

Nigeria (37)



NIGERIA

COUNTRY ASSESSMENT

April 2002

I SCOPE OF DOCUMENT

II GEOGRAPHY

III HISTORY

IV STATE STRUCTURES

VA HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

VB HUMAN RIGHTS - SPECIFIC GROUPS

VC HUMAN RIGHTS - OTHER ISSUES

CHRONOLOGY

POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS

PROMINENT PEOPLE

REFERENCES TO SOURCE MATERIAL

I Scope of Document

1.1. This assessment has been produced by the Country Information & Policy Unit, Immigration & Nationality Directorate, Home Office, from information obtained from a variety of sources.

1.2. The assessment has been prepared for background purposes for those involved in the asylum determination process. The information it contains is not exhaustive, nor is it intended to catalogue all human rights violations. It concentrates on the issues most commonly raised in asylum claims made in the United Kingdom.

1.3. The assessment is sourced throughout. It is intended to be used by caseworkers as a signpost to the source material, which has been made available to them. The vast majority of the source material is readily available in the public domain.

1.4. It is intended to revise the assessment on a 6-monthly basis while the country remains within the top 35 asylum producing countries in the United Kingdom.

1.5. The assessment has been placed on the Internet (http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/asylum/asylum_contents02.html). An electronic copy of the assessment has been made available to:

Amnesty International UK

Immigration Advisory Service

Immigration Appellate Authority

Immigration Law Practitioners' Association

Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants

JUSTICE

Medical Foundation for the care of Victims of Torture

Refugee Council

Refugee Legal Centre

UN High Commissioner for Refugees

II Geography

2.1. The Federal Republic of Nigeria currently consists of 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) containing the capital Abuja. It is a West African coastal state bordered by Benin to the west, Niger to the north, Chad to the north-east and Cameroon to the south-east. Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa, the 1991 national census found there to be 88.5 million Nigerians. The current unofficial estimate is over 120 million. Nigeria is a former British colony, and many influences are visible in contemporary Nigeria with English recognised as the official language. There are also many tribal based languages, and these remain the mother tongue to large sections of the population. [1][2][3]

Economy

2.2. The economy, which had been in decline for much of the last three decades, grew 3.8% in 2001. However, poor infrastructure, endemic corruption, and general economic mismanagement hindered further economic growth. Most of the population is rural and engaged in small-scale agriculture. The agricultural sector employed more than 65% of the workforce but accounted for less than 36% of gross domestic product (GDP). The agriculture and manufacturing sectors deteriorated considerably during the oil boom decades and years of military rule. The collapse of market agriculture contributed significantly to the country's urbanisation and increased unemployment. Although the great bulk of economic activity is outside the formal sector, recorded GDP per capita was \$250 (28,000 naira). Much of the country's wealth continued to be concentrated in the hands of a minority of its citizens. This is due in part to corruption, non-transparent government contracting practices, and other systems that favour the wealthy, including a banking system that impedes small and medium investors and regulatory and tax regimes that are not always enforced impartially. The country's ports and roads are poorly maintained, and the water and power infrastructure is inadequate. However, the Federal Government and various states began improving infrastructure with some

success, such as the privatisation of the Telephone Company (NITEL), the auction of two licenses for mobile telephones, and the rehabilitation of power plants. Chronic fuel shortages, which afflicted the country for several years, mostly have been alleviated by improvements in domestic refineries and partial deregulation of prices. Food production improved in 2001, due in part to record rainfalls, but much of the agricultural produce was lost due to the poor transportation infrastructure and road closures caused by civil unrest. Large numbers of the population live in poverty, and are subject to malnutrition and disease. During 2001, the Nigerian government reduced controls on the private sector and increased budget allocations for education and health care. [3][121]

III History

3.1. Nigeria achieved independence on 1st October 1960, but with a legacy of regional, ethnic and religious problems that have remained. These have been major factors in Nigeria's experience of military rule. [1]

3.2. During the 8 year tenure of Major-General Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993), the ban on political activity was lifted in May 1989 and 2 national political parties were created in October 1989, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). The SDP and NRC contested a series of local, state governorship, and federal assembly elections, culminating in a presidential election on 12 June 1993. The presidential election was believed to have been won by the SDP candidate Chief Moshood Abiola. However, the full results were never announced and the Babangida Government annulled the election. This precipitated a period of political uncertainty that was not dissipated by Babangida's appointment of a short-lived, Interim National Government (ING). This was headed by the Chief Ernest Shonekan but with continuing military influence in the guise of Defence Minister General Sani Abacha. On 17 November 1993 General Abacha ousted the ING and reinstated military rule. [1]

3.3. In June 1994 Chief Moshood Abiola declared himself President, which led to his arrest in late June 1994. His trial on charges of treason was repeatedly adjourned and he remained in custody until his death on 7 July 1998. In the aftermath of his arrest, over a hundred pro-democracy activists were arrested in protests centred on the cities of Lagos and Ibadan. [1][24][25][26][27][28]

3.4. A Military Tribunal was established by the PRC in June 1995 to hear in secret evidence concerning an alleged conspiracy to remove the Abacha Government that was "uncovered" in early March. On 14 July 1995 it was announced that of the 51 defendants that had been produced before it, 40 had been convicted including two leading political figures, former Head of State retired General Olusegun Obasanjo and retired General Shehu Yar'Adua, a leading member of the National Constitutional Conference (NCC), and previously Obasanjo's deputy. The Tribunal released without charge 8 people including elder statesman Chief Michael A. Akinloye. On 10 October 1995 it was officially confirmed that 43 soldiers and civilians were convicted by the Tribunal and following review by the PRC the 11 death sentences (including that on General Yar'Adua) had been commuted to lengthy prison sentences. The remainder had received sentences ranging from 15 years (including General Obasanjo and Beko Ransome-Kuti, Chairman of the Campaign for Democracy (CD) pressure group) to retirement from the army. The Tribunal was formally dissolved in August 1995. [1][4]

3.5. At the end of October 1995 Kenule Saro-Wiwa and a further eight Ogoni activists

were sentenced to death by a special military tribunal on charges of murder following the killing of some Ogoni chiefs. Six other defendants, including the deputy president of MOSOP were acquitted. On 10 November 1995 the nine convicted Ogonis were executed, which was immediately condemned by the international community and following which Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth. [1]

3.6. The first party-based elections since the annulled 1993 presidential elections were held throughout Nigeria on 15 March 1997. There were a number of reports of irregularities. Shortly afterwards Abacha introduced a Decree giving him authority to remove any elected officer. By April 1998 all five legal political parties, probably through a mix of bribery and coercion adopted Abacha as their presidential candidate and the electoral commission accepted this. However, he had not formally accepted the offer to stand in the election before his death. The state assembly elections that took place on 6 December 1997 were marked by a low turnout. As in the local government elections the UNCP were the emphatic winners capturing 637 seats in the 36 states. On 25 April 1998 elections were held for representatives to the two houses of the National Assembly. There was a very low turnout. The United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP) won more than 70% of the seats in the Senate and House of Assembly. [7][8][9][10] [11][14]

3.7. On 21 December 1997 Abacha's second in command General Oladipo Diya was arrested along with others and accused of plotting a coup. On 20 April 1998 it was announced that 16 alleged coup plot suspects had been cleared by the Special Military Tribunal, and released. These included Colonel E M Shoda (former military assistant to General Diya, and Colonel Daniel Akintonde (former military administrator of Ogun State). [12] On 28 April 1998 the Special Military Tribunal passed the sentences and verdicts on the remaining 30 accused persons who had been brought to trial. Six of those accused were sentenced to death, including General Diya. Four were sentenced to life in prison, and fourteen were released. The rest were sentenced to prison terms ranging from two to fourteen years. [13]

3.8. On 8 June 1998 General Abacha died of natural causes (according to official Nigerian sources). General Abdusalami Abubakar, previously the Chief of Defence Staff under Abacha, was appointed as the new head of state by the Provisional Ruling Council. On 12 June 1998 there were demonstrations in Lagos and Ibadan against Abubakar's succession. There were also protests in some other cities. However in the capital Abuja and most of the rest of Nigeria there appeared to be no sign of disturbances. [15][16][17]

3.9. On 16 June 1998 General Abubakar ordered the release of nine high profile detainees including: General Obasanjo, the former head of state, and Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti, the leader of the Campaign for Democracy (CD). [18][19][20] The police also withdrew treason charges against 15 pro-democracy activists, including Professor Wole Soyinka and Lt. General Alani Akinrinade as a result of a Federal Government directive. They have all since returned to Nigeria on a visit. Those that have been released or who have had charges against them dropped have been free to participate in the transition to democracy. [22][79]

3.10. Chief Moshood Abiola, died suddenly whilst still in captivity on 7 July 1998. Some of his family and supporters claimed he had been murdered. Rioting was reported in several Nigerian cities following the announcement of Abiola's death, including Lagos, Ibadan and Abiola's hometown of Abeokuta. Over 60 people were reported to have died. The situation returned to normal within a few days. Pathologists from Britain, Canada and the United States carried out an independent autopsy on Abiola. The result of the

autopsy was released in early August and indicated that Abiola had died of natural causes. In August 1998 Abubakar visited the Abiola family home to pay his condolences to the family. [24][25][26][27][28]

3.11. Amnesty International reported that most of the prisoners, accused of involvement with the 1990, 1995 and 1997 coup attempts, had been released by 31 March 1999. The prisoners, who were reported as still being detained, are Lieutenant Colonel Ibrahim Yakassai, who is accused of involvement in a hit squad, which is implicated in the assassination of Kudirat Abiola amongst others; retired Trooper Innocent Ofem Anang and retired Lance Corporal Lucky Iviero, both of whom have had their life sentences commuted to ten years imprisonment; Warrant Officer I Samson Ako Elo and Warrant Officer II Augustine Ogbere, who were among those released, were later re-detained. [120]

3.12. On 20 July 1998, General Abubakar announced a detailed plan leading to the restoration of a democratic civilian government. He created an Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The INEC announced a timetable for elections beginning with local elections on 5 December 1998. [30] Guidelines announced by INEC were designed to ensure political parties are not based solely in one region. Prospective political parties were invited to register with the INEC for recognition, and twenty-five prospective parties had registered by the deadline of 9 September 1998. [29][31] The deadline was subsequently extended until 16 October 1998. [88] On 19 October 1998 it was announced that nine parties met the requirements to contest the elections. A voter registration exercise was completed in October 1998. [81] On 10 September 1998 a coalition of 12 Nigerian human rights groups including the Civil Liberties Organisation announced the formation of a body to monitor the plan to restore civilian rule, the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG). [32]

3.13. On 9 September 1998 Twenty Ogoni activists held on suspicion of murdering Ogoni chiefs were released from jail where they had been held without trial since 1994. Justice A C Woryi said their detention without trial had been "unconstitutional, unlawful, illegal null and void". Also released was Mrs Daughter Dilosi, another Ogoni who had been arrested in September 1997. [23] Many prominent political exiles returned to Nigeria after the death of General Abacha, including Ledum Mitee, the leader of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). [80]

3.14. On 1 November 1998, in recognition of the progress being made towards respect for human rights and the restoration of democratic civilian Government, the European Union adopted a new Common Position on Nigeria. This lifted most of the measures which had been in place since 1993 (all visa restrictions; the ban on high level visits; the ban on sporting contracts; the ban on the appointment of European military personnel to diplomatic missions in Nigeria and Nigerian military personnel in the European Union). [36][84][85] In April 1999, in light of the progress made to restoring civilian rule, the UNCHR decided to conclude its consideration of the human rights situation in Nigeria. [129] On the 31 May 1999, the European Union lifted all remaining sanctions against Nigeria, and has commenced negotiations on the allocation of 330 million euros in development aid, which had been suspended following the executions of nine Ogoni leaders in November 1995. [130] Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth was lifted on the 29 May 1999, following the transfer of power to a civilian government. [127] [128]

Local elections 5 December 1998

3.15. The local elections were dominated by the People's Democratic Party, which won 459 chairmanship positions and 4, 650 councillor seats. The All People's Party was second and the Alliance for Democracy was the third placed party. All three parties were registered to compete in the next round of elections. International monitors said they were largely satisfied by the voting procedures. [94]

9 January 1999 Governorship elections and House of Assembly elections

3.16. Elections for Governors and members of the House of Assembly took place on 9 January 1999. The People's Democratic Party won the governorship of 20 states, the All People's Party won nine and the Alliance for Democracy won 6. In the State House of Assembly elections the People's Democratic Party again emerged as the largest party. Independent international monitors observed the elections, including some from the Commonwealth. The then Commonwealth Secretary General Emeka Anyaoku commended the conduct of the elections and said he believed they were credible. [95]

3.17. Although the elections generally passed off peacefully, there were a few trouble spots, and elections were delayed in some areas because of violence. [95] In Rivers State the Independent National Electoral Commission declared that the results were inconclusive as no results were received from several wards, and the result received from 11 wards in Port Harcourt was cancelled due to irregularities. [97] A re-run of the elections in these wards took place on the following Saturday. State elections in Bayelsa were postponed because of violence but later held peacefully on 30 January. [98]

Parliamentary elections - 20 February 1999

3.18. The national legislative elections took place on 20 February 1999. The People's Democratic Party emerged once again as the biggest party in the parliament, winning the majority of seats in the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Alliance for Democracy came second, and the All People's Party trailed in third place. [99]

3.19. The European Union observer mission to Nigeria expressed satisfaction with the conduct of the parliamentary elections. He commended the dedication of the Independent National Electoral Commission officials, and praised them for the freedom of access to information granted to the observers. There were however reports of irregularities in some areas, which the EU spokesman said did not undermine the credibility of the overall result. [100]

Presidential Elections - 27 February 1999

3.20. Two candidates contested the elections. General Obasanjo, heading the People's Democratic Party won by 63% of the vote, against 37% for Chief Olu Falae, head of a coalition of the Alliance for Democracy and the All People's Party. However there was criticism of the conduct of the elections by Chief Obasanjo's opponent and international observers. The European Union in a statement said that despite serious irregularities the result "reflects the wish of the Nigerian people". [101] The international observer mission led by Jimmy Carter said that because of the irregularities it was not possible to make an accurate judgement about the outcome of the elections. [102] [114] The president elect General Obasanjo was a former military ruler, who handed power to an elected president in 1979. [103]

Events since the election of President Obasanjo

3.21. Olusegun Obasanjo was sworn-in as president on 29 May 1999. Among his first act as president was to suspend all recent commercial contracts agreed by the previous military regime, pending a review by a panel appointed for this purpose. Lucrative oil contracts were included within these contracts. [131][132][133]

3.22. In 1999 President Obasanjo created a panel to investigate human rights abuses, the Human Rights Violations Investigation Committee (HRVIP), or "Oputa Panel". The HRVIP, is a panel to investigate human rights abuses dating back to 1966 and the time of the first military coup. The Oputa Panel can recommend courses of action to the justice system for perpetrators of past abuses, something the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) does not do. According to Justice Oputa, the chair, the panel's primary goal is to provide the country with a systematic examination of past human rights abuses to develop a national consensus on the boundaries of acceptable behaviour by government entities as well as individuals. The panel heard cases throughout 2001, mostly involving allegations of unlawful arrest, detention, and torture as far back as the 1966 Biafran War. The panel also heard cases in which the rights of groups were violated. Extensive hearings were held in Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, and Kano in 2001, and have taken evidence in the claims of more than 10,000 petitioners. [3]

3.23. On 29 June 1999 President Obasanjo abolished the Petroleum Trust Fund, a body which had been tasked with allocating the revenue from oil production, as he believed that it was irrelevant within a constitutional framework. [135] All military officers who held political posts between 1985 and 1999 were retired on 10 June 1999; the reason given for this action was to promote professionalism, to protect democracy and to ensure that the armies remained subordinate to the civil authority. It was emphasised that the dismissal of these officers was not meant to imply that they were involved in any wrongdoing. [136] On 10 July 1999 Obasanjo appointed his full cabinet of 49 ministers. He also appointed 12 Special Advisers on 12 July 1999; their role is to advise and assist the president. [138][139][140]

3.24. The prosecution of Hamza al-Mustapha, Mohammed Abacha, Mohammed Rabo Lawal, Lateef Shofalan, Mohammed Aminu and Sergeant Rogers Mshiella for the 1996 murder of Kudirat Abiola has been adjourned repeatedly; defence lawyers for each individual had filed numerous motions for adjournment in the Lagos High Court. The Government continued to investigate and detain former Abacha government officials and family members. These have included former Minister of the Interior Capital Territory Jerry Useni, former National Security Advisor Ismaila Gwarzo, Abacha's wife Maryam, Abacha's son Mohammed, and Colonel Ibrahim Yakassai, for the murder and attempted murders of other prominent pro-democracy activists in Lagos from 1996 to 1998. In 1999 the trial against former Army Chief of Staff Ishaya Bama for the attempted murder in 1996 of Guardian newspaper publisher Alex Ibru began. Hamza al-Mustapha, former Lagos Police Commissioner James Danbaba, and Colonel Yakubu, also were charged in the attempt on Ibru's life but their trials were pending. All of the defendants were being held at Kiri Kiri maximum-security prison. [3]

3.25. Justice Minister Bola Ige was murdered on 23 December 2001. The Minister was a political ally of President Obasanjo, and the motive for his murder remains unclear. He was killed by a number of gunmen in Ibadan. The police have vigorously investigated this crime, and a number of arrests have been made. A senior aide to the chief justice was found dead two weeks after the murder, Mr S. Awonusi's body was found not far from the central mosque in Abuja. There is nothing to indicate that the two killings were

related. [33][34][35]

3.26. On 27 January 2002, more than 1,000 people died as a result of massive explosions that followed a fire at an army ammunition dump in Lagos. Most of those who died were killed as they fled the explosions, some being drowned while attempting to cross a canal. There was violent unrest in Lagos, in the period of heightened tension following these explosions, with Yourubas attacking Hausa. Army units were deployed both in Lagos, to restore order, and in cities in the north to prevent retaliatory violence there. [41][42][43]

IV State Structures

The Constitution

4.1. The 1999 Constitution was based closely on the 1979 Constitution. Basic political rights are enshrined in Chapter IV of the 1999 Constitution. They include the right to personal liberty, the right to a fair trial, the right to freedom of expression and of the press, and the right to dignity of the human person. Under the Abubakar regime in the second half of 1998, the PRC government stopped exercising judicial power and also ceased to deny the courts the authority to review its actions. [3][38][141]

4.2. The 1999 Constitution prohibits torture and the mistreatment of prisoners. The Constitution protects individual rights before the judiciary, including a presumption of innocence, the right to be present, to confront witnesses, to present evidence, and to be represented by legal counsel. However these have been undermined by a lack of respect for the rule of law. [3][37][141]

4.3. The President has set up a Commission to review the Constitution. It holds public hearings around the country and it has now reported to the president. The National Assembly set up a parallel Commission, which is still touring the country taking evidence. [2][263]

Political System

4.4. Nigeria is a democratic federal republic. Local, parliamentary and presidential elections have been held, and the handover to the elected civilian president Olusegun Obasanjo took place on 29 May 1999 without incident. The cabinet is nominated by the president subject to the confirmation of the Senate. Although the Constitution allows the free formation of political parties, only three parties were registered with the INEC. The Constitution requires parties to have membership in two-thirds of the country's 36 states. [3]

Judiciary

4.5. Under the Constitution, the court system is composed of federal and state trial courts, state appeals courts, the Federal Court of Appeal, and the Federal Supreme Court. There are also Shari'a (Islamic) and customary (traditional) courts of appeal for each state and for the federal capital territory (Abuja). The lower courts include magistrate or district courts, customary or traditional courts, Shari'a courts, and for some specified cases, the state high courts. The nature of the case usually determines which court has jurisdiction. In principle customary and Shari'a courts have jurisdiction only if

both plaintiff and defendant agree. However, in practice fear of legal costs, delays, and distance to alternative venues encouraged many litigants to choose the customary and Shari'a courts over the regular venues. [3]

4.6. The extension of Shari'a law in many northern states has generated a public debate on whether Shari'a punishments such as amputation for theft, caning for fornication and public drunkenness constituted "torture or... inhuman or degrading treatment" as stipulated in the Constitution. Caning as a punishment is available under Nigerian common law, the Northern Nigerian Penal Code, and Shari'a law and has not been successfully challenged in the court system as a violation of the cruel and inhuman punishment clause of the 1999 Constitution. Although the expanded Shari'a laws technically do not apply to Christians, the Christian minority, especially in Zamfara and Sokoto States, was subjected to many of the social provisions of the law. [3]

4.7. Criminal justice procedures call for trial within three months of arraignment for most categories of crimes. Understaffing of the judiciary, inefficient administrative procedures, petty extortion, bureaucratic inertia, poor communication between police and prison officials, and inadequate transportation continued to result in considerable delays in bringing suspects to trial, often stretching to several years. [3]

4.8. Trials in the regular court system are public and generally respect constitutionally protected individual rights in criminal cases, including a presumption of innocence, and the right to be present, to confront witnesses, to present evidence, and to be represented by legal counsel. However, there is a widespread perception that judges are easily bribed or "settled," and that the courts cannot be relied on to render impartial judgements. Most prisoners are poor and cannot afford to pay the costs associated with moving their trials forward, and as a result they remain in prison. Wealthier defendants employ numerous delaying tactics and, in some cases, use bribes to persuade judges to grant numerous continuances. This, and similar practices, clogged the court calendar and prevented trials from starting. [3]

4.9. Many courts are understaffed, and personnel are paid poorly. Judges frequently fail to appear for trials, often because they are pursuing other means of income. In addition court officials often lack the proper equipment, training, and the will to perform their duties, again due primarily to their inadequate pay and poor conditions. [3]

4.10. Decree 63 of 26 May 1999 repealed many of the decrees that impinged on human rights including Decree 2. [185] The 1999 Constitution enshrined basic political rights including the right to a fair trial. [141] President Obasanjo has prepared a code of conduct signed by his ministers and advisors reminding them of the need for probity and accountability in public life. On 10 June 1999 it was reported that all legislation that was not in accordance with the 1999 Constitution and the spirit of democracy had been repealed. [142][143][144][145]

4.11. President Obasanjo has committed his government to a review of human rights abuse under previous military governments. He has also taken action against those who have been accused of human rights abuses committed during the Abacha regime. Colonel Ibrahim Yakassai has been prosecuted for the killing of pro-democracy activists in Lagos. In November 1999 the case against Hamza-Al-Mustapha, Mohammed Abacha, Mohammed Rabo Lawal, Lateef Shofalan and Mohammed Aminu for the murder of Kudirat Abiola was moved to Lagos High Court. Former Lagos Police Commissioner James Danbaba, General Bamaiyi and Colonel Yakuba have been charged with attempting to murder of newspaper publisher Alex Ibru on 2 February

1996. Other prominent security officials from the Abacha era are being investigated or have been detained, including Brigade General Ibrahim Sabo former Director of Military Intelligence, who has been detained because of his suspected involvement in the torture of people while working for the Abacha regime. [3][245]

4.12. The controversial Decree 33 of 1990 remains in operation. This decree allows for the detention of a Nigerian who has brought the country into disrepute. This decree is aimed at those who traffick in illicit drugs, and is subject to Judicial oversight. However, this decree allows for the detention of people, who may have already completed a sentence abroad, upon their return to Nigeria. This measure is a response to the serious drug trafficking problem that exists in Nigeria. The problem of the illicit drug trade, is one that the Nigerian authorities are attempting to address. [5][6]

Military

4.13. The Federal Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is tasked with law enforcement. The Constitution prohibits local and state police forces. Internal security is the duty of the State Security Service (SSS). The SSS's profile has declined under the Obasanjo regime. Until the advent of the civilian administration in May 1999, special paramilitary anticrime squads called "Rapid Response Teams" operated in every state. Under Obasanjo the military personnel dispatched to these units returned to their barracks, but the units remained intact in most states, staffed by regular policemen and with a reduced role and a less menacing presence. The Obasanjo Government lessened its reliance on the army to quell internal disorder. The degree of civilian control over the Rapid Response Teams and the national police force has expanded since the return to civilian rule. Despite these new controls, members of the security forces, including the police, anti-crime squads, and the armed forces are still accused of committing serious human rights abuses. [3]

4.14. Multinational oil companies and Nigerian oil producing companies subcontract police and soldiers from area units particularly to protect the oil facilities in the volatile Niger Delta region. Local youths claimed that these groups engaged in extrajudicial killings and other human rights abuses, in some cases with the support of foreign oil companies. [3] There have been calls from states in the South for state controlled police forces, as opposed to the present federal controlled system, the reason given was that improved security would increase investors confidence. However, this could also reflect a desire to set up police forces loyal to the local area. [246]

4.15. National police, army, and security forces committed extrajudicial killings and used excessive force to quell several incidents of ethnic and religious violence during 2001. The Government did not use lethal force to repress non-violent, purely political activities, but lethal force has been used when protests or demonstrations were perceived as becoming violent or disruptive, or in the apprehension and detention of suspected criminals. State anti-crime task forces remained the most frequent human rights offenders. However, in most cases in which abuses were committed, security forces were not held accountable for excesses, deadly use of force or the deaths of persons in custody. Security forces operated with impunity in the apprehension, illegal detention, and sometimes execution of criminal suspects. Since taking office, President Obasanjo has preferred to let the police deal with civil disturbances, sending in military reinforcements only when the police were unable to restore order. However, the Government deployed the army numerous times during 2001 to restore order after civil unrest, and the army committed numerous abuses while performing this role, in part due to a lack of training. [3]

4.16. The most significant recent example of army indiscipline, occurred in October 2001, when soldiers killed approximately 200 unarmed civilians, primarily ethnic Tiv, and caused considerable destruction in the town of Zaki Biam and a number of other villages in Benue State. This was in retaliation for the killing of 19 soldiers. The army had been

originally deployed to restore order between Tiv and Jukun communities in the state; who have been engaged in long running ethnic disputes. The Federal High Court in Makurdi, capital of Benue State, called for the removal of these forces in March 2002. [57][58]

4.17. More than 1,000 people died as a result of massive explosions that followed a fire at an army ammunition dump in Lagos on 27 January 2002. Most of those who died were killed as they fled the explosions, some being drowned in an attempt to cross a canal. There were violent clashes in Lagos, in the period of heightened tension following this fire, with Yourubas attacking resident Hausa. Army units were deployed both in Lagos, to restore order, and in cities in the north of the country to prevent retaliatory violence. [41][42][43]

4.18. The army was also deployed during a police strike on 1 February 2002. There have been reports that some elements in the army sympathise with the police's call for an improvement in conditions, and a call for an armed forces strike was circulated in March 2002. [59][60]

Police

4.19. Vigilante groups such as the OPC are common. This may reflect the mistrust that society at large has in the police. Most of these groups are also linked to tribal or ethnic groups, and this adds a political and ethnic dimension to their activities (see section on OPC). In Anambra State, the state government supported the extrajudicial activities of the vigilante group known as the Bakassi Boys, although they have recently arrested some members. Like most vigilante groups, the Bakassi Boys kill suspected criminals rather than turn them over to police; however, in some cases, the Bakassi Boys have chosen to cut off the hands or arms of perpetrators, rather than killing them outright. They also were accused of harassing and threatening political opponents of the state government. [3] The leader of this group Gilbert Okoyo was arrested in March 2001 in connection with the death of a police officer. [247]

4.20. Nationwide there has been an increase in crime. In Lagos in particular, there has been a serious breakdown in law and order. There have been frequent clashes between the police and armed criminal gangs involved in robbery and car thefts. There have been reports that a number of soldiers may be involved in crime, and the availability of weapons has also contributed to this increase. The police have been accused of being heavy handed in their response, and it has been reported that the police were responsible for the deaths of 387 people in Lagos in 2000. However, between August 2000 and May 2001, criminals killed 273 civilians in Lagos, and within the same period, 84 policemen were killed and 133 injured. The perceived inability of the police to deal with this violence has encouraged the formation of vigilante groups in Lagos and elsewhere, who have been responsible for the murder of a number of suspected criminals. [188][189][190]

4.21. The police are widely seen as being undisciplined, badly trained and poorly led, and unable to deal with the level of violent crime that they have to face. This may in part be due to low moral, due to underinvestment and neglect during the period of military rule. There have been local attempts to address these problems, by a more open approach to the general public, better training, and the use of appropriate equipment when dealing with crime, for example the issuing of rubber bullets to quell riots. In August 2001 President Obasanjo held a high-level meeting on national security involving the army, police and state governors who had been calling for the setting up of vigilantes to take up the fight against crime. [188][189][190]

4.22. In May 2000, the government announced that it would recruit 40,000 new police officers, and undertake a fundamental reform of the police, but there have been few improvements, and police numbers per head of population remain very low. This in turn has hindered the police's ability to investigate crime, and this, together with other social factors, has increased the level of lawlessness. The Nigerian Government is committed to improving the effectiveness of the police, and has announced plans to restructure the force in an effort to prevent violent crime, and to attract foreign investment. In August 2001 the Transport Minister announced that a Bill to increase police numbers from about 138,000 to 210,000 would be put before parliament. Training, rehabilitation of run-down police barracks and better equipment and pay would be part of the reform plans. [188][189][190][191]

4.23. However, despite government commitment to improvements, conditions for the police remain poor, and arrears in pay resulted in a one-day strike on 1 February 2002. President Obasanjo responded by releasing funds to meet the welfare needs of the police. He also sacked the head of the police service Musliu Smith, and a number of other senior officers. The police have threatened to resume industrial action, if they do not see a sustained improvement. [82][83]

4.24. There are also reliable reports that some police officers have been involved in violent crime. In April 2001 three police officers were sentenced to death for their part in the robbery and murder of bus passengers at an illegal roadblock; these sentences have yet to be carried out. [3] Poor discipline, pay and conditions are sighted as reasons for these crimes, but where they have come to light the Nigerian authorities have investigated, and where possible instigated criminal proceedings. [191][192]

Internal Security

4.25. Nigeria is a major regional power, and as such is a prominent member of the Economic Community of West African States and contributes a large military contingent to its monitoring force in Liberia and Sierra Leone (ECOMOG). There is a longstanding dispute with the Cameroon over the Bakassi peninsula, which lies to the extreme south of their shared border. The issue is currently before the International Court of Justice in The Hague. [1][51]

4.26. During General Abubakar's time as the Head of State the security situation improved as the programme for transition to civilian rule started. The main exceptions were in some areas of the Niger Delta where disaffected Ijaw youths have become more militant in their demands for a share of the area's oil wealth. [3] Unrest in the Niger Delta still continues under the civilian government, and efforts to address this by legislation have met with little success. The Niger Delta Development Commission has now been established. [137]

Legal Rights/Detention

4.27. Police and security forces are empowered to make arrests without warrants if they believed that there was reason to suspect that a person had committed an offence; they often abused this power. Under the Fundamental Rights Enforcement Procedures Rules of the Constitution, police may arrest and detain persons for 24 hours before charging them with an offence. The law requires an arresting officer to inform the accused of charges at the time of arrest and to take the accused persons to a station for processing within a reasonable amount of time. The police are required by law to provide suspects

with the opportunity to engage counsel and post bail. However, they generally do not adhere to legal procedures. Suspects have often been detained without being informed of the charges, denied access to counsel and family members, and denied the opportunity to post bail for bailable offences. There was no functioning system of bail, so many suspects were held in investigative detention. Numerous suspects alleged that police demanded payment before they were taken to court to have their cases heard. If family members attend court proceedings, police demand an additional payment. [3]

4.28. Police and security forces continued the practice of placing relatives and friends of wanted suspects in detention without criminal charge to induce suspects to surrender to arrest. Human rights groups called for the police to end the practice. [3] The Internal Affairs Minister Sunday Afolabi in a visit to Ekuje on 6 July 1999 acknowledged the delay in court hearings, and the importance of prison reform. However, prison conditions remain poor, and corruption and neglect are common. The Obasanjo government has embarked on a programme of prison reforms. [145][146][147][186]

Prisons and Prison conditions

4.29. Conditions in prison and places of detention remained harsh and life threatening. Most prisons were built 70 to 80 years ago and lack functioning basic facilities. Lack of potable water, inadequate sewerage facilities, and severe overcrowding resulted in unhealthy and dangerous sanitary conditions. Many prisons held 200 to 300% more persons than they were designed to hold. The Government acknowledged the problem of overcrowding as the main cause of the harsh conditions common in the prison system. According to government sources, approximately 45,000 inmates were held in a system of 148 prisons and 83 satellite prisons, with a maximum designed capacity of 33,348 prisoners. Some human rights groups estimate a higher number of inmates, perhaps as many as 47,000. Several times in 2000, authorities attempted to ease congestion in some smaller prisons. For example, in honour of the Eid-El-Kabir in March 2000, the Governor of Kano State released 159 prisoners, 52 of these were pre-trial detainees held without charge. Those released were provided with travel funds to return to their homes. During 2001, the Governor of Kaduna State, on the recommendation of a state court judge, made a similar release of prisoners. In December 2001, five teenagers were released from Suleja prison, in Niger State, through the help of local NGO's. [3][21][26]

4.30. Lengthy pre-trial detention remained a serious problem. According to the Constitution, persons charged with offences have the right to an expeditious trial; however, in practice this right was not respected. In March 2001, the Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) visited Owerri Prison in Imo State. According to reports, 90% of those in prison were awaiting trial. Multiple adjournments in some cases had led to serious delays. Serious backlogs, endemic corruption, and undue political influence continued to hamper the judicial system. Many of the pre-trial detainees held without charge had been detained for periods far longer than the maximum allowable sentence for the crimes for which they were being held. Police cited their inability to securely transport detainees to trial on their scheduled trial dates as one reason why so many of the detainees were denied a trial. [3]

4.31. In 2000 President Obasanjo directed the Ministry of Justice to create a judicial administration committee to address the questions of overcrowding, prison conditions, and rehabilitation. The NHRC began working with the Ministry of Justice and the Legal Resources Consortium during 2001 to draft a new Prison Bill to conform to the minimum standard rules of prisons practice and provisions of the UN. The NHRC has also urged the Federal Government and police not to detain persons in civil cases. During 2001, the

Government allowed international and domestic NGO's, including Prisoners Rehabilitation and Welfare Action (PRAWA), and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), regular access to prisons; however, it did not allow them continuous access to all prisons. PRAWA and the ICRC published newsletters on their work. The Government admits that there are problems with its incarceration and rehabilitation programmes and worked with groups such as these to address those problems. However, groups such as Rotary International report difficulties at the local level in gaining access to prisons and jails to do rehabilitation programmes. [3]

4.32. In November 2000 the Nigerian authorities re-affirmed their commitment to reforms, and announced that funds had been provided for this purpose. However, the sum needed to address this problem is estimated to be 17 Billion Naira, and for this reason it can only be funded over an extended period. [248][249] The Nigerian Government remains committed to improving prison conditions, and it is reported that 2.4 Billion Naria has been spent on the first phase of a prison reform programme started in 1999. This programme is intended to address staff training and inmate rehabilitation. [78]

4.33. In practice women and juveniles are held with male prisoners, especially in rural areas. The extent of abuse in these conditions was unknown. In most cases, women accused of minor offences are released on bail; however, women accused of serious offences are detained. There is no formalised procedure regarding the separation of detainees and convicted prisoners, and the method of confinement solely depends on the capacity of the facility; as a result, detainees are often housed with convicted prisoners. [3]

Medical Services

4.34. There is a Basic Health Service Scheme in Nigeria that aims to provide primary health care for the whole population. However, the quality and provision of care is still dependent on the ability of the patient to pay and long term care may not be covered by this scheme. [1] There is also provision for basic psychiatric care, but it appears to be confined to the major towns. [65][66]

4.35. One of the complaints of Doctors in their four-month strike in late 2000, was the decline in the health service, as well as in their pay and conditions. The erosion of the health service has been attributed to its neglect by the military government. This decline in the health service, has led to many Doctors leaving the country for posts overseas, which in turn has led to problems relating to level of experience, retention of staff and training in the profession. [250][251] There was further industrial action in May and June 2001, because of a perceived failure by the government to address the issues raised in the earlier strike. [67]

4.36. HIV and AIDS are growing problems in Nigeria. The estimation of the population affected is over 5%, or over 2.6 million people. [2][69][252][264] President Obasanjo has made tackling AIDS a priority of his government, and has instituted an education and treatment campaign to address this problem. The Nigerian government and voluntary bodies are attempting to address this problem, and in a visit to Nigeria in August 2000, the former US President Clinton announced that funds would be provided to assist in the treatment of AIDS and other health care matters. The government has set up a National Action Committee to look at possible treatments, and increase education and AIDS awareness. [252][253][254] The Department of International Development is helping with the fight against AIDS/HIV, and will provide funds for this

purpose over the next few years. [2]

4.37. The Nigerian authorities have shown a determination to address the AIDS/HIV problem. They have actively sought to obtain appropriate drugs, at affordable prices, subsidise their cost and organise effective treatment programmes. However, the scale of the epidemic means that there are many problems to be addressed. [68][69]

4.38. Sickle Cell Anaemia is a very common condition in Nigeria. This illness has many complications, the main ones being respiratory and circulation problems. The severity of its symptoms varies from case to case, and it is characterised by acute attacks of ill health and lethargy which are referred to as a "crisis". This condition is usually diagnosed in childhood, often before the sufferer is a year old. This condition can be life threatening, and limit the ability of a patient to lead a normal life. There are provisions for its treatment in Nigeria, but patients are usually expected to meet some of the costs of this care. [1][44]

4.39. Diabetes is also common in Nigeria, there are no reliable statistics regarding its prevalence, but estimates are that 2% of the population have this condition. A larger number may also have this condition, but in these cases it remains undiagnosed. Diabetes is life threatening, and, among other complications, is associated with renal problems and hypertension. Treatments for Diabetes are available, but again this is based on the ability to pay, and the cost can be prohibitive. [255][256]

Educational System

4.40. Public schools continued to be inadequate, and limited facilities precluded access to education for many children. The Constitution's general provisions call for the Government, "when practical," to provide free, compulsory, and universal primary education; however, despite the President's commitment to compulsory education, compulsory primary education rarely was provided, particularly in the north. Girls are discriminated against in access to education for social and economic reasons. The literacy rate for males is 58% but only 41% for females. Rural girls are even more disadvantaged than their urban counterparts. Only 42% of rural girls are enrolled in school compared with 72% of urban girls. In the north, Muslim communities favour boys over girls in deciding which children to enrol in secondary and elementary schools. In the south, economic hardship also restricts many families' ability to send girls to school and, instead, they are directed into commercial activities such as trading and street vending. [3]

(i) Student Cults

4.41. Student cults, secret societies based on student fraternities, have been responsible for many crimes in Nigerian universities. However, the Nigerian police have made efforts to investigate these crimes, and convict cult members involved.

4.42. Following the murder, by cult members, of students at Obafemi Awolowo University in July 1999, the Nigerian authorities took action to suppress these cults. In August 1999 the Nigerian government ordered Chancellors to eradicate cults from their campuses. The government said that it would hold Chancellors responsible for failures to maintain order amongst their students. The universities have since been having some success in encouraging students to renounce cult membership. [222][223][224][225]

4.43. On 10 March 2000 President Obasanjo commented on a report from Justice Okoi Itam into the events at Obafemi Awolowo University, he re-affirmed his government's commitment to eradicating student cults, which he described as undermining both education institutions and society in general. Justice Itam stated that the government must provide funds to implement the recommendations of his report, and also deal with the problem of cults in both Federal and State educational institutions. He also reminded

University authorities that they should monitor their students and staff for cult related activities. [226]

4.44. In September 2001 there was a serious outbreak of cult-related violence in Enugu State University of Science, when 8 students were killed in clashes. Police were deployed to investigate this incident. While cult-related violence still occurs, the Nigerian authorities have had some success in reducing it, and have made efforts to eradicate cults from Universities. [262]

V HUMAN RIGHTS

A. INSTRUMENTS OF THE STATE

B. ACTUAL PRACTICE WITH REGARD TO HUMAN RIGHTS

C. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

D. SPECIFIC GROUPS

5. HUMAN RIGHTS: INSTRUMENTS OF THE STATE

POLITICAL SYSTEM

5.1. Nigeria is a democratic federal republic. Local, parliamentary and presidential elections have been held, and the handover to the elected civilian president Olusegun Obasanjo took place on 29 May 1999 without incident. The cabinet is nominated by the president; subject to the confirmation of the Senate.

5.2. Although the Constitution allows the free formation of political parties, only three parties were registered with the INEC. The Constitution requires parties to have membership in two-thirds of the country's 36 states. In anticipation of the 2003 election INEC began preparing a draft electoral law for the National Assembly to consider in the next legislative session. Public forums were held during 2000, in all 36 states and the federal capital territory of Abuja to solicit citizens' views on the draft law. Over 10,000 citizens participated in these public fora; however, the draft law was not subject to any real public debate outside of this exercise. The new law is designed to specify the requirements of party formation and registration. The draft Bill is being considered by the National Assembly. [3]

THE CONSTITUTION

5.3. The 1999 Constitution was based closely on the 1979 constitution. Basic political rights are enshrined in Chapter IV of the 1999 Constitution. They include the right to personal liberty, the right to a fair trial, the right to freedom of expression and of the press and the right to dignity of the human person. Under the Abubakar regime in the second half of 1998, the PRC government stopped exercising judicial power and also ceased to deny the courts the authority to review its actions. [3][38][141]

5.4. The 1999 Constitution prohibits torture and the mistreatment of prisoners. The Constitution protects individual rights before the judiciary, including a presumption of innocence, the right to be present, to confront witnesses, to present evidence, and to be represented by legal counsel. However these have been undermined by a lack of

respect for the rule of law. [3][37][141]

5.5. The President has set up a Commission to review the Constitution. It held public hearings around the country and it has now reported to the president. The National Assembly set up a parallel Commission, which is still touring the country taking evidence; it is due to report in a few months. [264]

THE JUDICIARY

5.6. Under the Constitution, the court system is composed of federal and state trial courts, state appeals courts, the Federal Court of Appeal, and the Federal Supreme Court. There are also Sharia (Islamic) and customary (traditional) courts of appeal for each state and for the federal capital territory (Abuja). The lower courts include magistrate or district courts, customary or traditional courts, Sharia courts, and for some specified cases, the state high courts. The nature of the case usually determines which court has jurisdiction. In principle customary and Sharia courts have jurisdiction only if both plaintiff and defendant agree. However, in practice fear of legal costs, delays, and distance to alternative venues encouraged many litigants to choose the customary and Sharia courts over the regular venues. [3]

5.7. The extension of Sharia law in many northern states has generated a public debate on whether Sharia punishments such as amputation for theft, caning for fornication and public drunkenness constituted "torture or... inhuman or degrading treatment" as stipulated in the Constitution. Caning as a punishment is available under Nigerian common law, the Northern Nigerian Penal Code, and Sharia law and has not been successfully challenged in the court system as a violation of the cruel and inhuman punishment clause of the 1999 Constitution. In March in Zamfara State, Malam Buba Bello Jangebi's hand was amputated after he was convicted of cattle rustling in a Sharia court. Jangebi chose not to appeal his sentence. In September a Sokoto Sharia court handed down a sentence of amputation for a thief; the sentence had not been carried out by year's end. The first sentence handed down by Zamfara's Sharia courts, was for the caning of a pregnant unwed mother and her boyfriend; both had confessed to fornication. In September Bariya Ibrahim Magazu, a 17-year old-girl, was sentenced to 100 lashes for engaging in fornication and 80 additional lashes for naming in court but not being able to prove who the possible father of the unborn child was. Magazu's sentence was suspended until 3 months after the birth of her child. Her sentence was reduced to 100 lashes and carried out on 19 January 2001, despite the efforts of local NGOs and protest from the international community. [3][158] In August two motorcycle taxi drivers were caned for carrying Muslim female passengers in violation of the law in Zamfara State. [3]

5.8. Although the expanded Sharia laws technically do not apply to Christians, the Christian minority, especially in Zamfara and Sokoto states, was subjected to many of the social provisions of the law. These include the separation of the sexes in public transportation vehicles, a law that was repealed after two weeks, and in health facilities, the segregation by gender of school children, and bans on the selling of alcohol. [3]

i. Past Practice

5.9. Trials in the regular court system are public and generally respect constitutionally protected individual rights as outlined in the 1979 Constitution. General Abacha formally restored this Constitution on 21 November 1993 and hence it underpinned civil law decisions and a proportion of criminal work. However, the provisions of the 1979 Constitution have been overridden in specific areas by presidential decrees. On 5 September 1994 General Abacha extended these areas with new decrees that affected the judiciary directly. Decree No.11 of 1994 tightened Decree No.2 of 1984 and was itself supplemented by the removal of habeas corpus thereby theoretically enabling the indefinite detention without trial of those deemed a security risk. The retroactive Decree No.12 of 1994 granted the Abacha Government power to promulgate its existing and future decrees without binding judicial scrutiny. [1][3]

5.10. The State Security (Detention of Persons) Decree No. 2 of 1984 which allowed the government to detain a suspect indefinitely without bringing them to trial has been condemned by international observers, including the U N Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. In 1996 the Working Group declared a number of detentions carried out under the decree to be arbitrary, and requested that the government take steps to remedy the situation. In July 1996 the government announced some amendments to Decree No. 2. A panel was also established to review cases of detention. However the main clause in Decree No. 2 preventing the courts questioning the legality of a detention order remains in place. The Abubakar administration pledged to review Decree 2 and not to make use of it or any other draconian decrees that impinge on the rights of the Nigerian people. This Decree was annulled in May 1999, and there were no reports of Decree 2 being used during General Abubakar period as president, and the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC)

repealed it on 28 May. [1][3][39]

5.11. Those involved in Nigeria's legal system were concerned by the Abacha Government's appointment of military or special tribunals which circumvented the regular judicial process. These tribunals were allocated greater resources and better paid staff, which led to a decline in the number of competent judges and staff to work in the ordinary courts. Decree No.1 of 1984 first established a parallel system of special tribunals with sole jurisdiction over certain offenses, such as coup plotting, corruption, armed robbery, and illegal sale of petrol. An amendment in 1991 outlined that only sitting or retired civilian judges may chair tribunals hearing non-military cases. [39]

5.12. A seven man Special Military Tribunal was set up by General Abacha to try the 26 people suspected of involvement in the alleged coup plot of December 1997. The trial was held behind closed doors and sentenced six people to death although these sentences were later commuted to prison terms under the Abubakar administration, and the Provisional Ruling Council ordered their release in March 1999. [40] [93]

5.13. Trials in the court system are public and generally respect individual rights written into the constitution, including the right to be present, to present evidence and to be represented by legal counsel. However there is a view that judges can be bribed, and that courts cannot always be relied upon to be impartial. Most prisoners are poor and cannot afford to pay the costs associated with moving their trials forward, and as a result they remain in prison. Wealthier defendants employ numerous delaying tactics and in many cases used financial inducements to persuade judges to grant numerous continuances. This, and similar practices, clogged the court calendar and delay trials. [3]

ii. Present Position

5.14. Decree 63 of 26 May 1999 repealed many of the decrees that impinged on human rights including Decree 2. [189] The 1999 constitution enshrined basic political rights including the right to a fair trial. [141] President Obasanjo has prepared a code of conduct signed by his ministers and advisors reminding them of the need for probity and accountability in public life. On 10 June 1999 it was reported that all legislation that was not in accordance with the 1999 Constitution and the spirit of democracy had been repealed. On 24 June 1999 a new head of the Civil Service was appointed, and President Obasanjo took the opportunity to remind Civil Servants of the need for impartiality and respect for the rule of law. There have been no reports of interference in the actions of the Judiciary by President Obasanjo's administration. [142][143] [144][145]

5.15. President Obasanjo has committed his government to a review of human rights abuse under previous military governments. He has also taken action against those who have been accused of human rights abuses committed during the Abacha regime. Colonel Ibrahim Yakasai has been prosecuted for the killing of pro-democracy activists in Lagos. In November 1999 the case against Hamza-Al-Mustapha, Mohammed Abacha, Mohammed Rabo Lawal, Lateef Shofalan and Mohammed Aminu for the murder of Kudirat Abiola was moved to Lagos High Court. Former Lagos Police Commissioner James Danbaba, General Bamaiyi and Colonel Yakuba have been charged with attempting to murder of Newspaper publisher Alex Ibru on 2 February 1996. Other prominent security officials from the Abacha era are being investigated or have been detained, including Brigade General Ibrahim Sabo former Director of Military Intelligence, who has been detained because of his suspect involvement in the torture of people while working for the Abacha regime. [3][194]

LEGAL RIGHTS/DETENTION

5.16. Police and security forces are empowered to make arrests without warrants if they believed that there was reason to suspect that a person had committed an offense; they often abused this power. Under the Fundamental Rights Enforcement Procedures Rules of the Constitution, police may arrest and detain persons for 24 hours before charging them with an offense. The law requires an arresting officer to inform the accused of charges at the time of arrest and to take the accused persons to a station for processing within a reasonable amount of time. The police are required by law to provide suspects with the opportunity to engage counsel and post bail. However, they generally do not adhere to legal procedures. Suspects have often been detained without being informed of the charges, denied access to counsel and family members, and denied the opportunity to post bail for bailable offences. There was no functioning system of bail, so many suspects were held in investigative detention. Numerous suspects alleged that police demanded payment before they were taken to court to have their cases heard. If family members attend court proceedings, police demands an additional payment. [3]

5.17. Police and security forces continued the practice of placing relatives and friends of wanted suspects

in detention without criminal charge to induce suspects to surrender to arrest, although this was done much less frequently than under previous military regimes. There were calls by human rights groups for the police to end the practice. [3]

5.18. The Government repealed the State Security (Detention of Persons) Decree of 1984 (Decree 2), which allowed for prolonged arbitrary detention without charge. However, the police and security forces continued to use arbitrary arrest and detention. Prolonged pretrial detention remains a major problem. The judiciary is subject to political influence, and is hampered by corruption and inefficiency. [3]

5.19. The Internal Affairs Minister Sunday Afolabi in a visit to Ekuje on 6 July 1999 acknowledged the delay in court hearings, and the importance of prison reform. However, prison conditions remain poor, and corruption and neglect are common. The Obasanjo government has embarked on a program of prison reforms. [145][146][147][190]

THE SECURITY SERVICES

5.20. The Federal Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is tasked with law enforcement. The Constitution prohibits local and state police forces. Internal security is the duty of the State Security Service (SSS). The SSS's profile has declined under the Obasanjo regime. Until the advent of the civilian administration in May 1999, special paramilitary anticrime squads called "Rapid Response Teams" operated in every state. Under Obasanjo the military personnel dispatched to these units returned to their barracks, but the units remained intact in most states, staffed by regular policemen and with a reduced role and a less menacing presence. The Obasanjo Government lessened its reliance on the army to quell internal disorder. The degree of civilian control over the Rapid Response Teams and the national police force has expanded since the return to civilian rule. Despite these new controls, members of the security forces, including the police, anti-crime squads, and the armed forces are still accused of committing serious human rights abuses. [3]

5.21. Multinational oil companies and Nigerian oil producing companies subcontract police and soldiers from area units particularly to protect the oil facilities in the volatile Niger Delta region. Local youths claimed that these "militias" engaged in extrajudicial killings and other human rights abuses, in some cases with the support of foreign oil companies. [3] There have been calls from states in the South for state controlled police forces, as opposed to the present federal controlled system, the reason given was that improved security would increase investors confidence. However, this could also reflect a desire to set up police forces loyal to the local area. [247]

5.22. The army peacefully transferred power to a civilian government on 29 May 1999. One hundred and fifty Senior officers, who held post under the military regime, have been obliged to retire from military service. President Obasanjo has attempted to maintain good relations with the military, citing the need for improved barracks in his speech on taking office, and attending a dinner for retiring military officers. In a speech at the National War College on 24 July 1999, President Obasanjo described the military as being one of Nigeria most important institutions, with a duty to defend the country and serve the nation. On 17 August 1999 the Defence Minister Theophilus Danjuma stated that the government wish to reform and re-structure the army. President Obasanjo has also announced his intention to reform and re-professionalise the armed

forces. The international community is assisting with this especially in peacekeeping training. [148][149][150][151][154]

POLICE

5.23. Abubakar attempted to look into the issue of how police powers are exercised. A seminar aimed at finding solutions to conflicts that arise from the exercise of police powers and the protection of fundamental rights of the citizen took place in Abuja at the end of July 1998. It was organised by the Constitutional Rights Project, the National Human Rights Commission and the Nigerian Police. The seminar emphasised the importance of curtailing police excesses on crowd control, checkpoints and police stations. [41] In September 1998 Abubakar ordered the compulsory retirement of 10 top police officers for misconduct. Fifteen other officers were also retired. The Office of the Inspector General of Police said those compulsorily retired had earlier faced a disciplinary committee that had recommended them for immediate

retirement. [42]

5.24. The United Nations report of 14 January 1999, praised the ending of Operation Sweep, a controversial military operation set up to deal with crime in Lagos. [129] A Rapid Response Squad has replaced this, these are police units dealing with the growing problem of gang related crime. There has been an increase in criminal activity countrywide, following the return to civilian rule, and the withdrawal of military unit from law enforcement duties. However, many Nigerians believe that the police cannot control this crime wave. As a result of this perception, vigilante groups have been formed, and in June it was reported that twenty suspected robbers were killed in vigilante attacks. [152][153][155][156]

5.25. The Police Minister has publicly told his force the need to respect human rights. He also announced increased funding for the police force. In February 2000, the Nigerian government announced plan to recruit 40 000 police officers. According to a recent report, 33,000 officers have been recruited. [245] On 28 February 2000 Tell magazine reported that the conditions for police officers, their equipment and terms of employment remained poor. As a result moral is low, and the standard of officers recruited is not as high as it could be. The underlying reasons for these problems, and the neglected of the police force over a long period, was given as the dominance of the military in political and social affairs. This has resulted in erosion of the role of the police in society generally. The problems are serious, and it is accepted that it will take a lot of effort to bring the police up to the level of efficiency that the Nigerian government would like. However they have started to address some of the problems. [195][196]

5.26. Vigilante groups such as the OPC are common. This may reflect the mistrust that society at large has in the police. Most of these groups are also linked to tribal or ethnic groups, and this adds a political and ethnic dimension to their activities (see section on OPC). In Anambra State, the state government supported the extrajudicial activities of the vigilante group known as the Bakassi Boys, although they have recently arrested some members. Like most vigilante groups, the Bakassi Boys kill suspected criminals rather than turn them over to police; however, in some cases, the Bakassi Boys have chosen to cut off the hands or arms of perpetrators, rather than killing them outright. They also were accused of harassing and threatening political opponents of the state government. [3] The leader of this group Gilbert Okoyo was arrested in March 2001 in connection with the death of a police officer, there is no information as yet as to any charges that he may face. [248]

PRISON CONDITIONS

5.27. Conditions in prisons remained harsh and life threatening. Most prisons were built 70 to 80 years ago and lack functioning basic facilities. Lack of potable water, inadequate sewage facilities, and severe overcrowding resulted in unhealthy and dangerous sanitary conditions. Disease is pervasive, and chronic shortages of medical supplies were reported. Prison inmates were allowed outside their cells for recreation or exercise only irregularly and many inmates had to provide their own food. Only those with money or whose relatives brought food regularly had sufficient food; petty corruption among prison officials made it difficult for money provided for food to reach prisoners. Poor inmates often relied on handouts from others to survive. Beds or mattresses were not provided to many inmates, forcing them to sleep on concrete floors, often without a blanket. Prison officials, police, and security forces often denied inmates food and medical treatment as a form of punishment or to extort money from them. Harsh conditions and denial of proper medical treatment contributed to the deaths in detention of numerous prisoners. A human rights organization estimated in 1999 that at least one inmate died per day in the Kiri Kiri prison in Lagos alone. According to the same nongovernmental organization (NGO), dead inmates promptly are buried in mass graves on the prison compounds, usually without their families having been notified. A nationwide estimate of the number of inmates who die daily in the country's prisons is difficult to obtain because of poor (if not non-existent) record keeping by prison officials. A number of NGO's alleged that prison conditions were worse in rural areas than in urban districts. In practice women and juveniles are held with males, especially in rural areas. The extent of abuse in these conditions is unknown. [3][26][43]

5.28. Lengthy pre-trial detention remained a serious problem. According to the Constitution, persons charged with offenses have the right to an expeditious trial; however, in practice this right was not respected. Serious backlogs, endemic corruption, and undue political influence continued to hamper the judicial system. Estimates of the percentage of pretrial detainees held without charge in the prison population range from 33% to 65 % of the estimated 44-47,000 detainees. Many prisons held 200% to 300% more persons than they were designed to hold, and many of the pretrial detainees held without charge had been detained for periods far longer than the maximum allowable sentence for the crimes for which they were being held. Police cited their inability to securely transport detainees to trial on their scheduled trial dates as one reason why so many of the detainees were denied a trial. [3]

5.29. The Government acknowledged the problem of overcrowding as the main cause of the harsh conditions common in the prison system. According to government sources, approximately 45,000 inmates were held in a system of 148 prisons (and 83 satellite prisons) with a maximum designed capacity of 33,348 prisoners. Some human rights groups estimate a higher number of inmates--perhaps as many as 47,000. The Controller-General of prisons estimated that two-thirds of prisoners are detainees awaiting trial who have not been charged) and further admitted that the number of such inmates increased by 83% in the first half of the year. In May the Yobe state Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Alhaji Audu Mohammed Lawson, announced publicly that 287 inmates were awaiting trial and that at least two prisons, in Gashua and Potiskum, were at full capacity. Local officials blamed the lack of functioning police transport vehicles for the overcrowding since the state had no other means to transport prisoners to court securely. [3]

5.30. The authorities have attempted to ease congestion in some smaller prisons. For example, in honor of the Eid-El-Kabir holiday in March 2000, the Governor of Kano State released 159 prisoners, 52 of whom were pretrial detainees held without charge. Those released also were provided with travel funds to return to their homes. In September 2000, President Obasanjo directed the Ministry of Justice to create a judicial administration committee to address the questions of overcrowding, prison conditions, and rehabilitation. Throughout the year, the Government allowed both international and domestic NGO's occasional access to prisons; however, it did not allow them continuous access to all prisons. Prisoners Rehabilitation and Welfare Action and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have regular access to the prisons and publish newsletters on their work. The Government admits that there are problems with its incarceration and rehabilitation programs and worked with groups such as these to address those problems. However, groups such as Rotary International report difficulties at the local level in gaining access to prisons and jails to do rehabilitation programs. [3] In September 2000 the authorities state that they would set up a Judicial Committee on prison congestion, and that they intended to introduce a phased reform program addressing issues relating to, education, health, prison building and accommodation. In November the Nigerian authorities re-affirmed their commitment to reforms, and announced that funds had been provided for this purpose. However, the sum needed to address this problem is estimated to be 17 billion Naira, and for this reason it can only be funded over an extended period. [249][250]

HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE

5.31. The low national income per capita of Nigeria has impeded adherence to the economic and social aspects of the Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights. Indeed the socio-economic structure of education, social services, health and environmental programmes has deteriorated since its ratification by the Nigerian Government in July 1993. Illiteracy, malnutrition and inadequate health care continue to affect large sections of the Nigerian population. A high infant mortality of 1,259 per 100,000 live birth has been report for the 1991 to 1997 period. Pollution, neglect, corruption and underdevelopment are also major problems in the Niger Delta region, and these have lead to unrest and resentment of the foreign oil companies working there. [3][129][157]

5.32. There is a Basic Health Service Scheme in Nigeria that aims to provide primary health care for the whole population. However, the quality and provision of care is still dependent on the ability of the patient to pay and long term care may not be covered by this scheme. [1] One of the complaints of Doctors in their four-month strike in late 2000, was the decline in the health service, as well as in their pay and conditions. The erosion of the health service has been attributed to its neglect by the military government. This decline in the health service, has led to many Doctors leaving the country for posts overseas, which in turn has led to problems relating to level of experience, retention of staff and training in the profession. [251][252]

5.33. HIV and AIDS are growing problems in Nigeria. The estimation of the population affect is over 5%. [253] [265] President Obasanjo has made tackling AIDS a priority of his government, and has instituted an education and treatment campaign to address this problem. The Nigerian government and voluntary bodies are attempting to address this problem, and in a visit to Nigeria in August 2000, former US president Clinton announced that funds would be provided to assist in the treatment of AIDS and other health care matters. The government has set up a National Action Committee to look at possible treatments, and increase education and AIDS awareness. [253][254][255] The present Nigerian Government has committed itself to reforming national health care, ensuring access to care for all, but these efforts are hampered by the neglect of health care provisions by previous governments. [158] The Department of International Development is helping with the fight against AIDS/HIV, and will provide funds for this purpose over the next few years. [265]

5.34. Sickle Cell Anaemia is a very common condition in Nigeria this illness has many complications, the main ones being respiratory and circulation problems. The severity of its symptoms varies from case to case, and it is characterised by acute attacks of ill health and lethargy which are referred to as a "crisis". This condition is usually diagnosed in childhood, often before the sufferer is a year old. This condition can be life threatening, and limit the ability of a patient to lead a normal life. There are provisions for its treatment in Nigeria, but patients are usually expected to meet some of the costs of this care. [1][44]

5.35. Diabetes is also common in Nigeria, there are no reliable statistics regarding its prevalence, but estimates are that 2% of the population have this condition. A larger number may also have this condition, but in these cases it remains undiagnosed. Diabetes is life threatening, and, among other complications, is associated with renal problems and hypertension. Treatments for Diabetes are available, but again this is based on the ability to pay, and the cost can be prohibitive. [256][257]

6. HUMAN RIGHTS: ACTUAL PRACTICE WITH REGARD TO HUMAN RIGHTS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

i. The Abacha era: November 1993 - 8 June 1998

6.1 The Abacha period in Nigeria -November 1993 until June 8 1998 was marked by severe human rights abuses. The procedures of the Aziza Special Military Tribunal investigating the alleged March 1995 conspiracy contravened most rights of a defendant and fair trial standards enshrined in the Constitution and international obligations. Likewise the seven person Special Military Tribunal set up to try the 26 people who were brought to trial for their alleged part in the December 1997 coup plot contravened most rights enshrined in the constitution. The Tribunal was headed by army General Victor Malu rather than a judge and was held behind closed doors.

6.2 The Auta Tribunal hearings into the death of 4 Ogoni tribal leaders in May 1994, violated many judicial principles and culminated in the arbitrary execution of 9 Ogonis, including Ken Saro-Wiwa. A UN General Assembly resolution condemning, in particular, these executions after a flawed judicial process and urging a return to democratic rule in Nigeria was adopted in December 1995. [45] [46]

ii. Abubakar era

6.3. General Abubakar took several steps to improve the poor human rights record in Nigeria. 7 He released most of the political prisoners in Nigeria, including leading pro-democracy and human rights activists Dr Frederick Fasehun who is the Acting Chairman for the Campaign for Democracy and Chief Olu Falae a leading member of the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO).

6.4. Many of those released had been held without charge or trial under the State Security (Detention of Persons) Decree, No. 2 of 1984. Three others had been arrested following pro-democracy protests in May 1998, Olu Agbakoba, a human rights lawyer who was involved with the United Action for Democracy, Chief Ayo Opatokun, a lawyer and NADECO Secretary General and Olusegun Maiyegun, a leading member of the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights and the Campaign for Democracy. [47] [48]

6.5. In early September 1998 the 20 Ogoni political prisoners who had been in detention since 1994 for the murder of 4 Ogoni chiefs (the same charges as the late Ken Saro-Wiwa) were released after a High Court judge in Port Harcourt dropped all the charges. Their release was unconditional. [49] In March 1999 it was announced that most of the coup plotters imprisoned after unfair trials would be released. These included those imprisoned after the 1990, 1995 and 1997 coup plots, and most of these were released in late March. [93]

6.6. It was announced on 17 September 1998 that treason charges against fifteen of those accused of involvement in the 1995-7 bomb attacks had been dropped. Amongst those against who charges have been dropped are Professor Wole Soyinka, Chief Anthony Enahoro, Lt. General (rtd) Alani Akinrinade and Dr Amos Akingbe. They have since returned to Nigeria for various periods. [50]

iii. Current human rights situation

6.7. President Obasanjo created a panel to investigate human rights abuses between January 1966 and 28 May 1999, and to identify the people responsible. The panel has been sworn in under Justice Oputa, and has received approximately 1 000 petitions. The panel has held public hearings throughout the country. [134][191]

7.HUMAN RIGHTS: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

SECURITY SITUATION

7.1. Nigeria is a major regional power, and as such is a prominent member of the Economic Community of West African States and contributes a large military contingent to its monitoring force in Liberia and Sierra Leone (ECOMOG). There is a longstanding dispute with the Cameroon over the Bakassi peninsula, which lies to the extreme south of their shared border. The issue is currently before the International Court of Justice in The Hague. [51]

7.2. Under General Abacha, the deteriorating economic, political and social conditions have in the past contributed to a relatively unstable internal security situation. Despite the arrest of a number of suspects, more generally government ineffectiveness has been manifest in the contemporary prevalence of lawlessness centred on cities such as Lagos where violent street crime and armed robberies are commonplace. Official recognition of the scale of the problem came during May 1996 when 4,000 extra police and soldiers were deployed in Lagos. The alleged coup attempt of December 1997, although not causing major disruption in Nigeria's main cities was another indication of the perceived instability of Nigeria's power base under the late General Abacha.

7.3. During General Abubakar time as Head of State the situation became more stable, as the programme for transition to civilian rule started. The main exception has been in some areas of the Niger Delta where disaffected Ijaw youths have become more militant in their demands for a share of the area's oil wealth. [3] Unrest in the Niger Delta still continues under the civilian government, and efforts to address this by legislation have met with little success. The Niger Delta Development Commission. Has now been established. [137]

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY/OPINION

i. The situation under General Abacha 17 November 1983 - June 8 1998

7.4. Nigeria has acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. However political activity was proscribed by the PRC on 18 November 1993. Political debate was sanctioned within the forum of the NCC from its inauguration in June 1994. However during Abacha's period these rights were not respected, political activity was curtailed, and pro-democracy activists were detained. [52][53][54]

ii. The situation under General Abubakar 9 June 1998-29 May 1999

7.5. General Abubakar set Nigeria on the path to transition from military dictatorship to a civilian government. Prospective political parties were invited to register with the INEC for recognition. Nine parties fulfilled the criteria for registration. Guidelines announced by the INEC were designed to ensure political parties were not based solely in one region. [55] Parties were not allowed to form along tribal lines. Some of the new parties that have been formed include former Abacha supporters and associates, such as the All People's Party. [56]

7.6. Local, parliamentary and presidential elections went ahead as planned. Although there were reports by international monitors of some irregularities, they concluded that the results reflected the wishes of the Nigerian people. General Obasanjo was inaugurated president on 29 May 1999. [95] [96] [97] [98] [99] [100] [101] [102] [103]

7.7. In June 1998 Abubakar released the trade union leaders imprisoned by Abacha. In August 1998 he repealed decrees which had prevented Trade Unions from striking or organising on a national level which had been passed in 1994. The new decree signed by Abubakar also gave a legal backing to the reconstitution of the Academic Staff Union of Universities, which had been banned in 1996. The

government also abrogated the decrees outlawing the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) which had been passed by Abacha, the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers and Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria. [59] [60]

7.8. From August 17 to 21 1998 the International Labour Organisation undertook a direct contacts mission to Nigeria. They had previously been unsuccessful at obtaining permission for such a visit from the Abacha administration. The direct contacts mission had meetings with trade unions. Their conclusion was that there had been many positive developments since June 1998, including the release of trade union leaders, the repeal of many restrictive trade union decrees including decrees 9 and 10 which had dissolved the NUPENG and PENGASSAN Unions, as well as the re-opening of dialogue at international level. The direct contacts mission recommended that Nigeria consolidate the progress made so far by continuing to repeal the remaining of the restrictive decrees, in order to bring the legislation into greater conformity with freedom of association principles and standards. [92]

iii. The present situation

7.9. The Constitution provides the right to assemble freely and associate with other persons, and to form or belong to any trade union or other association for the protection of their interests. However, several statutory restrictions on the right of association and on trade unions remained in effect despite repeals of parts of the military-era anti-labour decrees. Only a single central labour federation (the Nigerian Labour Congress) is permitted, and the Government recognizes only 29 trade unions. Trade unions must be registered formally by the Federal Government, and a minimum of 50 workers is required to form a trade union. Non-management members of senior staff are prevented from joining trade unions, and senior staff associations are denied a seat on the National Labour Advisory Council. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Committee of Experts has repeatedly cited several of these restrictions; however, the Government had not addressed these problems by year's end. Workers, except members of the armed forces and employees designated as essential by the Government, may join trade unions. Essential workers include members of the armed forces and government employees in the police, customs, immigration, prisons, federal mint, central bank, and telecommunications sectors. Employees working in a designated export-processing zone may not join a union until 10 years after the start-up of the enterprise. [3]

7.10. In August the Government decertified the maritime workers' union on the grounds that the union had not scheduled internal elections in accordance with its charter's requirement. In September the Government issued directives requiring maritime workers to register with specific contracting firms. As a result this historically powerful union was weakened; however, it continued to challenge the Government's action during the year. [3]

7.11. Workers have the right to strike; however, certain essential workers are required to provide advance notice of a strike. Essential services being defined, as including banking, postal services, transportation, firefighting, public health, and utilities. There were several strikes throughout 2000. The most important strike occurred in June 2000, following a government decision to increase fuel prices by 50 %. The Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) called a general strike that was widely observed, resulting in significant economic disruption. Following negotiations, the fuel price increase was reduced. The strike action damaged relations between the NLC and the Government. The oil worker unions National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) and the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (Pengassan) successfully went on strike in September over wages in order to force oil marketing companies to negotiate. The oil workers' wage demands were triggered in part by the Government's announcement of public sector salary increases in May. The oil worker unions also called wildcat strikes over issues including the firing of one company's tanker truck drivers who sought to affiliate with NUPENG, and the raiding of a NUPENG office during civil unrest in the Delta. Academic and teacher unions went on strike several times during the year over nonpayment of wages and poor working conditions, as did doctors in Ibadan. [3] On 14 December the Nigeria's National Association of Resident Doctors ended a four-month strike after officials pledged to meet its demands. The doctors started their action on 13 September to demand higher pay, welfare packages and better working conditions. The strike paralysed activities in several government-owned hospitals. [251][252]

7.12. In July 2000 Lagos public sector workers went on strike to protest the state government's refusal to pay a higher minimum wage. On 5 July the protests turned violent when police used tear gas to disperse workers demonstrating outside of the Lagos State Secretariat complex. One person reportedly died in the violence, although the reason for the death was unclear. The workers accepted a compromise package offered by the state; however, the local union leadership continued to press for more pay at year's end. [3]

7.13. There are no laws prohibiting retribution against strikers and strike leaders, but strikers who believe that they are victims of unfair retribution may submit their cases to the Industrial Arbitration Panel (IAP) with prior approval of the Labour Ministry. The IAP's decisions are binding on all parties but may be appealed to the Nigerian Industrial Court (NIC). Union representatives have described the arbitration process as cumbersome and time consuming and as an ineffective deterrent to retribution against strikers. The NLC and labour unions are free to affiliate with international bodies; however, prior approval from the Minister is required. The NLC has affiliated with the Organization of African Trade Unions. [3]

7.14. The Constitution provides for the right to associate freely with other persons in political parties, trade unions, or special interest associations, and the Government generally respected this right in practice. However, there were exceptions during the year 2000. In July Lagos state police used tear gas to disperse a demonstration by striking public sector workers. One person died from the violence. On 13 April 2000, Lagos State police prevented approximately 1,000 members of the Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra from staging a rally and raising the Biafran flag. [3]

MEDIA FREEDOM

i. The situation under Abacha -November 1993- 8 June 1998

7.15. Nigeria has a long tradition of a vibrant and independently minded press. The Abacha administration cracked down on those involved with reporting which was critical of the regime. This resulted in the arrest and detention of a number of journalists, particularly those perceived to have written anything critical of Abacha. Hence high profile journalists or editors critical of the Abacha or the government, or overtly political in the content of their work may have faced harassment and persecution during the Abacha era. [61]

ii. The situation under General Abubakar 9 June 1998-29 May 1999

7.16. General Abubakar released most political prisoners who had been detained under the Abacha regime, including the journalists Chris Anyanwu, Ben Charles Obi, George Mbah and Kunle Ajibade. In March 1999 the Diet editor Niran Malaolu was freed. [93] The press generally operated with fewer restrictions, and without the intimidation that characterised Abacha's rule. However there were still some minor incidents of harassment of the press during Abubakar regime. [87] [115]

iii. The situation under the present government

7.17. The present civilian government has introduced a bill to abolish the 1962 official secrets act, which severely curtails press freedom, and has called for the responsible use of press freedom. [160][161] The press remains active and is able to freely investigate and report, for example, the News magazine recently exposed the speaker of the Nigerian House of Representatives Mr Ibrahim Salisu Buhari as being unqualified for his position, and as a result he resigned on 22 July 2000. This is one example of the press being permitted to investigate politicians. [162] [163]

7.18. The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press, and the Government generally respected these rights; however, there were problems in some areas. Although there is a large and vibrant private domestic press that is frequently critical of the Government, the Government also owns or controls many publications. [3]

7.19. On May 26, 1999, in the last days of Abubakar regime, Decree 60 was signed into law and created the Nigerian Press Council which was charged with the enforcement of professional ethics and the sanctioning of journalists who violated these ethics. The Nigerian Press Council immediately was criticized by the media as "an undisguised instrument of censorship and an unacceptable interference with the freedom of the press." Decree 60 attempted to put control of the practice of journalism into the hands of a body of journalists who were appointed by and received payment from the Government. In 1999 the NUJ, the professional association of all Nigerian journalists, and the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN) rejected the creation of the Press Council. The NPAN called the decree unconstitutional and a violation of press freedom, because there were already enough laws concerning the operation of the press. The decree, which virtually made members of the council employees of the Government, also contained a number of provisions inimical to the operation of a free press. Among other provisions, Decree 60 gave the Press Council the power to accredit and register journalists and the power to suspend journalists from practicing. Decree 60, required that publications be registered by the council annually through a system entitled "Documentation of Newspapers." In applying for registration, publishers were

expected to submit their mission statements and objectives and could be denied registration if their objectives failed to satisfy the Council. The penalties for practicing without meeting the Council's standards were a fine of 250,000 Naira or imprisonment for a term not to exceed 3 years. The decree also empowered the Council to approve a code of professional and ethical conduct to guide the press and to ensure compliance by journalists. Under the decree, publishers were expected to send a report of the performance of their publications to the Council; failure to do so was an offense that carried a fine of 100,000 Naira. The council has not yet begun operating, but it maybe introduced at some future date, and many journalists see the existence of such a decree as a significant limitation on freedom of the press. The Nigerian Press Council (NPC) continued after Obasanjo's inauguration, and in 1999 former Minister of Information Dapo Sarumi expressed the view of the new civilian Government that the council would continue to operate, and said, "It is in line with journalists' demands." [3]

7.20. During 2000, there were cases of threats against and attacks on the press. In January police beat, arrested and detained Igha Oghole, a journalist with Radio Benue, Makurdi, after he insisted on conducting a scheduled interview with the police commissioner rather than interviewing his subordinate. In March 2000, 50-armed policemen entered the International Press Center (IPC) in Ogba, Lagos and arrested 4 journalists who they held for 5 hours and then released without charge. The police subsequently claimed that the attack was not directed at journalists but was to find members of a militant faction of the OPC, who had engaged in battles with the police. The police claimed that they were acting on information that militant members of the OPC were planning to address a press conference at the center. In March members of the NPF seized most of the print run of the 4 March 2000 edition of the Kaduna-based newspaper Today as well as its Hausa language affiliate newspaper, Ayaqu, and sealed off their offices. The police justified their action on the grounds that the publications carried headlines that could have engendered violence in the Sharia dispute. [3]

7.21. On 4 April 2000, an armed detachment of SSS sealed off for several hours the premises of Leaders and Company, the publishers of This Day newspaper in order to search the grounds for what the Government described as "subversive and incriminating documents" and to arrest the editor-in-chief, Nduka Obaigbena. Obaigbena was not on the premises at the time and was not arrested. The charges against him were dropped 1 week later, but Obaigbena was told to cease investigations of Obasanjo's national security adviser, Aliyu Gusau. In August police and security agents again sealed off the premises of This Day newspaper and ordered the staff to leave the premises. [3]

7.22. State governments have also threatened and detained journalists who have criticized their policies. According to the country's Media Rights Agenda, since May 1999 there were nine cases of arrests and detentions of journalists and vendors; state security personnel were the perpetrators in all of these incidents. In March Ebonyi state police detained two journalists with the Ebonyi Times, Emmanuel Okikeogah and Ogbonaya Okorie, for publishing what the State Government described as "seditious articles in an unregistered newspaper." The articles claimed that the governor of Ebonyi State had bribed state legislators into approving a list of commissioners. Also in March, police in Aba, Abia state, arrested and detained Ademola Adegbamigbe of The News magazine, and a professional photographer who Adegbamigbe had hired to assist him, while covering the civil violence following the introduction of Sharia law in the north. On March 2 in Kaduna State, police raided the offices of the Nigerian Tribune in Ibadan after the publication of an article on Islamic law, and Zamfara State seized copies of the Nigerian Tribune, the Guardian, and Vanguard after they published articles critical on Sharia law. [3]

7.23. In January in Abuja, FCT police accompanied Yusuf Mamman, an Alliance for Democracy (AD) faction leader, to the AD headquarters in Abuja to prevent a rival faction leader, Adamu Song, from holding a press conference. Police attempted to seize the videocamera of an Africa Independence Television cameraman and the digital camera of a "This Day" newspaperman. Mamman asked police to arrest Song for "invading" AD offices; however, they failed to do so following the press conference. Police routinely are involved in political disputes under the guise of breach of the peace or assault. Nothing was ever done about the potentially improper use of the police in this case. [3]

7.24. There are two national, government-owned daily newspapers in English, the New Nigerian and the Daily Times. The New Nigerian publishes an additional Hausa edition. Several states own daily or weekly newspapers that also are published in English. They tend to be poorly produced, have limited circulation, and require large state subsidies to continue operating. Several private newspapers and magazines have begun publication since the inauguration of the civilian government. Five major daily newspapers, one newsmagazine, and several sensational evening newspapers and tabloid publications had begun publication at year's end. [3]

7.25. Journalists and editors of state media reportedly no longer fear suspension for their editorial decisions, although some self-censorship lingered. State broadcasters and journalists remain important

tools for civilian governors; these officials use the state-owned media to showcase the state's accomplishments and to stress the extent to which their states are in political accord with the Government. [3]

7.26. Since the May 1999 elections, foreign journalists who sought to enter the country to cover political developments generally have been able to obtain visas, and many of the obstacles that previously frustrated foreign journalists were removed. Officials within the Ministry of Information became more accommodating to requests from foreign journalists. [3]

Television and radio

7.27. As newspapers and television are relatively expensive and literacy is not universal, radio remains the most important medium of mass communication and information. There is a national radio broadcaster, the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, which broadcasts in English, Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, and other languages. Fifty-one state radio stations broadcast in English and local languages. For many years, the Government prohibited nationwide private radio broadcasting, but the Abacha regime granted broadcasting rights to local and regional private radio stations in 1994. There were six private radio stations operating at the beginning of the year. Several of these stations continue to struggle with financial difficulties, including Raypower FM, which ceased operations in September. The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) issued no new private radio licenses during 2000. Ten applications are still awaiting NBC approval at year's end. [3]

7.28. The National Television Station, NTA, is federally owned, while 30 states also operate television stations. There are nine privately owned television stations that broadcast domestic news and political commentary. There are two private satellite television services. The 1993 Press Law requires local television stations to limit programming from other countries to 40 %. The 1993 Press Law also restricts the foreign content of satellite broadcasting to 20%, but the Government does not restrict access to, or reception of, international cable or satellite television. The Government did not restrict Internet access, although unreliable and costly digital telephone service limited access and hindered service providers. All Internet service providers were privately owned. [3]

7.29. In October 1999, the NBC, in cooperation with the Information Ministry, revoked the licenses of 20 private radio and television broadcasters for nonpayment of license fees. The Director General of NBC cited Decree 38 of 1992, which mandates the commission to revoke a license where the prescribed fee was not paid on the due date. Several major domestic broadcasters as well as affiliates of international broadcasters such as Voice of America and the British Broadcasting Corporation were among those affected. They were reported to owe a total of 70 million Naira. All 20 of the broadcasters paid the delinquent fees and continued broadcasting. While private television and radio broadcasters remained economically viable on advertising revenues alone, despite the restrictions that the Government imposed on them, government-sponsored broadcasters complained that government funding and advertising were inadequate for their needs. [3]

7.30. The Political Parties Registration and Activities Decree No 35 of 1998 was passed to ensure equal allocation of time and similarity of subject matter in political broadcasts by registered parties leading up to and during the period of the elections during the transition process. All stations were directed to set up a complaints committee to examine complaints and appeals from political parties. [105]

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

7.31. The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, including freedom to change one's religion or belief, and freedom to manifest and propagate one's religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice, and observance. However, the Government restricted these rights in practice in certain respects, but only to maintain order, for example where a religious meeting may cause unrest. [3]

7.32. The Constitution prohibits state and local governments from adopting an official religion; however, it also provides that states may elect to use Islamic (Sharia) customary law and courts. About half of the population is Muslim, mostly living in the north of the country, about 40 % Christian, mostly living in the south of the country, and about 10 % practice traditional indigenous religion or no religion. Since independence, the jurisdiction of Sharia courts has been limited to family or personal law cases involving Muslims, or to civil disputes between Muslims and non-Muslims who consent to the courts' jurisdiction. However, the Constitution states that a Sharia court of appeal may exercise "such other jurisdiction as may be conferred upon it by the law of the State." Some states have interpreted this language as granting them the right to expand the jurisdiction of existing Sharia courts to include criminal matters. Christians have

alleged that, the adoption of an expanded Sharia law in several states, the continued use of state funds to fund the construction of mosques, teaching of Alkalís (Muslim judges), and pilgrimages to Mecca (Hajj), Islam has been adopted as the de facto state religion of several northern states. However, state funds also are been used to fund Christian pilgrimages to Jerusalem. In general states with a clear Christian or Muslim majority explicitly favor the majority faith. This is also the case in transaction between individuals and the local government, such as the awarding of contracts for example. There have also been accusations of that religious minorities in some States have been denied access to services and police protection in the areas where they live. The Constitution permits the Federal Government to establish a Federal Sharia Court of Appeal, but it has yet to established such court. [3]

7.33. The Government continued to enforce a ban on the existence of religious organizations on campuses of primary schools, although individual students retain the right to practice their religion in recognized places of worship. Many states allow the teaching of Koranic or Biblical knowledge in primary and secondary schools; however, in almost all states with religious minorities, there are reports that students are forced to take classes that violate their religious principles. Islam is a mandatory part of the curriculum in public schools in Zamfara and other northern states, to the exclusion of Christianity. State authorities claim that students are permitted to decline to attend these classes or to request a teacher of their own religion to provide alternative instruction. In practice the dominant religion of the state is taught in the school, and students cannot use these other mechanisms. There are reports that Christianity is taught in the same manner in Enugu and Edo states, and that Muslim students cannot access Koranic teaching in the public schools. [3]

7.34. Traditional religious beliefs are widespread in Nigeria, some of these are described as witchcraft or Ju-Ju. Nigerians are generally free to follows these traditional beliefs, but where these practises may have resulted in criminal activity, the Nigerian police have investigated them. As these practises are often secret and take a wide variety of forms, it is very difficult to obtain reliable information regarding the nature of these religious beliefs. [198]

7.35. The traditional leader of Nigerian Muslims was dethroned by the government in April 1996 and investigated in connection with his business affairs. The removal of Ibrahim Dasuki as Sultan of Sokoto and his replacement by Mohammed Maccido was a cause of celebration in Sokoto. [62] There is a history of religious tension between Muslims and Christians particularly in Northern states, most notably Kano, Kaduna and Katsina. [63]

7.36. On 12 September 1996 radical Muslim leader Ibrahim El ZakZaky was arrested with other leaders. El ZakZaky's supporters were involved in a numbers of acts of violence protesting at his detention between 1996 and the end of 1998 when he was released from detention. [64] [106] Although El ZakZaky was finally released at the end of 1998, his supporters continued to cause disturbances. In late 1998 some supporters were convicted and sentenced to between five and eight years imprisonment in northern Nigeria following the occupation of a university campus in which a security guard was killed. The Federal Government continued to settle property claims by Muslim Brotherhood leader Ibrahim El Zakzaky for compensation for his home and mosque, which were razed by law enforcement in 1997. All 96 of the Muslim Brotherhood followers jailed under the previous regime were released during 2000. [3]

i. The introduction of Sharia law, and subsequent events.

7.37. Nigeria's Constitution enshrines Nigeria as a secular state. Sharia Law has existed in Nigeria for many years, and the Constitution contains provision for Sharia courts to deal with issues of family law. However, on 27 October 1999 Zamfara State announced that they would introduce Sharia Law for criminal cases. This legislation contains provision that non-Muslims will not be subject to Sharia Law, but this has not assuaged the concerns of the Christian communities, who fear discrimination. Other northern states, with predominantly Muslim communities, have introduced, or are considering similar legislation. Zamfara's legislation came into force on 27 January 2000. Niger and Kebbi States signed similar laws in early February and Kano later the same month. The legislation cannot be formally introduced for at least three months after signature. There is a question over whether the introduction of the Sharia penal code is constitutional; this will have to be resolved by the Nigerian courts. [199][206][227] Ten States have now introduced the Sharian penal code: Zamfara Niger, Sokoto, Kebbi, Kano, Jigawa, Yobe, Katsina, Borno and Bauchi. Kaduna State has introduced a penal code that contains some elements of Sharia law. [197]

7.38. Violent riots broke out on 21 and 22 February 2000 in Kaduna, following a demonstration by the Christian community against the imposition of the Sharia penal code in Kaduna State. It is not clear who started the violence, but the situation quickly deteriorated into serious violence with Christians and Muslims burning each other's properties, businesses and places of worship. Hundreds of people were reported to

have been killed during this violence. [200][201] [227]

7.39. Retaliatory violence against Muslim communities broke out in Abia, Imo and Akwa Ibom States when some of the bodies of the Kaduna victims were returned to their home states. Over four hundred people were killed. [200] [202] [206] [227] In late May there was further rioting in Kaduna, following a demonstration where Christians clashed with Muslim youths. This violence lasted for two days and it is reported that three hundred people were killed. Security forces restored order, and this violence was limited to the Kaduna area. [228][229] The immediate cause of this violence is unclear, but it is not thought to be directly related to Sharia.

7.40. Following the Kaduna riots in February, President Obasanjo called a crisis meeting of the National Council of States, a body which includes the President, Vice-President, former Heads of State and the governors of all the States. After this meeting, Vice-President Abubakar announced that the introduction of Sharia would be suspended. However, some of the States have not implemented this, and Zamfara State carried out the first judicial amputation under Sharia on 23 March 2000, and further sentences have subsequently been carried out. [204] [205] [207] [227]

7.41. An inter-religious council covering all northern Nigeria has been established to try and reduce tensions. Similar organisations have also been set up by individual States. On 4 April 2000 the governors of all 19 northern states agreed to establish a panel of Christian and Muslim leaders to examine how Sharia Law can operate under Nigeria's existing penal code. A human rights group, Human Rights Law Service (HURILAWS), is supporting a challenge to the constitutionality of the introduction of Sharia in Zamfara by residents of the State, a previous challenge by the same organisation was dismissed. [203] [206] [207] [227]

ETHNIC GROUP

7.42. There are over 250 ethnic groups with different languages and dialects in Nigeria, which accounts for her cultural diversity. In descending order the Muslim Hausa-Fulani centred on the north, the Yoruba centred on the south-west, and the predominately Christian Ibo (or Igbo) centred on the south-east are the largest ethnic groups comprising around 70% of the population. Yet no single tribe encompasses a majority of the population. There is no federal policy of discrimination against any of Nigeria's ethnic groups and legislation is designed not to favour one group over another. This is largely respected provided that a group does not pursue secessionist demands.

7.43. An alleged dominance in the military and government is occasionally levelled at Hausa-Fulanis, with the converse claim that other ethnic groups are discriminated against. Ibos formed the Biafran rebels during the 1967-70 civil war but have since regained prominence in the professions and commerce, and became government ministers, without encountering government repression. [1]

7.44. Violent clashes between the Hausa and Yoruba tribes occurred in Shagamu, A Yoruba dominated town, on 17 July 1999, it is reported that at least sixty people have been killed. This violence followed the death of a Hausa woman, who was killed when she was found watching a Yoruba religious ceremony, which was forbidden to outsiders. The Nigerian authorities deployed police reinforcements in the towns. [164] [165] This violence spread when Hausas fled to Kano, and the local population attacked Yorubas resident there. The violence was brought under control after a few days. [166][167][168][169][174]

7.45. There were reports of confrontations between two communities in the Osun state city of Ile-Ife (the home of the senior Yoruba traditional leader the Ooni of Ife). This was triggered on 16 August 1997 by the relocation of the local government headquarters from Modakeke to Oke-Igbo. This sudden outbreak of violence in Ife is similar to that which has affected Warri since March 1997 following relocation of local government headquarters there. [66] The violence in Warri has continued throughout 1998 and 1999. Killings have occurred in clashes between the Itsekiris and Ijaw ethnic groups in early 1999. [170] A serious ethnic clash between Fulani and Karimjo people erupted at Karim Lamido in Taraba State during April 1996. Approximately 80 people were killed in the violence and 20 people were arrested as soldiers and police restored order. [65] [67]

7.46. It is reported that twenty-eight people were killed in three separate ethnic clashes in Taraba State on 24 and 25 June 1999. Tivs fought with Fulanis, Kutebs fought with Jukuns and Wurukum farmers with Fulani herdsman, these conflicts are reported to be caused by land disputes. Clashes between Tiv and Jukuns in Benue and Taraba States continued throughout 1999 resulting in the deaths of several hundred people, this violence stems from long standing land disputes between these two groups. [3][171]

7.47. In the riots following the death of Moshood Abiola in July 1998 there was an indication that some of the violence took on an ethnic dimension. Abiola's tribe the Yoruba majority based in south west Nigeria attacked the Hausas from the north who have been politically dominant in the past by keeping a tight grip on the military. Estimates of the number killed vary but estimates put it at between 50 and 100. [68]

7.48. In clashes between Ijaw and Ilaje in Ondo State and Western Delta State during July and August 1998, hundreds were reportedly killed. There have been renewed clashes between these two tribes in July and August 1999, with three hundred people being reported killed, the army were sent to the region to restore order, a significant move in light of the withdrawal of military forces under Abubakar. [172] [173]

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

7.49. The Constitution entitles citizens to move freely throughout the country, and to reside where they wish. In general, the Government respected this right, but the police occasionally restricted this right by setting up roadblocks and checkpoints where security and law enforcement officials routinely engaged in extortion, violence, and excessive use of force. An example of the occurred in March 2000, when the Governor of Niger State allegedly instructed state police to install roadblocks to prevent southerners from returning to their homes. The southerners, particularly Igbo traders, were attempting to return home because they feared violent reprisals in response to the deaths of Hausas in Aba and Owerri. [3]

7.50. The Constitution also prohibits the denial of exit or entry to any citizen, and the Government generally respected this law; however, the law also provides that women are required to obtain permission from a male family member before having an application for a passport processed. Some men take their wives' and children's passports and other identification documents with them while traveling abroad to prevent their family from leaving the country. [3]

8: HUMAN RIGHTS: SPECIFIC GROUPS

POLITICAL GROUPS/PRO DEMOCRACY GROUPS/HUMAN RIGHTS ASSOCIATIONS

8.1. Under the Abacha regime political parties were declared legal on 27 June 1995. However only five parties qualified for registration, and all of these supported Abacha's bid for the Presidency in the cancelled elections of August 1998.

8.2. Under General Abubakar most of the political prisoners who were detained by General Abacha were released. These include: Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti, the leader of the Campaign for Democracy who was serving 15 years for involvement in the 1995 coup attempt, NADECO activists that were imprisoned under General Abacha Chief Olabiyi Durojaye, who had been in detention without charge since 1996, and Olu Falae. [19][69]

8.3. General Abubakar had talks with opposition parties/pressure groups including NADECO prior to the elections on how to manage the transition to civilian democratic rule. Political parties and human rights groups are now free to operate without fear of harassment, and many of those who have been released have participated freely in the process of transition to democracy. All charges have been dropped against 15 political exiles abroad and Abubakar has asked them to return to help with the process of transforming Nigeria into a democracy. Many exiles are reported to have returned home Air Commodore Dan Suleiman, Vice Chairman of NADECO and Wole Soyinka, and none appear to have been harassed on their return. [3] [70]

O'ODUA PEOPLE'S CONGRESS

8.4. However, the Nigerian government has taken action against groups thought to be pursuing an agenda of independence for their particular ethnic group. The O'odua people's Congress (OPC) are a Yoruba group, led by Dr Frederick Fasheun. It was affiliated to JACON and widely believed to advocate an independent Yoruba state (although Fasheun has denied this). In early November 1998 it was reported that 5 members of the OPC were killed by police in Lagos. They were allegedly attacked by the police after finishing a meeting. Further clashes between police and OPC youths took place in February and early March 1999 following attacks, by elements of the OPC, on police stations in Lagos and Ogun State.

8.5. The OPC are believed to have triggered riots in Lagos port, in which a number of people were reported to have been killed. [107][192] On 9 September 1999 there was a serious riot at the port of Lagos, and it was reported that militants linked to the OPC were involved. The cause of this violence was an attempt by sacked workers to return to work, which was supported by the militants, but opposed by other workers. There was also an ethnic element to this violence as the rioters also sought to secure Yoruba domination over business conducted in the port. After several hours of fighting between the rival groups the police restored order, but it is reported that sixteen people were killed. [208]

8.6. In November 1999 in and around Lagos there were clashes between the OPC and Hausas over market trading, which resulted in the deaths of at least twenty seven people, and a vigorous police response. On 25 November 1999 President Obasanjo ordered that police shoot OPC members on sight if they did not surrender, as a result the police adopted a confrontational line with the OPC. There were also clashes between OPC and Ijaws in Lagos at around the same time. [209][210]

8.7. The OPC has also split into two factions, one under the leadership of Dr Frederick Fasheun and the other under the leadership Mr Ganiyu Adams, and these factions clashed in January 2000, resulting in at least six deaths. In another incident in January 2000 a senior police officer in Lagos was kidnapped and killed by OPC members attempting to free a member accused of robbery. This incident resulted in a crackdown by the police in which one hundred people were killed, and over two hundred OPC members detained on criminal charges. The Adams faction has been identified as being involved in most of this criminal activity, and has also acted as a vigilante organisation in Lagos. On 13 January 2000 President Obasanjo complained about the Governor of Lagos Bola Tinubu's handling of these incidents in a letter. His comments were met with a robust defence from the Governor of his administration. The Nigerian government has set up an ad hoc Senate committee to investigate both factions of the OPC, and present proposals as to how this organisation should be dealt with in the future. [211][212][213][214][215][216]

8.8. The Committee for the Defense of Human Rights reports that 302 OPC members were arrested in January following clashes with the police in Lagos. Of those detainees, 95 were released during the year. The remaining detainees were not been able to obtain legal representation and either could not make bail or were not eligible for bail due to the charges brought against them. [3]

8.9. In August 2000, after a number of violent clashes, including attacks on the police, the Nigerian police announced a crackdown on OPC members involved in these crimes. The attitude of the public, in the Lagos area, to the OPC is ambivalent, as they are seen as attempting to impose order in areas where the police have been unsuccessful, and some Yorubas sympathise with their aims, if not their methods. The Nigerian police have targeted their action against members of the OPC involved in violence, and ordinary members generally appear to be able to express their views without harassment. [230][231][232]

8.10. The OPC continues to be involved in occasional acts of violence. Dr Frederick Fasheun was briefly detained in November 2000, but was later released without being charged. This was following an upsurge in violence against the Hausa community in Lagos in October, in which over a hundred people died. In the same month the OPC protested against the expulsion of Nigerians from Libya. The OPC appears to be generally able to pursue its political objective without interference from the authorities. However, if any its members are involved in violence, the authorities have acted to curb this violence, and bring those suspected of responsibility to trial. An example of the OPC freedom to operate is that Dr Fasheun is taking action against the Nigerian authorities over President Obasanjo's actions regarding the OPC, especially his directive that its members should be shot on sight (see paragraph 8.6 above). However, OPC members have been detained, where at all possible, and only then when suspected of committing a crime. [3][259][260]

MINORITIES/ETHNIC GROUPS

THE OGONI

8.11. Many of the minority tribes of the Niger Delta have in recent years expressed their discontent over their local environmental, economic and social infrastructure problems. Much of the ethnic unrest has centred on Ogoniland, a densely populated area of approximately 400 square miles in Rivers State near to but not encompassing Port Harcourt. Along with some other ethnic groupings in the Niger Delta the estimated 500,000 Ogonis live in one of the most polluted parts of Nigeria. Most of the pollution is the result of intensive exploitation of the area's oil reserves. Many Ogonis accuse transnational oil companies (in particular Shell) and Nigeria's Federal military Government of responsibility for their plight. [71]

8.12. During the last few years the Ogonis have been involved in occasionally violent disputes with other local minority groups. This situation was heightened by demands from the Ogoni political movement founded in 1990, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). In particular MOSOP has campaigned for political autonomy and a greater share of oil revenue in compensation for the environmental degradation allegedly caused by on-shore oil production in Ogoniland. Although MOSOP initially appeared to command strong support among the Ogoni it was clear by 1993 that some of its leaders were more disposed to compromise with the federal Military Government and the authorities of Rivers State than others. The opposing faction was led by the renowned author Kenule ("Ken") Saro-Wiwa, who became MOSOP's President in June 1993. MOSOP demands became more uncompromising from 1993 onwards under his leadership. There is some evidence that some MOSOP activists and particularly those of its youth wing the National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP) resorted to intimidation of their fellow Ogonis. In April 1994, spurred by this escalation in unrest, the Abacha Government deployed an "Internal Security Unit" inside Ogoniland comprised of large numbers of police and military.

8.13. On 21 May 1994 a meeting was held at the Palace of Gbenemene of Gokana (a traditional ruler) in Giokoo. A number of Saro-Wiwa's opponents attended. The meeting was attacked by a large mob and four chiefs were killed. In the days and weeks after the killings a large number of people were arrested by the security forces. Among those arrested in late May were Saro-Wiwa, Ledum Mitee and Dr Kiobel. Fifteen members of the Ogoni ethnic minority were brought to trial before the Ogoni Civil Disturbance Special Tribunal for their alleged roles in the killings of the four Ogoni chiefs. On 31 October 1995, the Tribunal announced guilty verdicts and death sentences for Saro-Wiwa and eight other activists. The PRC confirmed this decision on 8 November 1995 and all nine were executed on 10 November 1995. [1][72][73]

8.14. MOSOP and NYCOP activists were subjected to harassment and persecution by the Nigerian authorities during the Abacha regime. After Abubakar became head of state in June 1998 the situation in Ogoniland improved. In early September 1998, 20 Ogoni political prisoners who had been in detention since 1994 for the murder of 4 Ogoni chiefs (the same charges as the late Ken Saro-Wiwa) were released after a High Court judge in Port Harcourt dropped all the charges. Their release was unconditional. [74]

8.15. General Abubakar withdrew the Internal Security Task Force from Ogoniland in the Rivers State of the Niger Delta. Free movement is now possible after years of restriction on travel in the area. Many Ogoni exiles have been able to return, and MOSOP have been able to hold rallies once again. Shell was driven from Ogoniland in 1993 after MOSOP activists sabotaged installations demanding compensation for pollution. MOSOP says Shell must meet their demands before they will permit its return. Abubakar promised reform of a commission which was set up to develop oil-producing areas but which local people believe has been ineffectual. [75]

8.16. President Obasanjo has attempted to deal with some of the underlying problems in Niger Delta region, and on 12 July 1999 he presented a bill to the National Assembly proposing to set up a development fund for the region together with a Commission to oversee development. [175] The oil companies operating in the region would contribute to this fund. This was rejected by MOSOP on 4 August 1999, after a meeting at Bori in Ogoniland, the proposals, in their opinion, would make the situation worse, and they believe that the proposed Commission would be a tool of the central government and not act in the interest of local people. [176] On 14 August 1999 it was reported that Ogoni leaders and MOSOP had attended a meeting with Royal Dutch Shell (RDS), the company that was forced out of the Ogoni region in 1993. This meeting was seen as a sign that both the Ogonis and RDS wished to reach an accommodation regarding the future development of the region. RDS has said that it will only return to the region with local approval, and in interim has offered to sponsor development projects. [177]

8.17. In April 2000 there were violent confrontations in K-Dere between rival factions of MOSOP, over a road building project in that village. Amnesty International has accused the police of using this violence as a means of harassing and detaining Ogoni activists. A house belonging to Ledum Mitee, the president of one of MOSOP's faction, was destroyed. He was also detained in connection with this violence and bailed, but there are charge still outstanding against him. [233][234][235][236] In May Nwibari Obani claimed leadership of a rival faction of MOSOP. Ledum Mitee has challenged the legitimacy of his election. [237] In July MOSOP reiterated its opposition to RDS operating in the region, and accused it of attempting to re-start operations clandestinely, without addressing the concerns of the local people or paying compensation. [238]

8.18. In February 2001, following the Oputa Panel hearings in Port Harcourt, the relatives of the 4 chiefs killed in 1994 signed an agreement with MOSOP, pledging themselves to the organisation. During the

hearings, MOSOP and Shell also agreed to hold further talks. These have not yet started. [266]

General situation in the Niger Delta

8.19. The situation in the Niger Delta during the latter part of 1998, and early 1999 has become increasingly volatile. Disaffected youths were involved in taking oil workers hostage and sabotaging pipelines, they have accused the oil companies of indifference to their economic plight and demanding compensation from the oil companies for the environmental impact of their operations. [86] Many Ijaw youths have been arrested for involvement in criminal activity, although concern has been expressed by some Ijaw groups that innocent Ijaws have also been arrested. [108] During 1999 the Security Forces operating in the Delta were again accused of using excessive, and sometime lethal force on a number of occasions, which has been a long-standing problem in the area. [3][104]

8.20. President Obasanjo has attempted to address the situation in the Niger Delta, on 25 June he negotiated a cessation of hostilities between the Itsekiris, Ijaw and Urhobos, and has proposed legislation to assist in the regions development (as detailed above). [178] However, the Ijaw, Urhobo, Isoko and Ndokwa communities have rejected this initiative, and the Ijaje community has requested amendments. [179][180] There have also been ethnic clash in the region is between Ijaje and Ijaw communities in Ondo State. [181][182] The National Assembly has passed the Niger Delta Development Commission Bill. [137]

8.21. In early November 1999 there were clashes between Ijaws of the Egbesu cult and the OPC in Ajegunle district of Lagos. The OPC, were acting in support of the Ijajes, a Yoruba sub-group tribe in the Delta State, who have been involved in a violent conflict with the Ijaw for the past two years. Fifteen people were reported to have been killed in this violence and over fifty-six arrested. [217] Twelve policemen were reported to have been killed by Ijaw youths, in retaliation for the large number of Ijaws arrested by the police during the Lagos riots. [218] On 20 November 1999 in response to this incident, the Nigerian armies were order by the civilian governor to surround the town of Odi in Bayelsa State. This was the town in which the policemen were killed, and where it was believed that the Ijaws responsible were hiding. The military came under fire and over-reacted, severely damaging the town. It is not known how many people were killed, but the local residents claim that over 500 died. Over 2000 people were detained, but it is not known if those responsible for the deaths of the police officer were among those detained or killed. An inconclusive investigation was launched into this incident. President Obasanjo later apologised for the excessive force used by the military, but no action has yet to be taken against any of the soldiers involved. [3] [219] [220] President Obasanjo visited Odi in March 2001, but did not offer more apologise or assistance. [267]

8.22. On 1 February 2000 a peace agreement was reached between the Ijaw and Itsekiri. The Delta State Government were commended for its part in brokering this peace agreement, and it is hope that this agreement may result in a general peace in the Warri region. [221]

8.23. Disruption of oil production and kidnapping of employees of oil companies has continued in the region, most of those kidnapped are released unharmed after a short period of time. Oil pipeline have also been vandalised, either by local people or by criminals intent on stealing oil. These incidents have resulted in a number of recent explosions and fires, which have killed or injured many local people. The Nigerian government is attempting to address this problem and has expressed its intentions to deploy security force to protect pipelines. [3][183][184] [239][240]

8.24. In September 2000 MOSOP called on the Nigerian government to drop charges against those accused of damaging pipelines, stating that lack of pipeline maintenance, rather than organised criminal activity was the cause of this problem. MOSOP stated that the oil companies failure to abide by international standards had resulted in pipeline leakage, and that their activities they were responsible for this problem. [241]

WOMEN

8.25. Freedom from discrimination based on gender is specifically provided for by the 1999 Constitution. Customary and religious discrimination against women persist in many communities and the police do not usually intervene in domestic disputes, except where alleged physical abuse exceeds customary norms. This failure to provide adequate legal protection, was criticised in a recent report by World Organisation against Torture a Swiss based organisation. [185] Women are not barred from seeking redress through the courts, although the expense precludes many. There are no legal impediments relating to either female employment or political participation, although women frequently have to encounter prejudice in male

dominated fields such as law and politics. While some women have made considerable individual progress, both in the academic and business world, women remain underprivileged. Although women are not barred legally from owning land, under some customary land tenure systems only men can own land and women can gain access to land only through marriage or family. In addition many customary practices do not recognize a woman's right to inherit her husband's property, and many widows were rendered destitute when their in-laws take virtually all of the deceased husband's property. Widows are subjected to unfavorable conditions as a result of discriminatory traditional customs and economic deprivation. "Confinement" is the most common rite of deprivation to which widows are subjected, this practise occurs predominately in eastern Nigeria. [3]

8.26. President Obasanjo has been criticised by women's groups for his failure to appoint more women to ministerial posts, and there appears to a perception of institutionalised discrimination against women in Nigerian society. [186] Women are underrepresented in government and politics, although there were no legal impediments to political participation or voting by women. Men continued to dominate the political arena. NGO's continued to protest the underrepresentation of women in the political process, and women were underrepresented in the civilian government. In President Obasanjo's first cabinet, only 6 women were appointed as ministers out of a total of 56 positions. There were 3 women among the Senate's 109 members, and only 12 women were elected to the 360-member House of Representatives. Women's rights groups pushed local, state, and the Federal Government (and local levels as well) to adopt a 30% affirmative action program; however, these efforts were unsuccessful. [3]

8.27. Reports of abuse are common, especially those of wife beating. Police normally do not intervene in domestic disputes, which seldom are discussed publicly. The Penal Code permits husbands to use physical means to chastise their wives as long as it does not result in "grievous harm," which is defined as loss of sight, hearing, power of speech, facial disfigurement, or other life threatening injuries. A Women's rights group has estimated that spousal abuse occurs in 20% of relationships. In more traditional areas of the country, courts and police are reluctant to intervene to protect women who accuse their husbands formally if the level of alleged abuse does not exceed customary norms in the areas. Rape and sexual harassment continue to be problems. Prostitution is rampant, particularly in urban areas. A number of states, including most northern states that have begun the enforcement of Sharia law, have begun to enforce existing laws or to introduce new laws to combat prostitution. Katsina, Jigawa, and Edo states have recently criminalized prostitution but it is not illegal in Lagos State; however, authorities can use statutes that outlaw pandering as a justification for arresting prostitutes. The adoption of Sharia-based legal systems by northern states has led to the strong enforcement of laws against prostitution for both adults and children. Southern states, like Edo, also are criminalizing prostitution and raising the legal age for marriage from 16 to 18. There is an active market for trafficking in women to Europe, and elsewhere. In some parts of the country, women continue to be harassed for social and religious reasons. Purdah, the Islamic practice of keeping girls and women in seclusion from men outside the family, continued in parts of the far north. [3]

8.28. A growing problem is the cross border trafficking of Nigerian women for the purpose of forced prostitution in Europe. Mrs Titi Abubakar, wife of the Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, has set up the Women-trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF). This organisation intends to combat this trade and help rehabilitate victims of this traffic who have been deported back to Nigeria, by providing vocational training, and financial assistance to set up businesses at the end of this training. The Nigerian authorities are aware of this exploitation and are attempting to stop this trade, they are also seeking international assistance to address this problem. [243] Human Rights Watch recently reported that according to women's rights organizations, hundreds of women and young girls migrated to Europe in response to job offers as domestic workers or waitresses. Upon arrival, many were forced into prostitution in order to pay off debts. In addition, there is evidence that Nigerian crime syndicates may use indebtedness, threats of beatings and rape, physical injury to the victim's family, arrest, and deportation to persuade those forced into sex work from attempting to escape. While the government deplores this trade, and is looking at ways to prevent it, the police reported that the women's families often condoned their entry into the trade. The Nigerian police attempts to stem the trafficking of persons include extended jail sentences and public humiliation; however, such actions focused primarily on victims, and traffickers have not been punished. Awareness campaigns, often conducted by NGO's and others, have only recently have begun to generate widespread attention. [3]

8.29. There are no legal provisions barring women from testifying in a civil court of law. However the testimony of women is given less weight in a Muslim Sharia court, and this may have implications in States where a Sharia legal code has been introduced. However, as this code is still being introduced, its long term effects remain to be seen. [3]

8.30. In July 2000, it was reported that the UNICEF representative for Nigeria had praised Nigeria's efforts

to improve the lot of women. She cited the appointment of women to ministerial posts and the encouragement of girls to enrol in school. The Legal Defence and Assistance Project, an NGO of lawyers and human rights workers also commended the Nigerian government's efforts to address women's rights. [242][244]

i. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

8.31. The government publicly opposes female genital mutilation (FGM). Nigeria co-sponsored a resolution at the Fourth World Health Assembly urging states to eliminate harmful health practices, including FGM. In 1984, a Nigerian National Committee was founded to campaign against FGM and it has subsequently obtained the collaboration and limited financial support from the Ministries of Health, Education and Information. The Ministry of Health and non-governmental organisations has sponsored public awareness and education projects informing communities of the health hazards associated with FGM. FGM is a traditional practice within local communities, and consequently it has proved difficult for federal government to effectively confront. However, the cultural nature of the practice in Nigeria determines that the mothers of young daughters are able to veto treatment if they oppose it. Communities from all of Nigeria's major ethnic groups and religions practise FGM, although adherence is neither universal nor nationwide. A 1985-6 survey found that it was not practised at all in 6 of the 19 states surveyed. [3][76][242]

8.32. The Nigerian Government does not approve of FGM, but there are no federal laws banning this practise, and it has taken no legal action to curb it. As this is view by some communities as a long-standing tradition, the government may have difficulty in discouraging FGM, while being seen to respect the traditions of the groups involved. Anti-FGM groups, because of the inability to take action at the federal level, are attempting to challenge FGM at the state and local government area (LGA) level. Edo State banned FGM in October 2000. Ogun, Cross River, Osun, Rivers, and Bayelsa states also banned FGM during the year. However, the punishments imposed are minimal, in Edo State the punishment is a 1,000 Naira fine and 6 months imprisonment. In addition once a state legislature criminalizes FGM, NGO's have found that they must convince the LGA authorities that state laws are applicable in their districts. [3]

8.33. The Women's Centre for Peace and Development (WOPED) estimated that at least 50% of women are mutilated. Studies conducted by the U.N. Development Systems and the World Health Organization estimated the FGM rate at approximately 60 % among the nation's female population. However, according to local experts, the actual prevalence may be as high as 100% in some ethnic conclaves in the south. While practiced in all parts of the country, FGM is more predominant in southern and eastern areas. Women from Northern states are less likely to be mutilated; however, those affected are more likely to undergo the severe type of FGM known as infibulation. WOPED believes that the practice is perpetuated because of a cultural belief that uncircumcised women are promiscuous, unclean, unsuitable for marriage, physically undesirable, or potential health risks to themselves and their children, especially during childbirth. The National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives, The Nigerian Women's Association, and the Nigerian Medical Association worked to eradicate the practice and to train health care workers on the medical effects of FGM; however, contact with health care workers remains limited. Nevertheless, most observers agree that the number of women and girls who are subjected to FGM is declining. [3]

CHILDREN

8.34. Public schools continued to be inadequate, and limited facilities precluded access to education for many children. The Constitution's general provisions call for the Government, "when practical," to provide free, compulsory, and universal primary education; however, despite the President's commitment to compulsory education, compulsory primary education rarely was provided, particularly in the north. Girls are discriminated against in access to education for social and economic reasons. The literacy rate for males is 58% but only 41% for females. Rural girls are even more disadvantaged than their urban counterparts. Only 42% of rural girls are enrolled in school compared with 72% of urban girls. In the north, Muslim communities favour boys over girls in deciding which children to enroll in secondary and elementary schools. In the south, economic hardship also restricts many families' ability to send girls to school and, instead, they are directed into commercial activities such as trading and street vending. While the Government increased spending on children's health in recent years, it seldom enforced even the inadequate laws designed to protect the rights of children. Cases of child abuse, abandoned infants, child prostitution, and physically harmful child labour practices remained common throughout the country. [3] Although the law forbids the imprisonment of children, it is reported that children are regularly detained with criminals. (See section on prisons above)

8.35. The Government only occasionally criticized child abuse and neglect, and it made little effort to stop customary practices harmful to children, such as the sale of young girls into marriage. There were credible

reports that poor families sell their daughters into marriage as a means of supplementing their income. Young girls often are forced into marriage as soon as they reach puberty, regardless of age, in order to prevent the "indecency" associated with premarital sex. [3]

8.36. As referred to above, UNICEF have urged the new Nigerian government to adopt a draft bill on children's rights drafted in 1993, which made provisions for support of education, the elimination of child labour and early marriage. This bill also proposed a ban on FGM and skin scarification or tattoos, which are used by some tribal groups to show affiliation. [159] Private and government initiatives to stem the growing incidence of child employment continue but have not been effective. UNICEF operated a program in Kaduna that sought to remove young girls from the streets where they hawked petty goods and relocate them to an informal educational setting. UNICEF reported that despite the narrow focus on young girls, the program only began to address the problem during the year. In conjunction with the ILO, the Government formulated a national program of action in support of child rights, survival, protection, development, and participation. In August a formal agreement between the ILO and the Labour ministry established the program; however, it has yet to show results due to logistical problems and changing personnel in the Ministry. [3]

8.37. The ILO reported that, based on a nationwide survey of child trafficking, approximately 19 % of school children and 40 % of street children have been trafficked for forced labor. The economic strategies that underlie child trafficking may be reflected in the fact that families who employ them also pay their school fees. Child traffickers also take advantage of a cultural tradition of "fostering" under which it is culturally accepted to send one's child to live and work with a family in an urban center for educational and employment purposes. Often the children in these situations only work and do not get any formal education. They are forced to serve as domestics or to become street hawkers selling nuts, fruits, or other items. According to reports from the media and the ILO, there is also an active trade in child labourers, some are sent to Cameroon, Gabon, Benin, and Equatorial Guinea to work in agricultural enterprises, others are coerced into prostitution. Authorities also have identified a trade route for traffickers of children for labour through Katsina and Sokoto to the Middle East and East Africa. The eastern part of the country and some southern states such as Cross River and Akwa Ibom have been the focus of trafficking of children for labour and, in some cases, it is claimed for human sacrifice. The country remains a destination point for the trafficking of Togolese children to serve as domestic or agricultural workers. The Government is investigating allegations of the collusion of customs officials in trafficking. Some of the returnees have alleged that immigration officials actively connive with syndicates; however, there were no arrests of immigration officials for trafficking offenses during the year. The Assistant Inspector General of Police is investigating allegations of the collusion of customs officials in trafficking. [3]

8.38. There have also been reports of young Nigerian women been trafficked to the continent through the United Kingdom, to mostly Italy, to be exploited for the purposes of prostitution. This abuse is increasing in some European countries. Some of these girls, who have been rescued, complain that violence, intimidation, threats against them or their families, and the use of voodoo practises, have all being used to control them. The United Kingdom authorities are attempting to address this problem, by taking action against those involved in this trade. [261][262]

STUDENT CULTS

8.39. Student cults, secret societies based on student fraternities, have been responsible for many crimes in Nigerian universities. However, the Nigerian police have made efforts to investigate these crimes, and convict cult members involved.

8.40. Following the murder, by cult members, of students at Obafemi Awolowo University in July 1999, the Nigerian authorities took action to suppress these cults. In August 1999 the Nigerian government ordered Chancellors to eradicate cults from their campus. The government said that it would hold Chancellors responsible for failures to maintain order amongst their students. The universities have since been having some success in encouraging students to renounce cult membership. [222][223][224][225]

8.41. On 10 March President Obasanjo commented on a report from Justice Okoi Itam into the events at Obafemi Awolowo University, he re-affirmed his governments commitment to eradicating student cults, which he described as undermining both education institutions and society in general. Justice Itam stated that the government must provide funds to implement the recommendations of his report, and also deal with the problem of Cults in both Federal and State educational institutions. He also reminded University authorities that they should monitor their students and staff for cult related activities. [226]

HOMOSEXUALS

8.42. Male homosexual conduct is prohibited by Nigerian law. Homosexuals can be subject to prosecution. The penalty for convicted homosexual behaviour varies from 3 months to 3 years imprisonment or a fine and/or corporal punishment. The justice system considers homosexual behaviour with a varying degree of statutory punishment.

8.43. Homosexual males in Nigeria are likely to face discrimination and occasional violence if they are overt about their sexual orientation, but not on an organised or systematic scale. Society is not openly hostile but homosexuals can be subject to ridicule. There are some areas in Nigeria where it is possible to live openly as a homosexual - such as in a large city like Lagos. There have been instances of homosexuals being subjected to violence, but they usually keep themselves to themselves and are usually left alone. [109]

THE OGBONI

9.1. There are many cults in Nigeria. Probably the best known is the Ogboni. The Ogboni are a secret society of the Yoruba tribe, and it is therefore hard to obtain reliable information about them. [110] [111] As a secret society it has been banned in Nigeria, and its power curtailed. However this ban is hard to enforce, and it is still active and alleged to be involved in satanic practices. [111] [112]

9.2. The title Ogboni is only conferred on the elders, i.e. senior members of the society. These are usually men but women, usually six in number, were traditionally included to represent the interests of women in the community. Membership of the society is usually, but not always, passed through patrilineal descent. [110] [111]

9.3. The Ogboni traditionally played a significant role in Yoruba religion and society, and were involved in the installation of new kings. Historically an Ogboni could be said to have combined the powers of a local magistrate, with those of a member of the local government and a religious leader. [110] [111]

9.4. The Ogboni engaged in animal sacrifice. There is no firm evidence to suggest that they engaged in human sacrifice. However, in the event that a king abused his power they could compel him to commit suicide. They could also impose sanctions against other members of the community if they believed that these were justified. The Ogboni are reputed to threaten its members with death should they break their oath of secrecy regarding its rituals and beliefs. It is still regarded as being a powerful organisation throughout Nigeria. [110] [111] [112]

9.5. It is believed that the Ogboni is a purely Yoruba cult, but there are a number of Yoruba sub tribes who also may be involved. [110]

The Reformed Ogboni Fraternity (ROF)

9.6. This was founded in 1914, and is not a religious organisation, although the members believe in God. The ROF is not a secret organisation, it is not banned, and is open to men and women regardless of race, colour, creed, religion, or political opinion.

9.7. The ROF is an indigenous African organisation that promotes African culture, advocates charitable and good works, believes in the brotherhood of man and self-improvement. It disassociates itself from cults, specifically the Ogboni, and does not participate in politics. However, it should be noted that members of the ROF can also be Ogboni, due to their position within Yoruba society, as was the case with the late leader **Sir Adetokunbo Ademola**, which may imply that the reputation of the Ogboni as a sinister cult has been exaggerated. [113]

MONITORING

9.8. International human rights organisations are active in Nigeria and regularly reported allegations of human rights abuses.

9.9. General Abubakar attempted to improve relations with the international community while Head of State, and appeared to be more receptive to criticisms about human rights issues than his predecessor. He addressed the United Nations General Assembly, and allowed a UN Special Rapporteur to visit Nigeria in November 1998. [77] In August 1998 a direct contacts mission from the International Labour Organisation was allowed to visit Nigeria. [92] There are no reports of the present government obstructing or preventing

INTERNAL FLIGHT

V.A Human Rights Issues

Overview

5.2. The Auta Tribunal hearings into the deaths of 4 Ogoni tribal leaders in May 1994 violated many judicial principles and culminated in the arbitrary execution of 9 Ogonis, including Ken Saro-Wiwa. A UN General Assembly resolution condemning, in particular, these executions after a flawed judicial process and urging a return to democratic rule in Nigeria was adopted in December 1995. [45][46]

5.4. Many of those released had been held without charge or trial under the State Security (Detention of Persons) Decree, No. 2 of 1984. Three others were arrested following pro-democracy protests in May 1998: Olisa Agbakoba, a human rights lawyer who was involved with the United Action for Democracy, Chief Ayo Opadokun, a lawyer and NADECO Secretary General and Olusegun Maiyegun, a leading member of the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights and the Campaign for Democracy. [47]

[48]

5.5. In early September 1998 the 20 Ogoni political prisoners who had been in detention since 1994 for the murder of 4 Ogoni chiefs (the same charges as the late Ken Saro-Wiwa) were released after a High Court judge in Port Harcourt dropped all the charges. Their release was unconditional. [49] In March 1999 it was announced that most of the coup plotters imprisoned after unfair trials would be released. These included those imprisoned after the 1990, 1995 and 1997 coup plots, and most of these were released in late March. [93] On 17 September 1998, it was announced that treason charges against fifteen of those accused of involvement in the 1995 and 1997 bomb attacks had been dropped. Amongst those against whom charges have been dropped are Professor Wole Soyinka, Chief Anthony Enahoro, Lt. General (rtd) Alani Akinrinade and Dr Amos Akingbe. They have since returned to Nigeria for various periods. [50]

5.6. President Obasanjo created a panel to investigate human rights abuses between January 1966 and 28 May 1999, and to identify the people responsible. The panel has been sworn in under Justice Oputa, and has received approximately 10,000 petitions. The panel has held public hearings throughout the country. [3][134][187] President Obasanjo has recently appeared before this panel to assist with questions regarding his presidency during the 1970's. Other former military rulers have shown little regard for this body, and have failed to appear when summoned. The present Nigerian authorities appear to respect the intentions of the panel, and to co-operate with it. [3][92]

Freedom of Speech and the Media

5.7. Nigeria has a long tradition of a vibrant and independently minded press. The Abacha administration cracked down on those involved with reporting which was critical of the regime. This resulted in the arrest and detention of a number of journalists, particularly those perceived to have written anything critical of Abacha. Hence high profile journalists or editors critical of Abacha or the government, or overtly political in the content of their work may have faced harassment and persecution during the Abacha era. [63]

5.8. General Abubakar released most political prisoners who had been detained under the Abacha regime, including the journalists Chris Anyanwu, Ben Charles Obi, George Mbah and Kunle Ajibade. In March 1999 the Diet editor Niran Malaolu was freed. [93] The press generally operated with fewer restrictions, and without the intimidation that characterised Abacha's rule. However there were still some minor incidents of harassment of the press during Abubakar regime. [87][115]

5.9. The present civilian government has introduced a bill to abolish the 1962 Official Secrets Act, which severely curtails press freedom, and has called for the responsible use of press freedom. [160][161] The press remains active and is able to freely investigate and report. The News magazine exposed the Speaker of the Nigerian House of Representatives Mr Ibrahim Salisu Buhari as being unqualified for his position, and as a result he resigned on 22 July 1999. This is one example of the press being permitted to investigate politicians. [162][163]

5.10. The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and of the press, and the Government generally respected these rights; however, there were problems in some areas. There is a large and vibrant private domestic press that is frequently critical of the Government. The Government owns or controls many publications. [3]

5.11. On 26 May 1999, in the last days of Abubakar regime, Decree 60 was signed into law and created the Nigerian Press Council which was charged with the enforcement of professional ethics and the sanctioning of journalists who violated these ethics. The Nigerian Press Council immediately was criticised by the media as "an undisguised instrument of censorship and an unacceptable interference with the freedom of the press." Decree 60 attempted to put control of the practice of journalism into the hands of a body of journalists who were appointed by and received payment from the Government. [3]

5.12. In 1999 the NUJ, the professional association of all Nigerian journalists, and the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN) rejected the creation of the Press Council. The NPAN called the Decree unconstitutional and a violation of press freedom, because there were already enough laws concerning the operation of the press. The

Decree, which virtually made members of the Council employees of the Government, also contained a number of provisions inimical to the operation of a free press. Among other provisions, Decree 60 gave the Press Council the power to accredit and register journalists and the power to suspend journalists from practising. Decree 60 required that publications be registered by the Council annually through a system entitled "Documentation of Newspapers." In applying for registration, publishers were expected to submit their mission statements and objectives and could be denied registration if their objectives failed to satisfy the Council. The penalties for practising without meeting the Council's standards were a fine of 250,000 Naira or imprisonment for a term not to exceed 3 years. The Decree also empowered the Council to approve a code of professional and ethical conduct to guide the press and to ensure compliance by journalists. Under the Decree, publishers were expected to send a report of the performance of their publications to the Council; failure to do so was an offence that carried a fine of 100,000 Naira. The Nigerian Press Council has opened an office and hired staff in Abuja, but has yet to take any official action. [3]

5.13. Editors have reported that government security personnel sometimes visit or call to demand information about a story or source; however, journalists and editors no longer fear suspension or imprisonment for their editorial decisions. State broadcasters and journalists remain important tools for civilian governors; these officials use the state-owned media to showcase the state's accomplishments and to promote their own political fortunes. During 2001, there were a few cases of threats against and attacks on the press. In April 2001 police beat a photographer and destroyed the film in his camera when he attempted to photograph a suspect leaving the Lagos High Court. In May 2001, Imo State security personnel raided newspaper stands where they seized and burned publications that carried stories on activities of MASSOB, a group advocating the revival of the Biafran Republic. In June 2001, police arrested, detained, and charged with libel Nnamdi Onyeuma, editor of the weekly magazine Glamour Trends, in connection with a story alleging that President Obasanjo received a \$1 million (115 million naira) allowance for each of his many foreign trips. Onyeuma was released on bail and is awaiting court action. [3]

5.14. Governors from Kano, Imo, and Zamfara States have been involved in disputes with journalists and publicly threatened the media. State governments have also threatened and detained journalists who have criticised their policies. In 2000 Ebonyi State police detained for approximately 2 weeks two journalists with the Ebonyi Times, Emmanuel Okike-ogah and Ogbonaya Okorie, for publishing what the state government described as "seditious articles in an unregistered newspaper." Also in 2000, police in Aba, Abia State, arrested and detained for 2 days Ademola Adegbamigbe of The News magazine, and a professional photographer who Adegbamigbe had hired to assist him, while covering the civil violence following the introduction of Shari'a law in the north. [3]

5.15. There are two national, government-owned daily newspapers in English, the New Nigerian and the Daily Times. The New Nigerian publishes an additional Hausa edition. Several states own daily or weekly newspapers that also are published in English. They tend to be poorly produced, have limited circulation, and require large state subsidies to continue operating. Several private newspapers and magazines have begun publication since the inauguration of the civilian government. Five major daily newspapers, one newsmagazine, and several sensational evening newspapers and tabloid publications had begun publication at year's end. [3]

5.16. Since the May 1999 elections, foreign journalists who sought to enter the country to cover political developments generally have been able to obtain visas and many of the obstacles that previously frustrated foreign journalists were removed. Officials within

the Ministry of Information became more accommodating to requests from foreign journalists. [3]

5.17. As newspapers and television are relatively expensive and literacy is not universal, radio remains the most important medium of mass communication and information. There is a national radio broadcaster, the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, which broadcasts in English, Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, and other languages. Fifty-one state radio stations broadcast in English and local languages. There are six private radio stations operating. [3] In February 2002, Nigeria's government granted television broadcast licences to five new television companies. The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) approved Silver Bird, Monarch, Nagarta Communications, Unity TV and Chrome-Choffan Communications. The announcement came a day after the government said it had granted licences to 16 private radio stations. [89]

5.18. The National Television Station (NTA) is federally owned, while 30 states also operate television stations. There are nine privately owned television stations that broadcast domestic news and political commentary. There are two private satellite television services. The law requires local television stations to limit programming from other countries to 40%. The 1993 Press Law also restricts the foreign content of satellite broadcasting to 20%, but the Government does not restrict access to, or reception of, international cable or satellite television. The Government does not restrict Internet access, although unreliable, and costly digital telephone service limited access and hindered service providers. All Internet service providers were privately owned, and access is not restricted. [3]

5.19. During 2001, the NBC threatened to take private television and radio stations off the air when the stations refused to pay 2.5% of their gross income to the NBC; the Independent Broadcasters Association of Nigeria (IBAN) challenged the fees in court. In October President Obasanjo set the annual fee for the broadcasters at \$1,300 (150,000 naira). During 2001, the NBC also prevented the commissioning of the Here and There television station in Oyo State, ruling that the original licence had expired. The NBC also challenged expansion plans by African Independent Television (AIT), a part of Daar Communications, claiming that AIT's global and terrestrial licences do not allow them to act as a network. [3]

5.20. While private television and radio broadcasters remained economically viable on advertising revenues alone, despite the restrictions that the Government imposed on them, government-sponsored broadcasters complained that government funding and advertising were inadequate for their needs. [3]

5.21. The Political Parties Registration and Activities Decree No 35 of 1998 was passed to ensure equal allocation of time and similarity of subject matter in political broadcasts by registered parties leading up to and during the period of the elections during the transition process. All stations were directed to set up a complaints committee to examine complaints and appeals from political parties. [105]

Freedom of Religion

5.22. The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, including freedom to change one's religion or belief, and freedom to manifest and propagate one's religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice, and observance. However, the Government restricted these rights in practice in certain respects, but only to maintain order, for example where a religious meeting may cause unrest. [3] Religious differences often correspond to

regional and ethnic differences. The northern region and much of the middlebelt are overwhelmingly Muslim, as are the large Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups of that area. Many southern ethnic groups are predominantly Christian. Consequently it is often difficult to distinguish between religious conflict, and ethnic conflict. Religious tensions often underscored what were predominantly ethnic confrontations. [90]

5.23. The Constitution prohibits state and local governments from adopting an official religion; however, it also provides that states may elect to use Islamic (Shari'a) customary law and courts. About half of the population is Muslim, mostly living in the north of the country, about 40% Christian, mostly living in the south, and about 10% practice traditional indigenous religion or no religion. Since independence, the jurisdiction of Shari'a courts has been limited to family or personal law cases involving Muslims, or to civil disputes between Muslims and non-Muslims who consent to the courts' jurisdiction. However, the Constitution states that a Shari'a court of appeal may exercise "such other jurisdiction as may be conferred upon it by the law of the State." Some states have interpreted this language as granting them the right to expand the jurisdiction of existing Shari'a courts to include criminal matters. Christians have alleged that the adoption of an expanded Shari'a law in several states, the continued use of state funds to fund the construction of mosques, teaching of Alkalis (Muslim judges), and pilgrimages to Mecca (Hajj), Islam has been adopted as the de facto state religion of several northern states. However, state funds also are being used to fund Christian pilgrimages to Jerusalem. In general, states with a clear Christian or Muslim majority explicitly favour the majority faith. This is also the case in transactions between individuals and the local government, such as the awarding of contracts for example. There have also been accusations that religious minorities in some states have been denied access to services and police protection in the areas where they live. The Constitution permits the Federal Government to establish a Federal Shari'a Court of Appeal, but it has yet to established such a Court. [90]

5.24. According to the Constitution, students are not required to receive instruction relating to a religion other than their own; however, public school students throughout the country were subjected to mandatory Islamic or Christian religious instruction. Islamic studies are mandatory in public schools in Zamfara and other northern states, to the exclusion of Christianity. State authorities claim that students are permitted to decline to attend these classes or to request a teacher of their own religion to provide alternative instruction; however, in practice the dominant religion of the state is taught in the school, and students cannot use these other mechanisms. There are reports that Christianity is taught in the same manner in Enugu and Edo States, and that Muslim students cannot access Koranic teaching in the public schools. During 2001, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) leaders volunteered to place teachers of Christianity in Zamfara and Sokoto State schools, where students alleged that they were being forced to take courses in Islamic religious knowledge in order to graduate. Governors of both states accepted the offer of assistance and stated that they had not been aware of the problem; however, CAN did not provide any teachers in either state during 2001. They indicated that schools in rural areas may not have qualified teachers of Biblical or Christian education classes, and that students in such schools have a right to opt out of Koranic knowledge classes, which otherwise would be required. The Government continued to enforce a 1987 ban on religious organisations on campuses of primary schools, although individual students retain the right to practice their religions in recognised places of worship. [3]

5.25. Traditional religious beliefs are widespread in Nigeria, some of these are described as witchcraft or Ju-Ju. Nigerians are generally free to follow these traditional beliefs, but where these practices may have resulted in criminal activity, the Nigerian police have

investigated them. As these practices are often secret and take a wide variety of forms, it is very difficult to obtain reliable information regarding the nature of these religious beliefs. [193][194][195] There have been isolated reports of ritualistic killings, which do not appear to be linked to organised traditional religious practices. When such rare events occur, they are investigated as crimes, and action taken against the perpetrators. There does not appear to be any widespread support for these practices, or their perpetrators. Such actions are viewed by society as criminal, they are investigated and dealt with in an appropriate manner. [196][197]

5.26. On 12 September 1996 radical Muslim leader Ibrahim El ZakZaky was arrested with other leaders. El ZakZaky's supporters were involved in a numbers of acts of violence protesting at his detention between 1996 and the end of 1998 when he was released from detention. [64][106] The Federal Government continued to settle property claims by Muslim Brotherhood leader Ibrahim El ZakZaky for compensation for his home and mosque, which were razed by law enforcement in 1997. [90]

(i) Shari'a law

5.27. Nigeria's Constitution enshrines Nigeria as a secular state. Shari'a Law has existed in Nigeria for many years, and the Constitution contains provision for Shari'a courts to deal with issues of family law. However, on 27 October 1999 Zamfara state announced that they would introduce Shari'a Law for criminal cases. This legislation contains provision that non-Muslims will not be subject to Shari'a Law, but this has not assuaged the concerns of the Christian communities, who fear discrimination. Other northern states, with predominantly Muslim communities, have introduced, or are considering similar legislation. Zamfara's legislation came into force on 27 January 2000. Niger and Kebbi States signed similar laws in early February and Kano later the same month. The legislation cannot be formally introduced for at least three months after signature. There is a question over whether the introduction of the Shari'a penal code is constitutional; this will have to be resolved by the Nigerian courts. [198][206][227] As of April 2002, 12 northern states have adopted variations of Shari'a law--Zamfara, Sokoto, Kebbi, Niger, Kano, Katsina, Kaduna, Jigawa, Yobe, Bauchi, Borno, and Gombe. Adherence to the new Shari'a provisions is compulsory for Muslims in some states and optional in others. [3]

5.28. Violent riots broke out on 21 and 22 February 2000 in Kaduna, following a demonstration by the Christian community against the imposition of the Shari'a penal code in Kaduna State. It is not clear who started the violence, but the situation quickly deteriorated into serious violence with Christians and Muslims burning each other's properties, businesses and places of worship. Hundreds of people were reported to have been killed during this violence. [199][200][201][227] Retaliatory violence against Muslim communities broke out in Abia, Imo and Akwa Ibom States when some of the bodies of the Kaduna victims were returned to their home states. Over four hundred people were killed. [199][200][202][206][227] In late May there was further rioting in Kaduna, following a demonstration where Christians clashed with Muslim youths. This violence lasted for two days and it is reported that three hundred people were killed. Security forces restored order, and the violence was limited to the Kaduna area. [228][229] The immediate cause of the violence is unclear, but it is not thought to be directly related to Shari'a.

5.29. Following the Kaduna riots in February, President Obasanjo called a crisis meeting of the National Council of States, a body which includes the President, Vice-President, former Heads of State and the governors of all the states. After this meeting, Vice-

5.30. However, in spite of these attempts at reaching an agreement, there is still a lack of trust between the Muslim and Christian communities in the north, which can lead to outbreaks of violence. In August 2001 there were renewed fighting between Christians and Muslims in Bauchi State over plans by the local government to introduce strict Islamic law. Violence also occurred in Tafawa Balewa between two communities, the mainly Christian Kutaru and the predominantly Muslim Zwall; 15 people are reported to have been killed while many more have been injured. This new unrest follows an outbreak of violence in Tafawa Balew in June and July 2001 when fighting between Christian Jarawas and Sayawas and Hausa-Fulani Muslims left more than 400 people dead and more than 22,000 displaced. The tense situation was just being brought under control when the later clashes erupted. The root cause of many of these clashes, are long-standing interethnic rivalries over land and resources. [39][40]

5.32. Non-Muslims are not subject to Shari'a statutes. However, a Christian was tried for assault in a criminal Shari'a court in Kano State after he voluntarily chose to be tried under the Shari'a code; apparently because the penalty of caning was less onerous than the potential penalty under common law. Many aspects of the Shari'a code directly

effects the lives of Christians living in the states where the code has been introduced. The Christian minorities in Shari'a states, especially in Zamfara, have been affected by many of the social provisions of the laws, such as the separation of the sexes in public transportation vehicles and bans on the sale of alcohol and alcohol consumption. Niger State has also enforced a ban on the selling of alcohol. In Zamfara State, Christian associations have arranged private transportation services for Christian females so that they are not forced to wait for female only transportation provided by the Zamfara State government. Sokoto State's transportation system is run completely by private operators. Sokoto State governor Dalhatu Bafarawa said that the state couldn't compel private operators to carry female passengers if doing so violates their religious convictions. In Zamfara State school children continued to be segregated by gender in schools. The Governor of Zamfara also disbursed public funds to refurbish mosques and pronounced that only persons with beards would win government contracts. There is a long tradition of separating schoolchildren by gender in the north; this practice was codified in Kebbi and Sokoto States in May 2000. [90]

5.33. In Zamfara, laws proposed during 2001, included a dress code for women that bans short skirts and trousers, and the mandatory closing of shops on Fridays. The CAN branch in Zamfara State has protested about these new laws to the Zamfara State government. Reportedly they were told that the first law was proposed on public decency grounds, and that the second law only would apply to Muslim businesses. A number of state sanctioned and private vigilante Shari'a enforcement groups have formed in states with expanded Shari'a law. In Zamfara State, the Governor vested the local vigilante group with full powers of arrest and prosecution because he believed that the police were not enforcing the new Shari'a laws. The Governor of Jigawa State also mobilised a statewide Shari'a enforcement committee to arrest, detain, and prosecute Muslim offenders. In April 2001, the Katsina Arts and Musicians Association wrote to the Katsina House of Assembly protesting about the arrest and detention of Sirajo Mai Asharalle. Asharalle was arrested by the state sanctioned Rundunar Adalci vigilante group while performing music at a local function, but was released soon after his arrest. The performance of music and dancing was banned under the Shari'a law introduced by Katsina state. In Kano State, an unofficial vigilante group known as Hisbah began taking action against both Muslims and Christians who violate the new Shari'a laws. In February 2001, youths in the Hisbah attacked a truck bringing alcohol to a military base in Kano State, and attacked the Nigeria Union of Journalists press centre in Kano following allegations that alcohol was served on the premises. On 14 April 2001, Kano State's Deputy Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje led vigilante enforcers and national police to five of Kano's largest hotels and ordered them to stop selling alcohol. Unofficial vigilante officials broke liquor bottles and engaged in minor vandalism at the hotels. On April 16, 2001, the Hisbah burnt down the Henzino Hotel, an establishment known for serving alcohol in a predominantly Muslim neighbourhood. In April 2001, some Kano State hotels stopped renting conference halls to Christian groups for fear of being targets of this vigilante violence. [90]

Freedom of Assembly & Association

5.34. The Constitution provides for the right to associate freely with other persons in political parties, Trade Unions, or special interest associations, and the Government generally respected this right in practice; however, there were exceptions. Although the Constitution allows the free formation of political parties, only three parties are registered with the INEC. The Constitution requires parties to have membership in two-thirds of the country's 36 states. [3]

5.35. Nigeria has acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

5.36. General Abubakar set Nigeria on the path to transition from military dictatorship to a civilian government. Prospective political parties were invited to register with the INEC for recognition. Nine parties fulfilled the criteria for registration. Guidelines announced by the INEC were designed to ensure political parties were not based solely in one region. [55] Parties were not allowed to form along tribal lines. Some of the new parties that have been formed include former Abacha supporters and associates, such as the All People's Party. [56]

5.38. In June 1998 Abubakar released the trade union leaders imprisoned by Abacha. In August 1998 he repealed decrees which had prevented Trade Unions from striking or organising on a national level which had been passed in 1994. The new decree signed by Abubakar also gave a legal backing to the reconstitution of the Academic Staff Union of Universities, which had been banned in 1996. The government also abrogated the Decrees which had been passed by Abacha, outlawing the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers and Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria. [61][62]

5.39. The Constitution provides for the right to assemble freely and associate with other persons, and to form or belong to any trade union or other association for the protection of their interests. However, several statutory restrictions on the right of association and on trade unions remained in effect despite repeals of parts of the military-era anti-labour decrees. Only a single central labour federation, the NLC, is permitted, and the Government recognises only 29 trade unions. Trade Unions must be registered formally by the Federal Government, and a minimum of 50 workers is required to form a Trade Union. Non-management members of senior staff are prevented from joining Trade Unions, and senior staff associations are denied a seat on the National Labour Advisory Council. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Committee of Experts has repeatedly cited several of these restrictions; however, the Government had not addressed these problems by the end of 2001. Workers, except members of the armed forces and employees designated as essential by the Government, may join Trade Unions. Essential workers include members of the armed forces and government employees in the police, customs, immigration, prisons, federal mint, central bank, and telecommunications sectors. Employees working in a designated export-processing zone may not join a union until 10 years after the start-up of the enterprise. [3]

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particularly are concerned about the increasing use of contract labour and the small number of indigenous workers in management positions. [3]

5.41. On 14 December 2000 Nigeria's National Association of Resident Doctors ended a four-month strike after officials pledged to meet its demands. The doctors started their action on 13 September to demand higher pay, welfare packages and better working conditions. The strike paralysed activities in several government-owned hospitals. [250] [251] In May and June 2001, both doctors and university professors went on strike over wages, working conditions, and government investment in infrastructure. Both strikes were resolved following lengthy negotiations with government ministries. During 2001, the Government committed itself to budgeting greater funds for development of the nation's health and education infrastructures. [3]

5.42. There are no laws prohibiting retribution against strikers and strike leaders, but strikers who believe that they are victims of unfair retribution may submit their cases to the Industrial Arbitration Panel (IAP) with prior approval of the Labour Ministry. The IAP's decisions are binding on all parties but may be appealed to the Nigerian Industrial Court (NIC). Union representatives have described the arbitration process as cumbersome and time consuming and as an ineffective deterrent to retribution against strikers. Lagos State government terminated the employment of an important local union leader in Lagos, ostensibly for non-performance, following an extended strike by state government workers in 2000. The NLC and labour unions are free to affiliate with international bodies; however, prior approval from the Minister is required. The NLC has affiliated with the Organisation of African Trade Unions. [3]

Freedom of Movement

5.43. The Constitution entitles citizens to move freely throughout the country, and to reside where they wish. In general, the Government respected this right, but the police occasionally restricted this right by setting up roadblocks and checkpoints where security and law enforcement officials routinely engaged in extortion, violence, and excessive use of force. One of the reasons for the use of roadblocks and checkpoints is to search for criminals and to prevent the transport of bodies from areas of ethnic or religious conflict to other parts of the country where their presence might instigate retaliatory violence. However, there were no reports of government officials restricting mass movements of individuals fleeing ethnic or religious unrest. [3]

5.44. The Constitution also prohibits the denial of exit or entry to any citizen, and the Government generally respected this law; however, the law also provides that women are required to obtain permission from a male family member before having an application for a passport processed. Some men take their wives' and children's passports and other identification documents with them while travelling abroad to prevent their family from leaving the country. [3]

V.B Human Rights - Specific Groups

Women

5.45. Freedom from discrimination based on gender is specifically provided for by the 1999 Constitution. Customary and religious discrimination against women persists in many communities and the police do not usually intervene in domestic disputes, except

where alleged physical abuse exceeds customary norms. This failure to provide adequate legal protection, was criticised in a report by World Organisation against Torture a Swiss based organisation. [182] Women are not barred from seeking redress through the courts, although the expense precludes many. There are no legal impediments relating to either female employment or political participation, although women frequently have to encounter prejudice in male dominated fields such as law and politics. While some women have made considerable individual progress, both in the academic and business world, women remain underprivileged. Although women are not barred legally from owning land, under some customary land tenure systems only men can own land and women can gain access to land only through marriage or family. In addition many customary practices do not recognise a woman's right to inherit her husband's property, and many widows are rendered destitute when their in-laws take virtually all of the deceased husband's property. Widows are subjected to unfavourable conditions as a result of discriminatory traditional customs and economic deprivation. "Confinement" is the most common rite of deprivation to which widows are subjected, this practice occurs predominately in eastern Nigeria. [3]

5.46. Women are underrepresented in government and politics, although there were no legal impediments to political participation or voting by women. Men continued to dominate the political arena. NGO's continued to protest about the underrepresentation of women in the political process, and women were underrepresented in the civilian government. In President Obasanjo's first cabinet, only 6 women were appointed as ministers out of a total of 56 positions. There were 3 women among the Senate's 109 members, and only 12 women were elected to the 360 member House of Representatives. Women's rights groups pushed local, state, and the Federal Government (and local levels as well) to adopt a 30% affirmative action program; however, these efforts were unsuccessful. [3]

5.47. Reports of abuse are common, especially those of wife beating. Police normally do not intervene in domestic disputes, which seldom are discussed publicly. The Penal Code permits husbands to use physical means to chastise their wives as long as it does not result in "grievous harm," which is defined as loss of sight, hearing, power of speech, facial disfigurement, or other life threatening injuries. A Women's rights group has estimated that spousal abuse occurs in 20% of relationships. In more traditional areas of the country, courts and police are reluctant to intervene to protect women who accuse their husbands formally if the level of alleged abuse does not exceed customary norms in the areas. Rape and sexual harassment continue to be problems. Prostitution is rampant, particularly in urban areas. A number of states, including most northern states that have begun the enforcement of Shari'a law, have begun to enforce existing laws or to introduce new laws to combat prostitution. Southern states, like Edo, also are criminalising prostitution and raising the legal age for marriage from 16 to 18. There is an active market for trafficking in women to Europe, and elsewhere. In some parts of the country women continue to be harassed for social and religious reasons. Purdah, the Islamic practice of keeping girls and women in seclusion from men outside the family, continued in parts of the far north. [3]

5.48. A growing problem is the cross border trafficking of Nigerian women for the purpose of forced prostitution in Europe. Mrs Titi Abubakar, wife of the Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, has set up the Women-trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF). This organisation intends to combat this trade and help rehabilitate victims of this traffic who have been deported back to Nigeria, by providing vocational training, and financial assistance to set up businesses at the end of this training. The Nigerian authorities are aware of this exploitation and are attempting to stop this trade; they are also seeking international assistance to address this problem.

[243] Human Rights Watch reported that according to women's rights organisations, hundreds of women and young girls migrated to Europe in response to job offers as domestic workers or waitresses. Upon arrival, many were forced into prostitution in order to pay off debts. In addition, there is evidence that Nigerian crime syndicates may use debts, threats of beatings and rape, physical injury to the victim's family, arrest, and deportation to persuade those forced into sex work from attempting to escape. While the government deplores this trade, and is looking at ways to prevent it, the police reported that the women's families often condoned their entry into the trade. The Nigerian police attempts to stem the trafficking of persons include extended jail sentences and public humiliation; however, such actions focused primarily on victims, and traffickers have not been punished. Awareness campaigns, often conducted by NGO's and others, have only recently begun to generate widespread attention. [3] President Obasanjo has set up a committee to address this problem, to receive those who are victims of this abuse, and provide rehabilitation and assistance. The Nigerian authorities are taking this abuse seriously, and are attempting to arrest those who organise and profit from it. [157][158]

5.49. There are no legal provisions barring women from testifying in a civil court of law. However the testimony of women is given less weight in a Muslim Shari'a court, and this may have implications in states where a Shari'a legal code has been introduced. However, as this code is still being introduced, its long term effects remain to be seen. [3]

5.50. In July 2000, it was reported that the United Nation Children's Fund (UNICEF) representative for Nigeria had praised Nigeria's efforts to improve the lot of women. She cited the appointment of women to ministerial posts and the encouragement of girls to enrol in school. The Legal Defence and Assistance Project, an NGO of lawyers and human rights workers also commended the Nigerian government's efforts to address women's rights. [242][244]

(i) Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

5.51. The government publicly opposes female genital mutilation (FGM). The Ministry of Health and non-governmental organisations has sponsored public awareness and education projects informing communities of the health hazards associated with FGM. FGM is a traditional practice within local communities, and consequently it has proved difficult for federal government to effectively confront. However, the cultural nature of the practice in Nigeria determines that the mothers of young daughters are able to veto treatment if they oppose it. Communities from all of Nigeria's major ethnic groups and religions practise FGM, although adherence is neither universal nor nationwide. A 1985-6 survey found that it was not practised at all in 6 of the 19 states surveyed. [3][76][242] The age at which women and girls are subjected to FGM varies from the first week after birth, until after a woman delivers her first child. The Ministry of Health, women's groups, and many NGO's sponsored public awareness projects to educate communities about the health hazards of FGM, and the media has repeatedly criticised its practice. [3]

5.52 The Nigerian Government does not approve of FGM, but there are no federal laws banning it, and the authorities have taken no legal action to curb it. As this is viewed by some communities as a long-standing tradition, the government may have difficulty in discouraging FGM, while being seen to respect the traditions of the groups involved. Anti-FGM groups, because of the inability to take action at the federal level, are attempting to challenge FGM at the state and local government area (LGA) level. Edo State banned FGM in October 2000. Ogun, Cross River, Osun, Rivers, and Bayelsa states also banned FGM. However, the punishments imposed are minimal; in Edo State the punishment is a 1,000 Naira fine and 6 months imprisonment. Once a state

5.53. The Women's Centre for Peace and Development (WOPED) estimated that at least 50% of women are mutilated. Studies conducted by the United Nations and the World Health Organisation estimated the FGM rate at approximately 60% among the nation's female population. However, according to local experts, the actual prevalence may be as high as 100% in some ethnic conclaves in the south. While practised in all parts of the country, FGM is more predominant in southern and eastern areas. Women from northern states are less likely to be mutilated; however, those affected are more likely to undergo the severe type of FGM known as infibulation. WOPED believes that the practice is perpetuated because of a cultural belief that uncircumcised women are promiscuous, unclean, unsuitable for marriage, physically undesirable, or potential health risks to themselves and their children, especially during childbirth. The National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives, the Nigerian Women's Association, and the Nigerian Medical Association worked to eradicate the practice and to train health care workers on the medical effects of FGM; however, contact with health care workers remains limited. Nevertheless, most observers agree that the number of women and girls who are subjected to FGM is declining. [3]

5.54. While the Nigerian Government has increased spending on children's health in recent years, it seldom enforced even the inadequate laws designed to protect the rights of children. Cases of child abuse, abandoned infants, child prostitution, and physically harmful child labour practices remained common throughout the country. The Government only occasionally criticised child abuse and neglect, and it made little effort to stop customary practices harmful to children. There were credible reports that poor families sell their daughters into marriage as a means of supplementing their income. Young girls often are forced into marriage as soon as they reach puberty, regardless of age, in order to prevent the "indecent" associated with premarital sex. [3]

5.56. Trafficking in Nigerian children remains a serious problem, both within Nigeria, and outside its borders. The economic reasons that underlie child trafficking may be reflected in the fact that families who employ them also pay their school fees. Child traffickers also take advantage of a cultural tradition of "fostering" under which it is culturally accepted to send one's child to live and work with a family in an urban centre

for educational and employment purposes. There are also reports of poor families selling their daughters into marriage, in order raise money. Often the children in these situations only work and do not get any formal education. They are forced to serve as domestics or to become street hawkers selling nuts, fruits, or other items. According to reports from the media and the ILO, there is also an active trade in children to work as labourers. Some are sent to Cameroon, Gabon, Benin, and Equatorial Guinea to work in agricultural enterprises, and others are forced into prostitution. Authorities also have identified a trade route for traffickers of children for labour through Katsina and Sokoto to the Middle East and East Africa. The eastern part of the country and some southern states such as Cross River and Akwa Ibom have been the focus of trafficking of children for labour and, in some cases, it is claimed for human sacrifice. The country remains a destination point for the trafficking of Togolese children to serve as domestic or agricultural workers. The Government is investigating allegations of the collusion of customs officials in trafficking. Some of the returnees have alleged that immigration officials actively connive with syndicates; however, there were no arrests of immigration officials for trafficking offences during 2001. The Assistant Inspector General of Police is investigating allegations of the collusion of customs officials in trafficking. [3]

5.57. There have also been reports of young Nigerian women been trafficked into Europe through the United Kingdom, mostly to Italy, to be exploited for the purposes of prostitution. This abuse is increasing in some European countries. Some of these girls, who have been rescued, complain that violence, intimidation, threats against them or their families, and the use of voodoo practises, have all being used to control them. The United Kingdom authorities are attempting to address this problem, by taking action against those involved in this trade. [155][156]

5.58. The Nigerian authorities have taken action when suspected cases of child trafficking have occurred. President Obasanjo has recently set up two commissions to investigate these crimes. Their remit is to look into both the trafficking of women and that of children, and will examine issues related to repatriation and rehabilitation. [157][158]

Ethnic Groups

5.59. There are over 250 ethnic groups with different languages and dialects in Nigeria, which accounts for her cultural diversity. In descending order the Muslim Hausa-Fulani centred on the north, the Yoruba centred on the south-west, and the predominately Christian Ibo (or Igbo) centred on the south-east are the largest ethnic groups. Yet no single tribe encompasses a majority of the population. There is no federal policy of discrimination against any of Nigeria's ethnic groups and legislation is designed not to favour one group over another. This is largely respected provided that a group does not pursue secessionist demands. [1][3]

5.60. An alleged dominance in the military and government is occasionally levelled at Hausa-Fulanis, with the converse claim that other ethnic groups are discriminated against. Ibos formed the Biafran rebels during the 1967 to 1970 civil war but have since regained prominence in the professions and commerce, and became government ministers, without encountering government repression. [1][3] In the riots following the death of Moshood Abiola in July 1998 there was an indication that some of the violence took on an ethnic dimension. Abiola's tribe, the Yoruba majority based in south-west Nigeria, attacked the Hausas from the north who have been politically dominant in the past, through their control of the military. [24][25] [26][27][28]

5.61. Violent clashes between the Hausa and Yoruba tribes occurred in Shagamu, A

Yoruba dominated town, on 17 July 1999; it is reported that at least sixty people have been killed. This violence followed the death of a Hausa woman, who was killed when she was found watching a Yoruba religious ceremony, which was forbidden to outsiders. The Nigerian authorities deployed police reinforcements in the towns. [164][165] This violence spread when Hausas fled to Kano, and the local population attacked Yorubas resident there. The violence was brought under control after a few days. [166][167][168] [169][170]

5.62. Ethnic violence recently occurred in Nigeria's central region. Fighting broke out in June 2001 between Tivs and their mainly Hausa-speaking neighbours in Nasarawa State. This violence resulted in at least 100 deaths, according to the police, but more than 200, according to other sources, and the displacement of more than 50,000 people. The violence was caused by the killing of Musa Ibrahim, the traditional ruler of the Azara people, on 12 June 2001, together with four members of his entourage. The gunmen were not identified but Tivs were suspect, with whom there was a long-standing land dispute, and the Azaras launched reprisal attacks. This led to intense inter-ethnic fighting in several towns and settlements across the state. [116][117]

5.63. The Tiv, who are a minority in Nasarawa, fled in large numbers to neighbouring Benue State where they form the majority. Local newspapers citing Red Cross sources said more than 40,000 displaced Tivs were camped in and around the Benue capital, Makurdi. Many others sought refuge further north in Plateau State. The fighting quickly spread from Nasarawa to nearby Taraba State, where the Tiv, once again in the minority, were attacked around the town of Wukari by the Fulani and the Kutebs, with whom they had also had violent clashes in recent years. The Nigerian police acted quickly to contain this violence, and have been even handed in their approach. However, those who were displaced have face healthcare and supply problems. [116][118]

5.64. Land and access to it has played a significant part in many of these ethnic conflicts. This recent violence may also have a longer-term consequence, in that the states affected are major agricultural areas, and this violence was during the peak harvest season. This may lead to an increase in food prices in the whole of Nigeria. [117]

5.65. In early September 2001 there were serious clashes in the central Nigerian City of Jos between Christians and Muslims. There are reports that 50 people were killed and that thousands fled the city. The unrest was reported to have been triggered by an argument outside a mosque following Friday prayers, and had its roots in interethnic tensions, that were heightened by the recent appointment of a Muslim Hausa to head a state poverty reduction programme. Churches and a mosque were destroyed as Christian vigilantes took to the streets. They also set up roadblocks around the city, stopping cars and searching them for Muslims. The conflict was mostly between the Christian Berom tribe and Muslim Hausa Fulanis whom they regarded as "settlers" on "their land". Clashes spread to Taraba State, about 300 km south of Jos. There was also violence in Kano, and Churches were attacked. [119] There was further violence in Jos in September. [116][119]

5.66. On 12 October 2001, 600 to 1,000 Muslims peacefully demonstrated in Kano against American and allied air strikes in Afghanistan. Several hours after the conclusion of this demonstration, rioting broke out in the largest marketplace in the city. While sparked initially by street gangs, the violence later took on religious and ethnic overtones. A number of churches and three mosques were reportedly set on fire during the fighting. The following morning, a mob of predominantly Hausa youths attacked

shopkeepers and looted shops in the city's major market. During the riots, 100 persons were killed. The army was called out to restore order. Some citizens alleged that the army and police used excessive and lethal force, and that this resulted in several deaths. In November 2001 police reportedly arrested and charged more than 200 persons in connection with the violence; according to the head of the police in Kano State, 150 persons were taken to court. After order was restored, Governor Kwankwaso held a series of meetings with local ethnic and religious leaders to stem further outbreaks and to rebuild trust between the communities. [3]

5.67. A longstanding conflict over land rights and status continued for several months in 2001 among members of the Tiv, Kwalla, Jukun, and Azara ethnic groups; each of these groups resides at or near the convergence of Nasarawa, Benue, and Taraba States. The Tiv, who are thought to have originated in the East African highlands, migrated to central Nigeria hundreds of years ago and are regarded as interlopers by the "indigenous" ethnic groups; however, in parts of Benue State the Tiv predominate. In July 2001 members of the Jukun ethnic group attacked the Tiv in Taraba State. Reportedly 25 persons were killed, and 25,000 Tiv fled Taraba for camps in Benue and Nasarawa. In September 2001 tensions rose in Makurdi, Benue State, over the influx of Tiv and nearly resulted in another ethnic conflict. In November 2001 members of an ethnic Tiv militia reportedly attacked ethnic Jukun neighbours in Taraba State; there were reports that dozens of persons were killed and thousands fled their homes. [3]

5.68. At least 23,000 Fulani herders from Nigeria's eastern Taraba State fled to Cameroon after clashes with farming communities at the beginning of 2002. The Miyetti Alla Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) claimed that 23,647 nomads had fled, and blamed the local authorities for not acting to protect them. Officials of the Sarduana local government, the council in the area of Taraba where the violence occurred, disputes the claims of MACBAN and accuse the Fulanis of inviting "mercenaries" from neighbouring countries who launched attacks on farming communities. The local government also accuses the herders of attempting to drive other groups off the land, and monopolise it. Clashes between pastoral and farming communities revolving around disputes over grazing land have become frequent in various parts of Nigeria's central and northern regions in recent years. Some analysts have blamed the clashes on the spread of desert conditions further north, which has been pushing herders south in search of fresh pasture, often putting them in conflict with farming communities. These clashes are part of a pattern of violent conflicts between so-called settlers and indigenous people, that have plagued the north and centre of Nigeria in recent years. [91]

5.69. The Nigerian authorities have generally acted rapidly to curb violence between ethnic groups, and in such conflicts have been generally even handed, trying to restore order and mediate between the groups in conflict.

Homosexuals

5.70. Male homosexual conduct is prohibited by Nigerian law. Homosexuals can be subject to prosecution. The penalty for convicted homosexual behaviour varies from 3 months to 3 years imprisonment or a fine and/or corporal punishment.

5.71. Homosexual males in Nigeria are likely to face discrimination and occasional violence if they are overt about their sexual orientation, but not on an organised or systematic scale. Society is not openly hostile but homosexuals can be subject to ridicule. There are some areas in Nigeria where it is possible to live openly as a homosexual - such as in a large city like Lagos. There have been instances of

homosexuals being subjected to violence, but they usually keep themselves to themselves and are usually left alone. [109]

5.72. In February 2002, the Shari'a code in Gusau, Zamfara State, was used to sentence a man to one hundred strokes of the cane and one year imprisonment for sodomy. The Shari'a code, as applied in some Nigerian states, has specifically proscribed homosexuality, both male and female. It is possible that these laws will be strictly applied, as other laws, governing personal conduct, are being enforced in states with a Shari'a code. [153][154]

V.C Human Rights - Other Issues

5.73. Under former President General Abubakar most of the political prisoners who were detained by General Abacha were released. These include: Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti, the leader of the Campaign for Democracy who was serving 15 years for involvement in the 1995 coup attempt, NADECO activists who were imprisoned under General Abacha Chief Olabiyi Durojaye, who had been in detention without charge since 1996, and Olu Falae. Political activity is now generally free. [19][70]

O'odua People's Congress (OPC)

5.74. However, the present Nigerian government has taken action against groups thought to be pursuing an agenda of independence for their particular ethnic group. The O'odua People's Congress (OPC) is a Yoruba group, led by Dr Frederick Fasheun. It was affiliated to JACON and widely believed to advocate an independent Yoruba State (although Fasheun has denied this).

5.75. In Lagos State, the OPC clashed repeatedly with the police during 2001, over their protection of Yoruba neighbourhoods, and other political issues. The OPC continued to function as a vigilante anti-crime force despite President Obasanjo's "shoot-on-sight" order issued against them in 1999. During 2001, there were fewer OPC vigilante killings than in previous years; however, on 16 August 2001, the OPC reportedly beheaded four suspected robbers and set their bodies on fire in Lagos State. The OPC also reportedly crucified a man in the Surelere district of Lagos. In 2000 the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights reported that 302 OPC members were arrested following clashes with the police in Lagos. Of those detainees, 95 were released in 2000. The remaining detainees were not able to obtain legal representation and either could not make bail or were not eligible for bail due to the charges brought against them. [3]

5.76. The OPC are believed to have triggered riots in Lagos port, in which a number of people were reported to have been killed. [107] On 9 September 1999 there was a serious riot at the port of Lagos, and it was reported that militants linked to the OPC were involved. The cause of this violence was an attempt by sacked workers to return to work, which was supported by the militants, but opposed by other workers. There was also an ethnic element to this violence as the rioters also sought to secure Yoruba domination over business conducted in the port. After several hours of fighting between the rival groups the police restored order, but it is reported that sixteen people were killed. [208]

5.77. In November 1999 in and around Lagos there were clashes between the OPC and Hausas over market trading, which resulted in the deaths of at least 27 people, and a

vigorous police response. On 25 November 1999 President Obasanjo ordered that police shoot OPC members on sight if they did not surrender, as a result the police adopted a confrontational line with the OPC. There were also clashes between OPC and Ijaws in Lagos at around the same time. [209][210]

5.78. The OPC has split into two factions, one under the leadership of Dr Frederick Fasheun and the other under the leadership Mr Ganiyu Adams, and these factions clashed in January 2000, resulting in at least 6 deaths. In another incident in January 2000 a senior police officer in Lagos was kidnapped and killed by OPC members attempting to free a member accused of robbery. This incident resulted in a crackdown by the police in which 100 people were killed, and over 200 OPC members were detained on criminal charges. [211][212][213][214][215][216]

5.79. The Adams faction has been identified as being involved in most of this criminal activity, and has also acted as a vigilante organisation in Lagos. On 13 January 2000 President Obasanjo complained in a letter about the Governor of Lagos Bola Tinubu's handling of these incidents. His comments were met with a robust defence of his administration from the Governor. The Nigerian government has set up an ad hoc Senate committee to investigate both factions of the OPC, and present proposals as to how this organisation should be dealt with in the future. [211][212][213][214][215][216]

5.80. In August 2000, after a number of violent clashes, including attacks on the police, the Nigerian police announced a crackdown on OPC members involved in these crimes. The attitude of the public, in the Lagos area, to the OPC is ambivalent, as they are seen as attempting to impose order in areas where the police have been unsuccessful, and some Yorubas sympathise with their aims, if not their methods. The Nigerian police have targeted members of the OPC involved in violence, and ordinary members generally appear to be able to express their views without harassment. [230][231][232]

5.81. The OPC appears to be generally able to pursue its political objective without interference from the authorities. However, if any its members are involved in violence, the authorities have acted to curb this violence, and bring those suspected of responsibility to trial. An example of the OPC freedom to operate is that Dr Fasheun is taking action against the Nigerian authorities over President Obasanjo's actions regarding the OPC, especially his directive that its members should be shot on sight. However, OPC members have been detained, where at all possible, and only then when suspected of committing a crime. [257][258]

5.82. The OPC continues to be involved in clashes with the police, and contributes to the difficulties in law enforcement in and around Lagos. In August 2001, Ganiyu Adams was arrested, and has denied 23 charges against him, which included murder, robbery and illegal possession of arms. The case has since been adjourned. He had been on the run for 20 months, after police declared him wanted in November 1999, following the clashes, allegedly spearheaded by his group, between Yorubas and Hausas in Lagos. During this period he was able to hold rallies in several southwestern towns in a show of defiance and impunity. His faction of the OPC has recently stated that it will halt all vigilante activities. [259][260][261] On 30 October 2001, Adams was released on bail. [3]

5.83. Following the fire and explosion in Lagos on 27 January 2002 there was wide spread rioting in the city. There have been accusations that elements of the OPC were involved in the unrest. Shops were looted, people robbed and Hausas were attacked; thousands seeking safety in military barracks in the city. There were many injured, and a

for their alleged roles in the killings of the four Ogoni chiefs. On 31 October 1995, the Tribunal announced guilty verdicts and death sentences for Saro-Wiwa and eight other activists. The PRC confirmed this decision on 8 November 1995 and all nine were executed on 10 November 1995. [1][72][73]

5.89. MOSOP and NYCOP activists were subjected to harassment and persecution by the Nigerian authorities during the Abacha regime. After Abubakar became head of state in June 1998 the situation in Ogoniland improved. In early September 1998, 20 Ogoni political prisoners who had been in detention since 1994 for the murder of 4 Ogoni chiefs (the same charges as the late Ken Saro-Wiwa) were released after a High Court judge in Port Harcourt dropped all the charges. Their release was unconditional. [74]

5.90. General Abubakar withdrew the Internal Security Task Force from Ogoniland in the Rivers State of the Niger Delta. Free movement is now possible after years of restriction on travel in the area. Many Ogoni exiles have been able to return, and MOSOP have been able to hold rallies once again. The oil company, Shell, was driven from Ogoniland in 1993 after MOSOP activists sabotaged installations demanding compensation for pollution. MOSOP says Shell must meet their demands before they will permit its return. Abubakar promised reform of a commission which was set up to develop oil-producing areas but which local people believe has been ineffectual. [75]

5.91. President Obasanjo has attempted to deal with some of the underlying problems in Niger Delta region, and on 12 July 1999 he presented a Bill to the National Assembly proposing to set up a development fund for the region together with a Commission to oversee development. [172] The oil companies operating in the region would contribute to this fund. This was rejected by MOSOP on 4 August 1999, after a meeting at Bori in Ogoniland. The proposals, in their opinion, would make the situation worse, and they believe that the proposed Commission would be a tool of the central government and not act in the interest of local people. [176] On 14 August 1999 it was reported that Ogoni leaders and MOSOP had attended a meeting with Royal Dutch Shell (RDS), the company that was forced out of the Ogoni region in 1993. This meeting was seen as a sign that both the Ogonis and RDS wished to reach an accommodation regarding the future development of the region. RDS has said that it will only return to the region with local approval, and in interim has offered to sponsor development projects. [174]

5.92. In April 2000 there were violent confrontations in K-Dere between rival factions of MOSOP, over a road building project in that village. Amnesty International has accused the police of using this violence as a means of harassing and detaining Ogoni activists. A house belonging to Ledum Mitee, the president of one of MOSOP's factions, was destroyed. He was also detained in connection with this violence and bailed, but there are charges still outstanding against him. [233][234][235][236] In May Nwibari Obani claimed leadership of a rival faction of MOSOP. Ledum Mitee has challenged the legitimacy of Obani's election. [237] In July MOSOP reiterated its opposition to RDS operating in the region, and accused it of attempting to re-start operations clandestinely, without addressing the concerns of the local people or paying compensation. [238]

5.93. In February 2001, following the Oputa Panel hearings in Port Harcourt, the relatives of the 4 chiefs killed in 1994 signed an agreement with MOSOP, pledging themselves to the organisation. During the hearings, MOSOP and Shell also agreed to hold further talks. As at April 2001 these had not yet started. [265]

The Niger Delta

5.94. The situation in the Niger Delta during the latter part of 1998 and early 1999, become increasingly volatile. Disaffected youths were involved in taking oil workers hostage and sabotaging pipelines, they have accused the oil companies of indifference to their economic plight and demanding compensation from the oil companies for the environmental impact of their operations. [86] Many Ijaw youths have been arrested for involvement in criminal activity, although concern has been expressed by some Ijaw groups that innocent Ijaws have also been arrested. [108] During 1999 the Security Forces operating in the Delta were again accused of using excessive, and sometime lethal force on a number of occasions, which has been a long-standing problem in the area. [3][104]

5.95. President Obasanjo has attempted to address the situation in the Niger Delta. On 25 June 1999 he negotiated a cessation of hostilities between the Itsekiris, Ijaw and Urhobos, and has proposed legislation to assist in the regions. [175] However, the Ijaw, Urhobo, Isoko and Ndokwa communities rejected this initiative, and the Ila community requested amendments. [176][177] There have also been ethnic clashes in the region between Ila and Ijaw communities in Ondo State. [178][179] The National Assembly has now passed the Niger Delta Development Commission Bill. [137][172][173]

5.96. In early November 1999 there were clashes between Ijaws of the Egbesu cult and the OPC in Ajegunle district of Lagos. The OPC were acting in support of the Ilaes, a Yoruba sub-group tribe in the Delta State, who have been involved in a violent conflict with the Ijaw for the past two years. Fifteen people were reported to have been killed in this violence and over fifty-six arrested. [217] Twelve policemen were reported to have been killed by Ijaw youths in retaliation for the large number of Ijaws arrested by the police during the Lagos riots. [218] On 20 November 1999 in response to this incident, the Nigerian army was ordered by the civilian governor to surround the town of Odi in Bayelsa State. This was the town in which the policemen were killed, and where it was believed that the Ijaws responsible were hiding. The military came under fire and over-reacted, severely damaging the town. It is not known how many people were killed, but the local residents claim that over 500 died. Over 2000 people were detained, but it is not known if those responsible for the deaths of the police officer were among those detained or killed. An inconclusive investigation was launched into this incident. President Obasanjo later apologised for the excessive force used by the military, but no action has yet to be taken against any of the soldiers involved. [3][219][220] President Obasanjo visited Odi in March 2001, but did not offer apologies or assistance. [266]

5.97. On 1 February 2000 a peace agreement was reached between the Ijaw and Itsekiri. The Delta State Government was commended for its part in brokering this peace agreement, and it is hoped that it may result in a general peace in the Warri region. [221]

5.98. Disruption of oil production and kidnapping of employees of oil companies has continued in the region; most of those kidnapped are released unharmed after a short period of time. Oil pipelines have also been vandalised, either by local people or by criminals intent on stealing oil. These incidents have resulted in a number of recent explosions and fires, which have killed or injured many local people. The Nigerian government is attempting to address this problem and has expressed its intentions to deploy security forces to protect pipelines. [3][180][181][239][240]

5.99. In September 2000 MOSOP called on the Nigerian government to drop charges against those accused of damaging pipelines, stating that lack of pipeline maintenance,

rather than organised criminal activity was the cause of this problem. MOSOP stated that the oil companies' failure to abide by international standards had resulted in pipeline leakage, and that they were responsible for this problem through their activities. [241]

The Ogboni

5.100. There are many cults in Nigeria. Probably the best known is the Ogboni. The Ogboni are a secret society of the Yoruba tribe, and it is therefore hard to obtain reliable information about them. [110][111] As a secret society it has been banned in Nigeria, and its power curtailed. However this ban is hard to enforce, and it is still active and alleged to be involved in satanic practices. [111][112]

5.101. The title Ogboni is only conferred on the elders, i.e. senior members of the society. These are usually men but women, usually six in number, were traditionally included to represent the interests of women in the community. Membership of the society is usually, but not always, passed through patrilineal descent. [110][111]

5.102. The Ogboni traditionally played a significant role in Yoruba religion and society, and were involved in the installation of new kings. Historically an Ogboni could be said to have combined the powers of a local magistrate, with those of a member of the local government and a religious leader. [110][111]

5.103. The Ogboni engaged in animal sacrifice. There is no firm evidence to suggest that they engaged in human sacrifice. However, in the event that a king abused his power they could compel him to commit suicide. They could also impose sanctions against other members of the community if they believed that these were justified. The Ogboni are reputed to threaten its members with death should they break their oath of secrecy regarding its rituals and beliefs. It is still regarded as being a powerful organisation throughout Nigeria. [110][111][112]

5.104. It is believed that the Ogboni is a purely Yoruba cult, but there are a number of Yoruba sub tribes who also may be involved. [110]

The Reformed Ogboni Fraternity (ROF)

5.105. This was founded in 1914, and is not a religious organisation, although the members believe in God. The ROF is not a secret organisation, it is not banned, and is open to men and women regardless of race, colour, creed, religion, or political opinion.

5.106. The ROF is an indigenous African organisation that promotes African culture, advocates charitable and good works, believes in the brotherhood of man and self-improvement. It disassociates itself from cults, specifically the Ogboni, and does not participate in politics. However, it should be noted that members of the ROF can also be Ogboni, due to their position within Yoruba society, as was the case with the late leader Sir Adetokunbo Ademola, which may imply that the reputation of the Ogboni as a sinister cult has been exaggerated. [113]

Monitoring

5.107. International human rights organisations are active in Nigeria and regularly reported allegations of human rights abuses. Former President General Abubakar attempted to improve relations with the international community while Head of State, and appeared to be more receptive to criticisms about human rights issues than his

predecessor. He addressed the United Nations General Assembly, and allowed a UN Special Rapporteur to visit Nigeria in November 1998. [77] There are no reports of the present government obstructing or preventing the activities of international human rights organisations in Nigeria.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

5.108. More than 280,000 Nigerians have at one time or another been displaced by conflicts or natural disasters over the past two years, according to figures from humanitarian organisations and the media. Religious and ethnic clashes were the main cause of internal displacement. There are few restrictions on internal movement within Nigeria, and many either return to their homes after a short period, or are re-settled. [183][184] During 2001, there were reports of at least 100,000 persons displaced in the country's central region as a result of communal clashes and army attacks against several communities. Many persons fleeing ethno-religious violence first found refuge in military barracks, police compounds, and other public places; some persons still were living in such government buildings at end of 2001. [3]

5.109. However, problems encountered by those displaced include threats to their health, shelter and security. Displacement also creates a need for food aid. Camps are often overcrowded, and as they are in school buildings or open spaces, they are also unsuitable. The lack of access to potable water expose those displaced to an increased risk to health, with diseases such as diarrhoea, cholera and typhoid fever being common. Camps are sometimes poorly secured from attacks by wild animals, bandits or rival groups. While government, UN and other international organisations, NGOs and embassies often provide assistance, this is seldom sufficient to deal with the numbers who are displaced. [183][184]

CHRONOLOGY

DECEMBER 1991 - DECEMBER 1996

JANUARY 1997 - DECEMBER 1998

JANUARY 1999 - FEBRUARY 2002

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

DECEMBER 1991- The seat of government moved from Lagos to Abuja. On 14 December National elections for governors and state assembly representatives, in which the SDP won 14 and NRC 16 governorships.

Violence erupted in Taraba following a long-standing land dispute between 2 ethnic groups (Tiv and Jukun). The conflict continued in subsequent months, by March 1992 5000 people were reported to have been killed.

MARCH 1992 - Legislation was introduced to allow the NEC to disqualify candidates

deemed unfit to hold office. 11 civilians released following almost 2 years in detention in connection with 1990 coup attempt - 9 of these are relatives of suspects.

On 20 March the edition of the Nigerian Tribune is arrested and charged with "incitement, defamation and publication of false news" after publishing an article critical of police.

MAY - Rioting erupted in protest at increases in transport fares, culminating in several demonstrations calling for the government's resignation. These were violently suppressed by the security forces, several people were reported killed in the following weeks.

Further rioting broke out in Lagos after CD Chairman Ransome-Kuti was arrested on 19 May for accusing the government of provoking violence to delay the transition to civilian rule. 2 other CD members are arrested on same day and on 29 May Gani Fawehinmi is also arrested.

JUNE - A number of Human Rights activists, including Ransome-Kuti, were released on bail, pending trial later that year on charges of conspiring to incite the riots in May. The SDP and NRC hold primaries for the elections to the House of Representatives and Senate. The NEC disqualifies more than 30 candidates from both parties.

JULY - On 1 July the government is ordered to pay Ransome Kuti 50,000 Naira in damages for unlawful arrest. The government ignores an order by the Ikeja High Court to produce 50 other detainees held since the May riots.

National Assembly elections took place on 4 July. The SDP secured a majority of 52 seats in the senate and 314 seats in the house of representatives. Inauguration, scheduled for 27 July, was postponed to 2 January 1993. On 22 July the government bans the striking Academic Staff Union of Universities.

AUGUST - SDP & NRC presidential candidature elections commenced on 1 August, but were suspended owing to widespread electoral malpractice. Jennifer Madike a prominent detainee held under Decree 2 was released

SEPTEMBER - Further polls to select presidential candidates took place. 4 leading candidates emerged: Gen Shehu Musa Yar'Adua and Chief Olu Falae (SDP), and Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi and Malam Adamu Ciroma (NRC).

OCTOBER - In October the government cancelled all stages of the presidential primary exercise, pending an NEC investigation into alleged incidents of electoral malpractice. Local, State and National committees of both the NRC and SDP were dissolved and replaced by caretaker committees.

The government announced that the SDP and NRC would be permitted to proceed with internal structuring after they had both been audited following alleged bribery in the September polls.

DECEMBER - Protests in Kano against the postponement of return to civilian rule that leads to arrests.

JANUARY 1993 - On 2 January the governing Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) was replaced by the National Defence and Security Council (NDSC).

On 4 January the Civilian Transitional Council replaces the Council of Ministers and is chaired by Ernest Shonekan.

MARCH - On 1 March SSS members arrest the editor of the Reporter newspaper. National party congresses took place from 27-29 March. Those selected to contest the presidential election were, for the NRC, Alhaji Bashir Othman Tofa, and for the SDP, Chief Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola.

APRIL - Abiola chose Baba Gana Kingibe as his vice-presidential candidate and Tofa selected Dr Sylvester Ugoh. Abiola and Tofa began campaigning throughout Nigeria.

MAY - On 1 May the ban placed on National Association of Nigerian Students in 1987 is lifted. The Treason and Treasonable Offenses Decree issued on 2 May which allowed the death penalty for anyone who "disrupts the general fabric of the country" was suspended on 21 May but not repealed.

JUNE - The leaders of the Association for a Better Nigeria (ABN) secured an interim injunction prohibiting the presidential election from taking place, pending the results of its appeal for the extension of military rule until 1997. The NEC declared the injunction invalid and the election went ahead although without the participation of MOSOP.

After results for 14 of the 30 states were released the NEC announced that the remaining results would not be released until further notice, following a further injunction secured by the ABN that prohibited the declaration of the results. Several other applications were presented in a number of courts, in an attempt to delay or suspend the electoral process.

The CD released the election results that indicated that Abiola had won the majority of votes in 19 states and Tofa in 11 states. These results were not challenged by Tofa.

On 23 June the NDSC declared the results of the election to be invalid, halted all court proceedings pertaining to the election, suspended the NEC, and repealed all decrees relating to the transition to civilian rule.

Babangida said that he was still committed to the transition on 27 August. In order to meet this schedule a reconstituted NEC was to supervise the election of new SDP and NRC presidential candidates.

JULY - A demonstration organised by the CD led to rioting, prompted by resentment at political developments and long-standing economic hardship. Security forces violently suppressed protests, however, sporadic unrest was reported throughout the country.

The SDP said that it would boycott any electoral process that superseded its 12 June victory.

Abiola stated his intention to form a parallel government, but fled abroad after alleged death threats.

On 13 July Ken Saro Wiwa and 2 others are charged in connection with the Ogoni boycott and the election but all are released later in the month.

On 29 July Nigeria signs the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

AUGUST - On 12 August the ban on ASUU is lifted however the following day a professor at Obafemi Awolowo University is arrested in connection with his pro democracy activities.

Several prominent CD members were arrested to prevent further CD protests, additional restrictions were imposed on the press. Numerous strikes and demonstrations organised by CD, the Nigerian Labour Congress and striking oil workers unions. At the end of August the CD staged a 3 day strike. The Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas workers (NUPENG) also announced industrial action in support of a civilian administration headed by Abiola.

Babangida announced his resignation on 26 August.

On 27 August an interim Federal Executive Council (FEC), headed by Ernest Shonekan, was installed. Following negotiations between the FEC and the NLC several journalists and prominent members of CD, including Ransome-Kuti were released.

SEPTEMBER - Abiola returned to Lagos. A pro-Abiola CD demonstration in Lagos was violently dispersed by security forces some prominent CD members, including Ransome-Kuti, were arrested.

OCTOBER - Members of a previously unknown organisation, Movement for the Advancement of Democracy (MAD) hijacked a Nigerian aircraft whose passengers included senior officials, MAD issued demands including the resignation of the ING in favour of Abiola. Abiola personally appealed for them to surrender, but they were overpowered by security forces. Other MAD members were later arrested in Lagos.

NOVEMBER - State subsidies on petroleum were withdrawn, prices rose dramatically, leading to widespread anti-government demonstrations.

On 15 December a general strike was called by the NLC (National Labour Congress) and the Democratic Movement starts.

On 17 November Shonekan resigned and transferred power to Abacha. He dissolved all organs of state and bodies established under the transition process, replaced state governors with military administrators, prohibited political activity and announced the formation of a Provisional Ruling Council (PRC). Restrictions placed on the media were suspended and July's publishing ban was revoked.

On 18 November Abacha announces that a constitutional conference will be held to decide the future from of Nigerian government a number of the delegates are military appointees.

On 21 November legislation to restore the 1979 constitution was introduced.

DECEMBER - On 16 December clashes between Ogoni's and Okrika's. The government issues 10 New decrees. There are reports of a government sanctioned attack on the Ogoni's in Rivers State leading to a high number of deaths.

FEBRUARY 1994 - On 10 February clashes between Christian and Muslim students in Kano.

MARCH - 6 people including General Lekwot convicted following the ethnic riots in Kaduna (May 1992) are released from prison.

APRIL - The government announced a programme to establish a national constitutional conference (NCC) comprising of 273 elected delegates and 96 government nominated delegates.

MAY - On 22 May Ken Saro-Wiwa was arrested in connection with the deaths of 4 Ogoni electoral candidates. Shell suspends operations following mass destruction of its equipment.

The National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) was formed. It demanded that Abacha relinquish power by the end of the month and urged a boycott on the NCC. The boycott was widely observed in the south-west with low voter participation reported. NADECO is declared illegal on 31 May.

JUNE - Violent anti-government demonstrations were reported following the expiry of the deadline given by NADECO for the military administration to resign.

The CD led a campaign of civil disobedience. Ransome-Kuti was later charged with treason.

On 11 June a symbolic ceremony was held in which Abiola was publicly inaugurated as president and head of a parallel government. A warrant for his arrest was issued on charges of treason and his publishing company and home are sealed off. He was later arrested on 23 June. The editor of Punch magazine is arrested and later released.

On 27 June the NCC was installed in Abuja.

JULY - On 6 July Abiola is produced in court but later refused bail.

6 Senators charged with treason in June are released on bail however some are rearrested and other are put under surveillance.

AUGUST - Abiola is granted bail however refuses to accept the terms. His trial was adjourned after a defence appeal that the Abuja High Court had no jurisdiction over an offence allegedly committed in Lagos. The court decided that it had jurisdiction but the presiding judge withdrew from the trial.

Abacha announced legislation extending the period of detention without trial to 3 months and prohibited legal action challenging government decisions.

Bomb attack on Gani Fawehinmi's home one of 5 such attacks against the regime's opponents.

On 31 August close to 100 people are reported killed following a student demonstration in Edo.

SEPTEMBER - Detention of NUPENG's president Wariebi Kojo Agameme.

Abacha issues new decrees in an attempt to exempt his government from the rule of law. He fires all civilian members of the PRC and introduces a new all military council

with an increased membership.

OCTOBER - Under a proposed transitional time table, a new constitution was to be adopted by March 1995, the ban on political activity was to be rescinded and multi-party elections were to take place at local and national level in 1996, prior to the installation of a new government in January 1997. An increase in fuel prices sparks more riots.

NOVEMBER - The Federal Court of Appeal in Kaduna granted Abiola unconditional bail, however, the government refused to comply with the court order providing for Abiola's release, on the grounds that he was charged with a capital offence.

Amnesty claimed that the government was responsible for the imprisonment or execution of large numbers of opposition members, and particularly condemned Human Rights violations perpetrated against the Ogoni's. Wole Soyinka flees the country and Ransome Kuti is arrested again on 9 November.

The government issues a decree suspending the right of habeas corpus. Another decree prevents the courts from hearing any legal challenge to the practice of indefinitely detaining arrestees.

DECEMBER - On 6 December the constitutional conference recommends a return to civilian rule by 1 January 1996.

On 17 December NADECO's second chairman, Anthony Enahoro was released having been detained since 19 August.

Representatives from Amnesty International are prevented from meeting detainees, members of the Ogoni community and pro democracy activists.

JANUARY 1995 - On 7 January Muslim fundamentalists and students clash in Kano leading the authorities to ban student union activity on campus.

The trials of Ken Saro-Wiwa and 14 other Ogoni activists commenced. They were charged with complicity in the murder of 4 Ogoni traditional leaders.

NADECO's founding member Chief Cornelius O. Adebayo was released from detention having been detained since 19 August 1994.

On 12 January Femi Falana, Beko Ransome Kuti and Sylvester Odion Akhaine are arrested. Falana and Ransome Kuti are released on bail shortly afterwards however Odion Akhaine remained in detention.

Union leaders Frank Kokori, Waiebi Agamene and FA Addo remain in detention without charge.

FEBRUARY - On 6 February charges of murder and incitement were brought against Saro-Wiwa and four other Ogoni's.

MARCH - Some 150 military officials were arrested following confirmation by the government of reports, which they previously denied, of an attempted coup. The government's opponents claimed that the coup was fabricated with the aim of suppressing dissent within the armed forces. Maj-Gen Shehu Yar'Adua (a prospective presidential candidate in the 93 elections and vice-president from 1976-79) and

Olusegun Obasanjo were among the prominent critics of the government who were arrested.

On 10 March Bayo Onanuga editor in chief of a Lagos press agency is arrested and on 15 March another journalist Chris Anyanwu is also arrested. Both were released later in the month.

On 17 March the parallel trial started against ten other Ogoni at the same court that brought charges against Saro-Wiwa.

General Abacha forms a new enlarged FEC comprising 36 ministers (7 army officers).

MAY - Ken Saro-Wiwa's trial, which had been suspended while he received medical treatment, resumed. On 23 May Femi Falana was arrested thus preventing him from representing Ken Saro Wiwa at this trial. Joe Okei of CD arrested to join other CD activists Odion Akhaine and Shehu Sanni.

Ethnic and religious tensions between Hausas and Ibos mixed with economic hardship degenerated into rioting in Kano on 30 May 1995. The investigation panel established declared 17 people had died, and the state administrator announced several measures to forestall future violence including the creation of a civil disturbances tribunal to try the 54 arrested. Despite the deaths that resulted in Kano, the episode did not precipitate unrest elsewhere and violence was contained to that single day.

A bomb explosion in Ilorin is attributed by the government to anti government forces.

JUNE - A number of pro-democracy campaigners were arrested after a bomb attack at an official function in Kwara State killed 3 people.

40 people, including civilians, were arraigned before a special military tribunal in connection with the coup attempt of March. Chris Anyanwu is arrested again for publishing an article concerning the coup.

Further arrests of pro-democracy activists occurred as the government attempted to pre-empt protests on the anniversary of the annulled election. However, a 1 day strike, supported by CD, was widely observed.

On 27 June Abacha rescinded the ban on political activity and the NCC submitted its draft constitution.

Ken Saro Wiwa's defence team withdraw from the case as a protest.

JULY - On 13 July General Abacha approved the repeal of the publishing ban on The Guardian newspaper.

On 14 July it was announced that of the 51 defendants that had been produced before the Aziza Tribunal, established to hear in secret evidence concerning the alleged coup plot, 40 were convicted including Olusegun Obasanjo and Shehu Yar'Adua. The Tribunal also released without charge 8 people.

Hundreds of people were reported killed in Bauchi State in clashes between Christians and the predominant Muslims. 38 villages were destroyed, of which 31 were Christian. 1500 homes were wrecked and churches and Mosques were burnt. The dead included

17 school children "hacked to pieces" in their school and 36 people murdered inside a church.

AUGUST - The Aziza Tribunal was formally dissolved on 7 August. On 13 August one of the Ogoni detained since May dies in detention. The government creates a 39 man committee to review the draft constitution submitted on 27 June.

OCTOBER - On 1 October General Abacha announced a timetable for transition to civilian rule with fixed phases culminating in an envisaged handover to an elected president on 1 October 1998. He outlined key elements of the new constitution, which the PRC later announced will come into effect on the handover date. He also announced the lifting of the ban on the remaining 2 proscribed media groups and the establishment of a national human rights commission, by Decree No 22 of 1995.

On 6 October Chief Rewane an opposition politician was murdered at his home in Ikeja. 7 people are arrested in connection with this.

On 10 October it was officially confirmed that 43 soldiers and civilians were convicted by the Aziza Tribunal. Following a review by the PRC the 11 death sentences, including that on General Yar'Adua, were commuted to lengthy prison sentences. The remainder received sentences ranging from 15 years (including both Obasanjo and Ransome-Kuti) to retirement from the army.

On 20 October the government announces the creation of a human rights commission in Nigeria.

On 30 October five of the Ogoni's charged were sentenced to death and on 31 October another four were charged, among them Saro-Wiwa.

NOVEMBER - Ken Saro-Wiwa and 8 other Ogoni's were convicted to the death sentence by the Auta tribunal. All 9 were hanged at 11.30 a.m. at Port Harcourt Prison on 10 November.

On 12 November Nigeria is suspended from the Commonwealth and shortly following this EU foreign ministers adopt sanctions against Nigeria which involve an arms embargo and refusal to issue visas to members of the military junta and their families.

Reports suggest that 19 Ogoni activists have been accused in the May 1994 murders of 4 Ogoni chiefs.

DECEMBER - On 5 December thousands of students demonstrated against the execution of Ken Sao Wiwa and 8 others.

An "All Politicians' Summit" of more than 450 civilian politicians from all over Nigeria was held in Lagos in mid-December.

In Sokoto 20 people are killed and others injured and arrested in clashes between Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups.

All six committees to facilitate General Abacha's transition programme were appointed.

Opposition politician and Abiola follower Prince Ademola Adeniji-Adele released from detention having been detained since 19 August 1994.

Police ban a number of demonstrations in December and arrest several CD members.

On 28 December Abacha creates the National Reconciliation Committee to aid the transition to democracy.

JANUARY 1996 - MOSOP claimed that 60 Ogoni's attending mass celebrations on Ogoni day, 4 January, were either killed, shot, tortured, or arrested by the security forces. However it is widely reported that 22 Ogoni's charged with holding an unauthorised rally, by a magistrates court, were released on bail. Paul Adams, a British Financial Times journalist, was detained for a week before being released on bail on 11 January after receiving a MOSOP document during an investigative visit to Ogoniland.

On 17 January General Abacha's son was killed in a plane crash. A previously unknown group called the United Front for Nigeria's Liberation (UFNL) claimed responsibility, but a more likely explanation for the crash was contaminated fuel.

2 explosions on 18 and 19 January in Kaduna and Kano respectively.

On 29 January 1996 it was announced that the new Constitution would not be instituted until the eve of the handover to an elected civilian President.

On 30 January the leader of the National Conscience Party (NCP) Gani Fawehinmi was arrested, ostensibly to prevent him from addressing a public rally at the University of Lagos.

FEBRUARY - On 2 February the publisher of The Guardian Alex Ibru is injured in an armed attack, 9 people are arrested and a few days later a group named the Revolutionary Movement for Hausa-Fulani Interest claimed responsibility.

On 3 February several people were killed in clashes between Nigerian and Cameroonian troops in the disputed Bakassi Peninsula. Also a further bomb blast occurs at Zaria police station.

On 7 February the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) released guidelines for the local government elections scheduled for March.

On 12 February the Government proclaimed the formal repeal of the decree banning the formation of political parties.

During February 60 Sayawa Christians from the predominantly Muslim Bauchi State were accused of provoking the religious clashes which occurred in that State in July 1995.

MARCH - In Enugu State 13 people are killed and approximately 10000 displaced in a territorial dispute involving the Egbo, Ide and Iziogo communities.

CD offices raided and an official arrested.

From 16 to 23 March non-party local government elections took place across Nigeria. Official estimates claimed that 60% of those eligible voted. However, opposition politicians and pro-democracy activists asserted that the true figure was considerably lower than that.

APRIL - The government dethroned the traditional leader of Nigerian Muslims, The Sultan of Sokoto. Ibrahim Dasuki was investigated in connection with his business affairs and was replaced by Muhammed Maccido.

A serious ethnic clash between Fulani and Karimjo people erupted at Karim Lamido in Taraba State. Approximately 80 people were killed in the violence and 20 people were arrested as soldiers and police restored order. In April a UN fact-finding mission visited Nigeria. The UN team of 4 were invited by the Nigerians to investigate the execution of the Ogoni 9 in November 1995. While in Nigeria, the UN team spent 3 days visiting Rivers State, where they met and spoke openly with members of the Ogoni tribe. However, after the visit there were unconfirmed reports of reprisals against those who had spoken against the government. Whilst in Nigeria the team also visited 4 political detainees (although they had asked to see 15) and met with Kudirat Abiola, the senior wife of Chief MKO Abiola. However, NADECO officials who came to meet the team were denied access to them, and were removed to a police station by government officials.

Further clashes in the Bakassi Peninsula between Nigerian and Cameroonian troops were reported in April.

MAY - Kudirat Abiola was arrested with 2 others on 7 May. They were all 3 charged with "conspiracy and false publication". All pleaded not guilty and were released on bail. The trial was adjourned until 28 May.

Elections to the executive of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) took place between 29 & 31 May.

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) at a national level was banned in May 1996.

The Nigerian authorities undertook to make major judicial reforms following recommendations made by the UN fact-finding mission that visited Nigeria in April.

Further clashes in the Bakassi Peninsula between Nigerian and Cameroonian troops were reported in May. However, 20 detained Nigerians were released by Cameroon.

JUNE - On 4 June 1996 Kudirat Abiola was shot dead in her car. The Nigerian Government undertook to investigate the circumstances of her death promptly and to bring those responsible to justice. However, many suspect that the Nigerian authorities were behind the murder.

As many as 20 members of the Abiola family were reportedly arrested for questioning in connection with the murder, as were four NADECO officials, but no charges were made.

On 7 June an independent National Human Rights Committee was established comprising representatives from human rights organisations, the media, the legal profession and from relevant government ministries. Its 16 members include its head P.K. Nwokedi, retired Supreme Court justice, Kunle Fadikpe of the CLO and Ray Ekpu, chief executive of Newswatch magazine. The committee was given powers to conduct investigations into allegations of human rights violations referred to it.

On 11 June Wole Soyinka's pirate radio station, "Radio Democrat International" began test broadcasts. Its inaugural broadcast was transmitted the following day. The station

had been transmitting since early 1996 under the name "Radio Freedom Frequency".

On 12 June the government announced the reform of 2 decrees. With immediate effect no military person would sit on special disturbances tribunals, such as the one that convicted the Ogoni 9. Also, the tribunal would now attract a right of appeal.

On 17 June the guidelines for political parties seeking official recognition were announced by NECON. The requirements included a card-carrying membership of at least 40,000 in each of the 30 states (15,000 in the FCT), a non-returnable deposit of N500,000, as well as a short profile of the party with copies of the constitution and the manifesto. The deadline for parties seeking registration was 26 June. 23 organisations sought registration forms. On the same day the Human Rights Commission was officially inaugurated in Abuja.

On 20 June, 3 to 8 students were reportedly killed in clashes between Muslim students and police in Kaduna.

The editor-in-chief of Tell magazine, Nosa Igiebor, who had been detained since December 1995, was released during June.

JULY - On 31 July Akina Deesor, an Ogoni and a radio station producer in Ogoniland was allegedly detained for broadcasting an Ogoni song.

During July 6 of the detained members of the Abiola family were released from detention without charge.

In July it was reported that 3 of the 11 people detained for their alleged involvement in the Orkar Coup attempt of April 1990 were released unconditionally. The remaining 8 were to undergo further screening and, if found guilty, would face court martial and dismissal.

Of the 23 organisations that sought registration as political parties, only 18 met the deadline of 25 July.

AUGUST - On 15 August General Abacha sacked and replaced all 30 State chief executives.

In mid-August 2 opposition journalists from "The News" were released from detention without charge. They had been detained for one week.

On 23 August, General Abacha proscribed the 3 major university unions; The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), The Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU), and The Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU).

On 26 August 4 members of proscribed ASUU were arrested at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria

On 27 August "Radio Democrat International" changed its name to "Radio Kudirat Nigeria".

Of the 23 political organisations who sought registration forms, 18 submitted them. Following application for mergers from 7 of these organisations 14 organisations remained in the registration process. The names of those organisations approved for

registration was expected to be revealed by the end of September.

SEPTEMBER - Shi'ite leader Ibrahim El ZakZaky was arrested with other Shi'ite leaders "for security reasons" on 12 September. The following day 14 people were reported killed in clashes in Zaria between Shi'ite Muslims and police. Protests also took place in Kaduna and Katsina. The leadership of El ZakZaky's group, the Muslim Brothers, threatened to attack the police if he was not released by 17 September. On 18 September a violent demonstration of some 10,000 people erupted. There were shootings and 6 people, including police officers, were killed. The following day armed soldiers were reported to have killed 50 people in Kaduna, but by 22 September Kaduna was reported to have become calm, with people going about their normal business.

On 30 September the result of the party registration process was announced by NECON. Of those that sought registration only 5 were successful. They were:

The United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP)

The National Centre Part of Nigeria (NCPN)

The Committee for National Consensus (CNC)

The Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN)

The Grassroots Democratic Movement (GDM)

It was announced that all of those political organisations which failed to attain registered status were to be dissolved with immediate effect.

OCTOBER - On 1 October 1996 General Abacha made his annual independence day speech. As part of the speech he announced the creation of 182 local government areas. He also announced the creation of six new states:-

Baylesa State
Eboniyi State
Ekiti State
Gombe State
Nassarawa State
Zamfara State

On 3 October, Chima Ubani and Ayo Opadokun were released from detention. Chima Ubani (a member of a CD offshoot called the Democratic Alternative) had been held in detention since June 1995. Ayo Opadokun (secretary of NADECO) had been detained since October 1994. Reports also stated that Dr Doyin Okupe, was well known politician and former NRC publicity secretary was detained on the same day as the releases. No explanation was given for the arrest.

On 14 October three NADECO leaders, Mr Adesanya, Mr Adebajo and Mr Dawodu were released from detention. They had been detained since the 17 June following the assassination of Kudirat Abiola.

Batom Mitee a MOSOP activist, who was previously reported detained during October, was released unconditionally later in the month.

NOVEMBER - On 14 November 4 or 5 men entered the home of Alhaja Suliat Adedeji (NCPN council member, well-known NADECO sympathiser and prominent Yoruba). She was shot several times and died on the way to hospital.

On the same day there was a bombing incident at Murtala Mohammed Airport. The police have linked the bombing to NADECO and Wole Soyinka's National Liberation Council (NALICON) and some arrests were made. All allegations were categorically denied by NADECO.

On 19 November Gani Fawehinmi, Femi Falana and Femi Aboshirade, critics of the military government were released from detention as the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group visits.

DECEMBER - The Ogoni 19 have their application for release rejected by the Port Harcourt High Court on 3 December and a new application was submitted. There were also unconfirmed reports that Joseph Kpakol, a MOSOP activist, died in detention at the State Intelligence and Investigation Bureau in Port Harcourt.

NADECO Chieftain Ptunba Olabiyi Durojaiye was reported to have been arrested on 3 December but no other details have been released.

On 7 December Ondo State Military Administrator banned NADECO meetings in the house of the organisation's leader, Chief Ajasin.

On 10 December World Human Rights Day most of the major human rights and pro-democracy movements issued statements condemning the regime's human rights. The day went off without incident but the planned "Walk for Life" was called off following news that State Security agents had impounded the passport of an Amnesty International Official.

Nigerian Appeal court confirms supremacy of the African Charter on Human Rights over internal decrees and urges Government to consider the total repeal of Decree No 2.

On 18 December sources report an explosion in Ikeja. 12 members of the task force were injured and eight people were arrested in connection with this bombing. No group have claimed responsibility for the act but reports suggest that the authorities again suspect NADECO involvement.

Local press and human rights organisations report further detentions during the second half of December. The Campaign for Democracy confirmed the arrest of their former National co-ordinator, Frederick Fasheun. An official of the Amalgamated Union of Public corporations, Civil Service Technical and Recreational Services Employees, Mr Ayodele Akele, and a unionist with the Lagos State Development and Property Corporation, Mr Adeniran Raman, were also arrested.

On 22 December the electoral commission NECON and the political parties announced that the municipal elections which should have been held at the end of December would now take place on 15 March 1997.

On 28 December police in the northern state of Sokoto arrested 43 members of a Shi'ite Moslem group allegedly planning to breach the peace in the area.

JANUARY 1997 - On 7 January a bomb blew up a Nigerian army bus inside a military camp in Lagos, killing two soldiers and wounding 15 people in the third bombing against army targets since December.

On 8 January thirty-seven detainees were freed after being held for up to ten years without charge.

On 9 January The Nigerian Liberation Organization, a previously unknown group, claimed responsibility for the 7 January Lagos bombing.

On 11 January Olu Falae, a leading member of NADECO was detained by the police in connection with the recent bombing and Senator Abraham Adesanya, another leading NADECO member accused the military government of attempting to assassinate him.

Senator Abraham Adesanya, a leading member of NADECO accused the government of sending gunmen to assassinate him on 14 January.

Political columnist for the Vanguard, Dele Sobowale was released from detention after five days on 30 January having been questioned about a news analysis.

FEBRUARY - On 5 February the Government released six people held in police custody for between 6 and 12 years without trial in compliance with a court order which ruled that their detention without trial was illegal and void.

On 7 February up to five people were reportedly killed during a riot between Moslems and the police in Kano.

Registration of voters began on 10 February and NECON announced that the elections to local government would take place on 15 March.

A further bomb attack in Lagos on 12 February again aimed at military targets.

Lagos High Court ordered that Frederick Fasehun, chairman of CD, detained since December 1996, should be released because his detention is a violation of human rights. The SSS appealed against the order.

A Nigerian court grants the 19 Ogoni's in detention the right to challenge their continued detention.

The Nigerian government invites 2 UN human rights investigators to visit with the specific intention of studying the issues of extrajudicial killings.

MARCH - Eight lecturers at the University of Nigeria were charged with sedition and arson. The eight were among those detained in February after student riots.

UN call off a visit by their two special investigators, due to the refusal of the Nigerian government in allowing them to visit detainees.

On 8 March and African mission from the Gambia based African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights arrived in Nigeria to conduct a two week visit.

On 12 March the Nigerian government charged 16 "dissidents" with treason in connection with the recent spate of bombings. Those charged included self-exiled members of NADECO including Wole Soyinka and in Nigeria Frederick Fasheun and Olu Falae.

On 14 March SSS agents kidnapped Miss Jane Nwagu, secretary to the Institute for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law based in Port Harcourt.

On 15 March the local government elections took place across Nigeria and independent observers from the US found them to be peaceful, free and fair. On the same day Chief Etiebet, leader of the National Centre party was arrested and detained for about 48 hours.

On 22 March the wife of Dapo Olorunyomi, opposition editor of The News was arrested. 129 employees of Shell were held hostage by Ijaw tribesmen. All hostages were released by 27 March.

On 24 March councillors and chairmen of town halls elected were sworn into office. Results of the elections showed an overwhelming victory for the United Nigeria Congress Party and the Democratic Party of Nigeria.

APRIL - On 4 April Don Etiebet quit his membership of the National Centre Party of Nigeria and joined the United Congress Party whilst declaring his support for Abacha to stand as President.

The Abacha government criticised groups calling for Abacha to stand as President and Abacha was insistent that his government would hand over to a civilian president.

On 17 April a man was killed in Warri when police fired teargas to separate youths from the feuding Ijaw and Itsekiri tribes.

On 18 April 5 more people died in Warri when their village was burnt down. These incidents led the Nigerian navy to send a ship to the Warri area to safeguard the production of crude oil.

On 20 April youths attacked an oil services company boat and kidnapped its captain.

On 21 April more people were killed in Warri. Shell closed Warri flow station and warned that because of the hostilities output was running below normal.

Soldiers were sent to patrol Warri on 23 April in an attempt to restore the peace however violent outbreaks were still reported and on 24 April Tamtu an Itsekiri village was set ablaze and 8 people killed. The government issued a warning that it would not tolerate violent behaviour of this kind being used to express political grievances.

On 26 April violence spread to Koko when 5 people were attacked (one killed) and property set ablaze.

Calls continue for Abacha to stand as a civilian in the presidential elections scheduled for 1998 these include: The National Mobilisation and Persuasion Committee, Youths Earnestly As for Abacha and the General Sani Abacha for 98 Presidency movement.

MAY - Godwin Abroko (editor of "The News" magazine), Mrs Ladi Olorunyomi and George Onah (defence correspondent for Vanguard) were released from detention on 6 May, 8 May and 14 May respectively.

On 7 May there was a bomb attack on an army vehicle in the Lagos suburb of Yaba.

On 9 May a hearing of the treason case involving Wole Soyinka took place. The next hearing is scheduled for 23 May.

On 10 May Abiola's doctor Ore Falomo met with him for the first time in 14 months.

On 11 May fighting in Bayelsa State over relocation of Nembe headquarters and local government and further clashes between rival tribes in Warri led to the death and injury of more people.

On 12 May there was a further bomb attack in Ibadan on another military target. This was the first incident of its kind outside Lagos since 1995. A further 2 bombs exploded in Onitsha on 16 May however these were not directed at a military target.

On 20 May 33 human rights and pro democracy groups formed an alliance called the United Action for Democracy following a meeting in Lagos.

Following the coup in Sierra Leone on 25 May hundreds of Nigerian troops were sent into the country in an attempt to reinstate ousted civilian president Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

JUNE - On 4 June members of the Abiola family and close friends got together to mark the anniversary of Kudirat Abiola's murder, which passed off peacefully.

On 15 June there was further violence in Warri following which the town was placed under heavy-armed guard.

JULY - On 2 July the government published a detailed revised timetable of the return to democracy programme:

State Assembly elections due in 3rd quarter of 1997 have been put back until 6 December;

National Assembly elections remain unchanged for 25 April 1998;

Governorship elections due in the 4th quarter of 1997 scheduled for 1 August 1998 (to coincide with presidential elections);

Swearing in of elected governors due on 21 September 1998. Swearing in of the President and inauguration of the National Assembly scheduled for 1 October 1998.

On 3 July deadline given of 8 July for Shell to leave oil-producing area.

From 7-11 July the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) met to gather information for a meeting in September which will finalise its recommendation to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to be held in October.

On 8 July Matthew Erebing president of the Niger Delta Oil-Producing Development Organisation was arrested. He was released on 11 July.

On 9 July Abraham Adesanya (one of the leaders of NADECO) had his expired passport returned by the authorities which had been seized in 1994.

On 15 July the Inspector General of the Nigerian Police announced that the authorities wished to question the US Ambassador over the recent bomb blasts.

There were more ethnic clashes as soldiers and civilians fought in Biu Borno State and there were problems in Bayelsa State.

On 22 July a Federal High Court ordered the release of 7 army officers who were jailed for their alleged involvement in the 1990 coup and were then granted amnesties.

On 27 July Nigerian journalist Mohammed Adamu was detained after writing an article critical of General Sani Abacha.

On 29 July further peace talks took place in Abidjan headed by Nigeria's Foreign Minister Tom Ikimi concerning the situation in Sierra Leone however these were to break down later.

Wole Soyinka, Anthony Enahoro, retired General Alani Akinrinade and Bola Tinubu were placed on the wanted list that stated they were being sought for "conspiracy and treason."

AUGUST - On 6 August there was a bomb blast in Port Harcourt. This incident occurred near the Corpus Christi Catholic Cathedral.

On 18 August a protest took place in Aleibri against oil companies in the area in particular Shell caused by their appeal against a court ruling which stated they must pay compensation of 30 million Naira to 4 villages in Delta State where an oil spillage took place in 1982.

Confrontations between 2 communities in city of Ile-Ife caused by relocation of local government secretariat led to a number of deaths and the imposition of a curfew.

On 25 August activists hoping to celebrate Chief Abiola's 60th birthday at his home were turned away by members of his family.

On 28 August Tunji Abayomi chairman of Human Rights Africa was arrested.

SEPTEMBER - On 2 September a bomb attack took place in Ekiti State in an attack on the military governor of the state.

Further clashes between the Ife and Modakeke communities in Ife. Reports of Abacha's ill health officially denied. Human rights activist Tunji Abayomi arrested twice the second occasion along with 70 others attending a conference on democracy in Jos.

On 17 September 4 soldiers were kidnapped by members of the Ijaw community in Warri.

OCTOBER - On 1 October Abacha made the traditional independence day speech which contained few surprises.

On 2 October soldiers attacked the village of Ekeremor Zion in Warri following the kidnapping of four soldiers by youths in the area.

On 3 October the leader of NADECO Michael Ajasin died. The cause of death was attributed to natural causes.

The associate and assistant editor of Tempo magazine (Ademola Abimboye and Gbenga Alakija) were arrested on 17 October.

From 24-27 October the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting took place Edinburgh. It concluded by announcing the continued suspension of Nigeria from the Commonwealth with any action suspended to await the result of the transition programme in October 1998.

Thousands of candidates from the five political parties put their names forward for participation in December's state assembly elections.

On 25 October the editor of "African Concord" Soji Omotunde was arrested.

NOVEMBER - On 8 November the process of screening candidates for the state assembly elections began and the government released the guidelines for this process.

On 8 & 9 November respectively 2 senior editors - Jenkin Alumona and Onome Osifo-Whiskey were arrested.

Clashes between the Ife and Modakeke tribes in Ile Ife continued with further loss of life.

The second anniversary of the execution of Ken Saro Wiwa passed off peacefully following the deployment of extra police and the banning of all public meetings.

On 17 November, the fourth anniversary of his succession to power Abacha made a speech that proposed to release certain detainees who did not pose a threat to national security and also dissolved the Federal Executive Council.

On 20 November the five registered political parties were given grants of 50m Naira each.

DECEMBER - On 6 December the state assembly elections took place. Voting was generally peaceful despite the postponement of voting in Warri and Ife where violent clashes among the community continued.

Results of the elections announced later in the month showed an emphatic victory for the United Nigeria Congress Party with their nearest rivals being the Democratic Party of Nigeria, mirroring the results of the local government elections in March.

On 9 December a peace treaty was signed by community leaders of the Ife and Modakeke tribes.

On the same day the former vice president Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, who was serving a

25 year jail sentence for his part in the 1995 alleged coup plot, died in detention. No official confirmation of the cause of death has yet been given.

On 12 December the UN adopted a resolution which called for the release of prisoners detained in connection with the 1993 elections.

An accidental explosion occurred at Abuja airport on 13 December which led to one death of a security guard.

On 15 December the reconstituted FEC was announced which included 17 individuals from the previous FEC and 16 "new" appointments. A number of the old guard retained their old positions whilst a small number were transferred to different portfolio's.

On 20 December Abacha's No 2 Lieutenant General Oladipo Diya along with twelve others (the majority from the Yoruba tribe) were arrested for their part in an alleged coup attempt. These arrests were followed shortly by the appointment of a Special Investigation Board to investigate the coup plot.

Nine people including four foreigners were taken hostage by oil workers in the Niger delta area.

JANUARY 1998 - On January 20 riot police occupied 26 banks after an order for their liquidation had been given. The government said that the banks' bad debts would result in loss of savings for investors.

On January 22 the Abacha Solidarity Movement (ASOMO) inaugurated in Abuja.

FEBRUARY - On 14 February the trial by military tribunal of 26 people arrested for planning to overthrow the government began in Jos, Plateau State.

Also in February the Nigerian led ECOMOG force drove out the military dictator Lt Col Johnny Paul Koroma from Sierra Leone. He had taken control in a coup in May 1997.

MARCH - In early March thousands of Abacha supporters held a two-day rally in Abuja, calling on Abacha to transform to a civilian president. An opposition rally by the United Action for Democracy in Lagos was dispersed violently by police using teargas. The UAD leader Olisa Agbakoba was arrested along with 37 others. He was later bailed.

The lawyer and human rights activist Femi Falana was reported to have been arrested.

APRIL - On 21 April Radio Kudirat reported that six protestors in the city of Kaduna who had been protesting for the release of Muslim leader Ibrahim El ZakZaky were shot by police.

On 22 April the release of the military personnel cleared of involvement in the December 1997 coup plot trial was ordered. Those released included:

Col. E.M. Shode

Col. Daniel O. Akintonde

Col T. E. C. Chiefe

Gp. Captain A. Andria

On 28 April it was announced that six people had been found guilty of involvement with the coup plot and had been sentenced to death.

These were:

1. General Oladipo Diya
2. Lieutenant-Colonel Olu Akiode
3. Major General Abdulkareem Adisa
4. Major General Tajudeen Olanrewaju
5. Major Oluseun Fadipe
6. Engineer A. Adebajo

Four other people were sentenced to life imprisonment and 14 were released. The rest were sentenced to between 2 and 14 years.

On 25 April 1998 elections were held for representatives in the two houses of the National Assembly. The turnout was low. By 27 April preliminary results indicated that the Nigeria Congress Party were ahead with about 80% of the vote.

Five people were killed and 14 injured by what was believed to have been a bomb in the city of Ile-Ife. There was also a bomb explosion in Lagos.

The government freed some political detainees including journalists Soji Omotunde, (editor of African Concord magazine) Mohammed Adamu, (a journalist with the African Concord magazine) and Onome Osifo Whiskey, (Tell magazine editor).

Seven staff working for the opposition newspaper P M news were reported to have been arrested.

Nigeria's pro-democracy and human rights groups agreed to form an alliance of opposition groups called the Joint Action Committee of Nigeri (JACON). Among the groups joining the coalition were the United Action for Democracy (UAD), National Democratic Coalition NADECO, and the Civil Liberties Organisation.

MAY - On 1 May thousands of people protested against military rule at a demonstration in the city of Ibadan organised by the opposition coalition United Action for Democracy. Several deaths were reported when the police opened fire on the demonstrators.

On 6 May the Moslem leader Ibrahim El ZakZaky appeared in court in Kaduna to defend himself against charges of inciting dissent. The case was adjourned.

On 12 May three people were reported to have been killed, and others reported missing in continuing clashes between the Ife and Modakeke groups in Osun State.

On 27 May it was estimated that at least 12 people had been killed including 4

policemen, when supporters of a quasi-Moslem sect the Maitatsine attacked police with bows and arrows in Lagos.

JUNE - On 8 June 1998 General Abacha died, reportedly of a heart attack. The following day General Abdusalam Abubakar, previously Chief of Defence staff and third in command under General Abacha, was sworn in as the new Head of State after his appointment by the Provisional Ruling Council.

General Abubakar promised a transition to an elected civilian government.

On 16 June General Abubakar ordered the release of 9 high profile detainees.

General Obasanjo Former head of State

Dr Boko Ransome-Kuti Leader of Campaign for Democracy

The above were serving 15 years for alleged involvement in the 1995 coup attempt.

Chris Anyanwu

Frank Kokori Trade Union leaders in detention without charge since 1994 and 1996 respectively

Milton Dabibi

Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki Deposed Sultan of Sokoto
Deposed Sultan of Sokoto

Chief Olabiyi Durojaye NADECO leader - in detention without charge since 1996

Chief Bola Ige Politician in detention since April 1998

Mr Uwen Udoh

On 25 June General Abubakar ordered the release of 17 more political prisoners:

Olisa Agbakoba Human rights lawyer and leader of United Action for democracy

Olu Falae Leading member of NADECO

Frederick Fasehun Acting Chairman of CD

Abubakar Rimi

Moses Akinmola

Lewis Aimola

Olayinka Festus

Adebayo

Mashood Yahaya

Musa Okoiyafo

Sukere

Mohammed

Olugbenga

Odumade

Mashood Raji

Adeyemo Femi
Layi Odumade
Sule Lamido
Segun Maiyegun
Ayo Opadokun

There were protests against the Abubakar regime. On 12 June there was a large protest in Lagos coinciding with the fifth anniversary of the 1993 elections which were annulled when Mashood Abiola looked as if he was poised to win them. There were no reports of death or serious injuries.

There were also demonstrations in other cities.

JULY - Chief Mashood Abiola, who was jailed for proclaiming himself President after appearing to win the annulled presidential elections of 1993, died suddenly whilst still in captivity on 7 July 1998. He was taken ill whilst meeting an American delegation, which was rumoured to be discussing terms for his release from prison. He had recently had a visit from Kofi Annan the Secretary General of the U. N.

Rioting followed the announcement of Abiola's death in many Nigerian cities. As many as one hundred people are believed to have been killed. The worst areas affected by the rioting were Lagos, Ibadan, Akure and Abeokuta. Some of the violence took on an ethnic dimension, with battles being fought between the Yorubas of the southwest and the Hausa of the north.

On 8 July 1998 Abubakar appeared on national television and said that he had dissolved his cabinet or Federal Executive Council.

Abiola was buried in his home compound in Lagos on 11 July. Thousands of people gathered around his home in the Ikeja area of the city. At one point hundreds of youths became violent and threw stones at the police who had been deployed in large numbers. The police used tear gas to disperse them.

On 9 July the ruling military Provisional Ruling Council commuted to prison sentences the death sentences passed in connection with the alleged coup plot of December 1997. Abacha's former deputy Lieutenant-General Oladipo Diya and two other convicted plotters, Major General Taludeen Olanrewalu and Major General A Adisa had their sentences cut to 25 years in prison. Three more death sentences were commuted to 20 year prison terms, those for Lieutenant Colonel O Akinyode, Major A Fadipe and A Adebajo. Ten other people sentenced to prison terms had the length of their sentences reduced. Among these was journalist Niran Malaolu, whose sentence was reduced from life to 15 years.

Major General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua was granted a posthumous pardon. He had died in prison following conviction of involvement in the 1995 coup plot.

On 12 July a group of independent international pathologists announced that the initial results of the post-mortem on Abiola showed that he had died of heart disease.

On 14 July General Abubakar held a meeting with leaders of the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO). The meetings objective was to discuss the proposed handover to civilian rule.

By July at least one NADECO exile is known to have returned to Nigeria -Dr Wahab Dosumu.

On 15 July the government ordered the release of prisoners who had served their full sentence, but were still being detained. A number of prisoners in the country's jails have completed their sentences but overlooked for release.

On 20 July General Abubakar pardoned 10 people sentenced over the 1995 coup plot. They included journalists Ben Charles Obi, George Mbah and Kunle Ajibade.

On 20 July General Abubakar announced that there would be a series of elections starting with local government elections on 5 December 1998, elections for state governors and for members of the state houses of assembly on 9 January a National Assembly poll on January 20 and a presidential election on 27 February 1999, which would result in the handover to a civilian rule on May 29 1999. The National Electoral Commission was to be scrapped and new Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was set up. In the same speech President Abubakar admitted that the previous transition programme was flawed, and that it was therefore cancelled. He also announced that all five existing political parties were dissolved. Abubakar's speech continued with the promise to publish and widely circulate the draft constitution drawn up at the Constitutional Conferences of 1994 and 1995 prior to consideration and approval by the Provisional Ruling Council. Abubakar also pledged commitment to human rights - in particular freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association. Abubakar also promised extensive prison reform, and to put in place measures to reduce the level of corruption, and bring an air of openness and accountability into government. Prospective political parties were invited to register with the INEC for recognition, and twenty-five prospective parties had registered by the deadline of 9 September 1998. Guidelines announced by the INEC are designed to ensure political parties are not based solely in one region. The deadline was subsequently extended until 18 October 1998.

A seminar aimed at finding solutions to conflicts that arise from the exercise of police powers and the protection of fundamental rights of the citizen took place in Abuja at the end of July.

AUGUST - The full results of the autopsy on Abiola were announced. The results of tests on tissue samples supported conclusively the earlier finding that Abiola had died of natural causes and had not been murdered, as some of his supporters claimed.

In clashes between Ijaw and Ilaje in Ondo State and Western Delta State during July and August 1998, hundreds were reportedly killed.

SEPTEMBER - On 10 September 1998 a coalition of 12 Nigerian human rights groups including the Civil Liberties Organisation announced the formation of a body to monitor the plan to restore civilian rule - the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG).

In September 1998 General Abubakar released the new draft constitution. It had been drafted in 1995 when Abacha was head of state, but never published. General Abubakar stated that all comments and views on the proposed constitution would be presented to the Provisional Ruling Council for consideration prior to publication.

Abubakar has stated his intention to clamp down on the corruption that is endemic in Nigerian society and government. He said the government has started investigations into the conduct of certain government departments. In September he announced that a substantial amount of money had been recovered from the family of the former head of state General Abacha. Many of Abacha's former aides are in detention for misappropriation and embezzlement of state funds. Maryam Abacha, the wife of the former dictator has been prevented from leaving Nigeria and is restricted to Kano, her hometown, while investigations are being made into her financial affairs. Abubakar has

also begun to investigate claims that billions of pounds of oil revenues had gone missing under the Abacha administration. There is no evidence to suggest administrations other than the Abacha one are being investigated.

In the light of the improved human rights situation in Nigeria the European Union made a declaration stating that it was ready to review the sanctions that had been imposed in 1995.

In early September 1998 the 20 Ogoni political prisoners who had been in detention since 1994 for the murder of 4 Ogoni chiefs (the same charges as the late Ken Saro-Wiwa) were released after a High Court judge in Port Harcourt dropped all the charges. Their release was unconditional.

On 18 September 1998 police were reported to have killed 15 members of a Moslem group led by Ibrahim El ZakZaky who had been detained since 1996. About 2,000 demonstrators were protesting around the central mosque in Kano about El ZakZaky's continued detention. The police fired into the crowd after they had failed to respond to police requests to disperse causing death and injury. Only 3 weeks previously approximately 5 people were reported to have been killed in clashes between police and supporters of El ZakZaky.

OCTOBER - On 1 October general Abubakar addressed the nation on the 38th anniversary of Nigerian independence. He pledged to handover to civilian rule by May 1999.

In early October voter registration began to prepare for the series of polls leading to the handover of power to a civilian government.

Some more prominent exiles returned to Nigeria including Dan Suleiman of NADECO and Wole Soyinka, who had the treason charges against him dropped.

The leader of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), Mr Ledum Mitee has also returned to Nigeria after three years in self-exile.

NOVEMBER - police killed Five members of the O'odua People's Congress in Lagos.

Prominent Ijaw leader Mr Shokare Clark was assassinated by unknown assailants.

United Nations Human Rights Special Rapporteur Soli Sorabjee visited Nigeria for a week to investigate human rights issues.

DECEMBER - Local elections took place on 5 December. They were dominated by the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

A dusk to dawn curfew was imposed in the oil producing Niger Delta following the declaration of a state of emergency.

A week of clashes between the Tiv and Ibo ethnic groups near the town of Gboko resulted in the deaths of at least 32 people.

Lt. Colonel Olu Akinyode, who was serving a prison sentence for his part in the alleged December 1997 coup plot died in prison.

JANUARY 1999 - Dusk to Dawn curfew in Niger Delta area lifted.

On 9 January elections took place for Governors and members of the House of Assembly. The People's Democratic Party (PDP) emerged as the largest party.

FEBRUARY - Parliamentary elections took place on 20 February. The PDP emerged as the largest party in the Senate and the House of Representatives.

On 27 February the presidential elections took place. General Obasanjo, a previous military ruler who handed over power to a democratically elected government in 1979 was elected. There have been accusations of vote rigging by international monitors.

MARCH - Coup plotters are pardoned, and all but three are released by the end of March.

The result of the presidential election is widely seen as free and fair by international observers.

On 11 March five people are reported to have died after two days of fighting in Ogun State, between The O'odua People's Congress and the police.

On 22 March over 767 Million Dollars recovered by the Military government. The money was part of the funds that went missing during the Abacha regime.

On 24 March Major General Tunde Idiagbon died, he had been deputy leader of Nigeria between 1984 and 1985.

On 16 March a Presidential Committee on development presents its report, which is highly critical of the failure to develop in the Warri region, or address its problems.

The International Court of Justice ruled against Nigeria in its continuing dispute with Cameroon over the Bakassi Peninsula on 29 March. The Court took the view that Cameroon had the right to determined ownership of the disputed region.

Since the start of 1999 at least one hundred people had died in clashes between Muslim Fulani herders and Christian and Animist farming tribes. The reasons for this dispute is primarily access to farming and grazing land, but ethnic and religious difference exacerbate these disputes.

APRIL - On 6 April the Nigerian Court of Appeal uphold a decision to reject a challenge to the election of Olusegun Obasanjo as president. Chief Olu Falae who had been the presidential candidate for the All People's Party and the Alliance for Democracy made the challenge. On 14 April Chief Falae said he would not proceed with any further challenge to the Court's decision.

In Kaduna more than 1,000 Shi'ite Moslems demonstrated on 7 April, to demand the release of forty Islamic activists held in detention. The protest was led by Ibrahim El ZakZaky, who is campaigning for the imposition of Islamic law in Nigeria. The Civil Rights Congress (CRC) on 30 April supported the claim that members of the Islamic Brotherhood were being persecuted. CRC stated that Moslem activists were being

illegally detained, denied access to higher education, and barred from attending and preaching in mosques. Most of Nigeria's Moslems are Sunnis and they do not approve of the views and aspirations radical Shi'ites organisations like the Islamic Brotherhood.

Unrest continues in the Niger Delta, it was claimed that a number of oil company installations were occupied, in an attempt to obtain compensation from Mobil Corp for an oil spill in the region in January; this action was not confirmed. On 10 April General Abubakar hosted talks on the Niger Delta region, with over two hundred delegates attending.

There was serious unrest in Ijebu-Ode between 7 and 14 April, after the death of a soldier led to rioting by his comrades.

At least one hundred people died in a land dispute near the village Aguleri in the first three weeks of April. This continued to around the 23 April when the police restored order. Over seven hundred people have died in violence between two local Igbo speaking communities over the past five years.

On 18 April over three hundred prisoners were granted pardons in Kaduna State, as part of a move to free up space in prisons and improve human rights. Most of those released had been in prison for about six years without trial.

The United Nations dropped an enquiry into Nigeria's human rights record on 23 April, and acknowledged the progress Nigeria had made in establishing an accountable democratic government.

On April thirty Itsekiri youths attacked a tanker on the Escravos River, the ship was damaged and the crew only freed after a ransom had been paid.

MAY - There were renewed clashes between Ijaw and Itsekiri youths in the Niger Delta on 1 May, following an attack on an Ijaw boatman. These clashes continued for two weeks, it is reported that twenty people were killed, and twenty-five soldiers were either injured or captured by the groups involved in this violence. The Nigerian government deployed reinforcements to restore order and free the captured soldiers. This violence flared up again in Warri on 30 May, when fifty people were killed in an attack on an Itsekiris village.

Ibadan University was closed following protracted students' protest against fees.

On 5 May the new constitution was signed into law.

Three people were killed and three villages burned to the ground, in a dispute between cattle herders and farmers in Kirikasmma in Jigawa State.

Ethnic Ogonis protest outside Royal Dutch Shell offices in Port Harcourt on 7 May. MOSOP accuses Shell of destroying the environment.

Unidentified gunmen murdered human rights activist Kazino Uzuazebe on 6 May.

Six people die in riots on 19 May following rumours of the death of president-elect Obasanjo.

Five military officers, part of Operation Sweep, were being sought by police on 21 May.

They were accused of involvement in the death of a bus driver who was shot when he failed to stop when challenged; two commuters and the bus conductor were also killed.

There were violent clashes in Kafanchan during the installation of Alhaji Muhammadu Isa Mohammed as new Emir of Jem'a on 22 May. It is reported that one hundred and two people were killed during this violence, and a curfew was imposed and the installation delayed. The reason for this violence, was opposition to the Emirate system from the local population. Order was restored in the area after a visit from the state administrator, Col Umar Faruk Ahmed, and the deployment of security personnel reinforcements in the area.

On 24 May, unidentified Cult members killed three students. They were shot while taking their exams in Enugu State University of Technology.

On the 25 May the Saro-Wiwa family announced their intention to sue Shell in the United States. Their application to take this action is due to be heard in New York later this year.

The military units involved in Operation Sweep were withdrawn on 26 May. On 28 May the outgoing military government repealed Decree 2, and on 29 May President Obasanjo takes power, and the new constitution comes into effect.

Nigeria rejoined the Commonwealth on 29 May, and the European Union lifted all remaining sanctions.

JUNE - President Obasanjo suspended all contracts signed by the outgoing military regime on 2 June, pending a review.

On 3 June the Nigerian national assembly is opened, and on 4 June President Obasanjo sets up a panel to review human rights abuses since January 1994.

President Obasanjo retires all officers who held political office under the military government, 149 senior officers are effected.

On 6 June fighting is reported between Urhobos and Itsekiri, and two hundred people were reported to have been killed. Clashes between the Itsekiri and Ijaw were also continuing in the region. Soldiers were deployed in the area, and a curfew was imposed to try and alleviate the situation; by 9 June the region was reported to be tense but calm.

On 10 June, all legislation that is inconsistent with the 1999 Constitution or the spirit of democratic government is repealed. All tribunals created by the military to try certain offences are also dissolved.

President Obasanjo visits the Warri area on 11 June, and appeals for calm. He also said that he would set up a development body, to oversee development in the region. On 26 June he obtains the agreement to a suspension of hostilities from the leaders of the Itsekiris, Ijaws and Urhobos, to allow the government time to find long term solutions to the region's problems.

Vigilantes killed five suspected armed robbers on 13 June, over twenty people are reported to have died since the beginning of June as a result of vigilante violence. There has been an upsurge in crime following the return to civilian government.

On 24 June an outbreak of cholera was reported in the Northern State of Kaduna, it is reported that at least sixty people had died of the disease during June.

There were violent clashes in Ibadan on 25 June, when a riot broke out between Yoruba traders and Hausa cattle dealers, seven people were killed before order was restored. Twenty-eight people were killed in three separate ethnic clashes in Taraba State on 24 and 25 June 1999. Tivs fought with Fulanis, Kutebs fought with Jukuns and Wurukum farmers with Fulani herdsman.

On 26 June, President Obasanjo required his prospective ministers to sign a code of ethics, which covered issues of probity, transparency and accountability in government. The intention of this document is to encourage just and honest government. A code of conduct has also been drawn up for Ministers' advisers.

On 27 June a helicopter operated by Shell and its two-man crew were seized by Ijaw youths.

On 30 June President Obasanjo abolishes the Petroleum Trust Fund, which had been created to oversee the allocation of revenue from oil production.

Three people died during the rescue of two local oil workers kidnapped in the Niger Delta. The rescue was organised by local youths from a neighbouring village.

JULY - The Nigerian government cancels all crude oil contracts on 2 July, pending re-negotiation, as some of the companies involved are linked to ex-army officers. On the 6 July the Nigerian government outlines its guidelines for future oil contracts, these include a commitment to development in Nigeria and a performance bond of one million dollars, which will be forfeited in the event of failure to invest in development. The oil companies agreed to a 0.5% levy for the development of the Niger Delta region on the same day.

The International Court of Justice allows a counter claim from Nigeria regarding the Bakassi peninsula on 3 July.

Ten Nigerian POWs in Sierra Leone, are released by the Revolutionary United Front, and arrive back in Nigeria on 3 July.

On the 7 July the first anniversary of the death of Chief Kashimawo Abiola passes without any serious incidents being reported.

On 8 July President Obasanjo recalls all recently appointed diplomats and places them on compulsory leave. On the same day the full Nigerian cabinet is appointed after, with the approval of the Senate.

On 9 July, President Obasanjo swears in eight advisors to assist him and his government.

On 11 July five students were killed during an attack on a hostel at Obafemi Awolowo Teaching Hospital. Members of an unidentified cult were involved in this incident, and three other students later died as a result of their injuries. Mr Wale Omole, the Vice Chancellor of the University, was indefinitely suspended from his post, because of his failure to address the problems of cults in the University, and a number of suspected cult members were detained. However, this failed to satisfy many of the students, and on 14

July they stormed a police station where the suspected cult members were being held and removed one suspect. Students kidnapped Mr Omole's wife, in an attempt to discover his whereabouts; they also blocked roads to the University, and boycotted lectures. The Nigerian government has said it will take measures to address the problems of cults in Universities.

On 13 July, President Obasanjo presents a Bill for development in the Niger Delta, he proposes that a Commission be set up to oversee development in the region, financed, in part, by contributions from the oil companies. The Ijaw Youth Council rejected this proposal on 15 July.

On 17 July Alhaji Muhammad Waziri, one of President Obasanjo's recently appointed special advisors, escaped an assassination attempt at his home in Abuja. However, he suffered serious injuries as a result of the attack.

There were serious clashes between Hausas and Yorubas in Shagamu on 17 July following the murder of a Hausa woman who had observed a secret Yoruba religious ceremony. Over sixty people are reported to have been killed, before order is restored.

These clashes trigger further clashes between Hausas and Yorubas in Kano on 22 July. Over seventy people are reported to have been killed before order is restored, but accounts of the exact number vary. One hundred and fifty people are subsequently arrested.

On 24 July the speaker of the House of Representative Alhaji Ibrahim Salisu Buhari is required to resign his post, because he had misrepresented his academic qualifications.

On 26 July Isoko youths free sixty oil workers who had been held for two days.

On 29 July it is reported that over one hundred and twenty people have died in clashes between two communities in Anambra State, the cause is a long-standing land dispute.

The former Minister of Sport, Air Commodore Anthony Ikazoboh was shot and killed at his home in Lagos on 29 July.

MOSOP said it identifies with the Nigerian government's efforts to resolve the problems in the Niger Delta on 29 July.

There were clashes between Ijaws and Ilajes in Ondo State in late July, over a land dispute, at least fifty people were reported killed.

AUGUST - On 4 August ex-speaker Alhaji Ibrahim Salisu Buhari is sentenced to one year in prison, on two counts of perjury and forgery, but is given the option of a 2,000 Naira fine.

Communities in the Ilaje local government area, make proposed amendments to the Niger Delta Bill on 6 August. They want an ambiguity in representation of local people clarified.

On 7 August MOSOP reject the Bill, as they believe that the commission would not be able to assist in development, and it also objects to the government definition of the states in the Niger region.

On 9 August soldiers are sent to Ondo State to restore order. Both the Ijaws and Ilajes had failed to abide by the terms of a peace agreement, and thousands of Ijaws have fled the fighting, and hundreds are reported killed.

On the 10 August there were demonstrations at the National Assembly against the allowances given to legislators.

It is reported that two hundred people were killed by Nigerian troops in the village of Lebambo in Taraba State. The soldiers had retaliated against the ethnic Kutebs after they had been attacked. Taraba State has been the scene of many ethnic clashes, because of dispute about grazing and land.

Five kidnapped oil workers were freed on 12 August.

On 14 August Ogoni leaders met with representatives of Royal Dutch Shell to discuss their differences, and to attempt to agree a formula for Shell to return to the Ogoni Region.

On 18 August the death of a British oil worker Mr Richard Lintot was reported. He died on 15 August, as a result of injuries sustained during a robbery at Sapele in the Niger Delta on 9 August.

On 18 August Ijaw youths attacked the regional parliament in Bayelsa State, and two MPs were stabbed. The Ijaws were protesting against the parliamentary speakers and other officials' involvement in an oil compensation Bill.

Texaco said in a statement on 19 August, that one hundred and fifty youths occupied its offices in Warri.

President Obasanjo submitted a list of one hundred and three ambassadorial nominees for the Senate's consideration on 19 August.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has expressed its approval of Nigeria's government, and intends to send a special mission to Nigeria in September to discuss development and co-operation. UNDP hope to assist in areas relating to job development, national planning, social development and food security. The UNDP already have approximately three hundred projects in Nigeria.

On 21 August, Shi'ites burn down hotels in Katsina, in a protest over an application to repeal a ban on alcohol.

President Obasanjo announced a wide-ranging program of poverty relief on 23 August, addressing health care and education provisions. He also stated that agricultural reform was also a high priority.

Taraba and Benue States were reported to be calm after a two-year period of ethnic clashes.

On 22 August students at Osum State Polytechnic rioted after the police allegedly killed five students, a local radio station was closed briefly for fear that the students would occupy it.

President Obasanjo approved the release of one thousand four hundred prisoners on 27 August.

SEPTEMBER - The army denied that it had maltreated civilians in Ondo State during operations to quell disturbances between Ijaw and Ilaje tribal groups. On 4 September the army suspends its withdrawal from Sierra Leone.

On 7 September Mr Justice Oputa requested more time to examine the cases submitted to his human rights panel for consideration. The panel is sworn in on 16 September, with the support of President Obasanjo.

Bandits in Northern Nigeria killed at least twenty people including a police officer during a robbery on 8 September.

On 9 September there was a serious riot at the port of Lagos, and it was reported that militants linked to the OPC were involved. The cause of this violence was an attempt by sacked workers to return to work, which was supported by the militants, but opposed by other workers. After several hours of fighting between the rival groups, the police used live ammunition to restore order, and it is reported that sixteen people were killed. In an unrelated incident, Hausa and Yoruba traders clashed in Abuja, two people are reported to have been killed. On the same day the high court ruled that the cancellation of a contract with Heritage Oil and Gas Co was legal.

On 13 September it was reported that police had killed fifty Ijaw youths in the Niger Delta, all were supposed to be members of the Egbesu cult. The police have subsequently denied involvement in these deaths.

On 17 September it is reported that two hundred people had died from Cholera in Borno State.

Disturbances continue in the Niger Delta, with attacks on oil installations and ethnic unrest. On 15 September two oil workers were kidnapped, but were later released. The most serious incident occurred on 20 September, when a crowd of local residents attacked a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) plant at Finima in the Bonny Rivers State. Production was resumed by 28 September, after an agreement was reached between the company Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas Ltd and the local community. President Obasanjo visited the region on a fact-finding mission.

23 September President Obasanjo addressed the UN General Assembly, and requested international assistance in recovering funds misappropriated by previous Nigerian and other African regimes. He said that this and debt relief would assist in African development.

OCTOBER - 4 October, members of Okrika and Ogoni communities in Port Harcourt, clashed in a dispute over the ownership of a refinery site, the police restored order.

On 5 October President Obasanjo ordered the human rights commission, under Mr Justice Oputa, to cover events back to the first military government in 1966.

Twenty broadcast licences held by TV companies are revoked for failure to pay licensing fees.

Zamfara State takes measures to introduce Shia'ra law on 27 October. It was anticipated that the trained personnel and courts necessary to support this law would be in place by January 2000.

NOVEMBER - In early November there were clashes between Ijaws of the Egbesu cult and the OPC in Ajegunle district of Lagos. The OPC, were acting in support of the Ilajes who have been involved in a violent conflict with the Ijaw for the past two years. Fifteen people were reported to have been killed in this violence and over fifty-six arrested. It was reported that twelve policemen were later killed by Ijaw youths, in retaliation for the large number of Ijaws arrested by the police during the Lagos riots.

Itshekereis and Ijaws were reported to have been involved in clashes in the Niger Delta in early November. In Bayelsa State ten soldiers guarding an oil installation were reported to have been killed.

17 November former army chief General Ishaya Bamaïyi was released from house arrest, he was under investigation by the human rights commission. On the same day Mohammed Abacha appeared in court charged with the murder Kudirat Abiola.

On 18 November it was reported that more than forty people had been killed in clashes between two Isoko communities in the Niger Delta. The dispute was over the allocation of oil pipes donated to local people by RDS. On the same day the Senate President Evan Enwerem was removed from office.

On 20 November 1999, in response to the killing of police officers in early November, the Nigerian army surrounded the town of Odi in Bayelsa State. This was the town in which the policemen were killed, and where it was believed that the Ijaws responsible were hiding. In the ensuing operation it is claimed by the local community that over five hundred residents were killed, and two thousand detained, it is not known if those responsible for the deaths of the police officers were among those detained or killed. An inconclusive investigation was launched into this incident. President Obasanjo later apologised for the excessive force used by the military.

Barnabas Gemade is elected chairman of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party.

Former army chief General Ishaya Bamaïyi appear in Lagos Chief Magistrates court on 24 November, charged with conspiracy to murder former newspaper publisher Alex Ibru. His co-defendants Maj. Hamza Al-Mustapha and police supt. Mohammed Rabo Lawal, are also charged with involvement in the death of Kudirat Abiola.

In late November 1999 in and around Lagos there were clashes between the OPC and Hausas over market trading, which resulted in the deaths of at least twenty-seven people, many Hausas fled Lagos because of this violence. On 25 November 1999 President Obasanjo ordered that police shoot OPC members on sight if they did not surrender.

DECEMBER - On 8 December the trial of Mohammed Abacha is adjourned, as his defence require time to study new charges against him.

There were riots in Ilorin on 18 December 1999, no deaths were reported, but eighteen churches were destroyed.

On 21 December, police dispersed Trade Unionists protesting outside the national parliament in Abuja against the repeal of fuel subsidies.

JANUARY 2000 - The Nigerian government announced that prisoners who had been on death row for twenty years or more would be pardoned. Others who have been on death row for over ten years would have their sentences commuted to life imprisonment.

On 5 January violence flared in Ibadan between local Yorubas and Hausas, when a Hausa lorry driver collided with a taxi carrying Yorubas, and then fled the scene. Seven people were killed in the accident, and four died in the ensuing violence.

The OPC has split into two factions, one under the leadership of Dr Frederick Fasheun and the other under the leadership Mr Ganiyu Adams. Mr Adams' faction is seen as being more hard line and less willing to compromise with the Nigerian authorities. These two factions clashed on 6 January 2000, resulting in at least six deaths. In another incident a senior police officer in Lagos was kidnapped and killed by OPC members attempting to free a member accused of robbery. Mr Ganiyu Adams remains wanted because of his suspected involvement in the Lagos clashes in November 1999.

The Ganiyu Adams' faction of the OPC was believed to have been involved in vigilante violence in the Mushin area of Lagos. The police attempted to curb this violence, but these vigilantes killed at least forty people, before order was restored on 7 January

There were reports of an increase in tension between Nigeria and Cameroon over the disputed Bakassi peninsula. The Nigerian military authorities denied this, but the possible cause of any rise in tensions, is the military assistance Cameroon has been receiving from France.

Charges against former army chief General Ishaya Bamaïyi, Police Commissioner James Danbaba, former Zamfara State Administrator Col. Bala Yakubu, Chief Supt. Of Police Mohammed Rabo Lawal and the late General Abacha Chief of Security Maj. Hamza Al-Mustapha were withdrawn on 13 January. These charges related to the attempted murder of Mr Alex Ibru. However, the charges against Al-Mustapha, Rabo Lawal, Mohammed Abacha and Lateef Shofolahan arising from the murder of Kudirat Abiola remain. As do charges against Al-Mustapha and Col. Frank Yakassai arising from the murder of Maj-Gen Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. General Bamaïyi remain in detention as there are other charges outstanding against him.

14 January thousands of Christians in Kaduna State protest against plans to introduce a Shari'a law code.

Two hundred members of the OPC were detained by the police, and charged with crimes connected to the recent violence in Lagos. There are reports that as many as one thousand members of Ganiyu Adams' OPC faction may have been detained.

Ogonis and RDS continue discussions aimed at reaching agreement about RDS returning to Ogoniland.

Fulani herders fought with villagers in central Nigeria, ten people were killed including two policemen.

Youths in Imo State seized some oil production installation on 18 January, in protest at

Imo being excluded from the Niger Delta Development Commission Bill.

On 22 January the city of Kano approves Shari'a law, subject to the consent of the State's Governor. On the 27 January Zamafara formally introduced the Shari'a penal code, and the first punishments under this code were carried out from that date.

FEBRUARY - On 4 February police occupy the office of the Alliance for Democracy, as this party had split into two factions and the police feared a violent confrontation.

On 21 February there were marches against the introduction of Shari'a law by Christians in Kaduna, during these marches serious disturbances were reported as Muslims and Christians clashed. On 22 February there was extensive rioting in Kaduna, and it is reported that more than three hundred people were killed over a three-day period. On the same day Sokoto became the third state to adopt a Shari'a based penal code.

The residence of the Sultan of Sokoto was also attacked on the 21 February. The attackers belonged to two rival Muslim factions who were disputing the leadership the Sultan Bello Mosque.

On 28 February violence spread to Aba, as youths from the mainly Christian Igbo tribe attacked local Muslims in reprisals for attacks on Christians living in Kaduna. The Central Mosque in the town was torched during this riot and around fifty people killed. In both incidents the police imposed a curfew. The army was also called in to support the police.

In light of the Constitutional implications of this law, a human rights group led by Olisa Agbokoba has made a legal challenge against this law.

On 29 February Vice-President Atiku Abubakar announced that as a result of a meeting of all state governors Shari'a law would be suspended. The response from the three states involved has been ambiguous, and they have been reluctant to confirm unequivocally that they would abide by the decision of the council. A number of other northern states have re-affirmed their intention to introduce a Shari'a based legal system.

MARCH - President Obasanjo appealed for calm and understanding in a national television broadcast on 2 March 2000.

There were clashes between two Yoruba communities in Ife on 5 March, over a long-standing land dispute.

On 7 March violence spread to Sokoto, when students rioted and demanded the immediate introduction of Shari'a, order was restored after a curfew was imposed. Unrest was also reported in Lagos after a Hausa lorry driver lost control of his truck and killed twenty people. Local Yorubas clashed with Hausas, and a curfew was imposed. There have been conflicting reports on the total death toll in February and March due to religious based unrest, and a true figure is hard to determine.

On 13 March thirty-two oil workers and two soldiers were abducted from a gas plant at Utorogu near Warri. On 14 March at least fifty people were killed in Umuichieichi-Umungbede village in a pipeline explosion.

APRIL - Dr Fredrick Fasheun president of the OPC was briefly detained by the SSS,

who were enquiring into the activities of the OPC.

Around 11 April There were violent confrontations in K-Dere between rival factions of MOSOP, over a road building project. Amnesty International has accused the police of using this violence as a means of harassing and detaining Ogoni activists. A house belonging to Ledum Mitee, the president of one of MOSOP's factions, was destroyed. He was also detained in connection with this violence and bailed, but there are charges still outstanding against him.

MAY - On 7 May Nwibari Obani claimed leadership of a rival faction of MOSOP. Ledum Mitee has challenged the legitimacy of his election.

In Late May there was further rioting in Kaduna. This violence lasted for two days and it is reported that three hundred people were killed. The security forces restored order, and this violence was limited to the Kaduna area.

JUNE - On 8 June Nigerians went on a stay-at-home strike in answer to a call from the umbrella Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) to protest against a 50% increase in fuel prices announced a week ago by the government. News organisations reported that all private businesses were closed and transport vehicles were off the streets after the talks between the government and the NLC, which wants the increases scrapped, proved inconclusive. There had been a number of protests in Lagos and other cities against the price hike, which was also opposed by the Senate and the governments of some states.

There were four separate incidents of pipeline sabotage on 3 June on the Warri-kadunna pipeline, a number of suspects were detained. An undetermined number of people died in the fires caused by this damage.

On 13 June the NLC called off a week-long strike after reaching agreement with government to scale down the fuel-price rise decreed last week.

On 20 June there was a pipeline explosion at Okuedjegba near Warri the number of killed and injured is not known.

The northern city of Kano issued an official proclamation of Shari'a in that state on 21 June.

Two oil workers were kidnapped while working on a boat on 21 June, but were later released when the Nigerian navy stormed the boat.

JULY- On the 5 July a Kano court imposed a sentence of eighty strokes of the cane and fifteen months in prison on a man convicted of drinking alcohol. In Zamfara a man was sentenced to eighty strokes of the cane for falsely accusing his wife of adultery.

On 6 July the authorities in Ondo State imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew in the town of Ikare-Akoko following 20 deaths resulting from clashes between supporters of two rival monarchs there. The violence, which began last weekend, dates back to 1992 when the Owaale, one of the monarchs in question, was recognised by the government even though the Olukare was reportedly already the traditional ruler.

On 10 July two hundred and fifty people were killed in an oil pipeline explosion in Adeje near Warri.

Civil servants in Lagos State suspended a three-week-old wage strike on 11 July to restart negotiations with the state government over the disputed minimum wage. Adams Oshiomhole, president of the Nigeria NLC announced the suspension of the strike after talks with Lagos State Governor Bola Tinubu. Oshiomhole said that the strike would only be called off when an agreement had been reached.

On 16 July there were clashes in Lagos between police and OPC, twenty people were killed including two police officers. Thirty people were killed in a pipeline explosion in Warri.

On 20 July FGM was declared illegal in southeastern Cross River State.

On 31 July, Ijaw militants held one hundred and sixty five oil workers hostage. They were released in early August.

AUGUST - Katsina becomes the fifth state to adopt Shari'a law on 1 August. Jigawa adopts Shari'a law on 2 August.

There is agitation in the Southern states, to prevent young people from the South serving in the National Youth Service Corp in North. This is a compulsory form of non-military national service, and this action has been taken because of a fear for their safety following the introduction of Shari'a law in some Northern states. Many Southern Christian youths are reported to have refused to be sent to serve in states that have adopted Islamic law.

President Clinton paid a visit to Nigeria and expressed his support for the civilian government, and pledged \$ 20 Million to support efforts to combat AIDS, malaria and polio.

SEPTEMBER - Ten people died in clashes between Christians and Muslims in Gombe State on 11 September, following protests against the proposal to introduce Shari'a law into that state.

President Obasanjo paid a short visit to the United Kingdom on 13 September, and amongst the subjects discussed, were debt relief and the recovery of funds looted under previous regimes.

OCTOBER - There were clashes between the OPC and Hausas in Ilorin and Lagos. As a result of this violence, military units were deployed in Lagos State.

In October the Human Rights Violations Investigation Panel (HRVIP), began hearings into 150 cases of killings by members of the security forces.

In October an OPC demonstration against Libya's expulsion of several Nigerian citizens resulted in a number of injuries and the death of a guard at a foreign embassy.

On 14 October, clashes broke out between members of the OPC and police in Ilorin. The violence spread to Lagos over the following 2 days. The fighting in Lagos was between members of the OPC and members of the Hausa ethnic group and originated in a dispute over the capture and killing of alleged robbers of the Hausa ethnic group by members of the OPC. The rioting resulted in the deaths of over 100 persons, the destruction of buildings in Lagos and the outlawing of the OPC by the Government

NOVEMBER- 30 November, dozens of people were killed when a ruptured fuel pipeline exploded near Nigeria's commercial capital, Lagos. Officials of the state-owned Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) said the fire erupted at a vandalised point on its pipeline. NNPC's Atlas Cove jetty, used for delivering imported fuel, is located some 500 metres from the scene. The fire damaged the jetty and adjacent depots.

Dr Frederick Fasheun leader of the OPC was briefly detained in November 2000, but later released without charge.

DECEMBER - Nigeria's National Association of Resident Doctors ended a four-month strike after officials pledged to meet its demands. The doctors started their action on 13 September to demand higher pay, welfare packages and better working conditions.

4 December - Several people were injured in the southeastern town of Okigwe after the Nigerian government deployed soldiers to curb the activities of a secessionist movement allegedly usurping law enforcement duties in the area. Heavily armed soldiers, arrived in Okigwe on 1 December, and were apparently pursuing Ralph Uwazurike, leader of the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB). His followers were said to have been enforcing the sale of fuel at controlled prices.

19 December - At least 500 people suspected of involvement in vandalising pipelines to steal fuel were arrested by the police across Nigeria. JANUARY 2001 9 January At least 20 people have been taken hostage following clashes between neighbouring communities in Nigeria's southern Niger Delta oil region. The dispute was over the location of a key oil company facility, that was considered lucrative, and pitted the Ke and Krakrama communities on one side against the neighbouring community of Bille on the other. All the communities are within the Degema District of Rivers State.

9 January Muslim youths went on the rampage in the northern Nigerian City of Maiduguri, burning down several churches and bars. Hundreds of youths had gathered to pray after sighting the eclipse, which they interpreted as a consequence of widespread sins. Then they became uncontrollable attacking churches and bars, and forcing non-Muslims to flee to a military barrack.

Late January President Obasanjo announced a cabinet re-shuffle.

FEBRUARY -1 February the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, arrived in Nigeria on Wednesday on a two-week pastoral visit, media organisations reported. During his visit he highlights concerns regarding the Shari'a in the North. 5 February Militant Ijaw protesters have ended their occupation of three crude oil production facilities of Royal/Dutch Shell near the southern Nigerian oil town of Warri, the French news agency reported.

8 February Nigerian police destroyed the headquarters of a separatist movement in the southeastern town of Okigwe and arrested several of its leaders - area residents and media organisations said. It is claimed that six people were killed by policemen, who also flattened the building that served as the headquarters of MASSOB. The group is campaigning for the resuscitation of the defunct Republic of Biafra. The group are accused of public disturbance, incitement and the unauthorised use of firearms and attempting to set up an illegal republic.

8 February Ten ministerial nominees submitted by President Olusegun Obasanjo to

Nigeria's Senate for consideration, following a re-shuffle, have been approved. The re-shuffle was the first major change in the composition of the federal cabinet since Obasanjo became President. Reuters news agency said the approval of the nominees without much delay was a sign that Obasanjo's previously difficult relations with the legislature had improved significantly. 9 February Kaduna has passed a modified Islamic code aimed at averting further religious violence. Under the new law the application of the Shari'a for criminal matters will be limited to lower courts and localities where Muslims are predominant. Traditional or customary law will be applicable at the same level in areas inhabited by non-Muslims. It is reported that civil law will remain applicable in the state's higher courts, responsible for trying criminal offences

MARCH - Bauchi State announced its intention to introduce Shari'a from end of the month.

JUNE/JULY - Fighting in Nasarawa State between Christian Tiv and Muslims Hausa-Fulanileft - more than 400 people dead and more than 22,000 displaced.

AUGUST - There was renewed fighting between Christians and Muslims in Bauchi State over plans by the government to introduce strict Islamic law. The latest outbreak of violence in the Tafawa Balewa involved two communities, the mainly Christian Kutaru and the predominantly Muslim Zwall, 15 people are reported to have been killed while many more have been injured.

Ganiyu Adams was arrested, and has denied 23 charges against him, which included murder, robbery and illegal possession of arms. The case has since been adjourned.

In early September 2001 there were serious clashes in the central Nigerian City of Jos between Christians and Muslims. Fighting spread to other areas of the country.

OCTOBER - Clashes were reported in Benue and Taraba States between Tivs and Jukun, due to long standing land disputes. A number of troops, who were sent to restore order, are reported to have been killed. Soldiers later attacked the Tiv communities, which were suspected of being linked to these deaths.

12 October -600 to 1,000 Muslims peacefully demonstrated in Kano against American and allied air strikes against Afghanistan. Several hours after the conclusion of a peaceful demonstration against military action in Afghanistan, rioting broke out in the largest marketplace in the city of Kano.

DECEMBER - Gombe State sign Shari'a into law.

JANUARY 2002- The first execution under Shari'a law was carried out on 3 January 2002. The man, convicted of murder, was hung in Katsina prison. The case of Safiya Hussein Tungar Tudu has attracted national and international attention. She has been convicted of adultery, and is facing the death penalty. Her appeal is still pending at the present time.

On 27 January, more than 1,000 people died as a result of massive explosions that followed a fire at an army ammunition dump in Lagos. Most of those who died were killed as they fled the explosions, some being drowned in attempting to cross a canal. Following the fire and explosion there were wide spread riots in the city.

FEBRUARY - 1 February 2002. There was a one-day police strike over pay and

conditions. President Obasanjo responded by releasing funds to meet the welfare needs of the police.

Political Organisations

Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC)

The SDP and NRC were created by the Babangida regime in October 1989 following the lifting of the ban on political parties in May 1989, and in March 1990 membership registration began for both parties. Chief Tom Ikimi and Baba Gana Kingibe were elected as chairmen of the NRC and SDP respectively in July 1990. In March 1993 following the National party congresses Chief Moshood Abiola and Alhaji Bashir Tafa were selected to stand in the Presidential elections which took place on 12 June 1993. Initial results indicated that Abiola had won the majority of the vote however on 23 June the results of the election were declared invalid which led to unrest. General Abacha the newly installed military ruler dissolved all democratically elected institutions and banned both parties in November 1994. Abiola declared himself President in a symbolic ceremony on 11 June 1994 and was arrested on 23 June 1994 on charges of treason. He died in prison in July 1998 whilst still awaiting trial, and just when it was widely believed that he was about to be released. Following the return to civilian rule, political parties are now allowed to function and register as political organisations.

Parties

After political parties were declared legal on 27 September 1995, a multitude of newly founded political organisations sprang up. They are mostly only listed by their titles in literature. Only five parties qualified for registration:-

United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP)

Committee for National Consensus (CNC)

National Centre Party of Nigeria (UCPN)

Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN)

Grassroot Democratic Movement (GDM)

These parties were dissolved by Abubakar in July 1998. There were viewed as being vehicles to secure Abacha's candidacy for the presidential elections that were to have taken place in August 1998.

Campaign for Democracy (CD)

This group was founded in November 1991 and involves an alliance of 25 human rights organisations, which oppose the present military regime. CD was established in advance of the 1993 elections and raised many criticisms of the weakness of the two-party

system. Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti is the Chairman of the organisation and was re-elected at a conference in Ibadan at the beginning of February 1994. On 27.7.95 Dr Ransome-Kuti was arrested in connection with the alleged March 1995 conspiracy against the Abacha Government. He was later convicted by the Aziza Tribunal and finally sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment on 1 October 1995. He was released from detention by Abubakar on 16 June 1998. On 25 June 1998 Frederick Fasehun, who had been imprisoned by the Abacha regime, was also released from prison. The CD's General Secretary, Sylvester Odion Akhaine, was released from detention at the beginning of 1996 during which time Ms Joe Okei had taken the role of Acting General Secretary. On his release from detention Mr Odion-Akhaine assumed that Ms Okei would hand over the running of the organisation to him but what followed was a leadership struggle which led to the expulsion of Ms Okei and two others in the light of alleged corruption charges.

Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR)

A human rights group with a strong record of criticising government abuses. Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti is the Chairman of this organisation. He was imprisoned by General Abacha but released by General Abubakar in June 1998.

National Democratic Coalition (NADECO)

NADECO is a political pressure group. The organisation was founded on 15.5.94. In 1994 Chief Michael Ajasin was Chairman of the organisation, General Secretary was Oyo Opadokun. In 1995 Chief Ajasin was joined by Chief Anthony Enahoro as co Chairman and who fled into exile in 1996. Following the death of Ajasin on 3 October 1997 Abraham Adesanya was promoted from his role of acting chairman to lead the organisation. Ayo Adebajo is regarded as another leader of the organisation. In June 1998 Abubakar released two members of NADECO from prison. Chief Olabiyi Durojaye who had been in detention without charge since 1996, and Olu Falae who is a leading member of NADECO. General Abubakar had several meetings with NADECO to discuss the transition plans leading to a handover to a democratically elected civilian government, prior to the transfer of power on 29 May 1999. Several prominent NADECO exiles have now returned from abroad.

Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO)

The CLO is one of the most vocal groups involved in the promotion of human rights in Nigeria. It has been active in documenting human rights issues including prison conditions, refugee rights and abuses of the legal process. The CLO began its activities in 1987. The president from this time was Olisa Agbakoba who has now been replaced by Ayo Obe.

National Democratic Alliance (NDA) or Association for a Better Nigeria (ABN)

The ABN was founded in 1993 at the time of the 1993 elections and advocates the continuation of military rule. The leader is Chief Francis Arthur Nzeribe and it has recently changed its name to the NDA.

Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP)

MOSOP was formed in 1990 and has campaigned for political autonomy and a greater share of the oil revenue derived from their land. It has its origins in the Ogoni Bill of Rights produced in 1990. MOSOP has been led since 1993 by Ken Saro Wiwa however

he was arrested in 1994 for his involvement in the murder of 4 Ogoni chiefs. On 10 November 1995 he and 8 others were executed following a highly criticised trial. Ledum Mitee, acquitted at the trial in which Saro Wiwa was convicted is acting President of MOSOP. He has recently returned to Nigeria after a period in exile in the United Kingdom. The twenty Ogonis who were convicted with Saro-Wiwa and sentenced to prison sentences were released from prison in September 1998, and all charges against them were dropped.

MOSOP (UK)

Originally called the Ogoni Community Association (UK) this organisation was set up in 1993 by Ogoni people living in Britain. MOSOP (UK) is an affiliate of MOSOP and aims to focus world attention on the plight of the Ogoni's.

National Conscience Party (NCP)

Although named party this organisation is unregistered. It was formed on 1.10.94 and is led by the radical lawyer Gani Fawehinmi.

Constitutional Rights Project (CRP)

The CRP was established in November 1990 and is registered as a nongovernmental organisation. It produces a journal and newsletter and is especially concerned about constitutional questions and the independence of the courts. Its executive director is Clement Nwankwo.

National Liberation Council (NALICON)

Founded by Wole Soyinka in June 1995 regarded as the militant section of NADECO. The treason charges against Soyinka have now been dropped and on 14 October he returned to Nigeria for a visit following a period spent in exile abroad.

United Action for Democracy (UAD)

An umbrella movement for approximately 30 Nigeria-based human rights/pro democracy groups opposed to the regime. The UAD was inaugurated in May 1997. Its leaders are the human rights lawyer, Olisa Agbakoba, CD General-Secretary Sylvester Odion Akhaine and pro democracy activist Chima Ubani.

Olisa Agbakoba had been imprisoned under Abacha on 8 May 1998 but was released by General Abubakar on 25 June 1998.

Joint Action Committee of Nigeria (JACON)

This is an alliance of human rights and pro-democracy groups that formed a coalition in April 1998 to campaign against continued military rule. It is led by Gani Fawehinmi. Twenty six anti military rule groups signed a communique calling for an end to military rule including United Action for Democracy (UAD), National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), National Conscience Party, Civil Liberties Organisation, Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR), Eastern Mandate Union and Campaign for Democracy (CD).

Movement for Justice in Nigeria (MOJIN)

The President is Abdulkarim Daiyabu. This group believes in the 12 June 1993 mandate given to Mashood Abiola in the Presidential elections.

Nigeria Labour Congress

An affiliation of trade unions. Taken over in August 1995 by the Abacha regime. Handed back to the Nigerian unions in September 1998 by the Abubakar regime.

Youths Earnestly Ask for Abacha

A group supporting Abacha in the Presidential election of August 1998 - which was cancelled following Abacha's death on 8 June 1998. This party has now become the

Mass Democratic Party.

There are three registered parties that contested the 1999 election: -

Alliance for Democracy (AD)

All People's Party (APP)

People's Democratic Party (PDP)

NB: The AD and the APP contested the 1999 elections in coalition.

PROMINENT PEOPLE

Nnamdi Azikiwe - leader of National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC). Following independence became first President of Nigeria in 1963 deposed in coup 1966, now deceased.

Chief Yabuku Gowon - army chief of staff chosen to head government (1966-75) overthrown in peaceful coup on 29 July 1975.

General Murtala Mohammed - succeeded Gowon, died as result of attempted coup on 13 February 1976.

General Olusegun Obasanjo - as chief of army staff succeeded Mohammed. Returned country to civilian rule in 1979. Arrested on 13 March 1995 and sentenced to life for concealment later commuted to 15 years. Released by General Abubakar in June 1998. Won 27 February 1999 presidential election, and took office on 29 May 1999.

Shehu Shagari - leader of National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and last civilian President of Nigeria (1979-83).

Major General Mohammed Buhari - took power following coup on 31 December 1983.

General Ibrahim Babangida - succeeded Buhari on 27 August 1985.

Chief Ernest Shonekan - head of ING installed on 27 August 1993.

General Sani Abacha - army chief of staff in Babangida's regime. Took power on 17 November 1993. Died 8 June 1998.

Chief Moshood Abiola - presidential candidate for Social Democratic Party (SDP). Arrested 24 June 1994 after he declared himself President of Nigeria on 11 June 1994. Died whilst still in custody on 7 July 1998.

Alhaji Ismailab Gwarzo - former security adviser under Abacha regime. Currently detained for allegedly misappropriating 2.5 bn dollars of public money.

Dr Frederick Fasehun - Chairman of Movement for Economic and Social Justice and self proclaimed chairman of CD in Beko Ransome Kuti's absence. Arrested 18 December 1996 in connection with recent bombings. Abubakar ordered his release on 25 June 1998.

Chief Olu Falae - former finance minister and SDP presidential aspirant. Arrested on 10 January 1997 also in connection with bombings. Released 25 June 1998.

Major General (rtd) Shehu Musa Yar'adua - Obasanjo's number 2 and leading light in SDP and leader of now defunct People's Democratic Movement. Arrested on 9 March 1995 and sentenced to death for conspiracy to commit treason. Later commuted to 25 years. Died in detention on 8 December 1997. Granted posthumous pardon by General Abubakar.

Chief Frank Kokori - secretary general of National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG). Arrested on 20 August 1994 for leading the July/August 1994 oil workers strike. Released 16 June 1998.

Major Gideon Orkar - leader of 22 April 1990 attempted coup. Was executed for his involvement on 27 July 1990 along with 42 others.

Milton Dabibi - General secretary of Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN). Arrested on 21 January 1996 for his role in 1994 oil workers strike.

Released 16 June 1998.

Chief Olabiyi Durojaiye - former presidential aspirant for SDP and NADECO chieftain. Arrested on 3 December 1996 in connection with recent bombings in Lagos. Released 16 June 1998.

Umaru Dikko - former minister of transport under Shagari. Declared wanted by Buhari regime. Was in self imposed exile until invited to be a delegate at National Constitutional Conference.

Chief Michael Adekunle Ajasin - part of National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) leadership and regarded by many as the leader. Also leader of a Yoruba group named Afenifere. Died from natural causes on 3 October 1997.

Chief Gani Fawehinmi - radical lawyer and leader of National Conscience Party (NCP).

Arrested on several occasions under the Abacha regime. Has acted as counsel for other prominent people including Dele Giwa and Ken Saro Wiwa.

Femi Falana - leader of National Association of Democratic Lawyers. Detained on a number of occasions the last being on 14 February when he was held until 20 November 1996.

Sylvester Odion Akhaine - General secretary of CD released from detention without charge on 31 December 1995 following his arrest on 17 January.

Beko Ransome Kuti - Chairman of Campaign for Democracy (CD) and president of CDHR. Arrested on numerous occasions the last being on 27 July 1995 when he was found guilty of committing an act sub judicial to the Aziza Tribunal. Sentenced to life imprisonment which in October was commuted to 15 years. Released 16 June 1998.

Colonel Lawan Gwadabe - regarded as key figure in 1995 coup plot. Convicted of treason and sentenced to death later commuted to life. Ordered to be released in March 1999.

Ken Saro Wiwa - President of Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). Arrested on 22 May 1994 in connection with murder of 4 Ogoni chiefs. Executed on 10 November 1995 along with 8 other MOSOP members.

Ledum Mitee - vice president of MOSOP prior to Ken Saro Wiwa's death. Now Acting President was acquitted at the same trial as Saro Wiwa. Ledum Mitee returned to Nigeria from exile in London in late 1998.

Wole Soyinka - on 16 June 1995 founded National Liberation Council (NALICON) allied to NADECO. Left Nigeria in November 1994. Charges that had been made against him by General Abacha were dropped by General Abubakar. Returned to Nigeria for a visit in October 1998.

Babafemi Ojuda - Managing Editor of THE NEWS- imprisoned for 8 months by Abacha. Freed 24 July 1998.

Kunle Ajibade - Executive Editor - THE NEWS - Imprisoned 1995 for "an accessory after the fact of treason". He was released in July 1998.

Baba Gana Kingibe - National Chairman of SDP and running mate of Abiola in 1993 elections. Was power and steel minister in Abacha's Federal Executive Council (FEC).

Chief Tom Ikimi - ex NRC chairman held position of Foreign Minister in FEC under Abacha.

Alhaji Bashir Othman Tofa - 1993 presidential candidate for NRC.

Chief Francis Arthur Nzeribe - leader of Association for a Better Nigeria founded in 1993.

Ayo Obe - President of Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO)

Olisa Agbakoba - ex President of CLO.

Clement Nwankwo - co founder of CLO executive director of CRP.

Kudirat Abiola - senior wife of Chief Abiola. Vociferous in calls for her husband's release and for him to be President. Arrested in May 1996 just prior to her assassination on 4 June 1996.

Chief Anthony Enahoro - vice chairman of NADECO. Arrested on a number of occasions and fled to US in May 1996.

Ayo Opadokun - Secretary General of NADECO.

Dele Giwa - founding editor in chief of Newswatch magazine. Killed on 19 October 1986 by a parcel bomb delivered to his home. It is widely believed that the government had a hand in his death.

Abraham Adesanya - chairman of NADECO. Detained in 1996 and survived an attempt on his life in 1997.

Alfred Rewane - former secretary to Obafemi Awolowo, regarded as financial pillar of NADECO. Assassinated on 6 October 1995 following appearance of an advert in the national press placed by Rewane deriding Babangida's regime.

Joe Okei - in opposition with Odion-Akhaine with regard to position of general secretary of CD.

Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki - deposed as Sultan of Sokoto (premier traditional ruler of Nigeria and leader of Muslim community) on 20 April 1996 for alleged financial irregularities.

Alhaji Muhammadu Maccido - replaced Dasuki as Sultan of Sokoto on 21 April 1996.

General Abdusalam Abubakar - head of state between 8 June 1998 until 29 May 1999.

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