from her husband and her children.

#### Questions

1. [Are Muslim women who resided in the south of Nigeria allowed to travel alone to study and reside in Western countries without their husbands but with their permission?](#)
2. [Do these women face adverse treatment by the Muslim community in the south of Nigeria?](#)
3. [Is Sharia Law applied in the south of Nigeria?](#)
4. [What rights do Muslim women have in the south of Nigeria?](#)

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## Answers

### 1. Are Muslim women who resided in the south of Nigeria allowed to travel alone to study and reside in Western countries without their husbands but with their permission?

COISS found no information on Muslim women residing in the south of Nigeria being allowed to travel alone to study and to reside in a Western country without their husbands but with their permission.<sup>1</sup>

Nigeria is known as a highly patriarchal society with cultural traditions<sup>2</sup> that are still 'continuing to perform poorly on gender inclusiveness indices.'<sup>3</sup> There is the expectation that women must play the role of being a 'good wife.'<sup>4</sup>

COISS found one example from late 2018 in which a Nigerian woman returned to living in Nigeria after she spent some time living in the UK. Upon returning to Nigeria, she married a Nigerian man and the woman 'complained' about how she was being treated by her husband. The response from her family was that she 'spent too long living among white people where everything is upside down and the women control the men.'<sup>5</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

### 2. Do these women face adverse treatment by the Muslim community in the south of Nigeria?

COISS found no information on how these women are treated by the Muslim community in the south of Nigeria.<sup>6</sup>

In the southwest region of Nigeria, Nasrul-lahi-li Fathi Society of Nigeria (NASFAT), a Muslim prayer group, is growing in response to the increasing popularity of Pentecostal Christianity in Nigeria.<sup>7</sup> The Yoruba community, who are based in the southwestern states, have embraced NASFAT.<sup>8</sup> NASFAT encourages both western and Islamic education.<sup>9</sup> This is in contrast to Boko Haram who are in the northeast of Nigeria who forbid Muslims from taking part in secular education.<sup>10</sup>

NASFAT now has branches in western countries such as England, Canada, Germany and the Netherlands.<sup>11</sup> NASFAT also has a week dedicated to women once a year that is to celebrate women and to promote progression in equality, empowerment, education, religious tolerance, more women in

<sup>1</sup> Sources consulted were CISNET, major government and non-government reports and a range of international and Nigerian news sources.

<sup>2</sup> [Country Information Report: Nigeria](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 21, CIS7B83941414

<sup>3</sup> [Country Information Report: Nigeria](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 21, CIS7B83941414

<sup>4</sup> ['Why are African women more at risk of violence? Nigeria tells a patriarchal tale'](#), The Guardian, 27 November 2018, 20191002171243

<sup>5</sup> ['Why are African women more at risk of violence? Nigeria tells a patriarchal tale'](#), The Guardian, 27 November 2018, 20191002171243

<sup>6</sup> Sources consulted were CISNET, major government and non-government reports and a range of international and Nigerian news sources.

<sup>7</sup> ['Praise Allah! Islam goes evangelical in Nigeria's south'](#), Gulf News, 04 May 2017, 20191002163712

<sup>8</sup> ['Praise Allah! Islam goes evangelical in Nigeria's south'](#), Gulf News, 04 May 2017, 20191002163712

<sup>9</sup> ['Praise Allah! Islam goes evangelical in Nigeria's south'](#), Gulf News, 04 May 2017, 20191002163712

<sup>10</sup> [Country Information Report: Nigeria](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 12, CIS7B83941414

<sup>11</sup> ['Praise Allah! Islam goes evangelical in Nigeria's south'](#), Gulf News, 04 May 2017, 20191002163712

politics and decent dressing.<sup>12</sup> In September 2019, a talk during this week in Lagos was about the promotion of healthy living.<sup>13</sup>

In November 2018, the Lagos State government ordered that hijabs could be worn in public schools with the school uniform.<sup>14</sup> Also in November 2018, the University of Ibadan International School (Oyo State) shut down for a week as the school prohibited Muslim students from wearing hijabs. After the closure, the school reopened but advised parents that students must comply with the dress code which meant no hijab until the parents go through the proper process to change the dress code.<sup>15</sup>

In southwest Nigeria, 'a single family can celebrate Muslim festivals such as Eid as well as Christian ones such as Christmas.'<sup>16</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

### **3. Is Sharia Law applied in the south of Nigeria?**

No. The 2018 Country Information Report: Nigeria from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade states that Sharia Law is applied in 12 northern states (Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara).<sup>17</sup> These 12 states are able to use a sharia-based penal code that allows for offences and punishments 'hadd'.<sup>18</sup> Sharia Courts are run parallel to both state and federal judicial systems.<sup>19</sup> These punishments include 'caning, amputation and death by stoning.'<sup>20</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

### **4. What rights do Muslim women have in the south of Nigeria?**

COISS found no information on what rights Muslim women have in the south of Nigeria.<sup>21</sup> Although women in Nigeria will often experience discrimination due to religious practices<sup>22</sup> and their gender.<sup>23</sup> The 1999 Constitution of Nigeria prohibits religious discrimination and gives individuals the freedom to choose their religion.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>12</sup> [Happy International Women's WEEK - NASFAT](#), Facebook, 03 October 2019, 20191003120229

<sup>13</sup> ['NASFAT tasks women on good health care'](#), Guardian, The (Nigeria), 20 September 2019, 20191002164754

<sup>14</sup> [Nigeria 2018 International Religious Freedom Report](#), US Department of State, 21 June 2019, p. 7, 20190625085922

<sup>15</sup> [Nigeria 2018 International Religious Freedom Report](#), US Department of State, 21 June 2019, p. 13, 20190625085922

<sup>16</sup> ['Praise Allah! Islam goes evangelical in Nigeria's south'](#), Gulf News, 04 May 2017, 20191002163712

<sup>17</sup> [Country Information Report: Nigeria](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 30, CIS7B83941414

<sup>18</sup> [Country Information Report: Nigeria](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 30, CIS7B83941414

<sup>19</sup> ['Lawyers call for reform in Nigerian sharia law'](#), Agence France Presse (AFP) - France, 07 March 2014, CX1B9ECAB11049

<sup>20</sup> [Country Information Report: Nigeria](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 30, CIS7B83941414

<sup>21</sup> Sources consulted were CISNET, major government and non-government reports and a range of international and Nigerian news sources.

<sup>22</sup> [Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 - Nigeria](#), US Department of State, 14 March 2019, p. 47, 20190314113221

<sup>23</sup> [Country Information Report: Nigeria](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 21, CIS7B83941414

<sup>24</sup> [Nigeria 2018 International Religious Freedom Report](#), US Department of State, 21 June 2019, p. 1, 20190625085922

In Nigeria, violence is widespread.<sup>25</sup> A recent study found that '28 percent of women aged 25-29 have experienced some form of physical violence since the age of 15.'<sup>26</sup> Due to constraints on both education and employment, women are usually economically dependent on others.<sup>27</sup>

However, it should be noted that the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations of Nigeria advocates for an enhanced role for Muslim women in Nigeria. According to its website it has chapters in 36 states and in Abuja.<sup>28</sup> It purportedly collaborates on projects with other organisations such as the National Council of Women's Societies, Women in Nigeria, and the Federation of Women Lawyers in Nigeria.<sup>29</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

<sup>25</sup> '[Nigeria's poisonous patriarchy](#)', Mail & Guardian Africa, 02 July 2019, 20191002165253

<sup>26</sup> '[Nigeria's poisonous patriarchy](#)', Mail & Guardian Africa, 02 July 2019, 20191002165253

<sup>27</sup> '[Nigeria's poisonous patriarchy](#)', Mail & Guardian Africa, 02 July 2019, 20191002165253

<sup>28</sup> '[The Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria](#)', The Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria, 03 October 2019, 20191003144334

<sup>29</sup> Muslim Women and Social Responsibility in Nigeria: Contributions of the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN), Muslim Women and Social Responsibility in Nigeria: Contributions of the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN), Alternational Journal, December 2017, p. 177, <https://journals.ukzn.ac.za/index.php/soa/article/view/847/1245>



## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: 20191016174858 – HIV Treatment – Support Services – Employment Discrimination

Date of Report

23 October 2019

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#### Background

The applicant suffers from HIV, is receiving treatment in Australia and has a good support network.

#### Questions

1. [What HIV treatments exist in Nigeria and are there any barriers to these treatments?](#)
2. [What support services are in place for people with HIV in Nigeria?](#)
3. [Are there reports of discrimination against people with HIV in Nigeria?](#)
4. [Are there reports of employment discrimination against people with HIV in Nigeria?](#)



## Answers

### 1. What HIV treatments exist in Nigeria and are there any barriers to these treatments?

A range of free treatments are provided to just over half of the 1.9 million people currently estimated to be living with HIV in Nigeria. Beyond this, the government has partnered with international agencies with the aim of further bolstering the provision of HIV treatments, although a range of barriers persist, including stigmatisation around seeking treatment, and a number of practical issues around accessing services.

#### Treatments

In March 2019, the Nigerian government released updated estimates – generated in conjunction with UNAIDS – of prevalence and treatment rates of people living with HIV (PLHIW) in the country.<sup>1</sup> According to Nigeria's National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA), there are around 1.9 million people living with (PLHIV) in the country, with more than one million of these receiving anti-retroviral treatment in 2018.<sup>2</sup> Clarity beyond the estimate of 'more than 1 million people' is not given. The relevant source does however proceed to state that 'the new estimates released today indicate that more than half of people living with HIV still do not have suppressed viral loads', explaining that:

At the national level, viral suppression among people living with HIV aged 15–49 years stands at 42.3% (45.3% among women and 34.5% among men). When people living with HIV are virally suppressed they remain healthy and transmission of the virus is prevented.<sup>3</sup>

Commenting on the release of the findings, the Director-General of NACA was quoted as saying:

"It is important that all people living with HIV get treatment and achieve viral suppression. To halt the epidemic, we need to act now" ... "As a government working with our partners, we have what it takes to support people who are HIV-positive, to provide treatment, to protect their families and to help people live long and healthy lives."<sup>4</sup>

UNAIDS' Nigeria webpage currently displays a treatment rate of 53 per cent, with 42 per cent of PLHIV being virally suppressed.<sup>5</sup>

In October 2019, HIV-advocacy NGO Avert published UNAIDS data from 2019 which stated what appear to be similar treatment rates as those indicated by NACA in the preceding source, indicating that the number of adults receiving Anti-retroviral therapy (ART) in Nigeria had risen to 55 per cent.<sup>6</sup>

Avert states that 'Nigeria aims to triple treatment coverage in the next three years, ensuring that 90% of the population living with HIV are on treatment by 2021'.<sup>7</sup> According to Avert, 'to do this they will also need to address stigma and discrimination around the virus, and have committed to work to foster an enabling environment for people living with HIV to come forwards'.<sup>8</sup> It appears that Avert's

<sup>1</sup> ['New survey results indicate that Nigeria has an HIV prevalence of 1.4%'](#), UNAIDS, 14 March 2019, 20191018115832

<sup>2</sup> ['New survey results indicate that Nigeria has an HIV prevalence of 1.4%'](#), UNAIDS, 14 March 2019, 20191018115832; ['Nigeria'](#), UNAIDS, 18 October 2019, 20191018122017

<sup>3</sup> ['New survey results indicate that Nigeria has an HIV prevalence of 1.4%'](#), UNAIDS, 14 March 2019, 20191018115832

<sup>4</sup> ['New survey results indicate that Nigeria has an HIV prevalence of 1.4%'](#), UNAIDS, 14 March 2019, 20191018115832

<sup>5</sup> ['Nigeria'](#), UNAIDS, 18 October 2019, 20191018122017

<sup>6</sup> ['HIV and AIDS in Nigeria'](#), Avert, 3 October 2019, 20191017145309

<sup>7</sup> ['HIV and AIDS in Nigeria'](#), Avert, 3 October 2019, 20191017145309

<sup>8</sup> ['HIV and AIDS in Nigeria'](#), Avert, 3 October 2019, 20191017145309

statements around 'tripling' treatment rates relates to earlier UNAIDS data from 2018 which indicated only 33 per cent of PLHIV in Nigeria were receiving ART.<sup>9</sup>

In 2017, relevant Nigerian government bodies launched targets aligned to the Joint United Nations Programme (UNAIDS)' 90-90-90 plan, the global aims of which include:

90 per cent of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status; 90 per cent of all people with diagnosed HIV infection will receive sustained antiretroviral therapy (ART); and 90 per cent of all people receiving ART will have viral suppression.<sup>10</sup>

Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) and NACA have domesticated the UNAIDS plan into the country's National Strategic Framework (NSF) 2017-2021, the aims of which include:

90 per cent of diagnosed People Living with HIV (PLHIV) are on ART by 2021; 90 per cent of diagnosed PLHIV on treatment are retained in care by 2021; 90 per cent of eligible PLHIV receive co-trimoxazole prophylaxis by 2021; and all PLHIV diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB) have access to services by 2021.<sup>11</sup>

The NSF outlines NACA's planned HIV treatment programme, including specific drug regimens:

The national HIV treatment programme is focused on increasing access of people living with HIV to antiretroviral therapy, providing them access to isoniazid prophylaxis for tuberculosis prevention; and reducing their risk for other opportunistic infections using co-trimoxazole prophylaxis. ...The treatment programme also embraces the principle of differentiated care, which is a responsive, client centered approach that simplifies and adapts HIV services across the cascade to better serve individual needs and reduce unnecessary burdens on the health system, with a view to increasing access and quality of ART services, and retention in care.<sup>12</sup>

In November 2017 however, Nigerian publication *The Guardian* reported that Nigeria may not be able to meet the NSF's previously stated targets, outlining a range of barriers to accessing treatment as discussed [below](#).<sup>13</sup>

A 2016 MedCOI Country Fact Sheet on Nigeria quoted in a 2018 UK Home Office report provides additional information on access to treatment:

2.1.4 The MedCOI country contact noted that free HIV treatment may be available in all public facilities as well as in designated private facilities. The MedCOI contact also stated that there is no other eligibility criterion to have access to the services other than the clinical eligibility criteria and that free treatment is accessible to all people living with HIV/AIDS.

2.1.5 According to the NASCP [National AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) Control Programme] integrated 2016 guideline the clinical criteria for initiating ART are as follows:

- '-All Adults and adolescents with severe or advanced HIV clinical disease (WHO stage 3 or 4);
- '-All adults and adolescents with HIV and CD4+ cell count of less than 350 cells/mm3;
- '-All HIV positive pregnant and breastfeeding women;
- '-All HIV positive children older than 5 years of age with severe or advanced disease (WHO stage 3 or 4);
- '-All HIV positive children older than 5 years of age with CD4+ cell count less than 350 cells/mm3;

<sup>9</sup> [HIV and AIDS in Nigeria](#), Avert, 3 October 2019, fn.10, 20191017145309. Other sources around 2017 also provided treatment prevalence rates around 30 per cent – see [COI Report Nigeria: Key Socio-Economic Indicators](#), EASO, 9 January 2019, p.49, 20190109132113

<sup>10</sup> [Sustaining free HIV treatment in Nigeria](#), The Guardian, 30 November 2017, 20191017141407

<sup>11</sup> [Sustaining free HIV treatment in Nigeria](#), The Guardian, 30 November 2017, 20191017141407

<sup>12</sup> [National HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework](#), National Agency for the Control of AIDS (Nigeria), 2017, 20191017152115

<sup>13</sup> [Sustaining free HIV treatment in Nigeria](#), The Guardian, 30 November 2017, 20191017141407

'-All HIV positive children less than 2 years of age;

'-All HIV positive children less than 5 years of age with CD4+ cell count of less than 750 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> or CD4 percentage less than 25%.'

2.1.6 As to geographical access to ART, the MedCOI country contact stated that treatment centres have been arranged in order to ensure that geographical barriers are minimized. The approach adopted is to make some Primary Health Centres (PHC) facilities into treatment centres. The ARV supply problems have also been minimized by improved logistics management. Still, HIV Counselling and Testing (HCT), ART and Prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) are more accessible in urban than in rural areas according to the NACA report.<sup>14</sup>

In May 2018, a local Nigeria news outlet published an article reporting that the Lagos State government had increased the number of PLHIV receiving treatment in the state to 67,763 people, up from 64,000 in June of the previous year.<sup>15</sup> The state's commissioner for health noted that the state had been able to upscale ART treatment from 44 to 65 sites.<sup>16</sup> He also explained that Lagos, in 2017, 'became the first Sub-National Government in all countries in the world to be appointed as a Principal Recipient by the Global Fund towards the implementation of comprehensive HIV Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support program across 70 health facilities in the three LGAs of Epe, Ikorodu and Oshodi Isolo', with the objectives of the grant 'to, among others, reduce new HIV infections, and improve the quality of life for the infected, affected, and to place 10,337 number of PLHIVs on treatment of which 3876 are children'.<sup>17</sup>

A December 2018 article published on Harvard University's School of Public Health website reports on the work of Phyllis Kanki, a professor of immunology from the School of Public Health who has been working on HIV in Nigeria for nearly 20 years.<sup>18</sup> Entitled 'A look back at Nigeria's success in battling AIDS', the report tracks the positive impact funding through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the [US] President's Emergency Plan for AIDS (PEPFAR) has had on the prevalence of treatment for PLHIV in Nigeria.<sup>19</sup> Prior to 2000, Kanki recounts, 'treatment in Nigeria was really only accessible to people who had the resources to go to Europe to get the drugs'.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the success, and the treatment prevalence rates as noted above, Kanki notes a number of residual challenges:

Kanki said that clinicians in the country today have to work with "a shallow pharmacy shelf." In other words, newer, costlier drugs aren't widely available in the country and patients are left taking less effective regimens that have been in use for many years. Among the problems this poses it that it increases the risk of patients developing and spreading drug-resistant strains of the virus.<sup>21</sup>

A July 2019 academic article published in peer-reviewed journal BMC Infectious Diseases notes that ART services have decentralized, in effect being provided through a greater number of facilities. The article explains:

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in '[Country Policy and Information Note Nigeria: Medical and Healthcare Issues](#)', UK Home Office, 28 August 2018, p.14, OG9EF767947

<sup>15</sup> '[Nigeria - 67, 763 HIV positive persons on treatment care in Lagos](#)', Leadership - Nigeria, 05 May 2018, CXBB8A1DA26842

<sup>16</sup> '[Nigeria - 67, 763 HIV positive persons on treatment care in Lagos](#)', Leadership - Nigeria, 05 May 2018, CXBB8A1DA26842

<sup>17</sup> '[Nigeria - 67, 763 HIV positive persons on treatment care in Lagos](#)', Leadership - Nigeria, 05 May 2018, CXBB8A1DA26842

<sup>18</sup> '[A look back at Nigeria's success in battling AIDS](#)', Harvard School of Public Health, 18 October 2019, 20191018124552

<sup>19</sup> '[A look back at Nigeria's success in battling AIDS](#)', Harvard School of Public Health, 18 October 2019, 20191018124552

<sup>20</sup> '[A look back at Nigeria's success in battling AIDS](#)', Harvard School of Public Health, 18 October 2019, 20191018124552

<sup>21</sup> '[A look back at Nigeria's success in battling AIDS](#)', Harvard School of Public Health, 18 October 2019, 20191018124552

Following decentralization of treatment from tertiary hospitals to secondary level hospitals in Nigeria, private hospitals have become intricately involved in the provision of such services due to their peculiar client base.<sup>22</sup>

The study concluded that 'secondary level hospitals were able to retain HIV patients while recording high level of adherence to antiretroviral among the patients'.<sup>23</sup>

### Barriers

An academic article published in the April 2018 edition of the Journal of the International AIDS society examines community ART models as a means of bridging HIV treatment gaps in Nigeria. The article identifies a range of barriers to accessing ART, including stigma associated with the uptake of HIV services, financial and geographic barriers (despite treatment being nominally free), costs associated with self-transportation to hospital and long waiting times.<sup>24</sup>

While stigma may be a factor in people's decision to take up HIV treatment, a 2019 academic article published in BMJ Open found that 'AIDS-related stigmatisation was low' among workers in the 38 primary healthcare centres in Lagos in which the study was conducted, with 86 percent of 161 healthcare providers surveyed not worried about secondary AIDS stigmatisation due to their work, and opinions about PLHIV generally supportive.<sup>25</sup>

Other reports indicate that levels of stigma may be higher in particular locales, and among particular cohorts. For example, an October 2018 report published by UNHCR states:

The prevalence of chronic illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension, HIV, and hepatitis was noted in Madagali, Michika, and Mubi. Severe stigmatization of HIV patients was reported in most locations. Discussions with health workers and community members revealed that in places like Gulak (Madagali), Duhu (Madagali), Blue House (Mubi), Muvur (Mubi), and Muchala (Mubi), HIV patients are too fearful of stigmatization to seek treatment in local health facilities. As a result, many travel to Mubi to get their medication. In Muvur, Primary Health Center staff indicated that some patients choose to remain without treatment out of fear of exposing their condition.<sup>26</sup>

Geography is another factor that can function as a barrier to accessing ART treatment. According to 'recent estimates from NACA and FMOH ... only nine states reached ART coverage of 50 per cent or more in first semester, 2017: Enugu, Benue, Delta, Adamawa, Anambra, Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Plateau, Kogi, and Ekiti states respectively'.<sup>27</sup> Unmet ART need (greater than 75,000 people) is reportedly highest in the following nine states: Oyo, Akwa-Ibom, Lagos, Sokoto, Edo, Taraba, Kaduna, Imo and Rivers.<sup>28</sup>

Weaknesses in the health system, such as a lack of drugs, can be another problem. Avert write:

Yet weaknesses in the health system exist and create a barrier to many people accessing or staying on treatment. Even when ART can be accessed, drug supplies are known to run out and cause stockouts. In an attempt to address this, the National Strategic Framework for the HIV response has made strengthening supply chains and improving logistics around treatment a priority.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>22</sup> '[Retention in care and adherence to HIV and AIDS treatment in Anambra State Nigeria](#)', BMI Infectious Diseases', July 2019, 20191018125840

<sup>23</sup> '[Retention in care and adherence to HIV and AIDS treatment in Anambra State Nigeria](#)', BMI Infectious Diseases', July 2019, 20191018125840

<sup>24</sup> '[Bridging the HIV treatment gap in Nigeria: Examining community antiretroviral treatment models](#)', Journal of the International AIDS society, April 2018, 20191018123218

<sup>25</sup> '[AIDS-related stigmatisation in the healthcare setting: a study of primary healthcare centres that provide services for prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV in Lagos, Nigeria](#)', BMJ Open, 2019, 20191018130819. [BMJ Open](#) is 'an online, open access journal, dedicated to publishing medical research from all disciplines and therapeutic areas'.

<sup>26</sup> '[Participatory Protection Assessment Report: Adamawa State, Nigeria](#)', UNHCR, October 2018, 20191018163320

<sup>27</sup> '[Sustaining free HIV treatment in Nigeria](#)', The Guardian, 30 November 2017, 20191017141407

<sup>28</sup> '[Sustaining free HIV treatment in Nigeria](#)', The Guardian, 30 November 2017, 20191017141407

<sup>29</sup> '[HIV and AIDS in Nigeria](#)', Avert, 3 October 2019, 20191017145309

While not so much a barrier to accessing treatment, a lack of funding is reportedly a barrier to the provision and maintenance of Nigeria's free HIV treatment. The 2017 article from *The Guardian* cited above states:

Nigeria requires at least N50 billion yearly to sustain the treatment of 1,050,594 PLHIV and N150 billion to treat all the 3,228,842 PLHIV; while the national budgetary allocation for health in 2017 was just about N303 billion.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, donor funds are reportedly dwindling, particularly those from US sources, and in part due to audit results uncovering widespread fraud within Nigeria's NACA.<sup>31</sup> *The Guardian* also reported in 2017 on allegations that 'the Ministry of Finance is endangering the lives of PLHIV by refusing to process import duty waiver for drugs and health commodities donated by the Global Fund for the treatment of Nigerians with HIV, tuberculosis and malaria'.<sup>32</sup>

While treatment is free, indirect costs associated with treatment may be another barrier to accessing treatment:

The UNAIDS catch-up plan for Nigeria, also identifies removing 'user-fees' as being a key next step in expanding treatment coverage. Although accessing the antiretroviral drugs themselves is free, often patients will be asked to pay for other services, for example running other tests. Studies have shown that these fees and high costs of travel to clinics can be a barrier to many people accessing care.<sup>33</sup>

Avert cite 'structural barriers' as an impediment to people accessing treatment. Drawing on data from the NSF, Avert write:

A simple lack of sites that deliver HIV services (testing sites, PMTCT sites, and treatment sites) presents problems for the Nigerian population. In 2015 there were only 1,078 facilities providing HIV treatment, according to the national strategic framework.<sup>34</sup>

Specific to the situation of children, a joint UNAIDS/UNICEF report on AIDS in Central and West Africa published in 2017 highlights a range of barriers to initiating ART:

An assessment in Nigeria in 2014 found that the main barriers to initiating ART included inadequate training of physicians on HIV treatment; the high cost of baseline laboratory tests; lack of appropriate ART formulations; poor access to CD4 count screening (in Anambra state); and issues with ART dosing, stockouts of drugs, prolonged waiting times at facilities and discrimination by health staff. Monitoring services are also substandard. In Nigeria, only 6 per cent of children followed in HIV services had viral load results at six months after ART initiation.<sup>35</sup>

LGBT people are reported to face additional barriers in accessing healthcare generally, including ART:

Accessing healthcare is difficult for many Nigerians, but LGBT people face additional barriers. Many LGBT people feel unsafe accessing healthcare because they fear discrimination from nurses and doctors. LGBT people may also encounter staff who are poorly prepared to attend to their needs and to whom it may be unsafe to disclose personal details. Again, the SSMPA adds an additional worry that doctors and nurses may report the person to the police. However, there are groups offering healthcare services to LGBT people, mostly focusing on HIV and AIDS work.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>30</sup> ['Sustaining free HIV treatment in Nigeria'](#), The Guardian, 30 November 2017, 20191017141407

<sup>31</sup> ['Sustaining free HIV treatment in Nigeria'](#), The Guardian, 30 November 2017, 20191017141407; ['HIV and AIDS in Nigeria'](#), Avert, 3 October 2019, 20191017145309

<sup>32</sup> ['Sustaining free HIV treatment in Nigeria'](#), The Guardian, 30 November 2017, 20191017141407

<sup>33</sup> ['HIV and AIDS in Nigeria'](#), Avert, 3 October 2019, 20191017145309

<sup>34</sup> ['HIV and AIDS in Nigeria'](#), Avert, 3 October 2019, 20191017145309

<sup>35</sup> ['Step Up the Pace: Towards an AIDS-free generation in West and Central Africa'](#), UNAIDS, UN Children's Fund, 5 December 2017, p.22, CISED50AD7798

<sup>36</sup> ['Country Policy and Information Note on Nigeria: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity or Expression'](#), UK Home Office, 12 April 2019, para.6.1.1, p.27, 20190415102058



Referring to a relevant study, JS1263 noted a significant increase in fear in seeking healthcare services by men who had sex with men after the enactment of the Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act (2014).[...] JS1364 stated that sections 5(2) and (3) of the Act had hindered access to AntiRetroviral Vaccines, HIV testing and counselling services.[...] JS865 stated that LGBT persons had experienced difficulties in accessing health care services. The denial of such services would have a negative impact on Nigeria's progress towards HIV eradication.<sup>37</sup>

Nigeria's government-sponsored 'Demographic and Health Survey' (DHS) for 2013 indicates that stigma and fear around the disease can form a barrier to people's uptake of treatment:

The HIV/AIDS epidemic has generated fear, anxiety, and prejudice against people living with HIV and AIDS, and people who are HIV positive face widespread stigma and discrimination. These societal attitudes can adversely affect both people's willingness to be tested for HIV and their adherence to antiretroviral therapy.<sup>38</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

## **2. What support services are in place for people with HIV in Nigeria?**

Limited information about specific support services for PLHIV in Nigeria has been located beyond the provision of treatment as outlined in [Question 1](#). At a general level, Avert writes that 'civil society organisations (CSOs) play a key role in service delivery and HIV education' in Nigeria, while MedCOI indicate the availability of both in and outpatient treatments.<sup>39</sup>

A recent academic study also points to the successful trialling of community pharmacy services for the delivery of ART drugs.<sup>40</sup>

Sources indicate that there are a number of LGBT organisations that register as human rights, women's or health organisations, and who focus on issues affecting LGBT people such as HIV prevention, treatment and other service provisions. Community-based groups are also reported to exist for peer support.<sup>41</sup>

COISS is aware of a number of high profile NGOs providing services to PLHIV – details of their websites are included in the 'Additional Reading' section below.

#### Additional Reading

- Website of Positive Action for Treatment Access, an NGO that works to ensure people living with diseases, especially women, have access to healthcare treatment, care and empowerment - <https://pata-nigeria.com/about-organization/> <Accessed 18 October 2019>
- Facebook page of the International Centre for Advocacy on Right to Health (ICARH), an advocacy body that works with sexual minorities and PLHIV in Nigeria – see <https://www.facebook.com/ICARH.NG/> <Accessed 18 October 2019>

<sup>37</sup> 'Country Policy and Information Note on Nigeria: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity or Expression', UK Home Office, 12 April 2019, para.6.1.4, p.28, 20190415102058. See also 'Human Rights Situation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Persons and Sexual Rights in Nigeria', Access to Good Health Initiative *et al.*, July 2019, 20191018162304

<sup>38</sup> 'Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey', Government of Nigeria, June 2014, p.233, 20190904155528. Note that there doesn't appear to be a more recent DHS report which covers the same ground as the 2014 report, likely due to funding constraints – see: 'U.S. and Partners fund new Demographic Health Survey', USAID, 16 August 2018, 20191017114325

<sup>39</sup> 'HIV and AIDS in Nigeria', Avert, 3 October 2019, 20191017145309

<sup>40</sup> 'Integrating community pharmacy into community based anti-retroviral therapy program: A pilot implementation in Abuja, Nigeria', PLOS One, 10 January 2018, 20191018153703

<sup>41</sup> 'Country Policy and Information Note on Nigeria: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity or Expression', UK Home Office, 12 April 2019, para.7.1.2, p.29, 20190415102058

### 3. Are there reports of discrimination against people with HIV in Nigeria?

Reports of discrimination against PLHIV persist, despite the enacting of anti-discrimination legislation.

In early 2015, Nigeria passed into law the *HIV and AIDS (Anti-Discrimination) Act*, which was intended to secure the rights of PLHIV, protect HIV-positive employees from unfair dismissal and from mandatory HIV testing.<sup>42</sup> Assessments of the tangible impact of the Act vary however, with one expert interviewed by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRBC) in December 2018 stating that the Act does 'not offer any tangible protection for sexual minorities'.<sup>43</sup> See [Question 4](#) for a more positive assessment in terms of employment measures.

The US Department of State's 2019 Nigeria human rights report states that people with HIV/AIDS were often denied health-care services,<sup>44</sup> although as noted in [Question 1](#) above, at least some academic studies have indicated an absence of stigma among health-workers in HIV-related facilities.<sup>45</sup>

In December 2018, a journalist explained to the IRBC that 'there are cases in which HIV-positive persons were denied treatment by doctors because they disclosed their sexual orientation during consultations'.<sup>46</sup> The prevalence or frequency of cases is not provided.<sup>47</sup>

According to a 2019 report by Avert, 'in 2016 UNAIDS reported that 21% of people living with HIV had been denied access to health services and reproductive health services due to their status'.<sup>48</sup>

In September 2019, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing released a statement in which she said that 'Due to stigmatization and discrimination by landlords, both HIV/AIDS positive persons and members of the LGBT community are at particular risk of violations of their right to housing'.<sup>49</sup>

As stated in a 2014 Government of Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) report, people with HIV were said to face widespread stigma and discrimination,<sup>50</sup> without further detail being provided as to the kind of discrimination.

#### Additional Reading

- Nil

### 4. Are there reports of employment discrimination against people with HIV in Nigeria?

The US Department of State's 2019 human rights country report on Nigeria states that people with HIV often lose their jobs:

The public considered HIV to be a disease and a result of immoral behavior and a punishment for same-sex sexual activity. Persons with HIV/AIDS often lost their jobs or were denied health-care services.

<sup>42</sup> ['The Situation of Sexual and Gender Minorities in Nigeria \(2014-2018\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 1 February 2019, Sect. 6.1, 20190625133919; ['HIV and AIDS in Nigeria'](#), Avert, 3 October 2019, 20191017145309

<sup>43</sup> ['The Situation of Sexual and Gender Minorities in Nigeria \(2014-2018\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 1 February 2019, Sect. 6.1, 20190625133919

<sup>44</sup> ['Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 - Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 14 March 2019, Sect.5, p.42, 20190314113221

<sup>45</sup> ['AIDS-related stigmatisation in the healthcare setting: a study of primary healthcare centres that provide services for prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV in Lagos, Nigeria'](#), BMJ Open, 2019, 20191018130819

<sup>46</sup> ['The Situation of Sexual and Gender Minorities in Nigeria \(2014-2018\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 1 February 2019, Sect. 2.3, 20190625133919

<sup>47</sup> ['Country Policy and Information Note on Nigeria: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity or Expression'](#), UK Home Office, 12 April 2019, para.7.1.2, p.29, 20190415102058

<sup>48</sup> ['HIV and AIDS in Nigeria'](#), Avert, 3 October 2019, 20191017145309

<sup>49</sup> ['Nigeria must act urgently to stop forced evictions and address grossly inadequate housing, says UN expert'](#), OHCHR, 24 September 2019, 20191018155714

<sup>50</sup> ['Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey'](#), Government of Nigeria, June 2014, p.233, 20190904155528

Authorities and NGOs sought to reduce the stigma and change perceptions through public education campaigns.<sup>51</sup>

Correspondence from a local NGO sourced from December 2018 and included in a February 2019 report published by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRBC) states that 'there are cases of HIV positive gay men who have been denied employment or were fired following HIV testing that was carried out either during interviews or during a work placement'.<sup>52</sup> The IRBC specify that they were unable to corroborate this information from other sources consulted, pending time constraints they faced in producing their report.<sup>53</sup>

The IRBC report also indicates however that the introduction of the *HIV and AIDS (Anti-Discrimination) Act* has had some positive effects:

According to Osifunke Ekundayo,<sup>54</sup> the HIV and AIDS (Anti-Discrimination) Act aims to protect "the rights and dignity of people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS" and has a "penalty for noncompliance, which is provided for in Section 23" of the act (Ekundayo 20 Dec. 2018). According to the academic researcher, due to the HIV and AIDS (Anti-Discrimination) Act, large multinational companies "are known to give antiretroviral drugs to staff that are HIV-positive" (Academic Researcher 11 Dec. 2018). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this report.<sup>55</sup>

In April 2019 a book entitled *Turning the Tide in Nigeria – AIDS in Nigeria* was to be launched in Nigeria. Responding to an advertisement for the launch, which stated that the book 'documents the tremendous progress of the country in preventing HIV infection, treating those in need and developing a responsive health care system', a blogger on website The Well Project, an HIV-advocacy project, stated:

This got me so worried and short of words because I don't understand this claim that the epidemic has reduced or is reducing! In a country where HIV stigma is still very high and people living with HIV cannot get job employment due to their HIV positive status, or where people have still not disclosed their status to their spouses because of the fear of losing their partners.<sup>56</sup>

The 2014 DHS report referenced earlier provides some insights into employment discrimination for PLHIV. The survey included questions, for example, around whether people would buy fresh vegetables from a shopkeeper with HIV, and whether they would allow an HIV-positive female teacher to continue teaching. A total of 48 per cent of male and 54 per cent of female respondents stated in the affirmative to the first proposition, and 58.3 per cent to the second.<sup>57</sup> Results were higher for wealthier, urban and better educated respondents.<sup>58</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

<sup>51</sup> ['Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 - Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 14 March 2019, Sect.5, p.42, 20190314113221

<sup>52</sup> ['The Situation of Sexual and Gender Minorities in Nigeria \(2014-2018\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 1 February 2019, Sect. 2.2, 20190625133919

<sup>53</sup> ['The Situation of Sexual and Gender Minorities in Nigeria \(2014-2018\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 1 February 2019, Sect. 2.2, 20190625133919

<sup>54</sup> Osifunke Ekundayo is a law professor at the University of Ibadan and member of the Nigerian Bar Association – see: ['The Situation of Sexual and Gender Minorities in Nigeria \(2014-2018\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 1 February 2019, Footnote 3, 20190625133919

<sup>55</sup> ['The Situation of Sexual and Gender Minorities in Nigeria \(2014-2018\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 1 February 2019, Sect. 6.1, 20190625133919

<sup>56</sup> ['Turning the Tide in Nigeria - AIDS in Nigeria: Book Launch'](#), The Well Project, 1 April 2019, 20191018152007

<sup>57</sup> ['Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey'](#), Government of Nigeria, June 2014, p.235-236, 20190904155528

<sup>58</sup> ['Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey'](#), Government of Nigeria, June 2014, pp.234-236, 20190904155528



## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: 20191031114653 – Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) – Parental Rights

Date of Report

6 November 2019

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#### Background

[redacted]

#### Questions

1. [What parental rights/legal rights do parents have over their children in regards to FGM in Nigeria?](#)



## Answers

### 1. What parental rights/legal rights do parents have over their children in regards to FGM in Nigeria?

In Nigeria, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is considered to be a 'family issue'.<sup>1</sup> According to the European Asylum Support Office, 'the final decision whether or not to circumcise their daughter is most often with the parents' but depending on the ethnic group it varies on whether it is the father or mother or a joint decision on the procedure.<sup>2</sup> Grandparents or the eldest female on the paternal side may also have a decisive role.<sup>3</sup> FGM is closely associated with the concept of both family honor and a girls' marriageability.<sup>4</sup>

Parents may feel pressure from relatives by them withholding support due to their 'wrong' decision.<sup>5</sup> However, as FGM is considered a 'family issue' the parents are 'usually not subjected to violence or threats of violence'.<sup>6</sup> There have been reports of a few girls whose relatives disregarded the parents' decision and performed the procedure anyway but this situation is considered to be very unusual.<sup>7</sup>

If a parent is against the girl undergoing FGM, and the community practices the performance, then they may 'face societal discrimination, blackmailing, denial of intracultural benefits and ostracism for going against culture or family traditions'.<sup>8</sup>

Like Australia, Nigeria has a three-tiered federal system of government. There is a constitutional power-sharing arrangement between federal, state and local governments.<sup>9</sup> The Federal Government's *Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act 2015* was adopted in Ebonyi, Imo, Oyo and Ogun states. It was also adopted by the Effium community in the Ohaukwu local government area.<sup>10</sup> As a Federal law, the Act only automatically applies to the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja. Other states or local government authorities may adopt the federal law or adopt their own laws that mirror the Federal law.<sup>11</sup> The *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999)* does not specifically refer to FGM or harmful traditional practices.<sup>12</sup>

Criminalisation of FGM varies from state to state and is sometimes prohibited in local government areas. Some southern states, Bayelsa, Edo, Ogun, Cross River, Osun and Rivers States have criminalised FGM under state law.<sup>13</sup> Delta State only has the Child's Rights Law 2004 in operation.<sup>14</sup>

FGM is widely practiced regardless of the law.<sup>15</sup> Nigeria is a developing country and the standard of law enforcement reflects that status.<sup>16</sup> Police are reported to treat FGM as a family or community affair.<sup>17</sup> Even in states where laws exist to protect women and girls from the practice, enforcement is

<sup>1</sup> ['Country Guidance: Nigeria'](#), EASO, 19 March 2019, p.63, 20190319173224

<sup>2</sup> ['Country Guidance: Nigeria'](#), EASO, 19 March 2019, p.63, 20190319173224

<sup>3</sup> ['Country Guidance: Nigeria'](#), EASO, 19 March 2019, p.63, 20190319173224

<sup>4</sup> ['Country Information Report: Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p.21 C1S7B83941414

<sup>5</sup> ['Country Guidance: Nigeria'](#), EASO, 19 March 2019, p.63, 20190319173224

<sup>6</sup> ['Country Guidance: Nigeria'](#), EASO, 19 March 2019, p.63, 20190319173224

<sup>7</sup> ['Country Guidance: Nigeria'](#), EASO, 19 March 2019, p.63, 20190319173224

<sup>8</sup> ['Nigeria: Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\)'](#), UK Home Office, 01 August 2019, p.9, 20191104161955

<sup>9</sup> ['Country Information Report: Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p.10 C1S7B83941414

<sup>10</sup> ['Performance Analysis for Phase II UNFPA-UNICEF joint programme on Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change'](#), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 30 August 2018, 20190321163758

<sup>11</sup> ['Nigeria The Law and FGM'](#), 28 Too Many, 04 September 2019, 20190904143010; ['Nigeria urged to fix legal mess around female genital mutilation'](#), Reuters, 04 September 2019, 20190904141607

<sup>12</sup> ['Nigeria The Law and FGM'](#), 28 Too Many, 04 September 2019, p.2, 20190904143010

<sup>13</sup> ['Country Information Report: Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p.21 C1S7B83941414

<sup>14</sup> ['Country Profile: FGM in Nigeria'](#), 28 Too Many, 01 October 2016, p.69, C1S38A80127489

<sup>15</sup> ['Country Information Report: Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p.21 C1S7B83941414

<sup>16</sup> ['Country Information Report: Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p.29 C1S7B83941414

<sup>17</sup> ['Nigeria: Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\)'](#), UK Home Office, 01 August 2019, p.10, 20191104161955



reportedly weak and there is a lack of prosecution even if the state had banned the practice.<sup>18</sup> One of the main strategic challenges is the systematic failure of authorities to enforce the law in a way that stops the practice and prevents it from going underground.<sup>19</sup> Police are open to bribery<sup>20</sup> and commonly employ extortion.<sup>21</sup> Responses to reports of crime are reportedly variable but are usually slow or non-existent<sup>22</sup> and may result in a demand for a bribe.<sup>23</sup> Anti-FGM projects are disadvantaged due to both the lack of enforcement of the law at the local level and the ongoing violence against women in Nigeria.<sup>24</sup>

UNICEF categorised Nigeria as a 'moderately' low prevalence for FGM.<sup>25</sup> According to the Nigerian Demographic and Healthy Survey, in 2012, it was estimated that approximately 40 per cent of adult females had been subject to FGM.<sup>26</sup> FGM is more common in the southern states.<sup>27</sup>

Delta State is comprised of five main tribes, the Igbo (delta north), Urhobo, Isoko, Ijaw and Itsekiri (all found in delta south). For the Igbo people, FGM prevalence is 29.2 per cent<sup>28</sup> and for the Ijaw people, FGM prevalence is 11 per cent.<sup>29</sup> The numbers have been decreasing since 2013.<sup>30</sup> Thirty-eight percent of women from Ijaw were circumcised at age 15 or older.<sup>31</sup>

A Nigerian daily newspaper states that 'female genital mutilation is customary among the Urhobos of Delta State'.<sup>32</sup> In regards to the Urhobo tribe and FGM, the Project Coordinator of Women's Right Watch Nigeria stated that:

Among the Urhobo Tribe of Delta State, the women are not notified of the date of [their] circumcision. They are kidnapped and forcefully circumcised during pregnancy. The authorities have done nothing and only pay lip service to the prevention of FGM. Even though some states have passed a law making FGM a crime, there has been no prosecution and FGM is still practiced daily in Nigeria. (24 Aug. 2006)<sup>33</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

<sup>18</sup> ['Nigeria urged to fix legal mess around female genital mutilation'](#), Reuters, 04 September 2019, 20190904141607

<sup>19</sup> ['Country Profile: FGM in Nigeria'](#), 28 Too Many, 01 October 2016, p.61, CIS38A80127489

<sup>20</sup> ['Do the Police Really Protect and Serve the Public? Police deviance and public cynicism towards the law in Nigeria'](#), University of New England (Armidale), 01 July 2019, 20190906163131

<sup>21</sup> ['Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 - Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 14 March 2019, 20190314113221; ['Nigerian Police Are in Desperate Need of Reform'](#), Council on Foreign Relations, 07 December 2018, 20190906165349

<sup>22</sup> ['Nigeria 2019 Crime & Safety Report Lagos'](#), Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), 06 September 2019, 20190906161709

<sup>23</sup> ['Nigeria 2019 Crime & Safety Report Lagos'](#), Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), 06 September 2019, 20190906161709

<sup>24</sup> ['Nigeria The Law and FGM'](#), 28 Too Many, 04 September 2019, p.6, 20190904143010

<sup>25</sup> ['Nigeria: Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\)'](#), UK Home Office, 01 August 2019, p.7, 20191104161955

<sup>26</sup> ['Country Information Report: Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 21 CIS7B83941414

<sup>27</sup> ['Country Information Report: Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 21 CIS7B83941414

<sup>28</sup> ['Nigeria: Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\)'](#), UK Home Office, 01 August 2019, p.8, 20191104161955

<sup>29</sup> ['Country Profile: FGM in Nigeria'](#), 28 Too Many, 01 October 2016, p.20, CIS38A80127489

<sup>30</sup> ['Nigeria: Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\)'](#), UK Home Office, 01 August 2019, p.8, 20191104161955

<sup>31</sup> ['Nigeria: Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\)'](#), UK Home Office, 01 August 2019, p.19, 20191104161955

<sup>32</sup> ['Nigeria : Prevalence of female genital mutilation \(FGM\) among the Urhobo, including the consequences for refusing to undergo this procedure, particularly pregnant women; state protection available'](#), Refworld, 16 November 2015, 20191105165436

<sup>33</sup> NGA101531.E: Consequences for parents who refuse to submit their daughters to the practice of female genital mutilation; reports of women, girls or children being abducted and forced to undergo the procedure; response by authorities to', Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 30 October 2006, NGA101531.E



## Standard Q&A Report

### **Nigeria: 20191107174813 – MASSOB – Legal Adviser – Treatment – Civil Organisations – 49<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Declaration of the Biafra Republic – Organisers – MASSOB Executives Petition Against Torture**

Date of Report

13 November 2019

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#### **Background**

[Information deleted]

#### **Questions**

1. [\[Question deleted\]](#)
2. [Please provide information on a procession on 30 May 2016 to commemorate the 49<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the declaration of the Biafra Republic. Who organised and led the procession? What was and is the treatment of organisers by the authorities?](#)
3. [Please provide information on 16 June 2016 and the names of people who signed the MASSOB executives' petition against torture. What is the treatment of people who signed the petition?](#)

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## Answers

### 1. [Question deleted]

[Information deleted]

### 2. Please provide information on a procession on 30 May 2016 to commemorate the 49th anniversary of the declaration of the Biafra Republic. Who organised and led the procession? What was and is the treatment of organisers by the authorities?

On 30 May 2016, there were protests held in a number of states in Nigeria to commemorate the 49th anniversary of the declaration of an independent Republic of Biafra. It is reported that the protesters were mainly members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and MASSOB. Specific information was not located in relation to the treatment of the organisers of the protests by the authorities. Reports indicate that a number of people were killed and injured on the day of the protests, and large numbers of protesters were arrested.

There are reports that a number of people were killed in the south of Nigeria when protesters clashed with security forces in several places, including Enugu state, on 30 May 2016, the 49th anniversary of the declaration of the Republic of Biafra. A June 2016 briefing note published by the Federal Office for Migration and Asylum, Germany states:

Violent clashes between demonstrators and security forces erupted in several cities in southern and southwestern Anambra, Imo, Enugu, Abia, Delta, Cross River and Ebonyi States during protests to commemorate the 49th anniversary of the declaration of an independent Republic of Biafra on 30 May 1967.

Official sources report the killing of seven people. Other sources say that at least 30 people were killed in the town of Onitsha (Anambra State).<sup>1</sup>

An article in Nigerian newspaper, *This Day*, dated 31 May 2016 indicates that on the previous day, 'thousands of protesters clashed with security forces in Anambra, Imo, Enugu, Abia, Delta, Cross River and Ebonyi States, leading to the deaths of dozens of people, including three policemen, several sustaining injuries, and the arrest of scores of protesters in all the states where the protests took place'.<sup>2</sup> The article refers to protesters holding processions in Onitsha, Anambra state, and in Umuahia, Abia state. According to the article, around 30 people had been killed and many injured in Onitsha. MASSOB leader, Mr. Uchenna Madu, said his group was not involved in the clashes. In Asaba, the capital of Delta state, however, a police spokesperson said that five members of MASSOB had been killed in clashes with the military and eight MASSOB members arrested. MASSOB said that ten of its members were arrested in Umuahia, the Abia State capital, while the police also arrested 17 MASSOB members in the Imo state capital, Owerri.<sup>3</sup> In relation to Enugu state, the May 2016 article in *This Day* states that '[l]ike other states where pro-Biafra rallies took place, the Enugu State Police Command said it arrested 13 suspected persons believed to be members of MASSOB early yesterday at the Edinburgh axis of Ogui in Enugu, the state capital'. The 13 people 'were rounded up based on intelligence reports'.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ['Group 22 Information Centre Asylum and Migration Briefing Notes June 2016'](#), Germany: Federal Office for Migration and Asylum, 6 June 2016, CIS38A80123148

<sup>2</sup> ['Dozens Killed, Several Injured as Biafra Day Rallies Turn Bloody'](#), *This Day*, 31 May 2016, 20191111161220

<sup>3</sup> ['Dozens Killed, Several Injured as Biafra Day Rallies Turn Bloody'](#), *This Day*, 31 May 2016, 20191111161220

<sup>4</sup> ['Dozens Killed, Several Injured as Biafra Day Rallies Turn Bloody'](#), *This Day*, 31 May 2016, 20191111161220; See also: ['South-East burns as Biafra Day turns bloody'](#), *Vanguard*, 31 May 2016, 20191113131557; ['Nigeria: Scores Feared Dead As Biafra Celebrates Anniversary'](#), *Mbawike, N, Leadership – Nigeria*, 31 May 2016, 20191113180109

A July 2016 Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response to information request refers to sources that provide the following information about the protests on 30 May 2016:

According to sources, during a protest that erupted on the anniversary of Biafra independence [2] on 30 May 2016, the Nigerian Army shot and killed five members of MASSOB and IPOB [Indigenous People of Biafra] (Newsweek 31 May 2016; Premium Times 31 May 2016) while wounding eight and arresting nine others (ibid.). Two police officers were also killed during the protest (ibid.; Newsweek 31 May 2016).

International Crisis Group reports that on 30 May 2016, during clashes between pro-Biafra separatists and security forces in several cities in South East Nigeria, at least 20 people were killed (1 June 2016). In its reports on the 30 May events, Amnesty International (AI) states that on 29-30 May 2016, the Nigerian military opened fire on "pro-Biafra supporters" and members of IPOB, and "[a]fter visits to hospitals and morgues, [AI] has confirmed ... that at least 17 people were killed and nearly 50 injured. The real number is likely to be higher" (AI 10 June 2016).

Sources report that on 30 May 2016 in Ebonyi state, 200 police officers raided a primary school where the MASSOB members gathered to celebrate the anniversary of Biafra independence, and according to a local MASSOB leader, 320 members, as well as clergymen, were arrested (Daily Post 31 May 2016; Premium Times 30 May 2016b). The Vanguard indicates that the Ebonyi state police laid charges against 92 MASSOB members that were arrested during "their anniversary celebration in the state" (31 May 2016). According to an article in the Daily Trust, a Nigerian newspaper, 101 MASSOB members who were arrested on 30 May 2016 in Ebonyi were granted bail on 31 May 2016 (Daily Trust 1 June 2016). The article further states that 88 of the 92 arrested members are facing charges of "conspiracy, belonging to unlawful society, membership of unlawful group and possession of items with inscriptions calling for the declaration of Biafra nation" (ibid.).

According to sources, 40 MASSOB and BIM [Biafra Independent Movement] members were arrested on 30 May 2016 while gathered in a church in Nsukka, Enugu State (Vanguard 30 May 2016; Premium Times 30 May 2016a). The same sources cite information provided by the Nigerian police as stating that "no fewer" than 13 presumed MASSOB and BIM members were arrested in the Enugu state (ibid., Vanguard 30 May 2016a). According to 1 June 2016 article by the Daily Trust, the 13 arrested MASSOB and BIM members were granted bail (1 June 2016). Further information on the status of the cases could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.<sup>5</sup>

A November 2016 Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response to information request includes further information on the treatment of members of IPOB by the authorities during the protests on 30 May 2016.<sup>6</sup>

Another report from November 2016 by Amnesty International indicates that the rally held on 30 May 2016 in Onitsha, Anambra state, involved 'more than 1,000 IPOB members and supporters'. The report also indicates that a week before the march, on 23 May 2016, 'IPOB leaders had written to the Anambra State police asking them to "provide the enabling environment for a peaceful May 30th 2016 Remembrance rally"'. On 29 May 2016, however, 'members of the army and police raided homes and a church in Nkpor where IPOB members were staying. The next day, the security forces shot people at several locations, predominantly in Nkpor, the venue for the rally, and in Asaba'. Amnesty International had 'not been able to verify the exact number of killed and injured, but confirmed that at least 60 people were killed and 70 injured on and around 30 May. The real number is likely to be higher'.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> ['NGA105577.E - Nigeria: Situation and treatment of members of the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra \(MASSOB\), including arrest and prosecution; whether the Nigeria Police Force pursue people who use bribes to flee detention and who have no charges against them \(2013-July 2016\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 20 July 2016, 20191101120826

<sup>6</sup> ['NGA105658.E - Nigeria: The Indigenous People of Biafra \(IPOB\), including objectives, structure, activities, relations with other Biafran independence groups, and treatment by authorities \(2014-October 2016\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 10 November 2016, 20191112152118

<sup>7</sup> ['Nigeria: 'Bullets were raining everywhere''](#), Amnesty International, 24 November 2016, p.33, 20191101114922



The Amnesty International report also refers to the organisation receiving a list with 29 names of people reportedly shot dead in Asaba, Delta State on 30 May 2016, but Amnesty had been unable to verify the identities of the victims. The police and military in Asaba reportedly were patrolling the streets 'to prevent hundreds of IPOB members and supporters from crossing the bridge to Onitsha to attend the Remembrance Day rally. Eyewitnesses said that the military and police told the protesters to disperse, but when they refused, they started shooting'.<sup>8</sup>

A November 2018 report on Nigeria by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) comments that '[t]he most violent event took place in several places in South East Nigeria on 30 May 2016, Biafra Remembrance Day. Estimations of people killed vary between at least 20 (International Crisis Group), and 60 (AI). The federal government denies the numbers and says that only five IPOB members were killed'.<sup>9</sup>

In relation to who had led and organised the protests, the May 2016 article in *This Day* indicates that the protests to commemorate the anniversary of the declaration of an independent Republic of Biafra occurred in a number of states, and the protesters 'were mainly members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and Movement for the Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB)', who 'had come out en masse to mark Biafra Day in memory of the former leader of the defunct Biafra Republic, the late Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu'.<sup>10</sup> The article does not specifically state who led and organised the protests. It refers to comments by 'MASSOB leader, Mr. Uchenna Madu', who said his group was not involved in clashes that occurred in Onitsha.<sup>11</sup> Another article dated 31 May 2016 in Nigerian newspaper, *Vanguard*, also mentions comments by MASSOB leader, Uchenna Madu, who 'said in a telephone interview that his organization was not involved in the protest, explaining that he had earlier issued a statement that this year's Biafra Day should be celebrated quietly and that all MASSOB members should stay at home'.<sup>12</sup> It is unclear from the article whether those comments refer to the protest held on 30 May 2016 in Onitsha, or to protests held on that day in Nigeria generally.<sup>13</sup> The article reports that members of MASSOB were killed and arrested in other states of Nigeria during the protests on 30 May 2016.<sup>14</sup> It also refers to comments by MASSOB leader, Okechukwu Nwogu, who said members of MASSOB arrested in Owerri, 'were on a peaceful march to commemorate the 49th anniversary of Biafra and 17th anniversary of MASSOB'.<sup>15</sup> The May 2016 article in *This Day* also refers to comments by 'Mr. Okechukwu Nwogu, a leader of MASSOB', in Imo state. It also mentions comments by the zonal leader of MASSOB in Cross River state, Mr. Samuel Okah, 'MASSOB leader, Mr. Uche Mmadu', in Ebonyi state, and a leader of the protesters, Mr. Patrick Agulobi, in Delta state.<sup>16</sup>

The November 2016 Amnesty International report indicates that the rally held on 30 May 2016 in Onitsha, Anambra state, involved 'more than 1,000 IPOB members and supporters'.<sup>17</sup> The report also notes that IPOB had 'emerged in 2012'<sup>18</sup> and campaigns for an independent Biafran state', and that prior to the emergence of IPOB, MASSOB 'was perhaps the most prominent pro-Biafra group in

<sup>8</sup> ['Nigeria: 'Bullets were raining everywhere''](#), Amnesty International, 24 November 2016, p.36, 20191101114922

<sup>9</sup> ['EASO Country of Origin Information Report: Nigeria: Targeting of Individuals'](#), European Asylum Support Office, November 2018, p.85, 20190109132722

<sup>10</sup> ['Dozens Killed, Several Injured as Biafra Day Rallies Turn Bloody'](#), *This Day*, 31 May 2016, 20191111161220

<sup>11</sup> ['Dozens Killed, Several Injured as Biafra Day Rallies Turn Bloody'](#), *This Day*, 31 May 2016, 20191111161220

<sup>12</sup> ['South-East burns as Biafra Day turns bloody'](#), *Vanguard*, 31 May 2016, 20191113131557

<sup>13</sup> ['South-East burns as Biafra Day turns bloody'](#), *Vanguard*, 31 May 2016, 20191113131557

<sup>14</sup> ['South-East burns as Biafra Day turns bloody'](#), *Vanguard*, 31 May 2016, 20191113131557

<sup>15</sup> ['South-East burns as Biafra Day turns bloody'](#), *Vanguard*, 31 May 2016, 20191113131557

<sup>16</sup> ['Dozens Killed, Several Injured as Biafra Day Rallies Turn Bloody'](#), *This Day*, 31 May 2016, 20191111161220;

See also: ['Nigeria: Scores Feared Dead As Biafra Celebrates Anniversary'](#), Mbawike, N, Leadership – Nigeria, 31 May 2016, 20191113180109

<sup>17</sup> ['Nigeria: 'Bullets were raining everywhere''](#), Amnesty International, 24 November 2016, p.33, 20191101114922

<sup>18</sup> The November 2018 report on Nigeria by the European Asylum Support Office indicates that IPOB was founded in 2014. ['EASO Country of Origin Information Report: Nigeria: Targeting of Individuals'](#), European Asylum Support Office, November 2018, p.82, 20190109132722



Nigeria. But due to state coercion and persecution, as well as infighting, allegations of misappropriation of funds and power tussles, the group's influence waned'.<sup>19</sup>

The July 2016 Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response to information request refers to sources that provide information on divisions that had occurred within MASSOB, with Ralph Uwazurike and Uchenna Madu leading factions that claimed to have expelled the other's faction from the movement. Sources indicate that Uwazurike had formed a MASSOB faction called the Biafra Independent Movement (BIM) following his alleged suspension from MASSOB. IPOB is reported to have been founded by Nnamdi Kanu.<sup>20</sup>

Specific information was not located in relation to the treatment of the organisers of the protests by the authorities. As previously mentioned, reports indicate that a number of people were killed and injured on the day of the protests, and large numbers of protesters were arrested. The July 2016 Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response to information request refers to the comments of a senior lecturer at Covenant University in Nigeria, who specializes in Biafra separatist movements, who said that 'arrests of MASSOB and other pro-Biafra activists are "rampant" in Nigeria, adding that "[a]ny time [MASSOB] planned to engage in rallies, marches, commemoration and other activities, [they] often result in clashes with security operatives ending up in the arrest and detention of MASSOB members".<sup>21</sup> The November 2016 Amnesty International report indicates that IPOB leader, Nnamdi Kanu, had been arrested in October 2015, and since then, Nigeria's Department of State Security (DSS) had 'arrested at least eight IPOB leaders'. The report does not indicate whether the further arrests had any relation to the protests on 30 May 2016.<sup>22</sup>

The November 2018 EASO report on Nigeria provides background information on MASSOB and IPOB, including the treatment of their leaders by the Nigerian authorities.<sup>23</sup> The report also states that a 'military Special Board, set up to investigate the events of 30 May 2016, did not find any wrongdoing by the army, reporting only on the arrest of 14 persons during the demonstrations on those days. In August 2017, after numerous protests and calls for investigation from both national and international organisations, the Governor of Anambra State apologised to IPOB members for the events of 30 May 2016'.<sup>24</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- A March 2018 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) country information report on Nigeria includes information on the treatment of individuals associated with MASSOB and IPOB, including on 30 May 2016. '[DFAT Country Information Report: Nigeria](#)', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, pp.17-18, CIS7B83941414
- A June 2017 European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report on Nigeria includes information on MASSOB and IPOB and the treatment of activists by the authorities between August 2015 and 2016. '[EASO Country of Origin Information Report: Nigeria: Country Focus](#)', European Asylum Support Office, June 2017, pp.20 & 25, CISED50AD4813

<sup>19</sup> '[Nigeria: 'Bullets were raining everywhere'](#)', Amnesty International, 24 November 2016, p.11, 20191101114922

<sup>20</sup> '[NGA105577.E - Nigeria: Situation and treatment of members of the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra \(MASSOB\), including arrest and prosecution; whether the Nigeria Police Force pursue people who use bribes to flee detention and who have no charges against them \(2013-July 2016\)](#)', Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 20 July 2016, 20191101120826

<sup>21</sup> '[NGA105577.E - Nigeria: Situation and treatment of members of the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra \(MASSOB\), including arrest and prosecution; whether the Nigeria Police Force pursue people who use bribes to flee detention and who have no charges against them \(2013-July 2016\)](#)', Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 20 July 2016, 20191101120826

<sup>22</sup> '[Nigeria: 'Bullets were raining everywhere'](#)', Amnesty International, 24 November 2016, p.49, 20191101114922

<sup>23</sup> '[EASO Country of Origin Information Report: Nigeria: Targeting of Individuals](#)', European Asylum Support Office, November 2018, pp.80-86, 20190109132722; See also: '[DFAT Country Information Report: Nigeria](#)', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, pp.17-18, CIS7B83941414

<sup>24</sup> '[EASO Country of Origin Information Report: Nigeria: Targeting of Individuals](#)', European Asylum Support Office, November 2018, pp.54-55, 20190109132722

**3. Please provide information on 16 June 2016 and the names of people who signed the MASSOB executives' petition against torture. What is the treatment of people who signed the petition?**

Specific information was not located on a petition against torture signed by MASSOB executives on 16 June 2016.<sup>25</sup>

Additional Reading

- Nil

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<sup>25</sup> Sources consulted include CISNET, Google search engine, FACTIVA, All Africa, US Department of State and UNHCR Refworld.



## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: 201911115095534 – Women – Unmarried Mothers – Honour Killings - Children

Date of Report

21 November 2019

This Q&A Report was prepared by the Country of Origin Information Services Section (COISS), Department of Home Affairs in response to a request for country information within time constraints. It is current at the time of completion. This Q&A Report should not be cited in a decision or any other document. Anyone wishing to use this information should only cite the source material contained herein.

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#### Background

[redacted]

#### Questions

1. [How are single \(unmarried\) mothers treated by family and society in Nigeria?](#)
2. [What is the prevalence of honour killings \(punishment\) for women who have children born outside of marriage?](#)
3. [What support is available to single \(unmarried\) mothers?](#)
4. [What is the general social and legal status of children born out of wedlock? What issues do children born out of wedlock face because of their status?](#)

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## Answers

### 1. How are single (unmarried) mothers treated by family and society in Nigeria?

Even though single parenting is becoming more common in Nigeria,<sup>1</sup> there is a negative perception of being a single mother,<sup>2</sup> particularly in the context of a religious family and/or community (Christians and Muslims).<sup>3</sup> More broadly, Nigeria is a highly patriarchal society where violence and gender-based discrimination (sexual, physical, psychological, traditional practices, socioeconomic) is frequently experienced by women.<sup>4</sup> In particular, unmarried women, with or without children, face many forms of discrimination.<sup>5</sup>

Authors of a July 2012 journal article claim that there is a perception that if a woman lives alone she would often face notoriety as being a harlot<sup>6</sup> and promiscuous.<sup>7</sup> Extramarital pregnancy is often met with public ridicule.<sup>8</sup>

One of the most significant problems a single mother faces is poverty due to the lack of income. A 2018 journal article indicates that women have a lower income, inadequate access to public assistance, and face cultural discrimination.<sup>9</sup> According to credible reports, many businesses implemented a 'get pregnant, get fired' policy.<sup>10</sup>

A 2017 EASO report on Nigeria states that if a woman is widowed, she may face violence from her husband's family, particularly if she is blamed for his death.<sup>11</sup> The couple's children may experience both verbal and physical abuse, or the 'relatives may demand that they participate in cultural practices to prove their innocence in relation to the husband's death'.<sup>12</sup> There is a higher occurrence of maltreatment of widows among the Christians, particularly Catholic, compared to other religious groups.<sup>13</sup>

The 2018 DFAT country information report comments that there is no comprehensive set of laws for prosecuting offenders for acts of violence against women. The Violence against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP) addresses sexual, physical, psychological, harmful traditional practices, and socioeconomic violence. However, provisions of the VAPP only apply in the Federal Capital Territory

<sup>1</sup> ['The Social and Religious Challenges of Single Mothers in Nigeria'](#), A M Essien and A A Bassey, American Journal of Social Issues and Humanities, volume 6, number 4, 1 July 2012, p.247, 20191120112307; [Community Perception of Single Parenting in Zaria, Northern Nigeria](#), E Anyebe, H Lawal, R Dodo, B R Adeniyi, Journal of Nursing and Care, volume 6, issue 4, July 2017, p.1, 20191120121349

<sup>2</sup> ['Community Perception of Single Parenting in Zaria, Northern Nigeria'](#), E Anyebe, H Lawal, R Dodo, B R Adeniyi, Journal of Nursing and Care, volume 6, issue 4, July 2017, p.1, 20191120121349

<sup>3</sup> ['Community Perception of Single Parenting in Zaria, Northern Nigeria'](#), E Anyebe, H Lawal, R Dodo, B R Adeniyi, Journal of Nursing and Care, volume 6, issue 4, July 2017, p.1, 20191120121349

<sup>4</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia), 9 March 2018, p.21, CIS7B83941414

<sup>5</sup> ['Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 - Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 14 March 2019, p.48, 20190314113221

<sup>6</sup> ['The Social and Religious Challenges of Single Mothers in Nigeria'](#), A M Essien and A A Bassey, American Journal of Social Issues and Humanities, volume 6, number 4, July 2012, p.245, 20191120112307

<sup>7</sup> ['The Social and Religious Challenges of Single Mothers in Nigeria'](#), A M. Essien and A A Bassey, American Journal of Social Issues and Humanities, volume 6, number 4, July 2012, p.248, 20191120112307

<sup>8</sup> ['The Social and Religious Challenges of Single Mothers in Nigeria'](#), A M Essien and A A Bassey, American Journal of Social Issues and Humanities, volume 6, number 4, 1 July 2012, p.245, 20191120112307

<sup>9</sup> ['Entrepreneurial Empowerment of Single Mothers in Ekiti State, Nigeria'](#), Journal of Research and Method in Education, 31 January 2018, p.1, 20191120115706

<sup>10</sup> ['Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 - Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 14 March 2019, p.48, 20190314113221

<sup>11</sup> ['Country Focus Nigeria'](#), European Asylum Support Office (EASO), 2 June 2017, p.34, CISED50AD4813

<sup>12</sup> ['Country Focus Nigeria'](#), European Asylum Support Office (EASO), 2 June 2017, p.34, CISED50AD4813

<sup>13</sup> ['Country Focus Nigeria'](#), European Asylum Support Office (EASO), 2 June 2017, p.34, CISED50AD4813



unless individual states have adopted the VAPP.<sup>14</sup> Other than the Federal Capital Territory, only three other Nigerian states (Kaduna, Anambra, Enugu) had adopted the VAPP.<sup>15</sup>

Whilst according to DFAT women in Nigeria are generally marginalised,<sup>16</sup> a woman is further marginalised based on her status as a single mother. Although no law prohibits women from owning land, customary land tenure systems only allow men to own the land. As such, women can only gain access to the land via family or marriage.<sup>17</sup> Women also face discrimination in employment due to both religious and traditional practices.<sup>18</sup> In the July 2012 journal article, a businesswoman discusses single motherhood stating that 'for the Igbo, I don't think it is part of their culture'.<sup>19</sup> Single motherhood can be 'seen as a curse rather than a blessing. It is often attributed to ill luck; spell or witchcraft, especially when one passes the expected 'marriageable age''.<sup>20</sup> There is still a belief in witchcraft in some of the Igbo communities.<sup>21</sup>

A 2012 British Council and UK International Development Report gender in Nigeria states that Christian women from the southern states are the most frequent victims of violence.<sup>22</sup> The report goes on to say that unmarried women are more likely to experience violence compared to their married counterparts.<sup>23</sup> However, the report was unable to identify why this is the case as a high number of women think that beating a wife in Nigeria is justified.<sup>24</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil

## **2. What is the prevalence of honour killings (punishment) for women who have children born outside of marriage?**

COISS found no information on the prevalence of honour killings for women who have had children outside of marriage.<sup>25</sup>

Women in Nigeria frequently experience gender-based discrimination and violence.<sup>26</sup> In a joint Ministry of Women's Affairs and UNPFA study at least 28 percent of Nigerian women aged 25-29 were found to have suffered from domestic violence.<sup>27</sup> In 2017, a woman in Benue state was killed

<sup>14</sup> '[DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria](#)', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia), 9 March 2018, p.21, CIS7B83941414

<sup>15</sup> '[Only 3 States Have Domesticated VAPP Act —Adewole](#)', Nigerian Tribune, 15 March 2018, 20191121094213; '[VAPP Tracker](#)', Rule of Law and Empowerment Initiative (Partners West Africa Nigeria), n.d., accessed 21 November 2019, 20191121093947

<sup>16</sup> '[Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 - Nigeria](#)', US Department of State, 14 March 2019, p.35, 20190314113221

<sup>17</sup> '[Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 - Nigeria](#)', US Department of State, 14 March 2019, p.35, 20190314113221

<sup>18</sup> '[Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 - Nigeria](#)', US Department of State, 14 March 2019, p.47, 20190314113221

<sup>19</sup> '[The Social and Religious Challenges of Single Mothers in Nigeria](#)', A M Essien and A A Bassey, American Journal of Social Issues and Humanities, volume 1, number 4, July 2012, p.245, 20191120112307

<sup>20</sup> '[The Social and Religious Challenges of Single Mothers in Nigeria](#)', A M Anthonia Essien and A A Bassey, American Journal of Social Issues and Humanities, volume 1, number 4, 1 July 2012, p.245, 20191120112307

<sup>21</sup> '[DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria](#)', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia), 9 March 2018, p.15, CIS7B83941414

<sup>22</sup> '[Gender in Nigeria Report 2012 - Improving the Lives of Girls and Women in Nigeria](#)', British Council, 11 May 2012, p.48, 20191120100056

<sup>23</sup> '[Gender in Nigeria Report 2012 - Improving the Lives of Girls and Women in Nigeria](#)', British Council, 11 May 2012, p.49, 20191120100056

<sup>24</sup> '[Gender in Nigeria Report 2012 - Improving the Lives of Girls and Women in Nigeria](#)', British Council, 11 May 2012, p.49, 20191120100056

<sup>25</sup> Sources consulted included CISNET, major government and non-government reports and a range of international and Nigerian news sources.

<sup>26</sup> '[DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria](#)', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia), 9 March 2018, p.21, CIS7B83941414

<sup>27</sup> '[Nigeria's poisonous patriarchy](#)', Mail & Guardian Africa, 2 July 2019, 20191002165253



by her drunken husband after she threatened his 'honour' when her husband became unemployed and felt he lost his self-worth.<sup>28</sup>

For widows, if a woman is blamed for her husband's death (including among the Igbo community<sup>29</sup>), her husband's family may force her to consume 'purifying' concoctions.<sup>30</sup> Such concoctions have been known to lead to death on a number of occasions.<sup>31</sup> According to a 2012 Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada research response, if the woman refuses to drink the concoction, it would be taken as an admission that she has killed her husband.<sup>32</sup> If she has no family protection, her life would be in danger from her husband's family and she would more than likely have to move away from her village.<sup>33</sup>

In a study prepared for the UN Special Rapporteur on unlawful killings in Africa, it is stated that vigilante justice has filled the gap left by weak courts and ineffective law enforcement in Nigeria.<sup>34</sup> There have been reports of vigilante killings for those accused of kidnapping, armed robbery and pick-pocketing.<sup>35</sup> The Nigerian Police Force is known to conduct extrajudicial executions and other unlawful killings along with cases of torture, enforced disappearance<sup>36</sup> and excessive force.<sup>37</sup> COISS found no information on whether vigilante groups or the Nigerian Police Force have killed a woman for having a child outside of marriage.<sup>38</sup>

Stoning is a punishment for adultery in the 12 northern states due to the adopted Sharia penal codes between 1999 and 2001.<sup>39</sup> The law remains in force but COISS is not aware of any incidents of women being prosecuted for adultery since 2002 (a case where the woman was acquitted).<sup>40</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil

### **3. What support is available to single (unmarried) mothers?**

Single women, widows in particular, experience difficulties acquiring support in Nigeria.<sup>41</sup> There are no official government support services for women who head their own household and the Ministry of

<sup>28</sup> ['Nigeria's poisonous patriarchy'](#), Mail & Guardian Africa, 2 July 2019, 20191002165253

<sup>29</sup> ['NGA104217.E: Nigeria: Ritual whereby a widow drinks the water used to clean her husband's corpse; consequences for a widow's refusal to drink the water; whether a widow's refusal is interpreted by others as responsibility for her husband's death'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 6 November 2012, p.1, 3902

<sup>30</sup> ['Unlawful Killings in Africa'](#), Centre of Governance and Human Rights, University of Cambridge, 2014, p. 169, 20191120144305

<sup>31</sup> ['Unlawful Killings in Africa'](#), Centre of Governance and Human Rights, University of Cambridge, 2014, p. 169, 20191120144305

<sup>32</sup> ['NGA104217.E: Nigeria: Ritual whereby a widow drinks the water used to clean her husband's corpse; consequences for a widow's refusal to drink the water; whether a widow's refusal is interpreted by others as responsibility for her husband's death'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 6 November 2012, p.2, 3902

<sup>33</sup> ['NGA104217.E: Nigeria: Ritual whereby a widow drinks the water used to clean her husband's corpse; consequences for a widow's refusal to drink the water; whether a widow's refusal is interpreted by others as responsibility for her husband's death'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 6 November 2012, p.2, 3902

<sup>34</sup> ['Unlawful Killings in Africa'](#), Centre of Governance and Human Rights, University of Cambridge, 2014, p. 190, 20191120144305

<sup>35</sup> ['Unlawful Killings in Africa'](#), Centre of Governance and Human Rights, University of Cambridge, 2014, p. 190, 20191120144305

<sup>36</sup> ['Unlawful Killings in Africa'](#), Centre of Governance and Human Rights, University of Cambridge, 2014, p. 39, 20191120144305

<sup>37</sup> ['Unlawful Killings in Africa'](#), Centre of Governance and Human Rights, University of Cambridge, 2014, p. 58, 20191120144305

<sup>38</sup> Sources consulted included CISNET, major government and non-government reports and a range of international and Nigerian news sources.

<sup>39</sup> ['FACTBOX: Stoning - where does it happen?'](#), Thomas Reuters Foundation, 29 September 2013, 20191120160143

<sup>40</sup> ['FACTBOX: Stoning - where does it happen?'](#), Thomas Reuters Foundation, 29 September 2013, 20191120160143. Sources consulted included CISNET, major government and non-government reports and a range of international and Nigerian news sources.

<sup>41</sup> ['COI Report Nigeria: Key Socio-Economic Indicators'](#), European Asylum Support Office, 9 January 2019, p.53, 20190109132113

Women's Affairs provides very little in the way of support.<sup>42</sup> The European Asylum Support Office notes that there are a few NGOs that provide support but their services are 'hardly effective'.<sup>43</sup>

In some of the northern states, there are a 'few state or religious-based organisations to provide women a 'safety net' in providing for their children, generating income or repaying debt'.<sup>44</sup> A March 2017 article from the Punch, a Nigerian newspaper, speaks to four single mothers and questions who supports them. They all answered friends and family.<sup>45</sup>

For divorced women with children, in Islam 'divorced women are not entitled to maintenance (except during the waiting period).<sup>46</sup> For Christian and secular marriages the maintenance orders are made but they are rarely enforced.<sup>47</sup>

Respondents to a study in northern Nigeria believe that support needs to be in the form of basic needs, job opportunities and free education for the children but they believe that the support depends on what was the cause of single parenting.<sup>48</sup> The study found that single parents by choice, or a child born out-of-wedlock, meant that they are not likely to receive support compared to a widower.<sup>49</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

#### **4. What is the general social and legal status of children born out of wedlock? What issues do children born out of wedlock face because of their status?**

COISS found no information on the general social status of children born out-of-wedlock.<sup>50</sup> In regards to the legal status of a child born in Nigeria, they are considered legitimate only if born during a valid marriage, the parents marry after the birth of the child, or by the father's acknowledgement.<sup>51</sup>

Acknowledgement is where the father indicates the child is his own through an act or conduct,<sup>52</sup> including a DNA test.<sup>53</sup> The family cannot acknowledge a child on behalf of the father, it must be done by him.<sup>54</sup>

Section 42(2) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria states that 'no citizen of Nigeria shall be subjected to any disability or deprivation merely by reason of the circumstances of his birth'.<sup>55</sup> There has been

<sup>42</sup> ['NGA103907.E: Nigeria: Whether women who head their own households, without male or family support, can obtain housing and employment in large northern cities, such as Kano, Maiduguri, and Kaduna, and southern cities, such as Lagos, Ibadan, Port Harcourt: government support services available to female-headed households'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 19 November 2012, 3891

<sup>43</sup> ['COI Report Nigeria: Key Socio-Economic Indicators'](#), European Asylum Support Office, 9 January 2019, p.53, 20190109132113

<sup>44</sup> ['COI Report Nigeria: Key Socio-Economic Indicators'](#), European Asylum Support Office, 9 January 2019, p.53, 20190109132113

<sup>45</sup> ['The joy, pain of single motherhood'](#), Punch, The, 26 March 2017, 20191120164323

<sup>46</sup> ['COI Report Nigeria: Key Socio-Economic Indicators'](#), European Asylum Support Office, 9 January 2019, p.53, 20190109132113

<sup>47</sup> ['COI Report Nigeria: Key Socio-Economic Indicators'](#), European Asylum Support Office, 9 January 2019, p.53, 20190109132113

<sup>48</sup> ['Community Perception of Single Parenting in Zaria, Northern Nigeria'](#), E Anyebe, H Lawal, R Dodo, B R Adeniyi, Journal of Nursing and Care, volume 6, issue 4, July 2017, p.6, 20191120121349

<sup>49</sup> ['Community Perception of Single Parenting in Zaria, Northern Nigeria'](#), E Anyebe, H Lawal, R Dodo, B R Adeniyi, Journal of Nursing and Care, volume 6, issue 4, July 2017, p.6, 20191120121349

<sup>50</sup> Sources consulted included CISNET, major government and non-government reports and a range of international and Nigerian news sources.

<sup>51</sup> ['An Analysis of the Concepts of Legitimacy and Legitimation'](#), M O Izzi, C D Long John. The Journal of Property Law and Contemporary Issues, volume 5, number 1, January 2017, p.182, 20191120180931

<sup>52</sup> ['An Analysis of the Concepts of Legitimacy and Legitimation'](#), M O Izzi, C D Long John. The Journal of Property Law and Contemporary Issues, volume 5, number 1, January 2017, p.182, 20191120180931

<sup>53</sup> ['Nigeria: Paternity Fraud! Three Out of 10 Nigerian Men Are Not Biological Fathers of Their Children'](#), All Africa, 27 April 2019, 20191120180512

<sup>54</sup> ['An Analysis of the Concepts of Legitimacy and Legitimation'](#), M O Izzi, C D Long John. The Journal of Property Law and Contemporary Issues, volume 5, number 1, January 2017, p.188, 20191120180931

<sup>55</sup> ['Rights Of Children Born Out Of Wedlock In Property Inheritance In Nigeria'](#), Property Advisory Network, 05 May 2019, 20191120180707

debate whether this section has completely abolished the status of an illegitimate child.<sup>56</sup> The restrictive view is that the Section has not eliminated the status of illegitimacy, more that it has removed the disabilities and deprivation suffered by illegitimate children.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, if that drafters of the constitution would have expressly stated if they intended to abolish the status of illegitimacy in the constitution.<sup>58</sup>

If a child is considered to be legitimate, the child is able to share the estate of the deceased father with their legitimate siblings.<sup>59</sup> If a child is considered to be illegitimate, the child will not have access to their deceased father's estate.

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

<sup>56</sup> ['An Analysis of the Concepts of Legitimacy and Legitimation'](#), M O Izzi, C D Long John. The Journal of Property Law and Contemporary Issues, volume 5, number 1, January 2017, p.194, 20191120180931

<sup>57</sup> ['An Analysis of the Concepts of Legitimacy and Legitimation'](#), M O Izzi, C D Long John. The Journal of Property Law and Contemporary Issues, volume 5, number 1, January 2017, p.194, 20191120180931

<sup>58</sup> ['An Analysis of the Concepts of Legitimacy and Legitimation'](#), M O Izzi, C D Long John. The Journal of Property Law and Contemporary Issues, volume 5, number 1, January 2017, p.194, 20191120180931

<sup>59</sup> ['A critical approach of the right of inheritance of children born out of wedlock'](#), M A Ajanwachuku, Hasanuddin Law Review, volume 2, issue 1, April 2016, p.8, 20191120181533



## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: 20191113161325 – National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) – Olayinka Mamowora – Investigations

Date of Report

4 December 2019

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#### Background

[Information deleted]

#### Questions

1. [Please provide information / history about the National Union of Road Transport Workers \(NURTW\).](#)
2. [Please provide information / history about the death of Olayinka Mamowora. Please provide any particulars about his life and role in the party and investigations after his death.](#)

## Answers

### 1. Please provide information/ history about the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW).

The National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) is an independent Nigerian trade union, established in 1978, which represents transport workers in the road transport sector. Since the 1970s, the political party in power in Lagos has tended to give the NURTW leadership, who supported their candidature, the freedom to run motor-parks across Lagos. The NURTW in Lagos is reported to have extorted money from commercial drivers and shop owners without fear of interference from the authorities. The union is also reported to have been a source of paid thugs for local politicians in some states. In November 2018, the NURTW National President said the era of the union being identified as the hit wing of certain political parties had long gone, and the union was now a professional organisation. More recent reports refer to the NURTW and another union coming to an agreement with bike-hailing companies that the companies pay a daily fee to the unions to avoid being harassed by union members, and to NURTW members being involved in a violent clash with members of another union over the control of bus parks.

Information on the website of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) indicates that '[t]he National Union of Road Transport Workers is an independent Nigerian trade union that serves the interests of transport workers in the road transport sector, by calling for collective obtaining and pushing for social stability for all workers in the transport sector as defined in its constitution. The union has its leadership both nationally and at the grassroots'. Also, '[t]he leadership is guided by the General Secretary who continues to encourage and support between members and officials to make the union appear strong and vibrant'.<sup>1</sup>

A January 2018 article in the journal, *African Affairs*, by Daniel E. Agbiboa, an Assistant Professor in the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University, Arlington, United States, includes information on the NURTW. The NURTW was established 'in 1978 under the leadership of Adebayo Ogundare, known as Bayo Success'.<sup>2</sup>

An earlier June 2012 article on Nigeria's road transport sector indicates that since the formation of the NURTW in 1978, 'the activities of the road transporters have revolved around' that union.<sup>3</sup> According to the article:

The NURTW membership, broadly defined, include individuals (mainly male), who are involved in the use of different modes of transport such as motorbikes (motorcycles), buses, cabs, tankers and tricycles - for conveying passengers and goods from one destination within the country to another. The need for orderliness prompted members of the sector to form two associations, namely the Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria [RTEAN] and the National Union of Road Transport Workers [NURTW]. Though the RTEAN predates NURTW, it is less active than the NURTW, which was registered as a trade union in 1978, and is an affiliate of the Central Labour Organisation [CLO], now known as the Nigerian Labour Congress [NLC]. While the RTEAN is less known, the NURTW has grown overtime, with its membership burgeoning on daily basis. Thus, it boasts of over "1.5 million membership throughout the federation" (The *NURTW Diary*, 2011: 6). With the exclusion of petroleum tanker drivers, all professional commercial drivers are automatic members of the Union... The main objective of the Union is to promote the economic welfare of its members. This explains the *raison d'être* for its engagement in the series of programmes like Road Safety, Immunisation, Family Economic Advancement Program [FEAP], Mass Transit Implementation, HIV/AIDS, and the Road Accident Medical Aid [RAMACHE] – a scheme that provides first aid for accident victims.

In order to manage the affairs of the union, the road transport workers set up an administrative structure.

<sup>1</sup> '[NURTW](#)', National Union of Road Transport Workers, n.d., Accessed 26 November 2019, 20191126141731

<sup>2</sup> '[Informal urban governance and predatory politics in Africa: The role of motor-park touts in Lagos](#)', Agbiboa, D E, *African Affairs*, vol. 117, issue 466, January 2018, pp.62-82 at p.75, 20191126163038

<sup>3</sup> '[The Nigerian Motor Transporters since the 1920s](#)', Olubomehin, O O, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, vol. 12, no. 12, June 2012, pp.230-237 at p.235, 20191128182605



Two officers of the workers union confirmed this in an interview with them.

They pointed out that the “secretariats of the union are established in units, branches, zones and states. Each of these has secretaries and elected officers, who are headed by chairmen, to coordinate the activities of the transport union throughout the federation, FCT inclusive” (Personal Communication with Mr Jide Sodipo and Mr Sina Afuwape, 4 March 2011). Each of the state secretariats has between ten and twenty elected officials. This is in addition to the State Secretary and some other staff, whose efforts contribute to the everyday coordination of the activities of the local branches, under each state council’s jurisdiction. Given the coherent and sound administrative organization of the road transporters described above, the transporters have become partners with the government in the process of national political and socio-economic development.<sup>4</sup>

The article also indicates that during the period of military rule in Nigeria, ‘the road transport workers operated as a form of pressure group’. Since 1999, when Nigeria returned to democratic rule, politicians had ‘continued to seek the support of the road transporters while seeking to be elected into political offices’. The politicians usually sought to ‘take advantage of the large population of the road transporters’, one of the largest of any union in the country. Also, because many road transporters were ‘very close to the people at the grass root level, politicians often used them to influence the people at that level in order to achieve their political end’. With ‘the evolving rapport between’ politicians and the road transporters, some state governors gave NURTW officers who had ‘supported their candidature into political office so much freedom to operate within the society’. NURTW officials could commit offences without police interference as they had ‘the support of the state governor who, in any case, is the chief security officer of the state. In return for the support they get from the government of the day, the officers of the road transport union often pledged their continued support for the governor’.<sup>5</sup>

An earlier October 2007 Human Rights Watch report also notes that ‘[i]n some states, politicians have drawn upon the membership of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) for paid thugs. NURTW theoretically represents the collective interests of commercial drivers and other workers tied to the industry but some of its chapters have been largely converted into reservoirs of thugs for local politicians’.<sup>6</sup>

The previously mentioned January 2018 article in *African Affairs*, which looks at the changing role of motor-park touts (*agberos*) in urban transport in Lagos, Nigeria, comments that ‘*agberos* appropriate the spaces of motor-parks, bus stops, junctions, and roads across Lagos, which they use as an operational base to extort taxes from commercial minibus–taxi (*danfo*) operators in the name of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) – the most politicized and violent union in Nigeria’.<sup>7</sup> The article also refers to a widespread perception ‘that the NURTW is a major supplier of thugs recruited among its battle-ready *agberos* to advance the Lagos State Governor’s electoral campaigns (i.e. through voter intimidation and violent extortion), frequently in exchange for the full autonomy to control and exploit motor-parks across the state’.<sup>8</sup> Many senior NURTW leaders ‘are connected to state politicians and local government officials’ in Lagos, ‘according to a deal that satisfies the vested interests of the actors involved and which has little to do with urban planning or the transportation system’.<sup>9</sup> It is also stated in the article:

Since its creation in the 1970s, the political party in power in Lagos has tended to give the NURTW

<sup>4</sup> ‘[The Nigerian Motor Transporters since the 1920s](#)’, Olubomehin, O O, International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, vol. 12, no. 12, June 2012, pp.230-237 at pp.235-236, 20191128182605

<sup>5</sup> ‘[The Nigerian Motor Transporters since the 1920s](#)’, Olubomehin, O O, International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, vol. 12, no. 12, June 2012, pp.230-237 at p.236, 20191128182605

<sup>6</sup> ‘[Criminal Politics: Violence, “Godfathers” and Corruption in Nigeria](#)’, Human Rights Watch, October 2007, p.26, CIS15439; See also: ‘[Political Violence](#)’, Human Rights Watch, January 2007, CXE90FC0120179

<sup>7</sup> ‘[Informal urban governance and predatory politics in Africa: The role of motor-park touts in Lagos](#)’, Agbiboa, D E, African Affairs, vol. 117, issue 466, January 2018, pp.62-82 at pp.62-63, 20191126163038

<sup>8</sup> ‘[Informal urban governance and predatory politics in Africa: The role of motor-park touts in Lagos](#)’, Agbiboa, D E, African Affairs, vol. 117, issue 466, January 2018, pp.62-82 at pp.74-75, 20191126163038

<sup>9</sup> ‘[Informal urban governance and predatory politics in Africa: The role of motor-park touts in Lagos](#)’, Agbiboa, D E, African Affairs, vol. 117, issue 466, January 2018, pp.62-82 at p.75, 20191126163038

leadership, who supported their candidature, the freedom 'to do and undo' within motor-parks across Lagos. In fact, during the 1980s, NURTW played a central role in the Second Republic elections. This gave them enormous power and immunity to run motor-parks across Lagos. NURTW members took the liberty to create more unauthorized motor-parks from where they violently extort levies from operators through their battle-ready *agberos*. The NURTW's dubious autonomy is thus protected by politics – most unionists remain very loyal to the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) party in Lagos, others to the People's Democratic Party (PDP), or other fringe political parties. In such a politically charged environment, violent clashes between rival unions and their *agberos* are the rule of the game, rather than the exception. Given their lucrative and politicized nature, motor-parks, bus stops, and junctions across Lagos are some of the least safe and most fractionalized spaces, and their control has become 'purely a matter of life and death,' as one unionist told me.

The NURTW generates its funds through the numerous levies it imposes on its members and enforces through its feared *agberos*. Each day, *agberos* brutally collect and make returns to their respective unit chairman who reports to the state chairman, who is the direct link to the national chairman. Along this chain, financial returns must be remitted on a day-to-day basis...

The huge revenue collected by the NURTW and the high social mobility this facilitates, explains why the union remains the most politicized, factionalized, and violent in Nigeria.<sup>10</sup>

Although there were steps taken by the authorities in Lagos to control the *agberos* with the enactment of the Road Traffic Law of 2012, 'which barred *agberos* from collecting taxes inside motor-parks, bus stops, and roads across Lagos', the article indicates that 'the authorities failed to sustain the ban against *agberos* mainly because of their connection to the powerful and politically influential NURTW. This reinforces not only the selective enforcement of laws in Lagos, but also intensifies public perception that the NURTW is a 'sacred cow' that operates in realms above the law'.<sup>11</sup>

A November 2018 article on the NURTW website refers to the union cautioning 'its members nationwide to resist ploy by politicians to use them as political thugs during the polls' ahead of the 2019 general elections in Nigeria. The union urged its 'members to confront any politician that approaches them for evil machinations to use his families to achieve the unwholesome practice'. The NURTW National President, Alhaji Najeem Usman Yasin, 'said the era of the transport union being identified as the hit wing of certain political parties had long gone, pointing out that the union was now revered as a professional organisation'. He also 'appealed to them to take advantage of the forthcoming general elections and vote credible candidates at different levels that would cater and represent their interests'.<sup>12</sup>

In December 2018, Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with road transport unions the NURTW, the RTEAN, and the National Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO), 'to use commercial vehicles for movement of election personnel and materials on election days in 2019'.<sup>13</sup>

In February 2019, Nigerian newspaper, the *Nigerian Tribune*, reported that the executive director of YIAGA Africa, a civil society group involved in election monitoring of the Nigerian presidential and National Assembly elections, had said they were told 'members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) held INEC to ransom in Abuja, alleging that they insisted on being paid ahead of the service they were to render. He added that the strike by NURTW members was responsible for the delayed polls in Gwagwalada and Abaji axis'.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> ['Informal urban governance and predatory politics in Africa: The role of motor-park touts in Lagos'](#), Agbibo, D E, African Affairs, vol. 117, issue 466, January 2018, pp.62-82 at pp.76-77, 20191126163038

<sup>11</sup> ['Informal urban governance and predatory politics in Africa: The role of motor-park touts in Lagos'](#), Agbibo, D E, African Affairs, vol. 117, issue 466, January 2018, pp.62-82 at pp.78-79, 20191126163038

<sup>12</sup> ['2019: Resist being used as political thugs, NURTW warns members'](#), National Union of Road Transport Workers, 2 November 2018, 20191126150704

<sup>13</sup> ['INEC signs MoU with road transport unions to use commercial vehicles for 2019 elections'](#), Ugbede, L, Premium Times, 12 December 2018, 20191120164310

<sup>14</sup> ['Again, Elections Of Blood, Logistic Hitches'](#), Adisa, T, Nigerian Tribune, 25 February 2019, 20191128144751

Another article dated 8 March 2019 in Nigerian online newspaper, *Premium Times*, about possible ways politicians seek to rig elections in Nigeria, mentions that 'the 'partnership' between the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) and INEC is an easy way to rig the election as most of the NURTW officials are known to be foot soldiers of politicians'.<sup>15</sup>

A further article in the *Nigerian Tribune* dated 30 April 2019 indicates that a civil society organisation, the Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA), which was a key election observation group in the 2019 elections, had said Nigeria needed a new electoral law to enhance the integrity of future elections. The CTA noted that a situation where INEC was 'not in control of the facilities and personnel' it needed to conduct a free and fair election, including 'such private actors as the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW)', could 'only lead to an unintended outcome, no matter the good intentions of various actors within the system'.<sup>16</sup>

In August 2019, Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari 'commended the significant role played by the members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) in support of his re-election during the 2019 election'.<sup>17</sup>

A more recent November 2019 article in Nigerian newspaper, *The Sun*, refers to the NURTW and the RTEAN reaching an agreement with bike-hailing companies that the companies 'pay a daily fee of N500 to avoid harassment'. The unions are reported to 'have harassed riders affiliated with ORide, MAX and Gokada, forcing them to pay levies to operate in many parts of Lagos'. Under the agreement, which was brokered by the Lagos State government, 'the NURTW and RTEAN will each receive ₦200, while ₦100 will go to the local government where the ticket was sold'.<sup>18</sup>

Another article in Nigerian newspaper, the *Daily Trust*, dated 21 November 2019 reports that '[t]en persons were arrested, while many others were injured and items worth several millions of naira destroyed when suspected members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) yesterday engaged their Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN) rivals in a violent clash at Igando, Lagos State'. One person was shot in the arm during the clash, which was 'over control of bus parks'. When the police intervened, members of the NURTW and RTEAN 'allegedly began robbing residents and destroying people's property'.<sup>19</sup>

Also in November 2019, seven NURTW and RTEAN members were sent to prison following a violent clash between members of the unions in Ore in Ondo state. Many people are reported to have suffered injuries in the fighting.<sup>20</sup>

An article in Nigerian newspaper, *This Day*, dated 25 October 2019 indicates that *agberos*, who are '[m]ostly members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) and Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN)', were continuing to collect money from bus drivers and conductors in Lagos.<sup>21</sup>

A September 2019 article in Nigerian daily newspaper, *The Punch*, refers to the comments of '[t]he new caretaker Chairman of the National Union of Road Transport Workers in Lagos State, Musiliu Akinsanya, otherwise known as MC Oluomo', who 'urged all other NURTW caretaker members to be

<sup>15</sup> ['10 ways politicians rig elections in Nigeria'](#), Iroanusi, Q E, *Premium Times*, 8 March 2019, 20191120155137

<sup>16</sup> ['2019 Election: Civil Society Group Demands New Electoral Act'](#), Adisa, T, *Nigerian Tribune*, 30 April 2019, 20191128153022

<sup>17</sup> ['Buhari Commends Supportive Role Played By NURTW Members During 2019 Elections'](#), *Nigerian Tribune*, 29 August 2019, 20191128160220

<sup>18</sup> ['Lagos: Transport unions reach agreement with bike-hailing startups to pay N500 daily'](#), Obogo, C, *The Sun*, 25 November 2019, 20191127173211

<sup>19</sup> ['10 persons arrested, many injured as NURTW/RTEAN members clash in Lagos'](#), Agha, E, *Daily Trust - Nigeria*, 20191127180959

<sup>20</sup> ['7 NURTW, RTEAN members sent to prison in Ondo over public disturbance'](#), *Daily Trust - Nigeria*, 4 November 2019, 20191128172321

<sup>21</sup> ['Of Touts, Danfo Drivers and Illegal Taxes'](#), Abiodun, E, *This Day*, 25 October 2019, 20191128175236

supportive and cooperative as we embark on the mission of rebranding NURTW nationwide and Lagos State chapter in particular'.<sup>22</sup> The article also states that:

The NURTW in Lagos State has become notorious for extortion of money from commercial drivers and shop owners and have become untouchable due to the cover they receive from politicians and security agents.

The union has also been known to perpetrate acts of violence which has led to the death of many in recent years.

Oluomo himself was stabbed several times at an APC rally in January 2019 during a fracas with another faction of the union.

His trusted sidekick Olayinka Mamowora, aka Mamok, was stabbed to death in 2015 while another prominent NURTW member in his Oshodi/Isolo community, Rasaq Bello, popularly known as Hamburger, was shot dead in Shogunle during the local council primaries of the APC in 2017.<sup>23</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil

## **2. Please provide information/ history about the death of Olayinka Mamowora. Please provide any particulars about his life and role in the party and investigations after his death.**

Olayinka Mamowora, aka Mamok, also referred to as Olayinka Mamora, was shot and killed on 30 September 2015 in Oshodi, Lagos, Nigeria. Mamowora was a close aide of Alhaji Musiliu Akinsanya, aka MC Oluomo, who was the leader of a faction of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), which was in rivalry with another faction of the union. Akinsanya is now the NURTW State Chairman in Lagos. In October 2019, two men, Ayuba Balogun and Evans Adamson, were remanded in prison custody by a magistrate in Lagos over the alleged possession of firearms and the murder of Mamowora. Other assailants involved in the shooting were reported to be still at large.

An article in Nigerian newspaper, *The Guardian*, dated 5 October 2015 indicates that 'Olayinka Mamowora, aka Mamok', had been killed during the previous week. The article mentions that Mamowora was a 'close aide' of 'Alhaji Musiliu Akinsanya aka MC Oluomo', the leader of a faction of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), which was in rivalry with a faction led by the 'late Olayemi Eniola also known as Esi Oluwo'.<sup>24</sup> It is stated in the article:

As the rivalry between two factions of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) continues to run deep between foot soldiers and loyalists of Alhaji Musiliu Akinsanya aka MC Oluomo and late Olayemi Eniola also known as Esi Oluwo, resulting in the death last week of MC Oluomo's close aide, Olayinka Mamowora, aka Mamok, residents of Oshodi and environs are living in panic over fears of unending reprisal attacks.

It was gathered that the 43-year-old Mamok had just returned from the United Kingdom where his family resided. He was said to have gone to Mosaku Street to cut his hair on last Wednesday when three gunmen, dressed in black, entered the salon and shot him. He was killed after a bullet hit him in the head.

A resident, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said Mamok was killed because he was suspected to have fired the shot that killed Esi-Oluwo. He alleged that one IK, who was an aide of the slain leader, led the squad that killed Mamok as a reprisal for his boss' death.

<sup>22</sup> ['Tinubu my father, leader, mentor – MC Oluomo'](#), Akinkuotu, E, The Punch, 6 September 2019, 20191120174555

<sup>23</sup> ['Tinubu my father, leader, mentor – MC Oluomo'](#), Akinkuotu, E, The Punch, 6 September 2019, 20191120174555

<sup>24</sup> ['I have no hand in Mamok's death, suspect says'](#), Daniel, E, The Guardian (Nigeria), 5 October 2015, 20191119180545



He said: "MC Oluomo and Esi-Oluwo were rivals for the leadership of the NURTW in Oshodi. Both men also supported the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), respectively, prior to the general elections. But Asiwaju Tinubu (a former Lagos governor) mediated in the fight. Some days after, Esi-Oluwo was killed and Mamok was fingered as the culprit."<sup>25</sup>

The article also indicates that 'Ikechukwu Jeff, popularly known as IK, debunked the allegation linking him to the assassination of Mamok'.<sup>26</sup>

Another article from October 2015 in Nigerian newspaper, *Vanguard*, mentions that Mamowora was previously 'one of the private bodyguards of former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Dimeji Bankole. He attended Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, Abeokuta. The late Mamok, is a relative of Senator Olorunnimbe Mamora'.<sup>27</sup>

An October 2019 article in Nigerian daily newspaper, *The Nation*, refers to 'Olayinka Mamora' who was 46 years old when he was killed in 2015. According to the article, 'Mamora (a.k.a Momok) until his death in 2015, was an aide to the then Lagos State Treasurer of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) Alhaji Musiliu Akinsanya (a.k.a MC Oluomo)'. Akinsanya was 'now the NURTW State Chairman'. Mamora was 'said to be a relative Senator Olorunnimbe Mamora', and 'was survived by an aged mother, wife and child'.<sup>28</sup>

In relation to investigations into the death of Mamowora, the October 2015 article in *The Guardian* states that '[a] police source from the Makinde division, who spoke on the condition of anonymity', had said that '[t]he incident was so ugly, that such assassination can take place in that kind of environment, and nobody could trace the killer, but we are on top of the situation'.<sup>29</sup> The *Vanguard* article indicates that although no arrest had been made, a Lagos state police public relations officer had said they had 'been able to identify the killers of Olayinka Mamowora' and were 'on their trail'.<sup>30</sup>

More recently, in October 2019, two men, Ayuba Balogun and Evans Adamson, were remanded in prison custody by a magistrate at the Igboosere Magistrates' Court, Lagos over the alleged possession of firearms and the murder of 'Olayinka Mamora'.<sup>31</sup> The October 2019 article in *The Nation* indicates that the prosecutor had 'informed the court that the defendants and others still at large on September 30, 2015, at about 7:30pm, mobilised themselves and invaded a barbing saloon, along Mosaku Street, Oshodi Lagos, shot and killed one Olayinka Mamora'. The prosecutor 'told the court that Balogun, also known as Black Jesus, shot him on the head and chest which resulted in his death'. The prosecutor also 'said during the course of the investigation, three pump action guns, and ten live cartridges were recovered from the defendants' criminal hideout at Mowe- Ibafo, Ogun state and Oshodi'.<sup>32</sup> The two defendants were remanded in prison custody for 30 days and the case was adjourned until 3 December 2019.<sup>33</sup>

Another October 2019 article in *The Sun* indicates that 'Ayuba Balogun and Evans Adamson, who were alleged to be involved in the killing of late Olayinka Mamora, popularly called Mamok', were

<sup>25</sup> ['I have no hand in Mamok's death, suspect says'](#), Daniel, E, The Guardian (Nigeria), 5 October 2015, 20191119180545

<sup>26</sup> ['I have no hand in Mamok's death, suspect says'](#), Daniel, E, The Guardian (Nigeria), 5 October 2015, 20191119180545

<sup>27</sup> ['Police yet to arrest killers of MC Oluomo's aide'](#), Onyegbula, E, Vanguard, 2 October 2015, 20191129172651

<sup>28</sup> ['Court remands suspected killers of MC Oluomo's aide in prison'](#), Onanuga, A and Adebajo, T, The Nation, (Nigeria), 29 October 2019, 20191119184115

<sup>29</sup> ['I have no hand in Mamok's death, suspect says'](#), Daniel, E, The Guardian (Nigeria), 5 October 2015, 20191119180545

<sup>30</sup> ['Police yet to arrest killers of MC Oluomo's aide'](#), Onyegbula, E, Vanguard, 2 October 2015, 20191129172651

<sup>31</sup> ['Court remands suspected killers of MC Oluomo's aide in prison'](#), Onanuga, A and Adebajo, T, The Nation, (Nigeria), 29 October 2019, 20191119184115

<sup>32</sup> ['Court remands suspected killers of MC Oluomo's aide in prison'](#), Onanuga, A and Adebajo, T, The Nation, (Nigeria), 29 October 2019, 20191119184115

<sup>33</sup> ['Court remands suspected killers of MC Oluomo's aide in prison'](#), Onanuga, A and Adebajo, T, The Nation, (Nigeria), 29 October 2019, 20191119184115



remanded in prison custody until 2 December 2019 'pending the release of legal advice by the State's Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) on the allegation against them'.<sup>34</sup>

A November 2019 article in the *Daily Trust* indicates that the assailants in the killing of 'Olayinka Mamora', were 'said to be 10 in number', and 'allegedly rode on motorcycles to Mosaku Street, Oshodi, and shot Mamora in the head, killing him'.<sup>35</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil

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<sup>34</sup> ['Court remands 2 suspects over alleged murder of Oshodi NURTW chief'](#), Olabiya, L, The Sun, 29 October 2019, 20191120175957

<sup>35</sup> ['NURTW crisis: Court throws out case against two bus conductors'](#), Bamgboye, A, Daily Trust - Nigeria, 6 November 2019, 20191120183410



## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: 20191210124346 – FGM – Yoruba tribe

Date of Report

13 December 2019

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#### Background

The applicants are of Yoruba ethnicity from Oyo State. They recently told the Department that they are planning to have their daughter circumcised when she turns 9 (she turned 9 today). They also have a younger daughter in Australia (currently 7 years old). It is assumed that their intentions are for the younger daughter to also be circumcised when she turns 9. At this stage it is not known whether they would follow through with this intention if they were to return to Nigeria.

#### Questions

1. [Are there any reports of Yoruba \(including sub-tribes\) performing FGM on girls when they turn 9?](#)
2. [Does this age \(9 years old\) have any significance amongst Yoruba \(including sub-tribes\) for FGM?](#)
3. [Are there any reports of FGM not being performed on Yoruba girls/young women after a certain age/life event?](#)

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## Answers

### 1. Are there any reports of Yoruba (including sub-tribes) performing FGM on girls when they turn 9?

Country information indicates that Yoruba people, including the Oyo sub-group, typically perform female circumcision (also described as female genital mutilation, FMG) on girls during their first week of their life, or at least 7-10 days after birth. More broadly, in Nigeria the procedure can be performed at any stage of a woman's life depending on a number of cultural variables specific to her ethnic group.

A 2018 dissertation by Jennifer Quichocho submitted to the University of Denver examines female circumcision of the Yoruba people in Nigeria. In her dissertation, Quichocho writes that 'in the case of Nigeria, 25% of women have undergone female circumcision' and 'the majority of Yoruba's practice type I circumcision'.<sup>1</sup> 'Type I' circumcision is known as '*sunna*' and involves 'pricking of (or) removal of portions (or) the entire clitoral hood'.<sup>2</sup>

Quichocho writes that Yoruba girls are circumcised within the first week of birth in a hospital or medical facility:

Yoruba girls are circumcised during the first week life. The majority of both rural and urban families that choose to circumcise, do so in a hospital or a medical facility. Historically, babies were circumcised as part of a ceremony with plant-based anesthesia. In modern society, circumcision has been monopolized by trained nurses. Infection is rare and in all cases is treated by antibiotics, mostly at government or private hospitals. "Because of the involvement of the modern health sector... there may be a very low level of circumcision-related mortality for both girls and boys" (Orubuloye et al. 2000:88).<sup>3</sup>

Quichocho cites the results of a survey of that interviewed 1150 men and 1150 women from Nigerian communities on the outskirts of Ilorin and Kwara state. The results, published in 1987, found that 'over 90% of the female respondents were themselves circumcised in their childhood'. Furthermore, 'in the two communities, females were generally circumcised in their infancy when they were 7-10 days old'.<sup>4</sup>

A 2012 journal article providing an overview of female circumcision in Nigeria states that 'in most parts of Nigeria, it is carried out at a very young age'.<sup>5</sup>

A study by a social development researcher that was funded by the United Nations Population Fund Nigeria discusses the age of female circumcision in Nigeria, incorporating information from community discussions with Nigerians:

Interviewees agree that a girl child qualifies for FGM/C from the 8th day of birth up until her adult years. FGM/C is performed – depending on the traditions of a community – during the first weeks of life, childhood, adolescence, in teenage years and during pregnancy.

In the communities visited in Imo state, parents and practitioners are unanimous on the 8th day conventional practice for the female child. Delays are rare in communities within this state, except in cases where a child is sick, in which case she is cut on regaining her health. Babies whose mothers died at their birth are often not cut for a longer time as they are perceived to be vulnerable and likely to die too. Any form of vulnerability suffered by a female child can indeed inform the decision not to mutilate her.

The process of capturing the lived experiences of FGM/C itself among the survivors was a major challenge during this study. The difference in cultural practices is observed in the fact that a majority of

<sup>1</sup> ['Through the Yoruba Lens: A Postcolonial Discourse of Female Circumcision'](#), Jennifer Quichocho, University of Denver, 1 January 2018, p.21, 20191212083004

<sup>2</sup> ['Through the Yoruba Lens: A Postcolonial Discourse of Female Circumcision'](#), Jennifer Quichocho, University of Denver, 1 January 2018, p.16, 20191212083004

<sup>3</sup> ['Through the Yoruba Lens: A Postcolonial Discourse of Female Circumcision'](#), Jennifer Quichocho, University of Denver, 1 January 2018, p.22, 20191212083004

<sup>4</sup> ['Through the Yoruba Lens: A Postcolonial Discourse of Female Circumcision'](#), Jennifer Quichocho, University of Denver, 1 January 2018, p.24, 20191212083004

<sup>5</sup> ['An Overview of Female Genital Mutilation in Nigeria'](#), T C Okeke, U S B Anyaehie, C C K Ezenyeaku, Annals of Medical and Health Sciences Research, January-June 2012, volume 2, issue 1, pp.70-73, 20190904144906

women and girls especially from the South-Western states could not recall their experience considering that they were mutilated as infants. Women and teenage girls who could narrate their experience of FGM/C were mostly from the SouthEastern state of Ebonyi where the practice of FGM/C was done for girls at an older age.

Whereas some women and girls can share their experience of FGM/C as teenagers, there was also a group of women who indicated that they were cut during pregnancy. Aside the known short and long term consequences of female circumcision, there are peculiar health implications of cutting a woman during pregnancy. It can lead to complications in pregnancy especially with possibility of severe haemorrhage, genital infection and stillbirth.

The mutilation of women in pregnancy has no age limits and includes teenage girls or pregnant adult women who for one reason or another may have missed the opportunity of being mutilated at an early age.<sup>6</sup>

An October 2017 cluster survey of households in Nigeria by UNICEF that was updated in February 2018 presents data on FGM.<sup>7</sup> The data reveal that women in the southwest of Nigeria represent the largest demographic of circumcised women in the country with 41.1 percent of women having undergone circumcision. The survey found that 51.3 percent of circumcised women in the southwest had flesh removed, 2 percent were nicked, less than 1 percent were sewn, and in 45.2 percent of cases the nature of the procedure was not disclosed. Yoruba represent the highest number of circumcised women in terms of ethnicity.<sup>8</sup> The survey found that 55 percent of Oyo women had been circumcised, 38.7 percent having had flesh removed, but almost 60 percent had not disclosed the nature of the procedure.<sup>9</sup>

The same survey presents data for circumcision of girls aged between 0-14 years. Girls in the southwest represent only 21.6 percent of girls circumcised in Nigeria, with the highest rate of prevalence amongst girls occurring in the northwest. More than three quarters of girls in the southwest had flesh removed during the procedure. Yoruba represent 27.3 percent off all girls circumcised across the country. Oyo account for 29.6 percent of girls circumcised, with 67.2 percent having flesh removed during the procedure.<sup>10</sup>

Almost 85 percent of women from the Yoruba ethnic group had heard about female circumcision and the majority of those women thought that the practice should be discontinued.<sup>11</sup> In Oyo state, almost 90 percent of women were aware of the procedure and just over half thought the practice should be discontinued.<sup>12</sup>

According to a 2013 demographic and health survey published by Nigeria's National Population Commission in June 2014 found that 'in Nigeria, female circumcision occurs mostly during infancy'. The survey found that four out of five circumcised women were circumcised before their fifth birthday. Only four percent of women circumcised were circumcised between the age of five and nine.<sup>13</sup> Some

<sup>6</sup> ['FMG in Nigeria: Telling stories, raising awareness, inspiring change'](#), Adaobi Nkekelonye, United Nations Population Fund (Nigeria), 22 February 2019, pp.21-22, 20191213090905

<sup>7</sup> Note: The fifth round Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS5) was carried out in 2016/2017 by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in collaboration with the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) and National Agency for the Control of Aids (NACA), as part of the global MICS programme. Technical support was provided by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) while World Health Organization (WHO), World Bank, Save One Million Live (SOML), Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, United Nations Population Funds (UNFPA) and UNICEF provided financial support.

<sup>8</sup> ['Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey \(MICS\), 2016-17'](#), National Bureau of Statistics (Nigeria) and UNICEF, originally published October 2017 (revised February 2018), p.236, 20191212153044

<sup>9</sup> ['Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey \(MICS\), 2016-17'](#), National Bureau of Statistics (Nigeria) and UNICEF, originally published October 2017 (revised February 2018), p.237, 20191212153044

<sup>10</sup> ['Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey \(MICS\), 2016-17'](#), National Bureau of Statistics (Nigeria) and UNICEF, originally published October 2017 (revised February 2018), pp.238-239, 20191212153044

<sup>11</sup> ['Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey \(MICS\), 2016-17'](#), National Bureau of Statistics (Nigeria) and UNICEF, originally published October 2017 (revised February 2018), p.240, 20191212153044

<sup>12</sup> ['Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey \(MICS\), 2016-17'](#), National Bureau of Statistics (Nigeria) and UNICEF, originally published October 2017 (revised February 2018), p.241, 20191212153044

<sup>13</sup> ['Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2013'](#), National Population Commission, June 2014, p.351, 20191212152235



88.7 percent of Yoruba were circumcised before five years of age and only 5.2 percent were circumcised between five and nine years of age.<sup>14</sup> In the southwest Oyo state, 90.2 percent of circumcised girls underwent the procedure under the age of five, and only 5.1 percent did so between the ages of five and nine.<sup>15</sup>

More broadly, commenting on the age of female circumcision globally, in 2019 the United Nations Population fund reported that the age at which the procedure is undertaken is dropping and is most commonly carried out before the age of fifteen.<sup>16</sup>

Interestingly, in 2015 female circumcision was legally banned in Nigeria. In May 2015, the Australian edition of *The Guardian* reported that the 'Nigerian government has taken the historic step of outlawing the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM), in a move campaigners describe as "hugely important"'. Reportedly, Nigeria 'introduced a new federal law banning the practice, which involves removing part or all of a girl's outer sexual organs'. The report did not comment upon how the law would be effectively implemented.<sup>17</sup>

Regardless, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade report that FGM is widely practiced.<sup>18</sup> Regarding Oyo state specifically, it is still practiced.<sup>19</sup> The author of a December 2018 dissertation for the fulfilment of a Master of Laws in Human Rights at the University of Pretoria discusses the codification and compliance with the national 2015 Violence Against Women Law in the state of Oyo relating to female circumcision provisions, stating female circumcision remains 'very prevalent' despite the state's law prohibiting the practice:

For an Act of the National Assembly to apply in a state in Nigeria, such an Act needs to be domesticated. In other words, a subsidiary legislation, containing the provisions of the Act, must be enacted. The Oyo State government successfully domesticated the VAPP Act of 2015 as the Violence Against Women Law of Oyo State, in 2016, criminalising FGM in its section 9. However, since the domestication of the Act in Oyo State, Nigeria, there has not been any report of compliance with its anti - FGM provisions in section 9 of the Law. Consequently, FGM is still very prevalent in Oyo State, Nigeria.<sup>20</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Section on 'age'. ['Nigeria: Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\)'](#), UK Home Office, August 2019, 20191104161955
- Section on 'age'. ['Country Profile: FGM in Nigeria'](#), 28 Too Many, October 2016, pp.22-24, CIS38A80127489
- 'Nigeria: 20191031114653 - Female Genital Mutilation - Parental Rights', Country of Origin Information Services Section (COISS), 6 November 2019, 20191106151024
- ['Nigeria Prevalence of FGM including ethnic groups in which FGM is prevalent including Lagos State and within the Edo Ethnic Group consequences of refusal and ability of family to refuse'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board Canada, 13 September 2016, 20190904150326

<sup>14</sup> ['Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2013'](#), National Population Commission, June 2014, p.352, 20191212152235

<sup>15</sup> ['Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2013'](#), National Population Commission, June 2014, pp.352-354, 20191212152235

<sup>16</sup> ['Female genital mutilation \(FGM\) frequently asked questions'](#), United Nations Population Fund, July 2019, 20191212150243

<sup>17</sup> ['Nigeria's female genital mutilation ban is important precedent, say campaigners'](#), The Guardian (Australia), 30 May 2015, 20191212152602

<sup>18</sup> 'Country Information Report: Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia), 9 March 2018, CIS7B83941414

<sup>19</sup> ['Despite being outlawed, Female Genital Mutilation Secretly Practiced in Oyo'](#), International Youth Journal, 1 May 2019, 20191212161939

<sup>20</sup> ['Violence Against Women Law in Oyo State, Nigeria: Addressing barriers to eradicating Female Genital Mutilation'](#), Anthonia Lola Dickson, University of Pretoria, December 2018, p.37, 20191213092848



## 2. Does this age (9 years old) have any significance amongst Yoruba (including sub-tribes) for FGM?

No information was located about the age of nine having significance for any particular reason. General information was located about the reasons why female circumcision is performed and they are typically psychosexual, sociological and culture, hygiene and aesthetic, religious, and socioeconomic. However, ethnicity is cited as the most significant factor globally for the prevalence of female circumcision. Amongst the Yoruba of Oyo state, the ethnic group's culture appears to be the motivating factor for the practice of female circumcision.

The 2018 dissertation by Quichocho indicates that people from Oyo state in Nigeria's southwestern region are a subgroup of the Yoruba who are the most likely to practice female circumcision, and that the practice remains prevalent for religious, social and cultural reasons. Additionally, in contrast to sub-Saharan Africa, women in Nigeria who are Christian, educated, and live in urban areas are likely to have circumcised daughters. Accordingly:

... in sub-Saharan Africa Christian women with higher education, live in urban areas and have a high socio-economic status are less likely to have circumcised daughters, except for the case of Nigeria, where the likelihood of having at least one daughter circumcised is greater among educated Christian, urban women, in comparison to other countries (UNICEF 2005:9). "One explanation could be that this difference is due to the confounding factor of ethnicity, because FGC is practiced by Yoruba groups, who are also more likely to be educated" (UNICEF 2005:9). For instance, specific subgroups of the Yoruba are known to practice circumcision. The subgroup that practices female circumcision the most are the Oyo people. Oyo people live in a certain location in southwestern Nigeria. The families that practice female circumcision continue to do it out of a sense of religious, social, and cultural responsibility. Regarding religion, Yoruba Muslims are twice as likely as Yoruba Christians not to circumcise their daughters (Orubuloye et al. 2000:93).<sup>21</sup>

The dissertation describes some of the cultural perceptions Yoruba people hold regarding female circumcision:

Among the Yoruba, who reside in southwestern Nigeria, the purpose of circumcision includes (Orubuloye et al. 2000:81):

1. The clitoris is dangerous and it could cause the death to the infant during delivery
2. The clitoris will keep growing throughout the woman's life
3. Circumcision increases personal enjoyment of sexual activity
4. That a circumcised vagina is aesthetically more beautiful<sup>22</sup>

Quichocho says cultural perceptions are a significant motivation behind the practice of female circumcision. Furthermore, Quichocho notes the cultural significance of circumcision to the Yoruba people dictates a preference by women that men also be circumcised prior to marriage:

Culturally, many women are hesitant not to circumcise their child, because they fear they will become unmarriageable. The same goes for men that are not circumcised, "only 1 percent of urban and rural women said they would marry an uncircumcised man" (Orubuloye et al. 2000:81). Therefore, cultural perceptions of duty and family expectations keep the practice of circumcision going. The cultural necessity of female circumcision is embedded in tradition not religion.<sup>23</sup>

A July 2004 report on sexuality in the Yoruba culture provides some insight on female circumcision as viewed by those within the culture:

Circumcision is done by trained experts among the Yoruba – for the good of both females and males. Female circumcision is not female genital mutilation in the Yoruba culture. It is meant to properly acculturate the females so that they behave properly like human beings. It was a common practice among

<sup>21</sup> ['Through the Yoruba Lens: A Postcolonial Discourse of Female Circumcision'](#), Jennifer Quichocho, University of Denver, 1 January 2018, pp.21-22, 20191212083004

<sup>22</sup> ['Through the Yoruba Lens: A Postcolonial Discourse of Female Circumcision'](#), Jennifer Quichocho, University of Denver, 1 January 2018, p.22, 20191212083004

<sup>23</sup> ['Through the Yoruba Lens: A Postcolonial Discourse of Female Circumcision'](#), Jennifer Quichocho, University of Denver, 1 January 2018, p.23, 20191212083004

the Oyo, Osun, Ibadan sub-groups of the Yoruba race in the olden days. Nowadays, the practice is dying out in those areas of the Yoruba ethnic group.<sup>24</sup>

A 2013 demographic and health survey published by Nigeria's National Population Commission in June 2014 discusses the demographics background of women whose daughters have been circumcised:

Twenty percent of girls age 0-4 whose mothers are Muslim have been circumcised. Daughters of women with more than a secondary education are less likely than daughters of women at lower levels of education to have been circumcised. In all age groups, the prevalence of circumcision is higher among girls whose mothers are circumcised than among those whose mothers are not circumcised. Daughters in households in the lowest wealth quintile (19 percent) are more likely to have been circumcised than daughters in households in the highest quintile (13 percent).<sup>25</sup>

Some relevant key finding of the survey include:

- Knowledge of female circumcision is higher among Yoruba women than among women in any other ethnic group in Nigeria.
- Eighty-two percent of women in Nigeria undergo circumcision before age 5
- The proportion of female circumcision among girls age 0-14 is higher among those whose mothers have also been circumcised.
- The higher a mother's level of education, the less likely her daughter has been circumcised.
- Female circumcision is more prevalent in the southern zones than in the northern zones.<sup>26</sup>

A 2012 journal article that provides an overview of female circumcision in Nigeria examines the prevalence of various sociocultural reasons for the continuing prevalence of female circumcision:

FGM is still deeply entrenched in the Nigerian society where critical decision makers are grandmothers, mothers, women, opinion leaders, men and age groups. FGM is an extreme example of discrimination based on sex. Often used as a way to control women's sexuality, the practice is closely associated with girls' marriageability. Mothers chose to subject their daughters to the practice to protect them from being ostracized, beaten, shunned, or disgraced. FGM was traditionally the specialization of traditional leaders' traditional birth attendants or members of the community known for the trade. There is, however, the phenomenon of "medicalization" which has introduced modern health practitioners and community health workers into the trade.<sup>27</sup>

More broadly, on a global scale the reasons why female circumcision is performed according to the United Nations Population fund are:

In every society in which it is practiced, female genital mutilation is a manifestation of deeply entrenched gender inequality. Where it is widely practiced, FGM is supported by both men and women, usually without question, and anyone that does not follow the norm may face condemnation, harassment and ostracism. It may be difficult for families to abandon the practice without support from the wider community. In fact, it is often practiced even when it is known to inflict harm upon girls because the perceived social benefits of the practice are deemed higher than its disadvantages.

The reasons given for practicing FGM fall generally into five categories:

**Psychosexual reasons:** FGM is carried out as a way to control women's sexuality, which is sometimes said to be insatiable if parts of the genitalia, especially the clitoris, are not removed. It is thought to ensure virginity before marriage and fidelity afterward, and to increase male sexual pleasure.

**Sociological and cultural reasons:** FGM is seen as part of a girl's initiation into womanhood

<sup>24</sup> 'Understanding Sexuality in the Yoruba Culture', Professor Olugboyega Alaba (University of Lagos), Africa Regional Sexuality Resource Centre, 29 July 2004, p.9, 20191213092310

<sup>25</sup> 'Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2013', National Population Commission, June 2014, p.354, 20191212152235

<sup>26</sup> 'Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2013', National Population Commission, June 2014, p.345, 20191212152235

<sup>27</sup> 'An Overview of Female Genital Mutilation in Nigeria', T C Okeke, U S B Anyaehie, C C K Ezenyeaku, Annals of Medical and Health Sciences Research, January-June 2012, volume 2, issue 1, pp.70-73, 20190904144906

and as an intrinsic part of a community's cultural heritage. Sometimes myths about female genitalia (e.g., that an uncut clitoris will grow to the size of a penis, or that FGM will enhance fertility or promote child survival) perpetuate the practice.

**Hygiene and aesthetic reasons:** In some communities, the external female genitalia are considered dirty and ugly and are removed, ostensibly to promote hygiene and aesthetic appeal.

**Religious reasons:** Although FGM is not endorsed by either Islam or by Christianity, supposed religious doctrine is often used to justify the practice.

**Socio-economic factors:** In many communities, FGM is a prerequisite for marriage. Where women are largely dependent on men, economic necessity can be a major driver of the procedure. FGM sometimes is a prerequisite for the right to inherit. It may also be a major income source for practitioners.<sup>28</sup>

According to the United Nations Population fund, although there are exceptions, ethnicity is typically cited as the most significant factor in the prevalence of female circumcision:

Ethnicity is the most significant factor in FGM prevalence, cutting across socio-economic class and level of education. Members of certain ethnic groups often adhere to the same social norms, including whether or not to practice FGM, regardless of where they live. The FGM prevalence among ethnic Somalis living in Kenya, for example, at 94 per cent, is similar to the prevalence in Somalia, and far higher than the Kenyan national average of 21 per cent, [according](#) to the most [recent](#) information [available](#).

But there are exceptions. In [Senegal](#), for example, there are major variations in FGM prevalence among Mandingue women, depending on where they live – 55 per cent in urban areas versus 84 per cent in rural areas. Similarly, FGM prevalence among the Poular ranges from 41 per cent in urban areas to 56 per cent in rural areas.<sup>29</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Demographic and drivers of female circumcision in Nigeria. '[Female genital mutilation/cutting in Nigeria: a scoping review](#)', Population Council, May 2017, pp.11-12 and pp.21.27, 20191213084141

### **3. Are there any reports of FGM not being performed on Yoruba girls/young women after a certain age/life event?**

No information was located about female circumcision not being performed on Yoruba girls and women after a certain age or life event. Country information in question [One](#) and [Two](#) indicate that although it is common for females in Yoruba in Oyo state to be circumcised during infancy, predominately the first week of life or shortly thereafter, the procedure can be performed later in life for reasons significant to Yoruba cultural perceptions such as prior to a girl becoming sexually active, as a prerequisite for marriage, prior to giving birth, or more generally for hygiene reasons.

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

<sup>28</sup> '[Female genital mutilation \(FGM\) frequently asked questions](#)', United Nations Population Fund, July 2019, 20191212150243

<sup>29</sup> '[Female genital mutilation \(FGM\) frequently asked questions](#)', United Nations Population Fund, July 2019, 20191212150243





## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: 20191216132810 – Biafra supporters – Overseas activity – Treatment of returnees

Date of Report

28 January 2020

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#### Background

The applicant's [redacted] is a member of The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and maintains an active pro-Biafra profile on social media. The applicant claims that as a result of her [redacted] online political activities (Facebook posts) and attendance at protests in Australia [redacted] is currently on a Nigerian government watch list. She claims that as a result of her relationship with [redacted], she and their son are at risk of harm on return from the Nigerian authorities. Her [redacted] is an Australia citizen and it is not clear as to whether [redacted] has ever engaged in any political activities with IPOB in Nigeria.

#### Questions

1. [Is there any information that individuals involved in pro-Biafra political activities \(including IPOB members\) overseas would come to the attention of Nigerian authorities?](#)
2. [Is there any information that the families of these individuals would be targeted on return?](#)

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## Answers

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### 1. Is there any information that individuals involved in pro-Biafra political activities (including IPOB members) overseas would come to the attention of Nigerian authorities?

No information has been located addressing the question.<sup>1</sup>

In related information, the (Australian) Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's March 2018 country information report on Nigeria wrote that Nigerian immigration officials stopped a small number of high profile human rights defenders from leaving Nigeria to participate in overseas protests relating to domestic political campaigns. The protestors had previously publicly announced their intention to participate in these overseas protests.<sup>2</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Provides information on whether family member of wanted persons are arrested by Nigerian authorities and the treatment they endure: ['Nigeria: Whether the police in Nigeria detain family members of wanted persons, including sexual and gender minorities; the manner in which these persons are treated; legal recourse available to them \(2016-November 2019\) NGA106375.E'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 20 November 2019, 20191213152305.
- Includes information on the Nigerian police force's ability to track individuals, including overseas, through mechanisms such as INTERPOL: ['Nigeria: information on a national police computer network for information sharing; nature and extent of communication between police offices across the country; whether police offices in different states are obligated to report to each other regarding persons of interest who are suspected of having relocated; whether a link to a police computer network is available at international airports \(2015-November 2017\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 21 November 2017, 20200123112648

### 2. Is there any information that the families of these individuals would be targeted on return?

The (Australian) Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's March 2018 country information report on Nigeria writes that the department is 'not aware of Nigerians being detained for political activities undertaken whilst abroad upon returning to the country'.<sup>3</sup> No other relevant country information has been located.<sup>4</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

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<sup>1</sup> Sources consulted include CISNET, ECOLI.net and EASO, government and non-government sources, online search engines.

<sup>2</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria'](#), 9 March 2018, Para.3.38, p.20, CIS7B83941414

<sup>3</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria'](#), 9 March 2018, Para.5.29, p.32, CIS7B83941414

<sup>4</sup> Sources consulted include CISNET, ECOLI.net and EASO, government and non-government sources, online search engines.





## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: 20200102180913 – Action People's Congress – Militia wing – Electoral rigging – Loansharking – Violence

Date of Report

5 February 2020

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#### Background

The applicant is from the Yoruba tribe from Lagos, Nigeria. He claims that he was a 'legitimate' member/volunteer of the 'Action People's Congress' (APC) in 2011/2-2014 and he seems to 'think' that the 'militia' arm of this party is "a sect called Oduduwa People's Congress" (OPC). He stated that they are "a deadly vigilante group that uses black magic to kill their culprit". They are also known for rigging elections and attacking people they loan money to.

#### Questions

1. [Please provide information on the Action People's Congress, and specifically their militia wing, the Oduduwa People's Congress, covering election rigging and recent acts of violence focussing on people to whom they've lent money.](#)

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## Answers

### 1. Please provide information on the Action People's Congress, and specifically their militia wing, the Oduduwa People's Congress, covering election rigging and recent acts of violence focussing on people to whom they've lent money.

Several sources refer to the 'Action People's Congress' as having won the 2015 Nigerian general elections or being the party of the current President, Muhammadu Buahari.<sup>1</sup> This appears to be a mistake or misnomer for the actual winning party, the All Progressives Congress, which was formed in February 2013 as an alliance of four smaller parties – the Action Congress of Nigeria, the Congress for Progressive Change, the All Nigeria Peoples Party and the All Progressives Grand Alliance.<sup>2</sup>

In what appears to be a separate use of the name, a 2013 article published in *Pointblank News* reports on emerging rifts between the parties that would go on to form the Action People's Congress (see preceding paragraph). According to the article, a party known as the Action People's Congress was registered in January 2006 before changing its name to the Action Congress in August of the same year. The party reportedly later changed their name (date unknown) to the Action Congress of Nigeria.<sup>3</sup> The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is also reported to have announced the registration of the Action People's Congress on 31 January 2006.<sup>4</sup>

COISS notes that neither of these uses of the party name fit the circumstances described by the applicant in the [Background](#) section above (in terms of the stated years of participation) and will not therefore pursue the remainder of the elements of the question (election rigging, money-lending violence) in relation to any potential links with, for example, the All Progressives Congress.

#### Odudawa/Oodua People's Congress

COISS has not found any information specifically linking the Oduduwa People's Congress (OPC) to election rigging or money-lending associated violence.<sup>5</sup> General information on the OPC is included below.

The digital intelligence repository TRAC (Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium), an online platform housing editorially reviewed contributions focussing on terrorism and political violence, notes a number of different spellings for the 'Odua' People's Congress:

Odua Peoples' Congress, also known as O'odua Peoples' Congress, Oduduwa Peoples' Congress, Oduduwa Peoples' Congress, Oodua Peoples' Congress, Yoruba O'odua Peoples' Congress is an active group formed c. 1995.<sup>6</sup>

COISS has conducted searches using all of these spelling variations.

A 2019 European Asylum Support Office (EASO) COI compilation report on Nigeria includes information on the 'Oodua People's Congress'. According to the report:

In May 2013, President Goodluck Jonathan marked MASSOB as one of the three 'extremist groups threatening the national security', together with Boko Haram and the Yoruba group Oodua People's

<sup>1</sup> See for example: '[Footloose Legislators: Implications of Legislative Cross-Carpeting on Multi-Party Politics in Nigeria's Fourth Republic](#)', Yahaya Yakubu and Muhammad Jibrin Bamalli, International Journal of Recent Innovations in Academic Research, February 2019, p.5, 20200129145327; '[Ethnic politics as an eternal clog in the wheels of politics: A Nigerian assessment](#)', Tochukwu Nwauba and Vincent Chukwudi Chieji, Malaysian Journal of Society and Space, February 2019, 20200129145913; '[Atiku vows to continue speaking, describes presidency as clueless](#)', Folio, 8 August 2019, 20200129153215.

<sup>2</sup> '[The Merger This Time](#)', PM News (Nigeria), 13 February 2013, 20200203140821; '[Nigeria: Welcome, All Progressives Congress](#)', Daily Trust (Nigeria), 10 February 2013, 20200203142344

<sup>3</sup> '[ANPP group wants merger with APC stopped over Tinubu's dominance](#)', Pointblank News, 4 April 2013, 20200129151027

<sup>4</sup> '[Nigeria: INEC Registers Three New Parties](#)', Nigeria First, 1 February 2006, 20200129151906

<sup>5</sup> Sources consulted include CISNET, ECOI.net, Refworld, IRBC's COI portal, online search engines.

<sup>6</sup> '[Odua Peoples' Congress](#)', Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium, 2020, 20200129155234

Congress (OPC). The latter conducted violent actions in the South West Zone mainly between 2000 and 2002.<sup>7</sup>

A 2017 EASO report writes of the OPC:

Another actor is the ethnic militia O'odua Peoples Congress (OPC) which was formed in 1994. OPC was historically aimed at working towards the unity, progress and autonomy of all descendants of Oduduwa (former king of Ile Ife, Yoruba land), but as time went by, OPC changed its major objectives from seeking self-determination for Yoruba people to crime-fighting activities and settlement of personal disputes.<sup>8</sup>

A 2018 report focussing on Boko Haram likens the OPC to 'other vigilante groups' across Nigeria who have worked for politicians in attacking political opponents, without specifying a timeframe in which the OPC were active.<sup>9</sup> The International Crisis Group (ICG), in a 2006 report, provide information as to the origins of the OPC, while also noting that their organisational strength had waned by 2006:

In the early 2000s, the Hisbah vigilance committees were set up in the north to promote compliance with Shari'a. Their excesses, especially in Kano, echoed the lawlessness that has come to be associated with the activities of the southern-based ethnic vigilante groups. Among the latter the O'odua People's Congress (OPC) figures prominently. Founded in 1994 in the aftermath of the annulment of Abiola's election as president, it quickly grew into a mass movement, promoting and defending Yoruba interests by means that included violence. Feelings of alienation ran particularly high in Yorubaland and were reflected in the "O'odua Bill of Rights", which advocated a sort of confederal arrangement within which all Yorubas would form a distinct political unit and called for a national conference to determine Nigeria's future.

The OPC was banned in late 1999, when it had become clear that the election of Obasanjo, a Yoruba, had done nothing to soothe anger over the 1993 annulment. The OPC's organisational strength has ebbed away, though popular support for what is politically promoted as the "Yoruba cause" remains strong. In the south east, since the turn of the century, an even more radical and overtly secessionist program has been promoted by the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB).<sup>10</sup>

Despite this ICG assessment, a January 2014 security threat assessment issued prior to the 2015 elections noted the OPC as a potential security risk:

The activities of various violent political gangs, disguised as security outfit across the states, call for concern. The Odua People's Congress (OPC), especially in Lagos state, Operation Burst in Oyo state, among others, constitute serious security threats;

The question of security contract allegedly awarded to the Fredrick Fasheun faction of the OPC, and his widely reported desire to reinvent 'Awoism' under a different political platform in the south west, also deserves attention;<sup>11</sup>

A 2013 country information report published by the UK Home Office, and quoting a 2010 report from the Simon Fraser University School for International Studies describes the OPC as one of several ethnic militia groups operating across Nigeria:

...the delta militias are not the only armed groups active in Nigeria. Other, so-called ethnic militias, claim to protect their kin's interests within or against the federal state. The Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) brought back fearful memories of Nigeria's 1960s civil war that pitted Igbo secessionists against central government forces. The Oodua People's Congress is another example of a well-established and visible ethnic militia, in this case assuming the struggle for the interests of Yoruba but with limited secessionist ambitions. In addition to these high-profile groups, smaller armed militias have been involved in many incidents of violence between communities across the country; most prominent are the clashes that have repeatedly erupted around the city of Jos in Plateau state.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> ['COI Report Nigeria: Targeting Individuals'](#), European Asylum Support Office, 9 January 2019, p.81, 20190109132722

<sup>8</sup> ['Country Focus Nigeria'](#), European Asylum Support Office, 2 June 2017, p.27, CISED50AD4813

<sup>9</sup> ['Boko Haram Beyond the Headlines. Analyses of Africa's enduring insurgency'](#), Zenn, Jacob (ed), 9 May 2018, p.82, CIS7B83941971

<sup>10</sup> ['Nigeria: Want in the midst of plenty'](#), International Crisis Group, 1 July 2006, p.28, CIS14926

<sup>11</sup> ['Security threat assessment: Towards 2015 elections - July - December 2013 edition'](#), Cleen Foundation, 1 January 2014, CIS27596

<sup>12</sup> ['Country of Origin Information Report Nigeria 2013'](#), 14 June 2013, UK Home Office, Para.10.02, p.64, OGC0D145413

In 2011, the UK Home Office reported that the OPC was at that time divided into two factions, one led by Frederick Fasehun and the other by Ganiyu Adams.<sup>13</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Older sources reporting on activities of the OPC: ['Reign of terror at Oshodi/Shogunle in Lagos'](#), 2 May 2012, Vanguard, CX287221; ['Armed Nigeria militia marches unstoppable in largest city, sign of dangerous ethnic divisions'](#), 9 December 2011, CX278207
- Several recent sources indicate that the OPC may have evolved away from their violent, militia-aligned activities, including to a role assisting the police with information gathering. COISS notes that several of these sources represent voices from within the OPC: ['Transformation of the Oodua Peoples Congress: 25 Years of Transition from Militancy to Nationalism and Cultural Diplomacy'](#), Naija Hottest Gists, 30 August 2019, 20200205160242; ['Nigeria elections: OPC breaks silence on 'member' lynched in Lagos'](#), Daily Post Nigeria, 24 February 2019, 20200205160620; ['Operation Amotekun: Police, army, NSCDC reject joint patrol with OPC, hunters, others'](#), Punch (Nigeria) 5 February 2020, 20200205160900

<sup>13</sup> ['Nigeria: April 2011'](#), 6 April 2011, p.138, UK Home Office, 2981



## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: 20200212142111 – Umuosochie Tribe – Igbo - Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Date of Report

21 February 2020

This Q&A Report was prepared by the Country of Origin Information Services Section (COISS), Department of Home Affairs in response to a request for country information within time constraints. It is current at the time of completion. This Q&A Report should not be cited in a decision or any other document. Anyone wishing to use this information should only cite the source material contained herein.

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#### Background

[redacted]

#### Questions

1. [Can you please provide a map and information about the Umuosochie tribe in Obowo Local Government Area of Imo State including how this may overlap with the Igbo ethnicity?](#)
2. [Any specific reports relating to female genital mutilation within this location/tribe?](#)



## Answers

### 1. Can you please provide a map and information about the Umuosochie tribe in Obowo Local Government Area of Imo State including how this may overlap with the Igbo ethnicity?

Information about an Umuosochie tribe in Obowo Local Government Area of Imo State was not located.<sup>1</sup> COISS did identify that Umuosochie<sup>2</sup> is a town<sup>3</sup> in the Obowo Local Government Area.

COISS found no information on the tribe that resides in Umuosochie.<sup>4</sup> A Boston University Libraries article discussing the origins of the Igbo language explains that Igbo is spoken in Ala Igbo or Ani Igbo (Igboland) region of Nigeria by the people who are collectively referred to as "Ndi Igbo" and their community "Olu no Igbo". Although Igbo-speaking people live all over Nigeria, Igbo people reside on both sides of the River Niger and occupy most of south-eastern Nigeria (which includes Imo state).<sup>5</sup>

Igbo subcultures are dispersed across six ecological zones in Nigeria: the northern Igbo in the Scarplands, the north-eastern Igbo in the Lower Niger, the eastern Igbo in the Midwest Lowlands, the western Igbo in the Niger Delta, the south-eastern Igbo in the Palm Belt and the southern Igbo in the Cross River Basin.<sup>6</sup>

The CIA World Factbook says that Igbo, also called Ibo, are the third largest group of people in Nigeria representing 15.2 percent of the population.<sup>7</sup> The Hausa are the largest group of people at 30 percent and the Yoruba are second at 15.5 percent.<sup>8</sup> The Igbo mainly reside in the south-eastern states of Nigeria. The Igbos are culturally and socially diverse and have numerous subgroups. Despite their diversity, they all speak the one language.<sup>9</sup>

More broadly, Igbo speaking people can be divided into five geographically based subcultures: northern Igbo, southern Igbo, western Igbo, eastern Igbo and north-eastern Igbo. These five subcultures can be again divided into subgroups based on specific names and locations:

The northern or Onitsha Igbo are divided into the Nri-Awka of Onitsha and Awka; the Enugu of Nsukka, Udi, Awgu, and Okigwe; and those of the Onitsha town. The southern or Owerri<sup>10</sup> Igbo are divided into the Isu-Ama of Okigwe, Orlu, and Owerri; the Oratta-Ikwerri of Owerri and Ahoada; the Ohuhu-Ngwa of Aba and Bende; and the Isu-Item of Bende and Okigwe. The western Igbo (Ndi Anoma, as they like to call themselves) are divided into the northern Ika of Ogwashi Uku and Agbor; the southern Ika or Kwale of Kwale; and the Riverrain of Ogwashi Uku, Onitsha, Owerri, and Ahoada. The eastern or Cross River Igbo are divided into the Ada (or Edda) of Afikpo, the Abam-Ohaffia of Bende and Okigwe, and the Aro of Aro. The northeastern Igbo include the Ogu Uku of Abakaliki and Afikpo.<sup>11</sup>

The below map was located on a Facebook page dedicated to developing and promoting the Igbo language and it provides details on the Igboland cultural regions, ethnic divisions and sub-divisions.

<sup>1</sup> Sources consulted included CISNET, major government and non-government reports and a range of international and Nigerian news sources.

<sup>2</sup> This is sometimes identified in articles as Odenkume/Umuosochie.

<sup>3</sup> This is sometimes identified as a village or a 'ward' which means a municipality that is a subdivision of a Local Government Area.

<sup>4</sup> Sources consulted included CISNET, major government and non-government reports and a range of international and Nigerian news sources.

<sup>5</sup> 'Language Learning: Igbo', Boston University Libraries, undated, accessed 19 February 2020, 20200219155027

<sup>6</sup> 'Language Learning: Igbo', Boston University Libraries, undated, accessed 19 February 2020, 20200219155027

<sup>7</sup> 'Nigeria - World Factbook', CIA World Factbook, 7 February 2020, 20200220153721

<sup>8</sup> 'Nigeria - World Factbook', CIA World Factbook, 7 February 2020, 20200220153721

<sup>9</sup> 'Igbo', Everyculture.com, 1 November 2019, 20191101123357

<sup>10</sup> The capital of Imo State.

<sup>11</sup> 'Language Learning: Igbo', Boston University Libraries, undated, accessed 19 February 2020, 20200219155027; 'Igbo - Orientation', Britannica Online Encyclopaedia, undated, accessed 19 February 2020, 20200219145336

Umuosochie would approximately be located between the major people groups of the Ikwere and the Isuma in the 'Southern' region. COISS is unable to verify the source of this map.<sup>12</sup>



Figure 1 – Igboland Cultural Regions, Ethnic Divisions and Sub-Divisions

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

<sup>12</sup> 'Igboland Cultural Regions, Ethnic Divisions and Sub-Divisions', Facebook, 14 March 2019, 20200219151823



## 2. Any specific reports relating to female genital mutilation within this location/tribe?

COISS found no information on incidents relating to female genital mutilation (FGM) in Umuosochie and limited information on the Obowo Local Government Area (LGA).<sup>13</sup>

Nigeria is a highly patriarchal society and cultural traditions, such as FGM, continue to occur across the country but particularly in the rural areas.<sup>14</sup> According to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, FGM is practiced widely in Nigeria and is more common in the southern states, where prevalence rates are estimated to be as high as 70 percent.<sup>15</sup> Currently there is a Nigerian federal law called the *Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) VAPP Act 2015* that includes provisions against FGM.<sup>16</sup>

### Obowo LGA

In 2018 the results were published of a study that was conducted in Amuzi in the Obowo LGA on the concept of FGM being practiced among child bearing women (20 – 40 years old).<sup>17</sup> This study identified that 80 percent of the women of childbearing age had a knowledge of FGM, 70 percent were circumcised and 80 percent maintained a reason for the practice.<sup>18</sup>

### Imo State

On 30 March 2017, the *Imo State Female Genital Mutilation (Prohibition) Law 2017* was signed by the Governor of Imo State.<sup>19</sup>

According to the UK Home Office Report, almost all women in Imo were circumcised before their fifth birthday.<sup>20</sup> According to a local Nigerian media article that cites the United Nations Children's Fund, Imo State has a prevalence of 53.2 percent which is behind only Ebonyi State at 61 percent.<sup>21</sup>

In April 2019, an eight day old baby girl was rescued by a UNICEF Partners State Team from undergoing FGM in Isu LGA. The UNICEF team spoke to the family about the harm that FGM does and with that the family assured the UNICEF team that this baby girl and other female children that are to be born into the family would not undergo FGM.<sup>22</sup>

In January 2020, Ikeduru and Oguta council areas publicly re-stated their collective resolution to abandon the practice of FGM.

In December 2019, the Orlu LGA traditional rulers publicly denounced FGM. The denunciation took place during a gathering of traditional rulers of the 35 communities in the area. A pact was created and a document was signed. Such paragraphs in the document read:

<sup>13</sup> Sources consulted included CISNET, major government and non-government reports and a range of international and Nigerian news sources.

<sup>14</sup> 'Country Information Report: Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p.21, CIS7B83941414

<sup>15</sup> 'Country Information Report: Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p.21, CIS7B83941414

<sup>16</sup> 'Tweet Conference Script: Overview of Imo State Female Genital Mutilation (Prohibition) Law, 2017 - 8th November, 2018', Endcuttinggirls Nigeria, 8 November 2018, 20200220122031

<sup>17</sup> 'The Pervading Public Health Implications of Female Genital Mutilation among Women (20-40 Years) in a Rural Community in Southeastern Nigeria', KU Ndugbu, Journal of Women's Health Care, 5 February 2018, 20200220130127

<sup>18</sup> 'The Pervading Public Health Implications of Female Genital Mutilation among Women (20-40 Years) in a Rural Community in Southeastern Nigeria', KU Ndugbu, Journal of Women's Health Care, 5 February 2018, p.5, 20200220130127

<sup>19</sup> 'Tweet Conference Script: Overview of Imo State Female Genital Mutilation (Prohibition) Law, 2017 - 8th November, 2018', Endcuttinggirls Nigeria, 8 November 2018, 20200220122031

<sup>20</sup> 'Country Policy and Information Note on Nigeria: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)', UK Home Office, January 2017, p. 14, OG6E7028815; 'EASO Guidance note on Nigeria', EASO, February 2019, p.63, 20190319173224

<sup>21</sup> 'Taking FGM battle to schoolgirls', New Telegraph, 20 February 2020, 20200220165159

<sup>22</sup> 'Another Female Baby Rescued From Undergoing Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Imo State', Endcuttinggirls Nigeria, 17 April 2019, 20200220122939

On this day, 17<sup>th</sup> December 2019, we publicly declare that Female Genital Mutilation, FGM, has ceased to be a culture and tradition of the people of Isiala – Amaifeke Community in Orlu LGA.<sup>23</sup>

In the Ikeduru LGA, there is a fine of N10,000 paid to their community and then they are 'taken to the government to face the law' for any person who is caught practicing FGM in the community.<sup>24</sup>

A 2015 media article states that the LGAs still practicing FGM include Oguta, Ohaji/Egbema, Ikeduru and Ngor Okpala. The State Director, National Orientation Agency said that:

"Studies have shown that in many communities, parents want their daughters to undergo female genital mutilation in order to avoid stigmatization or social exclusion by the rest of the community."<sup>25</sup>

### Igbo

Sources indicate that FGM is practiced by the Igbo ethnicity in Nigeria. The Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2018, conducted by the National Population Commission, states that 20 percent of women aged 15 – 49 are circumcised (a decrease from 25 percent in 2013)<sup>26</sup> with 30 percent of Igbo women being circumcised.<sup>27</sup> FGM prevalence is approximately 50 percent among Igbo women.<sup>28</sup>

According to a Nigerian media article, the Igbo believe that FGM can curb sexual promiscuity among women and is to control the sexual experience of young women.<sup>29</sup>

### Additional Reading

- This journal article provides insight into a mother's perception of FGM in Orlu, Imo State and how social factors promote the practice of FGM. '[Mother's perception of female genital mutilation among mothers in Owerre - Ebiri community in Orlu L.G.A.](#)', J E Ibebuikwe et al, International Journal of Advanced Research in Biological Sciences, 01 December 2018, pp 87-94, 20200220115138

<sup>23</sup> '[Imo traditional rulers denounce Female Genital Mutilation](#)', Premium Times, 18 December 2019, 20200220121009

<sup>24</sup> '[Imo community where indigenes are fined N10,000 for practising Female Genital Mutilation](#)', Vanguard (Nigeria), 14 August 2019, 20200220115709

<sup>25</sup> '[Nigeria: Imo Communities Still Practicing Female Genital Mutilation](#)', Daily Trust - Nigeria, 28 August 2015, 20200220144417

<sup>26</sup> '[Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2018](#)', National Population Commission (Nigeria), 1 January 2018, p. 465, 20200220141703

<sup>27</sup> '[Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2018](#)', National Population Commission (Nigeria), 1 January 2018, p. 473, 20200220141703

<sup>28</sup> '[Country Policy and Information Note on Nigeria: Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\)](#)', UK Home Office, 01 January 2017, p. 6, OG6E7028815

<sup>29</sup> '[No health benefit from FGM](#)', New Telegraph, 20 February 2020, 20200221093342



## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: 20200311151146 – Pagans – Christians – Ikolo – Boko Haram – Ritual Murder – Human Sacrifice – Awka

Date of Report

23 March 2020

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#### Background

[redacted]

#### Questions

1. [Do the Ikolo tribe, or other pagan tribes, still practice pagan rituals in villages in Awka? Is there information about Ikolo generally?](#)
2. [Are any pagan cults in Anambra state involved in human sacrifices?](#)
3. [Is there information that pagan tribes or villagers have killed or harmed Christian converts?](#)
4. [Is there hostility between traditional pagan followers and Christians in Anambra and Delta states?](#)
5. [Is there evidence of connection between pagan cults and Boko Haram?](#)

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## Answers

### 1. Do the Ikolo tribe, or other pagan tribes, still practice pagan rituals in villages in Awka? Is there information about Ikolo generally?

#### *Ikolo*

COISS identified two Ikolo towns in Nigeria. One town is in Enugu state in the south-east and the other is in Osun state in the south-west.

In November 2017, *Vanguard* reported a clash between two youths over a land dispute from the Ikolo and Aku communities in Igbo-Etiti Local Government Area in Enugu state. The media article states that the Ikolo youths destroyed some houses in the Aku community and the Aku youths equally destroyed houses in Ikolo.<sup>1</sup> *The Guardian* [Nigeria] reports that at least 20 people were severely injured in this attack.<sup>2</sup> The police engaged with leaders of the two communities to 'ensure lasting peace' between the two communities.<sup>3</sup> It is reported that there has been a long running boundary dispute between the Ikolo and the Aku.<sup>4</sup>

#### *Pagan Rituals in Awka, Anambra*

COISS found no information on whether the Ikolo or other pagan tribes or rituals are still in practice in Awka, Anambra.<sup>5</sup> COISS identified the below news sources which used the term 'pagan' in Anambra.

In April 2019, the Catholic Bishop of Nnewi, Most Rev. Hilary Okeke alluded to pagans in Anambra by condemning 'the rising spate of idol worship and neo-paganism among Nigerian Christians.'<sup>6</sup>

In December 2016, the Nibo community in Awka South Local Government celebrated Ezike Day that showcased the 'rich cultural heritage of Nibo, fosters unity and builds bridges among its people.' The President-General of Nibo Union Worldwide said that the festival has nothing to do with paganism saying:

"The traditional ruler, Ngene, who has been on the throne in the last 31 years, is a practicing Christian. Ninety per cent of Nibo indigenes are Christians. Ezike Day is a celebration of our culture and not pagan worship, as I have always told people".<sup>7</sup>

In September 2016, pagan youths attacked a Catholic priest during a rosary procession in Obubo community in Anambra. The same article states that pagan youths have also been suspected of attacking churches in Anambra. The article goes on to say that in August 2013, '50 Christians, including a 2 year old baby, were injured after several churches in Awka were attacked by suspected cultists'.<sup>8</sup>

A 2015 article from *The Guardian* uses an example of a man who sacrifices a chicken to his ancestors around the time of the Afia Olu, the Igbo new yam festival in Anambra state. The man is an adult

<sup>1</sup> ['After clash between Ikolo, Aku normalcy returns to Igbo-Etiti, Enugu state'](#), Vanguard (Nigeria), 24 November 2017, 20200319150017

<sup>2</sup> ['Police take over communities in Enugu over boundary clash'](#), Guardian, The (Nigeria), 25 November 2017, 20200319153312

<sup>3</sup> ['After clash between Ikolo, Aku normalcy returns to Igbo-Etiti, Enugu state'](#), Vanguard (Nigeria), 24 November 2017, 20200319150017

<sup>4</sup> ['Police take over communities in Enugu over boundary clash'](#), Guardian, The (Nigeria), 25 November 2017, 20200319153312

<sup>5</sup> Sources consulted included CISNET, major government and non-government reports and a range of international and Nigerian news sources.

<sup>6</sup> ['Pope has called Buhari on Leah Sharibu's matter – Catholic bishop'](#), Punch (Nigeria), 23 April 2019, 20200319162318

<sup>7</sup> ['Nibo community set for festival'](#), Nation, The (Nigeria), 22 December 2016, 20200319164518

<sup>8</sup> ['Catholic priest beaten into a coma by pagans in Nigeria'](#), Christian Times, 03 September 2016, 20200319163708

convert to Christianity and 'is still close enough to the old ways to feel guilty at the thought of abandoning them, and so he compromises':

He lets the blood of the animal soak into the ground outside our family home, then, unlike people who observe the traditions the colonisers called "paganism", my father cooks and eats the chicken.<sup>9</sup>

Awka is the capital of Anambra state and according to a 2016 journal article, many residents follow both Christianity and African traditional religion.<sup>10</sup> According to the same 2016 journal article, religion in Awka is ambivalent; 'on one hand it promotes group solidarity and on the other, it fosters ethnic socio-religious and cultural fanaticism, fundamentalism and tolerance'.<sup>11</sup>

A 2014 journal article states that Awka traditional festivities 'are of immense importance to the solidarity of community life in the community'.<sup>12</sup> In regards to religion, traditional festivals that are embedded in traditional religion are a means through which 'the entire community can congregate to worship and commune with both gods and man'.<sup>13</sup> The Awka community has a feast every month. The following is a brief rundown of all of the feasts observed in Awka:

Awka Calendar	Feast	Month
Onwa nvu (nbu)	Egwu Imoka	May
Onwa Ibo	Onwa Ukwu	June
Onwa Ito	Obubu Amanwulu	July
Onwa Ino	Onwa fulu manful/Onwa Evuru m	August
Onwa Ise	Chi	September
Onwa Ishii	Alo	October
Onwa Asaa	Otite	November
Onwa Asato	Mgbuireji/ owuwaji	December
Onwa Teghete	Ede ozo/ Ede Onwa sel Ukwu	January
Onwa Illi	Onwa Egwu-ovbuvbe (ofufe)	February
Diokpala Onwa Illi	Agbala-Imoka	March
Onwa Ogugu aro	Ede-mmou	April

Figure 1 – Table of Awka community feasts<sup>14</sup>

#### *Traditional Practices in Igboland*

According to a 2014 journal article, masquerade festivals (cultural or religious events that involve wearing a mask) are pertinent among African tribes especially in the southeast (Igboland).<sup>15</sup> These masquerade events are very fundamental in traditional African society and in some places they are believed to be the 'dead ancestors and messengers of traditional deities from the supernatural world'.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>9</sup> 'Crime and Christianity are killing off our religious traditions', The Guardian, 10 September 2015, 20200317163954

<sup>10</sup> 'Christianity and Awka socio-religio-cultural identity crisis: Areas of conflict', OGIRISI: a New Journal of African Studies, 01 September 2016, p.80, 20200318120342

<sup>11</sup> 'Christianity and Awka socio-religio-cultural identity crisis: Areas of conflict', OGIRISI: a New Journal of African Studies, 01 September 2016, p.84, 20200318120342

<sup>12</sup> 'Harnessing Awka Traditional Festival for Tourism Promotion', Ngozi, E & Tabitha, O, Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences, 01 June 2014, p.52, 20200319114810

<sup>13</sup> 'Harnessing Awka Traditional Festival for Tourism Promotion', Ngozi, E & Tabitha, O, Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences, 01 June 2014, p.52, 20200319114810

<sup>14</sup> 'Harnessing Awka Traditional Festival for Tourism Promotion', Ngozi, E & Tabitha, O, Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences, 01 June 2014, p.47, 20200319114810

<sup>15</sup> 'Harnessing Awka Traditional Festival for Tourism Promotion', Ngozi, E & Tabitha, O, Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences, 01 June 2014, p.43, 20200319114810

<sup>16</sup> 'Harnessing Awka Traditional Festival for Tourism Promotion', Ngozi, E & Tabitha, O, Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences, 01 June 2014, p.43, 20200319114810

The article provides an overview of festivals in Igboland:

Festivals in Igbo society are... periods set apart by communities or groups of individuals for commemorating important events which may be connected with homage to God, gods, ancestors and spirit or they may be connected with the transition from one season to the other... in almost all case, festivals are part of these commemorative events and rituals overtones can be detected in majority of these festivals.<sup>17</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

## **2. Are any pagan cults in Anambra state involved in human sacrifices?**

COISS found no information on whether any pagan cults in Anambra state are involved in human sacrifice.<sup>18</sup> COISS identified that both human sacrifice and ritual murders happen in Nigeria but there are no links to pagan cults specifically conducting the practices in Anambra and/or Nigeria as a whole.

An associate professor and chair of the Department of Anthropology at Franklin and Marshall College quoted in a 2005 research request from the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board describes the difference between a ritual murder and a human sacrifice:

Ritual murder covers all delicts that relate to the murder of people and the use of human parts for any magical purpose, whereas in sacrifice the killing of a person to mollify deities is the point.<sup>19</sup>

According to a 2004 media article from the *Sahara Reporters*<sup>20</sup>, 'ritual killing is a nationwide phenomenon, not restricted to one part nor is it the purview of any ethnic group nor indeed peculiar to traditional religion adherents.'<sup>21</sup> According to the 2005 research request, numerous media reports indicated ritual killings were carried out in various states including Anambra, Ogun, Bauchi, Enugu, Imo, Kano, Oyo, Delta, Ondo and Lagos.<sup>22</sup>

In a telephone interview in 2000 with the Research Directorate, a Lagos-based lawyer and director of the civil rights group Constitutional Rights Project explained:

That ritual murders are not usually associated with any particular group. He said that ritual killings are perpetrated mainly by "native doctors who have been involved in this since time immemorial, mostly through traditional cultic practices that have nothing to do with modern-day cults."<sup>23</sup>

In regards to potential victims of ritual murder:

[a]nyone is a potential victim, although the old are thought to be less valuable for ritual murder purposes than the very young and fertile. Youthful women are seen as probably victims; children are definitely seen

<sup>17</sup> ['Harnessing Awka Traditional Festival for Tourism Promotion'](#), Ngozi, E & Tabitha, O, Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences, 01 June 2014, p.45, 20200319114810

<sup>18</sup> Sources consulted included CISNET, major government and non-government reports and a range of international and Nigerian news sources.

<sup>19</sup> ['Prevalence of ritual murder and human sacrifice and reaction by government authorities \(March 2000-July 2005\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 01 July 2005, CIS20349

<sup>20</sup> Sahara Reporters is an online community of international reporters and social advocates dedicated to bringing news reports from a Nigerian-African perspective.

<sup>21</sup> ['Ritual Killings In Nigeria: How To Stop It!'](#), Sahara Reporters, 07 April 2014, 20200318160906

<sup>22</sup> ['Prevalence of ritual murder and human sacrifice and reaction by government authorities \(March 2000-July 2005\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 01 July 2005, CIS20349

<sup>23</sup> ['Prevalence of ritual murder and human sacrifice and reaction by government authorities \(March 2000-July 2005\)'](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 01 July 2005, CIS20349



as victims. There are a few, well-known “cases” where creative artists were supposedly killed because of their talents.<sup>24</sup>

The US State Department’s human rights country report on Nigeria states that in January 2019, two women were killed in Bayelsa State: ‘their bodies were found with vital organs missing, and it was suspected that the organs were harvested for ritualist use.’<sup>25</sup> Ritualists who believed certain body parts confer mystical powers kidnapped and killed persons to harvest their body parts for rituals and ceremonies.<sup>26</sup>

The Department of Foreign Affairs’ 2018 country report states that babies have been sold for various purposes including sacrificial rituals.<sup>27</sup>

In 2004, over 30 priests were arrested after 50 mutilated bodies and 20 skulls were found in the forests near the Okija shrines in Anambra state.<sup>28</sup> These priests were accused of committing human sacrifices and using body parts for ritual purposes.<sup>29</sup> In an undated incident from a 2014 media article in Ositsha, Anambra state, two young men cut off a boy’s sexual organ for ritual purposes.<sup>30</sup>

The Osu (outcasts) caste system is a social structure dating back centuries under which persons designated as Osu are forbidden from any social interaction, including marriage with those considered as freeborn in Igboland.<sup>31</sup> The Osu are made to live separately from the freeborn as they are dedicated to the *Alusis* (deities) and are seen as inferior people.<sup>32</sup> According to a 2019 journal article, ‘...Osu caste system has its roots in practice of human sacrifice in Igbo Land.’<sup>33</sup> Due to the belief that the Gods demand human sacrifice, it became the culture among the Igbo society to sacrifice a fellow human being.<sup>34</sup> According to a 2018 article from *The Guardian*, the practice of the Osu caste system is still in practice in some parts of Igboland, such as Oba in Anambra state.<sup>35</sup>

On 28 December 2018, the Eze Nri Enweleana II, Obidiegwu Ohyesoh, the current ruler of the Kingdom of Nri in modern-day south eastern Nigeria, declared the Osu caste system to be abolished in his community and urged other major Igbo traditional rulers to do the same.<sup>36</sup> The Anambra state government also backed the move to abolish the system completely from 28 December 2018.<sup>37</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

<sup>24</sup> [‘Prevalence of ritual murder and human sacrifice and reaction by government authorities \(March 2000-July 2005\)’](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 01 July 2005, CIS20349

<sup>25</sup> [‘Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2019 - Nigeria’](#), United States Department of State, 11 March 2020, p.40, 20200312124348

<sup>26</sup> [‘Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2019 - Nigeria’](#), United States Department of State, 11 March 2020, p.40, 20200312124348

<sup>27</sup> [‘DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria \(9 March 2018\)’](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 09 March 2018, p.24, CIS7B83941414

<sup>28</sup> [‘Prevalence of ritual murder and human sacrifice and reaction by government authorities \(March 2000-July 2005\)’](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 01 July 2005, CIS20349

<sup>29</sup> [‘Prevalence of ritual murder and human sacrifice and reaction by government authorities \(March 2000-July 2005\)’](#), Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 01 July 2005, CIS20349

<sup>30</sup> [‘Ritual Killings In Nigeria: How To Stop It!’](#), Sahara Reporters, 07 April 2014, 20200318160906

<sup>31</sup> [‘Osu Caste System In Igbo Society, Nigeria: A Sociological Evaluation’](#), International Journal of Innovative Research and Advanced Studies, 01 March 2019, p.90, 20191004165128

<sup>32</sup> [‘Culture: The Osu Caste System In Igboland’](#), Guardian, The (Nigeria), 18 November 2018, 20191007163006

<sup>33</sup> [‘Osu Caste System In Igbo Society, Nigeria: A Sociological Evaluation’](#), International Journal of Innovative Research and Advanced Studies, 01 March 2019, p.90, 20191004165128

<sup>34</sup> [‘Osu Caste System In Igbo Society, Nigeria: A Sociological Evaluation’](#), International Journal of Innovative Research and Advanced Studies, 01 March 2019, p.90, 20191004165128

<sup>35</sup> [‘Culture: The Osu Caste System In Igboland’](#), Guardian, The (Nigeria), 18 November 2018, 20191007163006

<sup>36</sup> [‘Why Anambra’s move to abolish the Osu caste system is a big deal’](#), Pulse (Nigeria), 22 February 2020, 20200318162957

<sup>37</sup> [‘Why Anambra’s move to abolish the Osu caste system is a big deal’](#), Pulse (Nigeria), 22 February 2020, 20200318162957

### 3. Is there information that pagan tribes or villagers have killed or harmed Christian converts?

COISS found no information on whether pagan tribes or villagers have harmed or killed Christian converts.<sup>38</sup>

According to a 2018 journal article, amongst the predominately Christian Igbo population, it has become both common and possible for people to regard themselves as Christians while respecting and celebrating aspects of Igbo traditional religion as cultural heritage.<sup>39</sup>

A September 2015 media article states that the author's father is a convert to Christianity but is still 'close enough to the old ways to feel guilty at the thought of abandoning them.'<sup>40</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

### 4. Is there hostility between traditional pagan followers and Christians in Anambra and Delta states?

#### *Anambra State*

COISS identified four media articles on hostilities between pagans and Christians with three being about Catholic leaders that are condemning pagans and one article that identified pagan youths as attacking a Catholic priest.

In August 2019, Bishop Paulinus Ezeokfar of the Catholic Diocese of Awka called Christians 'to remain truly faithful to their faith and shun neo-paganism which he described as the love for earthly things.'<sup>41</sup>

In April 2019, the Catholic Bishop of Nnewi, Most Rev. Hilary Okeke condemned 'what he called the rising spate of idol worship and neo-paganism among Nigerian Christians' and said 'any Catholic who wishes to take any title must sign an undertaking that no pagan rituals or idolatrous sacrifices would be involved, or such person would be excommunicated.'<sup>42</sup>

In September 2016, pagan youths attacked a Catholic priest during a rosary procession in the Obubo community. The priest was stabbed and beaten in the face because the youth thought he had burned down their gods' shrine. According to this media article, pagan youths have been previously suspected of attacking churches in Anambra. In August 2013, 50 Christians were injured after several churches in Awka were attacked by 'suspected cultists.'<sup>43</sup>

In May 2016, the Catholic Bishop of Awka Diocese, Most Rev. Paulinus Ezeokafor, spoke on his campaign on banning expensive burial celebrations in Anambra:

"Though Christians believe that our bodies, being the temple of the Holy Spirit, should be treated with respect, the feats that accompany burials in this part of the world are uncalled for. The culture of giving out

<sup>38</sup> Sources consulted included CISNET, major government and non-government reports and a range of international and Nigerian news sources.

<sup>39</sup> ['RELIGION AS HERITAGE IN NIGERIA: Igbo Christians and African traditional religion'](#), Outros Tempos, 01 June 2018, p.7, 20200319140351

<sup>40</sup> ['Crime and Christianity are killing off our religious traditions'](#), The Guardian, 10 September 2015, 20200317163954

<sup>41</sup> ['Catholic bishop to Christians: Shun neo-paganism'](#), Legit, 25 August 2019, 20200319165440

<sup>42</sup> ['Pope has called Buhari on Leah Sharibu's matter – Catholic bishop'](#), Punch (Nigeria), 23 April 2019, 20200319162318

<sup>43</sup> ['Catholic priest beaten into a coma by pagans in Nigeria'](#), Christian Times, 03 September 2016, 20200319163708



souvenirs and wearing asoebi dresses was borrowed, culture and contradict the Biblical description of how a burial should be done."<sup>44</sup>

In Igboland, shrines have been destroyed and converts have abandoned their traditional names that sound as though they might have 'pagan' links in favour of a biblical name.<sup>45</sup>

In the 1970s and 80s, many in Osumenyi, my father's village in Anambra state in south-eastern Nigeria, performed a similar balancing act. They initiated their sons into the masquerade cult, with its secret language, on Friday nights – and on Sunday morning those sons volunteered as altar boys at the local church. The church then was understanding. There was Christianity and there was tradition; the two were not mutually exclusive.<sup>46</sup>

#### *Delta State*

COISS found no information on whether there has been any hostility between traditional pagan followers and Christians in Delta state.<sup>47</sup>

Located in Delta state, the Ozoro clan are predominantly Christian but many natives still practice pagan worship as there are several ancestral shrines throughout Ozoro. According to the Ozoro Kingdom webpage, 'a critical appraisal of the belief system of the average Ozoro indigene will reveal a combination of both Christian and pagan learnings.'<sup>48</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

### **5. Is there evidence of connection between pagan cults and Boko Haram?**

COISS found no substantial evidence of a connection between pagan cults and Boko Haram.<sup>49</sup> Boko Haram has referred to its enemies as 'pagans' yet no government or non-government reports refer to pagans as having a connection or being targeted by Boko Haram.

In 2016, Boko Haram split into two factions; one is officially affiliated with ISIS and is referred to as the Islamic State of West Africa (ISIS-WA), headed by Abu Musal al Barnawi, and the other is known as the Shekau faction, headed by Abubkar Shekau.<sup>50</sup> The Shekau faction did swear allegiance to ISIS but they were 'rejected because it would not give up killing Muslims who stood in their way.'<sup>51</sup> Nigerians still refer to both of these groups collectively as Boko Haram.<sup>52</sup>

According to a February 2020 article from *Christianity Today*, *boko haram* means 'western teachings are sinful' when translated into English:

They claim as "proof" passages of the Quran which state that Muslims should fight "pagans" to be justification for attacks on Christians and those Muslims who hold no truck with them.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>44</sup> ['Awka Catholic Bishop Reiterates Ban on Extravagant Burial Ceremonies'](#), This Day [Lagos], 30 May 2016, 20200319165833

<sup>45</sup> ['Crime and Christianity are killing off our religious traditions'](#), The Guardian, 10 September 2015, 20200317163954

<sup>46</sup> ['Crime and Christianity are killing off our religious traditions'](#), The Guardian, 10 September 2015, 20200317163954

<sup>47</sup> Sources consulted included CISNET, major government and non-government reports and a range of international and Nigerian news sources.

<sup>48</sup> ['Ozoro - Religion'](#), Ozoro Kingdom, n.d., accessed 19 March 2020, 20200319173021

<sup>49</sup> Sources consulted included CISNET, major government and non-government reports and a range of international and Nigerian news sources.

<sup>50</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria \(9 March 2018\)'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 09 March 2018, p.12, CIS7B83941414

<sup>51</sup> ['Africa's Young Christian Communities Are Now in Islamic-Extremist Crosshairs'](#), National Catholic Register, 11 January 2020, 20200317124103

<sup>52</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria \(9 March 2018\)'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 09 March 2018, p.12, CIS7B83941414

<sup>53</sup> ['Buhari: Pastor Andimi's Faith Should Inspire All Nigerians'](#), Christianity Today, 03 February 2020, 20200317120348

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's 2018 country report notes that both Christians and Muslims have suffered violence inflicted by Boko Haram due to their religious beliefs. Muslim communities have been targeted more frequently by Boko Haram.<sup>54</sup> This report also notes that both Christians and Muslims living in the north-eastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa face a moderate risk of violence from Boko Haram and Christians and Muslims living in the middle belt and southern states face an extremely low risk of violence from Boko Haram or ISIS-WA.<sup>55</sup>

In one undated video, Shekau spoke on his views of Christians:

"This religion of Christianity you're practicing is not the religion of God. It's paganism. We are trying to coerce you to embrace Islam because that is what God instructed us to do."<sup>56</sup>

An article from 2017 on four boys who were abducted by Boko Haram and trained as soldiers has one boy who remembers being told by a 'big man with a turban':

"It is God that chose you to be part of us to do the work of Allah. So if you cooperate, we work together. If you don't cooperate, whatever happens is left to you. We will train and equip you to go and kill pagans."<sup>57</sup>

In the context of the Chibok school girls kidnapped in 2014, an article from the *Council on Foreign Relations* says that Boko Haram had kidnapped large numbers of young women and they invoked a 7<sup>th</sup> century Islamic practice as their justification for the kidnapping. They claim that the wives and daughters of 'infidels' or 'pagans' are legitimate 'booty' and can be sold into slavery.<sup>58</sup> An article from the *Independent* said that the Chibok school girls would be 'married' to the fighters; which is Boko Haram's pretext for allowing its members to rape victims as a kind of sexual enslavement.<sup>59</sup> One Chibok girl who escaped said that 'they said our men were pagans and they would marry us themselves.'<sup>60</sup>

In August 2014, in a video of footage of what appeared to be an attack on Gwoza, a north-eastern town, Abubakar Shekau is heard saying:

"Democracy is worse than homosexuality, worse than sleeping with your mother. You are all pagans and we will kill you, even if you do not attack us we will kill you.... Allah commands us to kill without pity."<sup>61</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

<sup>54</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria \(9 March 2018\)'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 09 March 2018, p.16, CIS7B83941414

<sup>55</sup> ['DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria \(9 March 2018\)'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 09 March 2018, p.17, CIS7B83941414

<sup>56</sup> ['Africa's Young Christian Communities Are Now in Islamic-Extremist Crosshairs'](#), National Catholic Register, 11 January 2020, 20200317124103

<sup>57</sup> ['Trained to Kill: How Four Boy Soldiers Survived Boko Haram'](#), New York Times Magazine, 21 July 2017, 20200317122613

<sup>58</sup> ['Boko Haram's Sex Slaves?'](#), Council on Foreign Relations, 07 May 2015, 20200317121025

<sup>59</sup> ['Two years after Chibok, Boko Haram survivors describe how they can never truly escape'](#), Independent, 15 April 2016, 20200317130146; ['Country Policy and Information Note on Nigeria: Boko Haram'](#), UK Home Office, 15 February 2019, p. 32, 20190215103954

<sup>60</sup> ['Two years after Chibok, Boko Haram survivors describe how they can never truly escape'](#), Independent, 15 April 2016, 20200317130146

<sup>61</sup> ['You are all pagans and we will kill you': Boko Haram leader claims Nigerian town is ruled by Islamic law'](#), The Sydney Morning Herald, 26 August 2014, 20200317110139



## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: 20200316145342 – [redacted] – [redacted]- Civil Liberties Organisation in the East of Nigeria

Date of Report

26 March 2020

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#### Background

An applicant [background information].

#### Questions

1. [Please provide information on \[redacted\], \[redacted\] role in the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra \(MASSOB\), and \[redacted\] treatment by the Nigerian authorities.](#)
2. [Please provide information on the Civil Liberties Organisation, its leaders in 2016, its aims, and its treatment by the authorities.](#)
3. [Please provide information on \[redacted\].](#)

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## Answers

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### 1. Please provide information on [redacted], [redacted] role in the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), and [redacted] treatment by the Nigerian authorities.

Specific information was not located on [redacted], [redacted] role in the MASSOB, and treatment by the Nigerian authorities. Three separate pieces of information were located: one about a human rights activist [redacted]; another, about a [redacted], one of the trustees of [redacted]; and the final one, about a [redacted] named [redacted] who is based in [redacted] and [redacted].

A 2016 media report mentions a Nigerian human 'rights activist', [redacted], who had appealed to the Nigerian government for the pardon and release of 'agitators' particularly the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Nnamdi Kanu, and members of the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB).<sup>1</sup> The same media report does not mention that the rights activist, [redacted], was a member of MASSOB.

A November 2018 notification published in the Nigerian newspaper, *The Daily Times*, refers to a [redacted], who was mentioned as one of the trustees (Deputy Chairman) of [redacted] that had sought registration under Nigeria's *Companies and Allied Matters Act No.1 of 1990*.<sup>2</sup> The same notification shows that [redacted] [redacted] aim and objectives included: 'catering for the widows and orphans; and empowering the youth in the society, alleviation of poverty through community engagements'.<sup>3</sup>

A 2020 media report mentions a [redacted] [redacted] who, according to the report, is a [redacted] based in [redacted].<sup>4</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

### 2. Please provide information on the Civil Liberties Organisation, its leaders in 2016, its aims, and its treatment by the authorities.

Recent information was not located on the Civil Liberties Organisation and its leaders. Specific information on the treatment of Civil Liberties Organisation members by the authorities was not located.

An undated report on 'The Status of Human Rights Organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa - Nigeria' by the University of Minnesota provides the following background information on Nigeria's Civil Liberties Organisation:

#### **History**

Established in 1987, the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO) is one of Nigeria's largest human rights organizations.

#### **Mandate**

The CLO is a non-governmental organization set up for the defence and expansion of human rights and civil liberties.

#### **Structure**

The CLO is a membership organization with sixteen state branches outside Lagos. It has a staff of 23 and is headed by a National Advisory Council and a Board of Governors. The organization is divided into the following project areas: litigation; police and prison; women's rights; national expansion

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<sup>1</sup> [Redacted]

<sup>2</sup> [Redacted]

<sup>3</sup> [Redacted]

<sup>4</sup> [Redacted]



(membership); annual report; campaign and empowerment (lectures, CD involvement, Liberty magazine); environmental action (in oil-producing areas); documentation and research; resource center; African monitoring group; ethics in government.

### Program

The CLO investigates human rights abuses and campaigns through litigation, publications and communications with the government on behalf of people whose rights have been abused. The CLO publishes a quarterly magazine, entitled Liberty, and a Journal of Human Rights Law and Practice. Its prison project has produced two major reports on prison conditions and a number of smaller publications. It has also published a number of reports on police brutality, military decrees, government impunity, the death penalty and annual reports on the human rights situation in Nigeria. Its legal aid project has represented over 4,000 indigent victims of human rights abuses. The organization also undertakes human rights education through its empowerment project, conducting clinics and seminars on rights issues. The organization is extremely active in lobbying the government through dialogue and public censure and launching campaigns to end specific government abuses.<sup>5</sup>

According to a 2016 media report, Igbo Akeregha was the National President of CLO in July 2016.<sup>6</sup> The current president of CLO is Uche Wisdom Dureke.<sup>7</sup>

The 2019 United States State Department's Country Report on Human Rights Practices for Nigeria notes that human rights groups generally function without restrictions. The report elaborates:

Domestic and international human rights groups generally operated without government restriction, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. Government officials sometimes cooperated and responded to their views, but generally dismissed allegations quickly without investigation. In some cases the military threatened NGOs and humanitarian organizations. In December 2018 a military spokesperson called for the banning of AI after the release of a report on farmer-herder violence, but no action was taken against AI. In September the army ordered Action Against Hunger and Mercy Corps, both humanitarian NGOs, to suspend operations in Borno and Yobe States. The army alleged members of the organizations, who were found with large sums of cash and other questionable items at checkpoints, were aiding and abetting a terrorist organization. Action Against Hunger and Mercy Corps strongly rejected these charges and cooperated with military officials, which resulted in the lifting of suspensions. On October 30, the government announced it would take new steps to vet and monitor humanitarian actors working in the Northeast. The next day both organizations resumed operations. A military board of inquiry continued to investigate the allegations.<sup>8</sup>

### Additional Reading

- Please refer to the answer to Question 2 of a 2019 COISS Standard Q&A on Nigeria: '[Nigeria: 20191107174813 - MASSOB - Legal Adviser - Treatment - Civil Organisations - 49th Anniversary of the Declaration of the Biafra Republic - Organisers - MASSOB Executives Petition Against Torture](#)', Country of Origin Information Services Section (COISS), 13 November 2019, 20191119131843
- '[Nigeria: Civil Liberties Organisation \(CLO\), its leadership, activities, goals and objectives, treatment of its members by the authorities](#)', Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 1 April 1998, 20200323132036, contains extremely dated information on CLO.
- A March 2018 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) country information report on Nigeria includes information on the treatment of individuals associated with MASSOB and IPOB, including on 30 May 2016. '[DFAT Country Information Report: Nigeria](#)', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, pp.17-18, CIS7B83941414
- A June 2017 European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report on Nigeria includes information on MASSOB and IPOB and the treatment of activists by the authorities between August 2015 and

<sup>5</sup> '[The Status of Human Rights Organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa – Nigeria](#)', University of Minnesota, undated[Accessed 23 March 2020], 20200323132345

<sup>6</sup> '[CLO petitions appellate judge over trial of APC chieftain in Rivers](#)', The Guardian (Nigeria), 1 July 2016, 20200323154643

<sup>7</sup> '[It is corruption to disregard the constitution](#)', The Guardian (Nigeria), 3 March 2020, 20200324115255

<sup>8</sup> '[Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2019 - Nigeria](#)', United States Department of State, 11 March 2020, Sect.5, pp.28-29, 20200312124348



2016. 'EASO Country of Origin Information Report: Nigeria: Country Focus', European Asylum Support Office, June 2017, pp.20 & 25, CISED50AD4813

### **3. Please provide information on [redacted].**

Specific information was not located on [redacted].<sup>9</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

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<sup>9</sup> Sources consulted include CISNET, government and non-government reports, domestic and international media outlets, and internet searches.



## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria - 20200429102901 - [redacted]

Date of Report

7 May 2020

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#### Background

[redacted]

#### Question

1. [\[redacted\]](#)
2. [\[redacted\] a political opponent of the former Governor of Kwara State, Olubukola Saraki?](#)
3. [What information is available about alleged connection between former Governor of Kwara State, Olubukola Saraki, and \[redacted\]?](#)

## Answer

### 1. [redacted]

COISS located no information about [redacted].<sup>1</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil

### 2. [redacted] a political opponent of the former Governor of Kwara State, Olubukola Saraki?

[redacted]<sup>2</sup>

COISS located information about the political career of Dr Abubakar Bukola Saraki (or Bukola Saraki), in the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and outside it.<sup>3</sup>

Dr Abubakar Bukola Saraki entered representative politics in 2003. His father, politician Dr Abubakar Olusola Saraki, had fallen out with Kwara State Governor Mohammed Alabi Lawal and left the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) for the People's Democratic Party (PDP). When incumbent Lawal sought re-election in 2003 Abubakar Bukola Saraki ran against and defeated him, due to Abubakar Olusola Saraki's claims that Lawal 'was going to dethrone the Emir if he wins the second term tenure and also that the Governor was disrespectful to the Royal House of Ilorin'. In 2007, after 'a serious contest' with Comrade Gbenga Olawepo, Bukola Saraki was returned as Governor.<sup>4</sup> Dr Abubakar Bukola Saraki was the Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) from 2007 to 2011, when he handed over to his successor, Rivers State Governor, Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi.<sup>5</sup>

In 2011 Bukola Saraki became a Senator representing PDP in Kwara Central Senatorial District.<sup>6</sup> In January 2014 Bukola Saraki and ten other Senators defected from the ruling PDP to the All Progressives Congress (APC).<sup>7</sup> On 9 June 2015 the 57 Senators who attended the inauguration of the 8th Senate returned him as Senate President unopposed, in the absence of contender Senator Ahmad Lawan and some of his supporters.<sup>8</sup> Nigerian newspaper *The Guardian* later reported that Bukola Saraki was elected Senate president 'in a circumstance that the APC leadership found disturbing'.<sup>9</sup> Five Senators brought a suit seeking to remove Bukola Saraki and Senate Deputy President Ike Ekweremadu from office on the premise that the Senate Standing Orders 2015 were forged, but subsequently applied to withdraw the suit as having been overtaken by events, after the 8th Senate's leadership carried out several legislative actions, including the constitution of committees. On 31 August 2015 Justice Ademola Adeniyi of the Federal High Court sitting in Abuja struck out the suit.<sup>10</sup> In June 2016 Bukola Saraki, Ekweremadu, and the former and current acting Clerks of the National Assembly appeared before a High Court of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, accused by the Federal Government 'of forging the Senate Standing Rules used ... to conduct the election that brought Saraki and Ekweremadu to office as principal officers of the Senate'. They were granted bail.<sup>11</sup> On 3 July 2016 *The Sun* newspaper reported that Justice Gabriel Kolawole of the Federal High Court sitting in Abuja adjourned the forgery charge, brought by the Attorney General and

<sup>1</sup> COISS consulted CISNET and Internet sites - including news websites and Internet search engines - in English.

<sup>2</sup> COISS consulted CISNET and Internet sites - including news websites and Internet search engines - in English.

<sup>3</sup> COISS consulted CISNET and Internet sites - including news websites and Internet search engines - in English.

<sup>4</sup> '[The Past, Present and Future of the Saraki's Dynasty](#)', Hamzat A O, Modern Ghana, 9 November 2012, 20200506141057

<sup>5</sup> '[Evolution of the Nigeria Governors' Forum](#)', Nigeria Governors' Forum, undated, Accessed 7 May 2020, 20200507075211

<sup>6</sup> '[The Past, Present and Future of the Saraki's Dynasty](#)', Hamzat A O, Modern Ghana, 9 November 2012, 20200506141057

<sup>7</sup> '[Saraki finally dumps APC](#)', Bakare T, The Guardian (Nigeria), 31 July 2018, 20200507075651

<sup>8</sup> '[Bukola Saraki emerges new Senate President](#)', Agbakwuru J & Erunke J, Vanguard, 9 June 2015, 20200507094534

<sup>9</sup> '[Saraki finally dumps APC](#)', Bakare T, The Guardian (Nigeria), 31 July 2018, 20200507075651

<sup>10</sup> '[Court strikes out forgery suit against Saraki, Ekweremadu](#)', Nnochiri I, Vanguard, 1 September 2015, 20200507095017

<sup>11</sup> '[I am ready to go to jail, says Saraki](#)', Jimoh A M & Richards O, The Guardian (Nigeria), 28 June 2016, 20200507081506

the Minister of Justice before an FCT High Court, to 6 July 2016 and said he 'would have nullified the forgery charge ... and set it aside for being a gross abuse of court and legal process if it had been filed before his court'.<sup>12</sup> In October 2016 the Federal Government filed a motion to withdraw the charge of criminal conspiracy against Bukola Saraki and Ekweremadu.<sup>13</sup>

*The Guardian* later reported that Bukola Saraki's swearing-in as Senate president was followed by 'a gale of legal battles that included him being dragged before a code of conduct tribunal'.<sup>14</sup>

In July 2015 *The Guardian* columnist Sonala Olumhense, noting the appearances in court the previous week, 'courtesy of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)', of former (to 2011) governor of Imo State Ikedi Ohakim and former (to 2014) governor of Adamawa State Murtala Nyako, 'wonder[ed] why only a handful of former governors are being brought before the courts instead of entire locusts [sic] of them': 'Why is Senate President Bukola Saraki, who left office in 2011 just like Ohakim, not in court just like Ohakim?'<sup>15</sup> Olumhense doubted EFCC would be effective:

... I don't trust the EFCC because although it is set up as an anti-corruption agency, ... it has not persuaded the public about its competence or its pursuit of justice, with thieving VIPs either celebrating their rottenness as if the commission does not exist, or being 'let go' following shoddy prosecution. Sometimes, it is as if the very strategy was to prosecute to lose.<sup>16</sup>

On 18 September 2015 the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) commenced hearing 'a 13-count charge of alleged corruption' against Bukola Saraki dated 11 September 2015 filed before the Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT). The offences included anticipatory declaration of assets, making false declaration of assets in forms he filed with CCB while Kwara State Governor, failing to declare assets he acquired while in office as Governor, acquiring assets beyond his legitimate earnings, and operating foreign accounts while being a public officer (Governor and Senator).<sup>17</sup> Bukola Saraki had sought a Federal High Court order seeking to stop his arraignment, and had failed to appear, so CCT Chairman Danladi Umar issued a bench warrant for Bukola Saraki's arrest, 'brushing aside' the Federal High Court order.<sup>18</sup> When Bukola Saraki's 'corruption trial' started in Abuja in March 2016, nine government lawyers were opposed by Bukola Saraki's lead counsel 'leading 79 lawyers'.<sup>19</sup> In response to a motion by Saraki's lawyer querying the competence of the charge against him and the CCT's jurisdiction, on 18 March 2016 the prosecution presented a joint EFCC/CCB counter-affidavit alleging in detail how Bukola Saraki looted Kwara State during his 2003-2011 tenure as Governor, taking 'billions' from public funds borrowed from commercial banks, particularly Guaranty Trust Bank, to buy himself several properties in Lagos, Abuja and London.<sup>20</sup> The government increased the charges to 17 on 11 January 2017, and added an eighteenth charge in February 2017; Saraki pleaded not guilty to all charges. On 14 June 2017 CCT dismissed the case of false asset declaration against Bukola Saraki; CCT Chairman Umar said the prosecution had failed to prove its allegations.<sup>21</sup> CCT said the prosecution's evidence (four witnesses and 49 exhibits) amounted only to hearsay.<sup>22</sup> *The Guardian* columnist Musa Toyib Olaniyi characterised CCT's acquittal of Saraki as the end of 'the anti-corruption war':

It is a pity that the body of the anti-graft war was interred the other day. The anti-corruption war expired on June 14, 2017 when one of the celebrated cases of the war fizzled out. The Code of Conduct Tribunal

<sup>12</sup> ['Saraki, Ekweremadu: Judge declares forgery case abuse of court process ... scolds AGF, JGP'](#), Tsa G, The Sun (Lagos), 3 July 2016, 20200507102427

<sup>13</sup> ['FG withdraws forgery charges against Saraki, Ekweremadu'](#), The Sun (Lagos), 7 October 2016, 20200507103324

<sup>14</sup> ['Saraki finally dumps APC'](#), Bakare T, The Guardian (Nigeria), 31 July 2018, 20200507075651

<sup>15</sup> ['Mixed Metaphors: Fascinating Money Narratives'](#), Olumhense S, The Guardian (Nigeria), 12 July 2015, 20200507082651

<sup>16</sup> ['Mixed Metaphors: Fascinating Money Narratives'](#), Olumhense S, The Guardian (Nigeria), 12 July 2015, 20200507082651

<sup>17</sup> ['Code of Conduct Tribunal orders Saraki's arrest'](#), Premium Times (Abuja), 18 September 2015, 20200507095809

<sup>18</sup> ['Saraki asks Court of Appeal to halt plans to arrest him'](#), Premium Times (Abuja), 19 September 2015, 20200507095729

<sup>19</sup> ['Nigeria's Senate President Corruption Trial: 80 Lawyers Appear For Saraki At The Code of Conduct Tribunal'](#), Sahara Reporters, 18 March 2016, 20200507124255

<sup>20</sup> ['How Saraki looted Kwara – EFCC, CCB'](#), The Nation, 19 March 2016, 20200507124636

<sup>21</sup> ['False Asset Declaration Charge: Saraki discharged, acquitted'](#), Okakwu E, Premium Times (Abuja), 14 June 2017, 20200507124945

<sup>22</sup> ['Supreme Court frees Saraki, dismisses remnant assets declaration charges'](#), Adesomoju A, The Punch, 6 July 2018, 20200507093245



discharged and acquitted Dr. Bukola Saraki on all counts preferred against him while at the same time it seriously lampooned the prosecution for ignorance in little matters of the law. It was a no-case verdict. And Saraki left the courtroom into a tumultuous embrace of his accomplices who reclined in the chamber that is meant to be hallowed which has unfortunately been made hollow. The chamber has become hollow by the number of fugitives from law perching on the seats reserved for distinguished people. It has been hollowed by demagoguery and unelevated discussions and the pursuit of personal interests over and above that of the country. The 8th Assembly sat on a forged foundation.<sup>23</sup>

The Federal Government appealed. On 12 December 2017 a three-member panel of the Court of Appeal, Abuja Division, affirmed CCT's dismissal of 15 of the 18 counts of false declaration of assets but referred back to CCT three counts - those on the purchase of properties number 17 A and B MacDonald Street, Ikoyi, Lagos State - in which it found the prosecution had established a *prima facie* case against Bukola Saraki.<sup>24</sup> Both parties appealed the Court of Appeal's decision to the apex court, the Supreme Court of Nigeria. Bukola Saraki appealed against the part of the decision restoring three of the counts, and the Federal Government cross-appealed the part of the decision affirming CCT's dismissal of the other 15 counts. On 6 July 2018 a five-member panel of the Supreme Court upheld Bukola Saraki's appeal and dismissed the Federal Government's appeal. The panel agreed with CCT that the evidence the prosecution presented at CCT was entirely hearsay.<sup>25</sup>

On 31 July 2018, after months of speculation, Bukola Saraki left the ruling APC and returned to the PDP. *The Guardian* reported that his statement shortly after he announced his resignation from APC alluded to what he had previously said several times: that 'his legal battles were persecution from a section of the ruling party'. 'However, some analysts believe that Saraki's switch of parties may be a step towards the realisation of his rumoured presidential ambition.'<sup>26</sup>

In August 2018 Bukola Saraki announced his bid for the main opposition party PDP's presidential candidacy, a contest with a dozen aspirants.<sup>27</sup> On 7 October 2018 Bukola Saraki finished third among nine aspirants to the PDP presidential candidacy for the 2019 general election, receiving 317 delegates' votes. He was behind Sokoto State Governor Aminu Tambuwal, who received 693 votes, and former Vice President Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, who received over 800 votes and became the PDP presidential candidate.<sup>28</sup>

Bukola Saraki failed to be re-elected in the 23 February 2019 Senatorial election, losing Kwara Central Senatorial District to Dr Yahaya Oloriegbe of APC, who received 123,808 votes to Bukola Saraki's 68,994.<sup>29</sup> On 6 June 2019 'His Excellency (Dr.) Abubakar Bukola Saraki, Con', president of the Senate, gave the valedictory speech at the final plenary of the 8th Senate.<sup>30</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil

### **3. What information is available about alleged connection between former Governor of Kwara State, Olubukola Saraki, and [redacted]?**

COISS located no information of alleged connection of the former Governor of Kwara State, Olubukola Saraki, with [redacted]. COISS located no information about [redacted].<sup>31</sup>

<sup>23</sup> ['And the anti-corruption war died'](#), Olaniyi M T, *The Guardian* (Nigeria), 25 June 2017, 20200507083229

<sup>24</sup> ['Saraki: Appeal Court upholds CCT decision on 15 counts, disagree on 3'](#), Ejike S, *Nigerian Tribune*, 12 December 2017, 20200507125402

<sup>25</sup> ['Supreme Court frees Saraki, dismisses remnant assets declaration charges'](#), Adesomoju A, *The Punch*, 6 July 2018, 20200507093245

<sup>26</sup> ['Saraki finally dumps APC'](#), Bakare T, *The Guardian* (Nigeria), 31 July 2018, 20200507075651

<sup>27</sup> ['UPDATED: 2019: Saraki declares for president, discloses plans for Nigeria'](#), Ayitogo N, *Premium Times* (Abuja), 30 August 2018, 20200507092821

<sup>28</sup> ['PDP presidential primary election: Live results from Port Harcourt'](#), Inyang I, *Daily Post* (Nigeria), 7 October 2018, 20200507092302

<sup>29</sup> ['Saraki loses seat to APC'](#), Nseyen N, *Daily Post*, 24 February 2019, 20200507130022; ['2019 Election: Saraki loses Senate seat to APC's Oloriegbe'](#), NAN [News Agency of Nigeria], *The Punch*, 24 February 2019, 20200507130315.

<sup>30</sup> ['Full Video: Saraki's last day as Senate President'](#), OakTV, 7 June 2019, 20200507130733

<sup>31</sup> COISS consulted CISNET and Internet sites - including news websites and Internet search engines - in English.

Saraki was named by the police as a person of interest in connection with a 'deadly robbery attack on six banks in Offa' in Kwara State<sup>32</sup> on 5 April 2018 by political gangsters, but he was not found to have a case to answer.<sup>33</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil

<sup>32</sup> [‘Saraki finally dumps APC’](#), Bakare T, The Guardian (Nigeria), 31 July 2018, 20200507075651

<sup>33</sup> [‘Offa Robbery: Police confirm 17 killed; 7 suspects arrested’](#), Ogundipe S, Premium Times (Abuja), 7 April 2018, 20200507090314; [‘Political gangs under scrutiny in Nigeria after armed robbery’](#), AFP [Agence France-Presse], The Guardian (Nigeria), 4 June 2018, 20200507085526; [‘Offa Robbery: AGF Malami clears Saraki, says police lack evidence against Senate President’](#), Ogundipe S, Premium Times (Abuja), 26 July 2018, 20200507091453; [‘Offa Robbery: Court orders police to suspend Saraki interrogation’](#), Olasupo A, The Guardian (Nigeria), 9 August 2018, 20200507085145.



## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: 20200506070601 – Christians in Plateau State

Date of Report

15 May 2020

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#### Background

The applicant's [is from] Jos, Plateau State.

The applicant claims that there have been numerous attacks on the Christians in this Region and until recently, the attacks have been aggravated with the sole purpose of enthroning sharia law in the land.

He claims that it is not safe for him and his family to return to Jos, Plateau State, due to the escalating persecution of Christians.

He claims to fear harm from Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen.

#### Questions

1. [Please provide information about the religious and ethnic demography of the Middle Belt, particularly Jos, Plateau State.](#)
2. [Please provide information about tensions between Muslims and Christians in the region, particularly Jos, Plateau State.](#)
3. [Please provide information about violence against Christians by Islamist group Boko Haram and the Fulani herdsmen in Plateau State, particularly since the most recent DFAT report \(March 2018\).](#)
4. [Please provide information about the government's actions in response to violence against Christians in the region.](#)

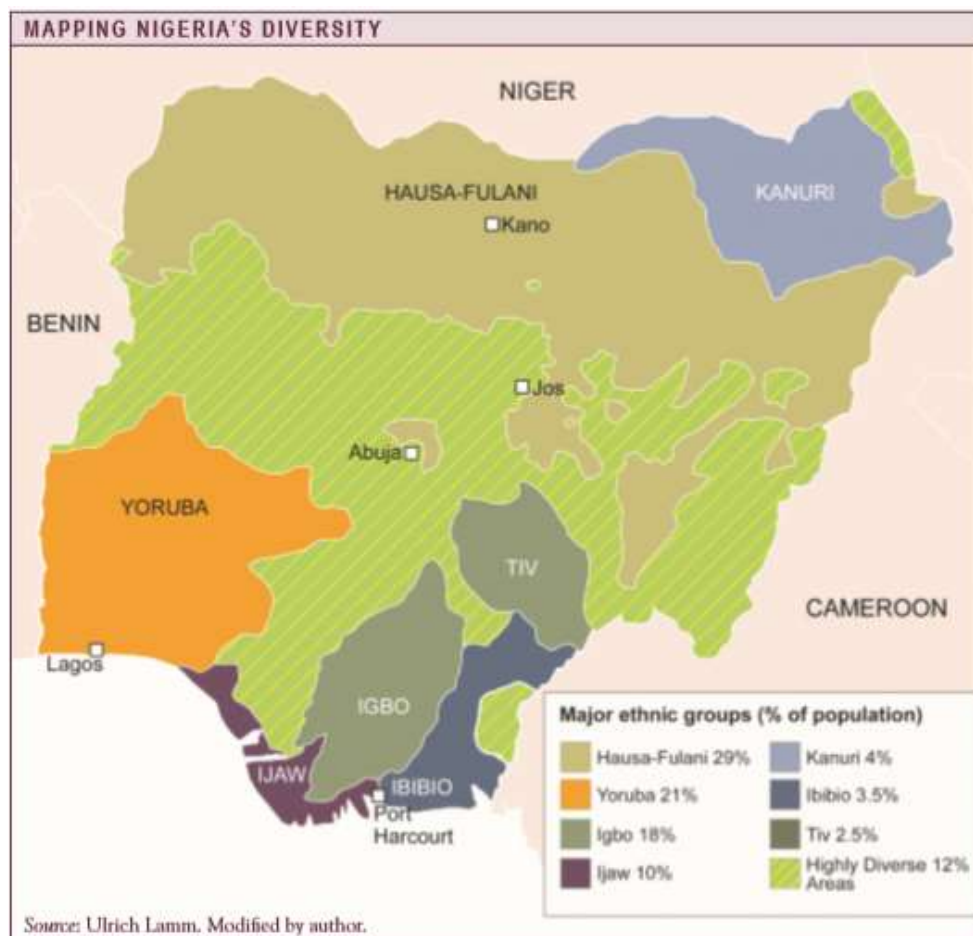
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## Answers

### 1. Please provide information about the religious and ethnic demography of the Middle Belt, particularly Jos, Plateau State.

Religious demography in Nigeria is difficult to report on because of a lack of reliable data. According to DFAT and the US Department of State, the Middle Belt of Nigeria is a mix of Christians and Muslims.<sup>1</sup> The presence of both religious groups in the region is further evidenced by clashes between them described in [question 3](#) and government efforts to reconcile them described in [question 4](#).

There is an overlap between religious, political and ethnic identity in Nigeria.<sup>2</sup> According to a widely distributed 2011 map of Nigerian ethnic groups from an African strategic studies think tank, the Middle Belt of Nigeria is 'highly diverse'.<sup>3</sup> Jos is noted in the map below:



<sup>1</sup> [Country Information Report: Nigeria](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 16, CIS7B83941414; [Nigeria 2018 International Religious Freedom Report](#), US Department of State, 21 June 2019, p. 3, 20190625085922

<sup>2</sup> ["Leave everything to God" - Accountability for inter-communal violence in Plateau and Kaduna States, Nigeria](#), Human Rights Watch, 1 December 2013, CIS27375; [Nigeria's Pernicious Drivers of Ethno-Religious Conflict](#), Chris Kwaja, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Africa Security Brief no. 14, July 2011, p. 4, 20200508111658; [Making sense of Nigeria's Fulani-farmer conflict](#), BBC News, 5 May 2016, 20200508112353

<sup>3</sup> [Nigeria's Pernicious Drivers of Ethno-Religious Conflict](#), Chris Kwaja, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Africa Security Brief no. 14, July 2011, 20200508111658. The map contained in that report has been reproduced, or similar maps have been based on it, in a number of publications. See e.g. [Making sense of Nigeria's Fulani-farmer conflict](#), BBC News, 5 May 2016, 20200508112353



Human Rights Watch describes these 'highly diverse areas' as 'mostly Christian'.<sup>4</sup>

A 2011 article from the *Financial Times* on Nigerian politics claims that Plateau State is majority Christian but also notes that political outreach to Muslims caused malicious rumours about a Christian candidate.<sup>5</sup> That article also states that the majority of Muslims in the state are descended from workers brought in under the colonial administration and that they are not indigenous to the region and do not enjoy the same rights as indigenous Christians.<sup>6</sup> The Human Rights Watch report quoted above also notes that the Muslims in the area are regarded as 'settlers' by local Christians and also notes official discrimination against them due to their non-indigenous status.<sup>7</sup>

Human Rights Watch explains:

Many of Nigeria's ethnic groups had no relationship to each other before being shoehorned into the same colony in 1914 by the British colonial government. The pre-colonial relationships that did exist between Nigeria's different groups were often antagonistic. In the Middle Belt region, for example, numerous minority groups during this time resisted conquest and were victims of frequent slave raids by the more powerful Hausa-Fulani states to the north.<sup>8</sup>

Jos itself is a city that was created during the colonial era. Abundant natural resources attracted a diverse mix of settlers to the city.<sup>9</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- None.

## **2. Please provide information about tensions between Muslims and Christians in the region, particularly Jos, Plateau State.**

Although ostensibly religious or ethnic in character, conflict between in Plateau state is often economic, political or land-related.

One source from a US based think tank describes the ostensibly ethnic and religious character of conflict as a 'socially constructed stereotype' and points instead to discrimination against non-indigenous people, described in [question 1](#), as the driving force of violence.<sup>10</sup>

An analysis by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) points to cattle raids as the cause of much of the violence.<sup>11</sup> Some Fulani are nomadic and land disputes about where cattle are grazed and claims of theft of cattle can lead to violence.<sup>12</sup> The article describes 'tit for tat' attacks between Christian Berom farmers and Fulani tribesmen.<sup>13</sup> The article also points to a political campaign against the Fulani (also described in the *Financial Times* article in [question 1](#)).<sup>14</sup>

Further information, including specific example of violence, is contained in [question 3](#).

#### Additional Reading

<sup>4</sup> ["Leave everything to God" - Accountability for inter-communal violence in Plateau and Kaduna States, Nigeria](#), Human Rights Watch, 1 December 2013, p. 34, CIS27375

<sup>5</sup> ["Tensions rise ahead of Nigerian poll"](#), *Financial Times*, 26 April 2011, 20200507145532

<sup>6</sup> ["Tensions rise ahead of Nigerian poll"](#), *Financial Times*, 26 April 2011, 20200507145532

<sup>7</sup> ["Leave everything to God" - Accountability for inter-communal violence in Plateau and Kaduna States, Nigeria](#), Human Rights Watch, 1 December 2013, p. 34, CIS27375

<sup>8</sup> ["Leave everything to God" - Accountability for inter-communal violence in Plateau and Kaduna States, Nigeria](#), Human Rights Watch, 1 December 2013, p. 34, CIS27375

<sup>9</sup> ["Nigeria's Pernicious Drivers of Ethno-Religious Conflict"](#), Chris Kwaja, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Africa Security Brief no. 14, July 2011, p. 2, 20200508111658

<sup>10</sup> ["Nigeria's Pernicious Drivers of Ethno-Religious Conflict"](#), Chris Kwaja, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Africa Security Brief no. 14, July 2011, p. 2, 20200508111658

<sup>11</sup> ["Making sense of Nigeria's Fulani-farmer conflict"](#), BBC News, 5 May 2016, 20200508112353

<sup>12</sup> ["Making sense of Nigeria's Fulani-farmer conflict"](#), BBC News, 5 May 2016, 20200508112353

<sup>13</sup> ["Making sense of Nigeria's Fulani-farmer conflict"](#), BBC News, 5 May 2016, 20200508112353

<sup>14</sup> ["Making sense of Nigeria's Fulani-farmer conflict"](#), BBC News, 5 May 2016, 20200508112353; see also ["Tensions rise ahead of Nigerian poll"](#), *Financial Times*, 26 April 2011, 20200507145532

- None.

### 3. Please provide information about violence against Christians by Islamist group Boko Haram and the Fulani herdsmen in Plateau State, particularly since the most recent DFAT report (March 2018).

#### Fulani herdsmen

COISS found recent examples of conflict between Fulani tribesmen and Christians that is consistent with the analysis contained in questions [one](#) and [two](#).

The most recent attack that COISS found was in May 2020 when, according to a Christian news website with a correspondent in Nigeria, a family of Christians in Plateau State was killed while praying in their house.<sup>15</sup> In the same attack, a school was also targeted and the headmaster was killed.<sup>16</sup> It was the second time the school had been targeted this year.<sup>17</sup>

According to local reports, 20 Christians were killed by Fulani tribesmen in April 2020 in a 'string of attacks'.<sup>18</sup> An Evangelical Christian church was attacked near Jos and four people killed, including the pastor.<sup>19</sup>

In June 2019, Fulani tribesmen attacked several villages in Barkin Ladi, Plateau State, killing about 200 Christian ethnic Berom farmers.<sup>20</sup> Barkin Ladi is in Plateau State, near Jos to the immediate south-east of Jos.

A June 2018 British media report claimed that violence between the groups was escalating and driving Nigeria towards civil war.<sup>21</sup> That report is consistent with the analysis above in that the conflict is driven by land and water disputes. However, it also pointed to the religious character of the attacks, noting a raid on a Catholic Mass in which two priests and 17 congregants were killed by Fulani tribesmen.<sup>22</sup>

In November 2018, the US Institute of Peace also assessed that the violence was worsening. That report noted that both Christian Berom farmers and Muslim Fulani tribesmen have been able to access more weapons in 2018 than they did previously.<sup>23</sup>

#### Boko Haram

Boko Haram attacks have been reported or suspected in Jos before the time period in question<sup>24</sup> and threats continue to be reported in local Nigerian media. In January 2020, the Nigerian Senate condemned a 'bloodbath' across several states include Plateau in which Boko Haram killed 20 people.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>15</sup> ['Four Christians Killed, Head of High School and Family Shot in North-central Nigeria'](#), Morning Star News, 7 May 2020, 20200508140817

<sup>16</sup> ['Four Christians Killed, Head of High School and Family Shot in North-central Nigeria'](#), Morning Star News, 7 May 2020, 20200508140817

<sup>17</sup> ['Four Christians Killed, Head of High School and Family Shot in North-central Nigeria'](#), Morning Star News, 7 May 2020, 20200508140817

<sup>18</sup> ['The government is silent': Fulani militia kills Christian pastor and burns down school in village near Jos, Nigeria'](#), Genocide Watch, 11 April 2020, 20200508123309

<sup>19</sup> ['The government is silent': Fulani militia kills Christian pastor and burns down school in village near Jos, Nigeria'](#), Genocide Watch, 11 April 2020, 20200508123309

<sup>20</sup> ['Nigeria 2018 International Religious Freedom Report'](#), US Department of State, 21 June 2019, pp. 2, 12, 20190625085922

<sup>21</sup> ['The bloody cattle conflict pushing Nigeria to the edge of civil war'](#), The Telegraph (UK), 17 June 2018, 20200508121837

<sup>22</sup> ['The bloody cattle conflict pushing Nigeria to the edge of civil war'](#), The Telegraph (UK), 17 June 2018, 20200508121837

<sup>23</sup> ['Nigeria's worst violence is not Boko Haram'](#), US Institute of Peace (Relief Web), Ena Dion; Isioma Kemakolam, 7 November 2018, 20200508125127

<sup>24</sup> See e.g. ['Nigeria's Boko Haram crisis: Jos blasts kill scores'](#), BBC News, 7 July 2015, 20200508123805

<sup>25</sup> ['Boko Haram: Senate condemns Plateau killings, abductions'](#), Vanguard, 30 January 2020, 20200508131738

Information about specific incidents in the referenced time period in Plateau State is sparse,<sup>26</sup> but threats against Christians in the area by Boko Haram and Islamic State in West Africa Province (an offshoot of Boko Haram) have been made.<sup>27</sup> A university student from Plateau State returning to university in Borno State (in Nigeria's north-east, where Boko Haram is most active) was killed by Boko Haram and a video of the killing was posted on the internet. It is not clear from reports whether this murder occurred in Plateau State or in the north-east.<sup>28</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- None.

#### **4. Please provide information about the government's actions in response to violence against Christians in the region.**

Both the federal and Plateau State governments have launched initiatives to reduce the violence in the state; however, these efforts do not appear effective given the worsening nature of violence described in [question 3](#).

The Plateau Peacebuilding Agency, which is established under Nigerian law, has conducted projects to ease interreligious and interethnic fighting. For example, they held a summit in 2018 bringing together leaders from different ethnic and religious groups.<sup>29</sup> Efforts in Kaduna State by a similar body have seen the establishment of peace committees in all local government areas of that state.<sup>30</sup>

According to the US Institute of Peace, government efforts at the state and federal level have had mixed success. According to their report:

Nigeria's federal and state government efforts to reduce the conflict have had mixed results. Federal authorities have proposed, but not yet implemented, establishing land reserves for grazing; meanwhile the states of Benue and Taraba have banned open-range grazing. Security responses—military operations across six states, and additional police—also have been only partially successful. Human rights violations, allegedly including excessive use of force and arbitrary arrests by security forces, and failure to follow up arrests with investigations and prosecutions, have alienated people on both sides of the conflict.<sup>31</sup>

That report notes that some local efforts, including local community leader-led mediation, has been more successful but notes that this depends on the local circumstances and has been on a case-by-case basis.<sup>32</sup>

The state has acknowledged the violence and use the local police to provide protection. A new Commander was appointed to Plateau State in June 2018 in response.<sup>33</sup>

Nigerian police are, in general, not known for their effectiveness. Public confidence in the police is low, corruption is widespread and police are poorly funded and equipped.<sup>34</sup> According to the US State Department, police and neighbourhood associations rarely deter or disrupt crimes and respond

<sup>26</sup> COISS conducted targeted web searches and checked Africa databases.

<sup>27</sup> ['Nigeria: Boko Haram - the Politics of Targeted Killing of Christians'](#), Premium Times, 7 February 2020, 20200508134951

<sup>28</sup> ['Boko Haram: Family of murdered Unimaid student cries out'](#), Daily Post, 23 January 2020, 20200508134740

<sup>29</sup> ['Nigeria 2018 International Religious Freedom Report'](#), US Department of State, 21 June 2019, p. 7, 20190625085922

<sup>30</sup> ['Nigeria 2018 International Religious Freedom Report'](#), US Department of State, 21 June 2019, p. 7, 20190625085922

<sup>31</sup> ['Nigeria's Worst Violence Is Not Boko Haram'](#), US Institute of Peace (Relief Web), Ena Dion; Isioma Kemakolam, 7 November 2018, 20200508125127

<sup>32</sup> ['Nigeria's Worst Violence Is Not Boko Haram'](#), US Institute of Peace (Relief Web), Ena Dion; Isioma Kemakolam, 7 November 2018, 20200508125127

<sup>33</sup> ['Killings: IGP replaces Plateau State Commissioner of Police'](#), Vanguard, 26 June 2018, 20200508142836

<sup>34</sup> ['Do the Police Really Protect and Serve the Public? Police deviance and public cynicism towards the law in Nigeria'](#), University of New England (Armidale), 1 July 2019, 20190906163131; ['Urgent need for police reform'](#), Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) -United Nations, 18 April 2012, CX285932; ['Nigeria 2019 Crime & Safety Report Lagos'](#), Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), 06 September 2019, 20190906161709

'slowly or not at all', and crime is usually not reported to police due to this ineffectiveness.<sup>35</sup> However, while the report notes that police response is usually ineffective, it also notes that their response is 'variable'.<sup>36</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- None.

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<sup>35</sup> ['Nigeria 2019 Crime & Safety Report Lagos'](#), Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), 6 September 2019, 20190906161709

<sup>36</sup> ['Nigeria 2019 Crime & Safety Report Lagos'](#), Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), 6 September 2019, 20190906161709





## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: 20200506070746 – [redacted] State – Middle Belt – Demographic Information – Religious Violence – Boko Haram – Fulani Herdsmen

Date of Report

15 May 2020

This Q&A Report was prepared by the Country of Origin Information Services Section (COISS), Department of Home Affairs in response to a request for country information within time constraints. It is current at the time of completion. This Q&A Report should not be cited in a decision or any other document. Anyone wishing to use this information should only cite the source material contained herein.

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#### Background

[redacted] As a Christian, the applicant fears being killed by Boko Haram and Muslim-Fulani herdsmen

#### Questions

1. [Please provide brief information about the religious and ethnic demography of Central Nigeria, including \[redacted\] State.](#)
2. [Do sources indicate recent tensions between Muslims and Christians in the region?](#)
3. [Do sources indicate ongoing violence against Christians by Islamist group Boko Haram and the Fulani herdsmen in \[redacted\] State \(post-publication of DFAT's March 2018 report\)?](#)
4. [What action has the government taken in response to any violence against Christians in the region?](#)

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under the Freedom of Information Act 1982

## Answers

### 1. Please provide brief information about the religious and ethnic demography of Central Nigeria, including [redacted] State.

Sources are unable to provide definitive information about the requested demographic information due to the country's last census (2006) failing to disaggregate data by either ethnicity or religion.<sup>1</sup> At a general level, sources agree that the country is more or less evenly divided between a Muslim north and Christian south, straddled by a central area known as the 'Middle Belt'. This Middle Belt is more religiously and ethnically diverse than its two adjacent regions, comprising hundreds of ethnic groups and split between Muslims and Christians (as well as other smaller religious groups). The focus of demographic information provided below is on the Middle Belt collectively, reflecting the focus of key sources.

There is no officially designated area known as 'Central Nigeria' as designated in the question. Rather [redacted] State is part of the North Central zone, one of Nigeria's six geopolitical zones. Six other states comprise the North Central zone, also commonly referred to as the 'Middle Belt' region. Listed in alphabetical order these are Benue, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau and the Federal Capital Territory (see [Map 2](#) below).<sup>2</sup>

#### Religious demographic

As already indicated, accurate and up-to-date official religious demographic data is difficult to obtain. Several sources however permit some indication as to the religious composition of the country as a whole, and more specifically of the Middle Belt region.

Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) provides the following summary of religious demographics in the country, though without specific information on the Middle Belt:

An estimated fifty per cent of Nigerians are Muslim, forty per cent Christian and ten per cent follow indigenous religious beliefs. The predominant Islamic group is Sunni but Nigeria also has Shia and Izala (Salafist) minorities. Christian groups include Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, evangelicals and Pentecostals, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons). Christianity is the majority religion in the southern states and Islam is the majority religion in northern states.<sup>3</sup>

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom provide a more detailed breakdown of countrywide religious adherence, though note that the collection of data is controversial:

RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY\* 51.6% Muslim (majority Sunni; also Sufi orders, Shi'a, and other sects and approaches to Islam) 11.2% Roman Catholic 35.7% Other Christian (including Anglican, Baptist, Evangelical, Methodist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, The Church of Latter-day Saints, Jehovah's Witnesses, and other denominations) 1.5% Indigenous beliefs, Other, or Unspecified (including Jews, Baha'is, atheists, and other beliefs)

\*Estimates compiled from the CIA World Factbook and the State Department. Population statistics are highly controversial and disputed in Nigeria.<sup>4</sup>

According to a 2010 survey conducted by the Pew Forum, 'the percentages of Muslims and Christians were nearly equal: 48.8 % respectively 49.3 % of the population, while 1.9 % was mainly composed of "either practitioners of indigenous religions or no affiliations"'.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ['World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples – Nigeria'](#), Minority Rights Group International, May 2018, 20200513112247

<sup>2</sup> ['COI Report Nigeria: Targeting Individuals'](#), European Asylum Support Office, 9 January 2019, p.19, 20190109132722; ['The deadly conflict tearing Nigeria apart \(and it's not Boko Haram\)'](#), IRIN News, 13 June 2017, CXC9040669238; 'Country Information Report Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia), 9 March 2018, para.2.6, pp.7-8, CIS7B83941414

<sup>3</sup> 'Country Information Report Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia), 9 March 2018, para.2.9, p.8, CIS7B83941414

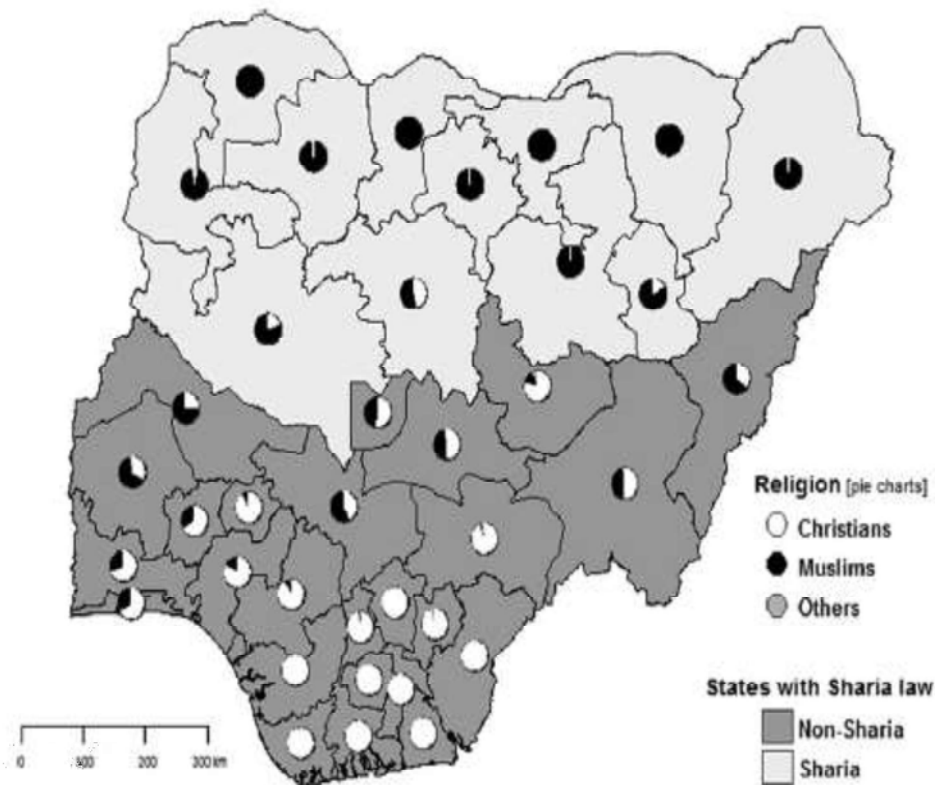
<sup>4</sup> ['United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Annual Report 2019'](#), United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), 29 April 2019, p.59, 20190508143726

<sup>5</sup> ['COI Report Nigeria: Targeting Individuals'](#), European Asylum Support Office, 9 January 2019, p.100, 20190109132722

Specific to the Middle Belt, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) note the Muslim-Christian divide within the region, mapping the divide along nomadic-sedentary lines: ‘the so-called Middle Belt, an area encompassing six states lying between the north and the south of the country, is populated largely by smaller ethnic groups and is also religiously diverse; more specifically, “many nomadic groups identify as Muslims, and sedentary groups as Christian, although the picture is less clear-cut than elsewhere in the country”’.<sup>6</sup>

Potentially the clearest source of information comes from a map displayed in a 2016 academic journal, charting ‘religious composition by state’ (as at 2013), although without identifying the states.<sup>7</sup> States may be identified by comparing with the second map displayed below (the purple states represent the North-Central zone/Middle Belt states):

**Map 1. Religious composition by state in Nigeria: Shading on map represents Sharia law in states; pie charts represent religious composition**



<sup>6</sup> 'COI Report Nigeria: Targeting Individuals', European Asylum Support Office, 9 January 2019, p.100, 20190109132722

<sup>7</sup> 'The Changing Religious Composition of Nigeria: Causes and Implications of Demographic Divergence', Marcin Stonawski *et al*, Journal of Modern Africa Studies, December 2016, p.3, 20200513100839. Data appears to be derived from domestic Demographic Health Surveys (p.4).

Map 2. Nigeria – by Administrative Zones and States<sup>8</sup>



### Ethnic Demographic

Sources indicate that the Middle Belt is marked by its lack of a single majority ethnic group and its dense composition of minority ethnic groups. Minority Rights Group International, in a May 2018 report, provide the following description of ethnic diversity in the Middle Belt:

The middle belt area of Nigeria, from the Cameroon highlands on the east to the Niger River valley on the west, includes some 50 to 100 linguistic and ethnic groups, ranging from larger Tiv and Nupe to much smaller language groups. (See separate entry on the Tiv) The Nupe inhabit primarily west-central Nigeria. They speak a Niger-Congo language related to Yoruba and Igbo and practice Islam. They live in villages growing yams, cassava and maize and raising goats, sheep and chickens. They are noted for their weaving, metalwork, embroidery, bead making, and carpentry.

Plateau State, just east of the centre of the middle belt is especially diverse. Among the main minority groups there are Berom, Tarok, Jawara and Gemai. The state is also religiously diverse, with Christians in a majority, a sizeable Muslim minority, and many people who still practice traditional beliefs.

The south is divided into a western, Yoruba-speaking area and an eastern Igbo-speaking area, a middle section of related, but differing groups and areas of Niger Delta peoples on the eastern and central coasts. Yorubas make up approximately 21 per cent of Nigeria's population and are dominant in the south-west. Igbos comprise around 18 per cent of the Nigerian population and form a regional majority in the south-east, but have faced marginalization within the broader context of Nigeria.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> 'Country Information Report Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia), 9 March 2018, p.2, CIS7B83941414

<sup>9</sup> 'World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples – Nigeria', Minority Rights Group International, May 2018, 20200513112247



Security firm Global Security provides the following description of the ethnic composition of the Middle Belt, noting several larger groups distinguished from myriad smaller groupings:

Along the border, dividing northern from southern Nigeria lies an east-west belt of peoples and languages, generally known as the middle belt. The area runs from the Cameroon Highlands on the east to the Niger River valley on the west and contains 50 to 100 separate language and ethnic groups. These groups varied from the Nupe and Tiv, comprising more than half a million each, to a few hundred speakers of a distinct language in small highland valleys in the Jos Plateau. On the east, languages were of the Chadic group, out of which Hausa differentiated, and the Niger-Congo family, indicating links to eastern and central African languages. In the west, the language groupings indicated historical relations to Mende-speaking peoples farther west.<sup>10</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

### **2. Do sources indicate recent tensions between Muslims and Christians in the region?**

Sources indicate recent tensions and high levels of violence between Muslims and Christians in the Middle Belt, while also noting that religion is but one dynamic underlying what may be analysed as several distinct conflicts. Beyond the more overtly religiously-infused activities of Islamist group Boko Haram (see [Question 3](#)), competition between (predominantly Christian) pastoralists and (Muslim) herdsman over access to diminishing natural resources is also noted by sources as fuelling a second, more deadly conflict in the Middle Belt states. A third form of insecurity is attributed by some analysts to criminal gangs who take advantage of the broader conflict situation, engaging in highway robbery, cattle-rustling and village-looting for personal gain.<sup>11</sup> Given the overlapping sources of conflict and insecurity, [Question 3](#) provides a more thorough response outlining the role of key actors Boko Haram, Fulani herdsman and pastoralist farmers.

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

### **3. Do sources indicate ongoing violence against Christians by Islamist group Boko Haram and the Fulani herdsman in [redacted] State (post-publication of DFAT's March 2018 report)?**

As per the information contained in sources relied upon below, the answer will focus on the Middle Belt more generally rather than [redacted] State specifically.

Sources indicate ongoing violence against Christians by Fulani herdsman throughout parts of the Middle Belt in the period post-March 2018, while some sources highlight the existential threat posed by Boko Haram to Christians more generally throughout Nigeria, warning of genocide and ethnic cleansing. There is some discrepancy in the sources however as to the direction of the Middle Belt violence – that is whether it is escalating or easing. COISS notes for example that the US Department of State's (USDOS) March 2020 country report indicated a 'steady slowing' of herder-farmer conflict during 2019, while Christian Solidarity International (CSI)<sup>12</sup> issued a 'Genocide Warning' in January 2020 in part related to the Fulani herdsman's violence targeting Christians.<sup>13</sup> Sources also appear to offer different perspectives – or perhaps place different emphases – on the primary motivations for the

<sup>10</sup> ['Middle Belt peoples and languages'](#), Global Security, 2020, 20200513111221

<sup>11</sup> ['Past is prologue: Criminality and reprisal in Nigeria's Middle Belt'](#), Search for Common Ground, 2017, p.5, 20200513140533

<sup>12</sup> Source note: CSI's ['About Us'](#) webpage describes the organisation as 'an international Christian human rights organization, campaigning for religious liberty and human dignity, and assisting victims of religious persecution, victimized children and victims of catastrophe'. The group has been operational for over 40 years.

<sup>13</sup> See ['Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2019 - Nigeria'](#), United States Department of State, 11 March 2020, Sect.6, 20200312124348; ['CSI Issues Genocide Warning for Christians in Nigeria, Calls on Permanent Members of the UN Security Council to Act'](#), PR Newswire, 30 January 2020, 20200514141443

conflict, specifically in terms of whether it is religiously-motivated or triggered by other factors (environmental degradation, natural resource competition).

### General Information

A 2019 EASO report captures the multiple dynamics driving conflict in the region, though framing specifically Muslim-Christian conflict as a predominantly northern issue:

Conflicts involving Christian and Muslim communities are concentrated in northern cities, and in the Middle Belt (around Jos), where farmers are predominantly Christian and from various ethnic groups, and herders are predominantly Fulani Muslims. Also Kaduna, in the north, has been hit hard by violent clashes between Christian and Muslim groups. However, although the clashes are often conceived by the media and local population as a religious conflict between Muslims and Christians, the struggle for decreasing resources and the local political economy are important underlying factors.<sup>14</sup>

According to the International Christian Concern's (ICC) April 2020 *Factsheet: Religious Freedom in Nigeria*, high levels of militant violence continued throughout the first quarter of 2020, including targeting Christian farmers in the Middle Belt region:

The first three months of 2020 clearly demonstrate that the Nigerian government's actions have been insufficient to curb the tide of violence, killings, and abductions caused by militant groups in the Northeast and throughout the Middle Belt.

According to International Christian Concern's research, there have been 200 violent incidents involving terrorist or militant groups throughout Nigeria. According to the Armed Conflict Locator and Event Database, there were only 4 days in the first quarter of 2020 with no attacks—January 16, February 7, February 28, and March 22. This list, however, does not include the many smaller attacks that take place and never reach the news.

In the first three months of 2020 there were at least 766 deaths related to terror or militant activity. Most of these were Boko Haram militants and military personnel, with Christian farmers making up the next largest number of deaths.<sup>15</sup>

Utilising a multiple source-verification method – including the Armed Conflict Locator and Event Database – ICC tabulate attacks disaggregated by perpetrator, target, outcome and location as follows for the first quarter of 2020:

With at least 200 incidents of militant violence in the first quarter of 2020, Nigeria continues to see significant violence. The two main aggressors, Boko Haram and Fulani militants, are responsible for a total of 766 casualties and a significant number of injuries and abductions as well.

### **Casualties**

	<b>Number of Incidents</b>	<b>Total Number Killed</b>	<b>Militant casualties</b>	<b>Government casualties</b>	<b>Civilian casualties</b>
<b>Boko Haram</b>	130	574	135-306	153	115-286
<b>Fulani Militants</b>	70	192	7	5	180

### **Injuries and abductions**

	<b>Number of Incidents</b>	<b>Government injuries</b>	<b>Civilians kidnapped</b>	<b>Civilians injured</b>
<b>Boko Haram</b>	130	21	Dozens	45
<b>Fulani Militants</b>	70		10	60

<sup>14</sup> 'COI Report Nigeria: Targeting Individuals', European Asylum Support Office, 9 January 2019, p.102, 20190109132722

<sup>15</sup> 'Factsheet: Religious Freedom in Nigeria', International Christian Concern, April 2020, 20200514142805

### Main locations of attacks

	Number of attacks	Number killed
Kaduna	10	48
Plateau	10	45
Benue	9	15
Deltawsa	8	16

Commenting on the attacks on Christians in the Middle Belt, and inferring a religious dimension to the Fulani attacks, the ICC write:

During the first quarter of 2020, Fulani militants are believed to have instigated at least 70 attacks on Christians and Christian villages throughout the Middle Belt of Nigeria. Their attacks have spread to nearly 20 states across Nigeria and have impacted millions of people. Though there have been no claims of Jihad or announcements of a unified effort to kill Christians by Fulani leaders, this does not mean that there has not been excessive deaths at the hands of these militants. The Nigerian government claims that there are no religious motivation for these attacks, but the facts show the opposite. Of the 9 northern states that have enacted full Sharia law, only 4 attacks took place with Fulani militants. Of the 3 states which have partial Sharia, 2 suffered multiple attacks, all of which took place in predominately Christian villages.

Kaduna suffered 10 attacks, while Niger suffered 4 attacks. The other 13 states that suffered attacks have no form of Sharia and are either evenly split between Christian and Muslims or are predominately Christian. This means that states with majority Muslim populations suffered, at most, 22 of the 70 attacks. Even in those states, though, all but the 4 were on Christian communities.

According to International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law (Intersociety), at least 1,500 churches have been destroyed by Fulani militant attacks in the last 57 months.

These attacks will continue to take place until the Nigerian government decides to stop them. They must allow states to have their own police forces to protect their citizens. They must enforce cattle ranching which will stop herders and farmers from clashing over land. They must also respond to information about suspected attacks.<sup>16</sup>

As noted in the summary section above, the USDOS's March 2020 country report contains a precis of the Middle Belt conflict. Unlike the ICC's analysis in the preceding paragraphs, the USDOS focus on the environmental factors sustaining the conflict:

Land disputes, competition over dwindling resources, ethnic differences, and settler-indigene tensions contributed to clashes between herdsman and farmers throughout the north-central part of the country. Ethnocultural and religious affiliation also were factors attributed to some local conflicts. Nevertheless, many international organizations, including International Crisis Group, assessed that these divisions were incidental to the farmer-herder conflict. During the past year, the conflict between herdsman and farmers in north-central states steadily slowed due to government policies and civil society conflict-resolution mechanisms. 'Silent killings,' in which individuals disappeared and later were found dead, occurred throughout the year. Conflicts concerning land rights continued among members of the Tiv, Kwalla, Jukun, Fulani, and Azara ethnic groups living near the convergence of Nasarawa, Benue, and Taraba States.<sup>17</sup>

Published just prior to the USDOS's 2020 country report, on 30 January 2020 CSI issued a Genocide Warning calling on the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council to take appropriate action to prevent genocide in Nigeria. In their accompanying press release CSI cited violence against Christians in late 2019 – early 2020 perpetrated by both Boko Haram and Fulani herdsman, including

<sup>16</sup> ['Factsheet: Religious Freedom in Nigeria'](#), International Christian Concern, April 2020, 20200514142805

<sup>17</sup> [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2019 - Nigeria](#), United States Department of State, 11 March 2020, Sect.6, 20200312124348

in Middle Belt state, as justification for their warning. The 'Warning' cites 1000 Christian deaths in the past year alone:

CSI issued this Genocide Warning in response to a rising tide of violence directed against Nigerian Christians and others classified as "infidels" by Islamist militants in the country's north and middle belt regions.

1,000 Christians in Nigeria are reported to have been killed by Islamist militias over the past year, with 6,000 murdered since 2015, according to the most conservative estimates from Nigerian Christian sources.<sup>18</sup>

According to Dr John Eibner, CSI's Chairman for International Management, and as communicated in the Genocide Warning, 'the conditions for genocide exist in Nigeria... with Christians, non-violent Muslims, and adherents of tribal religions being particularly vulnerable. The increasingly violent attacks and the failure of the Nigerian government to prevent them and punish the perpetrators are alarming'.<sup>19</sup>

### Boko Haram

Most sources portray Boko Haram's activities as largely contained to the Northeast of the country.<sup>20</sup> Other key sources indicate an existential threat (ethnic cleansing) targeting Christians countrywide.

While not specific to the Middle Belt, in their April 2020 *Factsheet: Religious Freedom in Nigeria* report, the ICC explain the motivation for ongoing Boko Haram attacks on Christians:

Boko Haram started targeting Christians with greater consistency in late 2019. In stark contradiction to remarks from President Buhari in early February, Islamic State West Africa Province, the ISIS-affiliated Boko Haram faction, stated that they are going to continue targeting Christians "for past atrocities." This statement came in late January [2020] during an execution video of Ropvil Dalep, a Christian student from the University of Maiduguri.

This execution video came shortly after the execution of 11 Christian aid workers in December 2019 and around the same time as the execution of a prominent Christian leader from Adamawa State. If this group had greater access to Christian villages there would be many more deaths. Lack of access is the main reason that Christians have not been killed in greater numbers by this group in recent years. As the group continues to gain more power and area of influence it is likely that more Christians will be targeted, killed, and kidnapped.<sup>21</sup>

EASO, in a 2019 report, and again not specific to a geographical region, note the number of Boko Haram attacks on Christians in the first half of 2018:

According to the International Society for Civil Liberties & the Rule of Law, quoted in the Vanguard, 250 Christians had been killed by Boko Haram in the first six months of 2018, and more than 2 450 in the period June 2015-June 2018. 553 These numbers could not be corroborated by other sources.<sup>22</sup>

In what appears to be an internally conflicted report, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom's (USCIRF) 2020 Annual Report (Nigeria chapter) provides an overview of Boko Haram activities in the country, with little information on violence specific to the Middle Belt, before providing a separate section containing the 'individual views' of two named commissioners. Within these individual views, the commissioners state that they consider the report to under-emphasise the nature and scope of the attacks against Christians, including in the Middle Belt, and characterise the

<sup>18</sup> ['CSI Issues Genocide Warning for Christians in Nigeria, Calls on Permanent Members of the UN Security Council to Act'](#), PR Newswire, 30 January 2020, 20200514141443

<sup>19</sup> ['CSI Issues Genocide Warning for Christians in Nigeria, Calls on Permanent Members of the UN Security Council to Act'](#), PR Newswire, 30 January 2020, 20200514141443

<sup>20</sup> ['USCIRF 2020 Annual Report'](#), United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), 28 April 2020, p.26, 20200429103634; ['United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Annual Report 2019'](#), United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), 29 April 2019, p.61, 20190508143726

<sup>21</sup> ['Factsheet: Religious Freedom in Nigeria'](#), International Christian Concern, April 2020, 20200514142805. See also the relevant local media reports listed on CSI ['Nigeria Report'](#) as outlined in [Additional Reading](#) below.

<sup>22</sup> ['COI Report Nigeria: Targeting Individuals'](#), European Asylum Support Office, 9 January 2019, 20190109132722



situation faced by Christians as 'ethnic cleansing'. Excerpts from both the main chapter and the subsequent Commissioners views are included below:

Boko Haram successfully targeted military posts and convoys, houses, farmlands, and mosques; abducted civilians; and killed hostages, including numerous humanitarian aid workers. Since 2009, Boko Haram has displaced more than two million people and killed tens of thousands. The widespread security issues of intercommunal and militia violence, rampant kidnapping, and general criminality also negatively impacted religious freedom. There were multiple reports of criminal attacks on religious and traditional leaders and houses of worship. In the surge of hundreds of kidnappings in 2019, media reported numerous incidents of kidnappings for ransom and the killing of Protestant and Catholic priests, including in Enugu, Ondo, and Kaduna states. There was less reporting of religious-based targeting in intercommunal violence in the Middle Belt region as compared to 2018; however, there continued to be reports of communal or ethnic militia attacks on entire communities, such as in Kaduna between Christian Adara and Muslim Fulani groups, in Zamfara, and in Taraba. The Nigerian government failed to effectively improve justice and security for its citizens, and was unsuccessful in addressing the immense need for accountability and reconciliation around past conflict.<sup>23</sup>

#### INDIVIDUAL VIEWS OF COMMISSIONERS GARY L. BAUER AND JOHNNIE MOORE

This chapter under-emphasizes the systematic, ongoing and egregious attacks against the Christian communities in the north and central parts of Nigeria, and over-simplifies the Nigerian government's challenges related to the Islamic Movement of Nigeria [IMN].

[...]

Finally, it is our conviction that Boko Haram, and those tribesmen inspired by them, intend on ethnically cleansing Nigeria of any Christian it cannot subjugate while threatening everyone that stands in their way, whatever their religion or ethnicity.<sup>24</sup>

In its previous year's report, USCIRF had noted, among other things, that Christians from Middle Belt states themselves had feared 'ethnic cleansing':

Across the country, sectarian conflict caused at least 2,000 deaths, with rising numbers of fatalities in Benue, Plateau, Taraba, Adamawa, and Nasarawa states in particular. During USCIRF's visits to Nigeria in 2018, civil society representatives and government officials offered diverse and overlapping reasons for the burgeoning and complex intercommunal violence: religious, ethnic, and tribal identity; clashes between farmer and herder communities; land and water disputes; and longstanding regional, local, and ethnic divisions.

[...]

The violence is exacerbated by the proliferation of and easy access to arms, polarizing media coverage, and the failure of security services to address the violence effectively and prevent it from recurring. High rates of unemployment and drug use were also identified as contributing factors.

[...]

Christian interlocutors reported ongoing fears that their communities were being targeted in ethnic cleansing campaigns. Religious communities in many areas remain highly polarized. In some cities, people are afraid to go into neighborhoods of the other religion or refuse to sell land to individuals from the other faith. Civil society members reported to USCIRF an ongoing problem with hate speech on the basis of religious and ethnic identity, including from clerics and clergy, as well as the spread of misinformation, which at times incites people to violence and reprisals. Numerous nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have developed radio programs to build trust and dialogue between Muslims and Christians and to encourage young people to use nonviolent methods to resolve issues.<sup>25</sup>

#### Fulani herdsmen

Sources indicate that it is the Fulani herdsmen rather than the Boko Haram conflict that poses the biggest threat to Christians throughout the Middle Belt states.<sup>26</sup> According to local sources and

<sup>23</sup> ['USCIRF 2020 Annual Report'](#), United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), 28 April 2020, p.26, 20200429103634

<sup>24</sup> ['USCIRF 2020 Annual Report'](#), United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), 28 April 2020, p.28, 20200429103634

<sup>25</sup> ['United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Annual Report 2019'](#), United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), 29 April 2019, pp.60-61, 20190508143726

<sup>26</sup> See for example ['The deadly conflict tearing Nigeria apart \(and it's not Boko Haram\)'](#), IRIN News (now 'The New Humanitarian'), 13 June 2017, CXC9040669238

international Christian groups, the number of attacks on Christians and the resulting death counts continue at alarming rates into 2020.

As indicated above, analysts hold a variety of perspectives on the key factors driving the Fulani-pastoralist conflict, with not all considering the religious (Muslim-Christian) dynamic paramount. NGO Search for Common Ground for example explicitly shed the idea of farmer-herder violence resulting from ethno-religious conflict:

1. Farmer/herder violence is neither an ethnic nor religious conflict, but rather a competition for resources playing out on ethno-religious lines in a fragile country characterized by impunity and corruption;
2. The current violence emanates from brutal responses to land disputes and attacks on livelihoods (crops and cattle), triggering self-perpetuating cycles of indiscriminate reprisal confrontations;
3. Gangs of criminals, often youth from farming and herding communities and/or local bandits, take advantage of growing insecurity, fear, and cyclical attacks to loot villages, engage in highway robbery, and rustle cattle for personal gain. Both farming and herding communities suffer from this criminality;<sup>27</sup>

The International Crisis Group provide a similarly multi-dimensional analysis explaining the escalation of violence across the Middle Belt in recent years:

The sparks for herder-farmer clashes tend to be disagreement over the use of land and water, livestock theft or the obstruction of traditional migration routes. But the conflict's roots lie in the – often forced – migration of herders south from their traditional grazing grounds in northern Nigeria. As drought and desertification have dried up springs and streams across Nigeria's far northern Sahelian belt, large numbers of herders have had to search for alternative pastures and sources of water for their cattle. Insecurity in many northern states, due to the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East and under-reported rural banditry and cattle rustling in other areas, has also driven herders southward. So, too, has the encroachment of settlements, farms and ranches on lands designated as grazing reserves by the post-independence government of the former Northern region (now split into nineteen states).

As the herders migrate into the savannah and rainforest of the central and southern states, they enter regions where high population growth over the last four decades has increased pressure on land.<sup>18</sup> Not surprisingly, disputes over crop damage, water pollution and cattle theft have become more frequent. With the decline of traditional mediation mechanisms and in the absence of mutually accepted alternatives, such quarrels increasingly turn violent.

Two additional factors have aggravated the conflict. While the jihadist Boko Haram indiscriminately killed both Christians and Muslims, it also heightened religious sensitivities, leading mostly Christian southerners to resent the influx of predominantly Muslim herders, which some southern and Middle Belt Christian leaders portray as an Islamising force. The growing availability of illicit firearms – locally produced, circulating from other Nigerian conflict zones in the North East and Niger Delta or smuggled in from other countries – has also enabled the carnage.

Against this backdrop, the 2018 escalation is the result of three more immediate developments: the rise of militias, the persistence of impunity and the passage of grazing bans that are anathema to herders.<sup>28</sup>

Adding a further dimension to this complexity, the USCIRF in 2019 noted that locals themselves found it difficult to diagnose the source of (escalating) conflict:

Sectarian violence between rural farmer and herder communities is prevalent in more than a dozen states, primarily in the broadly defined "Middle Belt" region of the country... Many community members conveyed that they did not understand the reasons for the escalation in attacks during 2018, citing a history of peaceful living between their communities. Sectarian violence has resulted in mass displacement, destruction of property, and the deaths of thousands.<sup>29</sup>

#### *Scale of violence*

In April 2020, domestic media outlet *The Nigerian Voice* reported that Fulani herdsmen had killed hundreds of Christians throughout Nigeria in 2020 and 7,400 since June 2015:

Not less than fifty (50) defenseless Christians were hacked to death in Nigeria in the month of March 2020. While twenty-five deaths were recorded in the first half of March 2020, twenty-five others took place

<sup>27</sup> ['Past is prologue: Criminality and reprisal in Nigeria's Middle Belt'](#), Search for Common Ground, 2017, p.5, 20200513140533

<sup>28</sup> ['Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence'](#), International Crisis Group (ICG), 26 July 2018, p.4, 20190618172152

<sup>29</sup> ['United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Annual Report 2019'](#), United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), 29 April 2019, p.60, 20190508143726

in the remaining half of the month, bringing the total to at least fifty (50). The killings were solely perpetrated by the Jihadist Fulani militants who also killed no fewer than ten Christians in first two days of April 2020. The monitored killings did not include those killed during the period by Boko Haram terror jihadists, if any.

In Jan and Feb 2020, no fewer than 350 Christians were hacked to death in the country, out of which, the Jihadist Fulani militants accounted for not less than 250 deaths. In all, not less than 410 Christian lives have been lost in Nigeria to Jihadist Fulani terrorists in the past 93 days of 2020 or 1st Jan to 2nd April 2020. This is on daily average of about five Christian deaths. On average, the Jihadist Fulani militants killed 125 Christians in January and February respectively and 50 in March.

The above was the position of Int'l Society for Civil Liberties & the Rule of Law in a statement released today at Onitsha, Eastern Nigeria and signed by Emeka Umeagbalasi, criminologist & graduate of security studies (Board Chair), Lawyer Obianuju Igboeli, (Head of Civil Liberties & Rule of Law), Lawyer Ndidiamaka Bernard (Head of Int'l Justice & Human Rights) and Lawyer Chinwe Umeche (Head of Democracy & Good Governance)

[...]

#### Previous Statistics

It is recalled that our organization had on March 8, 2020 released a special report, "in memory of the victims of Islamic Jihad in Nigeria". The special report had held that: "a total of 350 Christian deaths were recorded in the first two months of 2020" and that "Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen were responsible for at least 7,400 Christian deaths since June 2015."<sup>30</sup>

A selection of articles reporting on Fulani attacks resulting in Christian deaths in 2020 are included below, including in [redacted] State (see ['Additional Reading'](#) for a longer list of recent news reports)

- In early May 2020, in two separate attacks on Christians in the North Central state of Plateau, Fulani herdsman are reported to have killed four and wounded several other Christians. A pastor who survived the attacks claimed that 'nothing happens afterwards' in relation to the authorities' response to such attacks.<sup>31</sup>
- On 16 April, Christian Solidarity International reported on several deadly attacks on Christians in Plateau State in early-mid April 2010. Beyond leaving over ten dead, the attacks displaced some 250 people. Fulani are reported to have specifically targeted husbands during the attacks, though killed children when adult men could not be found.<sup>32</sup>
- On 5 April 2020, *Morning Star News* reported that Fulani herdsman 'since March 1 [2020] have killed more than 60 Christians, including at least 13 Christians last week in Plateau state, sources said'.<sup>33</sup>
- On 16 April 2020, *The Sun (Nigeria)* reported on a string of Fulani attacks in Kogi State targeting farmers that left 'scores' feared dead.<sup>34</sup> The religion of the farmers is not highlighted in the report.
- In February 2020, the ICG reported on 30 people killed on 1 January 2020 in Tawari town, Kogi state; twelve people killed in Kulben village in clashes between cattle rustlers and local youths on 9 January and 23 killed on 27 January in Kwatas village, both in Plateau state.<sup>35</sup> Nigerian news outlet *The Guardian* reports that the Kogi killers are suspected to be herdsmen.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>30</sup> ['Fifty Christians Hacked To Death By Fulani Jihadists In March & Ten In First Two Days Of April 2020'](#), The Nigerian Voice, 4 April 2020, 4 April 2020, 20200514143619

<sup>31</sup> ['Four Christians Killed, Head of High School and Family Shot in North-central Nigeria'](#), Morning Star News, 07 May 2020, 20200508140817

<sup>32</sup> ['Nigeria – Christians continue to come under attack despite coronavirus'](#), Christian Solidarity International, 16 April 2020, 20200514144118

<sup>33</sup> ['Fulani Herdsmen in Nigeria Kill More than 60 Christians in Five Weeks. Sources say'](#), Morning Star News, 5 April 2020, 20200512144812

<sup>34</sup> ['Scores feared killed as herdsman invade Kogi communities'](#), The Sun (Nigeria), 16 April 2020, 20200514144852

<sup>35</sup> ['Tracking Conflict Worldwide 2020 – Nigeria'](#), International Crisis Group, January 2020, 20200513161745

<sup>36</sup> ['23 killed as suspected militia attack Tawari in Kogi'](#), The Guardian, (Nigeria), 4 January 2020, 20200513161326

### Additional Reading

- An exhaustive list of local reporting on recent attacks targeting Christians is housed on Christian Solidarity International's '[Nigeria Report](#)' website.<sup>37</sup>
- A 2017 account indicating the Fulani rather than Boko Haram violence is Nigeria's most problematic conflict: '[The deadly conflict tearing Nigeria apart \(and it's not Boko Haram\)](#)', IRIN News (now 'The New Humanitarian'), 13 June 2017, CXC9040669238

## 4. What action has the government taken in response to any violence against Christians in the region?

Sources provide a mixed account of government actions taken in response to Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen violence, though in general share a consensus view that actions have failed to stem the conflict. The majority of sources referenced below attest to the authorities' actions countrywide; where permitted reference is made specific to the Middle Belt region of Nigeria.

According to the ICC report referenced in [Question 3](#), authorities concentrate their response on Boko Haram, largely ignoring the activities of the Fulani herdsmen:

Despite the large number and varied sources of these [Fulani] attacks the government only deals with Boko Haram and continues to turn a blind eye to Fulani militant aggression. This is demonstrated by the number of clashes between military and militant groups. The Nigerian military was involved in 105 tracked incidents relating to Boko Haram. This accounts for about 81% of incidents involving Boko Haram. However, for incidents involving Fulani militants in the Middle Belt, the Nigerian military or police were only involved in 10 out of 70. This is only 14% of incidents involving Fulani militants.<sup>38</sup>

The USCIRF in its 2019 report write that both Muslims and Christians felt unprotected by security services:

Both Muslims and Christians stated that they did not feel protected by security services. Police are either unresponsive or untimely in their response, lack capacity, fail to arrest (or prosecute) perpetrators, and do not properly collect data and document incidents of violence or subsequent investigations, nor do they effectively communicate results of investigations to the Attacks by the terrorist groups Boko Haram and ISIS-WA continued in spite of the Nigerian government's progress in its counterinsurgency efforts. Vigilante groups often fill the security gaps. In many cases, the military has deployed to restore order, though troops have faced criticism for using excessive force, harming civilians, fostering mistrust of authorities and among religious groups, and tacitly encouraging vigilante responses. The pervasiveness of vigilante groups and the continuous and disproportionate role of military operations around the country are evidence of a serious need for reform of police and security services.<sup>39</sup>

EASO reported on a legal innovation that was implemented across several states, including the North-Central state of Benue, which saw the cessation of herder grazing there. COISS is unclear whether this policy merely displaced the problem to contiguous states and notes the ICG's criticism of the law:<sup>40</sup>

Several states such as Ekiti, Benue and Taraba, have passed anti-grazing laws in attempts to avoid clashes between herders and farmers. According to SBM Intelligence, these measures only had effect in Ekiti where 'nearly zero' attacks have taken place. However, herders interviewed by BBC reported being forbidden to graze in Benue (punishable by five years prison) and forced to move to another state. Farmers feel justified by the anti-grazing laws to chase the herders away off their lands, 'sometimes violently'. MASSOB and IPOB have warned the Fulani not to enter the South East and South South areas as 10 000 men have been deployed as security operatives for Biafra.<sup>41</sup>

EASO draw on a range of secondary sources addressing the state's response to anti-Christian violence:

<sup>37</sup> The website of the newsfeed of CSI's Nigeria Report is <<https://www.nigeria-report.org/news>>

<sup>38</sup> '[Factsheet: Religious Freedom in Nigeria](#)', International Christian Concern, April 2020, 20200514142805

<sup>39</sup> '[United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Annual Report 2019](#)', United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), 29 April 2019, p.60, 20190508143726

<sup>40</sup> '[Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence](#)', International Crisis Group (ICG), 26 July 2018, pp.ii,2,4, 20190618172152

<sup>41</sup> '[COI Report Nigeria: Targeting Individuals](#)', European Asylum Support Office, 9 January 2019, p.98, 20190109132722



The Nigerian federal government and state authorities have reportedly done 'very little to address the rural insecurity in the north', nor did they arrest persecutors or offered redress to victims. 'As a result, both farmers and herders take matters in their own hands, further aggravating conflicts', according to International Crisis Group. Perpetrators largely go unpunished. The Nigerian authorities' response to the clashes is heavily criticised by AI, characterised as 'totally inadequate, too slow and ineffective, and in some cases unlawful'. AI specifically referred to the deadly attack on five villages on 4 December 2017 by hundreds of herdsmen, and the subsequent air force attacks, during which events 86 people were killed in total. In response to the mass killings in Plateau in the end of June 2018, the Nigerian police announced the deployment of a special intervention force to restore peace and security, and 'to carry out a thorough and discreet investigation into the killings and promptly apprehend those responsible'. Human Rights Watch comments that the authorities 'need to do more than debunk self-help calls if they want people to trust and cooperate with them' adding: 'Even-handed, prompt, and thorough investigations, followed by fair trials of those responsible for the violence, are effective ways to unequivocally send this message.' The police commissioner of Benue State explains his tactics to approach the ongoing conflicts between herdsmen and farmers as follows: 'dialogue, intelligence policing as well as involvement of communities in activities of the command. He explained that normal strategies of policing and community-based strategies in policing were also adopted to check the security challenges.'<sup>42</sup>

The ICG, writing in a July 2019 publication, note that despite the government taking some actions to stop the bloodshed, killings never the less continue:

The federal government has taken measures to stop the bloodshed. It has deployed additional police and army units, and launched two military operations to curb violence in six states – Exercise Cat Race, which ran from 15 February to 31 March, and subsequently Operation Whirl Stroke, which is still ongoing. Even with these deployments, however, killings continue. President Buhari and other senior officials have consulted with herder and farmer leaders, as well as relevant state governments, to discuss ways to halt the attacks. As a long-term solution, the government has proposed establishing "cattle colonies", which would set aside land for herdsmen across the country, and more recently unveiled a National Livestock Transformation Plan (2018-2027). These measures signal greater commitment on the government's part, but they are yet to be implemented and the violence continues.<sup>43</sup>

Elsewhere in the report however, the ICG state as one of the aggravating factors perpetuating the conflict 'the poor government response to distress calls and failure to punish past perpetrators'.<sup>44</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

<sup>42</sup> '[COI Report Nigeria: Targeting Individuals](#)', European Asylum Support Office, 9 January 2019, p.99, 20190109132722

<sup>43</sup> '[Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence](#)', International Crisis Group (ICG), 26 July 2018, Executive Summary, pp.ii-iii, 20190618172152

<sup>44</sup> '[Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence](#)', International Crisis Group (ICG), 26 July 2018, Principal Findings, 20190618172152



## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: 20200518140013 – Student Cults – Black Axe – Anambra State

Date of Report

21 May 2020

This Q&A Report was prepared by the Country of Origin Information Services Section (COISS), Department of Home Affairs in response to a request for country information within time constraints. It is current at the time of completion. This Q&A Report should not be cited in a decision or any other document. Anyone wishing to use this information should only cite the source material contained herein.

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#### Background

A [redacted] applicant fears harm from the Black Axe student cult.

#### Questions

1. [Is the Black Axe student cult still active in the Anambra State in Nigeria and how are they treated by the authorities?](#)

## Answers

### 1. Is the Black Axe student cult still active in the Anambra State in Nigeria and how are they treated by the authorities?

Country information located shows that the Black Axe student cult is active in the Anambra State in Nigeria and its members have been arrested by the police for their involvement in criminal activities.

The Black Axe (also known as Aye – from its motto ‘Ayei! Axemen’) emerged on the campuses of Nigerian universities and educational institutions from the Neo-Black Movement of Africa but started operating as criminal gangs by the 1990s and have become linked to political violence, criminal activity and people trafficking.<sup>1</sup> It is one of many confraternities or student cults that are associated with ‘violent initiation rites and illegal activities (such as killings, human trafficking, drugs trafficking, smuggling, extortions, kidnapping, and forced recruitment’, violence and death.<sup>2</sup> According to the 2018 Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) country information report for Nigeria.

Campus cults such as the Black Axe target students for membership. Students who refuse to join may face intimidation, threats and sometimes violence. Young men are more likely to be targeted. DFAT considers credible reports that inter-cult violence occasionally results in the death of cult members and that cult members have assaulted individuals who attempt to leave. Often the only way to escape unwanted attention from campus cults is to change universities.

DFAT assesses that members of the Black Axe group do not face violence on a day-to-day basis. If a member wishes to leave the group, they may face intimidation and threats; however, DFAT is not aware of any person being killed for leaving the group.<sup>3</sup>

A 2015 journal article examining student cults in Nigerian tertiary institutions while focusing on the Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Awka (the capital of the Anambra State which is one of the southern States of Nigeria) notes the presence of student cults in that institution.<sup>4</sup> Another journal article published in 2017 notes the existence of the Black Axe cult (which had earlier originated in the University of Benin and largely comprised of members belonging to the two dominant tribes of southern Nigeria, namely, Yoruba and Igbo) in the southern universities of Nigeria leading to cult violence.<sup>5</sup>

The activities of the cults create fear among the people and, according to Berlin-based journalist, Sean Williams, ‘few Nigerians dare cross the Black Axe’.<sup>6</sup> In January 2018, 20 people were killed and 60 arrested in Awka as a result of clashes between rival cults of the Black Axe and the Vikings.<sup>7</sup> In

<sup>1</sup> ‘The Black Axe’, Sean Williams, Harper’s Magazine, September 2019, 20200520092751; ‘Religious, Social and Criminal Groups in Trafficking of Nigerian Girls and Women. The case of shrines, “Ladies’ club” and “cultist groups”’, ECPAT France, March 2019, pp.16, 144-145, 20200520093001

<sup>2</sup> ‘Country Background Note Nigeria’, UK Home Office, January 2020, paras. 9.1.1 and 9.1.2, pp.21-22, 20200123110102; ‘Country Guidance: Nigeria’, European Asylum Support Office (EASO), 19 March 2019, p.13, 20190319173224

<sup>3</sup> ‘DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria’, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia), 9 March 2018, paras.3.73 and 3.74, p.25, CIS7B83941414

<sup>4</sup> ‘Causes, Effects and Strategies for Eradicating Cultism among Students in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria – A Case Study of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Anambra State, Nigeria’, U. V. Chinwe and I.U.J.Mag, *Journal of Education and Practice*, Vol.6 No.22, 2015, 20200520093335

<sup>5</sup> ‘An Assessment of Black Axe Cofraternity Cult in Nigeria: Its Impact on the University Educational System’, A. Z. Surajo and A.H.M.Z.Z. Karim, *South Asian Anthropologist*, Vo.1 No.17, 2017, pp.3, 5, 20200520093936

<sup>6</sup> ‘Causes and Panacea to Problem of Cultism in the Nigerian Education System’, S.O.Ajitoni and O.D.Olaniyan, *European Journal of Education Studies*, Vol.4 Issue 2, 2018, p.258, 20200520094339; ‘The Black Axe’, Sean Williams, Harper’s Magazine, September 2019, 20200520092751

<sup>7</sup> ‘Nigeria: Awka Cult War Claims 20 in One Month as Police Arrest 60 suspects’, All Africa, 24 January 2018, 20200520095100

June 2018, 16 people were killed in Awka as a result of clashes between the rival cults — the Black Axe and the Vikings.<sup>8</sup>

In 2019, several Nigerian media articles referred to the activities of the Black Axe cult in the Anambra State. For example: in March 2019, two persons were killed as a result of a clash between the Black Axe and the Vikings cults during Assembly elections in Anambra<sup>9</sup>; in April 2019, a member of the Black Axe cult was arrested for alleged displaying locally made weapons while other members fled from the scene in the north of the Anambra State<sup>10</sup>; in August 2019, the police arrested four suspected members of the Black Axe and Viking co-fraternities in Awka following a violent clash between members of the two co-fraternities<sup>11</sup>; also in August, the police arrested 85 cult suspects and recovered dangerous weapons in Awka<sup>12</sup>; in December 2019, police arrested four men who were allegedly preparing to initiate new members into the Black Axe cofraternity<sup>13</sup>.

The cult-related killings that took place in the Anambra State in 2019 were not only attributed to the two rival cults — the Black Axe and the Vikings — but also to ‘some top politicians’ in the State who were alleged to have sponsored killings in the State for which they were arrested by the police.<sup>14</sup>

According to a 2013 report by a Nigerian civil society organisation, the Anambra State has a history of armed violence. The report elaborates:

Violent crime is a pervasive problem in Anambra State, particularly as it experiences major changes in its political, demographic and economic makeup. As in other parts of Nigeria, Anambra has experienced vast unemployment in its rural areas, contributing to a rapid urbanisation. Its young, densely packed population has seen a lack of opportunities plague even its educated sectors, making education less attractive and leaving a large population of young male school drop-outs at great risk of criminal activity. With a legacy of inter-communal conflict, secessionist insurgency and other political violence, and the lingering weaponry and ideology of civil war, Anambra is ripe for all manner of armed violence.

[...]

Armed violence in Anambra is committed by a wide variety of perpetrators. The vigilante situation is such that two parallel security forces exist in the state: the official police, and the state-sanctioned vigilantes and private security firms.

[...]

[T]here are unemployed, uneducated, dropout youths committing crimes both as individuals and in gangs and “cults”.<sup>15</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Rival cult clashes claim 16 lives in two weeks in Anambra, says CP’, International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR), 5 June 2018, 20200520095326

<sup>9</sup> ‘Elections: Two killed in Anambra’, Premium Times (Nigeria), 9 March 2019, 20200520095905

<sup>10</sup> ‘Suspected cultist flee as police arrest member at funeral’, Today (Nigeria), 30 April 2019, 20200520100122

<sup>11</sup> ‘Police arrest four ‘cultists’ in Anambra’, Today (Nigeria), 14 August 2019, 20200520100423

<sup>12</sup> ‘Police arrest 85 cult suspects in Anambra’, Today (Nigeria), 19 August 2019, 20200520100651

<sup>13</sup> ‘Police nab two fake soldiers in Anambra’, Punch (Nigeria), 15 December 2019, 20200520100907

<sup>14</sup> ‘Police arrest politicians behind cult killings in Anambra’, Daily Post (Nigeria), 14 August 2019, 20200520092415

<sup>15</sup> ‘The Violent Road An overview of armed violence in Nigeria’, The National Working Group on Armed Violence in Nigeria, December 2013, pp.90, 92, 20200520095556





## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: 20200518121314 – Student Cults – Seal Lodge – Police Protection

Date of Report

25 May 2020

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#### Background

A Nigerian applicant [redacted].

#### Questions

1. [Please provide information on the Seal Lodge cult: what is it known for; what is its membership number and what are its activities?](#)
2. [Does the Seal Lodge cult operate in Ibadan and also in other parts of Nigeria?](#)
3. [Can the police protect individuals from the Seal Lodge cult?](#)

## Answers

### 1. Please provide information on the Seal Lodge cult: what is it known for; what is its membership number; and what are its activities?

COISS could not locate any information regarding the Seal or Sea Lodge cult.<sup>1</sup> Country information was located regarding two similar sounding confraternities or student cults<sup>2</sup>: the Pyrates (also known as the Seadogs) and the Buccaneers (also known as the Sealords).

The origins of the confraternity or student cults system in Nigeria can be traced back to the establishment of the Pyrates confraternity (formally called the National Association of Seadogs) in 1952 by the Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka at the University College, Ibadan, in south-west Nigeria.<sup>3</sup> According to the 2018 Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) country information report for Nigeria, members of the Pyrates cult 'dressed up as pirates, protested elite, colonial culture, and promoted pan-Africanism'.<sup>4</sup> The goals of the cult were 'to fight non-violently but intellectually and effectively, against the imposition of foreign conventions, to revive the age of chivalry' and 'find a lasting solution to the problems of tribalism and elitism'.<sup>5</sup>

The Pyrates confraternity became politically active and emerged as a hub in the University of Ibadan by the 1970s but by the mid-1980s, it broke down into other confraternities after its founder, Wole Soyinka, 'was forced to shut down all campus operations' 'due to the increasing violent actions on campus'.<sup>6</sup> An extremely dated (1999) report by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada notes that an alliance between three confraternities including the Pyrates existed at the universities of Lagos and Benin and also at Ibadan Polytechnic.<sup>7</sup>

A 2000 article corroborates the finding of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada and notes that:

Many secret cult organizations have been formed at the University of Ibadan. Some of them no longer exist. At the time of this research, about nine student cult organizations, including two new female associations, were active at the University of Ibadan. They include: Pyrates, Buccaneers, Black Axe, Mafice, Bye, Black Cobra, Daughters of Jezebel, Pink Lady and Viking.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sources consulted include CISNET, government and non-government reports, domestic and international media outlets, and internet searches

<sup>2</sup> Cults are sociologically understood as groups of people who share 'secret, esoteric and individualistic' beliefs. According to the founder of the first student 'cult' in Nigeria, Wole Soyinka, confraternities in Nigerian universities were not founded as cults but as social groups to add to the social life of the university. The original confraternity ('the Pyrates') did not 'swear any oath of secrecy' or bound 'blood and the identities of members'. 'Violence in the Citadel: The Menace of Secret Cults in the Nigerian Universities', A.Rotimi, *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, Vol.14 No.1, 2005, pp. 80-82, 20200521102300

<sup>3</sup> 'Religious, Social and Criminal Groups in Trafficking of Nigerian Girls and Women, The case of shrines, "Ladies' club" and "cultist groups"', ECPAT France, March 2019, p.143, 20200520093001

<sup>4</sup> 'DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia), 9 March 2018, para.3.70, p.24, CIS7B83941414

<sup>5</sup> 'Violence in the Citadel: The Menace of Secret Cults in the Nigerian Universities', A.Rotimi, *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, Vol.14 No.1, 2005, p.81, 20200521102300

<sup>6</sup> 'From Fraternal Brotherhood to Murderous Cult: The Origins and Mutations of Southern Nigeria's Confraternities from 1953 Onwards', Ben Bergman, *Pursuit* (University of Tennessee), Vol. 7 Issue 1, 5 April 2016, p.14, 20200521094410

<sup>7</sup> 'Nigeria: Activities of an organization called the Seadogs (Sea Dogs) (National Association of Seadogs: NAS), also known as the Pyrates Confraternity', Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 24 November 1999, 20200521102013

<sup>8</sup> 'Impact of Campus Secret Cult Organizations on University Administration: A case study of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria', M. Ogunsanya, in *The Dilemma of Post-Colonial Universities*, IFRA-Nigeria, 2000, 20200521101416

The Pyrates Confraternity has 37 branches across Nigeria.<sup>9</sup> It also has branches in seven other countries.<sup>10</sup>

The aims of the Pyrates Confraternity, according to its official website, include:

participation in a wide range of social activities, front-running commentaries on socio-political and economic issues with a view to bringing a dispassionate and problem-solving approach to thorny issues and to provide solutions where required. Its involvement in the Nigerian society has, over the years, spanned nearly all aspects of the country's societal life. Whilst it is a fundamental aspect of its existence to eschew self-place, it is sufficient to say that it has left (and will continue to leave) an indelible mark on the Nigerian societal ethos. The improvement of societal standards is encapsulated in its operational watchwords, "the four compass points": Against Moribund Convention, Against Ethnicity, For humanistic ideals, For comradeship and Chivalry.<sup>11</sup>

The website further notes:

In 1980, the Pyrates Confraternity was formally registered with the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs under the Land (Perpetual Succession) Act Cap 98 with the name "The National Association of Seadogs". Now in its 62nd year of existence, over 25,000 people have, at various stages, belonged to the organization. To date, the organization is present in all 36 states of Nigeria, and has full-fledged branches in the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States of America, Japan, Holland, South Africa and Canada.<sup>12</sup>

As noted above, the Pyrates confraternity splintered into other confraternities during the 1970s and the 80s, and, according to a 2016 article: 'from this point the confraternities began spreading outwards to other universities and states across Southern Nigeria'.<sup>13</sup> In 1972, one of the splinter groups started a rival organisation called the Buccaneers (Sealords) Confraternity whose members believe that the group are 'society's roving policemen, who are naturally and morally superior to all seafaring creatures'.<sup>14</sup>

According to the website of the Buccaneers Confraternity:

Thus the Buccaneers Confraternity was born in University of Ibadan (Modaship) with Bolaji Carew as its first head in 1972. The confraternity remained in the University of Ibadan from 1972 till 1976 when the idea of a national outlook was conceived. The graduate body was growing and spreading to other areas of the country and their good deeds were spreading too; a clamour for other decks increased and was accepted. This led to decks being established in various institutions of higher learning around the country.

The growth and spread of our confraternity on university campuses were not without attendant problems, for this coincided with the expansion of other student movements which consequently resulted in squabbles in many campuses. Conscious of the need to provide direction, uphold the ideals of the confraternity and to further cement the ideals of a nationally recognised body, a group of older Buccaneers gave strength to the formation of the Buccaneers Association of Nigeria (BAN) whose inauguration was performed at Modaship in 1982 during our tenth anniversary tagged DOUBLOON.

The period from 1982 provided another beginning and new challenges for the confraternity. The restructuring of the hierarchy came into effect. As a first step towards reining in the excesses of the under graduate members, the student body lost their autonomy and became subordinate to the odas of the Grand Eye, the national head.

The Buccaneers confraternity has weathered many storms and is beginning its 5th decade as a vibrant confraternity with a social and moral conscience and proper brotherliness amongst its members and the society in general. Our confraternity is a worldwide organisation with presence in most parts of the world

<sup>9</sup> 'Pirates Confraternity Branches in Nigeria', National Association of Seadogs (NAS), 2020[accessed 20 May 2020], 20200521100735

<sup>10</sup> 'Pirates Confraternity Branches outside Nigeria', National Association of Seadogs (NAS), 2020[accessed 20 May 2020], 20200521101001

<sup>11</sup> 'Who we are?', National Association of Seadogs, 2020 [accessed 20 May 2020], 20200521100329

<sup>12</sup> 'Who we are?', National Association of Seadogs, 2020 [accessed 20 May 2020], 20200521100329

<sup>13</sup> 'From Fraternal Brotherhood to Murderous Cult: The Origins and Mutations of Southern Nigeria's Confraternities from 1953 Onwards', Ben Bergman, Pursuit (University of Tennessee), Vol. 7 Issue 1, 5 April 2016, p.14, 20200521094410

<sup>14</sup> 'Nigeria: 'We Regret Forming Pirate Confraternity'', A. Aderoju, This Day (All Africa), 23 February 2005, 20200520165326; 'Our History', Buccaneers Confraternity, undated[accessed 20 May 2020], 20200521095356

including the United Kingdom (UK), United States of America (USA), Canada, South Africa, Malaysia and Mainland Europe.<sup>15</sup>

The Buccaneers Confraternity Community Facebook page is followed by over 30,000 people<sup>16</sup> and it claims that 'this is the only authorized official page of the Buccaneers Confraternity. All other pages purporting to represent us are illegal'.<sup>17</sup>

The 'philosophy' of Buccaneers Confraternity is based on the following values and principles:

We stand for love, orderliness, honesty, transparency, togetherness, championing and sharing each other's problems and positively seeking to solve them, promoting each other's welfare and well-being, creating a sample society for the world to copy from, promoting objectivity, fairness and social justice generally. These objectives underline our mottos stated below:

BLUD 4 BLUD is based on the philosophy that those who do injustice in any form will, by the natural laws, suffer for it in a way. It is a message to society and mankind that if things are not done in accordance with the principles enunciated in our objectives stated above, there will be repercussions for Society at large.

NO PRICE NO PAY also seeks to inculcate in our brothers and the world at large that if you do good, you will not suffer any retribution. It follows that for every ill you do, there is a price to pay. Again, this seeks to enjoin mankind to avoid divine or societal punishment by being law-abiding, fair and objective whatever your position may be for one day, you will be called to account.

NO FRIEND NO FOE means that in dealing with social and family issues, it is wrong to be selective. Principles and sanctions must be applied in equal measure and with equal force to every person irrespective of sex, sexuality, race, creed, colour, nationality, religion or political belief. It simply means that there should be no Sacred Cows.<sup>18</sup>

However, according to a 2019 report, the Buccaneers Confraternity group is associated with the 'development of violence' and 'rivalry between the confraternities'.<sup>19</sup>

A 2016 report shows the geographical distribution of the confraternities in Nigeria<sup>20</sup>:

<sup>15</sup> 'Our History', Buccaneers Confraternity, 2015[accessed 20 May 2020], 20200521095356

<sup>16</sup> 'Buccaneers Confraternity', Facebook, 2020[accessed 20 May 2020], 20200521095618

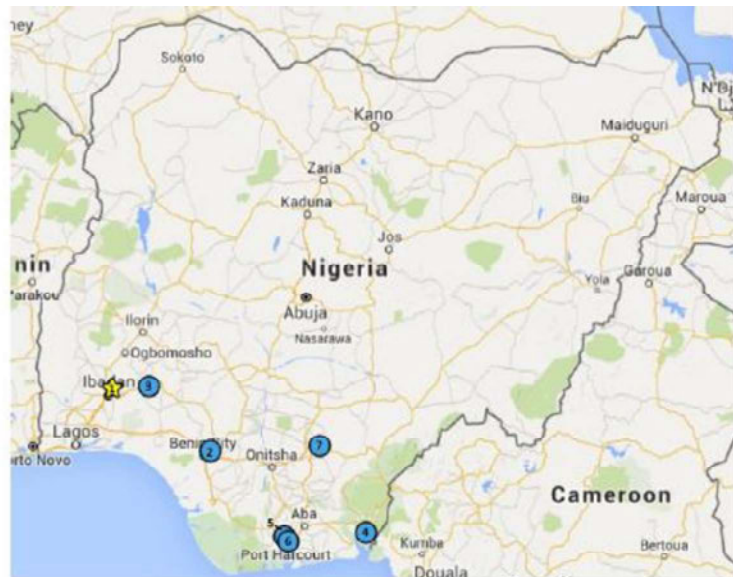
<sup>17</sup> 'About Buccaneers Confraternity', Facebook, 2020[accessed 20 May 2020], 20200521095856

<sup>18</sup> 'Our Philosophy', Buccaneers Confraternity, undated[accessed 20 May 2020], 20200521095005

<sup>19</sup> 'Religious, Social and Criminal Groups in Trafficking of Nigerian Girls and Women, The case of shrines, "Ladies' club" and "cultist groups"', ECPAT France, March 2019, p.146, 20200520093001

<sup>20</sup> 'From Fraternal Brotherhood to Murderous Cult: The Origins and Mutations of Southern Nigeria's Confraternities from 1953 Onwards', Ben Bergman, Pursuit (University of Tennessee), Vol. 7 Issue 1, 5 April 2016, p.15, 20200521094410





Legend	
	Pirates, Buccaneers, and Eiye--University of Ibadan
	Black Axe confraternity--University of Benin
	The Family confraternity--University of Ile-Ife
	Klansmen Konfraternity--University of Calabar
	Supreme Vikings confraternity--University of Port Harcourt
	Victor Charlie Boys--Rivers State University of Science and Technology
	Black Berets--Enugu State University of Science and Technology

According to the 2018 Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) country information report for Nigeria:

[...] several 'cults' now have a presence in high schools as well as the streets, operating more like gangs rather than religious cults. Young men in particular are targeted to join cults for protection and because of peer pressure. However, many young men and women voluntarily join – cult membership can mean access to money and power. Membership generally involves a violent initiation, which can include beatings and rape.<sup>21</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

## **2. Does the Seal Lodge cult operate in Ibadan and also in other parts of Nigeria?**

COISS could not locate any information regarding the Seal or Sea Lodge cult. Country information was located regarding two similar sounding confraternities or student cults: the Pirates (also known as the Seadogs) and the Buccaneers (also known as the Sealords). Please see reply to [Question 1](#) above.

#### Additional Reading

- Nil.

<sup>21</sup> 'DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia), 9 March 2018, para.3.71, p.24, CIS7B83941414

### 3. Can the police protect individuals from the Seal Lodge cult?

Information specifically answering the question could not be located. Country information located shows that the police are not generally trusted by the people who regard them as ineffective, ill-trained, and corrupt. The government relies on the military to respond to violent security situations.

The Nigerian Police Force (NPF) as the country's primary law enforcement agency along with other federal organisations has 'limited ability to control societal violence' leading to greater reliance on the military and other security services 'to provide community policing' particularly during a state of emergency or civilian conflict.<sup>22</sup>

The NPF suffers from a number of deficiencies ranging from a lack of suitable staff, funding, access to proper equipment and facilities, inadequate training, poor pay and a high prevalence of corruption that adversely impact on its effectiveness.<sup>23</sup> The NPF also prioritises the security of 'politicians and wealthy individuals' over community policing and protection and is generally perceived by the population as 'corrupt and ineffective'. That does not, however, prevent people from seeking its assistance.<sup>24</sup>

According to the 2019 US Department of State's country report on human rights practices in Nigeria:

Police, DSS [Department of State Services], and military reported to civilian authorities but periodically acted outside civilian control. The government lacked effective mechanisms and sufficient political will to investigate and punish most security force abuse and corruption. Police remained susceptible to corruption, committed human rights violations, and operated with widespread impunity in the apprehension, illegal detention, and torture of suspects. The DSS also reportedly committed human rights abuses. In some cases private citizens or the government brought charges against perpetrators of human rights abuses, but most cases lingered in court or went unresolved after an initial investigation.<sup>25</sup>

According to March 2019 European Asylum Support Office's country guidance for Nigeria:

It can be concluded that in some parts of the country, the capacity of the Nigerian State to provide effective protection is limited, in particular in the states of Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, Plateau, Benue, Nasarawa, Taraba, and Zamfara. The Nigerian State and its institutions may also prove inaccessible or ineffective in certain situations, such as for women and children victims of violence, for the prevention of FGM/C, forced and child marriage, for victims of trafficking, etc. Moreover, the Nigerian state may be an actor of persecution, for example in cases of LGBT persons or when implementing the Sharia in cases of adultery in the North.

Age, gender, area of origin and socio-economic status are among the factors that affect the accessibility of protection for the individual.<sup>26</sup>

According to the 2020 US State Department's (Overseas Security Advisory Council or OSAC) crime and safety report for Lagos in Nigeria which is not too far<sup>27</sup> from the city of Ibadan:

Despite a visible police presence in large cities, police response is variable. Law enforcement authorities usually respond slowly or not at all and provide minimal investigative support to victims. The Rapid Response Squad's policing capacity and emergency response capabilities continue to grow, but remain in a nascent state.

A serious lack of resources (e.g. communications equipment, vehicles, skilled leadership, training) continues to undermine the effectiveness of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). Usually, victims must maintain

<sup>22</sup> 'Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2019 - Nigeria', United States Department of State, 11 March 2020, p.1, 20200312124348; 'DFAT Country Information Report Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia), 9 March 2018, para.5.1, p.29, CIS7B83941414

<sup>23</sup> 'Country Policy and Information Note, Nigeria: Actors of Protection', UK Home Office, 10 April 2019, para 2.3.6, p.6, 20190411105142

<sup>24</sup> 'Country Policy and Information Note, Nigeria: Actors of Protection', UK Home Office, 10 April 2019, para 2.3.6, p.6, 20190411105142

<sup>25</sup> 'Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2019 - Nigeria', United States Department of State, 11 March 2020, Sect.1d, p.24, 20200312124348

<sup>26</sup> 'Country Guidance: Nigeria', European Asylum Support Office (EASO), 19 March 2019, p.24, 20190319173224

<sup>27</sup> Distance is 128 km. 'Nigeria key connection from Lagos to Ibadan', World Highways, 28 November 2016, 20200525160016

close contact with local police to move an investigation forward. Crime laboratories and facilities to process evidence are rare. A DNA forensic lab opened in late 2017.

Expatriates and affluent Nigerians employ their own security and use armored vehicles for travel. Businesses and individuals frequently hire police officers and other law enforcement agents to provide armed private security. Most businesses employ guard services, and many companies offer varying quality of service.

Most Nigerians do not perceive the NPF as an effective law enforcement body and have little faith in the criminal justice system. A call to police for assistance may result in the solicitation of bribes. Criminal groups do not fear arrest or prosecution for their activities. Local police and neighborhood associations generally do not deter or disrupt crimes, and seldom apprehend or detain suspects.<sup>28</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- 'Nigeria: Availability and effectiveness of state and police response in both urban and rural areas of southern Nigeria, for people who refuse to participate in ritual practices (2014 – October 2016)', Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 14 November 2016, CIS38A80124829
- 'The Police in Human Rights Protection', N. Akani, *African Journal of International and Comparative Law*, Vol.3 No.3, December 2019, 20200521094043

<sup>28</sup> 'Nigeria 2020 Crime & Safety Report: Lagos', US Department of State Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), 28 April 2020, 20200521092123



## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: 20200731154954 – Christianity – Preaching

Date of Report

17 August 2020

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#### Background

The applicant is from the Niger Delta region (south-south area of Nigeria). He claims to be a Christian with non-mainstream Christian views. He is also involved with the Laymen's Home Missionary Movement (LHMM) (or Bible Standard Ministries) in Nigeria. He claims he intends to preach on return but will be subjected to violence because his interpretation of the Bible is considered blasphemous.

#### Questions

1. [What type of followers does the LHMM have in Nigeria?](#)
2. [Are there any reports of individuals involved with the LHMM in Nigeria being harmed or mistreated for any reason?](#)
3. [Are there any reports of Christians who preach non-mainstream Christianity being harmed \(by other Christians or anyone else\)?](#)
4. [Are there any reports of conflict between Christian denominations or evangelical movements in the south?](#)

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## Answers

### 1. What type of followers does the LHMM have in Nigeria?

COISS found no information from independent sources about the Laymen's Home Missionary Movement (LHMM) in Nigeria, and cannot verify what type of followers, and how many, if any, that the LHMM has in Nigeria.<sup>1</sup>

COISS found some information on LHMM's publishing agency named Bible Standard Ministries (BSM) which publishes *The Bible Standard* magazine.<sup>2</sup> BSM claims that *The Bible Standard* magazine has been published in its present form in many languages over the last sixty years.<sup>3</sup> Digital versions of *The Bible Standard* magazine from 2000 until 2019 are available online.<sup>4</sup>

In its website, BSM states that the LHMM was established in 1920. The name 'Bible Standard Ministries' was created in 2005 for publication purposes and for other uses in the growing non-denominational Gospel ministry.<sup>5</sup>

According to the BSM's website:

The LHMM is a worldwide interdenominational, non-sectarian, non-profit-making, unincorporated religious movement, in which many Christian people, especially laymen, of all walks of life, from and apart from various denominations, co-operate voluntarily. There are many chapters in the U.S.A. and abroad. It is not affiliated with any other group or denomination. It is financed by unsolicited voluntary contributions. Donations to it are income-tax exempt.

The purposes of the LHMM are to preach the Gospel (the "good tidings of great joy"—Luke 2:10, 14), to encourage growth in Christlikeness, to spread and encourage others to spread Bible knowledge (particularly as it pertains to our times), and to stimulate greater interest in individual and group Bible study along non-sectarian lines—in churches, assembly rooms, homes, etc.<sup>6</sup>

COISS found that some issues of this magazine had references to Nigeria as early as 2000, and the first available digital version was the January issue.<sup>7</sup> In the January 2000 issue, in the "of interest" section, it mentioned that there is a church under construction in Lagos, Nigeria and larger churches are increasing.<sup>8</sup> The June 2000 issue announced the general conventions for 2000, among these is one held in Umunkiri, Nigeria from 23 to 25 June 2000. The September-October 2007 issue specifically listed 2007 LHMM Conventions in Nigeria, as well as other places, as follows:

Nigeria: Umunkiri, September, 30; Lagos, September 28-30; Aba, Abia State, November 11.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> COISS consulted CISNET, Google, ECOI, Refworld, allAfrica, AfricaConfidential, and conducted targeted web searches using multiple search engines.

<sup>2</sup> ['Bible Standard Ministries - Who We Are'](#), Bible Standard Ministries, 13 August 2020, 20200813144523

<sup>3</sup> ['Bible Standard Ministries - The Bible Standard'](#), Bible Standard Ministries, n.d., accessed 13 August 2020, 20200813151128

<sup>4</sup> ['Bible Standard Ministries - The Bible Standard'](#), Bible Standard Ministries, n.d., accessed 13 August 2020, 20200813151128

<sup>5</sup> ['Bible Standard Ministries - Our Work'](#), Bible Standard Ministries, n.d., accessed 14 August 2020, 20200814113916

<sup>6</sup> ['Bible Standard Ministries - Our Work'](#), Bible Standard Ministries, n.d., accessed 14 August 2020, 20200814113916

<sup>7</sup> ['The Bible Standard - Number 766 - January 2000'](#), Bible Standard Ministries, 31 January 2000, 20200813185514; ['The Bible Standard - Number 770 - May 2000'](#), Bible Standard Ministries, 31 May 2000, 20200813135128; ['The Bible Standard - Number 771 - June 2000'](#), Bible Standard Ministries, 30 June 2000, 20200813134250; ['The Bible Standard - Number 842 - September October 2007'](#), Bible Standard Ministries, 31 October 2007, 20200813121145; ['The Bible Standard - Number 858 - May June 2010'](#), Bible Standard Ministries, 30 June 2010, 20200813135824; ['The Bible Standard - Number 896 - September October 2016'](#), Bible Standard Ministries, 31 October 2016, 20200813132426

<sup>8</sup> ['The Bible Standard - Number 766 - January 2000'](#), Bible Standard Ministries, 31 January 2000, 20200813185514

<sup>9</sup> ['The Bible Standard - Number 842 - September October 2007'](#), Bible Standard Ministries, 31 October 2007, 20200813121145

Similarly, the May-June 2010 issue specifically listed 2010 LHMM Conventions in Nigeria, as well as other places, as follows:

Mbiakong, Akwaibom State, July 30, 31, August 1; Ulasi, Abia State, October 1, 2, 3; Akwanga, Nasarawa State, November 26, 27, 28.<sup>10</sup>

This is not an exhaustive list, as COISS did not look into all digital issues from 2000 to 2019. However, the information in this magazine appears to support that at least in 2007 and 2010, the LHMM organised events in Nigeria, particularly in Ulasi and Aba of Abia State and Mbiakong, Akwa Ibom State. These are the southern states of Nigeria. There are numerous conventions in its announcement for almost every magazine issue, but it doesn't have the LHMM name on it.

COISS does not have access to the archive of *The Bible Standard* magazine before January 2000 to assess when and where the LHMM established their presence and commenced their activities in Nigeria, particularly in the Niger Delta region.<sup>11</sup> The latest information on the Bible Standard Ministries lists a number of events in 2020, including on in Nigeria but time is to be announced.<sup>12</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- None.

## **2. Are there any reports of individuals involved with the LHMM in Nigeria being harmed or mistreated for any reason?**

COISS found no reports of individuals involved with the LHMM in Nigeria being harmed or mistreated for any reason.<sup>13</sup>

In its September October 2016 issue, *The Bible Standard* magazine mentioned a number of terrorist incidents undertaken by Boko Haram.<sup>14</sup>

There are reports of Christians being targeted and killed by Boko Haram or other ethnic groups such as Fulani, but these incidents primarily took place in northern Nigeria.<sup>15</sup> From February to mid-March 2019, Fulani herders and Boko Haram terrorists killed 280 individuals in predominantly Christian communities.<sup>16</sup> Throughout 2019, the UK-based Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) reported that "Fulani militia" killed over 1,000 Christians, which took place mainly in Kaduna.<sup>17</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- None.

## **3. Are there any reports of Christians who preach non-mainstream Christianity being harmed (by other Christians or anyone else)?**

<sup>10</sup> ['The Bible Standard - Number 858 - May June 2010'](#), Bible Standard Ministries, 30 June 2010, 20200813135824

<sup>11</sup> COISS consulted CISNET, Google, ECOI, Refworld, allAfrica, AfricaConfidential, and conducted targeted web searches using multiple search engines.

<sup>12</sup> ['Bible Standard Ministries - Events'](#), Bible Standard Ministries, n.d., accessed 13 August 2020, 20200813145711

<sup>13</sup> COISS consulted CISNET, Google, ECOI, Refworld, allAfrica, AfricaConfidential, and conducted targeted web searches using multiple search engines.

<sup>14</sup> ['The Bible Standard - Number 896 - September October 2016'](#), Bible Standard Ministries, 31 October 2016, 20200813132426

<sup>15</sup> ['2019 Report on International Religious Freedom: Nigeria'](#), United States Department of State, 10 June 2020, pp. 9-13, 20200616111754

<sup>16</sup> Although another report documented 350 total civilian deaths by "Fulani militia" in 2019. See ['2019 Report on International Religious Freedom: Nigeria'](#), United States Department of State, 10 June 2020, p. 11, 20200616111754

<sup>17</sup> Although another report documented 350 total civilian deaths by "Fulani militia" in 2019. See ['2019 Report on International Religious Freedom: Nigeria'](#), United States Department of State, 10 June 2020, p. 11, 20200616111754



COISS found no information or reports of Christian sectarian violence in Nigeria.<sup>18</sup> The available information indicates that the mainstream as well as non-mainstream Christians are generally targeted by Boko Haram, ISIS-WA and other extremist groups because of their Christianity, regardless of their denominations.<sup>19</sup>

### Christianity in Nigeria

DFAT assesses that an estimated forty per cent of Nigerians are Christians, most of whom live in the southern states:<sup>20</sup>

Christian groups include Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, evangelicals and Pentecostals, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons). Christianity is the majority religion in the southern states and Islam is the majority religion in northern states. The British ruled directly in southern Nigeria and promoted large-scale conversion to Christianity. By contrast, the colonial government applied a policy of indirect rule in the north through Muslim emirs. Christianity and western education were less prevalent in the north, creating significant cultural differences that continue to be a strong feature of Nigerian society today.<sup>21</sup>

The US Department of State's 2020 International Religious Freedom Report notes that:

A 2011 Pew report found among Christians, roughly one quarter are Roman Catholic and three quarters Protestant, with small numbers of Orthodox or other Christian denominations. Among Protestant groups, the Anglican, Baptist, and Presbyterian churches maintain the largest populations, while evangelicals, Pentecostals, Anabaptists (EYN Church of the Brethren), Methodists, Seventh-day Adventists, New Apostolics, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and Jehovah's Witnesses report tens of thousands of adherents each.

In the South East and South states, where the Igbo ethnic group is dominant, Christian groups, including Catholics, Anglicans, and Methodists, constitute the majority. In the Niger Delta region, where ethnic groups include Ijaw, Igbo, Ogoni, Efik, Ibibio, and Uhrobo among others, Christians form a substantial majority; a small but growing minority of the population is Muslim. Evangelical Christian denominations are growing rapidly in the North Central and South East, South, and South West regions.<sup>22</sup>

From the above information,<sup>23</sup> although there is no clear definition of what would constitute mainstream Christians and non-mainstream Christians, it appears Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists Baptist, and Presbyterian form the majority, or mainstream, and other subgroups of Protestants including Evangelical and Jehovah's Witnesses form the minority, or non-mainstream, based on Nigeria's Christian population.

Despite a split between a majority Muslim north and a mostly Christian south, and that Christianity is the major religion amongst the Igbo and Yoruba people in the south, DFAT notes that many Christians live in the north and Muslims live in the southern states.<sup>24</sup> DFAT also assesses that 'A mix of Muslims and Christians of various ethnicities comprise the middle belt, and major cities remain a fluid mix of different ethnicities and religions.'<sup>25</sup>

<sup>18</sup> COISS consulted CISNET, Google, ECOI, Refworld, allAfrica, AfricaConfidential, and conducted targeted web searches using multiple search engines.

<sup>19</sup> [2019 Report on International Religious Freedom: Nigeria](#), United States Department of State, 10 June 2020, 20200616111754; [Country Information Report: Nigeria](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, CIS7B83941414

<sup>20</sup> [Country Information Report: Nigeria](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 8, CIS7B83941414

<sup>21</sup> [Country Information Report: Nigeria](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 8, CIS7B83941414

<sup>22</sup> [2019 Report on International Religious Freedom: Nigeria](#), United States Department of State, 10 June 2020, p. 3, 20200616111754

<sup>23</sup> [2019 Report on International Religious Freedom: Nigeria](#), United States Department of State, 10 June 2020, p. 3, 20200616111754

<sup>24</sup> [Country Information Report: Nigeria](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 16, CIS7B83941414

<sup>25</sup> [Country Information Report: Nigeria](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 16, CIS7B83941414

Although the LHMM claims to be a worldwide interdenominational Christian movement with the core purpose to promote a shared and better understanding of the teachings of the Bible,<sup>26</sup> COISS found no specific information on whether LHMM has any close associations or cooperation with mainstream or non-mainstream Christians in Nigeria.<sup>27</sup>

#### Harm by Christians and others

Throughout 2019, the UK-based Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART) reported that “Fulani militia” killed over 1,000 Christians, which took place mainly in Kaduna,<sup>28</sup> a state located in the northwest of Nigeria. In June 2019, the US Department of State notes that in the South West, both Muslim and Christian groups threatened violence against members of the Fulani ethnic group when the government announced its plan to resettle predominantly Muslim Fulani herdsmen in southern parts of the country.”, but the government later abandoned the plan.<sup>29</sup>

The risks posed by Boko Haram to Christians in Nigeria are as follows:

DFAT assesses that Christians ... living in the north-eastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa face a moderate risk of violence from Boko Haram, particularly if they live close to the fighting. Attacks on Christians by Boko Haram are opportunistic and infrequent, and highly unlikely to target individual Christians. Many Christians have moved internally within Nigeria to escape the risks posed by the Boko Haram insurgency. DFAT assesses that Christians... residing in the middle belt and southern states face an extremely low risk of violence from Boko Haram or the Islamic State of West Africa (ISIS-WA).<sup>30</sup>

The available information indicates that the mainstream as well as non-mainstream Christians are generally targeted by Boko Haram (and its offshoots) because of their Christianity, regardless of their denominations.<sup>31</sup>

COISS found no information or reports of Christian sectarian violence in Nigeria.<sup>32</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- None.

#### **4. Are there any reports of conflict between Christian denominations or evangelical movements in the south?**

COISS found no information or reports of conflict between Christian denominations or evangelical movements in the south Nigeria.<sup>33</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- None.

<sup>26</sup> ['Bible Standard Ministries - Our Work'](#), Bible Standard Ministries, accessed on 14 August 2020, 20200814113916

<sup>27</sup> COISS consulted CISNET, Google, ECOI, Refworld, allAfrica, AfricaConfidential, and conducted targeted web searches using multiple search engines.

<sup>28</sup> Although another report documented 350 total civilian deaths by “Fulani militia” in 2019. See ['2019 Report on International Religious Freedom: Nigeria'](#), United States Department of State, 10 June 2020, p. 11, 20200616111754

<sup>29</sup> ['2019 Report on International Religious Freedom: Nigeria'](#), United States Department of State, 10 June 2020, p. 8, 20200616111754

<sup>30</sup> ['Country Information Report: Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p. 17, CIS7B83941414

<sup>31</sup> ['2019 Report on International Religious Freedom: Nigeria'](#), United States Department of State, 10 June 2020, 20200616111754; ['Country Information Report: Nigeria'](#), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, CIS7B83941414

<sup>32</sup> COISS consulted CISNET, Google, ECOI, Refworld, allAfrica, AfricaConfidential, and conducted targeted web searches using multiple search engines.

<sup>33</sup> COISS consulted CISNET, Google, ECOI, Refworld, allAfrica, AfricaConfidential, and conducted targeted web searches using multiple search engines.



Nigeria - CI180511122324629

Date: 15 May 2018

s. 47F(1)

- Can you provide references to articles or reports in relation to the murder of s. 47F(1), and the circumstances surrounding the incident.
- Can you find information on which s. 22(1)(a)(ii) were in, or getting in, the car under attack that night?

News media articles report that on s. 47F(1) was shot dead during an attack which appeared to have claimed the life of the wrong man.

As reported in a s. 47E(d) the incident occurred at the end of a late night meeting:

**S. 47F(1)**

The intended target is reported to have been the s. 47F(1)

In various reports, the principal gunman, s. 47F(1) is reported to have been acting on the orders of the s. 47F(1)

Both of these were arrested in February for their involvement in the January crime.<sup>3</sup> s. 47F(1) had also been previously arrested in early February, for their involvement with the crime.<sup>4</sup> These s. 47F(1) were not specifically identified as having been attempting to get into the car, rather they were arrested with s. 47F(1) vehicle that was said to have been used in the crime.<sup>5</sup> The names of the suspects were said to be s. 47F(1)

**S. 47F(1)**

s. 47F(1) claims that he simply drove s. 47F(1) the scene of the crime, s. 47F(1) on the way.<sup>7</sup>

s. 47F(1)

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## Standard Q&A Report

### Nigeria: 20190829145351 – [redacted] and His Family

Date of Report

11 September 2019

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#### Background

The applicant is a Nigerian national who claims that his brother was the [redacted]. The applicant also claims that the [redacted] wife and daughter were kidnapped for ransom.

#### Questions

1. [When was \[redacted\]?](#)
2. [What is his current position?](#)
3. [What is his family composition?](#)
4. [\[redacted\] kidnapped? What happened to them and where are they residing?](#)
5. [Are \[redacted\] and his family mistreated in Nigeria because of their previous position with the Edo Government?](#)

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## Answers

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### 1. When was [redacted]?

According to a contemporaneous media report, [redacted]. COISS was unable to find any information about when he began in the role.

The earliest report that COISS was able to find about [redacted] was from 2002. According to Nigerian media, as [redacted] failed to appear before parliament to explain financial information.

He was later [redacted]. [redacted] until 2011. Before his role as [redacted], he was involved in the [redacted].

#### Additional Reading

- None.

### 2. What is his current position?

According to a LinkedIn profile with the same name as the subject and claiming to be [redacted].

COISS conducted web searches for both businesses and did not find any results, except for the above-mentioned LinkedIn profile and two Facebook pages.<sup>1</sup> [redacted] has a Facebook page that identifies it as a school in Benin and says that it is managed by [redacted] and does not mention [redacted]. In turn, [redacted] has a Facebook page which identifies it as an education consulting company that was established in 2002 and incorporated in 2008. It does not mention [redacted].

[redacted] is apparently still in Nigeria. The most recent reference that COISS was able to find was from 11 August 2019 where it is reported that he attended a wedding in Nigeria. He also attended the funeral of [redacted], who died at the age of 87, 91 or 92 (depending on the source).

COISS was unable to find any further information about [redacted] current position.<sup>2</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- None

### 3. What is his family composition?

COISS was unable to find any information about [redacted] immediate family.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> COISS conducted targeted web searches on various search engines.

<sup>2</sup> COISS conducted targeted web searches, checked COI and Africa-related databases and searched Nigerian media, including the Nigerian Observer (published in Edo State), the Nigerian Guardian, the Nigerian News Agency, The Champion, The Daily Trust, the Vanguard and This Day. Some Nigerian news agency websites were unavailable at the time of searching. COISS also searched major international news outlets including The Guardian, the New York Times, Aljazeera and the BBC.

<sup>3</sup> COISS conducted targeted web searches, checked COI and Africa-related databases and searched Nigerian media, including the Nigerian Observer (published in Edo State), the Nigerian Guardian, the Nigerian News



The son of [redacted], mentioned in [question 2](#), is called [redacted]. He is the [redacted], the same town as [redacted] funeral. The subject of this report also attended that funeral. COISS was unable to verify whether the two men are related.<sup>4</sup>

Please see [question 4](#) about alleged kidnappings of [redacted] family members.

#### Additional Reading

- None.

#### **4. When were [redacted] kidnapped? What happened to them and where are they residing?**

COISS found a Nigerian media article which reports that [redacted] was kidnapped on 1 November 2011. Another article agrees approximately on the date but names the kidnapped wife as [redacted].

According to the latter article, the abductors demanded 100 million Nigerian naira (about 400,000 Australian dollars) in ransom. That article also states that [redacted] daughter and sister were kidnapped in 2010 but does not give further details.

COISS found no further information and is not aware of the details or the outcomes of the kidnappings.<sup>5</sup>

#### Additional Reading

- Kidnapping is a very common crime in Nigeria that particularly targets wealthy individuals. For further information on kidnapping in Nigeria, please see: '[Nigeria: CI180824114403064 – Political Profile – Kidnapping in Nigeria](#)', Country of Origin Information Services Section (COISS), 25 September 2018, CR837DFFB338

#### **5. Are [redacted] and his family mistreated in Nigeria because of [redacted]?**

COISS did not find any information that suggests that [redacted] or his family are mistreated in Nigeria because of the former's previous position in [redacted].<sup>6</sup>

Agency, The Champion, The Daily Trust, the Vanguard and This Day. Some Nigerian news agency websites were unavailable at the time of searching. COISS also searched major international news outlets including The Guardian, the New York Times, Aljazeera and the BBC.

<sup>4</sup> COISS conducted targeted web searches, checked COI and Africa-related databases and searched Nigerian media, including the Nigerian Observer (published in Edo State), the Nigerian Guardian, the Nigerian News Agency, The Champion, The Daily Trust, the Vanguard and This Day. Some Nigerian news agency websites were unavailable at the time of searching. COISS also searched major international news outlets including The Guardian, the New York Times, Aljazeera and the BBC.

<sup>5</sup> COISS conducted targeted web searches, checked COI and Africa-related databases and searched Nigerian media, including the Nigerian Observer (published in Edo State), the Nigerian Guardian, the Nigerian News Agency, The Champion, The Daily Trust, the Vanguard and This Day. Some Nigerian news agency websites were unavailable at the time of searching. COISS also searched major international news outlets including The Guardian, the New York Times, Aljazeera and the BBC.

<sup>6</sup> COISS conducted targeted web searches, checked COI and Africa-related databases and searched Nigerian media, including the Nigerian Observer (published in Edo State), the Nigerian Guardian, the Nigerian News Agency, The Champion, The Daily Trust, the Vanguard and This Day. Some Nigerian news agency websites

Additional Reading

- None.

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were unavailable at the time of searching. COISS also searched major international news outlets including The Guardian, the New York Times, Aljazeera and the BBC.

## Express Q&A: Nigeria - 20190916120637

### 1. Please provide information on treatment of converts from Islam to Christianity in Rivers, Edo and Port Hartcourt States in particular and the South of Nigeria in general and whether State Protection is available to converts.

Several key sources below are either noted (and references should be consulted for further reading) or have excerpts copied. There is no indication from any of the sources indicating mistreatment of converts from Islam to Christianity in the south of Nigeria, where the stated geographical areas are located. Instead, mistreatment of Christians more generally appears concentrated in the northern, predominantly Muslim part of the country, with emerging religious conflict in the 'middle band' of the country which divides the mainly northern Muslim and southern Christian parts of the country.

DFAT's 2018 country report highlights the constitutional freedom to convert one's religion and notes that the south (in which the stated geographical areas are located) comprises predominantly Christians:

3.11 The Nigerian Constitution guarantees freedom of religion, as well as the freedom for individuals to change their religion and to propagate their religion or belief through worship, teaching, practice and observance. State and local governments are prohibited from adopting a state religion or from giving preferential treatment to any religious community. All religious groups must apply to the federal Corporate Affairs Commission to build a church, mosque or other religious facility. In accordance with the Constitution, school students must receive religious instruction in their own religion. The Government observes a range of religious holidays including Eid-El-Maulud, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Eid-El-Fitr, Eid El-Adha, and Christmas.

3.12 Christianity is the major religion amongst the Igbo and Yoruba people in the south and Islam is the major religion of the Hausa-Fulani and Kanuri people in the north. Many observers continue to propagate the historical Christian-south, Muslim-north divide, although in-country sources insist the divide is not clearcut. Muslims and people of predominantly Hausa-Fulani and Kanuri ethnicity are the majority in the northern states, and Christians of predominantly Igbo and Yoruba ethnicity are the majority in the southern states. However, many Christians live in the north and Muslims live in the southern states. A mix of Muslims and Christians of various ethnicities comprise the middle belt, and major cities remain a fluid mix of different ethnicities and religions.<sup>1</sup>

The US Department of State's 2018 International Religious Freedom Report for Nigeria includes scant information on conversion, with one instance from northern Nigeria (Bungudu) highlighted in which a convert from Islam to Christianity was beaten:

In October local Muslim youth in Bungudu LGA beat and hospitalized a Hausa Christian convert. The Hausa man converted from Islam to Christianity in 2017 and was sent to Jos after threats against him. He was attacked after returning home for a visit in October 2018.<sup>2</sup>

A May 2019 UK Home Office Country Background Note includes a section on religious conversion, with only limited sources, and none specific to the nominated areas – see section 10.<sup>3</sup>

A February 2019 EASO report includes a COI summary and risk analysis on 'Christian and Muslim minorities in specific areas', noting that conflict between religious communities is concentrated in

<sup>1</sup> 'Country Information Report: Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p.16 CIS7B83941414

<sup>2</sup> [Nigeria 2018 International Religious Freedom Report](#), US Department of State, 21 June 2019, p.12, 20190625085922

<sup>3</sup> [Country Background Note: Nigeria](#), UK Home Office, 18 May 2019, Section 10, p.18, 20190605095610

the northern cities.<sup>4</sup> There is no information indicating mistreatment of converts in the south of the country.

A 2019 report produced for the UK's Foreign Commonwealth Office on persecution of Christians in several countries includes a chapter on Nigeria. It includes information additional to that found in the previously noted sources, explaining that Muslim-Christian conflict has spread from the north (where it is mainly perpetrated by Boko Haram) to the so-called 'Middle Belt, the segment of the country dividing the predominantly northern Muslim and southern Christian areas. The report does not however indicate that this conflict extends to the south, where the applicant claims to come from, or include information specific to conversion.<sup>5</sup>

### State Protection

A March 2019 UK Home Office Country Policy and Information Note is devoted to the topic of 'Actors of Protection' and includes specific sections on the police, intelligence agencies, armed forces and the judiciary.<sup>6</sup> No mention is made throughout the report on protection specific to religious conversion.

While not specifically addressing the question of state protection of converts, DFAT's 2018 country report addresses the topic of state protection more broadly at paragraphs 5.1 – 5.15 (pages 29-31).<sup>7</sup>

The USDOS's 2018 human rights country report also provides information on state protection – see section 1d, p.11.<sup>8</sup>

### **2. Also please provide information on whether the Muslim women required to dress in accordance with the Islamic dress code.**

See '[Hijabis face fear and ignorance](#)', Mail & Guardian, 11 January 2019, 20190918164912, which indicates that different dress codes (focusing on the wearing of the hijab) apply in different parts of the country.

See also '[Media Influences on the Perceptions of the Usage of Hijab in Nigeria's Public Institutions and Surrounding Controversy in the Lagos-Ibadan Axis](#)', Fatima Abubakre, Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, November 2018, p.1, 20190918165549, which also notes different dress codes in different parts of the country, and applied for different reasons.

An August 2016 Country Information and Guidance report published by the UK Home Office includes an excerpt from an Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) report indicating that dress-codes apply to Muslim women in the north of the country:

'Women's freedom of movement is restricted in that in some cases they are obliged to obtain their husbands' permission to obtain a passport or to travel outside the country. Women in purdah (in Muslim communities in northern areas) cannot leave their homes without permission from their husbands and must be accompanied by a man at all times when in public. Purdah also restricts

<sup>4</sup> See: [Country Guidance: Nigeria](#), EASO, 19 March 2019, pp.54-55, 20190319173224

<sup>5</sup> '[Bishop of Truro's Independent Review for the Foreign Secretary of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians](#)', Rt. Rev. Philip Mounstephen, Bishop of Truro, 5 July 2019, p.60, 20190710142010

<sup>6</sup> [Country Policy and Information Note, Nigeria: Actors of Protection](#), UK Home Office, 10 April 2019, 20190411105142

<sup>7</sup> 'Country Information Report: Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, pp.29-31 CIS7B83941414

<sup>8</sup> [Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 - Nigeria](#), US Department of State, 14 March 2019, sect.1d, p.11, 20190314113221



women's freedom of dress in that Muslim women must be veiled in public. Widows in these regions face the greatest degree of discrimination: they are confined to the home and must keep their heads shaven and wear mourning dress.<sup>9</sup>

A 2015 article at several points talks about the imposition or attempted imposition of dress codes on Muslim women, without providing additional information about the nature of these dress codes or whether they are enforced.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> 'Social Institutions & Gender Index 2014: Nigeria, Undated, Restricted Civil Liberties', Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 5 August 2016, quoted in: [Country Information and Guidance: Nigeria: Women fearing gender-based harm or violence](#), UK Home Office, 17 August 2016, para.8.13, pp.40-41, OGD7C848D59

<sup>10</sup> ['Women, Muslim Laws and Human Rights in Nigeria'](#), Wilson Center, 1 January 2015, CXBD6A0DE9751

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## TOP 50 UK SCHOLARSHIPS FOR NIGERIAN STUDENTS 2019-2020

April 12, 2019 By excelajah — [Leave a Comment](#)

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UK is one of the world nations that support world education with financial aid to students. The Commonwealth, Erasmus Mundus, government, Universities are involved in the empowerment of various developing country of the world. Nigeria is a major beneficiary in every package released by UK. Below are TOP 50 UK SCHOLARSHIPS FOR NIGERIAN STUDENTS 2019-2020.

## Level of scholarship

These scholarships are valid to candidates who seek to pursue [Undergraduate](#), [postgraduate](#) and [doctoral](#) programs.

## Top University of Dundee Postgraduate Scholarships for Nigerian Students 2019

The University of Dundee is inviting applications for 3 different Postgraduate Scholarships from promising [Nigerian](#) students wishing to undertake degree programmes at the University.

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## University of Brunel Scholarships for Students in Nigeria, Kenya and Egypt 2019/2020

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The University of Brunel Country-specific scholarships is available to [international](#) applicants on an undergraduate, postgraduate or Ph.D. programme starting in September 2019.

## Dorothy Nicol Scholarship for Sub-Saharan Africa at the University of Stirling in UK, 2019

The University of Stirling is offering a scholarship for students from Sub-Saharan [Africa](#) for entry in September 2019. Applicants must hold an offer (conditional or unconditional) of a place on any of the full-time Masters' programmes offered by Stirling Management School.

## The Fully-funded for Masters Students: Standard Bank Derek Cooper Africa Scholarships at LSE 2019/2020 – UK

The Standard Bank Derek Cooper Africa Scholarships are funding opportunities for students who are ordinarily resident in one of Standard Bank's African presence countries, with a preference for residents of South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Angola, Mozambique, and South Sudan.

## University of Dundee Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF) Scholarship for Nigerian Students 2019/2020

The University of Dundee in Scotland is inviting applications for the Petroleum [Technology](#) Development Fund (PTDF) Postgraduate Scholarship to Nigerian students.

## 2019 University of Cambridge Africa Regional Bursary in UK

The University of Cambridge is delighted to offers Bursary to African students to pursue [MBA programme](#). A bursary worth up to £18,000 will be awarded to a successful African candidate.

## ALC Peace and Security Fellowship for Nigerian Women 2019/2020 in the UK

The African Leadership Centre ALC is inviting applications for the Peace and Security Fellowship for African Women for 2019/2020.

## UPDATE: Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarships, at UK Universities 2019/2020 for Nigerians

Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarships 2019/2020 packages include overseas tuition fees at Master's degree-level and are open to candidates who are citizens of a developing Commonwealth country.

[Robert Gordon University Vice-Chancellor's Undergraduate Scholarship for International Students, 2019](#)

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Vice-Chancellor's Scholarship at Robert Gordon University is ONLY offered to international (non-UK) students pursuing a full-time undergraduate course in 2019-2020.

The scholarship is available in all the fields of study offered by the University.

**GDAI-Ph.D. Scholarships for African Students at SOAS in UK, 2019**

Offers are up for Mo Ibrahim Foundation scholarships available for African students at School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in the UK.

Preference will be given to scholarship candidates living in Sub-Saharan Africa. The scholarship is awarded for undertaking Ph.D. research programme (Full time) that directly address or be applicable to the issue of Governance in Africa.

## University of Edinburgh Online Commonwealth Scholarships in Global Health 2019/2020

The University's Global Health Academy has been awarded 10 fully funded studentships across six online Masters programmes within the domain of Global Health for the 2019/2020.

**Graduate School Development Trust Africa Scholarships at Loughborough University in UK, 2019-2020 for Nigerians**

Graduate School Development Trust Africa Scholarships at Loughborough University in UK  
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Who Want To Change the World through Policy Making.

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## Nigeria Birmingham Outstanding Achievement Scholarships 2019 – UK

The University of Birmingham is pleased to announce the award of 4 scholarships of £5,000 for Nigerian domiciled students applying for entry to an undergraduate programme at the University starting September 2019.

## Westminster International Fully-funded Scholarships for Developing Countries 2019/2020 – UK

The University of Westminster is inviting application for scholarship awards aimed at aiding the tuition fees of students from a developing country intending to study a full-time Masters degree at the University.

## 20 Country Specific Scholarships at Brunel University London in UK, 2019

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Brunel University London is inviting applications for Scholarships Specific to 20 countries for the academic year 2019-2020. These scholarships are available for pursuing undergraduate, postgraduate or Ph.D. programme starting in September 20179.

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## University of Edinburgh Online Commonwealth Scholarships (One World One Health) 2019/2020

The University of Edinburgh in conjunction with the Global Health Academy is offering 10 fully funded studentships across five online Masters programmes within the domain of One World, One Health.

## Africa Initiative for Governance Fellowships for Students from Ghana and Nigeria in UK, 2019

The Blavatnik School of Government at the University of Oxford is inviting applicants for the Africa Initiative for Governance (AIG) Fellowship.

Fellowships are open to Nigeria or Ghana who wish to spend time for up to six months at the Blavatnik School between September 2019 and June 2020.

## CHEVENING SCHOLARSHIPS 2019/2020: Requirements, Eligibility & Application Details

Chevening Scholarships in Nigeria are awarded to outstanding emerging leaders to pursue a one-year Masters at any UK university. The scholarship programme provides a unique opportunity for future leaders, influencers, and decision-makers from all over the world to develop professionally and academically, network extensively, experience UK culture, and build lasting positive relationships with the UK.

## University of Westminster Disaster Regeneration Scholarship for Developing Countries 2019/2020

Applications are invited for the Disaster Regeneration Scholarship. International students from a developing country/region affected by a natural or man-made disaster are eligible to apply. The intention of this scholarship is to aid in the regeneration of the affected country/region, so you must make the case for how your chosen course will facilitate this regeneration.

## Loughborough University Vice-Chancellor's Research Scholarships in UK for Nigerians, 2019-2020

Offers are up for the new Vice Chancellor's Research Scholarship which offers 20% tuition fee for a Ph.D. study to promising students who achieved a first-class undergraduate degree (or international equivalent).

## BSMS Global Health Scholarship for Nigerian Applicants in UK, 2019-2020

Applications are invited for the BSMS Global Health Scholarships for students admitted to full-time Master's degree in Global Health at the Wellcome Trust Centre for Global Health Research for the academic year 2019-2020.

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## University of Leicester Open Scholarships for International Students in UK, 2019

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The University of Leicester is inviting applications for 20 open scholarships for international students. Scholarships are available for new taught Master's students on all full-time courses starting in September/October 2019.

## MSc : University of Strathclyde International Leader of the Future Scholarship in UK, 2019

The Department of Strategy & Organization is inviting applications for scholarships exclusively for international students for academic session 2019/2020. These scholarships are available to pursue a postgraduate degree.

## Social Psychology PhD Research Scholarships at University of Kent in UK, 2019

Offers are up for Ph.D. research scholarships in social psychology and politics at the University of Kent for September 2019 intake. The GTA competition is open to applicants from any country.

## 15 University of York Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarships in UK for Nigerians, 2019

The University of York is offering 15 Commonwealth Distance Learning Scholarships with the aid from Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom (CSCUK) for 10 students joining the online Masters in Public Policy and Management programme and 5 students joining the Masters of Public Administration – International Development programme, commencing their studies in September 2019.

## Ghana, Kenya & Nigeria – University of Stirling International Masters Awards 2019/2020 in Scotland

Offers are up for the 2019-2020 University of Stirling International Masters Awards. Students entering directly onto a full-time Masters degree programmes from the selected countries are eligible to apply.

## SPRU International Master Scholarships 2019, UK for Nigerians

University of Sussex is offering 50th Anniversary International Scholarships for master studies at SPRU. Scholarships are open for all UK, Europe (Non-UK), International (Non-UK/EU) students at the Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU).

## 10 Informatics Scholarships for Postgraduates in UK, 2019

Offers are up for 10 Masters scholarships at the School of Informatics for the 2019-2020 academic session. International students can apply for these scholarships.

## IoPPN Dean's Master Scholarships for UK/EU and International Students in UK, 2019-2020

The Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience (IoPPN) is glad to offer a number of bursaries and scholarships to support students with the financial commitments of postgraduate study. These awards are open to UK/EU and International applicants.

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## The University of Edinburgh Ph.D. Interdisciplinary Research Training Studentship 2019

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## Marshal Papworth Scholarships For Developing Countries' Students In UK 2019

Marshal Papworth Scholarships provide opportunities for students from developing countries to gain the agricultural and horticultural skills needed to achieve a sustainable future for themselves and their communities through two scholarship programmes: Masters programme

## Goldsmiths, University of London International Scholarships in UK, 2019

Goldsmiths University of London Scholarships is available to prospective international students. These scholarships provide a £2,500 fee waiver for your first year of study.

## Forte Foundation MBA Scholarships for International Students at Imperial College Business School in UK, 2019

Imperial College Business School is pleased to offer Forte Foundation Scholarships which are open to all women applying to the MBA programme. The UK and international students can apply for these scholarships.

## 2019 Undergraduate Scholarships for International Students at Regent's University London, UK

Offers are on for undergraduate scholarships for the 2019-2020 academic year. Students of all nationalities are eligible to apply for these scholarships.

## University of Southampton Postgraduate Taught Talent Scholarship 2019/2020 – UK

University of Southampton is offering postgraduate taught talent scholarship for 2017 entry. Scholarships of £6,000 are available for students from Africa, Middle East, South America, and India.

## RUFORUM MasterCard Undergraduate and Masters Scholarships for African Students 2019/2020

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) in collaboration with the MasterCard Foundation, Gulu University, and Egerton University is offering scholarships to enhance the application of science, technology, business, and innovation for rural agriculture.

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Released by Department of Home Affairs  
under the Freedom of Information Act 1982

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

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**From:** s. 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 October 2019 4:47 PM  
**To:** s. 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** COISS - Nigeria - Q and A - October 2019 - 20190927163816 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Attachments:** World Scholarship Forum.pdf

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Please see the below response to your research request on Muslim girls' schools and subjects in Nigeria.

You will receive a system-generated email when I close the CISNET request.

Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Kind regards

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

**Nigeria: 20190927163816**

**Background:**

s. 47F(1)

**Questions:**

1. What subjects are taught at the primary and secondary Muslims schools in Nigeria?
2. How many Muslim girl schools are in the south of Nigeria?
3. How many Nigerian women (including Muslim women) study abroad?

**Answer:**

COISS found no recent or specific information on the subjects taught at primary and secondary Muslim schools in Nigeria (sources consulted are CISNET, major government and non-government reports and a range of international and Nigerian news sources).

In general, Madrasa schools (a religious Islamic school) in Nigeria offer exposure to both Islamic education and classical Arabic ([Islamic Schools, the Ulama, and the State in the Educational Development of Northern Nigeria](#), Bulletin de l'APAD, 01 August 2011, p. 8, 20191001135245). Out of the 12 subjects offered in a Madrasa school, nine focus on Islamic theology, jurisprudence and Arabic. The remaining four subjects are taught in English and are not valued as a core class ([Islamic Schools, the Ulama, and the State in the Educational Development of Northern Nigeria](#), Bulletin de l'APAD, 01 August 2011, p. 8, 20191001135245).

Northern Nigeria also offers the Traditional Qur'anic Schools. The main focus for a Traditional Qur'anic School is for Muslim children to be 'trained in the reading and memorisation of the Qur'an' ([Islamic Schools, the Ulama, and the State in the Educational Development of Northern Nigeria](#), Bulletin de l'APAD, 01 August 2011, p. 9, 20191001135245).

- The subjects taught in public schools are: English, mathematics, a Nigerian language (an indigenous language with the most common being Hausa, Ibo or Yoruba), basic science and technology, religion and national values and cultural and creative arts ([Education in Nigeria](#), World Education News and Reviews, 07 March 2017, 20191001110342).
- Learning an Arabic language is an option for some public schools ([Education in Nigeria](#), World Education News and Reviews, 07 March 2017, 20191001110342).
- Once the student is in grade 4 in a public school, they are given the option for French and for pre-vocational studies: home economics, agriculture and entrepreneurship ([Education in Nigeria](#), World Education News and Reviews, 07 March 2017, 20191001110342).

COISS found no information on how many Muslim girl schools are in the south of Nigeria (sources consulted are CISNET, major government and non-government reports and a range of international and Nigerian news sources).

- The Nigerian government has closed several schools in northern Nigeria due to the fear of Boko Haram ([Nigeria's girls and the struggle for an education in the line of fire](#), The Guardian, 15 May 2014, 20190927113850).
- In 2015, Nigeria had 129 international schools that offered an internationally-recognised curriculum ([Where are the greatest number of international schools](#), International School Consultancy Group (ISC), 01 August 2015, CXBD6A0DE18866).

COISS found no information on how many Nigerian women, including Muslim women, study abroad (sources consulted are CISNET, major government and non-government reports and a range of international and Nigerian news sources). However, COISS notes that:

- In late 2018, there were approximately 75,000 Nigerians studying abroad. Some of the countries the Nigerian students were studying in include Ghana, Benin, Republic, Egypt, the UK and the US ([Letter from Africa: How Nigeria's elite avoid 'bad education'](#), BBC News, 17 December 2018, 20190930155844).
- As of March 2019, 16,039 Nigerian students (54 percent male and 46 percent female) were studying abroad in the US ([Studying Abroad Ravages Nigeria](#), The Interview - Nigeria, 09 April 2019, 20190930160500).
- COISS was able to locate the top 50 Scholarships for Nigerian students for 2019-2020 in the UK. Women were given the opportunity to apply to scholarships with at least two being tailored towards women (source is not suited for CISNET. Please place on TRIM file. Copy of the webpage is attached – titled 'World Scholarship Forum').

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Senior Research Officer (Canberra)

Country of Origin Information Services Section (COISS)  
Humanitarian Programme Capabilities Branch | Refugee and Humanitarian Visa Management Division  
Department of Home Affairs  
P: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) | E: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au

UNCLASSIFIED

**From:** s. 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Sent:** Monday, September 30, 2019 10:01 AM  
**To:** s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>  
**Subject:** Country Information Scool subject in Nigeria 20190927163816

## Research request was assigned

### Requesting officer details

**Name:** s. 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Email:** s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au  
**Phone number:** s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

**Location:** WA

**Agency:** Home Affairs

**Role:** Decision Maker

### Request details

**Subject:** Scool subject in Nigeria



**Preferred due date:** 02/10/2019

**Agreed due date:** 02/10/2019

**Country:** Nigeria

**Interview/hearing date:** s. 47F(1)

**Case number ID:** null

**Priority:** Community

**Relevant background of the case:** s. 47F(1)

**Questions:** 1. What subjects are taught at the primary and secondary Muslims schools in Nigeria? 2. How many Muslim girl schools in the South of Nigeria? 3. How many Nigerian women ( including Muslim women) study abroad?

**Sources already consulted by Requestion Officer:** COIS

**COISS Comments:** null

**Request can be found at:** <https://cisnet.homeaffairs.gov.au/#/submit>

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## Country Information Nigeria 20191118120541

### Background

s. 47F(1)

### Questions

1. Please provide information on s. 47F(1) - s. 47F(1)
2. Is he being investigated for corruption?

s. 47F(1)

### Answers

1. Country information located shows that s. 47F(1) te in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, completed a degree in law before launching his political career s. 47F(1)
2. Country information located shows that in April 2019, Nigeria's anti-corruption agency, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), launched a fresh probe against s. 47F(1). In October 2019, media reports showed that the Lagos Division of the Federal High Court of Nigeria ordered the 'temporary forfeiture of two properties' owned by s. 47F(1) in Lagos, as they were alleged to have been 'acquired through proceeds of unlawful activity'. Same media reports also noted that, according to a statement by Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, s. 47F(1) 'withdrew over N12 billion cash from the account of the s. 47F(1) and paid same into his accounts domiciled in Access and Zenith Banks through one of his personal assistants, s. 47F(1), at different intervals' [Nigeria: Court Orders Forfeiture of s. 47F(1) Property, All Africa, 21 October 2019, 20191119111049; As. 47F(1) 2019111911440].
3. No country information was located for this question specifically.<sup>1</sup> Media reports show that one of s. 47F(1) assistant who was implicated in the corruption charges, was s. 47F(1)

<sup>1</sup> Sources consulted include CISNET, government and non-government reports, domestic and international media outlets, and internet searches.

s. 47F(1) [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] 20191119113341].

Internet searches have provided some details about a s. 47F(1) [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Released by Department of Home Affairs  
under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*

UNCLASSIFIED

Good afternoon s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Please see the below response to your research request on s. 47F(1)

You will receive a system-generated email when I close the CISNET request.

Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Kind regards

s. 22(1)(a)(ii), s. 47F(1)

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Nigeria: 20191212122541

Background: s. 47F(1)

demonstration/rally in Onisha, Amambra State during which 30 people were killed by the government.

Questions:

1. Please provide information on s. 47F(1) and his treatment by the government and non-state agents.
2. Please provide information on 30 May 2016 demonstration/rally in Onisha, Amambra State during which 30 people were killed by the government. Who led the demonstration? What happened at the demonstration? Were the leaders present at the demonstration targeted after?
3. Please provide information on s. 47F(1) established in November 2018.
4. The applicant presented a newspaper article from Nigerian newspaper s. 47F(1) gives interview to the media. Is there any information on Activist s. 47F(1) his position, his work, his family and whether he is mistreated by the state or non-state agents?

Answers:

1

- COISS found a LinkedIn profile for a s. 47F(1) from 2000 to 2004 (PDF attached).
- COISS found no information on s. 47F(1) and his treatment by the government and non-state agents (sources consulted included CISNET, non-government reports and a range of international and Nigerian news sources).

2

- COISS published a Q&A titled 'Nigeria: 20191107174813 - MASSOB - Legal Adviser - Treatment - Civil Organisations - 49th Anniversary of the Declaration of the Biafra Republic - Organisers - MASSOB Executives Petition Against Torture' on 13 November 2019 that provides information on the protest and the leaders of the protest ('Nigeria: 20191107174813 - MASSOB - Legal Adviser - Treatment - Civil

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Organisations - 49th Anniversary of the Declaration of the Biafra Republic -  
Organisers - MASSOB Executives Petition Against Torture', Country of Origin  
Information Services Section (COISS), 13 November 2019, 20191119131843).

3.

- COISS found a social media account for s. 47F(1) on both Facebook and Instagram. Both accounts had the first post being posted in September 2018 and the most recent post was posted on 13 December 2019.
- The 'About' section on Facebook page titled s. 47F(1) states:  
s. 47F(1) is a not for profit organisation that is determined to alleviate poverty through the means of community engagements. We bring creativity to the work we do therefore we are multidimensional in our approach (PDF attached).
- A Facebook post on 1 December 2019 states that there is a program at the Therapeutic School in Enugu with sponsorship from 'Australian Friends'. COISS found no information on the group 'Australian Friends' (sources consulted included government reports, non-government reports and a range of international and Nigerian and Australian news sources).
- The 'Bio' section of the Instagram page with the handle s. 47F(1) is a charity organisation that alleviates poverty through community engagements' (PDF attached).

4

- COISS found no information on an activist named s. 47F(1), other than the article from s. 47F(1) and whether he was mistreated by the state or non-state actors s. 47F(1)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Senior Research Officer (Canberra)

Country of Origin Information Services Section (COISS)

Humanitarian Programme Capabilities Branch | Refugee and Humanitarian Visa Management Division

Department of Home Affairs

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

UNCLASSIFIED

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From: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Sent: Thursday, 12 December 2019 12:26 PM

To: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Subject: Country Information s. 47F(1) 20191212122541

## Research request was created



## Requesting officer details

**Name:** s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

**Email:** s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)

**Phone number:** s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

**Location:** WA

**Agency:** Home Affairs

**Role:** Decision Maker

## Request details

**Subject:** s. 47F(1)

**Preferred due date:** 18/12/2019

**Agreed due date:**

**Country:** Nigeria

**Interview/hearing date:** s. 47F(1)

**Case number ID:** undefined

**Priority:** Community

**Relevant background of the case:** s. 47F(1)

demonstration/rally in Onisha, Amambra State during which 30 people were killed by the government.

**Questions:** Please provide information on s. 47F(1)

and his treatment by the government and non-state agents. Please provide information on 30 May 2016 demonstration/rally in Onisha, Amambra State during which 30 people were killed by the government. Who led the demonstration? What happened at the demonstration? Were the leaders present at the demonstration targeted after? Please provide information on s. 47F(1) established in November 2018.

s. 47F(1)

gives interview to the media. a) Is there any information on Activist s. 47F(1) his position, his work, his family and whether he is mistreated by the state or non-state agents.

**Sources already consulted by Requestion Officer:** COIS, open sources

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s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

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**From:** s. 47F(1)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 31 March 2020 11:20 AM  
**To:** s. 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Cc:** s. 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Subject:** COISS - Nigeria - 20200326180750

Hi s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Please find below the response to your CISNET request 20200326180750 on Nigeria.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

finalise your request in CISNET.

Once I get access to the system I will

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

COISS

-

Questions:

- 1 - Is there any information about FGM ritual/traditional rites that substantiate this claim?
- 2 - Is there any information about these 'rites of passage' or initiation ceremony for women in the Igbo?
- 3 - Is there any other reason that s. 47F(1) ?

Responses:

Question One:

COISS found no information on whether facial scarring is a part of FGM rituals or traditional rites. The World Health Organization notes that scarring and keloids are long-term complications to FGM but there is no mention that it is in relation to facial scarring ('Female genital mutilation', World Health Organisation (WHO), 03 February 2020, 20200330151554).

Question Two:

A 2012 journal article states the origins of FGM is fraught with controversy as either an initiation ceremony of young girls into womanhood or to ensure virginity and curb promiscuity in order to protect female modesty and chastity. As FGM is widespread in Nigeria, it could not have risen just from a single origin ('An Overview of Female Genital Mutilation in Nigeria', Annals of Medical and Health Sciences Research, 01 June 2012, p.2, 20190904144906).

According to the UK Home Office report on FGM from 2017, FGM is considered to be a part of a 'ritual initiation into womanhood that includes a period of seclusion and education about the rights and duties of a wife' (Country Policy and Information Note on Nigeria: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), UK Home Office, 01 January 2017, p.9, OG6E7028815).

A 2016 journal article explains *Iru Mgbede* which is the preparation of girls for adulthood:

Iru Mgbede (Iko Ọkọchị/Inọ Okpoko as some Igbo dialects refer to it), is one Igbo socio-cultural institution that is set up with the view to prepare girls for responsible adulthood and possible marriage. This is done by inculcating through attitudes the beliefs and language use, that mold individual life styles. During the mgbede period, young girls deemed to have attained the age of marriage are secluded and exempted from strenuous activities like farming and other house chores for at least three years. This seclusion affords the younger ladies the opportunity to receive from the elderly women the codes of cultural conducts and their roles as wives and mothers in various communities. Its tool of transmission is literally speech. Divulging those cultural norms and values consistently through speech and actions to this young girl accelerates the rate at which she understands the future task thereby preparing her better for the marital challenges and the social ethics that yield a secured generation. When she is confirmed to have attained a certain level of perfection, marriage may follow immediately. The advantages of Iru Mgbede are numerous. It molds the girl into a responsible, self-confident and hardworking woman. Her mode of addressing issues becomes diplomatic and less conflict prone. The girl who has undergone the cultural grooming through mgbede faces challenges better equipped etc. These attitudes are worthy of emulations and craves to be documented and passed on to other generations through daily interactions.

('Documentation and revival as language revitalization tools. the case of Iru Mgbede', Nwankwo, Anne Onyinye, International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Reviews, 01 May 2016, p. 166, 20200330142312)

A 2010 journal article explains *Ibi Ugwu* which is the ritual for circumcision:

The rite of circumcision is usually performed on both boys and girls between the third and eight day after birth. The time, however, varies in different localities, the operation being postponed until the age of puberty is reached in some places. For example, in some localities, as Ileogu (1974: 185) observes, circumcision of males may take place within 24 days after birth while females are circumcised a bit later. In a few localities such as Ugwoba and Abakaliki, circumcision is often postponed to the puberty initiation period with greater religious and social celebrations while in Aboh on the South Western banks of the Niger only girls are circumcised about the time of their puberty. The eighth day is the most generally accepted for circumcision. The Igbo man will on no account omit it. In some areas like Oghe, for example, the people do not like having expectant mothers go to modern maternity homes for delivery, just because the child is brought home when he is two old to be circumcised. But many hospitals and maternity clinics now perform this operation at the needed period. On which ever day, the practice of infant circumcision is accompanied with some religious rites and minor sacrifices. The mother leaves the compound for the first time on this day. She is escorted to the household farm, where she collects a few things for the ritual. The circumcision is performed by a skilled woman in the village. About the eight day (depending on the locality), the husband consults the oracle to know who will perform the circumcision. The person named is invited. "Chalk, kola-nut, alligator pepper and white fowl are among the items that must be provided. The officiant appeals to the ancestors and divinities with these items" ('Infancy rites among the Igbo of Nigeria', Christian Onyenaucheya Uchegbue, Research Journal of International Studies, 01 November 2010, p.159, 20200330141010)

Question Three:

A 2019 *France24* media article states that facial scars mean different things: identification, healing, spiritual protection and beautification. The scarring is done on both boys and girls by either burning or cutting. In 2017, the Nigerian Senate debated a bill for the 'prohibition official mutilation' that would introduce a punishment for anyone that performs the scarring process and protect those at risk. This legislation is still being debated in parliament. Traditional practitioners for this practice are called *oolola*. ('Nigeria's divisive tradition of facial markings fades', Agence France Presse (AFP) - France, 15 August 2019, 20200330153336)

A 2010 media article from *CNN* states that a High Priestess 'used a ceremonial knife to cut two teardrop scars beneath her grandson's eyes'. The article states that this scarring is a Yoruba tradition. The marks are used to identify family and everyone in the family must have identical scars. According to this article, facial scarring is becoming restricted to the people in rural regions. ('Tribal scars custom drying up in Nigeria', CNN, 21 July 2010, 20200330141355)

A 2012 media article states that facial scarring is designed to keep children safe. The article states that 'tribal marks that have patterns identifying a person's ethnicity and homeland.' Facial scarring is a tradition that goes back hundreds of years to when a time of ethnic wars and the slave trade made parents fear their children would be kidnapped and then they would be unidentifiable later in life. The article further states:

It is commonly believed that the marks themselves have health benefits. Many young adult Nigerians say they were marked because they were sickly children, and will only mark their own children if they become ill. ('Nigerian Parents Mark Children's Faces for Safety', Voice of America (VOA), 31 July 2012, 20200330135935)

A 2012 media article from the *Courier Mail* states that scars on faces are a part of their cultural identity. One of the women interviewed about her scars says she doesn't remember being cut and she has also scars on her arms from the wrist to her elbow. These marks were completed by her grandmother.

The primary reason for these scars was for identification. The facial markers allow for people to be identified as to where they are from and it is especially common with the Yoruba. Some examples of the scars from the article are lines from the corner of the mouth outwards and down the sides of the temple, small cut or nick on the cheeks and teardrops under the eyes. ('A new generation of Nigerians is facing up to life without markings, reveals Cindy Wockner', *Courier Mail*, The, 11 August 2012, 20200330140605)



COISS - Nigeria - Express Q&A - 20200414161756 - s. 22(1)(a)(ii) - s. 47F(1) April 2020

17 April 2020

Hi s. 22(1)(a)(ii),

Please find below a response to Country Information Request 20200414161756 on Nigeria. Please let me know if you have any queries regarding the information provided.

Regards,

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Senior Research Officer | Country of Origin Information Services Section

Humanitarian Program Capability Branch | Refugee, Humanitarian and Settlement Division

Immigration and Settlement Services Group

Department of Home Affairs

P: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

@homeaffairs.gov.au

nga20200414161756

## Background

s. 47F(1)

## Questions

1. I have located one reference on public media to s. 47F(1). Are you able to find any other poems or references to s. 47F(1)?

## Answer

1. In addition to the reference mentioned by the decision maker regarding s. 47F(1) there was limited information found about s. 47F(1).

A number of posts dated up to 12 May 2015 on the Facebook page of s. 47F(1)

There are also posts dated 12 February 2015, 30 May 2015 and 5 August 2015 on the Facebook page of s. 47F(1)

There is also a Facebook page of a person named s. 47F(1)

COISS - Nigeria - Express Q&A - 20200414173805 - Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) - Demonstrations - 2017 - 2018 - Sydney - Canberra - April 2020

17 April 2020

Hi [s. 22(1)(a)(ii)]

Please find below a response to Country Information Request 20200414173805 on Nigeria. Please let me know if you have any queries regarding the information provided.

Regards,

[s. 22(1)(a)(ii)]

Senior Research Officer | Country of Origin Information Services Section  
Humanitarian Program Capability Branch | Refugee, Humanitarian and Settlement Division  
Immigration and Settlement Services Group  
Department of Home Affairs  
P: [s. 22(1)(a)(ii)]  
[redacted]@homeaffairs.gov.au

nga20200414173805

## Background

[s. 47F(1)]

## Question

1. Please provide information on Australian IPOB demonstrations in 2017 and in 2018 in Sydney and Canberra.

## Answer

1. Limited information was located about demonstrations by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in 2017 and 2018 in Sydney and Canberra.


A [s. 47F(1)]

[redacted] and states that 'Biafra TV was live. 29 May 2017' [s. 47F(1)]  
[redacted], 20200416143112

A similar video appears on a Facebook page attributed to Biafra TV at

[s. 47F(1)]

Another video on a Facebook page attributed to Radio Biafra under the heading S. 47F(1)



Further information was not located about demonstrations by IPOB in Sydney and Canberra during 2017 and 2018.

COISS - Nigeria - Express Q&A - 20200514181809 - State Security – Warrants of Arrest - Police - Airport Departure - May 2020

25 May 2020

Hi s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Please find below a response to Country Information Request 20200514181809 on Nigeria. Please let me know if you have any queries regarding the information provided.

Regards,

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Senior Research Officer | Country of Origin Information Services Section  
Humanitarian Program Capability Branch | Refugee, Humanitarian and Settlement Division  
Immigration and Settlement Services Group  
Department of Home Affairs  
P: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto: @homeaffairs.gov.au)

**nga20200514181809**

## Background

s. 47F(1)

## Questions

1. Does the Nigerian State Security issue warrants for arrest?
2. Can a person of interest to the Security and police lawfully depart from Nigeria's international airport?

## Answers

1. There is reference in the *Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015* of Nigeria to Judges and Magistrates issuing warrants of arrest, and to warrants of arrest that have been issued by a court or Justice of the Peace.

The Department of State Services (DSS), also known as the State Security Service (SSS), is 'the primary domestic intelligence agency in Nigeria'.<sup>1</sup> An October 2016 article in Nigerian online newspaper, *The Cable*, includes information on whether Nigeria's DSS/SSS can execute arrest warrants. The relevant legislation referred to in the article is Nigeria's *Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015* (ACJA), which is 'applicable to all Federal Courts and courts in the Federal Capital

<sup>1</sup> 'DFAT Country Information Report: Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p.19, CIS7B83941414

Territory (FCT)', and where some states were yet to domesticate the ACJA, the relevant states laws.<sup>2</sup> A November 2017 Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response to information request also states that '[s]ources indicate that the *Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015* of Nigeria provides for the administration of criminal justice in the courts of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and other Federal Courts in Nigeria...' The response also provides information on the adoption of the Act in various Nigerian states.<sup>3</sup>

A copy of the *Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015* of Nigeria is attached.<sup>4</sup> In relation to the issuing of warrants of arrest, Section 36(1)(c) of the Act refers to a warrant of arrest being 'signed by the Judge or Magistrate by whom it is issued'.<sup>5</sup> Section 36(1) of the Act is as follows:

(1) A warrant of arrest issued under this Act, unless the contrary is expressly provided under any other law, shall:

(a) bear the date of the day of issue;

(b) contain all necessary particulars; and

(c) be signed by the Judge or Magistrate by whom it is issued.<sup>6</sup>

Section 41 of the *Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015* also refers to 'a warrant of arrest' that has been issued 'by any court or Justice of the Peace'.<sup>7</sup> Section 41 of the Act states:

Where a court has reason to believe, whether after evidence or not, that a suspect, against whom a warrant of arrest has been issued by itself or by any court or Justice of the Peace, has absconded or is concealing himself so that the warrant cannot be executed, the court may publish a public summons in writing requiring that person to appear at a specific place and a specific time not less than 30 days from the date of publishing the public summons.<sup>8</sup>

The November 2017 Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response to information request mentions '[a]n article published on 7 October 2016 in the Lawyers Chronicle, an online pan-African publication for lawyers, scholars, students and policy-makers that "surveys the main trends of legal and socio-political issues on the African continent" (The Lawyers Chronicle 21 March 2016),' which 'further explains that warrants of arrest in Nigeria are issued by a court to a police officer "or any other person" upon receiving a written complaint on oath (The Lawyers Chronicle 7 Oct. 2016)'.<sup>9</sup>

In relation to the execution of warrants of arrest, the *Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015* does not specifically refer to the Department of State Services (DSS) or State Security Service (SSS). Section 39(1) of the *Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015* states that '[a] warrant of arrest

<sup>2</sup> 'FAQs: Can search warrants be issued on Saturdays? Can DSS execute warrants?', The Cable, 16 October 2016, 20200522104819

<sup>3</sup> 'NGA106010.E - Nigeria: warrants of arrest, including those issued by the High Court of the Delta State: issuance procedures, methods of delivery, description of the document and the information it contains: prevalence of fraudulent warrants of arrest (2014-November 2017)', Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 16 November 2017, 20200522114435

<sup>4</sup> 'Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015', Government of Nigeria, 26 May 2015, 20200522125439

<sup>5</sup> 'Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015', Government of Nigeria, 26 May 2015, 20200522125439

<sup>6</sup> 'Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015', Government of Nigeria, 26 May 2015, 20200522125439

<sup>7</sup> 'Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015', Government of Nigeria, 26 May 2015, 20200522125439

<sup>8</sup> 'Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015', Government of Nigeria, 26 May 2015, 20200522125439

<sup>9</sup> 'NGA106010.E - Nigeria: warrants of arrest, including those issued by the High Court of the Delta State: issuance procedures, methods of delivery, description of the document and the information it contains: prevalence of fraudulent warrants of arrest (2014-November 2017)', Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 16 November 2017, 20200522114435



may be directed to a police officer by name or to all police officers'.<sup>10</sup> Section 40(1) of the Act indicates, however, that where no police officer is immediately available to execute an arrest warrant, the court issuing the warrant may 'direct it to some other person or persons' to execute. Under Section 40(1) of the Act, '[a] court issuing a warrant of arrest may, where its immediate execution is necessary and no police officer is immediately available, direct it to some other person or persons and the person or persons shall execute the same'.<sup>11</sup> Under Section 40(2) of the Act, '[a] person, when executing a warrant of arrest directed to him, shall have all the powers, rights, privileges and protection given to or afforded by law to a police officer executing a warrant of arrest and shall conform with the requirement placed by law on a police officer'.<sup>12</sup>

Please see the October 2016 article in *The Cable* for further information on whether Nigeria's DSS/SSS can execute arrest warrants.<sup>13</sup> Parts of the article are similar to an October 2016 factsheet produced by Nigeria's Presidential Advisory Committee against Corruption to justify the arrests of a number of allegedly corrupt judges, which includes information on who can issue a warrant of arrest.<sup>14</sup>

The US Department of State (USDOS) report on human rights practices in Nigeria for 2019 notes that the police and other security services had 'the authority to arrest individuals without first obtaining warrants if they have reasonable suspicion a person committed an offense, a power they often abused'.<sup>15</sup> Please see Section 18 of the *Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015* in relation to arrest by a police officer without a warrant.<sup>16</sup>

2. A November 2018 European Asylum Support Office report on Nigeria includes information on the international airports in Nigeria.<sup>17</sup> The report also states:

The freedom of movement for all Nigerians is stipulated in the 1999 constitution under Section 41(1):

'Every citizen of Nigeria is entitled to move freely throughout Nigeria and to reside in any part thereof, and no citizen of Nigeria shall be expelled from Nigeria or refused entry thereto or exit therefrom [...] Nothing [...] of this section shall invalidate any law that is reasonably justifiable in a democratic society - (a) imposing restrictions on the residence or movement of any person who has committed or is reasonably suspected to have committed a criminal offence in order to prevent him from leaving Nigeria; or (b) providing for the removal of any person from Nigeria to any other country.'<sup>18</sup>

A March 2018 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) country information report on Nigeria indicates that in relation to exit and entry procedures, '[t]he Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) is responsible for conducting exit and entry checks. Checks are generally enforced and Nigeria maintains records of entries and exits' to and from the country. Under Nigeria's *Immigration Act*

<sup>10</sup> ['Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015'](#), Government of Nigeria, 26 May 2015, 20200522125439

<sup>11</sup> ['Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015'](#), Government of Nigeria, 26 May 2015, 20200522125439

<sup>12</sup> ['Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015'](#), Government of Nigeria, 26 May 2015, 20200522125439

<sup>13</sup> ['FAQs: Can search warrants be issued on Saturdays? Can DSS execute warrants?'](#), *The Cable*, 16 October 2016, 20200522104819

<sup>14</sup> ['Buhari's advisers explain legal justification of arrest of judges'](#), Ogundipe, S, *Premium Times*, 23 October 2016, 20200522183624

<sup>15</sup> ['Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2019 - Nigeria'](#), US Department of State, 11 March 2020, Section 1(d), p.10, 20200312124348

<sup>16</sup> ['Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015'](#), Government of Nigeria, 26 May 2015, 20200522125439

<sup>17</sup> ['EASO Country of Origin Report: Nigeria - Key socio-economic indicators'](#), European Asylum Support Office, November 2018, pp.60-63, 20190109132113

<sup>18</sup> ['EASO Country of Origin Report: Nigeria - Key socio-economic indicators'](#), European Asylum Support Office, November 2018, p.64, 20190109132113; See also: ['Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999'](#), Federal Republic of Nigeria, 29 May 1999, Section 41(1) & (2), CIS38A80121422

1990, the country's 'immigration minister may prohibit the departure of any person from Nigeria if he or she considers it in the public interest to do so'. DFAT was 'aware a small number of human rights defenders who have been prohibited under this provision'.<sup>19</sup> This 'interference occurred when individuals intending to travel had publicly announced their intention to protest domestic campaigns overseas'. DFAT was 'not aware of recent instances of officials preventing human rights defenders from leaving or entering Nigeria'.<sup>20</sup>

The USDOS report on human rights practices in Nigeria for 2019 notes that '[t]he constitution and law provide for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, but security officials restricted freedom of movement at times by imposing curfews in areas experiencing terrorist attacks and ethnic violence'.<sup>21</sup>

A November 2017 Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response to information request, which includes information on whether a link to a police computer network is available at international airports in Nigeria, indicates that the Nigerian Immigration Service has a watch list and passengers travelling into and out of the country have their names documented by the police and other law enforcement representatives.<sup>22</sup> The response provides the following information:

Media sources report that the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) has access to an "Electronic Passenger Registration System" (e-pars) in Nigerian airports (Business Day 28 June 2016; *The Sun* 26 June 2016). The *Sun* quotes the NIS Controller General as stating that the

NIS has achieved tremendous success in border control at our Airports through the [e-pars]. The e-pars has integrated components that simultaneously cross-checks the data of a passenger against NIS watch list as well as registers his arrival or departure [in] real time when the passenger's passport is placed on the [d]ocument [r]eader at the immigration control point. (*The Sun* 26 June 2016)

On the subject of computer network systems in Nigeria, the police public relations officer explained, without providing further details, that the police have a command at all airports in Nigeria and that each command monitors criminal activities and shares information with airport authorities and other law enforcement representatives (Nigeria 8 Nov. 2017). The same source added that "passengers traveling in and out of the country have their names documented by the police and other law enforcement [representatives] in the country" (Nigeria 8 Nov. 2017).<sup>23</sup>

In April 2018, the senator representing Kogi West Senatorial District in the National Assembly, Dino Melaye, 'was arrested and detained at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport' by officers of the Nigeria Immigration Service. Melaye said that immigration officers indicated that there was 'a

<sup>19</sup> 'DFAT Country Information Report: Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p.32, CIS7B83941414

<sup>20</sup> 'DFAT Country Information Report: Nigeria', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, p.20, CIS7B83941414

<sup>21</sup> '[Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2019 - Nigeria](#)', US Department of State, 11 March 2020, Section 2(d), p.24, 20200312124348

<sup>22</sup> '[NGA106000.E - Nigeria: information on a national police computer network for information sharing: nature and extent of communication between police offices across the country; whether police offices in different states are obligated to report to each other regarding persons of interest who are suspected of having relocated; whether a link to a police computer network is available at international airports \(2015-November 2017\)](#)', Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 21 November 2017, 20200522162214

<sup>23</sup> '[NGA106000.E - Nigeria: information on a national police computer network for information sharing: nature and extent of communication between police offices across the country; whether police offices in different states are obligated to report to each other regarding persons of interest who are suspected of having relocated; whether a link to a police computer network is available at international airports \(2015-November 2017\)](#)', Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 21 November 2017, 20200522162214

directive from the police that I can't travel; that I am on their watch list'. He was told they were awaiting further instructions from the police.<sup>24</sup> He was reportedly detained for two and a half hours by immigration officials before being released.<sup>25</sup> Melaye was subsequently arrested by police at his home. He then escaped from police custody, but was re-arrested by the police in a hospital.<sup>26</sup>

Although dated, an August 2012 article in Nigerian newspaper, *This Day*, indicates that the suspended chairman of the House of Representatives Ad hoc Committee on the Monitoring of the Fuel Subsidy regime, Farouk Lawan, had been intercepted by security agents at the airport and initially prevented from making a trip to Saudi Arabia. He was then able to make the trip after the intervention of a 'top security chief'. Sources in the State Security Service said it was 'the only agency that can place a surveillance on people and intercept travellers at exit and entry points at the airports'. They said that Lawan was 'on the security watch list and that there is nobody on that list who passes through the airports that will not be intercepted'. Lawan's counsel, however, said in a statement that 'there was no way security agents would have stopped Lawan from travelling as he had the permission of the police to embark on the trip'.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> ['How I was arrested at the airport – Dino Melaye'](#), Daily Trust - Nigeria, 23 April 2018, 20200522194402

<sup>25</sup> ['Dino Melaye released'](#), Ogundipe, S, Premium Times, 25 April 2018, 20200525142804

<sup>26</sup> ['Drama, as Melaye lands in hospital after escape from police team'](#), Vanguard, 25 April 2018, 20200525145121; ['Dino Melaye Speaks On Arrest, Escape'](#), Ogundipe, S, Premium Times, 25 April 2018, 20200525152046

<sup>27</sup> ['Nigeria: How Farouk Lawan Eventually Made Saudi Trip'](#), Abonyi, I, This Day, 9 August 2012, 20200525153534

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

No information about s. 47F(1) variations on this name was located, besides Facebook profiles. For example, s. 47F(1)

No Facebook profile contained any relevant information to question two.

Regards,

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Senior Research Officer (Sydney)

Country of Origin Information Services Section (COISS)

Humanitarian Programme Capabilities Branch | Refugee and Humanitarian Visa Management Division

Department of Home Affairs

P: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) | E: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au

UNCLASSIFIED

From s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Sent: Wednesday, 6 May 2020 10:55 AM

To: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Subject: Country Information s. 47F(1) 20200504103924

## Research request was assigned

### Requesting officer details

Name: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Email: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @homeaffairs.gov.au

Phone number: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Location: WA

Agency: Home Affairs

Role: Decision Maker

### Request details

Subject: s. 22(1)(a)(ii), s. 47F(1)

Released by Department of Home Affairs  
under the Freedom of Information Act 1982

**Preferred due date:** 13/05/2020

**Agreed due date:** 14/05/2020

**Country:** Nigeria

**Interview/hearing date:** s. 47F(1)

**Case number ID:** null

**Priority:** Community

**Relevant background of the case:**

s. 47F(1)

**Questions:**

1. Please provide information on s. 47F(1) and his treatment in Nigeria
2. Is there is any information on s. 47F(1)

**Sources already consulted by Requestion Officer:**

CISNET and internet

**Request can be found at:** <https://cisnet.homeaffairs.gov.au/#/submit>

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## Express Q&A

### Nigeria: 20200608160519 – News Outlet – Credibility Issues

Date of Report

11 June 2020

#### Q. Is internet based news portal, Legit, (<https://www.legit.ng/>) a reliable source?

A. COISS has limited familiarity with the source legit.ng and has located limited reliable country information from credible sources about legit.ng. COISS is therefore unable to form an assessment on whether it is a reliable source or not, mindful (as covered below) of the general media environment of misinformation, fake and manufactured news in Nigeria.

COISS can provide background information about legit.ng from within that source itself and from a limited range of independent sources. Collectively, these indicate that legit.ng has links with major social media corporations Google Play and Facebook, has been praised by Facebook and independent reporting groups, and according to its own website places a high corporate value on the integrity of the material it publishes.

Legit.ng does however also actively seek user-submitted content from its readers, and provides instructions on how 'Guest authors' might submit stories for publication (though stating that these will be subject to review by an editorial team). Beyond this, credible sources consistently caution that media sources in Nigeria may be unreliable, with the credibility of publications questionable.

#### Information from Legit websites

Legit.ng ('Legit') has been 'in the market since 2012', was formerly known as NAIJ.com and claimed in 2019 to be 'is the biggest social media group in the daily news category and the number one publisher in Nigeria by traffic (Alexa rank)'.<sup>1</sup> In October 2018, NAIJ.com 'upgraded' to Legit.ng,<sup>2</sup> with the company explaining the basis of its decision to change as follows:

So why did we choose Legit.ng? Inaccurate and fake news often confuse Internet users, which can lead to terrible consequences. The primary goal of NAIJ.com has always been to protect the audience from hoaxes, so the new name represents this general idea in the best way. Integrity is among our values, so we double check all the facts before publishing and avoid using misleading or clickbait headlines.<sup>3</sup>

In 2018, while still trading under the NAIJ brand, the company self-published a report on *NewsWire* citing information about its performance from independent media analytics outfit Alexa.com,<sup>4</sup> including on 'reputational' metrics:

SEO parameter: This is a measure of how valuable and unique each page on a website is; NAIJ.com recorded an increase from 88/100 in 2017 to 89/100 in 2018.

Performance parameter: The performance parameter measures how fast a site is, and the results show that NAIJ.com's site speed is currently at 99/100.

<sup>1</sup> '[NAIJ.com upgrades to Legit.ng](#)', Legit, 2019, 20200610133709

<sup>2</sup> '[Who we are](#)', Legit, 2019, 20200610134042

<sup>3</sup> '[NAIJ.com upgrades to Legit.ng](#)', Legit, 2019, 20200610133709

<sup>4</sup> Alexa is an analytics-driven outfit that measures website traffic. According to their '[About](#)' page: 'At Alexa, we focus exclusively on delivering the richest and most meaningful analytics tools for our customers. Our obsession is to empower customers through compelling and actionable insights that drive measurable results for their business. At Alexa, we believe strongly in substance over style, which means you can count on getting the exact insights you need without having to navigate through extraneous content to get the information you need right now.'

Security: On the aspect of security, it is always important to measure how safe a site is and if users' information is being protected. NAIJ.com scored 100/100 in 2017 and still maintains that rating – a confirmation that visiting the page is totally safe!

Reputation: The reputation meter is a measurement of how much links from outside sources a page has; on this matter, NAIJ.com moved from 75/100 in 2017 to 98/100 in 2018.

[...]

Today, NAIJ.com Media Ltd. remains the operator of Nigeria's most visited online news website, according to Alexa. As a leader, NAIJ.com considers it the main responsibility to improve the reader's experience on the online platform.<sup>5</sup>

### Independent sources

COISS has found limited independent sources attesting to Legit's media credibility. *Sahara Reporters* in a 2018 article offered modest praise in stating 'In 2016, Naij.com, one of the more reliable sites, reported that The Guardian of Lagos was firing its managing director and 150 workers in an effort to survive.'<sup>6</sup> Facebook, on its Audience Network website, used Legit as a case study due to the latter's uptake of Facebook's Audience Network media distribution platform, writing positively of the company:

In 2012, Genesis Media began a journey that would eventually be that exact spark. Launched by Genesis in 2012, Legit.ng — now the number one website in Nigeria — has excelled in providing engaging content and news to Nigerians despite cultural and ethnoreligious barriers that differ from region to region and from state to state.

From the beginning, the team at Legit.ng began building a community and promoting their site with Facebook, but they hit a roadblock.

...

Their success using Facebook led them to Audience Network, where they could extend their reach. Legit.ng started using Instant Articles<sup>7</sup> during the beta stage at the end of 2015 and soon after they started, they knew it would become a long time solution. Most of their user-base has "poor or costly" internet connections coming from mobile devices. Instant Articles enables news publishers to distribute articles to Facebook's app that load and display as much as 10 times faster than the standard mobile web. As a result, Audience Network and Instant Articles enabled Legit.ng's audience to access content faster with smaller data consumption volume.

As a socially conscious media organization, Genesis and Legit.ng, decided to extend their good fortune to the very people who read their content and contributed user-generated responses.<sup>8</sup>

An article on Legit's parent company, Genesis Media, referenced in the preceding extract, can be found here: '[How we have built a global media company with an audience of 75 million people worldwide](#)', Medium, 3 April 2017, 20200610114402

### User-submitted stories

As an analytics-driven, social media platform, Legit actively encourages readers to submit stories for publication. Instructions for 'guest authors' can be found [here](#),<sup>9</sup> with the website stating that 'we also generate[s] a lot of content based on user-submitted stories'.<sup>10</sup> The instructions to prospective 'guest authors' specifies that submitted stories will be 'carefully reviewed' by the editorial team.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>5</sup> '[How NAIJ.com's Technology Has Improved Over the Past 1 Year](#)', NAIJ Nigerian News, 17 July 2018, 20200610134424

<sup>6</sup> '[Far from healthy? The state of Nigerian media](#)', Sahara Reporters, 22 May 2018, 20200610140231

<sup>7</sup> COISS notes that Facebook's Instant Articles platform is a digital platform for publishers to use. A range of highly credible media sources utilise the platform including the *New York Times*, *The BBC*, *National Geographic*, *The Guardian*, *Der Spiegel* and *The Atlantic*- see: '[7 Things You Need to Know About Facebook Instant Articles](#)', Contently, 13 May 2015, 20200610135213.

<sup>8</sup> '[How Legit.ng grew their business with Audience Network and improved the lives of fellow Nigerians](#)', Audience Network, 2019, 20200610134842<sup>8</sup>

<sup>9</sup> '[How To Become Naij.com Guest Author](#)', Legit, 2015, 20200610135624

<sup>10</sup> '[11 amazing facts about Naij.com](#)', 2016, Legit, 20200610135940

<sup>11</sup> '[How To Become Naij.com Guest Author](#)', Legit, 2015, 20200610135624

### Nigeria's media environment

Credible sources consistently point to the credibility deficit plaguing Nigeria's media and social media environment. DFAT for example write '[t]he reliability and honesty of the Nigerian media can be questionable.'<sup>12</sup>

See also: '[Letter from Africa: Fake news and Nigeria's media](#)', BBC Monitoring, 3 March 2020, 20200610120612 and '[Tackling Fake News: The Case of Nigeria](#)', Istituto Per Gli Studi di Politica Internazionale, 22 May 2019, 20200610130710. The former notes that while 'a certain recklessness is to be expected of stories published on social media', this may not always extend to reporting on militant groups. Boko Haram have for instance bombed media outlets considered to misreport on the group.

COISS also suggests consulting the following article published on *Africa Check*, an organisation which works to 'to promote accuracy in public debate and the media in Africa'. The article provides practical information on fact-checking and spotting fakes in media stories and other publications: '[How to Fact-Check: Tips and Advice](#)', Africa Check, 2020, 20200610133109

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<sup>12</sup> Country Information Report: Nigeria, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 9 March 2018, Para.3.39, p.20, CIS7B83941414 .

**UNCLASSIFIED**

Many thanks s. 22(1)(a)(i)

Kind regards,

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Protection Assessment VIC and QLD

Humanitarian Program Operations | Refugee Humanitarian and Settlement

Immigration and Settlement Services

Department of Home Affairs

P: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

[homeaffairs.gov.au](https://homeaffairs.gov.au)

**UNCLASSIFIED**

From: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>

Sent: Monday, 15 June 2020 4:48 PM

To: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>

Subject: COISS - Nigeria - Express Q and A - June 2020 - RE: Country Information Boko Haram in Lagos 20200611095613 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

**UNCLASSIFIED**

Hi s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Thanks for your Q and A request on the Nigerian Boko Haram article, detailed below. I could not find the article. I have included details of my searches below.

I searched for the exact article online by using Google's search tools for that exact title or other articles with similar content on that date. That search returned no results.

I also checked the All Africa and Africa Confidential databases for that exact article or information about the alleged incident which also returned no results.

I also checked the 'leadership.ng' website, which is the website of the newspaper that the article scan comes from. There were no results. The author, s. 47F(1) has published a number of articles in that publication, but I did not find the article listed or any other evidence of that incident.

I was able to find the applicant's address in both Google Maps and Google Street view, but I did not find a petrol station (noting that the alleged incident happened 15 years ago). I included the address in further searches for information about an alleged arson at a petrol station and found no results.

COISS understands that Boko Haram is not active in southern Nigeria. Boko Haram is active in the north of Nigeria. See e.g.

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under the Freedom of Information Act 1982

'NGA 20190821145436 Kidnappings for ransom by Boko Haram', Country of Origin Information Services Section (COISS), 26 August 2019, 20190826104435

'Anatomy of Boko Haram: The Rise and Decline of a Violent Group in Nigeria', Al Jazeera Centre for Studies, Freedom C. Onuoha and Samuel Oyewole, 22 April 2018, CIS7B839418951

I have not provided a written report as there is little to report on. I hope that this email adequately answers the question and I will close this job. Let me know if you need further information.

Cheers

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Senior Research Officer (Canberra)

Country of Origin Information Services Section

Humanitarian Programme Capabilities Branch | Refugee, Humanitarian and Settlement Division

Department of Home Affairs

P: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) | E: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au

UNCLASSIFIED

From s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Sent: Monday, 15 June 2020 8:57 AM

To: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) @HOMEAFFAIRS.GOV.AU>

Subject: Country Information Boko Haram in Lagos 20200611095613

## Research request was assigned

### Requesting officer details

Name: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Email: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au

Phone number: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Location: QLD

Agency: Home Affairs

Role: Decision Maker

### Request details

Released by Department of Home Affairs  
under the Freedom of Information Act 1982



**Subject:** Boko Haram in Lagos

**Preferred due date:** 18/06/2020

**Agreed due date:** 18/06/2020

**Country:** Nigeria

**Interview/hearing date:**

**Case number ID:** null

**Priority:** Community

**Relevant background of the case:**

s. 47F(1)

**Questions:**

In support of her claims the applicant provided a copy of an article purportedly printed in Nigeria's Leadership newspaper on s. 47F(1)

(CLD2020/2981001).

Are you able to verify whether this article is genuine? Are there any credible reports of a petrol station being burned down in Lagos on 30 October 2015?

**Sources already consulted by Requestion Officer:**

Nigeria's Leadership newspaper website, internet search

**Request can be found at:** <https://cisnet.homeaffairs.gov.au/#/submit>

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## OFFICIAL

Hi s. 22(1)(a)(i)

Our Nigeria lead researcher is away today and because of the short time frame I am going to reply to your question via email rather than a standard report.

1. Please indicate whether there are media/independent reports that would corroborate a mass shooting attack 27 July 2019 by Boko Haram in Maiduguri Borno state.

Yes. Independent reports from reliable sources describe this event. Please see, for example:

['After 10 years of Boko Haram violence, Nigerians crave peace'](#), Associated Press (AP), 26 July 2019, 20190730121416

['Nigeria: Toll in suspected Boko Haram funeral attack rises to 65'](#), Aljazeera, 29 July 2019, 20200811133208

['Suspected Boko Haram fighters kill 65 in attack on funeral in Nigeria'](#), Washington Post, 30 July 2019, 20200811134148

I note the following points from these sources:

- The place, the date and the death toll are consistent with the applicant's story.
  - o Except that the incident occurred in a village outside Maiduguri (see below). It is not clear from the sources how close to the city the incident occurred.
- The attack was on a funeral and was believed to be in retaliation for that village's resistance to Boko Haram.
- s. 47F(1)
  - s. 47F(1) A number of people who were not involved in the funeral went out to see what was going on. The killing was reportedly indiscriminate.

I am unable to comment on how likely it is that there were s. 47F(1) in that village. In the time available for research I was unable to find the name of the village. It was to the north of Maiduguri but I could not find a likely village on Google Maps. Even if I could find it, I doubt we would find information about the s. 47F(1) demography of the village.

2. Please indicate the extent of threats or harm by Boko Haram or other s. 47F(1) militant groups in the town of Maiduguri and more broadly in the Borno state from 2015 onwards?

Boko Haram is a 'catchall' name for various terrorist groups, including splinters, in northern Nigeria. Most of the reporting (see above, for example) is about a 'suspected Boko Haram attack' but the name of the group is probably not as important as the violence, the targets, the motives and the location, which are all otherwise consistent. See, for example, this recent reporting about a Borno State attack since 2015 where the media source notes the difficulty in naming the perpetrators: ['Video Surfaces of Execution of Aid Workers and Others Abducted in Nigeria'](#), New York Times, 23 July 2020, 20200811140001

In another recent example that illustrates the above point and fits the time frame, the BBC is more specific in naming of Islamist groups in Borno State. They refer to a 'faction' of Boko Haram called

Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP). See: ['Islamic State in Nigeria 'beheads Christian hostages'](#), BBC News, 27 December 2019, 20200811140724

Another attack on a s. 47F(1) village occurred in December 2019. There was an attack by 'Boko Haram' on a s. 47F(1) village in Borno State south of Maiduguri on Christmas Eve 2019: ['7 Killed in Nigeria Jihadist Attack on Christmas Eve'](#), VOA, 25 December 2019, 20200811141712

In the time available for research I did not find any reports since 2015 of s. 47F(1) being targeted in Maiduguri itself (I found reports from around the city, not in it and I found earlier reports). What we can say with some certainty is that there is a s. 47F(1) and that Boko Haram or one or more of its splinters is active in the city: ['Boko Haram Cuts Electricity to Maiduguri in Northern Nigeria'](#), Council on Foreign Relations, 22 January 2020, 20200811143142

I hope this helps. Let me know if you want to discuss.

Cheers

s. 22(1)(a)(

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Senior Research Officer (Canberra)  
Country of Origin Information Services Section  
Humanitarian Programme Capabilities Branch | Refugee, Humanitarian and Settlement Division  
Department of Home Affairs  
P: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) 7 | E: s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)

**UNOFFICIAL**

**UNOFFICIAL**

**From** s. 22(1)(a)(ii)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 11 August 2020 11:15 AM  
**To:** s. 47F(1) [homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.47F(1)@homeaffairs.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Country Information Bokoharam mass shooting 20200811111513

## Research request was created

### Requesting officer details

**Name:** s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

**Email:** s. 22(1)(a)(ii) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.22(1)(a)(ii)@homeaffairs.gov.au)

**Phone number:** s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

**Location:** NSW

Released by Department of Home Affairs  
under the Freedom of Information Act 1982

**Agency:** Home Affairs

**Role:** Decision Maker

## Request details

**Subject:** Bokoharam mass shooting

**Preferred due date:** 12/08/2020

**Agreed due date:**

**Country:** Nigeria

**Interview/hearing date:** s. 47F(1)

**Case number ID:** s. 47F(1)

**Priority:** s. 47E(d)

### Relevant background of the case:

s. 47F(1)

during a Boko Haram militants attack which killed 65 people in Maiduguri Borno state.

The applicant indicates that prior to the claimed attacks s. 47F(1)

### Questions:

1. Please indicate whether there are media/independent reports that would corroborate a mass shooting attack 27 July 2019 by Boko Haram in Maiduguri Borno state.

2. Please indicate the extent of threats or harm by Boko Haram or other s. 47F(1) militant groups in the town of Maiduguri and more broadly in the Borno state from 2015 onwards?

### Sources already consulted by Requestion Officer:

CISNET

Google

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