

**Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale**

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## Freedom in the World 2022 - Nigeria

Partly Free

43

/ 100

[Political Rights](#) 20 / 40[Civil Liberties](#) 23 / 60

Last Year's Score &amp; Status

45 / 100 Partly Free

Global freedom statuses are calculated on a weighted scale. [See the methodology.](#)

### Overview

While Nigeria has made significant improvements to the quality of its elections since the 1999 transition to democratic rule, the 2019 presidential and National Assembly elections, which saw President Muhammadu Buhari reelected and the All Progressives Caucus (APC) regain its legislative majority, were marred by irregularities. Corruption remains endemic in the key petroleum industry. Security challenges, including insurgencies, kidnappings, and communal and sectarian violence in the Middle Belt region, threaten the human rights of millions of Nigerians. The military and law enforcement agencies often engage in extrajudicial killings, torture, and other abuses. Civil liberties are undermined by religious and ethnic bias, while women and LGBT+ people face pervasive discrimination. The vibrant media landscape is impeded by criminal defamation laws, as well as the frequent harassment and arrests of journalists who cover politically sensitive topics.

### Key Developments in 2021

- In May, Abubakar Shekau, the leader of the Boko Haram militant group, died by suicide after being captured by the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), a Boko Haram splinter group. Over 1,000 fighters and relatives reportedly surrendered in subsequent weeks.
- ISWAP continued to launch violent attacks during the year. Aid workers sheltered in a bunker when the group attacked the town of Dikwa in March, while ISWAP launched two attacks against a military base in Borno State in May.
- In June, Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of the separatist Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), was arrested and returned to Nigeria, where he was accused of charges including treason. Kanu's lawyer accused the Kenyan government of mistreating him before returning him to Nigeria, which it denied; Kanu remained in custody at year's end.
- The IPOB called on southeasterners to remain home in response to Kanu's arrest, which residents reportedly complied with for fear of violence. The group's instructions and armed attacks against electoral offices impacted the Anambra state gubernatorial election in November; only 10 percent of voters participated, the lowest turnout recorded there since 1999.

### Political Rights

#### A Electoral Process

A1 0-4 pts

**Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through 2 / free and fair elections?**

4

The president can serve a maximum of two four-year terms and is elected by a qualified majority vote. The president must also win at least 25 percent of the votes cast in 24 states. President Buhari of the APC was reelected in February 2019, winning 53 percent of the vote. People's Democratic

Party (PDP) candidate Atiku Abubakar won 39 percent. Other candidates shared 8 percent.

A one-week voting delay, announced on the morning of the election, undermined confidence in the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). International observers noted serious irregularities when the election was held, including election-related violence, vote buying, and the intimidation of election officials and voters. Turnout was among the lowest seen in Nigeria, at 35.7 percent. Abubakar legally challenged the results that March, but the Supreme Court dismissed his appeal that October.

#### **A2 0-4 pts**

**Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?** 2 / 4

Members of the bicameral National Assembly, consisting of the 109-seat Senate and the 360-seat House of Representatives, are elected for four-year terms.

Legislative elections were held concurrently with the February 2019 presidential election. According to INEC, the APC won 212 seats, the PDP won 127, the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) won 10, and another 7 parties won the remainder. In the Senate, the APC won 63 seats, the PDP won 44, and the Young Progressives Party (YPP) won 1. One Senate seat was reported vacant.

Observers reported irregularities including violence, intimidation of voters and officials, and vote buying. They also noted incidents where party officials directed voters on how to cast ballots at polling stations. INEC declined to certify winning candidates in two races because local returning officers operated under duress.

#### **A3 0-4 pts**

**Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies?** 2 / 4

The 1999 constitution and the Electoral Act of 2010 provide Nigeria's legal electoral framework. In 2018 and 2019, the National Assembly passed Electoral Act amendments designed to strengthen equal airtime obligations for broadcasters, make the voter register and election results more accessible to voters, and extend federal electoral regulations to local races. President Buhari repeatedly vetoed the bill during this period, citing inconsistencies with existing law. The National Assembly passed an Electoral Act Amendment Bill in November 2021. Buhari declined to sign it in December, objecting to its provisions for party primary contests.

European Union observers reported that the 2019 national elections were administered in general accordance with existing procedures but warned that the delay to presidential and congressional races that February affected turnout, confused voters, and undermined confidence in the electoral process. Other observers noted INEC's apparent lack of preparedness; its electoral security committee, cochaired by the national security adviser, was not in operation by election day.

## **B Political Pluralism and Participation**

#### **B1 0-4 pts**

**Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?** 3 / 4

Nigerians generally have the right to organize in different political parties. There were 91 registered parties and 73 presidential candidates in 2019, the largest number of parties and candidates since the 1999 transition to democracy. INEC removed 74 parties from the register in 2020, citing their inability to win the support of a sufficient number of voters and lack of representation nationwide. While 22 parties won an appeals court judgment that year, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of INEC's original decision in May 2021.

A constitutional amendment signed by President Buhari in 2018 allowed independent candidates to compete in federal and state elections. Buhari also signed a "Not Too Young to Run" bill that same month, lowering the age of eligibility to run for political office from 40 to 35 years. However, a lack of internal party democracy and high fees make it difficult for prospective candidates to vie for major-party nominations.

#### **B2 0-4 pts**

**Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?** 3 / 4

Nigeria's multiparty system provides an opportunity for opposition parties to gain power through elections, as demonstrated by Buhari's 2015 victory over predecessor Goodluck Jonathan. Buhari's election marked the first time in Nigerian history that a sitting president was peacefully replaced. Opposition parties can also gain influence when legislators cross the aisle; the APC lost its legislative majority when some of its legislators defected to the PDP during the 2015–19 term.

New political parties have successfully entered the National Assembly in recent years; the YPP won its first Senate seat in 2019. The APGA, which was formed in 2003, won 10 lower-house seats in 2019. However, the APC and PDP still hold most elected offices in Nigeria.

**B3 0-4 pts**

**Are the people's political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means?** 1 / 4

Citizens' political choices remain impaired or undermined by vote buying and intimidation, the influence of powerful domestic and international economic interests, and the local domination of either the military or armed groups in some regions. Wealthy political sponsors, or "godfathers," dispense patronage and use their considerable influence to cultivate support for candidates who then use their offices to enrich their backers.

Local elections held in 2021 were seriously affected by the presence and activities of armed groups. Several INEC offices were attacked by unidentified assailants during the year, including in Anambra State, which held a gubernatorial election in November. Campaigns in Anambra State were restricted during the electoral period, as candidates faced harassment from armed individuals.

Residents of Anambra State and other areas were intimidated by the IPOB, which called on southeasterners to abide by stay-at-home orders after the June 2021 arrest of its leader. Residents reportedly complied with these instructions for fear of violence, though the IPOB issued stay-at-home instructions more selectively beginning in August. In October, it called on residents of Anambra and several other states to remain home before rescinding that call days ahead of the Anambra contest. Turnout in Anambra State stood at 10 percent, the lowest recorded there since the transition to democratic rule.

*Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 1 due to rising violence involving armed groups that has included attacks on election commission offices and disrupted political campaigns, particularly in the southeast.*

**B4 0-4 pts**

**Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities?** 2 / 4

Nigeria's legal framework generally provides for equal participation in political life by the country's various cultural, religious, and ethnic groups. However, politicians and parties often rely on voters' ethnic loyalties, and the interests of a given group may be poorly addressed in areas where it forms a minority or when affiliated parties are not in power.

Women enjoy formal political equality, but restrictive societal norms limit their participation in practice. Only 8 women hold Senate seats, while 13 hold House of Representatives seats. Women are poorly represented in the cabinet; Buhari named 7 women to his 43-seat cabinet in July 2019.

Same-sex relationships were criminalized and LGBT+ advocacy groups were banned in 2014, when former president Jonathan signed the Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act. Openly LGBT+ people are deterred from running for office or working to advance their political interests.

## C Functioning of Government

**C1 0-4 pts**

**Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?** 2 / 4

Elected officials generally make and implement policy in Nigeria, but are impaired by factors including corruption, partisan conflict, poor control over areas where militant groups are active, and the president's undisclosed health problems, which have caused him to seek treatment abroad in recent years.

President Buhari has demonstrated a willingness to obstruct government bodies. In 2019, for example, Buhari appointed an economic advisory council that superseded a constitutionally mandated economic-management body chaired by Vice President Yemi Osinbajo.

**C2 0-4 pts**

**Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective?** 1 / 4

The government has attempted to reduce corruption in public and private institutions, but the practice remains pervasive, particularly in the oil and security sectors. A whistleblower policy introduced in 2016, which rewards Nigerians who provide information on government corruption, has led to the recovery of significant monies in recent years. Customs officials have been known to smuggle goods through porous customs checks in return for bribes.

Senior law enforcement and anticorruption officials have faced corruption allegations in recent years. In February 2021, Abdulrasheed Bawa was appointed chief of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, following the 2020 suspension of former acting chief Ibrahim Magu over alleged ethics breaches. In July 2021, Deputy Commissioner of Police Abba Kyari was suspended pending a US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) investigation into his alleged links to a money laundering scheme.

Nigerian politicians have been locked in an effort to curb corruption in the petroleum sector since at least 2001, when legislators first considered an expansive Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB). Legislators later split the PIB into several components to secure its passage, though this effort was unsuccessful. In late 2020, President Buhari introduced a new PIB, which was passed in July 2021 and signed into law in August.

### **C3 0-4 pts**

#### **Does the government operate with openness and transparency? 2 / 4**

The 2011 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) guarantees the right to access public records, but nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have criticized government agencies for routinely refusing to release information sought through the law. The law has also encountered resistance in some states. As of May 2021, 2 states passed their own version of the FOIA. The other 34 have neither adopted the FOIA nor have they developed their own legislation.

## **Civil Liberties**

### **D Freedom of Expression and Belief**

#### **D1 0-4 pts**

##### **Are there free and independent media? 2 / 4**

Freedoms of speech, expression, and the press are constitutionally guaranteed. However, these rights are limited by sedition, criminal defamation, and so-called false-news laws. Sharia (Islamic law) statutes in 12 northern states impose severe penalties for alleged press offenses. Internet service providers sometimes block websites at the request of the Nigerian Communications Commission, particularly those advocating independence for the secessionist state of Biafra, which collapsed in 1970. The government has accused journalists of undermining national security when reporting on operations against Boko Haram. Officials restrict press freedom by publicly criticizing, harassing, and arresting journalists, especially when they cover corruption, human rights violations, separatist and communal violence, or other politically sensitive topics. In July 2021, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), the media regulator, called on television broadcasters to limit their reporting on unrest, saying detailed reporting may impact security operations.

Legislators considered amendments to the Nigerian Press Council (NPC) Act and the NBC Act that would have given the president more power to appoint NPC members while giving the NBC regulatory powers over "all online media." The amendments would have instituted fines and jail terms for proscribed offenses. The amendments' sponsor announced that their consideration was suspended in July 2021.

#### **D2 0-4 pts**

##### **Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public 1 / 4 and private?**

Religious freedom is constitutionally protected, but the government has also embarked on crackdowns against religious groups that have questioned its authority. Nigeria has been locked in a long struggle against Boko Haram, a militant group that has itself targeted moderate Muslims and Christians along with their respective houses of worship. State and local governments have been known to endorse de facto official religions in their territory, placing limits on religious activity.

The government's conflict with the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN), a Shiite Muslim group that advocates for Islamic rule in Nigeria, escalated in 2019, when an Abuja court banned it and labeled it a terrorist organization. The IMN considers its leader, Sheikh Ibrahim el-Zakzaky, to be the ultimate source of authority in Nigeria, and does not recognize the government in Abuja.

The government has responded violently to IMN activity in recent years. In 2015, security forces raided el-Zakzaky's compound, arrested him and his wife, and killed at least 300 IMN members. Dozens more were killed in a 2018 army operation. In September 2021, 8 people were killed and 57 were arrested when security forces and the IMN clashed in Abuja.

Despite a 2016 court order to release him, el-Zakzaky and his wife were only freed in 2019 to seek medical attention in India. El-Zakzaky elected to return to Nigeria, citing interference in his medical care and security restrictions in India. In 2020, reports surfaced that a homicide trial against el-

Zakzaky and his wife had begun in the Kaduna High Court. While the court dismissed the charges and freed the two in July 2021, the Kaduna state government appealed and filed new charges against them.

Individuals who express nonbelief can face legal consequences. In 2020, Mubarak Bala, a humanist, was arrested in Kaduna State for social media comments criticizing Islam. Bala, who was charged with blasphemy, was transferred to Kano State, and remained detained as of August 2021.

#### **D3 0-4 pts**

**Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination? 3 / 4**

The federal government generally respects academic freedom. However, some state governments mandate religious instruction in elementary and secondary curriculums and student admission and faculty hiring policies are subject to political interference.

Schoolchildren have been affected by Boko Haram's assault on secular education, which has caused the closure or destruction of primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions. Schoolchildren have also been abducted by Boko Haram. In late 2020, Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the disappearance of over 300 students in Katsina State, though they were released a week later. In August 2021, one of the 270 students abducted by Boko Haram in Borno State in 2014 was released; Boko Haram was still believed to hold 113 of them as of her release.

Criminals seeking ransom also target schoolchildren. Between December 2020 and July 2021, armed gangs abducted over 1,000 students from northern schools for ransom. In April, Amnesty International reported that over 600 northern schools were closed due to the risk of abduction.

Students have faced ill-treatment in unregulated Islamic schools, which have operated for decades. Some parents have patronized these schools for corrective services, as a robust juvenile-rehabilitation system is lacking in much of Nigeria.

#### **D4 0-4 pts**

**Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution? 3 / 4**

Nigerians are generally free to engage in discussions on politics and other topics, though expression of critical views on political leaders or sensitive subjects like the military, religion, and ethnicity occasionally leads to arrests or violent reprisals.

By 2018, the National Assembly passed a Digital Rights and Freedom Bill, which would expand freedom of expression online by regulating government surveillance and prohibiting the suspension of internet services. The bill was sent to Buhari in 2019, who declined to sign it, stating that it covered too many technical subjects and did not address them extensively. Legislators reportedly expect that the bill will attain passage during the 2019–23 term.

The government targeted online platforms used by ordinary citizens and activists during 2021. In February, the central bank banned some transactions involving cryptocurrency, which supporters of the 2020 #EndSARS protests used to support their campaigns. Nigerians have reportedly continued to trade cryptocurrency despite the directive, however. In June, the government blocked access to Twitter after the company deleted a post from President Buhari threatening a violent response to unrest in the southeast. That restriction remained in force at year's end. Also in June, the NBC directed social network operators to apply for broadcast licenses, along with online broadcasting outlets.

## **E Associational and Organizational Rights**

#### **E1 0-4 pts**

**Is there freedom of assembly? 1 / 4**

The right to peaceful assembly is constitutionally guaranteed. However, federal and state governments frequently ban public events perceived as threats to national security, including those that could incite political, ethnic, or religious tension. Rights groups have criticized federal and state governments for prohibiting or dispersing protests that are critical of authorities or associated with controversial groups, including the IPOB. IMN activities were banned in 2019 after an Abuja court classified it as a terrorist organization.

Authorities used force to disperse protests in 2021. In February, police physically attacked at least 6 protesters who opposed the reopening of the Lekki toll gate in Lagos; at least 12 people were killed by soldiers and police while protesting police brutality there in October 2020. Later in February, video surfaced of detained protesters being held in a physical position that may have indicated

torture. In June, police in Abuja and Lagos deployed tear-gas to disperse antigovernment protests. Police reportedly harassed journalists covering the protests while destroying the mobile phones of some protesters.

#### **E2 0-4 pts**

**Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights- and governance-related work?** 2 / 4

Nigeria has a broad and vibrant civil society. However, members of some organizations face intimidation and physical harm for speaking out against Boko Haram, or encounter obstacles when investigating alleged human rights abuses committed by the military against Boko Haram suspects. Groups operating in the restive Niger Delta region face intimidation.

Aid workers operating in the northeast are impeded by restrictions imposed by civilian and military officials as well as by the activities of armed groups. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, humanitarian workers in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states reported 1,157 incidents where their work was impeded in the first quarter of 2021; one aid worker died during this period. In March, ISWAP attacked the town of Dikwa, forcing aid workers to shelter in a bunker. In April, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that its staff was forced to evacuate from the town of Damasak, which was also attacked by ISWAP.

#### **E3 0-4 pts**

**Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations?** 3 / 4

Workers are constitutionally allowed to form and join trade unions, engage in collective bargaining, and conduct strikes. Nevertheless, the government forbids strike action in some essential services, including public transportation and security.

In April 2021, the Judiciary Staff Union of Nigeria (JUSUN) launched a strike and called for greater financial autonomy for the judicial branch. In June, JUSUN suspended its strike at the request of the National Judicial Council. In August, National Association of Resident Doctors (NARD) members launched a strike over pay, conditions, and a lack of personal protective equipment. The NARD suspended the strike in October, citing progress in talks with the government.

## **F Rule of Law**

#### **F1 0-4 pts**

**Is there an independent judiciary?** 2 / 4

Judicial independence is constitutionally and legally enshrined. The judiciary has achieved some degree of independence and professionalism, but political interference, corruption, equipment, and training remain important problems.

Former Supreme Court chief justice Walter Onnoghen was suspended for allegedly maintaining undisclosed assets weeks before the 2019 presidential election, sparking fears of a politically motivated effort to remove him. Onnoghen was convicted of falsely declaring assets that April, receiving a 10-year ban from public office.

Funding is a problem for the judiciary. In 2020, President Buhari signed an executive order ostensibly giving state-level judiciaries and legislatures financial autonomy. Nigeria's 36 state governors sued the federal government that September, alleging that it sought to avoid its financial responsibilities through the order; the Supreme Court did not issue a ruling by the end of 2021.

#### **F2 0-4 pts**

**Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters?** 1 / 4

There have been numerous allegations of extortion and bribe taking within the police force. Federal and state authorities have been criticized for disregarding due process, with prolonged pretrial detention of suspects even after courts ordered their release on bail. Children with suspected Boko Haram ties face military detention according to a 2020 United Nations report.

Accountability for the use of force during the 2020 #EndSARS protests has been lacking. In November 2021, a panel of inquiry found that authorities attempted to conceal their actions at the Lekki toll gate. While the panel made 32 recommendations to the Lagos state government that month, the government fully accepted 11 and modified 6.

Nigerians in the southeast risked arbitrary arrest during the government's campaign against the IPOB's armed wing, which began in January 2021. Residents with no IPOB affiliation were arrested during the campaign.

In late June 2021, IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu was arrested and returned to Nigeria, with Abuja accusing Kanu of charges including treason. In July, Kanu's lawyer accused the Kenyan government of mistreating him before returning him to Nigeria, which it denied. Later that month, the United Kingdom called on Abuja to explain the circumstances of Kanu's arrest; Kanu maintains British citizenship.

### **F3 0-4 pts**

**Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war 0 / and insurgencies? 4**

The military has been repeatedly criticized by local and international human rights groups for extrajudicial killings, torture, and other abuses, including during counterinsurgency efforts in the northeast and operations against separatist movements in the southeast.

In January 2021, the government launched a campaign targeting the IPOB's armed wing, the Eastern Security Network (ESN), which was formed in late 2020 and targeted police stations and other public buildings. Security personnel used excessive force and extrajudicially executed residents during their campaign. Amnesty International reported that security forces killed at least 115 people between March and June; many victims were not affiliated with the ESN.

Police have been accused of using excessive force. Amnesty International reported that the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) was responsible for at least 82 cases of torture, ill-treatment, or extrajudicial killings between 2017 and May 2020. Although SARS was dissolved in 2020, allegations of police abuse persist.

Sharia courts are known to impose the death penalty. In August 2020, a Sharia court in Kano State handed Yahaya Sharif-Aminu a death sentence over blasphemous comments. In January 2021, a court in Kano State overturned Sharif-Aminu's conviction and ordered a retrial.

Boko Haram remained active during 2021, though its operations were impacted by the May death of leader Abubakar Shekau, who died by suicide after being captured by ISWAP. Boko Haram was blamed for over 30,000 deaths under Shekau's leadership. The army reported that over 1,000 Boko Haram members and their relatives surrendered in subsequent weeks. Senior Boko Haram members either shifted their allegiance to ISWAP or surrendered.

ISWAP continued to launch attacks during 2021. In May, ISWAP attacked a military base in Borno State twice, killing 35 people. September, ISWAP killed at least 8 soldiers in an ambush in Borno State in September.

A rolling conflict between farmers and the Fulani, a seminomadic Muslim ethnic group, continued to destabilize northern Nigeria in 2021. The Fulani have abandoned degraded grasslands in the north, coming into increased conflict with farmers as they travel south to find new grazing lands.

Kidnapping and other forms of criminality are acute concerns. In July 2021, criminal gangs shot down a fighter jet on the border between Kaduna and Zamfara states, though the pilot survived. In October, security forces rescued 187 kidnapping victims in Zamfara State, several weeks after they were taken captive.

Various vigilante groups are active in Nigeria. The National Assembly unsuccessfully attempted to give official recognition to the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN) in 2017 and 2019. In November 2021, the lower house passed a bill to extend official powers to the VGN.

### **F4 0-4 pts**

**Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the 1 / population? 4**

Despite constitutional safeguards against ethnic discrimination, many ethnic minorities experience bias by state governments and other societal groups in areas including employment, education, and housing.

Women are subject to widespread societal discrimination regarding matters such as education and employment. Many poor families choose to send sons to school while daughters become street vendors or domestic workers. Women also face significant legal disadvantages in states governed by Sharia statutes.

LGBT+ Nigerians face widespread official and societal discrimination. Nigerians convicted of engaging in same-sex relationships can be imprisoned for as long as 14 years, while 12 northern states maintain the death penalty for same-sex relations. LGBT+ people are also subject to assault by police officers during arrests, extortion attempts, and discrimination when accessing public and private services. A 2019 survey showed widespread opposition to LGBT+ rights, with 74 percent of respondents supporting prison sentences for those engaging in same-sex activity.

## G Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

### G1 0-4 pts

**Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education?** 1 / 4

While the freedom of movement is legally guaranteed, security officials frequently impose dusk-to-dawn curfews and other movement restrictions in areas affected by communal violence or by militant activities. The UNHCR reported that 2.2 million people were internally displaced as of December 2021.

### G2 0-4 pts

**Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors?** 1 / 4

Nigeria's poorly regulated property rights system hinders citizens and private businesses from engaging in the efficient and legal purchase or sale of property, including land. Bribery is a common practice when starting a business and registering property. Women belonging to certain ethnic groups are often denied equal rights to inherit property due to customary laws and practices.

However, the climate for private enterprise in recent years has benefited from advancements in credit accessibility, ease of starting a business, ease of paying taxes, and property registration.

The property rights of Fulani and of farmers are affected by violence as Fulani travel south to find new grazing lands. Herding groups' grazing lands have been used for cultivation, while Fulani herders have been observed expropriating farmers' land and crops. In May 2021, 17 state governors called for an open-grazing ban but President Buhari voiced his disagreement, questioning the proposal's legality.

*Score Change: The score declined from 2 to 1 because the government has failed to protect the rights of farmers and herders who have had their land and property expropriated amid escalating communal violence in recent years.*

### G3 0-4 pts

**Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance?** 1 / 4

Despite the existence of strict laws against rape, domestic violence, female genital mutilation (FGM), and child marriage, these offenses remain widespread, with low rates of reporting and prosecution. Women and girls in camps for displaced persons have reported sexual abuse by members of the military and other authorities. Boko Haram's attacks on women's rights have been particularly egregious, with victims often subjected to forced marriage and rape, among other acts.

Abortion is illegal unless the life of the mother is in danger. As a result, many women seek out dangerous illegal abortions, finding themselves at risk of medical complications. Women who face such complications often do not receive further medical treatment.

### G4 0-4 pts

**Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation?** 1 / 4

Nigerian organized crime groups are heavily involved in human trafficking. Boko Haram has subjected children to forced labor and sex slavery. Both Boko Haram and a civilian vigilante group that opposes the militants have forcibly recruited child soldiers, according to the US State Department.

Meanwhile, implementation of the 2003 Child Rights Act, which protects children from sexual exploitation and other abuses, remains uneven; at the end of 2021, UNICEF noted that eight northern states have not implemented the legislation, though all eight were in the process of doing so.

The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) continues to rescue trafficking survivors and prosecute some suspected traffickers, but its funding is reportedly inadequate and labor traffickers face few prosecutions. Survivors often find their freedom of movement withheld by NAPTIP in poorly managed shelters and experience discrimination when seeking access to public services after their release.

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