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Freedom of expression

On 14 March, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) fined 25 stations over their coverage of the 2023 general elections for allegedly breaching the broadcasting code. On 1 April, the NBC fined Channels Television NGN 5 million (USD 6,540) over views expressed by Datti Baba-Ahmed, the Labour Party vice-presidential candidate, during a TV programme. However, on 10 May, the Federal High Court in Abuja barred the NBC from imposing fines on broadcast stations.

On 18 March Chude Franklin Nnamdi, a Labour Party supporter, was arrested by police in Onitsha, Anambra state, for alleged cyberstalking – in contravention of section 24 of the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc) Act, 2015 – over his criticism on social media of Charles Soludo, governor of Anambra state.

On 18 August, the authorities withdrew accreditation from 25 journalists and media houses, excluding them from covering activities at the presidential villa in Abuja, on vague grounds of “security concerns and overcrowding of the press gallery area”.

On 7 October, the NBC issued Arise TV “a final warning” for airing a programme containing “unguarded incendiary remarks... against the Legislature, Executive, Judiciary and Mr. President.”

On 1 November, police – in collusion with the Imo state government – beat and blindfolded Joe Ajaero, president of Nigeria Labour Congress, during a protest in Owerri municipality over workers’ unpaid salaries and pensions.

Journalists

The authorities continued to clamp down on journalists and use criminal sanctions for “defamation”.

In January, Agba Jalingo faced criminal charges for alleged defamation of a relative of Ben Ayade, former governor of Cross River state. On 7 February, investigative journalists Gidado Yushau and Alfred Olufemi were convicted of conspiracy and defamation over a report on drug abuse in Kwara state.

On 18 April, a police officer physically assaulted Benedict Uwalaka, a photojournalist, for covering a protest by aviation union members in Lagos state.

Prisoner of conscience Omoyele Sowore continued to face bogus treason charges at the Federal High Court in Abuja for calling for #RevolutionNow protests in 2019.

Unlawful attacks and killings

Security forces used excessive force, including in the dispersal of peaceful protests and assemblies.

On 5 April, a police officer shot dead Onyeka Ibe for refusing to pay a NGN 100 bribe (USD 0.13) in Delta state.

On 29 June, soldiers shot dead three youths protesting at extortion and underemployment in Afokpella community in Etsako local government area, Edo state.

A leaked government memo dated 19 July indicated that the Lagos state government had in its possession the bodies of 103 people killed during the #EndSARS protests in October 2020, and had approved their secret mass burial.¹ On 10 October, the Lagos state government announced the suspension of the burial.

On 6 September, armed police officers teargassed and used excessive force on University of Lagos students protesting against an increase in tuition fees from NGN 19,000 (USD 24.76) to NGN 190,000 (USD 247.65). Olorunfemi Adeyeye and six other students were arrested, beaten and threatened with death by police.

On 9 October, police officer Drambi Vandi was convicted in the High Court in Lagos state for the murder of Omobolanle Raheem, who he shot dead on 25 December 2022 on the Lekki-Epe road after trying to stop her car. He was sentenced to death by hanging.

Torture and other ill-treatment

On 30 July, Faiz Abdullahi died in police custody in Kaduna, Kaduna state, after being tortured during interrogation. Abdullahi Tukur Abba, a 17-year-old student, died in hospital following torture during interrogation after he was picked up by police on 5 August in Yola, Adamawa state.

Economic, social and cultural rights

On 29 May, President Bola Tinubu announced the removal of the fuel subsidy, leading to a steep rise in food prices and the cost of living.

On 2 August, the Nigeria Labour Congress went on strike over issues including low wages and the eight months' non-payment of salary for university teachers. On 1 October, President Tinubu announced a temporary monthly minimum wage increase of NGN 25,000 (USD 31).

Forced evictions

The authorities continued to forcibly evict residents, without adequate notice or compensation or making alternative resettlement plans, rendering hundreds of people homeless. On 21 and 22 May, security agents and the Kaduna State Urban Planning and Development Authority demolished structures belonging to supporters of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria. On 27 July, over 12,000 people were rendered homeless and over 250 houses were demolished in communities in Oworonshoki, Lagos state.

Right to a healthy environment

The authorities failed to put in place adequate measures to mitigate the impact of heavy rainfalls and floods, exacerbated by climate change.² In June, four people died and 166 houses were submerged by flooding in Abuja, and eight people died as floodwaters submerged Agege community, Lagos state.

In August, over 700 houses and farms were destroyed by flooding in Cheledi community, Bauchi state, and five communities were displaced as houses and farmlands were submerged by floods in Niger state. Also, in August, farms in Ogbaru, Anambra state, were affected by severe flooding, leading to the death of over 25,000 birds in a poultry farm.

Oil-related pollution and environmental damage continued in the Niger Delta.³ The clean-up by Shell remained inadequate.⁴ Shell had not explained how it planned to address the pollution of Nigerian communities linked to its operations.⁵

Violations of international humanitarian law

Abuses by armed groups

There were continued human rights abuses by Boko Haram and Islamic State's West African Province in the north-east; assailants, locally called "bandits", in the north-west and centre; and "unknown gunmen" in the south-east. On 23 January, gunmen beheaded Christopher Ohizu, a local government administrator in Imo state. On 5 and 6 April, gunmen killed at least 46 people in the village of Umogidi, Benue state.

On 22 August, Boko Haram fighters abducted over 40 women and girls in Mafa local government area, Borno state. On 19 September, gunmen attacked and killed about eight security operatives comprising soldiers, police officers and members of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in Ehime Mbano local government area, Imo state.

On 24 December 2023, gunmen carried out deadly attacks on 20 communities of Bokkos and parts of Barkin-Ladi local government area of Plateau state, killing over 194 people and leaving dozens injured and displaced.

Attacks on educational institutions

The Nigerian state failed to protect educational institutions from attacks and abductions.⁶ In January, gunmen abducted six pupils, aged four to six years, from LGEA Primary School in Alwaza, Nasarawa state. In March, herders attacked the Community Grammar School in Alaropo Nla, Oyo state, injuring pupils and teachers. On 22 September, gunmen abducted 30 schoolgirls from their hostels at the Federal University of Gusau, Zamfara state. On 4 October, gunmen attacked Federal University Dutsin-Ma in Katsina state and abducted five female students.

On 9 October, gunmen abducted four female students – Rahila Hanya, Josephine Gershon, Rosemary Samuel and Goodness Samuel – at the Nasarawa State University in Angwan Ka'are community, Nasarawa state.

Unlawful attacks and killings by security forces

Defence and security forces committed human rights violations during their operations against armed groups.

On 24 January, an air strike by a suspected Nigerian air force drone killed dozens of civilians in Rukubi local government area, Nasarawa state. On 25 January, at least 21 civilians were killed in an air strike by the Nigerian air force in Niger state. In September, security forces attacked Umualumaku community in Ehime Mbano local government area, Imo state, setting several houses and vehicles ablaze, in reprisal over the killing of members of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, police and army. On 3 December, Nigerian military air strikes killed over 120 people attending a religious ceremony at Tudun Biri village, Kaduna state.

Enforced disappearances

Maduabuchi Obinwa, aged 22, disappeared after his abduction on 24 April 2022, when security agents from the Awkuzu State Criminal Investigation Department raided his house in Ekwulobia, Anambra state. Obiora Agbasimalo, a governorship candidate, was abducted by gunmen on 18 September 2021 while going to an election campaign outing in Azia town, Anambra state. Sunday Ifedi and Calista Ifedi, a couple, were taken by security operatives from their home in Enugu on 23 November 2021, because of their alleged membership of the Indigenous People of Biafra. The fates and whereabouts of all these people remained unknown at the end of the year.

Violence against women and girls

According to the minister of women's affairs, as of October there were 24,720 reported cases of sexual and gender-based violence during the year, including 975 deaths. On 15 June, an eight-months' pregnant woman was raped by John Akpo at Irabi, Benue state. On 22 June, the police arrested Chukwuemeka Orji for raping a 13-year-old domestic worker in Aba, Abia state.

On 14 July, the mutilated body of 32-year-old Dorcas Shangev was found in Makurdi, Benue state. On 15 July, 27-year-old Chinyere Awuda was beaten to death and dumped in an abandoned hotel pool in Awka, Anambra state.

LGBTI people's rights

On 27 August, police arrested 69 men for organizing a gay wedding in Delta state. On 4 September, they were charged under the Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act at a High Court in Delta state and detained in prison. On 19 September, they were granted bail, with harsh terms, and their criminal trials continued. On 22 October, 59 men and 17 women were arrested at Duwa Plaza shopping mall, Gombe, Gombe state, for allegedly holding a gay birthday party and planning to hold a gay wedding.

Internally displaced people's rights

More than 2.4 million people remained internally displaced in the north-east. The Borno state government closed four camps in July and resettled 11,000 households. Most of the resettled people lacked adequate food and access to basic amenities. On 6 October, Dr Betta Edu, the minister of humanitarian affairs and poverty alleviation, handed over 40 housing units to internally displaced people in Zamfara state.
