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A Commentary on the December 2013 Nigeria Operational Guidance Note

This commentary identifies what the 'Still Human Still Here' coalition considers to be the main inconsistencies and omissions between the currently available country of origin information (COI) and case law on Nigeria and the conclusions reached in the December 2013 Nigeria Operational Guidance Note (OGN) issued by the UK Home Office. Where we believe inconsistencies have been identified, the relevant section of the OGN is highlighted in blue.

An index of full sources of the COI referred to in this commentary is also provided at the end of the document.

This commentary is a guide for legal practitioners and decision-makers in respect of the relevant COI, by reference to the sections of the Operational Guidance Note on Nigeria issued in December 2013. Access the complete OGN on Nigeria [here](#).

The document should be used as a tool to help to identify relevant COI and the COI referred to can be considered by decision makers in assessing asylum applications and appeals. This document should not be submitted as evidence to the UK Home Office, the Tribunal or other decision makers in asylum applications or appeals. However, legal representatives are welcome to submit the COI referred to in this document to decision makers (including judges) to help in the accurate determination of an asylum claim or appeal.

The COI referred to in this document is not exhaustive and should always be complemented by case-specific COI research.

Contents

3.16 The Niger Delta	p. 2
3.17 Fear of cults, gangs and vigilante groups (including fear of juju, student confraternities and bakassi boys)	p. 10
3.18 Boko Haram	p. 14
3.19 Religious persecution	p. 34
3.20 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	p. 51
3.21 Victims of trafficking	p. 55
3.22 Forced marriage	p. 63
3.23 Gay men and lesbians	p. 66
3.24 Prison conditions	p. 76
2.2 Actors of Protection	p. 85
2.3 Internal Relocation	p. 94
Witchcraft	p. 112
APPENDIX	
Useful sources to consult on the security and humanitarian situation in Nigeria	p. 122
Index of sources	p. 124

3.16 The Niger Delta

The conclusion for this main category of claim states:

Excerpt from the December 2013 Nigeria OGN

3.16.7 Conclusion. Whilst applicants from the Niger Delta may face harassment and ill-treatment at the hands of the security forces who work to protect the interests of the oil industry, they are unlikely to be able to establish that they face treatment amounting to persecution based solely on their residence there. Applicants who are able to demonstrate that they face a level of harassment and ill-treatment amounting to persecution at the hands of the security forces in the Niger Delta are unlikely to be able to seek redress from the authorities. Such applicants, however, have the option to relocate internally to another area of the country outside of the Niger Delta where they will not be of continuing interest to the security forces feared. Therefore, a grant of asylum or Humanitarian Protection will not be appropriate for this category of claim.

The conclusion for this main category of claim asserts that applicants can escape the threat of persecution from the security forces by relocating outside of the Niger Delta. Note the position of the UNHCR Guidelines on internal relocation in cases raising the state as the agent of persecution:

- [UNHCR, Guidelines on International Protection No. 4: "Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative" Within the Context of Article 1A\(2\) of the 1951 Convention and/or 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, 23 July 2003](#)

[...] I. The Relevance Analysis

[...] b) Is the agent of persecution the State? National authorities are presumed to act throughout the country. If they are the feared persecutors, there is a presumption in principle that an internal flight or relocation alternative is not available. [...]

The conclusion for this main category of claim also only raises the 'safety' or 'relevance' criteria of internal relocation; the reasonableness of internal relocation is not addressed. For analysis on this point, see section [2.3 Internal Relocation](#).

The conclusion addresses the risk arising from state security forces, but does not mention the risk arising from armed groups in the Niger Delta. This is despite the *Treatment* section of the OGN documenting the practice of kidnap for ransom by armed groups (at paragraphs 3.16.5 and 3.16.6). The following additional non-exhaustive, illustrative COI from the past 12 months further documents kidnappings perpetrated by armed groups in the Niger Delta:

Kidnapping by armed gangs in the Niger Delta

- [Jamestown Foundation, Militancy in the Niger Delta Becoming Increasingly Political – A Worry for 2015, 14 November 2013, Terrorism Monitor Volume: 11 Issue: 21](#)

As oil bunkering, piracy, and kidnapping in the Niger Delta has continued or worsened over the course of the year, the general instability has increasingly politicized militants in the region, exacerbating a growing problem for the central government. The more political mindset of the militants has entailed an intensification of the rhetoric emanating from the Delta, marking an evolution in the aims of the militant networks in the region. The more political - and religious - justifications cited in their threats indicate that the militants are pursuing loftier goals in recent times than the mere pragmatic economic benefits derived via oil theft, which since the 2009 amnesty has been the prime driver of local criminal behavior. In such an environment, 2015 looms large, not only because of the contentious presidential elections that year, but also because the stipend payments and training protocols of the 2009 amnesty officially expire in 2015.

To be sure, instability and criminal activity has not stopped and several significant incidents have occurred in recent months. On September 6, unknown gunmen kidnapped the nation's second-most senior Anglican archbishop, Ignatius Kattey, and his wife near their residence in Port Harcourt. Similarly, on

September 11, a traditional ruler in southeastern Edo state was kidnapped from his palace. Shell has likewise experienced significant disruptions in output due to criminal activity over the past several months. In mid-October, the firm decried the level of oil theft and claimed it had been forced to defer some 300,000 barrels of oil per day. A total of 189 crude theft points were repaired on the Trans-Niger Pipeline (TNP) and the Nembe Creek Trunk Line (NCTL) between January and September of this year, and the TNP line has been closed down at least five times since early July due to leaks from crude oil thefts. An official for the Nigerian branch of Shell called for a more concerted effort to protect the lines and lamented what was "turning out to be a dangerous development in the Niger Delta" (Daily Trust [Lagos], October 15). Criminal activity offshore has also reached dangerous levels. A report from early October noted that the amount of money stolen via piracy had reached \$100 million since 2010 as the militants have streamlined their operations and tactics, leading to a highly successful attempt rate and many significant heists. [1] A recent report noted further that piracy attacks off Nigeria's coast had increased by a third year-on-year. [2] MEND-affiliated criminals also claimed the high-profile kidnapping of two U.S. sailors off Nigeria's coast in late October (Bloomberg, October 25).

Perhaps of greater importance is the transformation of the underlying motivation for these incidents. Prior to the amnesty, while profit was undeniably an aim, MEND-affiliated militants were primarily politically motivated. As a result, many of the attacks did not involve monetary gain and were direct assaults on personnel and energy installations with the goal of destroying output and forcing the government to address the needs of the local population. For the past several years, brazen theft has by-and-large supplanted the former political ideology of the pre-amnesty militants and the bunkering and distribution of oil became deeply engrained as a strategy for economic livelihood within the delta.

Currently, MEND and similarly motivated groups appear to be assuming an increasingly political stance in their activity. Always an attractive means of earning income, opportunistic criminal activity in the Delta (kidnapping, oil bunkering and piracy) may become a form of political protest once again. A few recent incidents demonstrate this trend:

The kidnapper of Archbishop Kattey claimed that the kidnappings in the Delta and elsewhere were intended "to draw the attention of the Federal Government to the sufferings of the people of Kokori and Urhobo at large" and cited the "continuous cheating of our people by the Federal Government," noting that "for over 50 years now, they have been drilling oil from our community... yet we have nothing to show for it." He went on to threaten to shut down all well heads in the area if his demands for development were not met (The Guardian, September 19).

MEND's ultimately unfulfilled threat against Chevron's Escravos plant on October 1, part of the militants' so-called Hurricane Exodus operation, was a clear act of political protest, with no discernible monetary objective (see Terrorism Monitor, September 20).

In early September, MEND offered to cease its campaign (launched in April) against the government and oil industry if the government addressed its political demands, i.e. development of the region and more influence in the oil sector (Platts.com, September 9).

Purportedly part of Operations Hurricane Exodus, MEND spokesman Jomo Gbomo claimed responsibility for an explosion and fire at a refinery in Warri on October 22, saying the attack was retaliation for the "unsustainable and fraudulent Niger Delta amnesty program" (This Day [Lagos], October 23). There were conflicting reports regarding casualties and the nature of the incident. Some sources claimed at least ten were killed; the firm claimed an investigation was ongoing but claimed there were no casualties, indicated that the explosion was caused by a gas leak rather than an attack. (Nigerian Tribune [Ibadan], October 23; SpyGhana [Accra], October 22).

Some MEND statements indicate a more religious bent, a novel and potentially destabilizing development. Reportedly to "save Christianity in Nigeria from annihilation", MEND threatened in April to launch attacks against mosques, hajj camps, Islamic institutions, gatherings of Muslims, and Islamic clerics in a campaign codenamed "Operation Barbarossa" (Leadership [Abuja], April 13). While this was not the first time MEND-related militants made threats in reaction to Boko Haram activity, their statements included more direct threats against Muslims and Islamic institutions than their previous rhetoric (see Terrorism Monitor, February 23, 2012). Although it was later rescinded, Operation Barbarossa raised concerns about the expansion of MEND interests to the activity of Boko Haram, the nation's most pressing political and security problem. Though it is difficult to gauge the seriousness of these threats, MEND spokesman Jomo Gbomo said the movement's decision to rescind the threats was due to "the intervention of well-meaning Nigerians, religious bodies and the Nigerian government's recent show of sincerity with the order to release from detention women, children, relatives and suspected Boko Haram members, giving room for

genuine dialogue (This Day [Lagos], May 23). In short, MEND was rewarding the government for making steps towards peaceful conflict resolution while showing genuine concern for innocent Nigerians - an approach MEND would similarly like to see directed towards the Delta.

Timing is compounding matters. The controversy surrounding President Jonathan's expected 2015 presidential run is evoking hostility in the north, as expected, but also in the south, where it is feared that Jonathan, a Bayelsa southerner, may be ousted from office. Although the region perceives itself as marginalized by the state and federal government, some Delta youths have an even greater fear of a northern presidency and have threatened war should the presidency switch back to the north (This Day [Lagos], September 9). Separately, one of the original MEND leaders, Asari Dokubo, has likewise warned of bloodshed should Jonathan not retain the presidency (Premium Times [Abuja], September 9).

Despite these political issues and problems in the Delta, perspective needs to be kept. The capability of MEND and other disgruntled militants remains highly questionable, as evidenced by their inability to fulfill their threats against Chevron or perpetrate other violent acts as promised. Simply put, MEND is too weak and disjointed to conduct a focused campaign against energy installations for the foreseeable future. On the other hand, the situation should not be dismissed. Unaddressed, long-standing grievances in this volatile region could, with scant provocation, erupt into yet another cycle of deadly violence.

Nonetheless, the government's response has been tacit dismissal of the problem. In an effective hand-washing of the matter, the Special Assistant to the President on the Amnesty Program, Kingsley Kuku, has on several occasions claimed to have successfully fulfilled the mandate of the amnesty, citing as success the return of oil production to pre-amnesty levels while ignoring the fundamental drivers of instability in the region (This Day [Abuja], February 17; July 17). Aside from the blatant disregard for one of the fundamental purposes of a government, i.e. the provision of law and order, such statements by the governing elite exemplify their continued abrogation of responsibility for the Niger Delta's development as it concerns the center. As substantive improvements to the delta can only arise from the central federal government, this bodes ominous not only for the region, but also for the future of the nation. [...]

➤ [Premium Times, Nigeria: Kidnappers Release Oronto Douglas' Sister, 25 October 2013](#)

The elder sister of Oronto Douglas, a close aide to President Goodluck Jonathan, has been released by her abductors.

Augusta Douglas-Ayam was released by her kidnappers on Thursday morning, nine days after she was kidnapped in the Niger Delta area, the family said.

"After nine traumatic days in the hands of abductors, our beloved sister Augusta Douglas-Ayam was this morning unconditionally released to the family," Romeo Samuel Douglas, a spokesperson for the Douglas family said in a statement.

"We thank God for his protection and intervention. We also thank all Nigerians who through prayers and words of encouragement supported us throughout this ordeal."

"Our sister is currently in a hospital receiving treatment."

The family declined to comment on whether ransom was paid for the release or not.

"We will not be making any further statements on this issue and wish to put it behind us," they said.

Kidnapping has been on the rise in the Niger Delta and other states across Nigeria with many of the victims' families paying huge amounts as ransom before they are released.

Security agencies have also arrested many suspected kidnappers with some being prosecuted.

➤ [BBC, Archbishop Ignatius Kattey freed by Nigerian kidnappers, 15 September 2013](#)

[...] One of Nigeria's most senior Anglican clerics, who was kidnapped by armed men more than a week ago, has been freed.

Archbishop Ignatius Kattey was released without a ransom on Saturday evening near the southern city of Port Harcourt, police said. He was in a stable condition.

Officials provided no further information about his captors.

Kidnapping for ransom has become common in the oil-rich Niger Delta region around Port Harcourt in recent years.

Numerous armed gangs operate in the area following years of violent protests against the oil industry.

Archbishop Kattey is the head of the Anglican Church in the predominantly Christian Niger Delta.

The cleric and his wife Beatrice were seized close to their Port Harcourt residence on 6 September. His wife was released unharmed several hours later.

"The archbishop was released behind a filling station at Eleme in Rivers state," police spokeswoman Angela Agabe said in a statement.

"His captors dropped him when the police were about to close in on them. No ransom was paid." [...]

➤ [U.S. Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2012: Nigeria, 19 April 2013](#)

[...] b. Disappearance

Continuing abductions of civilians by criminal groups occurred in the Niger Delta and Southeast

Other parts of the country also experienced a significant increase in abductions. Political figures were often targets of abduction, largely due to their status as wealthy figures in the community; rarely did kidnappers announce political motives for the abductions.

[...] In recent years Akwa Ibom, Abia, Anambra, Imo, and Rivers states passed strict antikidnapping laws that prescribe long prison sentences, and sometimes the death penalty, for those found guilty of kidnapping. These laws resulted in few convictions.

Police and other security forces were often implicated in the kidnapping schemes. On April 5, then acting inspector general of police Mohammed Abubakar ordered the arrest of the officer in charge of the Anti-Kidnapping Task Force in Delta State, a chief superintendent of police, and six other officers under suspicion they aided and abetted kidnappers in the state. The IGP also disbanded the task force. Police officials suspected the accused officers had provided information on the movements of prominent people in the state to kidnappers. In June the police service commission returned the head of the task force to his former position, provoking protests from the Delta State Legislature. [...]

The Niger Delta region is home to a large oil industry that has a maximum production capacity of approximately 2.5 million barrels of crude oil per day. However, during the year, floods, oil theft, and pipeline sabotage lowered production to approximately 2.2 million barrels a day. From 2006 to 2009, militant groups used violence, including kidnapping oil company workers, as part of a campaign to demand greater control of the region's resources. In June 2009 the government announced a general and unconditional amnesty for militants in the Niger Delta, and almost all major militant leaders accepted the offer by the October 2009 deadline. Although the amnesty led to a sharp decline in attacks by militants, kidnapping for ransom, armed robberies, gang wars, and fighting connected to the theft of crude oil, known as illegal oil bunkering, continued and contributed to the region's general insecurity and lack of economic vitality. [...]

g. Use of Excessive Force and Other Abuses in Internal Conflicts

[...] By year's end 26,368 former militants had benefitted in some way from the amnesty program. Many former militants received vocational training and stipends. At year's end 5,280 former militants were undergoing vocational training, with 1,538 attending courses abroad. The amnesty program resulted in a sharp decline in militant violence in the region. Some observers expressed concern, however, the militants used amnesty payments to purchase more arms. [...]

Criminal gangs, called "cults" in some parts of the region, copied the methods of more sophisticated militants to amass wealth and power. In a recent trend, kidnappers targeted businessmen, doctors, teachers, religious leaders, foreign residents, and others. Gangs extended their reach beyond the Niger Delta states, where they originated as politically sponsored thugs to intimidate opponents and aid election rigging. Kidnappings committed primarily for ransom increased throughout the country, including in the North (see section 6). In recent years power struggles between gangs resulted in extensive property damage and hundreds of deaths, including of civilian bystanders. [...]

Abductions: Government authorities responded to kidnappings in the Niger Delta by deploying the JTF, which reportedly used excessive force and engaged criminals in gun battles.

During the year criminals continued to kidnap the relatives (usually children or parents) of prominent politicians for ransom or to force payment for services such as protection details and voter intimidation during elections. [...]

➤ [BBC, Nigeria police bodies found in Niger Delta after ambush, 10 April 2013](#)

[...] Nigeria's security forces have recovered the bodies of 11 of the 12 policemen killed in the oil-rich Niger Delta on Friday, police have said.

Some of the bodies had been mutilated and burnt beyond recognition, AFP news agency quoted witnesses as saying.

Last week, a militant group said it would resume attacks after its leader, Henry Okah, was jailed for a bombing campaign in 2010.

The oil-rich region is vital to Nigeria's economy.

However, many people are poor, fuelling resentment towards the national government and oil companies. At the weekend, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (Mend) said it had ambushed a police boat in the creeks and waterways of Bayelsa state, killing the policemen.

Police spokesman Alex Akhigbe said 11 bodies had been recovered, while one was still unaccounted for. [...]

➤ [US Institute of Peace, What's Next for Security in the Niger Delta? 6 April 2013](#)

[...] The Amnesty

[...] There has been no rigorous assessment of the amnesty program's successes and failures to date, and this report passes no final judgment. The necessary data are absent: No outside body has tracked outcomes over the past four years, and the Presidential Amnesty Office, which administers the program, is still developing its own monitoring and evaluation tools. Furthermore, success would be hard to measure, given that the government never articulated clear goals for the amnesty. The Jonathan administration has also struggled at times to communicate its achievements, whether on the Niger Delta or more broadly.

Successes

The above notwithstanding, gains from the amnesty have been real and substantial. Most notably, the program helped cut armed attacks on oil installations to almost zero. [...] In addition to the oil sector rebound, anecdotal evidence suggests kidnappings, particularly of expatriates, fell sharply in late 2009. Conflict-related deaths likely dropped, though no good data exist. [...]

Warlordism" and Organized Crime

Perhaps the strongest criticism of the amnesty is that its transfers of wealth and political power have turned militant leaders into "warlords." At first glance, this designation appears apt in several ways. The most influential ex-commanders now hold government mandates to guard national oil company pipelines and help police Nigeria's coastal and inland waters. Military and police forces—which once engaged leaders in armed combat—provide them and their associates security details in Lagos and Abuja. State governors defer to them on some decisions. A handful of ex-militants have come to rival the state as providers of public services, offering communities food, education, and health care. A few arbitrate local disputes and regulate access to land, water, or other natural resources within limited boundaries. Finally, as will be discussed later in this report, some ex-fighters have assumed the warlord-like roles of middle-man and beneficiary from organized crime.

But how much Niger Delta militants resemble warlords from other conflict zones? The federal government arguably has not ceded them territorial sovereignty or a monopoly on violence to the extent seen in Afghanistan, Liberia, Somalia, or other warlord strongholds. Neither does the state lack physical or legal access to militant turf, as has been the case in Chechnya or Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Niger Delta militants do not have the political footholds or records of atrocities seen in some places, where disturbed individuals who carried out massacres, regulated trade, used child soldiers, an murdered heads of state won high seats in government. Nor do they seem to have created large "shadow states" that eclipse the Nigerian government in legitimacy, diplomatic presence, or ultimate territorial control, thereby signaling "state failure." It should also be remembered that periods of militia activity are common in underserved, weakly governed, rural, ethnic-minority enclaves like the Niger Delta, particularly when the formal state is transitioning from military to democratic rule.

Arguably the ultimate measure of security risk from a warlord is the amount of difficulty the state faces in dislodging him from his turf. No strong evidence suggests Nigeria's security forces could not corral the current group of Niger Delta militant leaders if called upon. The main commanders likely are weaker in fighting strength and tactical sophistication than the military. They may know the terrain better, but they do not control human or signals intelligence out of the region. Most major military strikes on militant positions during the 2000s ended in quick retreats, particularly when air strikes were used. So long as the delta remains calm, however, provoking the ex-commanders through military action would make little sense. [...]

While the amnesty has not created warlords in the worst senses, it arguably has helped strengthen the local environment to enable certain types of crime. Organized criminality in the Niger Delta, from bank robbery and kidnapping to industrial-scale oil theft and arms and drug trafficking, certainly predates 2009. Facilitation of crime around the amnesty, it should be noted, was not an overt federal government policy.

But in some cases, the cease-fire conditions that went along with the program gave violent actors fresh political standing and cover to engage in crime. The recent booms in Gulf of Guinea sea piracy and the illegal refining of stolen oil have strong links to ex-militants. Oil theft, in turn, has undermined the higher production and revenues from the amnesty, sped up environmental devastation, and forced Nigeria to draw on savings at a time of high global oil prices. Nothing says the trends are irreversible, and a zero-tolerance policy for some types of crime could seriously jeopardize the peace. But again, addressing Niger Delta organized criminality at this stage carries an uncertain amount of risk. What can be said with certainty is this: The amnesty and its aftermath have created some new space for violent actors in national politics. Compared with some conflict-affected nations, their powers may be relatively small. But now that the space for them has opened, others likely will compete to fill it once the current group is finished. Closing this space will pose a fresh challenge in Nigerian political life, whether it is done by President Jonathan or a successor. [...]

➤ [Vanguard, Why bunkering, kidnappings are back in Niger Delta – Security agencies, 30 March 2013](#)

[...] Barely four years after Niger Delta militants denounced violence against the state and accepted an unconditional amnesty, the perpetrators of the twin evil of oil bunkering and kidnapping for ransom, are back to work even with greater steam and sophistication, Saturday Vanguard has learnt. The late President Umaru YarÁdua declared amnesty for repentant militants on June 25, 2009, paving the way for the return of a large cache of weapons by militants and the relocation and reintegration of the former warlords from the vast creeks of the Niger Delta region to the society.

However, indications emerged yesterday that kidnapping and bunkering, which had significantly died down in the wake of the general pardon to militants, had resumed in earnest in most parts of the creeks.

Findings by Saturday Vanguard revealed that the attempt by the government to compensate major warlords in the region with mouth-watering contracts running into billions of Naira for the protection of pipelines was responsible for the renewed level of attacks and oil theft in the Niger Delta.

A top security expert in the Niger Delta told Saturday Vanguard that the award of multi-million contracts by the Federal Government to selected former Niger Delta militant leaders for the protection of oil pipelines was responsible for the resurgence of the new wave of criminality in the area.

The source, who has been working with other security agencies in the Niger Delta for many years, pointed out that most of the Niger Delta warlords who got the oil pipelines surveillance jobs betrayed the government by not taking care of their foot soldiers who were part and parcel of bunkering, kidnapping and destruction of oil facilities before the 'accepted amnesty'. [...]

➤ [Jamestown Foundation, No End in Sight: Violence in the Niger Delta and Gulf of Guinea, 8 March 2013, Terrorism Monitor Volume: 11 Issue: 5](#)

[...] The Kidnapping Industry

Perhaps more worrying, a recent spate of kidnapping incidents involving wealthy Nigerians and foreigners (a favorite MEND pastime) highlights the increase in criminal activity in the region. [...]

In the most high-profile of these incidents, Kamene Okonjo, the mother of Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, was abducted from her home in Delta State on December 9, 2012. In response, soldiers arrested 63 people (including two policemen) during raids aimed at finding Okonjo in Delta State. Finance Minister Okonjo-Iweala is a former leading candidate to head the World Bank and is known in Nigeria for her campaign to end the controversial fuel subsidy program. Okonjo-Iweala blamed her mother's kidnapping on those angered by the government's decision to discontinue the controversial fuel subsidy program. The subsidy has benefited impoverished locals who enjoy artificially low prices on gas, but has also constituted a major drain on the government's resources, leading Okonjo-Iweala to end the program. However, since Nigeria lacks adequate refining capacity and must export its oil abroad to be refined, the subsidy has also been a cash cow for smugglers and corrupt politicians who import refined fuel at inflated prices and then collect on the subsidy (This Day, December 12, 2012). While it remains unknown whether Niger Delta militants were directly involved in the kidnapping (Okonjo-Iweala blamed only the corrupt political elite of the ruling People's Democratic Party for her mother's abduction), the matter nonetheless demonstrates the growing instability of a region in which security and political officials are complicit in energy-related criminal activity, whether in alliance with administrators in Abuja, rebels in the Delta creeks, or both. [...]

➤ [BBC, Hyundai paid Nigeria kidnap ransom, police say, 4 January 2013](#)

South Korean firm Hyundai paid a ransom of \$190,000 (£118,000) to free six workers kidnapped last month, Nigerian police say.

Bayelsa state police say they learned of the ransom after capturing members of the criminal gang believed responsible.

Hyundai Heavy Industries has not commented on the reports.

The BBC's Habiba Adamu, in Abuja, says it is rare for anyone to acknowledge ransoms paid to kidnappers in Nigeria.

The kidnapping of foreigners and wealthy Nigerians is common in the oil-rich Niger Delta region, and has become a lucrative trade for criminals.

Gunmen kidnapped the four South Korean and two Nigerian workers after storming a passenger boat on 17 December.

They were released days later but South Korean officials declined to say whether they had paid a ransom.

Bayelsa state police commissioner Kingsley Omire said most of the suspected kidnappers were later arrested, including the leader.

He told the police that a payment of 30m naira (\$190,000) had been made, with each gang member getting 3m, Mr Omire told BBC Hausa.

The man is said to have later escaped from custody.

"The police did not know a ransom was paid before the release," the state police chief said.

He said that paying ransoms would only encourage more kidnapping and urged people to instead contact the police, saying they have freed several hostages.

The mother of Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was kidnapped in December and held for five days before being freed.

It is not clear whether a ransom was paid, or whether the motive was criminal or political.

➤ [Voice of America News, Civilian Armed Groups Fight Crime, Wreak Havoc in Niger Delta, 31 December 2012](#)

[...] In Delta State, Monday Okwoserie heads about 80 groups that are composed of between 20 and 200 men each. He says armed robberies have decreased dramatically since they have been on patrol. But, he adds, kidnappings now plague wealthy Niger Delta families on a nearly daily basis.

"The latest crime now is kidnapping. We are fighting against kidnapping. We want to reduce it by all means." In early December, 83-year-old Kamene Okonjo, the mother of Nigeria's finance minister and the wife of a traditional king in the Niger Delta, was abducted from her palace, prompting many people to say that no one is safe. Gabriel Asakene, a security consultant in Delta State, says the civilian armed groups have made the streets safer in some places where security forces are overstretched. "They are supposed to guide and protect the citizenry in that particular locality. Actually, the role they are supposed to play is to maintain peace for that particularly place," he said. "To see that there's no sign of robbery, thieves and the rest of them." He says, however, little oversight of the groups, sometimes known as bakassi, means they can act like thugs, beating up people and demanding thousands of Nigerian naira, the local currency.

"An incident that happened not that long ago in my area: Some bakassi came and arrested some group of boys and they got home and beaten up. And in the end they were instructed to be settling themselves with some 15,000, some 8,000 [Nigerian naira]," he said. Asakene says local people often fear the bakassi, and that fear alone prevents some crimes. [...]

➤ [Unlock Nigeria \(Fund for Peace\), Beyond Terror and Militants: Assessing Conflict Risk in Nigeria, 10 December 2012](#)

[...] Cult Violence In Rivers State

On one level, Nigeria's Amnesty program has been a great success. Since 2009, militant attacks on state assets and oil facilities have declined significantly. Partly due to this trend (as well as global economic factors) oil production is now up. In 2008, an average of 800,000 barrels per day were produced; in 2012, this figure has soared to 2.4 million barrels per day.

The Amnesty program was designed to address a narrow problem: militancy against state assets. Unfortunately, the broader problem of human insecurity remains. Abductions, violent crime, mob violence, conflict over land and resources, chieftaincy tussles, political thuggery, abuses by public security forces, and gang violence are major issues for people living in the Niger Delta, issues that the Amnesty

program was not designed to address. In fact, as one person told our researcher in Port Harcourt, frankly speaking, “for us, militancy was not the problem.”

As expressed in Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews, one key driver of human insecurity that needs to be addressed is cult violence, as groups of armed youths terrorize the population despite several initiatives by the government to eradicate them. Cults are gangs whose membership rosters are secret and are bound by oaths.

Cults that once stood for the protection and emancipation of the people of the Niger Delta have become among the most feared elements of society. [...]

Urban cult godfathers provide members with arms, especially during electioneering for political thuggery. Criminals hire them to administer routes and provide onsite-security for illegal oil bunkering activities. Cult gangs are active within community youth associations as enforcers, to defend the interests of their members, increase their influence and for protection. Businesses have been known to make direct payments to those associated with cult gangs, to ensure the safety of their operations. In addition to extortion and racketeering activities, cultists are used as bouncers in clubs, restaurants, and brothels. In sum, cult gangs are funded through illegal activities such as armed robberies, protection money, dues paid by members, land rights from prostitutes, and payments for hits. The police are undertrained and frequently ill-equipped to deal with this threat to public security. Corruption also undermines the effectiveness of the response. Cults have served as a gateway into all kinds of criminality and violence, including militancy. [...]

Although the Amnesty program did in fact peel off the leaders and incentivize the syndicates to stop attacking state assets, it did little to address issues of criminality, political thuggery, and other forms of violence that these groups are frequently involved in. Furthermore, as the legitimacy of traditional leadership structures has eroded due to their inability to deal with transcommunal issues, cult groups have backed their own candidates to take leadership in the community, further destroying traditional dispute resolution mechanisms. Chieftaincy tussles and other violent intra-communal conflicts have erupted across the Niger Delta. [...]

Urban Cults in Rivers State

Urban cult gangs originate from innocuous cultural groupings of young people that usually grew up together or went to the same school. Over time these evolve into street cult gangs dedicated to the protection of their members and territory and providing them with economic opportunities within their community. Members are bound by an oath and keep their identities secret.

These gangs are prevalent in squatter camps and poor, dense neighborhoods. Urban gangs maintain fluid alliances, merging with confraternity military wings and are often sourced by ethnic militias, politicians, and criminals for specific tasks and activities.

Cultism and the response to cultism frequently leads to escalations in human insecurity. A recent example in Rivers of such a vicious cycle was the October 2012 lynching of four alleged thieves who were reported to be cult gang members. According to some news sources five young men from the University of Port Harcourt went to Aluu village to collect a debt from another student.

As they were attempting to do so, local villagers apprehended them and accused them of stealing a phone and a laptop. As punishment for the offence a vigilante mob beat them and burned four of them alive. In retaliation, students from the university invaded Aluu destroying cars, setting buildings ablaze and looting houses and shops. The university was closed for weeks and people left the village of Aluu for fear of further violence, whether by cultists, student protesters, or police. This incident is an example of how the prevalence of cultism and criminality has led to a cycle of vigilantism and security crackdowns, escalating violence in an environment where people have little confidence in the judicial system. [...]

3.17 Fear of cults, gangs and vigilante groups (including fear of juju, student confraternities and bakassi boys)

The conclusion for this main category of claim states:

Excerpt from the December 2013 Nigeria OGN

3.17.13 Conclusion. Applicants who fear, or who have experienced ill-treatment at the hands of these groups will generally be able to seek protection. However those applicants for whom sufficiency of protection is not available will generally be able to safely relocate within the country to escape such treatment. Therefore, a grant of asylum or Humanitarian Protection will not generally be appropriate for this category of claim.

The conclusion asserts that effective protection will generally be available for persons fearing cults, gangs and vigilante groups, however no COI is included in the OGN to support this supposition. In fact, COI is presented in the OGN that indicates collusion between certain cults, gangs and vigilante groups, and politicians and the security forces (paragraphs 3.17.3, 3.17.5 and 3.17.6), and on the specific shortcomings in relation to the police or judicial system addressing cults, gangs and vigilante violence (paragraphs 3.17.4, 3.17.5, 3.17.9 and 3.17.10), thus undermining the ability of applicants to seek state protection. Additional sources corroborate this collusion:

➤ [Ombatse: Nigerian Religious Cult Joins War on the State in Central Nigeria; Terrorism Monitor Volume: 11 Issue: 10, 17 May 2013](#)

[...] The Ombatse cult is based on traditional forms of worship practiced by the Eggon ethnic group. The Eggon people of Nasarawa State are roughly divided in their religious allegiance to Christianity and Islam, but many see no contradiction in also following more traditional belief systems. The Eggon speak their own Benue-Congo language (Eggon), though traditional oral histories of the group trace their origin to Yemen. Today, they are concentrated in the Lafia, Akwanga and Nasarawa-Eggon districts of Nasarawa State. [...]

Religion or Politics?

Some Eggon claim to have engineered the election of Nasarawa State governor Umaru Tanko al-Makura (a non-Eggon Muslim) by invoking the intervention of the Ombatse shrine. However, al-Makura has since fallen out of favor with the Eggon. Allumaga and other Ombatse leaders now accuse successive Muslim governors of Nasarawa State of attempting to carry out an “ethnic cleansing” of Eggon from parts of the state (Nigerian Tribune, May 12). Many Eggon are now supporting the candidacy of a fellow Eggon, current state minister of information Labaran Maku, in the 2015 election for governor.

Ethnic militias have frequently been formed and deployed for intimidation purposes in Nigerian electoral contests and there are some in the state capital of Lafia who believe Ombatse has a political purpose related to the inability of the Eggon to produce a governor from their own group despite their numbers in the state. The militia may in this sense be part of an effort to rally the frequently disunited Eggon behind a single purpose through oath-taking and appeals to traditional norms (Premium Times [Abuja], May 10).

The Nasarawa Commissioner for Information, Hamza Elayo, has suggested that some Eggon politicians may have recruited Ombatse to further their cause: “It is obvious they are being sponsored by some ambitious politicians... The security agencies have been closing in on such politicians but I don't want to mention names” (AFP, May 9). An official statement by Governor al-Makura confirmed the administration's view that the Ombatse violence was political rather than religious in nature: “The crisis has no religious [dimension] as speculated by some sections of the media; some people are just bent on destroying the state because they feel they are not in power” (Premium Times [Abuja], May 12).

Even Ombatse spokesman Zachary Zamani Allumaga has acknowledged the movement has a political purpose. Referring to their self-declared responsibility for the election of the present governor, Allumaga noted:

There is serious animosity against the Ombatse group simply because they are aware that we went to Azhili [a traditional deity] and prayed for the political landscape of Nasarawa State to change for good, and indeed it changed... As 2015 is approaching, we are aware that some people are planning to ensure the Eggon nation is dislodged from the political landscape of the state, so they call us all kinds of names so

that they can hang us. But I can assure you, we are prepared to pray to Azhili with all legitimacy (Vanguard [Lagos], December 22, 2012). [...]

➤ [U.S. Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2012: Nigeria, 19 April 2013](#)

[...] b. Disappearance

Continuing abductions of civilians by criminal groups occurred in the Niger Delta and Southeast. [...] Other parts of the country also experienced a significant increase in abductions.

[...] Police and other security forces were often implicated in the kidnapping schemes. On April 5, then acting inspector general of police Mohammed Abubakar ordered the arrest of the officer in charge of the Anti-Kidnapping Task Force in Delta State, a chief superintendent of police, and six other officers under suspicion they aided and abetted kidnappers in the state. The IGP also disbanded the task force. Police officials suspected the accused officers had provided information on the movements of prominent people in the state to kidnappers. In June the police service commission returned the head of the task force to his former position, provoking protests from the Delta State Legislature. [...]

[...] g. Use of Excessive Force and Other Abuses in Internal Conflicts

Abductions: [...] During the year criminals continued to kidnap the relatives (usually children or parents) of prominent politicians for ransom or to force payment for services such as protection details and voter intimidation during elections. [...]

➤ [Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Nigeria: The Black Axe confraternity, also known as the Neo-Black Movement of Africa, including their rituals, oaths of secrecy, and use of symbols or particular signs; whether they use force to recruit individuals \(2009-November 2012\), 3 December 2012](#)

[...] 6. Black Axe Confraternity's Connection to Officials

Sources indicate that clashes between the Black Axe and Aiye confraternities in Benin City are related to the sharing of money that has been given to these cults by politicians (Leadership 27 July 2012; Vanguard 27 July 2012). According to a January 2011 article by Vanguard, cultists have been recruited "as thugs" by politicians during primaries (24 Jan. 2011). Leadership newspaper indicates that cults are reportedly supported by people in "high places" such as security agencies (27 Oct. 2011). [...]

For additional issues besetting the police force, further undermining effective protection, see [2.2 Actors of Protection](#). For information on the risk of kidnapping from gangs operating in the Niger Delta, see [3.16 The Niger Delta](#). For information on vigilante groups formed to assist the authorities in their fight against Boko Haram, see [3.18 Boko Haram](#). For information on vigilante inter-communal and religious violence see [3.19 Religious persecution](#).

Only one paragraph of COI is included on juju, and the situation for persons fearing juju is not addressed in the conclusion for this main category of claim. The following illustrative COI documents the authorities' inability to provide effective protection for persons fearing juju rituals:

➤ [Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Nigeria: Prevalence of ritual murder and human sacrifice; police and state response \(2009-2012\), 20 November 2012, NGA104218.E](#)

[...] 1. Overview

According to various sources, ritual killings in Nigeria are performed to obtain human body parts for use in rituals (Daily Trust 21 June 2010; Osumah and Aghedo June 2011, 279; Sahara Reporters 3 July 2012), potions (Daily Trust 21 June 2010; This Day 26 Sept. 2010), and charms (The Punch 10 Aug. 2012; Sahara Reporters 3 July 2012). The Lagos-based newspaper This Day explains that "ritualists, also known as headhunters, ... go in search of human parts at the request of herbalists, who require them for sacrifices or for the preparation of various magical potions" (26 Sept. 2010). Similarly, the Abuja-based Daily Trust indicates that human body parts are brought to herbalists who perform the rituals (21 June 2010). [...]

In an academic journal article on kidnapping in Nigeria, researchers from Ambrose Alli University in Ekpoma, Edo State, and the University of Benin in Benin City state that traditional targets of ritual kidnapping are "children, lunatics and the physically challenged" (Osumah and Aghedo June 2011, 279). Similarly, the Sahara Reporters article states that "vulnerable members of society," such as women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities, as well as family members of ritualists, are targeted and killed (3 July 2012). [...]

2. Prevalence

According to This Day, ritual murders are "a common practice" in Nigeria (26 Sept. 2010). This statement is partially corroborated by the Sahara Reporters article, which states that ritual murder is common in southern Nigeria (3 July 2012). The Daily Trust writes that ritual killings continue to be practiced in Nigeria and have become more prevalent since 1999 (21 June 2010). Similarly, a 2012 Daily Independent article states that "in recent times, the number of ... brutal murders, mostly for ritual purposes and other circumstances, involving couples and their partners has been on a steady progression" (30 July 2012). In contrast, a research associate at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London who has researched and written on Nigerian religions stated in correspondence with the Research Directorate that, while ritual murder does occur in Nigeria, it is not a "systematic practice" (31 Oct. 2012). [...]

According to a report published in Leadership, ritual murder is not limited to any specific part of the country and "every region, tribe and state has its own share of the scourge" (30 Apr. 2012). However, in 2009, This Day reported that a confidential memo from the Nigerian police to registered security service providers indicated that ritual killings were particularly prevalent in the states of Lagos, Ogun, Kaduna, Abia, Kwara, Abuja, Rivers, and Kogi (26 Oct. 2009). Corroborating information could not be found by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

In 2010, one newspaper reported that dead bodies with missing organs were being discovered on a daily basis on a road close to Lagos State University that was described as a "hot spot for ritual killers" (This Day 26 Sept. 2010). A second newspaper reported in February 2011 that, in the same area, ten people had been killed in suspected ritual murders in the preceding two months (Daily Times 11 Feb. 2011). A 2009 article published by Agence France-Presse reported that, according to a state government official, the kidnapping of children for ritual murder was on the rise in Kano (4 July 2009). [...]

4. State Response

According to the research associate at the University of London, "there is no recognised, institutionalised response [to ritual murders] from police or state" (31 Oct. 2012). The research associate added, further, that because of corruption in police and state institutions, "any action or inaction wouldn't necessarily be transparent" (31 Oct. 2012).

In October 2012, the Governor of Zamfara State, in response to "reports of incessant killings and disappearances of persons," especially children, reportedly warned "ritual killers and cultists" in a public address to leave the state, adding that they would be subject to the death penalty if found guilty of murder (Daily Trust 20 Oct. 2012). Further information on the response by state authorities to ritual killings could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. [...]

4.1.1 Enforcement of Legislation and Prosecution

Information on prosecutions for ritual murder was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

According to Leadership, the number of unsolved cases of ritual murder is "troubling" (30 Apr. 2012). The Punch indicates that many victims of ritual killings disappear and are never found (10 Aug. 2012). Newspapers report that, in December 2011, a man was sentenced to death in Kano for killing and beheading a woman in 1992 (Nigerian Tribune 7 Dec. 2011; Vanguard 7 Dec. 2011). The murder was reportedly performed for ritual purposes (ibid.).

Sources report that a former information commissioner of Jigawa State was convicted in January 2010 of the ritual killing of two children and sentenced to life imprisonment (Leadership 30 Apr. 2012; The Will 6 Jan. 2010). However, he was reportedly acquitted in 2012 due to "lack of direct evidence or proof" (Daily Independent 25 July 2012). [...]

- [Modern Ghana, Ritual killings business in Nigeria: a curse about to explode, 19 February 2012](#)

[...] The number of missing persons in Lagos State alone runs into hundreds weekly. Police stations are daily inundated with reports of missing persons. Ninety five percent of such persons are never found. The case is the same in different parts of the country. Persons miss daily and are never found. The victims are mostly able bodied men and women who had the misfortune of entering public transport system especially commuter buses and taxis. The ritual killings business is very old in Nigeria. People apprehend fellows, kill them and use certain parts for human sacrifices. There is a superstitious belief among these vampires that certain human parts like eyes, breast, private part etc serve some human advancement purposes. They believe that the use of human beings for rituals confers some political, economic and security advantages. [...]

The ritual business in Nigeria is a thriving business. A human head with all the condiments is sold for between N200, 000 to N500, 000 (\$1,200-\$2,000). In certain cases, the captives are paraded before the beneficiaries for selection, while at times the beneficiaries send couriers to do the selection on their behalf, after which the person is slaughtered. [...]

The patrons of ritual business are mostly politicians, business men and recently senior civil servants. Their headquarters is Lagos, Kano, Benin, Aba and Ibadan however they operate in every state now. In 2006 I got into a conversation with an aide of a former Governor in the South East who quietly absconded from duty. The reason is that he came to the government house very early in the morning to meet his colleagues cleaning up blood and was told as an insider that someone has just been sacrificed for the security of the state chief executive. He pretended to hail the exercise until his family members advised him to gradually find something else to do. [...]

The Nigerian polity has been silent on this wickedness. The security agencies have not organized to bust those behind the ritual business. This is obviously due to the high profile patrons of the business who usually use one phone call to kill off any attempted investigations. Therefore, thousands of Nigerians are left at the expense of these predators that have no respect for the sanctity of human blood. [...]

Also see section on [Witchcraft](#) for additional information on ritual killings.

3.18 Boko Haram

The conclusion for this main category of claim states:

Excerpt from the December 2013 Nigeria OGN

3.18.17 Conclusion Those applicants who fear persecution at the hands of Boko Haram should be able to seek protection from the authorities and should be able to relocate to an area outside of the North of Nigeria where attacks by Boko Haram are less frequent. Applicants claiming asylum in this category are likely to be refused but caseworkers should remember that each case should be looked at on its individual merits.

The OGN concludes that persons fearing Boko Haram should be able to seek state protection. However, COI presented in the *Treatment* section indicates that Boko Haram directly targets state agencies and personnel (paragraphs 3.18.3, 3.18.5, and 3.18.8) thereby undermining protection. COI presented in the OGN also documents the unlikelihood of a diplomatic solution to end the violence (paragraphs 3.18.10 and 3.18.12) and security forces committing human rights abuses and corruption in the course of cracking down on Boko Haram (paragraphs 3.18.3, 3.18.12, 3.18.13, 3.18.14, 3.18.15, and 3.18.16), which causes growing resentment among the civilian population and contributes to support for Boko Haram (see COI provided below). Additional COI from 2013 not included in the OGN is presented below on these issues together with sources detailing that vigilantes are working with the security forces which analysts have argued may exacerbate reprisals against civilians and that Boko Haram continues to be able to carry out attacks despite a May 2013 military offensive.

Also see the general issues besetting the police force which further undermines effective protection as set out in section [2.2 Actors of Protection](#).

The conclusion with regards to Boko Haram also indicates that applicants “should be able to relocate to an area outside of the North of Nigeria where attacks by Boko Haram are less frequent”. However it fails to address any risk of new harm in the proposed site of relocation, or the reasonableness of internal flight. For example, Muslim applicants relocating outside of the North to escape the threat of Boko Haram may face both state abuses and societal discrimination and violence due to their religion as is set out in [3.19 Religious persecution](#). For a full analysis of the reasonableness assessment of internal relocation, see [2.3 Internal Relocation](#).

Also note that the OGN does not address the Ansaru group, which is reported to be a dissident offshoot of Boko Haram. For background information, see:

- [ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation: ecoinet featured topic on Nigeria: Boko Haram, 27 September 2013](#)
- [BBC, Profile: Who are Nigeria's Ansaru Islamists? 11 March 2013](#)

Non-exhaustive, illustrative COI from the past 12 months is presented on the following issues:

- [State protection against Boko Haram and Ansaru \(particularly in north Nigeria\)](#)
- [Recent attacks, targets and reach of Boko Haram and Ansaru](#)

State protection against Boko Haram and Ansaru (particularly in north Nigeria)

➤ [Integrated Regional Information Networks \(IRIN\), Updated timeline of Boko Haram attacks and related violence, 12 December 2013](#)

[...] Despite a fierce crackdown on insurgent group Boko Haram by Nigerian security forces, violence in northeastern Nigeria has not abated. Over 100 people have been killed in attacks in recent weeks, and some fear the violence will only worsen as the 2015 elections approach. Thousands of troops have been fighting Boko Haram in the north since President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in May 2013. Rights groups have accused all involved - Boko Haram, the government's Joint Task Force and civilian vigilante groups - of carrying out human rights abuses, putting civilians at risk of violence from all sides. [...]

➤ [Integrated Regional Information Networks \(IRIN\), Civilian vigilante groups increase dangers in northeastern Nigeria, 12 December 2013](#)

[...] Members of civilian vigilante groups known as the "civilian joint task force" (CJTF) are taking an increasingly active role in the government's fight against Boko Haram (BH). But while some residents call them heroes, others fear they are inciting BH to more directly target civilians, that they are committing abuses themselves and that they are eroding the already strained rule of law in Nigeria's northeast.

Youths started forming these vigilante groups in June, in Maiduguri - the capital of Borno State and former seat of BH's leadership - when they became fed up with BH's incessant killings (see timeline).

CJTF members patrol the streets armed with machetes, bows and arrows and sticks, identifying BH suspects, whom they turn in to the government security Joint Task Force (JTF). At times they also attack or even kill suspects themselves. Once a self-organized group, most members now receive US\$113 per month from the Borno State government.

CTJF head, Abubakar Mallum, told IRIN from Maiduguri that the vigilantes will not back down. "We have crossed the Rubicon and there is no going back. BH have declared war on us and even if we stop hunting them down, they will still come after us, so we have to fight to the finish." [...]

Zanna Mustapha, Borno State deputy governor, at a 28 November ceremony launching a government training scheme targeting the CTJF in Maiduguri, said the vigilantes must be reined in: "It is only law enforcement agencies... who have the power to arrest or detain suspected criminals like Boko Haram sect members or robbers. The idea of the civilian JTF trying to take laws into their hands by acting alone is wrong. This must stop now."

Festus Okoye, director of the Human Rights Monitor (HRM), agrees: "Arming and encouraging youths from diverse backgrounds to take up weapons and, in an unregulated manner, to block roads, make arrests, beat up suspects, kill those 'found guilty', and burn their houses and chase them out of town is dangerous to the rule of law and the current efforts aimed at tackling security challenges in Nigeria," [...]

➤ [Human Rights Watch, Nigeria: Boko Haram Abducts Women, Recruits Children, 29 November 2013](#)

[...] The rise of an anti-Boko Haram group allied with Nigerian security forces, the so-called Civilian Joint Task Force, has added a worrisome new dimension to the violence. Civilian Joint Task Force members inform security forces about presumed local Boko Haram activity; the Islamist group then retaliates against both the neighborhood vigilante group and the broader community. [...]

In July, the combined efforts of the security forces and Civilian Joint Task Force appear to have pushed Boko Haram out of Maiduguri. Since then, the group has carried out numerous attacks in the nearby towns of Damaturu, Benisheikh, and Gamboru. [...]

In June 2013, young men in Maiduguri organized into a group known as the Civilian Joint Task Force, or Yan Gora, to monitor and protect their town and neighboring villages from violence. Members interviewed by Human Rights Watch said the youth had grown tired of being targeted by both Boko Haram and the security forces. The group maintains checkpoints; searches pedestrians, vehicles, and residences; and provides intelligence to the security services.

The Civilian Joint Task Force relies on members' knowledge of the community to identify Boko Haram members for the security forces. The Borno State governor has recruited 1,800 youths, paying them the equivalent of US\$100 per month to work with the Civilian Joint Task Force, who are trained by security forces. Recruitment and training of Civilian Joint Task Force members is ongoing. [...]

➤ [Voice of America, Nigerians Face More Violence, Emergency Rule in Northeast, 22 November 2013](#)

[...] Some analysts warn the government is alienating the public by shooting suspects rather than arresting them or locking them up for long periods of time without charges in inhumane, sometimes deadly, conditions.

This is John Campbell, a former U.S. ambassador to Nigeria and senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations:

"The government's heavy-handed brutal approach, if anything, tends to drive public support to Boko Haram. Absolutely counter-productive," said Campbell. [...]

➤ [United States Department of State, Nigeria: Countering the Threat Posed By Boko Haram, 17 November 2013](#)

Testimony from Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of African Affairs at the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittees on Africa, Global Health, Human Rights, and International Organizations and Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade. [...]

I am pleased to inform you that the United States has recently taken additional steps to counter the threat posed by Boko Haram and Ansaru. Earlier today, the State Department designated both as Foreign Terrorist Organizations under Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended, and as Specially Designated Global Terrorists under section 1(b) of Executive Order 13224. We took this step after careful consideration. We anticipate that this designation will empower U.S. law enforcement and the Treasury Department with additional tools to pursue these violent extremist organizations. We believe this designation is an important and appropriate step, but it is only one tool in what we believe must be a comprehensive approach toward addressing the Boko Haram threat. [...]

The United States recognizes that the Nigerian Government and security forces face a difficult challenge in countering the Boko Haram insurgency. Both ordinary citizens and security forces have suffered. Still, we are concerned by reports that some Nigerian security forces enhance investigations and forensics, and counter improvised explosive devices. The State Department also funds a Legal Adviser to help the Nigerian Government strengthen its anti-money laundering and counter terrorist financing regime. Military and law enforcement efforts are necessary, but they alone are insufficient to counter the threat posed by Boko Haram and associated violent extremist groups. In the long run, reducing Boko Haram's ability to recruit is just as important as degrading its capabilities. In addition to the imperatives of improving governance and fostering equitable development, Nigeria must protect civilians, guarantee human rights, and ensure accountability in instances where government officials and security forces violate those rights. Nigeria must demonstrate that government can be the sole, trusted arbiter of justice in the country. [...]

➤ [Agence France Presse, Boko Haram kill 40, torch 300 homes in Nigeria: official, 4 November 2013](#)

[...] The military maintains that its massive offensive against the Islamists, which has included aerial bombings, has left the group in disarray and contained the rebel fighters in remote parts of the northeast. But a major attack last month in Damaturu, the heavily fortified capital of northeastern Yobe state, cast doubt on that claim. Shekau [Boko Haram's purported leader] claimed responsibility for the October 24 attack in a video released on Sunday and obtained by AFP. On December 14, Jonathan will have to decide whether to extend the state of emergency when its six-month mandate expires. Some analysts say the emergency measures and the military assault have been effective, while others counter that Boko Haram could still regroup and resume attacks on a range of targets across the country. [...]

➤ [Integrated Regional Information Networks \(IRIN\), Boko Haram violence takes toll on education, 4 October 2013](#)

[...] The Nigerian government declared a state of emergency in northeastern Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states on 14 May and heavily deployed troops to neutralize BH and dislodge them from areas they had taken over, especially in northern Borno on the border with Cameroon, Niger and Chad.

The strategy has failed to stop the attacks, which have become more frequent and deadlier despite the shut-down of telephone signals to prevent BH from coordinating attacks.

"Although there is increase in troop movement and military hardware deployment in the northeast, people were yet to see the kind of action on the ground that effectively nips criminal and terrorists activities in the bud," Bego [Yobe governor's spokesman] said in a 29 September statement. [...]

➤ [Agence France-Presse, Boko Haram kills 40 students in Nigeria college dorm, 29 September 2013](#)

[...] Military offensive criticised

The military has described the recent school attacks as a sign of desperation by the Islamists, claiming that they lack the capacity to strike anything but soft targets.

Defence officials have said that an offensive launched against Boko Haram in mid-May has decimated the group and scattered its fighters across remote parts of the northeast, the insurgents' traditional stronghold.

While many of the recent attacks have occurred in more remote areas, often targeting defenceless civilians, the unchecked killing has cast doubt on the success of the military campaign.

"Although there is increase in troop movement and... more military hardware in the northeast, people were yet to see the kind of action on the ground that effectively nips criminal and terrorist activities in the bud," the Yobe governor's statement said. [...]

➤ [BBC, Nigeria's 'Boko Haram': Abuja sees security forces targeted, 20 September 2013](#)

[...] Local vigilante groups have been formed to help counter the militants but scores of these volunteers have been killed in recent weeks. [...]

➤ [Jamestown Foundation, Nigerian Army Takes over Anti-Boko Haram Operation, 6 September 2013](#)

Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan has authorized the creation of a new Nigerian Army Division dedicated to conducting operations against the Boko Haram Islamist militant group in the Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states of north-eastern Nigeria currently under a state of emergency. The new Division is taking over operations against Boko Haram from the multi-service Joint Task Force (JTF), a counter-terrorism force initially created to combat militants in the oil-rich Niger Delta, but whose deployment in north-eastern Nigeria during the current anti-terrorist offensive has been characterized as heavy-handed with a casual regard for the safety and security of civilians in combat areas.

The handover from the JTF to the new division took place on August 19 and marked a new stage in Operation BONOYA, a three-month old offensive against Boko Haram terrorists operating in northeastern Nigeria near the unsecured borders with Chad, Niger and Cameroon. With its headquarters in Maiduguri, the new division will be under the command of Major General Obida Etnan, former commander of the Army Garrison Headquarters in Abuja (Nigerian Tribune, August 18).

Three armored brigades currently based in the northeastern states of Bauchi, Borno and Adamawa will form the core of the new division along with the 241st Reconnaissance Battalion in Yobe, which brings the Nigerian Army to a strength of six divisions with headquarters in Maiduguri, Kaduna, Jos, Bradan, Lagos and Enugu (Daily Trust [Abuja], August 19; Nigerian Tribune, August 18). Some 900 Nigerian troops that were prematurely withdrawn from their mission in Mali will also be directly assigned to the new division (Leadership [Abuja], August 19; for the Nigerian withdrawal from Mali, see Terrorism Monitor Brief, July 25).

Earlier this year, Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Onyeabo Azubuike Ihejirika created a new counterterrorism training center in Kontagora (Niger State) where Nigerian troops could receive advanced training for operations against Boko Haram. The director of the training facility, Brigadier General TK Golau, said the course included training in house entry and clearance, urban patrols, unarmed combat, arms skills, the creation of road-blocks and checkpoints, recognition and disposal of IEDs and "the dynamics of terrorism and insurgency as they relate to Boko Haram, among others" (Leadership [Abuja], February 21).

The creation of the new division came a day before General Ihejirika made a scathing speech before various commanding officers in which he criticized the army's mode of operations against Boko Haram and complacency in the officer corps that was allowing infiltration of the military by terrorists (Channels TV, August 19). The remarks were a counterpoint to President Goodluck Jonathan's more optimistic views: "We are consistently adapting our security architecture to deal with terrorism which has become a challenge to the whole world. Boko Haram is being progressively weakened but we are not resting on our

oars. We will continue to do everything possible to achieve greater security for all who reside within our borders" (Guardian [Lagos], August 31).

However, despite his efforts to improve discipline in the Army's ranks, General Ihejirika has come under accusations of nepotism and ethnic favoritism from other senior officers who have gathered under the banner of the Group for the Salvation of the Nigerian Army (Osun Defender/Punch [Lagos], September 4). Meanwhile, attempts by the civilian population to assert themselves against Boko Haram terrorists through the formation of vigilante groups backfired on August 31 when roughly 100 members of a Borno vigilante group joined what they thought was a group of uniformed Nigerian troops on their way into the forest to apprehend Boko Haram members. The men instead led the vigilantes into an ambush in which 24 were killed (AFP, August 31; Reuters, August 31).

The vigilante groups are typically poorly armed (often bearing little more than machetes and clubs) but have played an important part in intercepting Boko Haram movements, making the vigilantes and their families a target for retribution. However, there are fears that the formation of vigilante groups from unemployed youth in the region will open the door to their use as private militias by various politicians (Nigerian Tribune, September 1).

➤ [Reuters, ANALYSIS-Nigeria backlash against Boko Haram spurs risky vigilante war, 11 August 2013](#)

[...] Nigerian ironworker Ba Kaka initially felt sympathy for Boko Haram's violent uprising against a state he and many others saw as corrupt, un-Islamic and kowtowing to Western ideology.

But as deaths mounted in the Islamist sect's bloody campaign against state institutions, security services, Christians and even school children in northeast Nigeria, he began to see them as a threat to his life and livelihood.

"We thought they were doing God's work at the beginning, but over time, we realised they were just a cult," said Kaka, who was forced to close his shop in the northeast's main city of Maiduguri after a spate of Boko Haram attacks in his area.

Kaka is part of a popular backlash against the Islamists - a member of one of a number of government-approved vigilante groups that have become a weapon in a military offensive that has dismantled Boko Haram networks and squeezed its fighters into a mountainous area by the Cameroon border.

Though the sect remains the gravest threat to Africa's most populous country and top oil producer, it is weaker than it has been for years.

Yet the decision to give these gangs of largely unemployed youths the go ahead to hunt down militants risks dragging civilians further into the north's conflict. Reprisals are already a problem, and security troubles could emerge further down the line, as has happened in the past with youth gangs.

Though the state is not giving them guns, a few have acquired them anyway. Kaka himself uses his iron-working skills to fashion bladed weapons like machetes for the militias. [...]

Before May, Boko Haram had seemed close to setting up a de facto Islamic state in the lawless border areas around Lake Chad, where Nigeria meets Chad, Cameroon and Niger. Local council officials had fled and police stations were empty, especially in Borno state, relic of an old Islamic caliphate.

The military crackdown has re-established sovereignty over these areas. Military officials say senior Boko Haram commanders have also been killed or arrested - though they decline to name names - which could mean a secession crisis if Shekau is caught. [...]

Since the vigilantes rose up, Boko Haram, whose name roughly translates to "Western education is forbidden", has turned on civilians. Fighters killed dozens of people in assaults on Western-style schools, which Islamists suspect harbour youths who are informants.

"Boko Haram can intimidate the (vigilantes) by targeting their family members and villages where they are strong," said Jacob Zenn of the Washington-based Jamestown Foundation.

This will in turn lead to paranoia and over-reaction by the vigilantes when they hunt homes for militants, he said.

Shehu Sani, president of Nigeria's Civil Rights Congress, says there have been cases of summary executions and burning down the houses of suspects by the vigilantes - the sort of abuses Nigeria's military had been accused of in the past.

"The army is starting to use them to perpetrate things they don't want to be seen to be doing themselves," he said.

Nigeria's history is riddled with examples of angry, destitute youths who formed groups backed by politicians for a particular purpose, which then grew out of control. [...]

➤ [Thompson Reuters, Nigeria to pull many peacekeepers from Mali, Darfur, 19 July 2013](#)

[...] Nigeria plans to withdraw much of its 1,200-strong contingent from international peacekeeping missions in Mali and Sudan's Darfur region saying the troops are needed to beef up security at home, sources familiar with the matter said on Thursday.

Nigeria is battling Islamist group Boko Haram, but the troop withdrawal comes just 10 days before a presidential election in Mali, which is meant to restore democracy after a coup and the occupation of the desert north by al Qaeda-linked rebels last year.

The 12,600-man U.N. mission in Mali is rolling out to replace most of the 4,500 French forces who intervened successfully in January to halt an Islamist advance south.

"It seems Nigeria is pulling out its infantry but leaving some other elements ... I think that it is because the troops are needed at home," said a Nigeria-based diplomat.

A Nigerian military source and two other diplomats in West Africa confirmed the planned pullout, saying it was mainly due to the need to tackle the country's own insurgency. [...]

A two-month offensive against Boko Haram in northeast Nigeria since President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in mid-May has stretched its security forces and new rotations are needed to go in. [...]

➤ [Agence France-Presse, Armed gang kills 48 in raid in Nigeria: official, 19 June 2013](#)

[...] An armed gang has raided a northern Nigerian village and killed 48 people in an apparent reprisal attack targeting a local vigilante group, a state official said Wednesday.

The attack saw gunmen move house to house as well as take positions atop a hill and open fire, the official said. Houses were also burnt, but it was not clear how many.

"There was an attack by armed bandits early Tuesday on Kizara village where 48 residents were killed in apparent targeted killings by cattle rustlers that have been terrorising the state for some time now," said Ibrahim Birnin-Magaji, commissioner for information in Zamfara state, where the remote village is located.

Dozens of gunmen arrived in the village before dawn on motorbikes, he told AFP.

"Some of them climbed up the hill overlooking the village and opened fire indiscriminately," he said.

"They later moved house to house, telling residents that they were looking for members of local vigilante (groups) whom they said had been disturbing them."

He said those killed included the local chief, the chief imam and the head of the vigilante group in the village.

"The police from nearby Keta mobilised and engaged the bandits in a shootout, but they were overwhelmed by the gunmen's superior firepower and were forced to retreat," said Birnin-Magaji.

Many villages in Nigeria form local vigilante groups to defend themselves against violent cattle rustlers or other criminal gangs, sometimes leading to a cycle of clashes and reprisal attacks.

Zamfara state, located in Nigeria's northwest, has seen a number of such incidents. [...]

➤ [Integrated Regional Information Networks \(IRIN\), Analysis: Nigerians on the run as military combat Boko Haram, 22 May 2013](#)

[...] Since January 2013 BH [Boko Haram] has taken control of Marte, Mobbar, Gubio, Guzamala, Abadam, Kukawa, Kala-Balge and Gamboru Ngala local government areas in northern Borno, chasing out local government officials, taking over control of government buildings and imposing Sharia law.

This prompted President Goodluck Jonathan to declare last week that he would "take all necessary action... to put an end to the impunity of insurgents and terrorists," including the arrest and detention of suspects, taking over BH hideouts, the lockdown of suspected BH enclaves, raids, and arresting anyone possessing illegal weapons.

The military crackdown came after several attempts at dialogue - the most recent on 17 April, when the president set up a 26-member Amnesty Committee (headed by Nigerian Special Duties Minister Kabiru Tanimu) with a three-month mandate to try to convince BH to lay down its arms in exchange for a state pardon and social reintegration.

Dialogue soon broke down, and BH stepped up bombing attacks and assassinations in April and May in apparent defiance of the proposed amnesty. BH has repeatedly rejected peace talks, citing insincerity on the part of the Nigerian government following a series of failed mediated negotiations.

On 8 and 9 May the Amnesty Committee met Nigerian security chiefs in Abuja and then BH members in detention in Kuje prison near Abuja to gather information on how to reach out to the BH leadership for talks. But on 9 May around 200 BH gunmen, armed with rocket launchers and rifles, launched coordinated attacks on security forces in the town of Bama in northern Borno, including a military barracks, a prison and police buildings, killing 42 people including soldiers, policemen, prison guards and civilians and freeing 105 inmates. Some 13 BH gunmen were killed in the attacks, according to the military.

In a 13 May video, BH leader Abubakar Shekau rejected the government's amnesty overtures and vowed not to stop his group's violent campaigns to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria.

Flip-flopping

The government's flip-flop approach is evidence of its frustration with the deteriorating security situation. But the next steps are not clear. "Deployment of troops and the declaration of war on BH by the president have put a huge stumbling block on the path of the Amnesty Committee," said Mohammed Kyari, a political science professor at Modibo Adama University of Science and Technology in neighbouring Adamawa State capital Yola, which is also affected by the emergency decree.

"It will now be difficult to win the confidence of BH which is crucial in bringing them to the negotiating table because you can't talk of peace on one hand and be deploying troops on the other." A leading rights activist in the north, Shehu Sani, who has participated in past negotiations with BH, agrees.

But many say the government had no choice. Yahaya Mahmud, a prominent constitutional lawyer in Nigeria, told IRIN: "No government anywhere will allow a group to usurp part of territorial sovereignty. The declaration of a state of emergency was necessitated by the constitutional obligation to restore a portion of Nigeria's territory taken over by an armed group which involves the suspension of constitutional provisions relating to civic rights."

The fear now is that the more violent the crackdown, the greater the chance of radicalizing angry young men to join the rebel cause. Babagoni Kachalla, a resident of Wuljo, one of the areas taken over by BH in northern Borno, said BH has been going village-to-village since January in all-terrain vehicles fitted with loudspeakers to gather recruits and preach their ideology. In the days leading up to the military response, BH fighters stepped up their recruitment drive, said Borno State residents.

Political scientist Kyari worries, in response to the crackdown, that BH will just shift their bases. "BH can't face Nigerian troops in conventional war; the troop deployment to northern Borno means they will move out to other towns and cities with less military presence and launch guerrilla war, which is deadlier." [...]

➤ [U.S Department of State, 2012 International Religious Freedom Report - Nigeria, 20 May 2013](#)

[...] *Abuses by Rebel or Foreign Forces or Terrorist Organizations*

[...] Government attempts to stop Boko Haram were largely ineffective. Actions taken by security forces often increased the death toll, especially in the remote and troubled city of Maiduguri, Borno State, where large clashes between Boko Haram and security personnel occurred frequently. Religious leaders, civil society, and international human rights organizations condemned the government's heavy-handed military response in Maiduguri. [...]

➤ [Human Rights Watch, Spiraling Violence: Boko Haram Attacks and Security Force Abuses in Nigeria, 11 October 2012](#)

[...] Summary

[...] Nigeria's government has responded with a heavy hand to Boko Haram's violence. In the name of ending the group's threat to citizens, security forces comprising military, police, and intelligence personnel, known as the Joint Military Task Force (JTF), have killed hundreds of Boko Haram suspects and random members of communities where attacks have occurred. According to witnesses, the JTF has engaged in excessive use of force, physical abuse, secret detentions, extortion, burning of houses, stealing money during raids, and extrajudicial killings of suspects. These killings, and clashes with the group, have raised the death toll of those killed by Boko Haram or security forces to more than 2,800 people since 2009. [...]

On December 31, 2011—after a series of Boko Haram bombings across northern Nigeria—President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency, which suspended constitutional guarantees in 15 areas

of 4 northern states. The state of emergency, which remained in effect for six months, did not ameliorate insecurity. Nor did regulations issued in April 2012 that detailed emergency powers granted to security forces to combat the Boko Haram threat. The group carried out more attacks and killed more people during this six-month period than in all of 2010 and 2011 combined. Nigeria has kept Boko Haram suspects in detention often incommunicado without charge or trial for months or even years and has failed to register arrests or inform relatives about the whereabouts of detainees. [...]

IV. Security Forces Abuses

[...] The government has deployed security personnel across northern and central Nigeria in an effort to protect vulnerable minority groups and other potential targets of violence. In Maiduguri, for example, Human Rights Watch observed, in May 2012, military and police personnel behind sandbagged barricades guarding the city's prominent churches. Although security personnel often become targets themselves, these extra measures have provided protection that is critical for vulnerable groups in this region. Nevertheless, the conduct of the security forces has also undermined the effectiveness of the enhanced security procedures. [...]

According to civil society leaders, JTF abuses have created growing resentment in communities, making community members more reluctant to provide information that could help curtail Boko Haram.

As one prominent civil society activist in the north said: "The abuses by the JTF have created more distance between the people and the government. Ordinary people are alienated by the activities of the JTF, so they don't want to cooperate." [...]

Residents might also shun the police and military because of the prevalence of corruption within the security agencies, which has eroded social interaction with communities and undermined efforts to tackle Boko Haram. [...]

Recent attacks, targets and reach of Boko Haram and Ansaru

➤ [Integrated Regional Information Networks \(IRIN\), Updated timeline of Boko Haram attacks and related violence, 12 December 2013](#)

[...] Despite a fierce crackdown on insurgent group Boko Haram by Nigerian security forces, violence in northeastern Nigeria has not abated. Over 100 people have been killed in attacks in recent weeks, and some fear the violence will only worsen as the 2015 elections approach. Thousands of troops have been fighting Boko Haram in the north since President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in May 2013. Rights groups have accused all involved - Boko Haram, the government's Joint Task Force and civilian vigilante groups - of carrying out human rights abuses, putting civilians at risk of violence from all sides. [...]

Below is a chronology of known or suspected BH attacks over the past several years.

9 December 2013: The Nigerian Human Rights Commission summons security chiefs over the 19 September killings of eight squatters in a raid on an incomplete building in the Apo area of Abuja. President Goodluck Jonathan lends support to the creation of an African rapid reaction force, which could help tackle the BH insurgency.

6 December 2013: An Abuja Federal High Court orders Nigeria's inspector general of police to produce three policemen being detained over alleged BH membership.

5 December 2013: Governor of Borno State, Kashim Shettima, makes a financial donation to the families of 20 fishermen killed by BH in Kukawa District, on the border with Chad.

4 December 2013: The Nigerian army admits holding 1,400 suspected BH members for months without trial. It recommends trial for 500 of the suspects, release of 167 and reviews of the cases of 614. Nigeria warns the US against using its terror designation for BH and splinter rebel group Ansaru against Nigerians traveling to the US for legitimate purposes.

3 December 2013: A round-the-clock curfew in Maiduguri is relaxed by 13 hours, and phone services are restored in the metropolis. A Lagos Federal High Court orders the trial of 17 suspected BH members charged with terrorism to be held in private following an application by the prosecution.

2 December 2013: Around 200 BH gunmen dressed as soldiers launch coordinated attacks on an air force base, a military barracks and a nearby checkpoint in Maiduguri. They burn buildings and five aircraft, and kill dozens of soldiers and civilians. The attacks prompt a round-the-clock curfew in the city and the suspension of flights.

30 November 2013: The Nigerian military pledges to secure communities near the country's northern and eastern borders with Chad, Niger and Cameroon over Christmas and New Year due to fears of BH strikes. BH gunmen kill seven fishermen in an ambush the town of Baga - reprisals over the arrests of sect members the previous day. Local boats and fishing nets are burned in the attack. Troops kill BH members and arrest five others in an ambush at Gidan Maiwa Village in Ningi, a local government area of Bauchi State. Eleven Kalashnikovs, rocket launchers, grenades and over 1,000 rounds of ammunition are recovered from the insurgents.

29 November 2013: Human Rights Watch calls for BH to stop targeting ordinary Nigerians, claiming the group has abducted scores of women and girls and used children as young as 12 in fighting.

28 November 2013: BH insurgents kill 17 residents of Sabon Gari Village, in Damboa District, 90km from Maiduguri, during a raid in which over 100 shops and several vehicles are burned.

25 November 2013: The Nigerian military says it will continue to dislodge BH elements who fled from the country's northeast to the southwest following a sweeping military offensive.

23 November 2013: BH gunmen kill 12 residents, burn several homes and steal vehicles in an attack on Sandiya Village, 85km outside Maiduguri. It is a response to the villagers' alleged collaboration with troops.

21 November 2013: Suspected BH gunmen kill three vigilantes in the Kasuwar Gwari area of Yola for their collaboration with troops. Gunmen kill four policemen in an ambush on a police patrol vehicle in the Bauchi State capital, Bauchi. Wahabi Islamic group Izala calls for the release of Mohammed Nazeef Yunus, a lecturer of Islamic studies arrested for being an alleged BH spiritual leader in central Kogi State. Izala insists he was framed.

20 November 2013: The Nigerian lower parliament approves a six-month extension of the state of emergency in three northeastern states. Nigeria's secret police arrest an alleged BH spiritual leader for Kogi State, Mohammed Nazeef Yusuf, along with four accomplices. Yusuf denies the allegation and accuses the police of setting him up. The Borno State government urges the federal government to tighten security along the country's northern borders to curb the BH insurgency.

19 November 2013: Troops kill two BH gunmen and recover arms during a raid on a hideout in the Gayawa area of Kano. The raid follows the earlier arrest of two armed BH members at a checkpoint in neighbouring Katsina State. Maiduguri residents nab a teenager spying for BH in the city. The Nigeria Defence Academy says it is modifying its training in response to Nigeria's security challenges, especially BH militancy. Gunmen kill a police officer and injure another in an attack on a police station in Kwami District of Gombe State.

18 November 2013: French hostage Francis Collomp arrives in Paris after escaping his Ansaru captors.

16 November 2013: Collomp escapes from his Ansaru captors in the northern Nigerian city of Zaria. Collomp, a 63-year-old wind-energy engineer, was kidnapped on 19 December 2012 in northern Nigeria's Katsina State. The Nigerian military says it has killed 20 BH gunmen in a raid on a BH camp in Bitu Village, Borno State, which the insurgents were using to launch deadly attacks on nearby villages. Scores of BH vehicles and motorcycles were destroyed in the raid. Nigeria's military says it is ready for air strikes against BH Islamists as several thousand troops move to the remote northeast to retake territory seized by the insurgents.

15 November 2013: Nigerian troops kill nine BH members in a gunfight in the Damboa area of Borno State, near the border with Cameroon; a soldier is injured in the incident. Soldiers destroy two BH vans and recover ammunitions in the attack. A BH source confirms the group is behind the kidnap of a French priest in Cameroon, near the border with Nigeria. A Nigerian federal high court sentences BH member Umaru Mustapha to life for the bombing of a complex housing several newspaper offices in Kaduna, killing four people.

13 November 2013: The US designates BH and Ansaru as terror groups. The UN releases a report saying 37,000 people, including 29,000 Niger nationals, have fled northeast Nigeria into neighbouring Niger since the military began its sweeping offensive against BH on 15 May. Gunmen riding on motorcycles kidnap a French Catholic priest from his parish in the Cameroonian village of Nguetchewe, 10km from the Nigerian border. The 15 gunmen cross into Nigeria, and Cameroon authorities blame BH.

9 November 2013: Five BH insurgents and two soldiers are killed in shootouts during raids on two BH hideouts in Kano, following Intel reports that gunmen were planning suicide attacks in Kano and Nigeria's capital, Abuja.

7 November 2013: The Nigerian senate approves the president's request for a six-month extension of emergency rule in three northeastern states.

6 November 2013: The president seeks lawmakers' approval of a six-month extension of the state of emergency in three northeastern states.

5 November 2013: The Nigerian army says it killed seven BH insurgents and injured several others in raids on BH camps in Bama District, Borno State. Nigeria's presidential dialogue and reconciliation committee on BH submits its report, with the committee's head saying BH wants dialogue. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Cécile Pouilly says BH could be guilty of crimes against humanity.

4 November 2013: Dozens of BH gunmen on motorcycles and in pickups kill 27 people and burn down 300 homes in a raid on Bama, a town in northeast Borno State. Twelve people are injured in the raid, according to a local official.

3 November 2013: A BH attack on a wedding convoy kills more than 30 people, including the groom, along Bama-Banki highway, while the convoy is returning from Michika in neighbouring Adamawa State. In a video, BH leader Abubakar Shekau claims responsibility for the 24 October attack on a military base and police facilities in Damaturu.

31 October 2013: BH gunmen kill 13 passengers in an ambush on a commercial bus in Bama District.

29 October 2013: The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) urges Cameroonian authorities not to expel Nigerians who fled to Cameroon to escape fighting between BH and Nigerian soldiers.

26 October 2013: The Nigerian military says it killed 95 BH insurgents in two days of air-and-ground raids on BH camps in northern Borno State.

24 October 2013: BH gunmen in military uniform launch coordinated attacks on a military barracks and four police facilities in Yobe State capital Damaturu. Scores are killed, including 35 men in army uniform. It is not clear if the 35 are BH gunmen or Nigerian soldiers.

22 October 2013: Nigeria's military says it killed 37 suspected BH fighters during an air-and-ground assault on an insurgent camp in the northern Borno State.

21 October 2013: The Nigerian military says it has commenced a massive recruitment to tackle the country's security challenges.

15 October 2013: Nigeria's military says it repelled three coordinated attacks by BH gunmen in the towns of Bama, Gwoza and Pulka on 12 October, killing 40 insurgents. Amnesty International issues a report saying 950 people suspected of having links to BH have died in custody in the past six months, claiming prisoners have been suffocated, starved and subjected to extra-judicial killings in the army-led operation in the country's northeast.

9 October 2013: Troops destroy a BH hideout used for making improvised explosives. They recover explosives, including a suicide pack intended for attacks in the northern city of Kano during the Muslim Eid celebration. One suspected BH member is killed in the raid.

7 October 2013: The military says it has killed 30 BH insurgents and recovers a huge arms cache in air-and-ground raids on BH camps in Damboa District, Borno State.

4 October 2013: Amnesty International says in a report that school attacks in northeast Nigeria have forced thousands to abandon their educations. The lives of at least 70 teachers and scores of pupils have been claimed in these attacks.

3 October 2013: Military sources in Niger say "armed bandits" killed a Niger soldier and seriously wounded three others in northeast Nigeria on 2 October. The soldiers were part of a three-nation West African force combating trans-border crime, including BH violence.

28 September 2013: BH gunmen open fire in a dormitory at the College of Agriculture, in the town of Gujba in Yobe State, while students are asleep. Forty students are killed.

27 September 2013: BH splinter group Ansaru releases an online video of a French national kidnapped on 19 December 2012 in northern Nigeria's Katsina State. The video shows 63-year-old engineer Francis Collomp calling for negotiations for his safe release.

25 September 2013: Gunmen kill a priest and two children in an attack on a church in Dorawa Village, in northeastern Yobe State, burning the church and two nearby houses. BH's leader, Abubakar Shekau, appears in new video claiming responsibility for several attacks and mocking the 19 August 2013 military claim that he may have been killed. The Nigerian army says it is trying to verify the authenticity of the video.

24 September 2013: Nigeria's human rights commission says it is investigating allegations that security agents shot dead eight unarmed squatters in the capital Abuja under the guise of fighting BH insurgents.

20 September 2013: BH gunmen attack Bulabulin Ngaura Village, outside Maiduguri, killing 14 residents.

19 September 2013: Security operatives shoot dead eight squatters in an incomplete building during a raid to apprehend suspected BH members, near a residence for lawmakers in Abuja. The security agents claim

they came under gunfire from the squatters, a claim the squatters - who are mostly artisans and labourers - refute. Gunmen kill eight people, including three police escorts, and rob a bullion van filled with cash near the town of Damboa.

18 September 2013: Some 150 BH insurgents are killed in coordinated raids on BH camps in Kafiya Forest in Borno State. The dead include Abba Goroma, a wanted BH commander with a 10 million naira bounty on his head. Sixteen soldiers are killed in the fight, with nine others missing.

17 September 2013: BH gunmen kill 142 people and burn dozens of homes in coordinated attacks on the town of Benisheikh in Borno State. BH gunmen dressed in military uniform use assault rifles, rocket launchers and anti-aircraft weapons in the attacks.

15 September 2013: Suspected BH gunmen attack a meeting of a local vigilante group in the town of Gamboru Ngala, in Borno State, on the border with Cameroon. They kill 17 people, including the vigilante leader and a local chief supporting them.

14 September 2013: Vigilantes from the town of Biu in Borno State kill four BH members who fled to Michika in neighbouring Adamawa State during a raid. Seven other sect members are arrested in the raid. A policeman shoots dead a vigilante following an argument over a traffic infraction, leading to street protest by vigilantes.

11 September 2013: Gunmen with explosives and rocket-propelled grenades attack a police station in Ga'anda Village in northeast Adamawa State, killing two officers and injuring another. The police station is burned in the attack.

10 September 2013: Nigerian troops kill 10 BH gunmen after launching an air strike in the Konduga area of Borno State in which two BH camps are destroyed.

8 September 2013: Seventeen vigilantes, dubbed "Civilian JTF", are killed and 18 injured in a fight with BH gunmen attacking Benisheik town, 72km from Maiduguri. Five BH gunmen are also killed in the fight.

7 September 2013: BH gunmen kill five residents on their way to mosque in Bulabulin Ngaura Village, 35km from Maiduguri.

6 September 2013: Nigeria's military says it had killed 50 BH insurgents in northeastern Borno State in an air-and-ground assault launched in response to the BH attack on a local market.

5 September 2013: BH gunmen dressed as traders open fire on a market in the town of Gajiran, 85km from Maiduguri, killing 15 people.

31 August 2013: BH gunmen kill 12 nomads who storm Boko Harma's hideout to avenge the killing of two herders killed by the insurgents following a previous attack on Yaguwa Village in Damboa District of Borno State. BH gunmen disguised as soldiers shoot dead 24 vigilantes, who were combing Monguno Forest in Borno State in search of the insurgents.

28 August 2013: A Nigerian court orders a man accused of being a member of the Al-Qaeda affiliate in Yemen, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), to be extradited to the US. He was allegedly sent to Nigeria to find English-speaking recruits. The suspect, identified as Lawal Olaniyi Babafemi, also known as "Abdullah" or "Ayatollah Mustapha", has been indicted on four charges in the US, including the charge of supporting a foreign terrorist group.

23 August 2013: Nigeria says it has deported some 22,000 improperly documented or undocumented immigrants from neighbouring Niger, Chad and Cameroon over two months as part of a crackdown linked to its fight against the BH insurgency.

21 August 2013: Seven BH insurgents and two policemen are killed in shootout following an attack on a police station in the town of Gwoza, Borno State. BH gunmen kill four residents and injure eight others in an attack on Gamboru Ngala town on the border with Cameroon.

19 August 2013: The Nigerian military says in a statement that BH leader Abubakar Shekau may have died from a gunshot wound after a clash with soldiers on 30 June. According to the military, Shekau may have died between 25 July and 3 August 2013, after being taken over the border into Amitchide, Cameroon. The Nigerian military establishes a 7 Division in Maiduguri, which replaces the Joint Task Force that has been fighting BH since 2010.

16 August 2013: BH gunmen open fire on civilians and a police station in Konduga, killing 11 people.

15 August 2013: Before bilateral security talks in Abuja, US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman says BH's brutal insurgency has stalled Nigeria's development, inflamed ethnic tensions and raised concern among its neighbours. She says the US is ready to help Nigeria develop a multi-faceted strategy to contain the violence, but warns that a military crackdown alone is not enough. The military says Shekau's deputy, Momodu Bama, and his father are among the 32 insurgents killed during a 4 August insurgent attack in the northeast.

12 August 2013: BH leader Abubakar Shekau appears in video taunting world leaders and vowing to defeat Nigerian authorities.

11 August 2013: BH gunmen storm a mosque and open fire on worshippers just before morning prayers, killing 44 people. It accuses the community of cooperating with soldiers in the arrest of sect members, prompting an exodus of residents from the town.

10 August 2013: BH insurgents kill 12 residents in Ngom Village near Konduga. The attackers shoot dead or slaughter their victims after retiring to their homes after who retires to their homes.

6 August 2013: Nigeria moves to extradite to the US a 33-year-old man accused of being a member of the Al-Qaeda affiliate in Yemen, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), court documents show. Soldiers begin house-to-house searches in select areas of the town, an apparent search for high-profile BH suspects.

5 August 2013: Explosions and gunfire rage overnight between BH gunmen and troops in the town of Gamboru Ngala, in Borno State. The military in Yobe State places a round-the-clock curfew on Potiskum, the state's commercial hub, amid a huge military deployment ahead of the Muslim Eid al-Fitr holiday. Factional leader of BH Muhammad Marwan claims responsibility for the 29 July bombings of two open beer gardens in Kano, which killed 24 people.

4 August 2013: The military in Borno State says 32 BH gunmen, including Shekau's deputy, two soldiers and a policeman, are killed and two soldiers are injured in two separate BH attacks on a police base in Bama town and a multi-national military checkpoint in Malam Fatori town, both in Borno State. Four all-terrain vehicles, guns, explosives, ammunitions and rocket launchers are recovered from the insurgents.

1 August 2013: The military warns of plans by BH insurgents to carry out massive attacks and bombings in Maiduguri metropolis and other parts of Borno State during the Muslim Eid al-Fitr celebration.

29 July 2013: Nigeria announces it will start to withdraw some of its troops from Mali because they are needed back home to face the BH insurgency. Four bomb blasts targeting two open beer gardens rip through the mainly Christian Sabon Gari area of Kano, killing 24 people and shattering a months-long lull in insurgent attacks.

27 July 2013: BH gunmen kill more than 20 civilians, mostly fishermen and traders. The attack is a reprisal for an attack on them by a vigilante group in Dawashe Village, near the town of Baga in Borno State.

26 July 2013: BH gunmen kill 23 youth vigilantes, called the "Civilian JTF", fighting the insurgents in an ambush near the town of Mainok, 58km from Maiduguri. The vigilantes are returning to Maiduguri, with some suspected BH members arrested in Mainok.

17 July 2013: Nigerian authorities restore the phone signal in Yobe State for the first time since the phone shutdown in three northeastern states, which followed the May 15 state of emergency declaration by the president. The president hails youth vigilantes fighting BH in the northeast as "new national heroes".

14 July 2013: Nigeria's military says it rescued women and children hostages from a BH stronghold in the Bulabulin Ngarnam area of Maiduguri, where several BH gunmen were killed following days of gun battle. The gun battle led to the discovery of a series of bunkers dug by the insurgents and a number of dead bodies.

13 July 2013: BH leader Abubakar Shekau appears in a video expressing support for the 6 July attack on a boarding secondary school in the town of Mamudo in Yobe State that killed 41 students and a teacher, but did not claim responsibility for the massacre.

11 July 2013: Nigeria's military approves the restoration of phone services in northeast Adamawa State after three months of blackout, following the 15 May imposition of a state of emergency.

10 July 2013: Nigeria's special duties minister tasked with talking to BH says he is in ceasefire negotiations with the Islamist insurgents.

9 July 2013: A Nigerian court sentences four BH members to life in prison over April 2011 bombing attacks that killed at least 22 people. The attacks were carried out on an electoral office, a campaign rally and a church in the central city of Suleja, near Nigeria's capital, Abuja.

8 July 2013: The British Home Office discloses that BH will be banned in Britain, alongside Ansar al-Sharia UK, from 13 July, subject to parliamentary approval.

7 July 2013: Yobe State orders the closure of all secondary schools after a massacre at a boarding secondary school in the town of Mamudo by BH gunmen. The European Union condemns the "horrific murder by terrorists" at the school.

6 July 2013: BH gunmen attack a government secondary school in Mamudo in Yobe State, killing 41 students and a teacher and setting dormitories on fire. The military arrests the chairman of the ruling All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) in Borno State, Othman Mala, over suspicion of BH links.

3-8 July 2013: Troops carry out intensive raids on BH's remaining strongholds in Bulabulin Ngarnam, Jajeri and Falluja areas of Maiduguri, killing several insurgents and rescuing women and young girls who had been kidnapped. Nigerian Muslim umbrella body JNI calls on BH to accept dialogue to end violence.

2 July 2013: A vigilante group called "Civilian JTF", which claims to help authorities battle BH insurgents in Nigeria's northeast, sets fire to the Maiduguri home of Othman Mala, chairman of the ruling ANPP in Borno State, after accusing him of links to BH. Human Rights Watch calls on dialogue between BH and a reconciliation committee of the Nigerian government to exclude serious crimes that violate international human rights law from possible amnesty, demanding perpetrators of such crimes be held accountable.

30 June 2013: The Nigerian Human Rights Commission quotes in its new report a Nigeria police investigation report accusing soldiers of firing wildly "at anybody in sight" during a deadly April incident in the town of Baga in Borno State, in which troops razed five wards of the town. BH gunmen kill 10 cowpea traders from southern Nigeria in the town of Monguno in Borno State.

29 June 2013: BH gunmen sack seven hill communities in Gwoza District, forcing residents to flee into neighbouring Cameroon and other far-flung areas.

28 June 2013: Male residents of Bama, in northern Borno State, continue to flee following forced conscription by BH insurgents, who threaten to behead whoever refuses to join their ranks. BH leader Abubakar Shekau appears in a video claiming his fighters have scored several victories against the military during an ongoing offensive while themselves sustaining little damage.

27 June 2013: The Yobe State government says BH has burned down a total of 209 schools in the state.

19 June 2013: The Nigerian military says it has arrested eight of the suspected BH insurgents behind two deadly school attacks in Damaturu and Maiduguri, in which more than a dozen students were killed. Nigeria's military bans the use of satellite phones in the three northeastern states where mobile phone service has been cut due to the imposition of a state of emergency. The military argues the insurgents used satellite phones to plan attacks on two schools in the region, killing over a dozen students.

18 June 2013: Gunmen open fire on an examination hall in the Ansaruddeen private school in Maiduguri, killing five students. BH gunmen kill 13 people, including fishermen, along Alau Dam on the outskirts of Maiduguri, accusing them of collaborating with security agencies. The UN says at least 9,000 people have fled violence in northeastern Nigeria and crossed into neighbouring countries as a government offensive aims to end a four-year Islamist insurgency. A local official says some 19,000 wheat and rice farmers in Marte District, in northern Borno, have fled their fields for fear of BH attacks, raising concerns over potential food shortages. BH issues an audio clip, threatening an all-out war on youths in Maiduguri and Damaturu for helping the military against the insurgents.

17 June 2013: BH gunmen storm a student dormitory in a secondary school in Damaturu, killing seven students and two teachers. Soldiers kill two of the gunmen in a shootout. A five-hour shootout between BH gunmen and soldiers at a military checkpoint in Damaturu leaves three soldiers wounded.

13 June 2013: Security sources say the Nigerian government has released from detention nine BH women, including BH leader Shekau's wife, her three children, widow of BH founder Mohammed Yusuf, as well as 13 other children.

11 June 2013: BH gunmen disguised as mourners kill 15 residents of the Hausari area of Maiduguri in a fake funeral, a reprisal for the arrest of a sect member the previous day. The attack prompts the spontaneous formation youth vigilante groups fighting BH, forcing the insurgents to flee.

6 June 2013: Nigeria's emergency agency announces the deployment of relief items to its fleeing nationals in nearby Niger, following an ongoing military assault to crush the BH insurgency in the northeast. Nigeria's military confirms the US-designated "global terrorist" Abubakar Adam Kamar was killed in a military operation on 18 March 2012.

4 June 2013: Nigeria formally declares BH and the splinter Ansaru rebel group to be terrorist organizations. It issues a law banning them.

3 June 2013: The US announces up to \$23 million in rewards to help track down five leaders of militant groups accused of spreading terror in West Africa. The highest reward, \$7 million, is offered for BH leader Abubakar Shekau. Soldiers kill three BH members disguised as women and arrest 20 other insurgents clad in women's clothing in a foiled attack on a police station in Maiduguri.

31 May 2013: Nigeria's military says it has released 58 women and children held in connection with the BH insurgency in the northeast under a peace gesture.

28 May 2013: BH leader Abubakar Shekau appears in a video for the first time since the state-of-emergency declaration, claiming victory over Nigerian troops and calling on global jihadists to join BH in its battle against Nigerian soldiers. Nigeria's former president, Olusegun Obasanjo, says during a Rome visit

that the root causes of the Islamist insurgency by BH need to be understood before the problem can be resolved and calls on Nigerian government to use a "carrot and stick" approach in tackling BH.

25 May 2013: US Secretary of State John Kerry renews a plea to Nigerian authorities to ensure the military does not carry out atrocities against civilians in its clampdown on BH militants.

24 May 2013: Nigerian authorities say they have freed three women and six children abducted by BH as part of an ongoing military operation targeting the insurgents. The group was abducted on 7 May during an attack on the town of Bama in Borno State.

21 May 2013: Nigeria announces it will release a number of BH detainees, including all women and children, in a peace bid as it wages a military offensive against the insurgents. The Nigerian military relaxes by 10 hours a round-the-clock curfew in some areas of Maiduguri, three days after it is imposed, as soldiers press along with their campaign against BH.

20 May 2013: Nigeria's military says it has re-established control in five remote areas of the northeast Borno State where BH seized territory.

19 May 2013: The Nigerian army's offensive against BH Islamists in northern Borno leaves 14 insurgents and three soldiers dead in the military's latest toll from the operation. Seven wounded BH gunmen are captured in the offensive.

18 May 2013: The military imposes a 24-hour curfew in 12 neighbourhoods of Maiduguri as soldiers press on with a campaign against BH.

17 May 2013: A sweeping offensive against BH Islamists leaves dozens of insurgents dead, as the military presses on with air raids and ground assaults across three northeastern states affected by a state of emergency, a military spokesman said. A Nigerian fighter jets is partially damaged by a BH rocket during an aerial bombardment in Sambisa Forest, but it manages to return to its base in Maiduguri. The UN's human rights office warns BH Islamists could face charges of crimes against humanity, and urges the government to ensure civilians are not swept up in an army counter-offensive. The military accuses BH of wearing army uniform during civilian attacks. Four gunmen, three soldiers and two policemen are killed in coordinated attacks on banks and police stations in the town of Daura, in Katsina State.

16 May 2013: Nigeria's military announces a "massive" deployment of troops and military hardware to its restive northeast, after the president declares a state of emergency in areas where Islamist insurgents have seized territory. Phone signals are shut down in Borno and Yobe states.

15 May 2013: Nigerian troops begin an offensive against BH in the states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, where a state of emergency is declared in order to retake territory seized by insurgents. The US urges Nigeria to protect the rights of civilians and avoid a "heavy-handed" response as it moves against BH militants to enforce a state of emergency.

14 May 2013: The president imposes a state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states, saying the level of violence calls for "extraordinary measures".

13 May 2013: BH claims responsibility for the Baga and Bama attacks in a video, which also depicts women and children apparently being held hostage.

10 May 2013: Nigeria's president holds emergency talks with his security chiefs about a spate of deadly violence, including the BH insurgency.

9 May 2013: A presidential panel set to seek an amnesty deal with BH meets with 40 suspected sect members being held in Kuje prison outside Abuja.

7 May 2013: BH launches coordinated attacks in the northeastern town of Bama against security formations, killing 55 people and freeing 105 inmates.

6 May 2013: Former oil minister Ali Monguno, who was kidnapped by gunmen in the northeastern city of Maiduguri, is released. Troops rescue the parents of a Nigerian lawmaker from Borno State, who were kidnapped the previous night by BH gunmen while on their way home from a family visit. The kidnappers are arrested.

5 May 2013: A group of gunmen storms Njilang Village in northeast Adamawa State, killing 10 residents in attacks on a church and a market.

3 May 2013: A former Nigerian oil minister, Ali Monguno, is kidnapped by gunmen who storm his vehicle outside a mosque in the restive city of Maiduguri.

1 May 2013: Human Rights Watch releases satellite images showing massive destruction in the Nigerian town of Baga, voicing concern that the military has "tried to cover up" abuses that should be investigated by the International Criminal Court.

29 April 2013: During the launch of seven new police helicopters, President Goodluck Jonathan says Nigeria is going through "a trying moment".

26 April 2013: Emergency officials say many survivors of brutal clashes between soldiers and BH gunmen in Baga town, which killed 187 people, are still in hiding. Twenty BH gunmen and five policemen are killed in attacks on police formations in Gashua town in Yobe State.

25 April 2013: Nigerian rescue workers set up temporary camps in Baga and distribute aid to the masses displaced by brutal fighting between troops and BH.

22 April 2013: The Nigerian Red Cross says heavy fighting between Nigerian troops and BH insurgents in Baga town, in Borno State, has killed 187 people, including scores of civilians, while massive blazes left nearly half the town destroyed. The US condemns the Baga clashes, urging authorities to respect human rights.

19 April 2013: Fierce fighting between troops and suspected Islamists in the remote northeastern town of Baga kills 187 people. BH releases a French family of seven it abducted while holidaying in neighbouring Cameroon.

17 April 2013: The Nigerian president sets up a panel to look into how the proposed amnesty for BH should be approached.

11 April 2013: Four policemen and five BH gunmen are killed in a shootout during an attack on a police station in Babban Gida Village of Yobe State. BH leader Abubakar Shekau rejects the idea of any potential amnesty deal with the government. Borno State sets up a committee on contact with BH for the proposed presidential amnesty.

9 April 2013: During a European Union delegation visit to Nigeria, representatives pledge 50 million euros in support of the African force tasked with helping fight Islamist rebels in Mali.

4 April 2013: President Goodluck Jonathan forms a panel to look at the possibility of offering an amnesty deal to Islamist insurgents.

31 March 2013: Fourteen BH gunmen and a soldier are killed in military raids on a BH hideout in the northern city of Kano following Intel reports the insurgents were planning an Easter attack in the city.

22 March 2013: Twenty-five are killed in northeastern Adamawa State when attackers blast a jail, a police station and a bank with bombs, machine-guns and rocket-propelled grenades. Some 127 prison inmates escape during an attack on the jailhouse in Ganye town.

21 March 2013: The emir of Kano, Ado Bayero, says a suicide attack that killed 41 people at a bus park was intended to inflame tensions between Muslims and Christians. Bayero is the second most influential Muslim leader in Nigeria.

18 March 2013: A suicide attack at a bus station in Nigeria's second largest city, Kano, kills 41. BH releases a video showing the French family of seven abducted in Cameroon.

16 March 2013: Nigeria rules out a ransom payment to the kidnappers holding seven members of a French family hostage, as France's foreign minister holds talks with President Goodluck Jonathan on the abductions.

15 March 2013: Gunmen kill a senior judicial official in northern Nigeria's largest city, Kano. Gunmen raid a prison in Gwoza, in northeastern Borno State, freeing 170 inmates and killing a civilian.

12 March 2013: Gunmen open fire at a primary school in the northern city of Kano, injuring four teachers before fleeing on a stolen motorcycle.

9 March 2013: A video posted online claims to show the bodies of at least some of the seven foreign hostages believed killed by Ansaru following their abduction in northern Nigerian town of Jama'are. Lebanon is still trying to confirm the fate of two Lebanese, while Britain, Italy and Greece - whose national are among the hostages - say the murder claim appears to be true.

8 March 2013: Nigeria's president defends the heavy deployment of soldiers to the restive northeast during a rare visit to Maiduguri.

7 March 2013: Nigeria's president rebuffs calls for an amnesty deal for BH during a visit to Damaturu.

6 March 2013: Nigeria's top Islamic leader calls on the president to offer amnesty to all BH combatants to end violence by the sect.

5 March 2013: BH leader Abubakar Shekau denies any ceasefire deal with the government in a video in which a man accused of being an informant appears to be beheaded on camera.

3 March 2013: Nigeria's military says it has killed 20 BH insurgents while repelling an attack in the town of Monguno of Borno State.

28 February 2013: Three people, including a soldier, are injured in multiple blasts in three areas of Maiduguri, with one targeting a military patrol vehicle. Gunmen storm a residence housing foreign workers in Tella Village, in central Taraba State, killing two police guards in a failed kidnapping.

26 February 2013: Nigerian troops kill a suspected BH commander and three of his lieutenants during an operation in Maiduguri. France's defence minister rules out talks with the abductors of a French family seized in Cameroon, after a video of the hostages appears on YouTube.

25 February 2013: A video appears on YouTube of seven kidnapped members of a French family with their abductors, who claimed to be from BH, demanding the release of their imprisoned comrades. France condemns the video as a shocking "display of the kidnappers' cruelty".

23 February 2013: Five people are killed in an attack on a group of people playing cards in Maiduguri. The assailants were gunmen riding on a motorcycle.

22 February 2013: A suicide blast targeting a military vehicle in Maiduguri kills one civilian and wounds six soldiers. Gunfire rings out for hours.

21 February 2013: Nigerian security forces search the country's northeast along the border with Cameroon in a bid to free a French family kidnapped by BH.

20 February 2013: A blast targeting a military patrol vehicle in Maiduguri kills two civilians. France urges its citizens to leave northern Cameroon after the kidnapping of seven members of a French family by BH.

19 February 2013: A French family of seven is kidnapped in Cameroon and taken to Nigeria. BH claims responsibility.

17 February 2013: Two BH gunmen and two civilians are killed in a shootout between gunmen and soldiers at a checkpoint in Nigeria's northern city of Kano. A first contingent of 80 Nigerian troops departs for Mali as part of a UN-mandated African force to help the country battle Islamists who are believed to have forged a close alliance with BH.

See previous timeline

➤ [Human Rights Watch, Nigeria: Boko Haram Abducts Women, Recruits Children, 29 November 2013](#)

Boko Haram has abducted scores of women and girls, used children as young as 12 in hostilities, and killed hundreds of people in recent attacks, Human Rights Watch said today. [...]

Commanders of the Civilian Joint Task Force, working with security forces, said that they had rescued 26 abducted women and girls from a Boko Haram stronghold in Maiduguri and later in Sambisa Forest. Some of the women and girls were pregnant; others had babies. The commanders told Human Rights Watch that a number of the girls had been abducted while hawking wares on the street or working on farms in remote villages. Many girls who were rescued or had escaped were sent off by their families to distant cities like Abuja and Lagos to avoid the stigma of rape or pregnancy outside of marriage, activists said.

Several witnesses said they saw children in the ranks of Boko Haram during attacks. In Maiduguri, Human Rights Watch researchers saw a video recording of the interrogation by security forces of a 14-year-old boy, who described the role he played in Boko Haram operations. Commanders of the Civilian Joint Task Force said they had freed numerous children during a 2013 attack on a Boko Haram base in Sambisa Forest.

Human Rights Watch also observed children who appeared to be aged 15 - 17 manning checkpoints for the Civilian Joint Task Force in Maiduguri; other witnesses described seeing children manning checkpoints elsewhere in Borno and Yobe states.

Witnesses told Human Rights Watch that Boko Haram intensified its attacks on civilians following the state of emergency imposed by the federal government in May in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states. President Goodluck Jonathan in November renewed the state of emergency in these states for another six months.

Witnesses described Boko Haram laying siege to towns, villages, and highways; looting and burning houses, shops, and vehicles; and executing and decapitating people, some of whom they accused of aiding the Civilian Joint Task Force. [...]

➤ [Amnesty International, Nigeria: Unlawful killings by Boko Haram may constitute crimes against Humanity, 6 November 2013](#)

Amnesty International strongly condemns the unlawful killings of members of the public in northern Nigeria. The killing of at least 115 people in the last two weeks by unknown gunmen and other suspected members of Boko Haram may constitute crimes against humanity as defined in Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, to which Nigeria is a state party. [...]

➤ [Jamestown Foundation, Targeting Civilians at the Core of Boko Haram's New Strategy; Terrorism Monitor Volume: 11 Issue: 20, 31 October 2013](#)

[...] Boko Haram's strategy since the State of Emergency is aimed at deterring the civilian population from forming militias (such as the "Civilian JTF") to support the Nigerian military's Joint Task Force (JTF). In previous years, Boko Haram tolerated dozens, if not hundreds, of Muslim civilian deaths as collateral damage, but it did not specifically target civilians on a mass-scale. Now, however, Boko Haram is carrying out massacres of the lightly-armed Civilian JTF and civilians who come from villages where the Civilian JTF is active. Boko Haram's massacres in Borno since August resulted in the deaths of more than 300 civilians and 50 Civilian JTF members in more than 15 attacks on different villages. One of Boko Haram's most common tactics is to dress as the Nigerian military and set up fake checkpoints to kill travelers (often by beheading) along the roadway.

One explanation for the massacres of civilians who have little or no connection to the Civilian JTF is that Boko Haram has become psychologically acculturated to violence after four years of insurgency and more than 4,000 people killed. Mass beheadings, forced conscription of youths and forced marriages of local women to Boko Haram members are now more commonplace than at any time since 2009 (This Day [Lagos], July 16). Another possibility is that Boko Haram's tactics are a way of "integrating" local communities into the movement. This is similar to what Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) did in Uganda and the Congo (The Guardian, May 15). Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau's statement that the 12 wives and children of government officials that Boko Haram kidnapped from Bama on May 7 could become his "servants" reflects Kony-like methods. [1] Like the LRA, Boko Haram fighters in Borno may now be focused more on their own survival and re-establishing safe havens in the border region to carry out criminal activities, such as kidnapping and weapons smuggling, than garnering support from the local population it once sought to represent in its war on the Nigerian government, traditional Muslim leaders and Christians.

Despite Boko Haram's violence, most of its recent attacks in Borno did not attract significant media attention because they took place in remote areas and became increasingly routine—and therefore not "newsworthy." [...]

The Boko Haram breakaway faction Ansaru, which rejects Shekau's killing of Muslims, will likely remain AQIM's preferred affiliate in Nigeria. Most of Ansaru's leaders trained in Algeria and the Sahel with former AQIM commanders such as Mokhtar Belmokhtar and the late Abu Zeid (Agence Nouakchott d'Information, March 10, 2012; AFP, June 21). Members of Ansaru—not Boko Haram—took part in the Belmokhtar-led suicide operations in Arlit and Agadez, Niger in May. [5] Ansaru's kidnappings of foreigners in northern Nigeria, including Frenchman Françoise Collomp, who appeared in an Ansaru proof-of-life video in October 2013, are more consistent with AQIM's modus operandi and al-Qaeda's "public relations strategy" than Boko Haram's attacks on civilians (Leadership [Abuja], October 1). AQIM's overall leader and key strategist, Abd al-Malik Droukdel, has shown no support for Shekau or Boko Haram since he issued "condolences" for Boko Haram founder Muhammad Yusuf in July 2009 and declared his support of Nigerian Muslims after the election violence of April 2011. [...]

➤ [Amnesty International, Nigeria: 'Keep away from schools or we'll kill you': Right to education under attack in Nigeria, 4 October 2013](#)

[...] 1. Introduction

[...] Education is under attack in northern Nigeria. Since the beginnings of 2012, according to Amnesty International's research, at least 70 teachers and over 100 schoolchildren and students have been killed or wounded. At least 50 schools have either been burned or seriously damaged and more than 60 others have been forced to close. Thousands of children have been forced out of schools across communities in Yobe, Kaduna, Adamawa and Borno states. Many teachers have been forced to flee for their safety to other states. The highest number of attacks was in Borno state in the north-east. According to the Nigeria Teachers' Union, more than 1,000 teachers have been forced to flee from areas in the north since 2012. The Islamist armed group commonly known as Boko Haram has claimed responsibility for some of the attacks. As far as Amnesty International is able to ascertain, no other group or individuals have claimed responsibility for attacking schools in the north. However, it is possible other groups or individuals have also carried out attacks. [...]

2. Background

[...] Since July 2009, the Islamist armed group Jamā'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lādda'awatih wal Jihad [People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad], commonly referred to as Boko Haram [meaning "Western education is forbidden"], and individuals or groups claiming to be members of Boko Haram, have claimed responsibility for bombings and gun attacks across northern and central Nigeria. The group has killed Muslim and Christian clerics and worshippers, politicians, journalists and lawyers, and also police personnel and soldiers. Boko Haram has claimed responsibility for attacks on churches, prisons, police stations, school buildings, newspaper offices and the UN. [...]

For an illustrative list of Boko Haram incidents from January 2013 to 21 September 2013, see:

- [ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation: ecoinet.net featured topic on Nigeria: Boko Haram, 27 September 2013](#)

For an illustrative list of Boko Haram incidents from April 2012 to April 2013, see:

- [ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation: ecoinet.net featured topic on Nigeria: Boko Haram, 29 April 2013](#)

Treatment of persons perceived to be Boko Haram members

This issue is not addressed in the conclusion nor in the introductory paragraph 3.18.1 to this section. However, COI is presented on this point in the following paragraphs of the *Treatment* section:

Excerpt from the December 2013 Nigeria OGN

3.18.3 [...] The escalation of Boko Haram activity was matched by a harsh and somewhat indiscriminate response from the military and police, reportedly including extrajudicial killings and arbitrary arrests.

3.18.12 In response to the Boko Haram attacks, President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in Borno, Yobe, Niger, and Plateau states on December 31, 2011, allowing the Nigerian army to enter those states. However, rather than stop Boko Haram, the army's use of excessive force exacerbated the problem. Hundreds of suspected Boko Haram members are in detention, with trial dates yet to be determined. [...]

3.18.13 Nigeria's security forces perpetrated serious human rights violations in their response to Boko Haram – including enforced disappearance, extrajudicial executions, house burning and unlawful detention. Scores of people were unlawfully killed by the Joint Task Force (JTF) – army, police and other security forces – set up to deal with the violence, or police; others were subjected to enforced disappearance from police or JTF custody. People in at least five communities in Maiduguri had their houses burned down by the JTF, often following raids and arrests in the areas and in some cases seemingly as a punitive measure.

3.18.14 Hundreds of people accused of having links to Boko Haram were arbitrarily detained by the JTF. Many were detained incommunicado for lengthy periods without charge or trial, without being brought before any judicial authority, and without access to lawyers. Hundreds of people were detained without charge or trial at Giwa Barracks, 21 Armoured Brigade, Maiduguri, in harsh conditions that may amount to inhuman and degrading treatment. Independent and impartial investigations were rarely carried out into allegations of human rights violations by the security forces and, when they were, the findings were not made public. [...]

3.18.15 On 1 May 2012, following a killing by a suspected member of Boko Haram in Kwar Maila, JTF soldiers made women and children living nearby leave their homes before setting approximately 33 houses on fire. An Islamiyya school attended by local children was also burned down by the JTF. The building was unoccupied at the time.

3.18.16 Security forces commit abuses with near impunity, and corruption pervades their ranks. Amnesty International has accused military forces currently deployed to quell the terrorist activities

of Boko Haram of worsening human rights conditions through extreme, extralegal tactics. [...]Many of the tactics used by the military, such as cordon-and-sweep searches, result in other forms of rights abuses in areas where Boko Haram operates, and security forces have engaged in arbitrary mass arrests of young Muslim men in these areas.

Additional illustrative recent COI on the treatment of perceived Boko Haram members includes:

➤ [Human Rights Watch, Nigeria: Boko Haram Abducts Women, Recruits Children, 29 November 2013](#)

[...] The Nigerian government, meanwhile, has failed to account for hundreds of men and boys whom security forces have rounded up and forcibly disappeared during Boko Haram's four-year insurgency. [...] Security forces acting with enhanced powers, particularly during the state of emergency, established frequent screening routines for male youths in Maiduguri, detaining several hundred young men, according to residents. Witnesses described how soldiers pounded on doors in neighborhoods perceived as Boko Haram strongholds beginning at 5 a.m., ordered the young men out, demanded that they stand before a car with its headlights on, and then declared the men either free or under arrest. Scores of those arrested have disappeared, and their family members, despite great efforts, have been unable to locate them.

A woman in Gwange, a Maiduguri neighborhood, described how security forces arrested her seven sons, between the ages of 12 and 30, who had gathered in front of their home with 15 others for evening prayers in May. Another woman told Human Rights Watch that eight soldiers ordered her 10-year-old son to lie down, beat him with batons and tied him up, piled him face down with 22 others in an open-back vehicle, and then drove them away.

Two former detainees and three other witnesses provided detailed statements about the horrific conditions in the security forces' notorious Giwa military barracks in Maiduguri. They said that hundreds of detainees died as a result of dehydration, illness, and beatings, while many others were executed. [...] Former detainees, family members of detainees, human rights advocates, and militia leaders described the detention in Maiduguri of hundreds of men in mass arrests by security forces; the numbers of detentions were particularly high in May and June 2013.

Scores, perhaps hundreds, of these men and boys remain unaccounted for. Witnesses and former detainees credibly assert that detainees died in custody from the appalling detention conditions or were executed by the security services within the 21 Armored Brigade, popularly known as Giwa Barracks. Both the detentions and deaths in custody appear to have slowed since July. [...]

➤ [IRIN, Detainee abuses "monumental" in northern Nigeria, 15 November 2013](#)

[...] As attacks by militant group Boko Haram (BH) continue to spread terror across northeastern Nigeria, the government's response is also causing widespread fear among civilians. Mass sweep-ups of BH suspects, led by the military's Joint Task Force (JTF), have led to mounting reports of detainees dying or disappearing in custody. According to rights group Amnesty International (AI), in the first six months of 2013, at least 950 people in the northeastern cities of Maiduguri, in Borno State, and Damaturu, in Yobe State, died in military custody. Most of the alleged victims were suspected members of BH, but they were largely held without being charged or tried.

Released detainees, families of the missing and a member of the JTF, who asked to remain anonymous, told IRIN that AI's 950 figure was just a fraction of the real death toll. They claimed the deaths reached into the thousands. [...]

According to doctors in Maiduguri, detainees' families and the AI report, detainees died from gunshot wounds, torture, dehydration, malnutrition or suffocation (many were held in overcrowded cells with no windows). Some detainees were shot in the leg and left to bleed to death, according to AI. Others were killed outright. [...]

Amnesty International did not document cases of poisoning at detention centres, but a medical source at Sani Abacha Specialist Hospital in Damaturu said that in August of this year, 27 bodies were brought to the hospital from the Guantanamo detention centre, and "all had white foam in their mouths which was a clear case of oral poisoning. But the issue was hushed out of fear for the safety of medical staff."

At Guantanamo, some suspects are thrown into large holes dug into the ground, "where there is no protection from the scorching heat, rain or cold, and with their hands bound behind their back. Between 30 and 50 men are put in each hole, and allowed to die," the military source told IRIN.

Soldiers use euphemisms such as "delete him" and "take him to the abattoir", said the military source. The dead are usually buried in the camps, but sometimes they are packed into open trucks and dumped at the state-run Sani Abacha specialist hospital in Damaturu, sources said. [...]

Decomposing bodies are also routinely dumped outside the cemetery in Gwange area of Maiduguri City by BOSEPA trucks, said an elderly Gwange resident. "We have become used to the mass burial of dead bodies dumped by soldiers here. They bring them in BOSEPA trucks and residents [gather] to identify their relatives or friends from among them. And those that cannot be identified, we bury them in mass graves," he told IRIN. [...]

➤ [Amnesty International, Nigeria: Authorities must investigate deaths of Boko Haram suspects in military custody, 16 October 2013](#)

[...] Hundreds of people may have died in detention facilities run by the Joint Task Force (JTF) in 2013. Amnesty International is calling on the Nigerian authorities to conduct a thorough, impartial and transparent investigation into the deaths, as a matter of urgency. Amnesty International received credible information from a senior officer in the Nigerian Army that over 950 people died in detention facilities run by the Joint Task Force in the first six months of 2013 alone. A large proportion of these people are believed to have died in Giwa military barracks in Maiduguri, Borno state and Sector Alpha, commonly referred to as 'Guantanamo' and Presidential Lodge (known as 'Guardroom') in Damaturu, Yobe state - facilities used by the JTF to detain people suspected of being members of or associated with Boko Haram. According to former detainees interviewed by Amnesty International, people died on an almost daily basis in Giwa barracks as well as Sector Alpha detention centres, from suffocation or other injuries due to overcrowding and starvation. Some suffered serious injuries due to severe beating and eventually died in detention due to lack of medical attention and treatment. Others were reportedly shot in the leg during interrogation, provided no medical care and left to bleed to death [...]

3.19 Religious persecution

The conclusion for this main category of claim states:

Excerpt from the December 2013 Nigeria OGN

3.19.14 Conclusion The right to religious freedom and expression is enshrined in the constitution and there are no reports of anyone experiencing any problems with the Federal Government in practising their chosen religion. In general those fearing ill-treatment will be able to seek protection from the state or alternatively internally relocate to escape a localised threat. Applicants who express a fear of Shari'a courts have the constitutional right to have their cases heard by the parallel (non-Islamic) judicial system and as such their claims are likely to be unfounded.

In general those expressing fear of Hisbah groups will be able to internally relocate to elsewhere in Nigeria where such groups do not operate or have no influence. Caseworkers must refer to the Asylum Instruction on Internal Relocation for guidance on the circumstances in which internal relocation would be a 'reasonable' option. A claim based on fear of Hisbah groups is unlikely to qualify for a grant of asylum or humanitarian protection.

With regards to the first highlighted sentence, whilst there are no reports of abuses of religious freedom by the federal government, the conclusion fails to mention that there are abuses by both state and local governments:

➤ [U.S Department of State, 2012 International Religious Freedom Report - Nigeria, 20 May 2013](#)

[...] Government Practices

There were no reports of abuses of religious freedom by the federal government. However, there were reports of abuses by some state and local governments, including reports of detentions. In addition, some state and local governments imposed restrictions on religious freedom that affected members of religious groups. Some state governments asserted that they placed limits on religious activity to address security and public safety concerns. [...]

For further information on abuses by state and local governments, see the OGN at paragraphs 3.19.7, 3.19.8, 3.19.9, and 3.19.12 and additional COI not included in the OGN presented below on:

[State treatment of Muslims \(particularly in south Nigeria\)](#)

[State treatment of Christians and non-Muslims \(particularly in north Nigeria\)](#)

The next highlighted sentences of the *Conclusion* above assert that in general those fearing ill-treatment will be able to internally relocate to escape a localised threat, and also that those fearing Hisbah groups (religious police supported by state governments) will be able to internally relocate elsewhere in Nigeria where such groups do not operate or have no influence. Whilst referring in general to the required reasonableness assessment of internal relocation, the *Conclusion* does not mention the specific need to assess religious freedom in the proposed site of internal relocation, which is highly relevant for this profile of claimant. This is despite the OGN including information on societal violence and discrimination against Muslims particularly in south Nigeria (at paragraphs 3.19.5, 3.19.8, 3.19.10, and 3.19.11) and societal violence and discrimination against Christians and non-Muslims particularly in north Nigeria (paragraph 3.19.5, 3.19.9, 3.19.10, and 3.19.12). Additional COI to that included in the *Treatment* section of the OGN is presented below on these issues.

Despite being addressed in the *Treatment* section it should be noted that the conclusion for this main category of claim also fails to mention the risk arising from inter-religious and communal violence, and the lack of effective protection available for such violence from the authorities (see paragraphs 3.19.5 and 3.19.6) which may also be relevant to an assessment of internal relocation.

Non-exhaustive, illustrative COI from 2013 not included in the OGN is presented at the end of this section on the following issues to assist an assessment of whether relocation to a new area would be unduly harsh based on a claimant's religion:

- [State abuses of religious freedom](#)
[State treatment of Muslims \(particularly in south Nigeria\)](#)
[State treatment of Christians and non-Muslims \(particularly in north Nigeria\)](#)
- [Societal violence and discrimination \(not including attacks by Boko Haram\)](#)
[Societal violence and discrimination against Muslims \(particularly in south Nigeria\)](#)
[Societal violence and discrimination against Christians and non-Muslims \(particularly in north Nigeria\)](#)
- [Inter-communal and religious violence in the central states](#)
- [Effective state protection available for persons fearing religious and communal violence](#)

Also relevant to the assessment of internal relocation, is the analysis of the [3.18 Boko Haram](#) section which presents COI on:

- [State protection against Boko Haram and Ansaru attacks \(particularly in north Nigeria\)](#)
- [Recent attacks, targets and reach of Boko Haram and Ansaru](#)

For a full analysis of the issues for research required for the relevance and reasonableness assessment, see the [2.3 Internal Relocation](#) section.

The conclusion for this main category of claim also states:

Excerpt from the December 2013 Nigeria OGN

3.19.14 Conclusion The right to religious freedom and expression is enshrined in the constitution and there are no reports of anyone experiencing any problems with the Federal Government in practising their chosen religion. In general those fearing ill-treatment will be able to seek protection from the state or alternatively internally relocate to escape a localised threat. Applicants who express a fear of Shari'a courts have the constitutional right to have their cases heard by the parallel (non-Islamic) judicial system and as such their claims are likely to be unfounded.

In general those expressing fear of Hisbah groups will be able to internally relocate to elsewhere in Nigeria where such groups do not operate or have no influence. Caseworkers must refer to the Asylum Instruction on Internal Relocation for guidance on the circumstances in which internal relocation would be a 'reasonable' option. A claim based on fear of Hisbah groups is unlikely to qualify for a grant of asylum or humanitarian protection.

In the highlighted sentence above, the OGN concludes that "applicants who express a fear of Shari'a courts have the constitutional right to have their cases heard by the parallel (non-Islamic) judicial

system'. However, the COI below suggests that this right only applies to non-Muslims. The same excerpt also indicates that whilst Muslims can theoretically appeal Shari'a court decisions, this has not been done in practice before:

- [U.S Department of State, 2012 International Religious Freedom Report - Nigeria, 20 May 2013](#)
[...] The constitution provides for state courts based on the common law or customary law systems. Twelve northern states maintain Sharia courts. The constitution specifically recognizes Sharia courts for civil but not criminal matters. Non-Muslims have the option to try their cases in the Sharia courts if involved in disputes with Muslims. Common law courts hear the cases of non-Muslims who do not agree to the use of Sharia courts. Sharia courts cannot compel participation by non-Muslims, but some non-Muslims took cases to Sharia courts, citing their speed and low cost. Aggrieved parties can appeal Sharia court judgments to three levels of Sharia appellate courts. Decisions by the Sharia court of appeal (the highest level of the Sharia courts) theoretically can undergo appeal to the Federal Court of Appeal and then to the Supreme Court, although none has done so. [...]
[...] Government Practices
[...] Some non-Muslims alleged that use of government-funded Sharia courts amounted to the adoption of Islam as a state religion. [...]

The following excerpt of the OGN gives an indication of those scenarios in which a Muslim may fear a Shari'a court decision:

Excerpt from the December 2013 Nigeria OGN

3.19.13 Since 1999, all 12 Muslim-majority northern Nigerian states established, or announced plans to establish, their interpretation of Shari'ah law in their criminal codes. No new Shari'ah laws were established during the reporting period. Each of these 12 states has sought to extend the jurisdiction of Shari'ah courts beyond personal status matters to include Shari'ah crimes and punishments for Muslims alone. In the past, such punishments included amputation, flogging, or death by stoning. No such sentences were reported in 2012. Trials in Shari'ah courts in these states often fall short of basic international rule of law standards, and defendants have limited rights of appeal and sometimes have no opportunity to obtain legal representation. Women face discrimination under these provisions, especially in adultery cases where pregnancy alone has been used as adequate evidence of guilt. Allegations of rape and sexual violence rarely are investigated

The following is non-exhaustive, illustrative COI from the past 12 months not included in the OGN:

State abuses of religious freedom

State treatment of Muslims (particularly in south Nigeria)

- [U.S Department of State, 2012 International Religious Freedom Report - Nigeria, 20 May 2013](#)
[...] Government Practices
[...] Some Muslims in the south alleged that local government officials demolished or prevented the construction of mosques in retaliation for denials in the north. On August 12, Muslims in predominantly Christian Anambra State protested the state government's decision to demolish a mosque, allegedly for a road construction project. By year's end, government officials had not compensated the community or provided a new mosque. [...]

State treatment of Christians and non-Muslims (particularly in north Nigeria)

- [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Summary prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 \(b\) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, 31 July 2013](#)

[...] 72. ECLJ [European Centre for Law and Justice] stated that it was common in the northern states for authorities to effectively ban Christian churches. Permits for the construction or renovation of such churches were frequently denied. [...]

➤ [U.S Department of State, 2012 International Religious Freedom Report - Nigeria, 20 May 2013](#)

[...] Government Practices

[...] On August 8, Kano State Hisbah personnel arrested 20 people who chose not to fast during Ramadan. Authorities reportedly denied the detainees food to “teach them how to fast” and released them after three days. Kano State authorities maintained steep fines and prison sentences for the public consumption and distribution of alcohol, in compliance with Sharia statutes. Some non-indigene and non-Muslim residents of Kano accused the Hisbah of impounding alcoholic beverages transported on federal roads through Kano, and harassing and injuring travelers passing through the state because they used or possessed alcohol.

Authorities in some states reportedly denied building permits for construction of new places of worship of the non-dominant religious community, or for expansion and renovation of existing ones. Christians from both the north and the south alleged that in the predominantly Muslim northern states, local government officials used zoning regulations and title registrations to stop or slow the establishment of new churches. Early in the year, a church in a northern state purchased land from a private seller to expand its rectory, but local government officials refused to transfer the title into the church’s name. [...]

Societal violence and discrimination (not including attacks by Boko Haram)

Societal violence and discrimination against Muslims (particularly in south Nigeria)

➤ [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Summary prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 \(b\) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, 31 July 2013](#)

[...] 32. JS 12 [Jubilee Campaign; Advocates International, International Institute for Religious Freedom; Institute on Religion and Democracy; Human Rights Law Foundation; Mitchell Firm; Open Doors International; and Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union (Joint Submission 12)] stated that discrimination against religious minorities was endemic in at least 16 of the 19 northern states in Nigeria. Religious minorities were denied equal rights, most state jobs and promotions. Christian neighborhoods were frequently overlooked for development or maintenance.

33. JS 13 [Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), CSW USA, CSW Nigeria and Stefanus Alliance International (Joint Submission 13)] stated that non-Muslims in Shari’a states often suffered marginalisation, particularly in rural areas. They were rarely permitted to join the military or the public sector. There was discrimination in employment with qualified applicants from minority faiths being disregarded for key positions. [...]

➤ [U.S Department of State, 2012 International Religious Freedom Report - Nigeria, 20 May 2013](#)

[...] Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

There were reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Because ethnicity and religion were often inextricably linked, it was difficult to categorize social abuses or discrimination cases as either ethnic or religious intolerance. [...]

Muslims and Christians increasingly feared reprisal attacks based on their religious affiliation, especially following attacks on churches. In June an estimated 50 people died in reprisal attacks after a series of church bombings in Kaduna, and several prominent Christian leaders made inflammatory statements. However, most Christian and Muslim religious leaders based in areas experiencing violence either spoke up for tolerance or remained silent. Several Christian and Muslim religious leaders speculated that the perpetrators of an October suicide bombing of a church in the Middle Belt intended to spark communal violence in the surrounding community. They also acknowledged that the state government’s quick action to maintain order and establish a curfew averted a larger crisis. [...]

➤ [United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, USCIRF Annual Report 2013 - Countries of Particular Concern: Nigeria, 30 April 2013](#)

[...] Sectarian Violence in 2012

Sectarian violence continued in 2012, although not at the levels of previous reporting periods. There were three reported instances of sectarian violence in this reporting period. On January 10, in Potiskum, eight people were killed when gunmen opened fire in a bar, in reprisal for an assault on a mosque and Islamic school in Benin in which five were killed and six injured. Three were arrested in this incident, but there are no reports of prosecutions. On November 18, Christians set up an illegal checkpoint on a road near their church during services to prevent attacks. A Muslim who tried to go through the checkpoint was killed. Muslims retaliated and riots ensued, houses and shops were torched, and 10 were killed, including both Muslims and Christians. There were no known arrests or prosecutions. [...]

Societal violence and discrimination against Christians and non-Muslims (particularly in north Nigeria)

- [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Summary prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 \(b\) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, 31 July 2013](#)

[...] 72. ECLJ [European Centre for Law and Justice] stated that it was common in the northern states for authorities to effectively ban Christian churches. Permits for the construction or renovation of such churches were frequently denied.

73. JS 12 [Jubilee Campaign; Advocates International, International Institute for Religious Freedom; Institute on Religion and Democracy; Human Rights Law Foundation; Mitchell Firm; Open Doors International; and Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union (Joint Submission 12)] stated that in January 2012, Christians in Yobe state, particularly in Potiskum and Damaturu were attacked in nightly house-to-house killings, and were targeted solely for their religious identity.

74. STP [Society for Threatened People, Göttingen, Germany] stated that Boko Haram or its offshoots was targeting and killing people in the northern states of Nigeria based on their Christian religion and ethnicity.

[...] 76. JS 13 [Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), CSW USA, CSW Nigeria and Stefanus Alliance International (Joint Submission 13)] stated that child abduction and forcible conversion continued to occur, particularly in the remote areas of Shari'a states. [...]

101. JS 13 stated that in Kano State girls attending public school have been required to wear the hijab as part of their school uniform, regardless of their religious affiliation. Also, most private schools were required to have compulsory lessons of Islam and to employ Muslim clerics.

102. JS 13 stated that in several states, children in public schools were obliged to perform Muslim prayers regardless of religious backgrounds. Also, in some Shari'a states, children were obliged to change their name to a Muslim name and adopt Muslim practices, including worship, in order to receive a state education, risking expulsion if discovered not to be Muslim. [...]

- [U.S Department of State, 2012 International Religious Freedom Report - Nigeria, 20 May 2013](#)

[...] Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

There were reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Because ethnicity and religion were often inextricably linked, it was difficult to categorize social abuses or discrimination cases as either ethnic or religious intolerance.

Early in the year, a Muslim woman in a northeast state reportedly received death threats after she converted to Christianity. Anonymous harassers whom she suspected were Boko Haram members told her to convert back to Islam. When she refused, unknown gunmen shot and killed members of her immediate family in her home. [...]

Muslims and Christians increasingly feared reprisal attacks based on their religious affiliation, especially following attacks on churches. In June an estimated 50 people died in reprisal attacks after a series of church bombings in Kaduna, and several prominent Christian leaders made inflammatory statements. However, most Christian and Muslim religious leaders based in areas experiencing violence either spoke up for tolerance or remained silent. Several Christian and Muslim religious leaders speculated that the perpetrators of an October suicide bombing of a church in the Middle Belt intended to spark communal violence in the surrounding community. They also acknowledged that the state government's quick action to maintain order and establish a curfew averted a larger crisis. [...]

There were credible reports that some Christian and Southern indigenes temporarily moved away from the northeastern states of Borno and Yobe early in the year. They cited general security concerns, including attacks on churches and sustained violence between extremists and government security forces. [...]

➤ [United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, USCIRF Annual Report 2013 - Countries of Particular Concern: Nigeria, 30 April 2013](#)

[...] Sectarian Violence in 2012

Sectarian violence continued in 2012, although not at the levels of previous reporting periods. There were three reported instances of sectarian violence in this reporting period. On January 10, in Potiskum, eight people were killed when gunmen opened fire in a bar, in reprisal for an assault on a mosque and Islamic school in Benin in which five were killed and six injured. Three were arrested in this incident, but there are no reports of prosecutions. On November 18, Christians set up an illegal checkpoint on a road near their church during services to prevent attacks. A Muslim who tried to go through the checkpoint was killed. Muslims retaliated and riots ensued, houses and shops were torched, and 10 were killed, including both Muslims and Christians. There were no known arrests or prosecutions. In Bichi town on November 22, a Christian allegedly blasphemed the Prophet Muhammad, leading to riots by hundreds of Muslim youths, in which Christian shops and places of worship were looted and burnt and four Christians died. Police and soldiers sent in to restore calm arrested 10 with no prosecutions to date. [...]

Inter-communal and religious violence in the central states

➤ [Human Rights Watch, "Leave Everything to God" : Accountability for Inter-Communal Violence in Plateau and Kaduna States, Nigeria, 12 December 2013](#)

[...] Summary

[...]Nigeria's volatile Middle Belt, an area in central Nigeria that divides the largely Muslim north from the predominantly Christian south, has witnessed horrific internecine violence over the past two decades. Two neighboring states in this region—Plateau and Kaduna—have been worst affected. Since 1992, more than 10,000 people in those two states have died in inter-communal bloodletting; several thousand of those deaths have occurred since 2010 alone. Many of the victims were targeted and killed, often in horrific circumstances, based simply on their ethnic or religious identity. Victims, including children, have been hacked to death, burned alive, or dragged off buses and murdered in tit-for-tat killings. The Nigerian authorities have failed, with rare exception, to break the cycle of violence by bringing to justice the perpetrators of these serious crimes, and horrific attacks in both Plateau and Kaduna have continued.

This report details the major incidents of violence in Plateau and Kaduna states, in particular brutal massacres in 2010 and 2011, and documents how the Nigerian authorities responded to these mass killings. The incidents documented in this report are not simply bygone historical events but remain very present in the lives of the victims and survivors. In the absence of effective remedies through the criminal justice system, similar violence continues to threaten these states, as aggrieved individuals seek retribution for the loss of their loved ones, homes, and livelihoods.

While the root causes driving communal violence in the Middle Belt are varied and often entail longstanding grievances and disputes, they are exacerbated both by divisive state and local government policies that discriminate on ethnic or religious lines and by the failure of authorities to hold to account those responsible for the violence. [...]

While the root causes driving communal violence in the Middle Belt are varied and often entail longstanding grievances and disputes, they are exacerbated both by divisive state and local government policies that discriminate on ethnic or religious lines and by the failure of authorities to hold to account those responsible for the violence. The report examines the reasons that Nigerian officials have not prosecuted perpetrators and recommends steps the government can and should take to end the pervasive culture and practice of impunity that have helped fuel this violence.

The communal strife in Plateau and Kaduna states has primarily pitted Hausa-Fulani Muslims—the largest and most politically powerful group in northern Nigeria—against smaller predominantly Christian ethnic groups that, together, constitute the majority in the Middle Belt. Members of these Christian groups say they feel threatened by the expanding Hausa-Fulani communities in the region. Some Christian leaders accuse the Hausa-Fulani of trying to impose Islam on the region and point to a history of oppression and

violence suffered by non-Muslims in the northern region of the country to back up these concerns. They also accuse Hausa-Fulani in the Middle Belt communities of resorting to violence to achieve these ends.

In Plateau State, state and local government officials have responded to this perceived threat by implementing policies that favor members of predominantly Christian “indigene” groups—those who can trace their ancestry to what are said to be the original inhabitants of an area—and exclude opportunities, such as state and local government employment, to Hausa-Fulani and members of other ethnic groups they deem to be “settlers.”

The situation is more complex in Kaduna State, where the ethnic and religious divisions are more evenly split. In the northern part of the state, Hausa-Fulani hold the majority, and Christians claim they face discrimination, while in the southern part of the state—where numerous predominantly Christian ethnic groups, together, make up the majority—Hausa-Fulani complain that they are treated as perpetual “settlers” and second-class citizens, despite the fact that, in some cases, their families have lived in those communities for multiple generations. The struggle for “ownership”—cultural, religious, and political control—of these areas has been at the heart of much of the inter-communal conflict.

Both sides have accused the other of using extreme violence to achieve their goals, including mass killing and ethnic or sectarian cleansing of communities and neighborhoods. Christian leaders in these states often accuse the Hausa-Fulani of starting the violence, allegations that the Hausa-Fulani leaders usually deny, while Hausa-Fulani point out that far more Muslims have died in mass killings at the hands of the Christians, massacres that Christian leaders invariably dispute. [...]

➤ [Agence France Presse, Gunmen kill 37 in central Nigeria attack: military, 26 November 2013](#)

[...] - Gunmen in central Nigeria's Plateau state killed 37 people in a pre-dawn raid Tuesday, the military said, the latest unrest to hit the area gripped by a decade-long sectarian conflict.

"At about 2:00 am (0100 GMT) unknown gunmen carried out an attack" in four villages, said area military spokesman Salisu Mustapha.

"The attackers killed... 13 persons in Katu Kapang, eight in Daron, nine in Tul and seven others in Rawuru." Plateau falls in Nigeria's so-called Middle Belt, on the dividing line between the mainly Christian south and predominantly Muslim north.

Mostly Muslim herdsmen from the Fulani-Hausa ethnic group have been blamed for scores of attacks on mainly Christian agriculturalists from the Berom ethnic community.

Fulani leaders say the Berom politicians who control the state have systemically suppressed the rights of herdsmen, denying them access to desperately needed grazing land.

It was not clear who carried out the latest attack which hit the Barkin Ladi area, a hotspot in the protracted conflict. [...]

Violence in Plateau "has led to ethnic cleansing that recalls the Balkans", former US ambassador to Nigeria John Campbell wrote in July in The Atlantic magazine.

"Formerly mixed villages or neighbourhoods (in the capital Jos) now consist of only one ethnic group. If an outsider is detected, he risks being killed on the spot," added Campbell, now with the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR).

The CFR, which tracks violence in northern and central Nigeria, counted "785 sectarian related deaths in Plateau state" between May 29, 2011 and June 30, 2013.

"These estimates are very conservative," Campbell wrote.

"Victims are predominantly women, children and the elderly -- men are able to run off. Killings sometimes occur among close neighbours," he continued.

Several peace processes in Plateau have mostly failed to stop the violence, with deep mistrust persisting between the state's politicians and the security forces.

Berom leaders have accused the military of supporting and at times co-operating with the Fulani but such allegations have not been proven. [...]

➤ [Agence France Presse, 'Hundreds' of gunmen storm central Nigeria town, kill 5: police, 24 November 2013](#)

Some 300 gunmen stormed a mostly Christian village in central Nigeria on Sunday, killing five people and burning scores of homes, police said.

The early morning attack targeted the village of Kuka in Plateau state, which roughly falls on the dividing line between Nigeria's mainly Christian south and predominately Muslim north.

"Five people were killed and many houses were burnt," said Plateau's police spokeswoman Felicia Anslem. "About 300 attackers invaded the community early on Sunday," she added. The decade-long mostly sectarian conflict in Plateau has left thousands dead. Herdsmen from the Fulani-Hausa ethnic group, which is mostly Muslim, have been blamed for scores of attacks on the primarily Christian Berom community. The Berom are considered the state's indigenous people, which legally gives them enhanced rights, including better access to land, education and public offices. Fulani leaders have for years claimed that the violence can only be tempered if state leaders, who are almost entirely Berom, agree to major political reforms. It was not clear who carried out the latest attack. While Kuka is a mostly Christian village, some of the victims were said to have been Fulanis. Resident Abdullahi Ragmin said "200 houses" were burnt, and described the victims as ranging from age 35 to 60, in an account confirmed by other witnesses. [...]

- [Agence France Presse, At least 16 killed in central Nigeria unrest: police, 10 October 2013](#)
[...] Armed gunmen suspected to be cattle rustlers killed 10 members of one family before six of the gunmen were shot dead by security forces in Nigeria's central Plateau state, the police said. "Cattle rustlers believed to be (ethnic) Fulani attacked Kukek village in the state. They murdered about 10 members of a family. Six of the attackers were mowed down in an exchange of fire with security forces," the police chief in the state, Chris Olakpe, told AFP. Several other people in the village were wounded in the attack, said Olakpe, who added he went to the inspect the area after the attack. Some local media put the death toll in the unrest at 21. [...]

- [Agence France Presse, Central Nigeria ethnic violence kills at least 48: army, 28 June 2013](#)
[...] Raids by gunmen in ethnically divided central Nigeria and gun battles between soldiers and attackers have killed at least 48 people and left dozens of homes burnt, the military said Friday. The attacks appeared to have been reprisals linked to cattle theft, often the source of friction in the Middle Belt region dividing the mainly Muslim north and predominately Christian south of Africa's most populous nation. Thursday's violence saw gunmen raid three villages in the remote Langtang region of Plateau state, leaving at least 28 residents dead. Homes were also burnt in two other villages, said Captain Salisu Mustapha, spokesman for a military task force in the region. He did not have a specific number of homes burnt, but said it was around 100. Residents were fleeing the area to find shelter and out of fears of further violence. According to Mustapha, homes were burnt in areas where the attackers fled by youths seeking revenge against the assailants. "We now have a total of 48 dead from the attacks on three villages," Mustapha told AFP. He said the dead included 20 assailants killed in an hours-long gun battle by soldiers. [...]

- [Integrated Regional Information Networks \(IRIN\), Bandit attacks displace northern Nigeria herders, 19 June 2013](#)
[...] Incessant deadly attacks on Fulani settlements and villages in northern Nigeria by armed bandits - made up partly of disgruntled Fulani who themselves have lost cattle - are threatening herds and upping tensions in northern Nigeria. Gangs of heavily armed bandits prowl the vast Dajin Rugu forest which spans several hundred square kilometres across Zamfara, Katsina and Kaduna states and Niger State in central Nigeria, according to Fulani leaders. In February 2012 alone, over 23,000 Fulani herders poured into Cameroon from Nigeria's northeastern state of Taraba, following deadly clashes with farming communities, according to the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), an umbrella association of Fulani herders. The gangs steal herds, loot and burn homes, and assault women in the attacks, according to Fulani leaders. Many of the armed bandits are Fulanis who have joined gangs involved in cross-border armed robbery and cattle-rustling in Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, Senegal and Mali.

- [Voice of America News, Year After Church Bombings Kaduna Struggles to Rebuild, 17 June 2013](#)

[...] Sectarian violence has plagued central Nigeria for decades and tens of thousands of people have been killed. Many mosques and churches are still rubble and in some cities the population has segregated itself out of fear. It is the first anniversary of triple church bombings that sparked sectarian riots in the central city of Kaduna.

There is no roof on this mosque in Kaduna and no walls to protect worshippers from the smell of a nearby open sewer. It's been almost a year since the last time it was burnt to the ground but people still come here to pray.

Mallum Abdullahi Bayero, a spokesman for the Supreme Council of Sharia in Nigeria, says because so many mosques have been destroyed in this area, some Muslims are afraid to attend services.

"A lot of Muslim brothers doesn't have the free of fear atmosphere, a conducive atmosphere for them to practice and actualize their religion," said Bayero.

The third time this mosque was destroyed was last June, after three churches were bombed, killing 19 people. In the days that followed nearly 100 more people died in fighting between Christians and Muslims in Kaduna.

Christian leaders say despite the relative calm over the past year, their members are also still afraid to attend services.

Yohanna Buru is the president of the Peace Revival and Reconciliation foundation of Nigeria, a Christian non-governmental organization. He says nearly 100 churches and mosques lay in rubble in Kaduna. [...]

Analysts say the clashes are not usually about religion itself, but politics, economics and reprisal attacks. However in the Middle Belt, ethnic, economic and political lines are often the same as religious lines and people on the streets tend to identify the fighting as between Christians and Muslims. [...]
- [Inter Press Service, 39 die in Nigerian religious violence: police, 4 May 2013](#)

[...] Thirty-nine people died and 30 were injured in fierce fighting between Christian and Muslim mobs in central Nigeria's Taraba state on Friday, prompting a round-the-clock curfew, police said.

Scores of houses were set ablaze and destroyed during the clashes in the town of Wukari which come amid a surge in religious violence in the west African nation.

"We have so far compiled a death toll of 39 people while 30 others were seriously injured," state police spokesman Joseph Kwaji told AFP on Saturday.

Local residents told AFP that the death toll could rise.

"Thirty-two houses have also been destroyed in the violence," Kwaji said of the unrest which has prompted authorities to impose an indefinite all-round curfew in the predominantly Christian city.

He added that 40 suspects were arrested in the aftermath of the violence.

State information commissioner Emmanuel Bello said that extra troops were deployed to the city on Saturday to bolster security.

"We have deployed more troops today to Wukari to ensure that the situation, which has been brought under control, is strengthened," he told AFP.

The police spokesman Kwaji said Friday's violence erupted when the funeral procession of a traditional chief from the predominantly Christian Jukun ethnic group marched through a Muslim neighbourhood chanting slogans, which Muslims viewed as an act of provocation. [...]

Tensions have been on the rise in Wukari since February, when a dispute over the use of a football pitch between Muslim and Christian soccer teams set off sectarian riots that claimed several lives.

Friday's violence came a day after the state government inaugurated a committee to investigate the February violence. [...]
- [United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, USCIRF Annual Report 2013 - Countries of Particular Concern: Nigeria, 30 April 2013](#)

[...] In 2012, there were numerous reported incidents of Fulani in the middle of the night attacking Christian villages in Plateau and Kaduna states, killing and wounding hundreds. The most serious recent incident occurred on July 7, when armed Muslim Fulani killed at least 25 Christians in three villages in Jos South. Nineteen of the gunmen were killed in an exchange with the military Special Task Force. Mourners were then attacked the following day during a burial service, with at least 20 killed, including Federal Senator for Plateau State North Gyang Dalyop Datong and Majority Leader in the Plateau State House Assembly Gyang James Fulani. [...]

➤ [Agence France Presse, Seven dead in central Nigeria attack: military, 9 April 2013](#)

[...] Clashes between rival ethnic groups in central Nigeria killed seven people at the weekend, the latest flare up in a conflict that has left at least 66 people dead in three weeks, the military said Tuesday.

Plateau state, which falls on the dividing line between Nigeria's mostly Muslim north and predominately Christian south, has been racked for more than a decade by ethnic violence fuelled by land and political disputes.

"Seven people were killed in the attack at (the central) Langtang area of the state over the weekend," the military spokesman in Plateau, Captain Salisu Mustapha told AFP.

He said the suspected gunmen were members of the mostly Muslim Fulani ethnic group, made up largely of nomadic herdsmen.

The violence continued in another area on Monday when purported Fulani attackers razed several homes and fired weapons, but no one was killed, Mustapha added.

The Fulani have been blamed for scores of attacks on Christians in the state, who are mainly farmers.

Plateau's Christian ethnic groups see themselves as the state's indigenous people and hold greater land ownership and political rights. They have accused the Fulani of trying to steal wide swathes of land.

Fulani leaders have said their tribesmen are the victims of unequal treatment from the state's mostly Christian political leaders.

The conflict is estimated to have killed 4,000 people since 2001, according to the International Crisis Group.

At least 23 people, including both Fulani and Christian settlers, were killed in clashes on March 20 and 21, while 36 others died in violence over the last weekend of March.

Dozens of houses were also burnt in the violence last month. [...]

➤ [Agence France Presse, Central Nigeria ethnic violence kills 19, displaces 4,500, 2 April 2013](#)

[...] Weekend attacks on three communities in volatile and ethnically divided central Nigeria have left 19 people dead and displaced some 4,500 others, a local official said on Tuesday.

The attacks were believed to be reprisals in a dispute involving mainly Muslim Fulanis and the mostly Christian Atakar ethnic group.

"From the death toll we've compiled, 19 people including women and children were killed by gunmen we suspect to be Fulani herdsmen in attacks on three communities on Saturday night through Sunday," local government official Kumai Badu told AFP of the violence in the Kaura district, a remote region of Kaduna state.

Fulanis in the area tend to be nomadic herdsmen, while Atakar are mainly farmers. Land disputes often flare up between the two groups.

Badu added that some 4,500 people were displaced and two camps had been set up to house them.

"Apart from the gun attacks, the assailants also set fire to homes," he said. [...]

Dozens have been killed over the last couple of weeks in similar ethnic violence in neighbouring Plateau state.

Last week, violence involving rival ethnic groups killed at least 36 people and left dozens of houses burnt in Plateau.

Those casualties were in addition to at least 23 people killed in attacks the previous week in Plateau on March 20 and 21. [...]

➤ [Agence France Presse, Nine people dead in central Nigeria clashes: army, 24 January 2013](#)

[...] Clashes between ethnic Fulani herdsmen and local farmers have left at least nine people dead in central Nigeria's volatile Plateau State, a military spokesman said Thursday.

Captain Salisu Mustapha of the special task force in the state said the incident happened late Tuesday in Wadata, a mainly Christian farming village outside the flashpoint city of Jos.

"I can confirm that at least nine people were killed and several injured in the violence between the local farmers and Fulani cattle rearers," he said.

The cause of the latest clashes had yet to be determined, he said.

"We have restored order in the area. The place is now calm but we are still investigating the cause of the fighting," he said.

Residents said up to 20 people might have been killed in the clashes, sparked by the discovery of a local farmer's corpse in the bush. [...]

- [International Crisis Group \(ICG\), Curbing Violence in Nigeria \(I\): The Jos Crisis, 17 December 2012, Africa Report N°196](#)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

[...] Since 2001, violence has erupted in Jos city, capital of Plateau state, in Nigeria's Middle Belt region. The ostensible dispute is over the "rights" of the indigene Berom/Anaguta/Afizere (BAA) group and the rival claims of the Hausa-Fulani settlers to land, power and resources. Indigene-settler conflicts are not new to Nigeria, but the country is currently experiencing widespread intercommunal strife, which particularly affects the Middle Belt. [...]

Because the settlers are almost entirely Muslim and the indigenous people predominantly Christian, struggle over land ownership, economic resources and political control tends to be expressed not just in ethnic but also religious terms. [...]

- [Human Rights Watch, Spiraling Violence: Boko Haram Attacks and Security Force Abuses in Nigeria, 11 October 2012](#)

[...] I. Fertile Ground for Militancy

[...] Inter-communal Violence

Nigeria is the largest country in the world that is almost equally divided between Christians and Muslims. Its population of some 160 million people belongs to more than 250 different ethnic groups. The vast majority of the north is Muslim, while southeast Nigeria is largely Christian. Many parts of central Nigeria, often referred to as the "Middle Belt," are predominately Christian, though some states in this region have a Muslim majority. The population of southwest Nigeria is roughly evenly mixed among Christians and Muslims.[30] Divisive state and local government policies that discriminate against individuals solely on the basis of their ethnic heritage and relegate thousands of state residents to permanent second-class status have exacerbated existing ethnic tensions. Boko Haram has exploited Nigeria's history of ethnic and sectarian strife, along with chronic impunity for perpetrators of violence, including Christians accused of killing Muslims, as justification for its own violent campaign.

Though a national phenomenon, inter-communal violence has been most deadly in the "Middle Belt" region, especially in Kaduna and Plateau states. Since 2000, several thousand people have been killed in each of these states. The victims, including women and children, have been hacked to death, burned alive, and dragged out of cars and murdered in tit-for-tat killings that in many cases were based simply on their ethnic or religious identity. Mobs have burned down both mosques and churches. Since 2010, three mass killings in which more than 100 people died in each incident took place in small towns and villages of these states. The highest death toll occurred in an attack on April 18 and 19, 2011 in the town of Zonkwa, in southern Kaduna State, which left at least 300 Muslim men dead. The attack followed election riots and burning of churches in northern states. [...]

Effective state protection available for persons fearing religious and communal violence

- [Human Rights Watch, "Leave Everything to God" : Accountability for Inter-Communal Violence in Plateau and Kaduna States, Nigeria, 12 December 2013](#)

[...] Summary

[...] Many commentators described the failure of the Nigerian authorities to bring the perpetrators of violence to justice as one of the major drivers of the cycle of violence. "The law that is there is just on the books," a Christian youth leader in Jos lamented. "If you are a victim of a crisis, you will become a perpetrator of the next crisis because there is no justice."

This impunity is largely the result of an already broken criminal justice system, including systemic corruption in the Nigeria Police Force, that has been further rendered ineffectual by political pressure to protect the perpetrators of these crimes. In the absence of accountability and effective redress, communities that have suffered violence frequently take the law into their own hands and carry out revenge killings.

Human Rights Watch found that the response of Nigerian authorities following mass killings has been surprisingly similar through the years. During or immediately following most spates of violence, hundreds

of suspects were arrested. But those arrested were often randomly rounded up, in an attempt to calm the situation, or the police or soldiers dumped suspects en masse at police stations, with weapons and any other evidence collected at the scene all lumped together, making it nearly impossible to link individual suspects to any specific crime. “[N]o attorney general worth his salt wants to file a case in court when there is no evidence whatsoever,” a lawyer in Kaduna said. So, instead, after “tempers might have calmed down,” a judge in Kaduna explained, “people might not be paying attention to the cases, and you go and quietly discharge them.”

In many communities racked by violence, people witnessed the crimes, and, especially in rural areas, knew the perpetrators. Human Rights Watch interviewed dozens of eyewitnesses to alleged murder and arson. In most cases the witnesses had not reported the crime to the police. Some cited fear of retaliation by the perpetrators, but by far the most common reason cited for not reporting to the police was captured by a rural Fulani man in Kaduna State: “The police won’t do anything.”

But many witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch had indeed gone to the police, including witnesses from some of the largest mass killings in the area. In some cases, police investigators, including from Force Headquarters in Abuja, also came to the communities to interview witnesses. Witnesses said, however, that the police failed to take any action in response to their complaints, and many of them still see the men who murdered their family members and neighbors walking freely in their neighborhoods.

The failure to conduct, or follow through with, criminal investigations reflects systemic problems in the police force, where police officers frequently demand that complainants pay them to investigate crimes or at times take bribes from criminal suspects to drop investigations. This system leaves victims of communal violence, who frequently have lost everything they own, not to mention their loved ones, at the mercy of an often unresponsive and ineffective police force.

These problems are further exacerbated when the violence is communal or sectarian in nature. Police and government officials fear that if they arrest suspects, it might spark renewed violence. Community and religious leaders often rally behind members of their own groups suspected or implicated in crimes during outbreaks of violence and pressure the authorities to drop the cases.

There are, however, important exceptions. Following the 2010 violence in Plateau State, for example, the federal attorney general took the rare step of intervening by prosecuting some of the perpetrators in Federal High Court, instead of leaving them in the state courts. These prosecutions, including convictions of individuals for the March 2010 Dogo Nahawa massacre (described in this report), were an important step forward. To gain jurisdiction, however, federal prosecutors often had to try the suspects using rather tenuously connected terrorism provisions under federal anti-corruption legislation. Since then, prosecutions by state prosecutors in Plateau State have also led to several convictions.

Aside from these infrequent prosecutions, the authorities have generally treated the violence as a political problem rather than a criminal matter. They invariably set up commissions of inquiry, which are good in theory, but in practice have become an avenue for reinforcing impunity. In the words of one civil society leader, “Going to these panels buys the government time, and when the problem drops from the headlines, they go back to business as usual.” More often than not, the reports are shelved, their recommendations are rarely implemented, and the perpetrators are not brought to book.

“I don’t think it is good enough,” a judge in Kaduna argued. “That is why we are having this recurrent crisis. [For] any small thing people will just take to the streets because nobody has been really pinned down.” [...]

IX. The Anatomy of Impunity

[...] Nigerian authorities have rarely brought to justice those responsible for serious crimes committed during episodes of inter-communal violence over the past 25 years in Plateau and Kaduna states. This section, based on Human Rights Watch interviews with police officers, lawyers, federal and state prosecutors, judges, and religious and civil society leaders, looks at the most common responses by the Nigerian authorities to communal violence and examines why criminal investigations and prosecutions have often failed. [...]

Failures at Time of Arrest

Human Rights Watch found that in some cases of mass violence in Plateau and Kaduna the police were absent or took no or limited effective measures to contain the violence.^[469] In other cases, the police or, more often, the military responded with excessive force, including extrajudicial killings.^[470] In some incidents of communal violence there were no arrests,^[471] but in many cases the police or the military made numerous arrests.^[472] These arrests, however, appeared to have been designed primarily to calm the situation, without a focus on the need for reliable evidence for a criminal investigation.

Mass Arrests to Quell the Violence

Prosecutors and judges observed that in cases of mass violence the police or military frequently arrest anyone they find at the scene of the violence. These mass arrests usually amount to rounding up people, regardless of the evidence, in an attempt to bring the situation under control, by getting some of the youth off the streets, and to be seen by the public as responding to the violence. [...]

Evidence Lost at Time of Arrest

Even when the security forces arrest perpetrators of violence caught in the act, they often fail to collect or maintain the evidence necessary to enable the suspects to be successfully prosecuted, judges, prosecutors, and defense lawyers said. [...]

Suspects Charged to Court Without Evidence

Judges and prosecutors observed that after the security services arrest people, the police will often simply gather all the detainees together, and charge them, en masse, before a magistrate's court. A chief magistrate in Kaduna, who has presided over some of these cases, described the quality of evidence in these cases as "substantially bad. [...]"

Cases Quietly Dropped After "Tempers Have Calmed"

After police have charged suspects without evidence before the magistrates' courts, the investigating police officers have an impossible task of building the case file to enable the suspect to be prosecuted. The chief magistrate in Kaduna explained that police investigators will often eventually hand over the case diary to the state attorney general but state prosecutors faced with no evidence to prosecute the case will quietly discharge the suspects. [...]

Failure to Investigate: The Weak Link

The failure of the police to investigate crimes, by proactively investigating incidents of violence, pursuing credible leads, and following through on criminal investigations, is one of the major impediments in securing accountability for these serious crimes.

The Anonymity of the Mob

Mass violence, which is often carried out by large groups or mobs, is particularly difficult to prosecute, given the challenges of linking evidence to individual suspects. [...]

Witnesses Fail to Report Crimes

The police point out that one of the difficulties in investigating cases of communal violence is that witnesses are often reluctant to come forward to file complaints with the police. For example, the deputy head of State CID in Kaduna, told Human Rights Watch: "Most of the arrests took place during the violence. If any, there were very few arrests after the violence. We had problems of getting witnesses to come to say I saw so, so, so." [493] Many of the witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch also said they had not gone to the police.

The Police Won't Take Any Action

When Human Rights Watch asked witnesses why they had not reported the crime to the police, witnesses often responded that it would be futile to go to the police because the police would not do anything. In the words of the son of the district head in Gidan Maga, Kaduna State, who was killed in April 2011, "Even if we report it to the police, nothing will happen. The police will take no action." [494]

Human Rights Watch interviewed a Christian woman in Jos who said mobs had twice set fire to her house—in 2001 and 2008—and a Christian woman in Kafanchan who said mobs had burned down her house twice—in April and November 2011—but no action was taken against the perpetrators. [495] Similarly, a Christian pastor in Zaria showed Human Rights Watch his church that had been attacked and burned three times with impunity by mobs over the years. [496] In Plateau State, Fulani leaders pointed to the failure of Nigerian authorities to prosecute anyone for the murder of rural Fulani in 2001 and 2011. [497] [...]

Victims Displaced by Violence Have Limited Resources

Many victims who have been displaced from their communities and had their homes and property looted or destroyed pointed to the sheer financial and logistical difficulty of pursuing justice. [...]

Perceived Religious or Ethnic Bias in the Police

Other witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch said they believed the police were biased against them because of their religious or ethnic identity. The head of State CID in Plateau State acknowledged to Human Rights Watch that, "Even though we are trying our best to be non-partisan—non-religious—the people see it along these lines." [506] For example, a Christian woman in Kafanchan told Human Rights Watch, "We are Christians, but the DPO [divisional police officer] is Muslim and his assistant is Muslim. Even if you go report [the incident] to the police, they will not arrest them, they are supporting them."

Similarly, a Fulani man from Fan district in Barkin Ladi local government area in Plateau State, who witnessed Berom men from his village burn Fulani homes, said he has not filed a complaint with the police. "The police are mostly Berom at the police station there," he said. "If we report it, they will do nothing about it." [507]

Witnesses Fear Reprisals for Reporting Crimes

Fear is at times cited as a reason to not report a case to the police. "I haven't spoken to the police," a Fulani man from a village in Zangon Kataf told Human Rights Watch. "I am afraid to tell the police. I am afraid that the Bajju people will come and do us more harm." [508] A Fulani man from another village in Zangon Kataf put it even more bluntly: "I am afraid to go report to the police," he said. "If I go, the Kataf people may kill me." [509] In Kuru Karama, Plateau State, a Berom woman, who is Muslim, said she has not gone to the police to report what Berom Christians did in the town. "I am afraid of my relations," she said. "When I go home, they would kill me because I reported them to the police." [510]

Witnesses Report Crimes to Commissions of Inquiry

Many witnesses who had not gone to the police said that they provided information to their community leaders who filed a report to a government commission of inquiry. For example, a Christian man in Kafanchan, whose house was burned, said he has not gone to the police. "It was a general crisis problem. You cannot seek redress anywhere as an individual, because thousands of people were affected in this crisis, so they will not listen to you as an individual," he said. "Rather we compiled our report as a group as Christians affected by this crisis." [511] Similarly, a teacher in Gidan Maga, Kaduna State, who saw Bajju men he recognized murder several people in April 2011, explained that in a communal crisis, "no one can file single complaints." Rather, he said, the community compiled a joint report and submitted it to the government commission of inquiry. [512]

Victims Leave "Everything to God"

Some victims said it was futile to report to the police and instead said they would leave it to God to find justice. [...]

Police Fail to Pursue Leads

Although many witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch said they had not come forward to speak with the police, in many other cases witnesses did go to the police to report the crimes, including cases of murder and arson of homes and property. As the report documents above, Human Rights Watch interviewed witnesses from Kuru Karama, Tim-Tim, and rural Fulani or Berom villages in Plateau State, and from Zonkwa, Maraban Rido, Matsirga, and Christian villages in Soba local government area in Kaduna State who reported crimes to the police, but there were no arrests in any of these incidents.

Human Rights Watch spoke with police officials at State CID and the Legal Department at police headquarters in Kaduna. The deputy head of CID—who has been with the investigations department since before the April 2011 violence—said he did not know whether witnesses reported to the police in these cases, but shifted the blame to the witnesses, insisting that they were responsible for the police failing to follow up on the investigation. "If they came here [to report a crime], they should follow up with us," he said. [514] The officer in charge of the Legal Department was even more candid. "If they don't follow up, the case doesn't move," she said. "The investigating police officers have to be reminded." [...]

Dysfunction and Corruption in the Police

The failure to conduct or follow through with criminal investigations is a systemic problem within the police force. Human Rights Watch has documented how the police often will not open a criminal investigation without financial inducements from the complainant and will rarely follow through unless the complainant can meet the incessant demands to fund the cost of the investigation. Meanwhile, accused persons with financial resources can sometimes pay off the police to drop the case. Without financial resources or internal or external pressure on the police to follow through on an investigation, the case will rarely go forward. [521]

In communal violence cases, this problem is exacerbated by the fact that many of the victims are poor—inter-communal violence rarely occurs in the affluent neighborhoods in these states—and have often lost all their possessions in the violence. As a community leader from Kuru Karama, whose wife was killed, explained when asked why he had not gone back to the police to follow up on the complaint, "We are greatly handicapped—we lost everything [in the attack]." He added, "As citizens of this country, even if we don't go back to the police [to follow up on a complaint], they [the police] should do something about it." [522] In addition, external pressure from various communities to protect the perpetrators and pursue political solutions instead works to further discourage the police from going forward with these cases. [...]

Criminal Prosecutions: The Rare Exceptions

The rare cases in which suspects have been charged before federal or state High Court, following the completion of a criminal investigation by the police, have faced an uphill battle at trial. In Plateau State, defense lawyers generally credited the federal prosecutors and judges for holding speedy trials for the cases they brought related to the 2010 violence. By the end of 2010, the first judgments were handed down, including several convictions. Since then, however, one of the High Court judges has been deployed out of Plateau State, which has substantially delayed the remaining cases.[523] The federal trials were not without problems. At this writing, many of the accused persons had been acquitted or the charges against them dropped.

Challenges Prosecuting Mass Violence

Defense lawyers and prosecutors pointed to shoddy police investigations and sloppy police work as one of the major factors undermining the cases. [...]

Police and state prosecutors observed that one of the other main challenges is that the arresting officer—often a soldier or a police officer deployed from another state to help quell the violence—can be redeployed after the violence, making it difficult to bring the arresting officer back to testify at trial. Funding to transport the witness back is often not available. [...]

Failure to Systematically Prosecute Cases of Violence

Although the federal prosecutions in Plateau State for the January and March 2010 violence were an important step forward, most of the cases involved suspects who were arrested at the scene of the violence, not suspects who were arrested following a criminal investigation. [...]

Failure to Prosecute the Organizers of Violence

Human Rights Watch asked the police commissioner in Plateau State whether they had investigated those who may have planned or organized the violence. “The sponsors—well, that one is difficult,” he responded. “Those sponsors, they are faceless. We don’t know them. [...]

Commissions of Inquiry or Political Solutions Instead of Criminal Prosecutions

Instead of investigating and prosecuting those who have organized or carried out these crimes—including mass murder—political leaders defer responsibility by setting up independent commissions of inquiry. They also often succumb to pressure by community and religious leaders to seek political compromises that protect the perpetrators. [...]

Fear that Arrests Will Spark Further Violence

Law enforcement officials and community leaders expressed concern that arrests could lead to more violence. “People are afraid that if you make arrests it will spark off another set of violence,” a Christian leader in Kaduna explained to Human Rights Watch. “Instead of arresting and prosecuting those people, they let them go.” [...]

Political Compromises That Reinforce Impunity

Government officials and community leaders often treat communal violence as a political problem that must be resolved by political solutions rather than a criminal matter. “People are not being seen from the crime they have committed but from the religious background they come from,” a leading civil society activist in Kaduna explained. [...]

- [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Summary prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 \(b\) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, 31 July 2013](#)

[...] 42. Edmund Rice International (ERI) stated that the recommendation in paragraph 103.20 of the Report has not been implemented with the failure of the government at all three levels to prevent politically motivated and sectarian and religious based violence.

[...] 43. ERI stated that the recommendations in paragraph 103.31 of the Report concerning religious-based conflict have not been implemented. HRAN [Human Rights Agenda Network, Abuja, Nigeria (Joint Submission)]; stated that the increase in sectarian violence, terrorism and other forms of violence crime between 2009 and 2013 have resulted in upsurge of unlawful killings.

44. HRW stated that inter-communal violence has left several thousand people dead in Kaduna and Plateau states. State and local government policies that discriminate against “non-indigenes” people who cannot trace their ancestry to what is said to be the original inhabitants of the area have exacerbated inter-communal tensions and perpetuated ethnic-based divisions.

[...] 71. European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ) stated Nigeria had neglected to adequately address issues of inter-religious cooperation and the protection of citizens from religiously motivated crimes, in accordance with those recommendations as contained in paragraphs 103.11, 103.18, 103.20 and 103.31 of the Report. [...]

➤ [Integrated Regional Information Networks \(IRIN\), Bandit attacks displace northern Nigeria herders, 19 June 2013](#)

[...] Incessant deadly attacks on Fulani settlements and villages in northern Nigeria by armed bandits - made up partly of disgruntled Fulani who themselves have lost cattle - are threatening herds and upping tensions in northern Nigeria.

[...] More coordinated efforts by the local authorities and security forces is needed to try to temper the violence, said Kaduna State information commissioner Saidu Adamu. "A military battalion is grossly inadequate to patrol the vast forest. We are in touch with Zamfara, Katsina and Niger state governments to forge a common front in dealing with this security threat," he told IRIN.

Shehu Hammayidi, a community leader from Unguwar Tsamiya, a village in Faskari District, Katsina State, urged the Nigerian government to establish a special joint military and police unit on cattle rustling as an effective approach to quelling the violence.

But any efforts that do not involve MACBAN will not work, warned Bayeri, saying that only it can mobilize community surveillance to track bandits on the scale needed.

"These criminals are a transnational syndicate of renegade Fulani nomads who know the forest very well, and no amount of military deployment can check their activities without the involvement of MACBAN," he said.

MACBAN knows who some of the criminals are and is willing to expose them, he said, but has been rebuffed by local authorities whom, he says, mistakenly blame all of MACBAN for being complicit in the violence. [...]

➤ [U.S Department of State, 2012 International Religious Freedom Report - Nigeria, 20 May 2013](#)

[...] Government Inaction

[...] The federal government did not act swiftly or effectively to quell communal violence, nor to investigate and prosecute those responsible for abusing religious freedom. Although religious leaders and civil society groups commended the Kaduna state government for taking decisive action to halt reprisal killings after a church bombing in October, an overall air of impunity persisted. Legal proceedings against five police officers arraigned in 2011 for the extrajudicial killing of Boko Haram leader Mohammed Yusuf did not resume as scheduled in February. No indictments or prosecutions followed August 2011 communal violence in Jos in which 100 people died. [...]

➤ [United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, USCIRF Annual Report 2013 - Countries of Particular Concern: Nigeria, 30 April 2013](#)

[...] FINDINGS: The government of Nigeria continues to tolerate systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom that lead to particularly severe violations affecting all Nigerians, both Christian and Muslim. For many years, the government has failed to bring those responsible for sectarian violence to justice, prevent and contain acts of such violence, or prevent reprisal attacks. [...]

RECURRENT SECTARIAN VIOLENCE

Impunity for Sectarian Violence

[...] The Nigerian government, at the state and federal levels, has proven unable or unwilling to address the violence and its underlying causes.

[...] Almost universally, individuals identified as perpetrators have not been prosecuted, and there were no known prosecutions for sectarian violence in 2012. In more than a decade, and out of 14,000 sectarian deaths, fewer than 200 individuals are confirmed by USCIRF to have been prosecuted for their involvement in sectarian violence. In 2011, the Minister of Justice told USCIRF that he expected a number of prosecutions, and said that his Director of Public Prosecutions would provide USCIRF with statistics of prosecutions and convictions that have occurred that year. Unfortunately, by the end of the reporting period the Ministry of Justice had not provided this information to either the U.S. Embassy in Abuja or to USCIRF. During a USCIRF meeting with Plateau State Governor Jonah Jang and the Plateau State Attorney General, in October 2011, the Attorney General indicated he believed some prosecutions were moving

forward. In 2012, a number of prosecutions moved forward in both Kaduna and Plateau states, including some convictions.

This dearth of prosecutions is despite the fact that video and photographic evidence of sectarian conflicts identifying perpetrators can be found on the internet. While police and judicial mechanisms have been underutilized in curbing sectarian violence, the government has repeatedly called upon Nigerian federal police and military to intervene, and they have been repeatedly accused of using excessive force, including extrajudicial killings

Since USCIRF first recommended that Nigeria be designated a CPC in 2009 for its toleration of severe religious freedom violations and the failure to prosecute perpetrators of sectarian and communal violence, the federal government has prosecuted only a handful of cases, all against Fulani Muslims. These cases concerned 41 individuals convicted for terrorism and 123 individuals convicted for illegal possession of a weapon during their involvement in communal violence in Plateau State in March 2010 where 500 persons were killed (see below). USCIRF is not aware of any other successful prosecutions for violence perpetrated during this or other attacks.

A climate of impunity exists due to the lack of effective law enforcement and failure to impose penalties for religious violence. Since there are no consequences for violence, large-scale incidents regularly trigger ricochet riots in other areas for retaliation. Such incidents include, but are not limited to, the following: clashes in February 2009 in Bauchi State in retaliation for the destruction of two mosques in Jos in March 2008, killing between 11 and 20, displacing 1,500 and destroying churches, parsonages and one mosque; attacks in April 2009 on a procession of Christians who were celebrating Easter in two separate towns; riots in January 2010 in Plateau State, after Christians attacked a Muslim trying to build a home in a Christian area, which left an estimated 150 persons dead and 3,000 displaced; in March 2010 Muslim Fulani herdsmen attacked Christian villages in Jos South, killing at least 500 persons including women, children, and babies, and displacing an estimated 800 persons; January 2011 violence in Bauchi state over the burning of a Christian man's billiards table that left at least 20 dead and mosques and Muslim homes burned; April 2011 post-election violence and August 2011 violence in Jos after Christian youths attempted to prevent a Muslim Izala from using prayer grounds during the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr, which killed between 40 and 100 Christians and Muslims. To date, there have been no confirmed prosecutions of perpetrators of any of the above violence.

Federal-state jurisdictional disputes and a lack of political will continue to pose a challenge to successful prosecutions. In order for state attorneys general to pursue prosecutions, Nigeria's federal police must cooperate with state-level criminal justice partners to conduct investigations to develop a case. If this occurs and a case is developed, the state attorneys general must then have the political will to prosecute the cases. Thus far, neither side has shown the will to fully and professionally investigate perpetrators of sectarian violence or prosecute those arrested.

In response to religion-related violence, federal and state officials have formed commissions of inquiry to review the causes of the violence and make recommendations to prevent further violence. More than a dozen such commissions have been formed since 1999, and they often make the same recommendations to federal and state officials. These recommendations include: arresting and prosecuting perpetrators; better training of police forces to respond to violence; improving and increasing inter-faith dialogues; repealing "indigeneship" provisions in the constitution, which grant preferences to ethnic groups considered native to an area; ending discrimination based on religion in the building of houses of worship; monitoring religious institutions for religious hate speech and incitement to violence and removing outdoor speakers from religious institutions where such sentiments are aired; and improving early warning systems and procedures. However, these recommendations are rarely implemented, and these commissions often fault the government for failing to implement the recommendations put forth by previous such commissions.

On a positive note, in Jos since 2010, a special security joint task force comprised of the army, police, and other security services has been present in large numbers in the city and its environs, which has helped prevent large-scale outbreaks by quickly responding to violence. [...]

3.20 Female Genital Mutilation

The conclusion for this main category of claim states:

Excerpt from December 2013 Nigeria OGN

3.20.9 Whilst protection and/or assistance are available from governmental and non- governmental sources, this is limited. Caseworkers will need to ensure that each case is considered on its own merits, however in general those who are unable or, owing to fear, unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of the authorities, can safely relocate to another part of Nigeria where the family members who are pressurising them to undergo FGM would be unlikely to trace them. Women in this situation would if they choose to do so, also be able to seek protection from women's NGO's in the new location.

The concluding guidance suggests that protection and assistance, though limited, is available for girls or women who are at risk of FGM, and it further asserts that IFA is likely to be relevant. This is despite COI included in paragraphs 3.20.2, 3.20.3, and 3.20.7 [note that paragraph 3.20.8 contains the same information as in paragraph 3.20.2] which highlights that laws criminalising FGM are only available in certain areas at state level but not at the federal level, that the penalties are mild, and enforcement has been a "huge challenge". No COI is included on the availability of government or non-governmental assistance.

With regards to the possibility to safely and reasonably relocate to another part of Nigeria, please refer to the [2.3 Internal Relocation](#) section below.

As for protection, the COI available in the public domain and presented below highlights that protection and assistance is not just limited, but practically unavailable from the government.

State protection available for girls fearing FGM

- [Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2013 - Nigeria, 9 May 2013](#)
[...]Although the federal government publicly opposes female genital mutilation, it has taken no action to ban the practice. [...]
- [Country of Origin Research and Information \(CORI\), CORI Thematic Report, Nigeria: Gender and Age, December 2012](#)
[...] 2.3.3.6 Access to justice
[...]In July 2011 the Inter African Committee on Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting Women and Children's Health stated that law enforcement authorities do not intervene in FGM cases, which are viewed as a private, family matter, the NGO was not aware of any prosecutions for carrying out FGM,
"FGM is considered a private matter, and Nigerian authorities generally do not interfere. We as an NGO have never heard of anybody being prosecuted for carrying out FGM. The law enforcement authorities see FGM as a family problem."
In an interview with CORI in July 2011 the Inter African Committee on Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting Women and Children's Health reported that FGM is considered a private family matter and that the state does not get involved with tackling it,
"FGM is considered a private matter, and Nigerian authorities generally do not interfere. It is difficult to apprehend the [FGM] violators because the victim is usually a baby (talking about south western Nigeria) and the parents and the circumcisers are willing collaborators. The State does not interfere with the issue of FGM and the work on FGM elimination has been solely the prerogative of NGOs."
[...]2.3.3.7. Access to support
In a July 2011 interview with CORI the Inter African Committee on Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting Women and Children's Health reported that few women have used a hotline set up by the organisation, they further report losing contact with a woman they were supporting who went into hiding due to threats from her in-laws,

"Though we set up a hotline for victims to call and maybe we could rescue them, we have had very few people calling in and mainly parents who one way or the other had listened to our programmes on radio or are opportune to attend sensitization programmes and we have been able to dissuade them from circumcising their children. It is rare to have victims themselves call for assistance because in most cases they are minors and have no choice but to succumb to the dictates of their parents. Once we had an adult but she later went underground and we could not locate her because of the threats from her in-laws."

In a July 2011 interview with CORI the Inter African Committee on Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting Women and Children's Health stated that there are no shelters or protection schemes for women who fear forcible subjection to FGM. In response to a question concerning whether there any protection schemes available to individuals who fear being the victim of family violence or subjected to FGM the Inter African Committee stated, "No except few NGOs who have established homes for victims of Domestic Violence but not that of FGM." [...]

➤ [Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada: Nigeria: Whether parents can refuse female genital mutilation for their daughters; protection available to the child \[NGA104220.E\], 21 November 2012](#)

[...]3. State Protection

[...] 3.2 Effectiveness

A 2010 report on Nigeria by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child noted the lack of updated information on the measures taken by Nigeria to prevent and eliminate harmful traditional practices (UN 21 June 2010, para. 65).

[...] According to Okeke, even though parents can lodge complaints at the police station in states where FGM is prohibited, "many people will not exercise this option as [FGM] is considered a family issue" (7 Nov. 2012). The CWSI representative indicated that people's attitude toward FGM being practiced is "'it's not my business' and so no one is reported" (12 Nov. 2012). The CWSI representative added that "the law does not go into communities where [FGM is practiced] to monitor and punish offenders" (12 Nov. 2012). Okeke indicated that "[m]ost likely, police will also consider it a family affair and refuse to interfere" (Okeke 7 Nov. 2012). She further pointed out that "people hardly go to court for many reasons: Nigerians are generally non-litigious, many people are afraid of the aftermath of litigation (may breed bad name, etc.), people avoid stigma, the penalty is not severe, amongst other reasons" (ibid.). The Women's Rights Watch Nigeria project coordinator indicated that she is not aware of this offence having been prosecuted (7 Nov. 2012). She also indicated that laws that ban FGM are not used because it is a "cultural belief and widely accepted by people" (Women's Rights Watch Nigeria 7 Nov. 2012). She further indicated that other states have not criminalized this practice for the same reasons (ibid.). The CWSI representative expressed the view that, when the majority of the members in state legislative bodies favour patriarchy, laws that address issues such as FGM will not be enacted, since for them "it is not an issue" (12 Nov. 2012). [...]

➤ [Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2012 — Nigeria Country Report, December 2012](#)

[...] 3 Rule of Law

[...] The state lacks the ability to protect women and girls, in particular of lower status, from violence including rape, spousal abuse, female circumcision and abuses perpetrated through customary law [...]

➤ [Amnesty International, Human Rights Agenda 2011-2015, 14 October 2011](#)

[...] 7.3 Domestic Violence and Violence in the Community

[...] In many communities, the harmful traditional practice of female genital mutilation continues to traumatize young girls and leave women with lifelong pain and damage to their health. In most cases, the criminal justice system fails to offer protection, justice or reparation to women who have been subjected to violence in the home or community. [...]

➤ [Leadership, Nigeria: Female Genital Mutilation - Will the 'Cutting' Stop?, 28 February 2011](#)

Beyond policy formation, the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, through a signatory to the Maputo Declaration on the Prohibition of all Harmful Practices Against Women, has not taken steps aimed at achieving results. What would have been responsible [sic] for this action?

Stakeholders have continued to express worry over the fact that though Nigeria is a signatory to the Maputo Declaration on the Prohibition of all Harmful Practices against Women, the federal government

has not taken concrete steps, beyond policy formulation, to curb the menace of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), in the country. [...]

- [Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children, LEGISLATION TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION \(FGM\) Expert paper prepared by: Ms. Berhane Ras-Work, Executive Director Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Expert Group Meeting on good practices in legislation to address harmful practices against women, United Nations Conference Centre Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 25 to 28 May 2009, 21 May 2009](#)
[...] Nigeria
[...] Lessons Learnt: Some bold excisers [sic] make mockery of the laws and dare any lawenforcement agent to arrest them [...]

The conclusion of this section of the OGN asserts that protection may be provided by NGOs. As part of the establishment of a Common European Asylum System (CEAS), the EU introduced in April 2004 the first Qualification Directive, one of five legal instruments that make up the EU *acquis* (body of law) on asylum. Article 7 established that protection could be provided by: (emphasis added):

Article 7

Actors of protection

1. Protection can be provided by:

(a) the State; or

(b) parties or organisations, including international organisations, controlling the State or a substantial part of the territory of the State.

2. Protection is generally provided when the actors mentioned in paragraph 1 take reasonable steps to prevent the persecution or suffering of serious harm, inter alia, by operating an effective legal system for the detection, prosecution and punishment of acts constituting persecution or serious harm, and the applicant has access to such protection.

3. When assessing whether an international organisation controls a State or a substantial part of its territory and provides protection as described in paragraph 2, Member States shall take into account any guidance which may be provided in relevant Council acts.¹

An NGO providing shelter clearly does not come under this definition of actors providing protection.

The position of the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) is that:

non-state actors should never be considered as actors of protection. Non- State actors cannot be held accountable under international law and are often only able to provide protection which is limited in duration and scope. Given the inclusion of the requirements to provide protection which is effective and non-temporary it is extremely unlikely that non-State actors will be able to fulfil this requirement in practice.²

Please note here that Article 7 (2) of the Qualification Directive states that protection is “generally provided” where reasonable steps are taken to “prevent the persecution” by “operating an effective legal system for the detection, **prosecution and punishment of acts** constituting persecution

¹[European Union, Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection and the content of the protection granted](#)

²[ECRE, ECRE Information Note on the Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted \(recast\), 7 October 2013](#)

[emphasis added]”. No COI included in the OGN, nor found elsewhere in the public domain, indicates that any prosecution of cases have been brought forward to date.

In 2011 the EU recast the Qualification Directive, which applies to all EU Member States except the UK, Ireland and Denmark which opted out of the recast Directive. The UK and Ireland will continue to be bound by Directive 2004/83/EC whilst Denmark is not bound to either of these Directives. The recast Article 7 amends the concept of actors of protection in so far as it clarifies that protection **can only be** provided by the actors indicated on this provision, as well as by requiring that protection must be effective and of a non-temporary nature [emphasis added]:

Article 7

Actors of protection

1. Protection against persecution or serious harm can only be provided by:

(a) the State; or

(b) parties or organisations, including international organisations, controlling the State or a substantial part of the territory of the State;**provided they are willing and able to offer protection in accordance with paragraph 2.**

2. Protection against persecution or serious harm must be effective and of a non-temporary nature.

Such protection is generally provided when the actors mentioned under points (a) and (b) of paragraph 1 take reasonable steps to prevent the persecution or suffering of serious harm, inter alia, by operating an effective legal system for the detection, prosecution and punishment of acts constituting persecution or serious harm, and when the applicant has access to such protection.

3. When assessing whether an international organisation controls a State or a substantial part of its territory and provides protection as described in paragraph 2, Member States shall take into account any guidance which may be provided in relevant Union acts.³

³[European Union, DIRECTIVE 2011/95/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted \(recast\)](#)

3.21 Victims of trafficking

The conclusion for this main category of claim states:

Excerpt from December 2013 Nigeria OGN

3.21.11 Conclusion When a victim of trafficking agrees to give evidence as part of a criminal prosecution, caseworkers must consider if: it is likely to affect the basis of the asylum claim (for example by increasing the risk of retribution), and if they should postpone the decision on the asylum claim until the trial is concluded. The impact of the applicant giving evidence on the likelihood of future risk can then be assessed. It may be necessary to liaise with the police in these circumstances.

3.21.12 In line with the findings in PO Nigeria at paragraph 191, support and protection from governmental and non-governmental sources in Nigeria are generally available to victims of trafficking. Internal relocation will often also be a viable option for applicants who fear reprisals from traffickers upon return to the country. However, caseworkers should refer to paragraph 192 of PO Nigeria when considering the risk to an individual of being re-trafficked (please see caselawsection above). Not all trafficked women returning to Nigeria will be able to access the arrangements and facilities available to enable successful re-integration and as such some trafficked women may well be members of a PSG. Where an applicant falls into this category and are able to demonstrate that the treatment they will face on return amounts to torture, inhuman or degrading treatment a grant of asylum will be appropriate.

The concluding guidance suggests that effective protection is generally available to victims of trafficking, but recognises that some women might not be able to access the services needed for a successful re-integration. This section relies almost exclusively on the U.S. Department of State annual trafficking report covering 2012, but omits the following important additional information included in that report:

➤ [U.S. Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report 2013: Nigeria, 19 June 2013](#)

[...] Despite the growing number of Nigerian trafficking victims identified abroad, the government has yet to implement formal procedures for the return and reintegration of Nigerian victims; consequently, many victims are not afforded adequate care upon their return to Nigeria. This is of particular concern, as some European countries deny Nigerian victims' attempts to seek asylum or access to European victim programs on the basis of the perceived availability of adequate victim services in Nigeria. [...]

Additional, though limited, COI found in the public domain continues to highlight the serious difficulties of accessing effective protection and services and suggests that firstly, support from NGOs is insufficient and secondly, that state sponsored support is inadequate and protection not effective:

➤ [Institute for Public Policy Research, Homecoming: Return and Reintegration of Irregular Migrants from Nigeria, April 2013](#)

[...] Executive Summary

[...] There are currently many gaps in the support available to people returning to Nigeria. Some returnees are better supported than others. The policy response to return migration only caters for the extreme ends of the returnee experience. Services are developed partially for migrants perceived as the most vulnerable (female victims of trafficking, for example), and the most valuable (such as the highly skilled diaspora). This is not to say that the support in place for trafficked people is sufficient to meet acute and substantial needs.

[...] 2.3.3 Journey to the country of origin

Previous research by IPPR found that in many cases there was a lack of smooth transition between European and Nigerian agencies as people were returned (Cherti et al 2013). Victims of trafficking who had been returned to Nigeria through an AVR scheme arrived at the airport with no one to meet them, and had no means of contacting the organisation that they had been given details of. Some ended up in detention in Nigeria, or were met at the airport by their trafficker (ibid).

[...] 4.2 Return and reintegration in practice

[...] Furthermore, although support was available for people who had been trafficked, we found that it did not meet their needs. The support was not provided in such a way as to be therapeutic. While it met basic material needs, it was often offered on a short-term basis without adequate follow-up, as opposed to long-term support which helps people to become independent gradually over time. Support to enable trafficked people to access employment is particularly narrow. Yet this is important: previous IPPR research (Cherti et al 2013) has found that women's inability to support themselves through work, whether due to discrimination or low training opportunities, was a key factor that made them vulnerable to trafficking.

[...] Some stakeholders and interviewees reported that some organisations lacked sensitivity to the issues surrounding social reintegration. One interviewee reported that although she was afraid of contacting her family because they had colluded with her trafficker, her support provider had contacted them regardless, on the assumption that family reintegration would be the final outcome of their intervention – despite the abuse that the interviewee had suffered. [...]

➤ [Institute for Public Policy Research, Beyond Borders, Human Trafficking from Nigeria to the UK, January 2013](#)

[...] Executive Summary

[...] Under the current system, victims of trafficking are often not able to access protection that is open, targeted, supportive and transformational, whether in the UK or Nigeria.

[...] Former victims of trafficking face significant vulnerability in Nigeria. The close relationship between traffickers and the communities that trafficked people originate from, or their families, causes particular difficulties. Even where the risk of re-trafficking can be avoided, the prospects of former trafficking victims remain poor: as well as returning with possible health problems and broken social networks, the social stigmatisation of former trafficking victims is high. The capacity of support organisations in Nigeria is low, with support frequently constrained by lack of funding and poor coordination. While some services are highly professional and proficient, this is not the case across the board. Victims' support too often lacks therapeutic value and is unsafe. 'Safe' houses are known targets of traffickers. Some services presume the ultimate outcome to be family reunification, but this is often inappropriate. Vulnerability to traffickers often started as a result of individuals fleeing a violent or abusive family situation. In other cases, family members were complicit in the trafficking or relatives were at risk of reprisals.

[...] 5.2 Prosecution of traffickers in Nigeria

The problem of trafficker impunity in Nigeria is still acute. Consequently, many offenders are able to operate with little risk of prosecution (Okojie 2009). Nigeria's weak rule of law, coupled with at times the indifference and even, according to our stakeholder respondents, the active involvement of police and other officials, has led to low penalties and prosecution rates for trafficking. Low prosecution rates for violent crimes such as sexual assault as well as low tariffs for those convicted are also an issue. This is in part because, outside NAPTIP itself, knowledge and concern about trafficking among officials and police is perceived to be generally low. NAPTIP has been making some efforts to address this, for example through educational outreach with federal and state judges on the particular complexities of trafficking crimes (US Department of State 2012). At the same time, it seems that until the fundamental issues of corruption and malpractice among police and other officials are effectively addressed, these initiatives will have only a limited impact. Several respondents reported incidents of indifference or even active complicity when victims or their families notified police about their situation, only to be told it was a 'private' matter. In at least one case, the families were subsequently murdered. In another, the victim appeared to have been handed over directly from custody by police to a stranger, who then trafficked her into sexual exploitation.

[...] While in theory the penalties for trafficking were appropriate, even where prosecutions could be brought, this was undermined by the option for some offenders to pay a fine in place of serving a prison term. Of the 23 offenders convicted in the 2011/2012 period, eight were offered fines in lieu of a prison sentence, ranging from US\$63 to US\$316 (US Department of State 2012). These reflect neither the severity of trafficking as a crime nor its high profitability. At the same time, alongside the impunity of many traffickers, victims often have little recourse to official protection themselves. 'If the victim is concerned that she is being sold as a slave,' said one British stakeholder, '[she] can't go to the police as

there's a very good chance [the trafficker] is being paid by criminals. They are in a no-win situation as not only will it not help, but it might get back to traffickers.' This view was also echoed by many respondents:

'The police there they cannot help you ... If I was in Nigeria and I [ran] away like I did, the police, what the police would do, even the college, they wouldn't help me. They'll say you have to go back or they'll call the [traffickers] themselves or they'll report you to the police, the [traffickers] will bribe them; and the police, they'll help them to beat you or send you back to the [traffickers].' Female victim, 21

This creates a potent enabling context for human trafficking. For the professional gangs, as well as the many 'ordinary' people such as family members who collaborate in the recruitment and exploitation of the victim, the incentives are not only the large and lucrative demand for trafficked persons but also the high levels of impunity. Trafficking is still regarded as a low-risk activity compared to its profit (UNESCO 2006). 'Trafficking is one of the booming businesses which traffickers earn a lot of money from,' said one Nigerian informant. 'The risk involved in trafficking is not as much as that of drug or arms trafficking, because a trafficker can recruit a victim, maybe from one particular point, with a minimum of amount of money.

[...] 6.2. Within Nigeria

Our research identified that many organisations engaged in anti-trafficking within civil society can be vulnerable to political pressures and be reliant on senior political support rather than grassroots activism. Many actors lack resources and as a result struggle to work together due to funding pressures. NAPTIP did not provide a developed role to capture best practice nor encourage collaboration between different NGOs. [...]

The conclusion of the OGN also asserts that protection may be provided by NGOs. As part of the establishment of a Common European Asylum System (CEAS), the EU introduced in April 2004 the first Qualification Directive, one of five legal instruments that make up the EU *acquis* (body of law) on asylum. Article 7 established that protection could be provided by (emphasis added):

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(b) parties or organisations, including international organisations, controlling the State or a substantial part of the territory of the State.

2. Protection is generally provided when the actors mentioned in paragraph 1 take reasonable steps to prevent the persecution or suffering of serious harm, inter alia, by operating an effective legal system for the detection, prosecution and punishment of acts constituting persecution or serious harm, and the applicant has access to such protection.

3. When assessing whether an international organisation controls a State or a substantial part of its territory and provides protection as described in paragraph 2, Member States shall take into account any guidance which may be provided in relevant Council acts.⁴

An NGO providing shelter clearly does not come under this definition of actors providing protection.

The position of the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) is that:

non-state actors should never be considered as actors of protection. Non-State actors cannot be held accountable under international law and are often only able to provide protection which is limited in duration and scope. Given the inclusion of the requirements to provide protection which is effective

⁴[European Union, Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection and the content of the protection granted](#)

and non-temporary it is extremely unlikely that non-State actors will be able to fulfil this requirement in practice.⁵

In 2011 the EU recast the Qualification Directive, which applies to all EU Member States except the UK, Ireland and Denmark which opted out of the recast Directive. The UK and Ireland will continue to be bound by Directive 2004/83/EC whilst Denmark is not bound to either of these Directives. The recast Article 7 amends the concept of actors of protection in so far as it clarifies that protection **can only be** provided by the actors indicated on this provision, as well as by requiring that protection must be effective and of a non-temporary nature [emphasis added]:

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(a) the State; or

(b) parties or organisations, including international organisations, controlling the State or a substantial part of the territory of the State; **provided they are willing and able to offer protection in accordance with paragraph 2.**

2. **Protection against persecution or serious harm must be effective and of a non-temporary nature.**

Such protection is generally provided when the actors mentioned under points (a) and (b) of paragraph 1 take reasonable steps to prevent the persecution or suffering of serious harm, inter alia, by operating an effective legal system for the detection, prosecution and punishment of acts constituting persecution or serious harm, and when the applicant has access to such protection.

3. When assessing whether an international organisation controls a State or a substantial part of its territory and provides protection as described in paragraph 2, Member States shall take into account any guidance which may be provided in relevant Union acts.⁶

The following document lists organisations that provide some form of shelter or assistance to victims of trafficking and their contact details. **Although NGOs should not be viewed as an actor of protection** as laid out in the Qualification Directive, depending on the individual case it might be useful to contact these organisations directly in order to gain further information about the services they offer, the number of intakes, length of stay etc.

➤ [International Organization for Migration, Country Sheet: Nigeria, August 2013](#)

[...] IX. VULNERABLE PERSONS

1. Assistance to Women and Mothers returning alone (Gender Projects)

[...] Other minorities

- African Women Empowerment Group (AWEG)
- The Women's Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON)
- Girls Power Initiative (GPI)
- Committee for the Support of the Dignity of Women (COSUDOW) [...]

Contact details for the governmental National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and other related matters (NAPTIP) can be found [here](#). According to its website they operate 8 shelters

⁵[ECRE, ECRE Information Note on the Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted \(recast\), 7 October 2013](#)

⁶[European Union, DIRECTIVE 2011/95/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted \(recast\)](#)

in a variety of locations throughout the country, with a total capacity of 293 places and length of stay limited to 6 weeks:

- [National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and other related matters \(NAPTIP\), Counseling & Rehabilitation Department, Undated \[last accessed: 17/12/2013\]](#)

Shelter management Section takes care of the day-to-day running of the shelter facilities established for housing rescued trafficked persons. Services offered at the shelter includes feeding, clothing, provision of regular hygiene products, physical exercises, basic educational courses. The Agency operates eight shelters across the country with the capacity to accommodate the following number of victims at a time.

S/N	LOCATION OF SHELTER	NUMBER OF BEDSPACE
1.	Abuja	38
2.	Lagos	60
3.	Benin	40
4.	Uyo	45
5.	Enugu	30
6.	Kano	30
7.	Sokoto	30
8.	Maiduguri	20

TOTAL: 293 This statistics is on capacity rate and not occupancy rate.

Please note that NAPTIP operates transit and closed shelters because of the peculiarity of the Agency. Length of stay is limited to 6 weeks. Any person needing a longer stay is referred to the shelters owned by collaborating NGOs. [...]

Excerpt from December 2013 Nigeria OGN

3.21.12 In line with the findings in PO Nigeria at paragraph 191, support and protection from governmental and non-governmental sources in Nigeria are generally available to victims of trafficking. Internal relocation will often also be a viable option for applicants who fear reprisals from traffickers upon return to the country. However, caseworkers should refer to paragraph 192 of PO Nigeria when considering the risk to an individual of being re-trafficked (please see caselawsection above). Not all trafficked women returning to Nigeria will be able to access the arrangements and facilities available to enable successful re-integration and as such some trafficked women may well be members of a PSG. Where an applicant falls into this category and are able to demonstrate that the treatment they will face on return amounts to torture, inhuman or degrading treatment a grant of asylum will be appropriate.

The concluding guidance of the OGN refers case owners to “paragraph 192 of PO Nigeria”. The CG case [PO \(Trafficked Women\) Nigeria CG \[2009\] UKAIT 00046 \(23 November 2009\)](#) was heard in November 2008 and January 2009, and its determination published in November 2009. In its appeal, [PO \(Nigeria\) v Secretary of State for the Home Department \[2011\] EWCA Civ 132 \(22 February 2011\) \[paragraph 58\]](#), only paragraphs 191 and 192 of the original determination were upheld and remain “interim guidance, pending further consideration” from the Immigration and Asylum Tribunal. Paragraph 191 determines that effective state protection is available to victims of trafficking, whilst paragraph 192 highlights that the risk of re-trafficking for victims of trafficking returned to Nigeria and reprisal against their family members is highest for those who have outstanding “target earnings”, i.e. a particular sum of money for the trafficker or gang required to be earned by the victims before being free of any obligation to the trafficker or gang:

- [PO \(Trafficked Women\) Nigeria CG \[2009\] UKAIT 00046 \(23 November 2009\)](#) [emphasis added]
[...] Risk to Victims of Trafficking in being Re-trafficked on Return to Nigeria
192. It must be born in mind, however, that a claimant may still have a well-founded fear of persecution if

she can show that the Nigerian authorities know or ought to know of circumstances particular to her case giving rise to his fear, but are unlikely to provide the additional protection her particular circumstances reasonably require. To that end:

(a) A very careful examination of the circumstances in which the victim was first trafficked must be undertaken and careful findings made. **If a victim has been told that she is required to earn a particular sum of money ("target earnings") for the trafficker or gang, before being free of any obligation to the trafficker or gang, then, if the victim should escape before earning the target sums, there may well be a risk to the victim that on return to Nigeria she may be re-trafficked if found.** The extent of the risk of the trafficking will very much depend on the circumstances in which the victim was originally trafficked.

(b) It must always be remembered that within Nigeria there are gangs of people traffickers operating who generate enormous sums of money from their activities. **The evidence seems to us to be clear that where a victim escapes the clutches of her traffickers before earning the target earnings, then the traffickers are very likely to go to extreme lengths in order to locate the victim or members of the victim's family, to seek reprisals.**

(c) In the absence of evidence that a trafficked victim has been trafficked by an individual, it should be borne in mind that it is likely that the trafficking will have been carried out by a collection of individuals, many of whom may not have had personal contact with the victim. Within trafficking gangs, individual members perform different roles. One might, for example, be a photographer who takes the photograph which is used within the victim's passport, whether or not the passport is a genuine one. One gang member may, for example, be a forger who is involved in the preparation of false passports or other documents for use by the victim; one might be a corrupt police official, or a border guard, whose role is to assist in facilitating the victim's passage in some way. **Gang members may perform any number of different roles but it is essential to bear in mind that if a victim has been trafficked by a gang of traffickers, as opposed to a single trafficker, then the risk of re-trafficking may be greater for someone who escapes before earning the target earnings set by the trafficker, because the individual gang members will have expected to receive a share of the target sum and will, therefore, be anxious to ensure that they do receive that share or seek retribution if they do not.**

Recent, though limited, COI post *PO* found in the public domain inform about the fear of trafficking victims to testify in court, the size of Nigerian trafficking gangs and state complicity with traffickers, further undermining effective protection available for victims:

➤ [National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and other related matters \(NAPTIP\), Fact Sheet 8: Challenges, Undated \[last accessed: 17/12/2013\]](#)

[...] Victims are reluctant to testify in court as a result of the following:

- Intimidation or threat (real or perceived) of physical harm to the persons of the victim by the traffickers or his associates
- Post-trauma depression as a result of prolonged exploitation
- Fear of voodoo [...]

➤ [Institute for Public Policy Research, Beyond Borders, Human Trafficking from Nigeria to the UK, January 2013](#)

[...] 5.2 Prosecution of traffickers in Nigeria

[...] Several respondents reported incidents of indifference or even active complicity when victims or their families notified police about their situation, only to be told it was a 'private' matter. In at least one case, the families were subsequently murdered. In another, the victim appeared to have been handed over directly from custody by police to a stranger, who then trafficked her into sexual exploitation. [...]

➤ [Waging NonViolence, Flash mob shines light on human trafficking, 30 May 2012](#)

[...] Janete, a woman now in her early 20s, was lured from her native Nigeria for the purpose of sexual exploitation in Spain. (Her name has been changed for her protection.) After gathering the courage to escape from her traffickers more than three years ago, she still lives in daily fear that they will find her.

[...] During Janete's enslavement, no passersby, neighbors, "clients" or police officers stopped to question or report the situation. Moved by witnessing other women in similar circumstances who had been forced to work as prostitutes for years without pay, Janete eventually took the risk she understood could cost her life: She filed a report against her traffickers. The following day, her story was published on the front page of a local newspaper, immediately compromising her anonymity. Lack of awareness on the part of the media ultimately put both Janete and her family in imminent danger. Back in Nigeria, family members began receiving death threats, and shortly afterwards their house was burned down. Janete was later attacked by one of her traffickers as retribution for turning him in. [...]

Excerpt from December 2013 Nigeria OGN

3.21.12 In line with the findings in PO Nigeria at paragraph 191, support and protection from governmental and non-governmental sources in Nigeria are generally available to victims of trafficking. Internal relocation will often also be a viable option for applicants who fear reprisals from traffickers upon return to the country. However, caseworkers should refer to paragraph 192 of PO Nigeria when considering the risk to an individual of being re-trafficked (please see caselawsection above). Not all trafficked women returning to Nigeria will be able to access the arrangements and facilities available to enable successful re-integration and as such some trafficked women may well be members of a PSG. Where an applicant falls into this category and are able to demonstrate that the treatment they will face on return amounts to torture, inhuman or degrading treatment a grant of asylum will be appropriate.

The OGN also suggests that victims of trafficking are able to relocate internally without any assessment of the relevance or reasonableness of internal flight. COI available in the public domain highlights the difficulty single lone women face in Nigeria. Please refer to the [2.3 Internal Relocation](#) section below for such information, especially that relating to the:

- [Economic situation for women](#)
- [Discriminatory practices against women](#)
- [Risk of violence against women](#)
- [Lack of effective protection by the Nigerian police force](#)
- [Lack of services available to single lone women](#)
- [Restrictions on women's freedom of movement](#)

The following illustrative COI available in the public domain highlights the difficulties women face returning to Nigeria after having been trafficked:

- [UNHCR, Voodoo, Witchcraft and Human Trafficking in Europe, October 2013](#)
[...] Voodoo as a form of coercion in African sex trafficking
[...] Consequences of breaking the oaths
[...] Victims usually believe they deserve these consequences because they broke the ritual oath. This reinforces other victims' belief in the power of the oaths as they witness how the rupture has caused misfortune. It is important to note that breaking the pact is considered to lead to psychic and mental harm to the women concerned, but it is also an act of dishonor to their community, as the oath ties them not only to voodoo gods but also to the local community. [...]
- [Institute for Public Policy Research, Homecoming: Return and Reintegration of Irregular Migrants from Nigeria, April 2013](#)
[...] 2.4.3 Social stability and networks
[...] Migrants also made clear the importance of social support when they discussed the barriers to their reintegration. For some, the stigma they faced upon returning or being deported presented major social hurdles – particularly for those who had been victims of trafficking. [...]

➤ [Voice of America news, Nigerian Sex Trafficking Victims Abandoned, 26 November 2012](#)

For many Nigerian victims of sex trafficking, coming home is as hard as the trip. In Edo State, sometimes the same kind of so-called "magic" that binds victims to traffickers is used to set them free. After five years of sex work on the streets in Italy, Patience Ken had paid \$40,000 to her madam, essentially buying her freedom. Before she could make any money of her own, she was arrested and thrown into a Roman jail. Months later, she was handcuffed and brought to the airport. From there, she was shipped back to Nigeria. After she landed, they told her she was free. She fainted. "They said I am free, so there I got faint," she recalled. "I got faint because what am I going to do? Where am I going to start from? There is no money. I am stranded. No clothes. Only the clothes that I am putting on. Only the shoes that I am putting on." Ken sold her mobile phone to pay for her trip back to her village in Edo State, where most Nigerian sex trafficking victims in Europe originate. When she arrived, her family was not happy to see another mouth to feed. Neighbors whispered: "Had she been a prostitute? Why then did she have no money?" Solomon Okoduwa is the president of the Initiative for Youth Awareness on Migration, Immigration, Development and Re-integration, an aid organization for returnees. Okoduwa says returning victims do not just face poverty and isolation at home. Many fear they will be killed by a juju spell, the supposed magical oath in which they swore they would pay traffickers for their passage to Europe.

[...] His organization runs a training program for returnees, teaching agriculture and business. But when students finish the program, they often find no available jobs, and have no capital to start up businesses. This problem, he says, is why so many young people want to leave in the first place. "The economic situation, that is the drive of our people that is chasing so many of them out of our country thinking that the grass is greener on the other side," he said. [...]

➤ [Science Nordic, Victims of sex trafficking return home to great expectations, 12 September 2012](#)

A great responsibility awaits Nigerian women who have sold sex on European streets when they return home. In Nigeria, repatriated women are regarded as socioeconomically advantaged individuals by their families – even when it's apparent that they have sold sex in Europe. Relatives expect the former sex workers to have made money and established contacts in Europe, which could help them all out of poverty. So concludes a new study which has looked into lives of Nigerian women upon their return to Africa after having sold sex in the West. [...]

➤ [Meleena M. Bowers, Room for Improvement: Nigeria's Approach to Trafficking, 4 September 2012](#)

[...] The stigma associated with being a victim of sexual slavery has severe negative consequences for the successful rehabilitation of a trafficked person [...]

➤ [The Independent, The curse of 'juju' that drives sex slaves to Europe, 7 April 2011](#)

[...] Paved roads and reliable electricity may not have reached this part of rural Nigeria, but the myth of the "Italos" – the women who have made a fortune in Italy – has permeated every household. It is an open secret that the Italos earn their money by selling sex, and there is no shame in it – Nigerian women who travel are stigmatised only if they return home penniless. But many do, often beaten and HIV-positive, and are rejected by their families. [...]

3.22 Forced marriage

The conclusion for this main category of claim states:

Excerpt from the December 2013 Nigeria OGN

3.22.7 Conclusion Forced marriages do still occur in Nigeria and are prevalent in the north of the country. Whilst the government did not take significant steps to stop traditional practices harmful to children and women they have signed and ratified the Maputo Protocol which states that; 'no marriage shall take place without the free and full consent of both parties'. Applicants should be able to seek protection from the authorities but where they are unable to do so they may be able to internally relocate to escape localised threats from members of their family, careful consideration must be given to the relevance and reasonableness of internal relocation on a case by case basis taking full account of the individual circumstances of the particular claimant.

The concluding guidance is contradictory in that it suggests that state protection should be available since the Nigerian government signed and ratified the Maputo Protocol, yet in the same sentence it highlights that it has not been successfully implemented as the government "did not take significant steps to stop traditional practices harmful to children and women". The OGN includes excerpts from the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board Research Directorate at paragraphs 3.22.4 and 3.22.5 to such effect, but failed to include the following important information found in that source or other COI in the public domain which emphasises that state protection is not available nor effective:

- [Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Nigeria: Prevalence of forced marriage, particularly in Muslim and Yoruba communities; information on legislation, including state protection; ability of women to refuse a forced marriage, 9 November 2012](#)

[...] 2. Legislation

Okeke [a lawyer and sexual-and-reproductive-rights activist] said that many states have adopted the Child's Rights Act with a "reservation on age of marriage thereby stripping the law of the ability to prevent early/forced marriage" (10 Apr. 2010). She also noted that the Child's Rights Act has not yet been used in court, and therefore the effectiveness of the Act has not been tested (Okeke 26 Oct. 2012). The Nigerian Federal Ministry of Justice indicates that enforcement of statutory laws is "negligible" and explains that, although the Child's Rights Act "outlaws the arbitrary fixing of age of marriage under customary and traditional practices," "Nigeria still has many customary laws that provide institutional support for practices such as early marriage" (Nigeria Aug. 2011, 31). According to the Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition, in the states that have passed the Child's Rights Act into law, "implementation and enforcement of the law remains a challenge" (18 July 2008). According to the Women's Rights Watch Nigeria project coordinator, the Child's Rights Act is not being implemented and is not effective because, while the law makes provision for the establishment of family courts, the only state to establish a family court has been Lagos (18 Oct. 2012). [...]

According to Okeke, while there is no legislation in place to protect adults from forced marriage, in some states, such as Kano, Niger, Gombe, Bauchi and Borno, there are laws against withdrawing young girls from school in order to marry, and Cross River State has a law against early marriage (26 Oct. 2012). Okeke added that "there are a few laws which can be creatively employed to protect victims but many people will not go to courts" because forced marriage is considered to be cultural, and "people are reluctant to question customs" (26 Oct. 2012).

[...] 5. State Protection

The Assistant Professor of Anthropology is not aware of any programs that provide protection for women who refuse forced marriages, or any legislation that supports women's marital decisions (18 Oct. 2012). [...] The BBC reports on a 26-year-old woman from Sokoto who was forcibly married to a Nigerian senator (22 Oct. 2010). After taking her case to the Nigerian high court, the judge said that the case was under the jurisdiction of the Islamic court, and that, based on the constitution, the federal court could not intervene in matters before the Islamic court (BBC 22 Oct. 2010). The judge also indicated that the forced marriage was not a violation of the woman's human rights, and dismissed the case (ibid.). [...]

➤ [ThinkAfricaPress, Nigeria – Child Not Bride, 3 September 2013](#)

Nigeria's Senate has failed to remove a clause in the constitution which legitimises child marriage.

[...] As part of its review of some sections of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Senate took a vote on July 16 concerning the removal of clause 29 (4)(b). That clause states that "any woman who is married shall be deemed to be of full age", essentially legitimising child marriages by establishing that any girl younger than 18 is automatically mature enough to handle the responsibilities and realities of marriage by virtue of her involvement in the act of marriage itself. Although the majority of the Senate voted against it, with 60 voting for removal and 35 voting for retention, the total fell short of the 73 votes required to change the Constitution.

[...] The acknowledgement of child marriage would have been on its way out of the constitution if it had not been for the intervention of one particular Senator. Senator Ahmad Sani Yerima of Zamfara West led calls on the floor of the Senate to reject the constitutional committee's recommendation for removing the clause. Yerima, who himself is widely believed to have married a 13-year-old girl in 2009, pushed for a second vote on the matter following an initial vote which had produced the majority required to remove the clause, arguing that under Islamic law a woman is of age once she is married, and that Nigeria cannot legislate on marriages under Islamic rites. Yerima's invocation of Islamic law succeeded in forcing a second vote as President of the Senate, David Mark, recognised the issue as "sensitive". However, the idea that child marriage is sacrosanct in strict interpretations of Islamic law is far from universally accepted. [...]

➤ [Carol Ajie, Overcoming challenges of Senator Yerima's child marriage in Nigeria \(2\), 2 October 2012 – paper presented at the 2012 International Bar Association \(IBA\) Annual Conference and reprinted in the Daily Independent](#)

[...] In April 2010, a coalition of Nigerian civil society and gender rights activists petitioned to the Senate calling for action against Yerima over his marriage to the 13 year old Egyptian girl. The Senate requested the coalition to take the matter to court, suggesting that its member Senator Yerima and others like him had not violated its code of ethics. Also the Attorney General of the Federation, Bello Adoke SAN refused all requests to prosecute him and hold Ahmed Yerima liable for his wrongs.

[...] The Senator had an earlier marriage in 2006, to a 15 year old child, Hauwa whom he caused to drop out of school at JSS 3, as his fourth wife and had to divorce her at the age of 17 and nursing a child for him, to make room for this marriage to a 13 year old Egyptian child, Marim

[...] NAPTIP [National Agency for Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and other Related Matters] had summoned Mr. Yerima during its investigations and granted him bail on self-recognition in the sum of N5 million. Upon completion of its report, Yerima was found to have violated several laws notably:- Sections 21, 22 (1&2) and 23 (a-d) of the Child's Right Act 2003, which is operational in the FCT Abuja and Sections 12(a&b), 13(1&2), 14 (1) and 17(a&b) of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act 2003.

[...] The Executive Secretary of NAPTIP, Mr Egede recommended to the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF), Mohammed Bello Adoke, SAN to prosecute Yerima, in exercise of the AG's constitutional powers under s.174 of the 1999 Constitution to institute and undertake criminal proceedings against any person who has violated an Act of the National Assembly such as the Child's Right Act (CRA) 2003.

Also the Executive Secretary of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Roland Ewubare, at the time, committed NHRC's support for Yerima's prosecution as recommended by NAPTIP. He made a courageous pronouncement against the criminal activities of goons. He said *inter alia* that, "I am aware that NAPTIP has conducted an extensive and rigorous investigation of the Yerima child bride matter. I am also aware that the investigation was done with the active support of the Egyptian authorities. NAPTIP has now made a recommendation, and such a recommendation must be given maximum deference and implemented fully. Anything short of this will be tantamount to a cover up and non-adherence to the principle of equality of all before the law." Mr. Yerima's conduct continued to receive rebuke in and outside the shores of Nigeria. The Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) actually wrote to the National Assembly (NASS) to take a stand against his illegitimate practice. But we saw nothing significant come out of the ethics committee of the legislative chambers in Nigeria where Yerima gleefully sits to promulgate laws, one of which the CRA, was violated by him.

Some lawyers wrote to AGF Bello Adoke SAN, expressing preparedness to prosecute Yerima for his audacious criminal activities but the AGF refused to authorize his prosecution or to donate a fiat to one or the other trial-ready Counsel.

Some more discomfiture inflicted by the HAGF: Mr. Egede, Executive Secretary of NAPTIP a government agency under the AGF's department, was relieved of his post after he had submitted the damning Report on Senator Ahmed Sani Yerima and was substituted with a lackey of the AGF, ostensibly resentful of Mr. Egede's bold steps. [...]

➤ [BBC News, Nigeria court rejects 'forced marriage' case, 22 October 2010](#)

A Nigerian high court has dismissed a case brought by a 26-year-old woman who says her father forced her to marry a senator.

The judge said her human rights had not been violated and it was a matrimonial matter for an Islamic court.

Zainab Isa Mayana was married to the senator of Zamfara State, Sahabi Ya'u, 54, in July at a ceremony where she was represented by her father.

She says she has never met him and her father knew she was already engaged. [...]

➤ [IRIN news, Early marriage adds to socioeconomic woes, NGOs say, 26 November 2008](#)

[...] Among Nigeria's predominantly Muslim northern states, just one - Jigawa - has passed a law to enforce the [UN Child Rights Act](#), which prohibits child marriage, according to Ahmed Bello of the region's agency for the prohibition of human trafficking. But even in the Jigawa case, the 2007 law does not specify an age, referring only to "puberty" and letting a judge decide. "We substituted the age limit of 18 years in the original draft with 'puberty', which we find acceptable with our people," said Musa Imam, secretary of Jigawa State Judicial Reform Commission, which reviewed the law. Residents of Jigawa told IRIN they had never heard of the law being enforced since it was passed. "Even if the government decides to enforce the law people will defy it because to us it is better to marry off your daughter and go to jail than to have a grandchild outside marriage," said Hamisu Umar, a resident of Kandi village, 20km outside Dutse, the Jigawa State capital. Judicial expert Imam told IRIN enforcement cannot come immediately. "We are aware that the child rights law is not enforced at the moment and this is deliberate," he said. "We first want to sensitise the people on the existence of the law and its provisions and once we are sure they are fully aware of the law, we can then prosecute non-compliance with the law." Attempts to bar early marriage have come under severe criticism from Islamic clerics, parents and state parliamentarians in northern Nigeria, who say it contravenes cultural and religious norms of the region's people. [...]

➤ [The Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition Shadow Report, Submitted to the 41st Session of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women holding at the United Nations Plaza New York, between June 30 – July 18 2008](#)

[...] Citizenship By Registration

[...] Section 29(4)(b) of the Constitution states that "any woman who is married shall be deemed to be of full age." But this provision must be read along with Section 29(1) of the Constitution, which applies to any citizen of Nigeria of full age who wants to renounce his/her citizenship. The context of deemed age of maturity for any woman can easily be misconstrued if not properly contextualised. The provision can be abused to encourage child marriage as a girl who is under 18 and given out in marriage is deemed to be of full age. The provision may also be invoked to render Section 21 of the Child Rights Act¹², which prohibits marriage and betrothal of a child under the age of 18, inconsistent with the provisions of the Constitution. [...]

In addition, COI found in the public domain also reports on the problems and possible retributory acts women might face for refusing a forced marriage:

➤ [Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Nigeria: Prevalence of forced marriage, particularly in Muslim and Yoruba communities; information on legislation, including state protection; ability of women to refuse a forced marriage, 9 November 2012](#)

[...] 4. Refusing a Forced Marriage

According to the Director of WPD, the ability of women to refuse a forced marriage in Nigeria "depends on the tribe, the sub-clan, the location, the degree of education, [and] ... income levels" (15 Oct. 2012). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an assistant professor of Anthropology at the University of

Kansas indicated that the consequences of refusing a forced marriage are "contingent upon the family" (18 Oct. 2012). According to Okeke, it is easier for a woman in the south to escape a forced marriage because women in the south "are more educated" (26 Oct. 2012). Okeke indicated that consequences for refusing a forced marriage could include "total neglect" and "ostracism" (26 Oct. 2012). The Women's Rights Watch Nigeria project coordinator stated that refusing a forced marriage "could be dangerous for the victim" (18 Oct. 2012). The project coordinator provided the example of the death of a woman in a forced marriage whose legs were "chopped off" by her husband to stop her from constantly trying to leave him (Women's Rights Watch Nigeria 18 Oct. 2012). Okeke said that a girl's hand was cut off for escaping a forced marriage (26 Oct. 2012). Media sources report on girls attempting to escape forced marriages and returning to their families, who then force the girls to return to their husbands (Daily Champion 2 July 2010; The Times 28 Nov. 2008). Media sources also report that the husbands of girls attempting to escape forced marriages have beaten them (Daily Champion 2 July 2010) and raped them (The Times 28 Nov. 2008). According to the Women's Rights Watch Nigeria project coordinator, "a lot" of girls who are forced to marry are suicidal (18 Oct. 2012). [...]

➤ [Ine Nnadi, An Insight into Violence against Women as Human Rights Violation in Nigeria: A Critique, 21 August 2012 in Journal of Politics and Law, Vol. 5, No 3; 2012](#)

[...] 3.3. Child Marriage

[...] Mention must be made here of the intervention of Bauchi State in this regard where child marriage is prevalent. The State enacted a law banning child marriages after the pathetic case of Hauwa Abubakar, a 9 year old girl who was married off to one Mallam Shehu Garuba Kiruwa a 40 year old cattle dealer. This case is instructive here (UN Report, 2001). Her father being indebted to the husband forcefully gave Hauwa as wife to Shehu at the tender age of 9. She ran away from the husband's house on two occasions and was forcefully brought back to his house, on the third occasion; when she ran away and was brought back by her parents, the husband pinned her down and chopped off her legs with a poisoned cutlass. [...]

Excerpt from the December 2013 Nigeria OGN

3.22.7 Conclusion Forced marriages do still occur in Nigeria and are prevalent in the north of the country. Whilst the government did not take significant steps to stop traditional practices harmful to children and women they have signed and ratified the Maputo Protocol which states that; 'no marriage shall take place without the free and full consent of both parties'. Applicants should be able to seek protection from the authorities but where they are unable to do so they may be able to internally relocate to escape localised threats from members of their family, careful consideration must be given to the relevance and reasonableness of internal relocation on a case by case basis taking full account of the individual circumstances of the particular claimant.

The OGN, though emphasising the need for a relevance and reasonableness assessment of internal relocation, suggests that IFA may be a possibility for girls and women fleeing from forced marriage. COI available in the public domain highlights the difficulty single lone women face in Nigeria. Please refer to the [2.3 Internal Relocation](#) section below for such information, especially that relating to:

- [Economic situation for women](#)
- [Discriminatory practices against women](#)
- [Risk of violence against women](#)
- [Lack of effective protection by the Nigerian police force](#)
- [Lack of services available to single lone women](#)
- [Restrictions on women's freedom of movement](#)

3.23 Gay men and lesbians

The conclusion for this main category of claim states:

Excerpt from the December 2013 Nigeria OGN

3.23.13 Conclusion Societal hostility and discrimination against LGBT persons exists in Nigeria and same sex relationships are illegal. Whilst the law criminalises homosexual relationships, prosecutions are rare and it cannot be said homosexuals are being persecuted as a generality when concrete examples are few. However due to widespread societal taboos against homosexuality some gay men and lesbians may find that they are threatened, ostracized, fired from their jobs or thrown out of their family homes. Where gay men and lesbians do encounter social hostility which puts them at real risk, the individual would be unable to seek effective protection from the authorities. Caseworkers should consider whether the claimant could avoid the risk by relocating elsewhere in Nigeria. Caseworkers must however take into account that the Supreme Court in the case of HJ (Iran) made the point that individuals cannot be expected to modify their behaviour and that internal relocation is not the answer if it depends on the person concealing their sexual orientation in the proposed new location for fear of persecution.

3.23.14 Each case must however be examined on its own merits. Where caseworkers conclude that a claimant is at real risk of persecution in Nigeria on account of their sexual orientation and are unable to internally relocate then they should be granted asylum because gay men, lesbians and bisexuals in Nigeria may be considered to be members of a particular social group.

The first highlighted sentence of the conclusion asserts that prosecutions for homosexual relationships are “rare”. Only one paragraph of the OGN (3.23.7) details a prosecution for engaging in same-sex relations; the awarding of a two year custodial sentence and fine in March 2012. No other COI is included in the *Treatment* section for this main category of claim on the implementation of Nigerian laws criminalising same-sex relationships, nor on police treatment of the LGBT community. This is despite such COI being available at the time of publication of the December 2013 OGN indicating that as of October 2013 there were 12 persons in prison or awaiting trial under Nigeria’s laws against consensual sex between men. It is also reported that the authorities view same-sex marriage as against Nigerian national values and culture and that the passage of the Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Bill has led to increased police harassment, blackmail and extortion of the LGBTI community and that LGBTI persons in Nigeria have experienced arbitrary arrest, torture in custody and illegal detention. Sources have been presented on these issues below.

With regards to the second highlighted sentence of the conclusion, whilst the OGN recognises that the LGBT community experiences threats, ostracism, dismissal from employment and being thrown out of their homes, it fails to mention that blackmail, extortion and physical harassment are suffered. This is despite the OGN including reports of communities stripping LGBT persons naked, beating and parading them through villages (paragraphs 3.23.7 and 3.23.10), stonings and beatings of members of a LGBT-friendly church (paragraph 3.23.8), and societal blackmail and extortion (paragraphs 3.23.11 and 3.23.12). Additional COI from 2013 further indicates societal discrimination against the LGBTI community; that LGBTI persons in Nigeria have suffered curative rape, forced disappearance, and murder; that there is very strong public support (92% according to one poll) of the proposed bill to make same-sex marriages punishable with 14 year prison sentences and the introduction of the bill has increased the level of hostility towards those accused of same-sex activities.

- [State treatment of LGBTI community](#)
- [Societal treatment of LGBTI community](#)

State treatment of LGBTI community

➤ [Pink News, Nigeria: Seven arrested for violating anti-gay laws, 3 December 2013](#)

[...] State officials in Nigeria say they have arrested seven individuals suspected of breaking the country's anti-gay laws.

According to Nigeria's Punch website, Commander Alhaji Mohammad Gidado from the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps in Jigawa State said that the parents of one of the suspects reported him to officials, adding that after his arrest, the suspect gave information which led to the arrest of other individuals.

Mr Gidado described the conduct of those arrested as "barbaric, animalistic and nasty", adding that the suspects were between the ages of 18 and 25 years.

"Parents and teachers need to do more in guiding our youths. This kind of behaviour from our future generation is bad," he said. [...]

➤ [Vanguard, Homosexuals, Lesbians to serve 14 yrs on conviction in Katsina, 3 December 2013](#)

The Katsina State House of Assembly on Tuesday passed a law which provides for the conviction of homosexuals and lesbians to 14 years imprisonment without option of fine.

The law also affects anyone convicted of sexual harassment of students and other residents.

The provisions amended Sections 284 and 285 of Penal Code Law, CAP. 96 Laws of Katsina State, 1991.

The amendment was sponsored by Alhaji Rabi'u Idris, the member representing Funtua Local Government, following reports of sexual harassment in some tertiary institutions in the state.

Idris had while seeking for the law to be amended, said it was "too light" to deter anyone from committing such offences.

Part of the amended law reads: "Whoever has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal, that person shall be punished with 14 years imprisonment and liable to N10,000 fine.

"Any woman who employed means of satisfying her sexual desire through bodily contact with another woman or otherwise, with or without her consent, that woman shall be liable to 14 years imprisonment together with N10,000 fine."

On gross indecency, the law stated that: "whoever commits gross indecency upon another person; sexually harassed or caused fear by use of force or otherwise.

"Or threatens another person of failure in examination, promotion, admission or employment or join with him in the commission of the above offences, the person shall be punished with 14 years imprisonment and N10,000 fine."

The Speaker, Alhaji Ya'u Gwajogwajo said the law also empowers the court to require the offender to pay compensation to victims. (NAN)

➤ [76 Crimes, Nigerian LGBT case brings total to 12 in prison or awaiting trial, 9 October 2013](#)

[...] Two more Nigerian men were hauled into court on homosexuality charges on Oct. 3, bringing to 12 the number of those in prison or awaiting trial under Nigeria's laws against consensual sex between men.

Premium Times Nigeria reported that Emeka Eze, 35, and Jonathan Akatin, 22, were arraigned Oct. 3 in an Upper Area Court, Jos, and charged with homosexual behaviour.

The alleged offense, which occurred at 10 p.m. Sept. 7, was reported to police by their neighbors.

Click on the image for the blog's list of people in prison or awaiting trial for homosexuality.

Click on the image for the blog's list of people in prison or awaiting trial for homosexuality.

They were charged under Section 284 of the Penal Code (Northern States) Federal Provisions Act, which provides for up to 14 years in prison for same-sex relations.

The two men pleaded guilty and asked for leniency, saying that they were unaware that homosexual relations were illegal. [...]

➤ [Pink News, Nigeria: Two men charged with 'homosexual behaviour' face up to 14 years in prison, 4 October 2013](#)

[...] Two men have been arrested and charged with "homosexual behaviour" in Nigeria.

Emeka Eze, 35, and Jonathan Akatin, 22, were charged on Thursday in the city of Jos, and face a potential prison sentence of 14 years.

The pair were arrested by police following a tip-off from neighbours, who alleged that they had been engaging in homosexuality, Premium Times reports.

The prosecutor, Gokwat Ibrahim, told the court that the accused committed the alleged offence at 10pm on 7 September.

"The accused have been committing the offence in their compound publicly, which is against the order of nature. During police investigation, the suspects confessed to the crime," Mr Ibrahim said. [...]

➤ [76 Crimes, Nigeria: 'Suspected homosexuals' charged, plead not guilty, 3 October 2013](#)

[...] Two young men were arraigned Oct. 1 in Osogbo, Nigeria, on charges of homosexual activity and released on bail pending trial.

The "suspected homosexuals," as they were described in AllAfrica and Africa Spotlight, are the defendants Samuel Friday, 19, and Oni Oluwatobi, 18, who pleaded not guilty.

The charges against them were described as "a two-count charge of indecent sexual practice and seducing another into homosexuality." [...] Bail was set at N100,000 each (US \$620) plus two sureties of the same amount. [...]

➤ [Huffington Post, In Nigeria a Mere Rumor of Being Gay Can Lead to Violence and Imprisonment, 8 August 2013](#)

[...] This week police in Aba state, Nigeria, had 40-year-old Benjamin Ndubuisi go on trial for having gay sex with a 23-year-old man, based on rumors.

Police allege that Ndubuisi, who they say is a pastor, had sex with a younger man who worked at his Ogbor Hill church, basing their case entirely on what appears to be verbal reports of locals.

The parents of the younger man, known only by his first name, Ndukwe, described in Nigeria's anti-gay media as a "victim," allegedly reported to the police the alleged incident after he complained of "health problems" that led him to confess "to his family about the secret love affairs between him and the gay prophet [Ndubuisi]."

Ogbor Hill residents alleged that Ndubuisi engaged his victim as a worker in the church "as a ploy to always have him around to satisfy his sexual urge," reported the daily Vanguard. [...]

Ndubuisi's case has been widely publicized in Nigeria in a highly homophobic manner, claim Nigerian LGBT advocates.

Nigerian LGBT advocates criticized the case, pointing to the fact that it is based on rumors and may have involved beating Ndubuisi during his capture. [...]

➤ [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Summary prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 \(b\) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, 31 July 2013](#)

[...] 34. Joint Submission 3 (JS 3) [International Centre for Advocacy on Rights to Health, Abuja, Nigeria; Women's Health and Equal Rights, Abuja, Nigeria; Improved Youth Health Initiative, Edo States, Nigeria; and The Initiative for Equal Rights, Lagos, Nigeria (Joint submission 3)]; stated that Nigeria should amend all laws and policies, and stop practices that discriminated on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity; and that Nigeria must undertake legislative and policy measures that promote acceptance to homosexual and diverse gender identity.

35. CHRI [Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, New Delhi, India] stated that in November 2012, the House of Representatives unanimously passed a second reading of the Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Bill. If this Bill is passed it would further entrench discrimination against persons based on sexual orientation.

36. JS 3 [International Centre for Advocacy on Rights to Health, Abuja, Nigeria; Women's Health and Equal Rights, Abuja, Nigeria; Improved Youth Health Initiative, Edo States, Nigeria; and The Initiative for Equal Rights, Lagos, Nigeria (Joint submission 3)]; stated that Nigeria must release all persons imprisoned or detained on the grounds of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Also, Nigeria must end impunity by prosecuting those who allegedly violate the rights of LGBTI persons. [...]

➤ [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21*, 30 July 2013](#)

[...] Recommendation 12 (Legalization of same marriage)

48. Nigeria does not accept this recommendation because same-sex marriage is against its national values. Recent polling data suggests that 92% of Nigerians support the Anti Same-Sex Marriage Bill passed by the Senate.

49. The Marriage Act defines marriage as a relationship between a man and a woman. Christianity and Islam, which are the major religions in Nigeria, also recognize marriage as relationship between a man and woman. Same-sex marriage is not in the culture of Nigerians.

50. Sexual and gender minorities are not visible in Nigeria and there is no officially registered association of gays and lesbians. In writing this report, a consultation and validation process was held with various stakeholders where the issue of same-sex marriage was brought up, and the general view of the participants was that same-sex marriage was not a human rights issue in Nigeria. [...]

➤ [76 Crimes, Nigerian police extort money from LGBTs after anti-gay bill, 11 July 2013](#)

[...] Passage of the Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Bill by Nigeria's federal legislature has led to increased harassment, blackmail and extortion of the LGBTI community, sometimes by police, even though the bill has not been signed into law.

For example, Mayowa K., a gay man, reported that he was stopped in the Ojodu-Berger area of Lagos, on June 24 on his way to work by police who at first thought he was a "yahoo-yahoo" (local slang for an Internet fraudster).

After he denied the accusation and showed his identification, the police insisted on confirming that he was not a fraudster by searching his phone and laptop, even though Nigerian law guarantees the right to privacy, including computers and phones.

On the computer, they found gay pornographic films. The police also extracted his parents' telephone numbers from his contact lists and threatened to call them and tell them he is gay unless he paid a bribe. He paid the police about 20,000 naira (about US\$124 or 96 euros) as a bribe to keep quiet and let him go.

In an incident in the Ajao estate area of Lagos state on June 29, plainclothes police accosted another gay man, handcuffed him, and took his phone. They checked his chat messages and initiated a chat with his partner, whom they tricked into going to a rendezvous. When the partner showed up and found out that he had been conned, police arrested him and threatened that he would be shot if he dared to make a move.

Both men were charged with violating the Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Bill, even though it is not a law. They were detained for two days, then released after they paid about 50,000 naira (US\$309 or 40 euros).

A further consequence of passage of the bill is an increase in anti-gay slurs. For example, M. Davis of Port Harcourt in Rivers State, a lawyer who is willing to represent members of the LGBTI community, is now labeled a "homo lawyer." [...]

➤ [This Day, Nigeria: Kano Hisbah Arrests Nine Beggars for Sodomy, 19 June 2013](#)

[...] The Kano State Hisbah Command has arrested nine beggars for engaging in homosexuality.

The deputy commander in charge of Operations and Special Duties, Nabahani Usman, said the operation was conducted by the Tarauni Local Government command of the agency at Unguwa Uku Motor Park.

He said the operatives of the agency succeeded in the arrest of nine teenagers and three adults who engaged in homosexuality at the park. "This operation is part of our commitment to reform the act of street begging in the state based on several reports we received on social vices associated with the act of begging," he said. [...]

➤ [Amnesty International, Nigeria: President must veto discriminatory anti-LGBTI bill, 5 June 2013](#)

[...] President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria should not sign into law a draconian new bill that would formalize discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people and have wide-ranging effects on civil liberties in the country, 10 Nigerian and international human rights groups said today.

On May 30, 2013, Nigeria's House of Representatives passed the Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Bill, which would impose a prison sentence of up to 14 years for anyone found guilty of engaging in same-sex relationships. The Senate had already passed a similar bill.

If signed into law, the bill would also criminalize freedom of speech, association, and assembly.

"The bill is a throwback to past decades under military rule when these civil rights were treated with contempt," said Lucy Freeman, deputy director of the Africa Programme at Amnesty International.

"It would provide for prison sentences for anyone who speaks out in support of, meets with, or forms a group advocating for the rights of LGBTI people. It criminalizes the lives of LGBTI people, but the damage it would cause extends to every single Nigerian.

"It undermines basic freedoms that Nigeria's civil society has long fought to defend. The civil rights of Nigerians cannot simply be legislated away."

"Same-sex marriages" or "civil unions" - which could lead to imprisonment of up to 14 years - are so broadly defined in the bill that they include virtually any form of same-sex cohabitation. In addition, the bill seeks to impose prison sentences on a range of people who associate with or assist LGBTI people.

Individuals or groups, including priests or other clerics, who "witness, abet and aid the solemnization of a same sex marriage or union" would face a 10-year prison sentence. So would those who "directly or indirectly make public show of same sex amorous relationship," or anyone who "registers, operates or participates in gay clubs, societies and organizations."

In addition, anyone who "supports" LGBTI groups, "processions or meetings" could also face a decade behind bars. [...]

➤ [International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia \(IDAHO\), Nigeria IDAHO Report 2013, 24 May 2013](#)

[...] The Nigerian government continues to propose for the criminalization of relationships involving persons of the same sex by allowing religious extremists to influence her policy making process with claims that same sex relationship or marriage is a "sin" in a secular state of over 100 million persons, acknowledging the fact that the constitution of the country was not drafted on such basis. Also the lack of political will of the Nigerian government to use its protective mandate in ensuring equal protection for all citizens regardless of their sexual orientation fuels homophobia in Nigeria. [...]

Specifically, in the last one year, on the list of documented human rights violated targeted at LGBTI persons in Nigeria alone are arbitrary arrest, torture in custody, [...] illegal detention (private cells). [...]

➤ [Gay Star News, Man jailed for gay sex and scorned by Nigeria's media, 14 April 2013](#)

A 35-year-old man, named Hashiru Usman, has been sentenced to 9 months imprisonment by a court in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria.

Usman was sentenced midweek after he had pleaded guilty having gay sex with what the Nigerian media termed 'a boy', although activists have challenged the manner the use of the reports' wordings.

The prosecutor, Mukadas Maiyaki told the court that on April 4, Usman picked up the 'boy' at Zuma Rock and 'forcefully' had anal sex with him.

He told the court that Usman, after having sex with him, he dropped him off at pickup spot.

The prosecutor said that when Usman came back at later date to pick another 'boy' from the same place he was apprehended by the police, following the 'boy's complaint to security agents.

In his judgement, the presiding judge, Alhassan Kuserki, convicted him on the one-count charge of 'unnatural offence', without an option of fine.

The judge stated: 'I will not grant you an option of fine because you do not deserve it.

'You only carry the face of a human being but your behaviors are equivalent to those of animals because it is only animals that have sexual copulation through the anus.

'After you have ruin your own life by engaging in such disgusting act, you decided it was not enough for you.

'So you have to ruin the lives of innocent children by abusing and molesting them. It is my utmost hope that you will become a better person at the end of your jail term'.

Nigerian LGBT rights advocates have, however, slammed the country's media for creating a moral panic and deliberately conflating gay sex with pedophilia.

Commenting on the reports, Adebisi Alimi, told Gay Star News: 'In the past few days I have seen an increase in the number of reported cases of homosexuality in the Nigerian media, leading to police arrest and/or criminal charges.

'However something that is baffling is the use of the word "boy"; The media kept using the "noun" over and over again as the benchmark for the age of the victim and thereby creating an atmosphere of "pedophilia" epidemic through the act of homosexual sex.

'Yet in all cases the real age of the "boy" is not disclosed, so we do not know if the person is above the age of consent.

'The use of the word "boy" is designed to incite hatred, anger and resentment, a subtle anti-gay propaganda of the press to cause more harm to an already vulnerable population. [...]

➤ [This Day, Nigeria: Court Remands Three for Alleged Homosexual Practices, 3 April 2013](#)

[...] A Mararaba Upper Area Court in Nasarawa State Tuesday ordered three accused persons to be remanded in prison for the alleged unnatural offence of homosexuality.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported that the accused were Armstrong Ihua, 40, of Ikorodu, Lagos State; Collins Ejike, 30, of Lugbe, Abuja, and Pius Bamayi, 25, of Masaka, Nasarawa State.

They, however, pleaded not guilty to the charge. [...]

➤ [Erasing 76 Crimes, With Uganda arrests, at least 13 in jail for being gay, 3 January 2013](#)

[...] Arrests of two gay-rights workers this week in Uganda bring to at least 13 the number of people worldwide who are currently imprisoned on charges of violating laws that punish those who are born gay, lesbian or bisexual. In addition, at least 14 other people are awaiting trial for homosexuality. [...]

At present, the lists are dominated by Cameroon (8 in prison and 12 free while awaiting trial), with Nigeria and Uganda a distant second (2 in prison in each country). Those countries have a similar combination of repressive laws and active news media. [...]

> NIGERIA

Nigerian law provides for sentences of up to 14 years for homosexual activity. In parts of northern Nigeria where sharia law applies, the death penalty can be applied for same-sex intercourse.

3 and 4. Ifeanyi Chukwu Agah and Rabiun Benedict Yusuf

Two years in prison. Sentenced March 21, 2012.

Ifeanyi Chukwu Agah and Rabiun Benedict Yusuf were convicted of same-sex intercourse after police said Rabiun refused to pay Ifeanyi for his services as a prostitute. Rabiun asked for mercy on the grounds that he was married with six children, but the court rejected his plea. [...]

For further background information, the following are useful sources which pre-date 2013:

➤ [Country of Origin Research and Information \(CORI\), CORI Thematic Report, Nigeria: Gender and Age, December 2012](#)

➤ [Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Nigeria: Treatment of sexual minorities, including legislation, state protection, and support services; the safety of sexual minorities living in Lagos and Abuja \(2010-January 2012\), 3 February 2012](#)

➤ [International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, Nowhere to Turn: Blackmail and Extortion of LGBT People in Sub-Saharan Africa, February 2011](#)

Societal treatment of LGBTI community

➤ [Gay Star News, Bishop tells Nigeria's president: Ban gay marriage before the world ends, 15 October 2013](#)

[...] An Anglican bishop in Nigeria has appealed to President Goodluck Jonathan to sign the 'Jail all the Gays Bill' before gay marriage makes the world end. [...] Now the Anglican Bishop of Asaba, Justus Mokekwu, has urged him to assent to the bill, saying same-sex marriage was not a human right but a curse.

Nigerian newspaper Premium Times reports him as saying world powers are bringing the prophesy of the fall of Babylon from the Bible into being by backing lesbian and gay marriage equality. [...]

➤ [Pink News, Poll: 92% of Nigerians support proposed bill to criminalise same-sex marriage, 20 June 2013](#)

[...] A new poll has found that 92% of Nigerians are in support of a proposed bill to make same-sex marriages punishable with 14 year prison sentences.

Back in May, a bill to further criminalise same-sex marriages in Nigeria with prison terms of up to 14 years was passed by lawmakers in the country's Parliament. [...]

The poll was conducted by NOI Polls Limited, which works in partnership with the US-based Gallup Polling, and was conducted between 4 and 6 June.

The reason for the support was mainly moral and religious, the poll revealed.

The results of the poll revealed that most respondents were of the opinion that the proposed bill was not an infringement on the human rights of LGBT people, because "homosexuality is not in the Nigerian culture".

Rashidi Williams, the Director of Nigeria's Queer Alliance Rights Group told Vanguard: "The Bill takes away the fundamental rights accorded Nigerians under the constitution. This is really, not a pressing national issue."

The poll was tailored with multiple questions, in order to ascertain the level of awareness the respondents had of the legislation, before asking whether they think it is an infringement on the human rights of LGBT people.

It then asked to what extent the respondent supported or opposed the bill, and to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the claim that homosexuality is "not part of the culture of Nigerians".

69% of respondents were aware of the legislative vote to ban same-sex marriage, and 85% said they felt strongly that being gay was not part of the country's culture.

The poll was conducted in such a way, in order to feed into a more general debate around the acceptance of homosexuals in Nigeria. [...]

➤ [International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia \(IDAHO\), Nigeria IDAHO Report 2013, 24 May 2013](#)

[...] From the Conference Hall of the ICARH in the Nigerian Capital, Abuja, on May 17, 2013 the following statement was made by Ifeanyi Orazulike, Executive director of the International Centre for Advocacy on Rights to Health and Co-Chair of the Sexual Minorities Against AIDS in Nigeria (SMAAN): "STOP HOMOPHOBIA: Ending Homophobic Violence and Inhuman Degrading Treatment on the Basis of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Nigeria."

Background information

As we all know that homophobia is promoted in Nigeria by policy makers by the virtue of legislation to further criminalize the Nigerian citizens on the ground of their sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as organizations, religious extremists and individual through homophobic campaigns and hate speeches. Homophobia has been a justification for many human rights violations in Nigeria. Consequently, homophobic violence happens with impunity since perpetrators of homophobic violence are not brought to book.

[...] From our evidence based programs over the past twelve years, we are able to identify homophobia as a major setback in the addressing the health challenges and human rights needs of LGBTI population in Nigeria despite the constitutional provisions of protection of all persons from discrimination as enshrined in Chapter 4, Section 42 of the Nigerian constitution. Many Nigerian and non-Nigerian citizens had suffered acute human rights violations on the ground of suspected or actual sexual orientation due to homophobia. Specifically, in the last one year, on the list of documented human rights violated targeted at LGBTI persons in Nigeria alone are arbitrary arrest, torture in custody, curative rape, illegal detention (private cells), forced dismissal from employment, forced disappearance, community violence, blackmail, extortion and murder of persons on the basis of their perceived or real sexual orientation.

Despite this dilemma, majority of LGBTI persons prefers not to report human rights violations they experience due to the policy environment. Due to the situations of extreme homophobia, LGBTI persons are driven underground, hence decreasing the number of sexual minority persons willing to come out and access human rights and healthcare services geared towards addressing their social developmental needs.

A notable fact is the preliminary findings of the IBBSS that reflects an increase in the national HIV prevalence among MSM from 13.5% to 17.1% between 2007 and 2010 respectively, while the national HIV prevalence has dropped from about 5.8% to 4.4% in the same period. [...]

While many countries around the world progresses in terms of socio-cultural and economic advancement, Nigeria suffers from the aftermath of homophobia such as violence involving loss of lives and property. Although many transgender and intersex people are not homosexual, recently reports reflects a community lynching of an intersex person in Warri, Delta state, among other inhuman degrading treatment targeted at gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. [...]

➤ [Gay Star News, Nigeria: Man stabbed to death over allegedly gay sex, 4 May 2013](#)

[...] Nigeria's media has sensationally reported the murder of Adindu Ohamara, allegedly a gay banker, who was stabbed to death by a man he picked up in Akoka, Lagos State.

Ohamara returned home with a man he picked who allegedly stabbed him at midnight and left his flat.

The victim lived in a three-bedroom flat with his elder sister, Flora and a lodger.

According to daily Punch Metro, Ohamara was forced into marriage due to pressure from his family.

In their reports, Nigerian media stressed the victim was gay and according to local LGBT activists seem to have almost confused the crime with the banker's presumed sexuality.

The press reported that 'local resident' said: 'A few weeks ago, Ohamara did his wedding introduction and shortly after that, one man came to the compound to fight him.

'There was a lot of noise over the issue and even neighbors had to come to settle the matter.

'The unidentified man complained that he had been jilted and threatened to deal with Ohamara before he left in anger', reported to be gay, by the local press.

Police, however, arrested Ohamara's sister and lodger and allegedly demanded N350,000 from each of the detained persons before they could be released.

The flat's landlord protested to the local police and demanded that they would be freed immediately.

When Punch Metro contacted the spokesperson for the state police, he confirmed the murder case and the detention of the two but said he was unaware of a bail fee or if Ohamara was gay.

'Investigations are ongoing and we will get to the bottom of it', he said.

Adebisi Alimi, a Nigerian LGBT rights advocate told Gay Star News: 'My condolence to the family of this young man.

One would expect the Nigerian press to address the issue of the homicide instead of hyping the issue of the victim's presumed sexuality.

Anyone can commit a crime and one's sexuality does not make one more prone to killing someone.

'This sensationalism disrespects the grieving family and shows how low the Nigerian media has stooped in their desire to break news.

'I hope that media owners and editors will take time to train their reporters on diversity so they could report the news without confusing sexuality with a crime.'

In the last few months, Nigerian media has been running sensationalist anti-gay crime stories. [...]

➤ [U.S. Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2012: Nigeria, 19 April 2013](#)

[...] Societal Abuses, Discrimination, and Acts of Violence Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

[...] In November 2011 the Senate passed the Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Bill, 2011, which would prohibit participating in or witnessing same-sex marriage ceremonies, criminalize public displays of affection between same-sex couples, and criminalize LGBT organizations. [...] LGBT activists claimed an increased level of hostility towards those accused of same-sex activities since the bill's introduction. [...]

Other Societal Violence or Discrimination

There was widespread societal discrimination against persons with HIV/AIDS. The public considered the disease a result of immoral behavior and a punishment for homosexual activity. Persons with HIV/AIDS often lost their jobs or were denied health-care services. Authorities and NGOs sought to reduce the stigma and change perceptions through public education campaigns. [...]

➤ [Gay Star News, Homosexuality is 'demonic' says renowned Nigeria pastor, 13 March 2013](#)

[...] A famous Nigerian pastor has compared homosexuality to bestiality and incest saying it was 'demonic' and 'disfigures' God's glory.

The pastor, Wole Oladiyun, of Christ LivingSpring Apostolic Ministry (CLAM), also equated gay sex with prostitution, adultery and fornication and said oral sex dishonours people, 'unhygienic and dirty'. [...]

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For further background information, the following are useful sources which pre-date 2013:

- [Country of Origin Research and Information \(CORI\), CORI Thematic Report, Nigeria: Gender and Age, December 2012](#)
- [Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Nigeria: Treatment of sexual minorities, including legislation, state protection, and support services; the safety of sexual minorities living in Lagos and Abuja \(2010-January 2012\), 3 February 2012](#)
- [International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, Nowhere to Turn: Blackmail and Extortion of LGBT People in Sub-Saharan Africa, February 2011](#)

3.24 Prison conditions

The conclusion for this section states:

Excerpt from the December 2013 Nigeria OGN

3.24.18 Conclusion Prison conditions in Nigeria are harsh and life threatening and taking into account the levels of overcrowding and lack of basic facilities have the potential to reach the Article 3 threshold in individual cases. The individual factors of each case should be carefully considered to determine whether the person is at real risk of detention and whether detention will cause a particular individual in his or her particular circumstances to suffer treatment contrary to Article 3, relevant factors being the reasons for detention, the likely length of detention, the likely type of detention facility, and the individual's gender, age and state of health. Where in an individual case treatment does reach the Article 3 threshold a grant of Humanitarian Protection will be appropriate.

The conclusion only specifically mentions overcrowding and a lack of basic facilities as among those issues besetting detention facilities in Nigeria. This is despite COI being included in the OGN in the *Treatment* section which details the prevalence of disease and chronic shortages of medical supplies causing deaths from treatable illnesses (paragraph 3.24.8); insufficient food (paragraphs 3.24.3 and 3.24.10); denial of medical treatment and food for punishment or extortion (paragraph 3.24.10); rape (paragraph 3.24.3); and beatings, torture, and extrajudicial killings in unofficial military detention facilities (paragraph 3.24.4).

This section of the OGN heavily relies on the 2012 U.S. Department of State Human Rights report. However, whilst including most of the information contained in section 1c on 'Prison and Detention Center Conditions', the OGN fails to include any information from section 1c 'Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment' and only brief reference is made to the practice of torture being committed in unofficial military prisons (at paragraph 3.24.4). The 2012 U.S. Department of State Human Rights report notes with specific regards to torture in detention facilities that:

➤ [U.S. Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011, 24 May 2012](#)

[...] a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

[...] During the year Joint Task Forces (JTFs), composed of elements of the military, police, and other security services, conducted raids on militant groups and criminal suspects in Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Kano, Kaduna, Kogi, Niger, Plateau, Sokoto, and Yobe states, resulting in numerous deaths and injuries to alleged criminals, militants, and civilians. According to credible eyewitness accounts, JTF members committed illegal killings during attempts to apprehend members of the extremist group Boko Haram in several states, including Borno, Kano, Kaduna, and Yobe states and surrounding areas. Local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international human rights groups, and political and traditional leaders from the affected states accused the security services of indiscriminate and extrajudicial killings, illegal detention, inhumane treatment of detainees, and torture during the year. [...]

Reports also surfaced during the year that the JTF based in Maiduguri illegally detained and killed suspected members of Boko Haram in the Giwa barracks in Borno State. Former detainees accused security forces of torture and mistreatment, which in some cases led to the death of detainees. Authorities publicly denied the claims, describing them as inaccurate or unbalanced.

[...] c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Although the constitution and law prohibit such practices and provide for punishment of such abuses, torture is not criminalized, and security service personnel, including police, military, and State Security Service (SSS) officers, regularly tortured, beat, and abused demonstrators, criminal suspects, detainees, and convicted prisoners. Police mistreated civilians to extort money. The law prohibits the

introduction into trials of evidence and confessions obtained through torture; however, police often used torture to extract confessions. [...]

According to credible reports, during the year security forces committed rape and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls with impunity. In 2010 the Open Society Justice Initiative reported that rape was “a routine but unspoken aspect of policing” and was regarded by police as “one of the fringe benefits attached to night patrol.” This report on corruption within the police force highlighted the rape of arrested prostitutes by police. The report described police officers raping women who could not pay 1,000 naira (\$6.40) for their release. Police allegedly raped women who came to report crimes at police stations. The report also claimed officers, both male and female, sodomized women with bottles and metal pipes. [...]

No other sources documenting the prevalence of torture in detention facilities in Nigeria are included, nor is the practice of torture mentioned in the conclusion. Illustrative sources documenting torture in detention facilities from 2013 have been presented below.

Paragraph 3.24.12 of the OGN mentions the existence of pre-trial detention facilities, but does not address the authorities’ use of lengthy pre-trial detention, despite this also being addressed in the same 2012 U.S. Department of State report cited heavily in this section of the OGN:

➤ [U.S. Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2012: Nigeria, 19 April 2013](#)

[...] d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

[...] Pretrial Detention: Lengthy pretrial detention remained a serious problem, and human rights groups reported detainees awaiting trial constituted 72 percent of the prison population, with some awaiting trial more than 10 years. At year’s end 36,934 pretrial detainees were held in the country’s prisons, out of a total of 50,920 prisoners. The shortage of trial judges, serious trial backlogs, endemic corruption, and undue political influence continued to hamper the judicial system. Multiple adjournments in some cases resulted in serious delays. Many detainees did not have trials because police had insufficient vehicles to transport them to court on their trial dates.

The NHRC [National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria] reported some detainees were held because authorities had lost their case files. Some state governments released inmates who were already detained for longer than the potential maximum sentences they would have received if found guilty. Although detainees had the right to submit complaints to the NHRC, the commission had yet to act on any complaint. Detainees could try to complain to the courts but often found this approach impossible. Even detainees with legal representation often waited years to gain access to the courts. [...]

Additional illustrative sources from 2013 on this issue have also been presented below.

Excerpt from the December 2013 Nigeria OGN

3.24.17 The last known executions in Nigeria were carried out in 2006, when at least seven men were hanged in Kano state in northern Nigeria. According to government information, 56 death sentences were imposed in 2012.

The above excerpt is not consistent with COI available at the time of publication of the OGN which documents that Nigeria executed four death row prisoners in June 2013:

➤ [Amnesty International, Nigeria: Authorities in Nigeria must not carry out any further executions of death row prisoners, 28 August 2013](#)

[...] Amnesty International and nine Nigerian civil society organisations call on authorities in Nigeria to immediately halt all plans to execute further death row inmates in the country, and to return to a moratorium on executions, with a view of abolishing the death penalty. The organisations are deeply concerned that Thankgod Ebhos, who was nearly executed on 24 June 2013 when four other men were

hanged at Benin City Prison in Edo state, is still at risk after unconfirmed reports that the authorities in Edo state are planning to request a court to change the method of his execution from firing squad to hanging. The Edo state government gave a directive to Benin prison to transfer him to Kaduna state, where he was originally sentenced to death. The organisations condemn the execution of Chima Ejiofor, Daniel Nsofor, Osarenmwinda Aiguokhan and Richard Igagu on 24 June 2013 without regard for due process and without giving prior notice to their families or lawyers. In addition, and also contrary to international standards on the use of the death penalty, the bodies of the four inmates executed have not been returned to the families for burial, or the location of their graves made known.

According to information received by the organisations, prison officers fired tear gas into the cells of the death row inmates on 24 June because those to be executed were allegedly refusing to leave their cells. The small cells for death row inmates contained approximately six people. Deploying tear gas in enclosed areas can constitute a human rights violation. High levels of exposure to chemical irritants in buildings can be lethal or cause serious injuries. It is especially dangerous for those who have pre-existing or compromised health conditions. There were also reports that the inmates executed were beaten by the prison officers before they were executed, and that no medical care was given. The prison authorities in Benin City have neither confirmed nor denied these allegations. [...]

It is considered that given the prevalence of disease and chronic shortages of medical supplies causing deaths from treatable illnesses, insufficient food, denial of medical treatment and food for punishment or extortion, rape and beatings, torture, and extrajudicial killings in unofficial military detention facilities as is documented in the OGN, together with the prevalence of torture, use of lengthy pre-trial detention, deaths in detention due to starvation, beatings and suffocation, the resumption of imposing the death penalty after fair trials, and ongoing poor detention facilities as documented in the COI presented below, that detention conditions not only have the potential, but are likely to reach the Article 3 threshold in most cases.

Non-exhaustive, illustrative COI from 2013 is presented on:

- [Torture in detention facilities](#)
- [Lengthy pre-trial detention](#)
- [Deaths in detention](#)
- [Poor detention facilities](#)

Torture in detention facilities

➤ [Human Rights Watch, Nigeria: Boko Haram Abducts Women, Recruits Children, 29 November 2013](#)

[...] Mass Arrests, Detention, and Disappearances by Security Forces in Maiduguri

Former detainees, family members of detainees, human rights advocates, and militia leaders described the detention in Maiduguri of hundreds of men in mass arrests by security forces; the numbers of detentions were particularly high in May and June 2013.

Scores, perhaps hundreds, of these men and boys remain unaccounted for. Witnesses and former detainees credibly assert that detainees died in custody from the appalling detention conditions or were executed by the security services within the 21 Armored Brigade, popularly known as Giwa Barracks. Both the detentions and deaths in custody appear to have slowed since July. [...]

A man who was detained at Giwa Barracks for six months with 16 other men and boys from his neighborhood, ranging in age from 17 - 60, said he was the only one from the group to survive. Hundreds of his cellmates died at Giwa, the man said:

After reaching Giwa, many of us were chained to the columns – four of us on each one – where I remained for 20 hours while they beat us; an old man chained alongside me died right there, his head hanging limp. I watched as six of my neighbors died while being beaten with sticks and iron rods by soldiers the very first day we got to Giwa Barracks – two of them were brothers. They fell down and never got up again.

Of those in my group, the other 10 died from starvation and illness in the cell, where we were detained with over 1,000 other men... They died one by one like so many others, of illness, of sickness like dysentery or cholera, of hunger... sometimes up to 25 would be taken out of the cell dead. In one day I saw others being dragged off for interrogation, but they never returned.

On several occasions I heard the officers saying, “Just finish him,” and then a shot would ring out. Once I saw the major take out a Beretta [firearm] and shoot a detainee... only they will know what to say to Allah on the Day of Judgment.

Several witnesses described an underground bunker where men thought to be active members of Boko Haram were detained and where the conditions were even worse. Two witnesses described seeing corpses on several occasions brought up from the cellar and loaded onto an ambulance.

The former detainees and witnesses described gross overcrowding, with hundreds of men jammed into a cell: “We were packed so tightly; if you dared stand up, there was no way you’d find the room to sit down again,” one former detainee recalled. The detainees at times urinated, defecated, and vomited on themselves. One detainee said he bathed only twice in six months.

Witnesses attributed the majority of deaths in detention to dehydration and illness, primarily dysentery. They said the pace of deaths increased in the hot months and rainy season. One detainee claimed to have seen up to 20 or 25 dead being taken out per day. An 18-year-old former detainee who was arrested in his home with a friend, also 18 years old, said:

I was handcuffed to my friend for 10 months and had only one free hand to quickly use the toilet and get our meal, which is served directly unto our palms within the five minutes we were opened up in the mornings and evenings [to use the bathroom and get meals]. My friend became gravely ill and weak so our cuff was removed, but he received no treatment or medication except painkillers once in a while. When we were eventually released after two years through the intervention of a benefactor, my friend could no longer hear, speak, or walk... He is still gravely ill now. [...]

➤ [IRIN, Detainee abuses "monumental" in northern Nigeria, 15 November 2013](#)

[...] According to rights group Amnesty International (AI), in the first six months of 2013, at least 950 people in the northeastern cities of Maiduguri, in Borno State, and Damaturu, in Yobe State, died in military custody. Most of the alleged victims were suspected members of BH, but they were largely held without being charged or tried. [...]

According to doctors in Maiduguri, detainees' families and the AI report, detainees died from gunshot wounds, torture, dehydration, malnutrition or suffocation (many were held in overcrowded cells with no windows). Some detainees were shot in the leg and left to bleed to death, according to AI. Others were killed outright.

➤ [Human Rights Watch, Nigeria: UPR Submission March 2013, 17 October 2013](#)

[...] II. Human Rights Issues

[...] C. Security Force Abuses

During its 2009 UPR, Nigeria accepted to take “all practical measures” to end “extrajudicial executions” and “step up its measures to halt torture.” Since then, however, government security forces have been implicated in numerous extrajudicial killings, torture, and other serious human rights abuses. [...]

The Nigeria Police Force continues to be implicated in numerous human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests, torture, extrajudicial killings, and other extortion-related abuses. There are many documented cases where the police extort money from victims of crimes to investigate the matter and solicit bribes from suspects to drop investigations. Police funds have been embezzled or mismanaged by senior police officials, who also often demand monetary “returns” from their subordinates from money extorted from the public. Despite promising public statements by the inspector general of police,

Mohammed Abubakar, corruption and abuse remain widespread in the police force, and those responsible are rarely brought to justice. [...]

- [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Summary prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 \(b\) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, 31 July 2013](#)

[...] 3. NHRC [National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria] stated that the police experienced challenges in its work in terms of quality and respect for human rights which was evident from the allegations of torture, extrajudicial killings and shoddy investigations, coupled with obsolete laws and weak oversight. [...] 39. HRW [Human Rights Watch] stated that at the Review, Nigeria accepted to take all practical measures to end extrajudicial executions and to halt torture. Since then, however, government security forces have been implicated in numerous extrajudicial killings, torture and other serious human rights abuses. CHRI [Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, New Delhi, India] stated that although Nigeria accepted recommendations on police accountability and reform, there were alleged cases of disappearances of persons from police custody, extrajudicial killings and torture. Joint Submission 14 (JS 14) [UPR Coalition Southeast Nigeria comprising of: Better Community Life Initiative, Owerri; National Human Rights Commission; Legal Redress and Justice Centre; Foundation for Environmental Rights and Development; Ikeoha Foundation; Int'l Federation of Women Lawyers, FIDA Anambra; Int'l Federation of Women Lawyers, FIDA Ebonyi; Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Centre, Abakaliki; and Civil Resource Development and Documentation Centre, Enugu (Joint Submission 14)] stated suspects were tortured to obtain confessions. [...]

41. JS 11 [Prisoners' Rehabilitation and Welfare Action and Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (Joint Submission 11)] raised as issues of concern the systematic torture in police and other centres of detention; inadequate documentation and tracking of all tortured persons upon reception in prison; the lack of an institutionalised mechanism for compulsory autopsy of all deaths in custody; the lack of a comprehensive database of all places of detention, their locations, addresses and the total number of detainees; inadequate monitoring and oversight of all detention facilities; the torture and inhumane treatment of persons who were mentally disabled within the criminal justice delivery system; the lack of provision of adequate rehabilitation services torture victims; and the lack of reporting and documentation of all cases of torture and extrajudicial killings. [...]

- [Amnesty International, Amnesty International Annual Report 2013 - Nigeria, 23 May 2013](#)

[...] Torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of criminal suspects and detainees, perpetrated by the security forces, remained widespread.

On 9 January, Alexander Nworgu was arrested in Owerri, Imo State, and taken to the police anti-kidnapping unit in Rivers State. He claims that, while in custody, he was regularly beaten with a machete and suspended from the ceiling by his feet every other day. After spending more than a month in police detention he was remanded in prison on 15 February before eventually being released on bail on 6 July. The charges against him were changed to theft while he was in police detention. [...]

- [Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2013 - Nigeria, 9 May 2013](#)

[...] In addition to extrajudicial killings of criminal suspects and prisoners, torture and general ill-treatment of detainees are widespread in Nigeria, and such abuses are reportedly used to force confessions and extort bribes. Corrupt officers are often supported by a chain of command that encourages and institutionalizes graft. [...]

Lengthy pre-trial detention

- [Amnesty International, Nigeria: Extension of state of emergency must not lead to more human rights Violations, 8 December 2013](#)

[...] In October 2013, Amnesty International revealed that over 950 people reportedly died in detention facilities run by the Joint Task Force (JTF) in the first six months of 2013 alone. Others have simply disappeared. Amnesty International has also received information that dead bodies in military vehicles are delivered on a daily basis at the respective hospital mortuaries in Borno and Yobe states.

Hundreds more are denied access to lawyers and families and are not being charged with any crimes or brought before a court. Many people have spent more than a year in military detention without being tried or even charged with any crimes. [...]

- [Written statement* submitted by Amnesty International, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status to the UN Human Rights Council, 3 September 2013](#)
[...] Nigeria [...] Many of the over 1,000 people under sentence of death in Nigeria have been sentenced following blatantly unfair trials, some after spending more than a decade in prison awaiting trial, and for non- lethal crimes. [...]
- [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Summary prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 \(b\) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, 31 July 2013](#)
[...] 5. NHRC [National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria] stated that administration of justice was challenged by the continued use of outdated legislation, allegations of corruption, poor access to justice and long delays in concluding existing litigations. In addition, the absence of sentencing guidelines resulted in wide disparity or variations in sentences, delays in trials lead to lengthy pre-trial detentions, and the use of outdated court procedures. [...]
61. JS 11 [Prisoners' Rehabilitation and Welfare Action and Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (Joint Submission 11)] stated that the arrest and detention practices of the police and the absence of institutional control over these practices were central to the pattern of abuse and impunity. One such practice is the "holding charge" which provides for persons to be remanded in custody without minimal judicial investigation into the charges and without any opportunity for challenging those charges. Since no court is seized of the matter, the police have the unfettered ability to detain such persons indefinitely.
62. STP [Society for Threatened People, Göttingen, Germany] stated that tens of thousands of arrested suspects were waiting for the completion of their trials for years, in congested prisons, under inhuman conditions, for their trials. [...]
- [Amnesty International, Amnesty International Annual Report 2013 - Nigeria, 23 May 2013](#)
[...] Justice system
Widespread corruption and disregard for due process and the rule of law continued to blight Nigeria's criminal justice system. Many people were arbitrarily arrested and detained for months without charge. Police continued to ask people to pay money for their release from detention. Many detainees were kept on remand in prison for lengthy periods and in harsh conditions. Court processes remained slow and largely distrusted. According to the Executive Secretary of the NHRC, over 70% of people in detention were awaiting either trial or sentencing. Court orders were often ignored by police and security forces. On 30 April, Patrick Okoroafor was released from prison after 17 years. He had been unfairly sentenced to death for robbery, at the age of 14, after an unfair trial. [...]
- [Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2013 - Nigeria, 9 May 2013](#)
[...] Ordinary defendants frequently lack legal representation and are often ill-informed about court procedures and their rights.
[...] Pretrial detainees, many of whom are held for several years, account for about 70 percent of the country's inmates, and few have access to a lawyer. [...]
- [Open Society Justice Initiative, Fact Sheet: Improving Pretrial Justice in Nigeria, February 2013](#)
 - Over 70% of the prison population are detainees who are awaiting trial.
 - Capital offenders often spend over 5 years in pretrial detention.
 - Over 20% of the prison population has been awaiting trial for over a year.
 - The current imprisonment rate is relatively low, but steadily increasing.Detainees in Nigeria face an array of obstacles as they attempt to navigate their way through the criminal justice system. Many spend months or even years in detention before they appear in court, and many cases get lost in the system. A number of factors contribute to the serious state of pretrial justice:

- suspects are often arrested by the police before the start of an investigation and the police often have little or no information linking them to a specific crime;
- magistrates do not have the authority to hear capital cases such as armed robbery or murder, but can remand suspects in custody typically without a fixed court date;
- most suspects do not have access to legal representation. In 2005, 75 % of detainees in pretrial custody did not have access to a lawyer.

The Duty Solicitor Model

In 2005 the Police Duty Solicitor Scheme (PDSS) launched a project to provide basic legal assistance to suspects at police stations and in prisons. The project works with duty solicitors; recent law graduates who work under the supervision of a lawyer from the Legal Aid Council. The PDSS has been its success in 'fast tracking' cases towards bail hearings and reducing the time spent in police custody. In the six participating states suspects now spend an average of 24-36 hours in police custody – a significant reduction compared with figures of up to 6 months in previous years and in line with constitutional provisions and international standards. [...]

Deaths in detention

➤ [IRIN, Detainee abuses "monumental" in northern Nigeria, 15 November 2013](#)

[...] According to rights group Amnesty International (AI), in the first six months of 2013, at least 950 people in the northeastern cities of Maiduguri, in Borno State, and Damaturu, in Yobe State, died in military custody. Most of the alleged victims were suspected members of BH, but they were largely held without being charged or tried.

Released detainees, families of the missing and a member of the JTF, who asked to remain anonymous, told IRIN that AI's 950 figure was just a fraction of the real death toll. They claimed the deaths reached into the thousands.

The AI report "is only a scratch on the surface," said the JTF member in Maiduguri. "The situation is deeper and more horrendous than that. What happens is carnage of monumental proportions. The deaths run into several thousands in the period AI is talking about," he told IRIN.

According to doctors in Maiduguri, detainees' families and the AI report, detainees died from gunshot wounds, torture, dehydration, malnutrition or suffocation (many were held in overcrowded cells with no windows). Some detainees were shot in the leg and left to bleed to death, according to AI. Others were killed outright.

AI called on human rights monitors and lawyers to be allowed access to JTF detention facilities, but this has not yet been granted. It also asked for an impartial, transparent investigation into the killings. Senior defence officials in the capital, Abuja, told AI in July that the Chief of Defence had set up a committee to investigate the allegations of detainee ill-treatment, but no further details were shared. [...]

Amnesty International did not document cases of poisoning at detention centres, but a medical source at Sani Abacha Specialist Hospital in Damaturu said that in August of this year, 27 bodies were brought to the hospital from the Guantanamo detention centre, and "all had white foam in their mouths which was a clear case of oral poisoning. But the issue was hushed out of fear for the safety of medical staff."

At Guantanamo, some suspects are thrown into large holes dug into the ground, "where there is no protection from the scorching heat, rain or cold, and with their hands bound behind their back. Between 30 and 50 men are put in each hole, and allowed to die," the military source told IRIN.

Mass graves

Soldiers use euphemisms such as "delete him" and "take him to the abattoir", said the military source. The dead are usually buried in the camps, but sometimes they are packed into open trucks and dumped at the state-run Sani Abacha specialist hospital in Damaturu, sources said.

A doctor at the hospital told IRIN, "The JTF regularly brings in dead bodies from Guantanamo and the Guardroom. They dump them outside the morgue, and relations of detainees come to identify them, and those who are identified are taken away for burial while the remaining are given a mass burial."

He said, "Sometimes they bring in as many as 40 bodies, with bullet wounds in most cases. We have received no less than 2,500 bodies in the past six months." [...]

➤ [Amnesty International, Nigeria: Authorities must investigate deaths of Boko Haram suspects in military custody, 16 October 2013](#)

[...] Hundreds of people may have died in detention facilities run by the Joint Task Force (JTF) in 2013. Amnesty International is calling on the Nigerian authorities to conduct a thorough, impartial and transparent investigation into the deaths, as a matter of urgency. Amnesty International received credible information from a senior officer in the Nigerian Army that over 950 people died in detention facilities run by the Joint Task Force in the first six months of 2013 alone. A large proportion of these people are believed to have died in Giwa military barracks in Maiduguri, Borno state and Sector Alpha, commonly referred to as 'Guantanamo' and Presidential Lodge (known as 'Guardroom') in Damaturu, Yobe state - facilities used by the JTF to detain people suspected of being members of or associated with Boko Haram.

According to former detainees interviewed by Amnesty International, people died on an almost daily basis in Giwa barracks as well as Sector Alpha detention centres, from suffocation or other injuries due to overcrowding and starvation. Some suffered serious injuries due to severe beating and eventually died in detention due to lack of medical attention and treatment.

Others were reportedly shot in the leg during interrogation, provided no medical care and left to bleed to death. 18 former detainees of Giwa barracks and Sector Alpha interviewed by Amnesty International also said they had witnessed soldiers taking detainees from their cells and heard them threatening to shoot the detainees. The detainees were never returned to their cells. In some cases, they may have been extra-judicially executed. [...]

- [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Summary prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 \(b\) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, 31 July 2013](#)

[...] 63. JS 9 [The Niger Delta UPR Coalition comprised of: Kebekache Women Development and Resource Centre, Reforms Support Group, Save Earth Nigeria (SEN), Living Earth Nigeria Foundation (LENF), Centre for the Protection of Ogbogolo People (CENPOP), Stakeholder Democracy Network (SDN), NIDREF, Community Environment and Development Network (CEDEN), Lokiaka Community Development Centre (LCDC), Host Communities Network (HOCON), Centre for Environment, Human Rights and Development (CEHRD), Peoples' Right to Life Foundation (PERLDEF), Media for Good Governance and Accountability, Greenleaf Foundation The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), Council for the Liberation of Ikwere People (COLIP) and Gender and Development Action (GADA) (Joint Submission 9);] stated that Nigeria has not taken any steps to bring the alleged perpetrators of extrajudicial killings to justice, pursuant to recommendations in paragraphs 103.14, 103.22 and 103.23 of the Report.

64. AI stated that killings by police and deaths in police custody were rarely adequately investigated and there was often no action to hold police officers to account. [...]

Poor detention facilities

- [IRIN, Detainee abuses "monumental" in northern Nigeria, 15 November 2013](#)

[...] Three of the worst-offending detention centres, according to AI, are: Giwa, a former military barracks in Maiduguri; Sector Alpha in Damaturu, which is often called "Guantanamo"; and Presidential Lodge, also in Damaturu, which is commonly called "Guardroom".

One ex-detainee, a fish-trader from Maiduguri's Muna Garage neighbourhood, was rounded up in a military sweep in November 2012, following a BH attack on a nearby military target. He was held in Giwa until June 2013, he told IRIN.

"People are kept like animals, in filthy and overcrowded rooms with neither ventilation nor light. Suspects are given very little food or water. Many become sick from hunger, torture or infection," he said.

"The sick are just taken out of the cell to a place soldiers refer to as the 'abattoir', where they are shot dead. We would just hear gunshots every time sick suspects were taken out, and they never returned."

He continued: "Once a cell is congested, the inmates will be given a poisoned meal to clear it. When the bodies begin to decompose, they call in BOSEPA [Borno State Environmental Protection Agency] sanitation trucks to pack them out of the barracks." [...]

- [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Summary prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 \(b\) of the annex to Human](#)

[Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, 31 July 2013](#)

[...] 4. National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria (NHRC) stated that there was overcrowding in city-based prisons, coupled with poor nutrition, inadequate clothing for inmates, poor sanitation, poor record keeping and derelict physical structures. [...]

56. CHRI [Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, New Delhi, India] stated that there were overcrowding, poor sanitation, lack of food and essential medical supplies in prisons. [...]

➤ [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Summary prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 \(b\) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, 31 July 2013](#)

[...] 5. NHRC [National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria] stated that administration of justice was challenged by the continued use of outdated legislation, allegations of corruption, poor access to justice and long delays in concluding existing litigations. In addition, the absence of sentencing guidelines resulted in wide disparity or variations in sentences, delays in trials lead to lengthy pre-trial detentions, and the use of outdated court procedures. [...]

➤ [Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2013 - Nigeria, 9 May 2013](#)

[...] Children and the mentally disabled are often held with the general prison population. Prison facilities are rife with disease, as they commonly lack water, adequate sewage facilities, and medical services. [...]

2.2 Actors of protection

The conclusion for this section states:

Excerpt from the December 2013 Nigeria OGN

2.2.20 Conclusion If the applicant's fear is of ill-treatment/persecution by the state authorities, or by agents acting on behalf of the state, then state protection will not be available. Consideration does need to be given as to whether the fear is based on a localised, random or national threat and **whether redress might be available through the courts;** though the judiciary is subject to political interference.

2.2.21 If the ill-treatment/persecution is at the hands of non-state agents, then the provision of state protection may be accessible. Caseworkers must refer to the most up to date country information to ascertain whether in the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision is made, effective protection is available for an individual applicant, taking full account of their personal circumstances.

With regards to the availability of effective protection for persons fearing state agents, the first highlighted sentence of the conclusion indicates that "redress might be available through the courts". Even if this were the case in practice, the existence of redress mechanisms is not a form of durable, effective protection. Moreover COI included in the OGN indicates that the judiciary is not only subject to political interference, but also corruption (paragraph 2.2.17, 2.2.18, 2.2.19) and is slow and overburdened (paragraphs 2.2.17, 2.2.18 and 2.2.19) further undermining the ability to seek protection from the courts.

The OGN asserts that the provision of state protection may be accessible, despite identifying a number of issues which seriously compromise the ability of the authorities to provide effective protection: corruption, including extortion and bribes to initiate investigations and to drop cases (paragraphs 2.2.8, 2.2.9, 2.2.11, 2.2.12 and 2.2.19); security forces committing human rights abuses (paragraphs 2.2.5, 2.2.8, 2.2.9, 2.2.10 and 2.2.19); impunity for violations (paragraphs 2.2.5, 2.2.10, 2.2.12, 2.2.13, 2.2.14 and 2.2.15); a lack of investigative resources (paragraphs 2.2.7 and 2.2.17) and a corrupt, slow and an overburdened judiciary (paragraphs 2.2.17, 2.2.18, and 2.2.19).

Non-exhaustive, illustrative COI from 2013 not included in the OGN further documents these issues, which it is considered indicates that effective protection is generally unlikely to be available:

- [Bribery and corruption \(especially to initiate investigations and to drop cases\)](#)
- [Human rights abuses](#)
- [Impunity for abuses](#)
- [Lack of investigative resources](#)
- [Corrupt, slow and overburdened judiciary](#)

For women's access to police protection, see in section 2.3 *Internal Relocation*: [Lack of effective protection by the Nigerian police force](#)

For information on torture, deaths in custody and the use of pre-trial detention see [3.24 Prison conditions](#).

Bribery and corruption (especially to initiate proceedings and to drop cases)

- [Human Rights Watch, "Leave Everything to God" : Accountability for Inter-Communal Violence in Plateau and Kaduna States, Nigeria, 12 December 2013](#)

[...]Summary

[...] This report details the major incidents of violence in Plateau and Kaduna states, in particular brutal massacres in 2010 and 2011, and documents how the Nigerian authorities responded to these mass killings. [...]

Many commentators described the failure of the Nigerian authorities to bring the perpetrators of violence to justice as one of the major drivers of the cycle of violence. “The law that is there is just on the books,” a Christian youth leader in Jos lamented. “If you are a victim of a crisis, you will become a perpetrator of the next crisis because there is no justice.”

This impunity is largely the result of an already broken criminal justice system, including systemic corruption in the Nigeria Police Force, that has been further rendered ineffectual by political pressure to protect the perpetrators of these crimes. In the absence of accountability and effective redress, communities that have suffered violence frequently take the law into their own hands and carry out revenge killings. [...]

The failure to conduct, or follow through with, criminal investigations reflects systemic problems in the police force, where police officers frequently demand that complainants pay them to investigate crimes or at times take bribes from criminal suspects to drop investigations. This system leaves victims of communal violence, who frequently have lost everything they own, not to mention their loved ones, at the mercy of an often unresponsive and ineffective police force. [...]

[...] IX. The Anatomy of Impunity

Dysfunction and Corruption in the Police

The failure to conduct or follow through with criminal investigations is a systemic problem within the police force. Human Rights Watch has documented how the police often will not open a criminal investigation without financial inducements from the complainant and will rarely follow through unless the complainant can meet the incessant demands to fund the cost of the investigation. Meanwhile, accused persons with financial resources can sometimes pay off the police to drop the case. Without financial resources or internal or external pressure on the police to follow through on an investigation, the case will rarely go forward.[521]

In communal violence cases, this problem is exacerbated by the fact that many of the victims are poor—inter-communal violence rarely occurs in the affluent neighborhoods in these states—and have often lost all their possessions in the violence. As a community leader from Kuru Karama, whose wife was killed, explained when asked why he had not gone back to the police to follow up on the complaint, “We are greatly handicapped—we lost everything [in the attack].” He added, “As citizens of this country, even if we don’t go back to the police [to follow up on a complaint], they [the police] should do something about it.”[522] In addition, external pressure from various communities to protect the perpetrators and pursue political solutions instead works to further discourage the police from going forward with these cases. [...]

- [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Summary prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 \(b\) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, 31 July 2013](#)

[...] 60. AI stated that widespread corruption and disregard for due process and the rule of law continue to blight the criminal justice system. The police demanded money for release from detention. [...]

- [Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2013 - Nigeria, 9 May 2013](#)

[...] Corruption remains pervasive, and government efforts to improve transparency and reduce graft have been inadequate. A 2011 report by Human Rights Watch found that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Nigeria’s main anticorruption agency, arraigned 30 prominent politicians on corruption charges since it began work in 2002. However, it won only four convictions, resulting in little or no jail time. The body is hampered by political interference, an inefficient judiciary, and its own institutional weaknesses, and is subject to accusations that it targets those who have lost favor with the government. In a sign of ongoing, large-scale graft, an internal Petroleum Resources Ministry report leaked in October 2012 found that \$29 billion in public revenue was lost over the past decade to a natural gas price-fixing scheme. Nigeria was ranked 139 out of 176 countries surveyed in Transparency International’s 2012 Corruption Perceptions Index.

[...] Security forces commit abuses with near impunity, and corruption pervades their ranks. [...]

In addition to extrajudicial killings of criminal suspects and prisoners, torture and general ill-treatment of detainees are widespread in Nigeria, and such abuses are reportedly used to force confessions and extort bribes. Corrupt officers are often supported by a chain of command that encourages and institutionalizes graft. [...]

➤ [U.S. Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2012: Nigeria, 19 April 2013](#)

[...] Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

[...] In July the CLEEN Foundation released the results of a national crime and safety survey revealing 31 percent of people claimed to have fallen victim to a crime over the past year. Only 21 percent of these self-reported victims reported those crimes to the police, possibly because 76 percent of respondents believed they would have to pay a bribe to receive services. The report noted that, over the past two years, incidents of robbery had increased 6 percent, while reports of domestic violence had increased 14 percent – possibly due to increased awareness of the crime. Of those who reported crimes, only 48 percent of respondents reported satisfaction with police handling of their case. The survey also suggested corruption, particularly among police, continued to affect the lives of many persons, and respondents pointed to government insincerity as the most significant obstacle facing the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offenses Commission (ICPC), the federal government's two main anticorruption agencies. Respondents listed crime control as the top priority over all others deserving government attention. [...]

[...] Arrest Procedures and Treatment While in Detention

[...] Arbitrary Arrest: Police routinely detained suspects without informing them of the charges or allowing access to counsel and family members. Provision of bail often remained arbitrary or subject to extrajudicial influence. Judges often set conditions of bail too stringent to be met. In many areas with no functioning bail system, suspects remained incarcerated indefinitely in investigative detention within the prison system. Authorities kept detainees incommunicado for long periods. Numerous detainees alleged police demanded bribes to take them to court to have their cases heard. If family members wanted to attend a trial, police often demanded additional payment.[...]

Human rights abuses

➤ [Amnesty International, Nigeria: Extension of state of emergency must not lead to more human rights violations, 8 December 2013](#)

[...] Amnesty International is deeply concerned that the extension of the state of emergency in the three states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe may lead to further human rights violations by security forces in north-eastern Nigeria. The organisation is calling on the Nigerian authorities to ensure that this extension does not give the security forces carte blanche to do whatever they want in the name of national security.

On 7 November 2013, the Nigerian Senate approved a request from President Goodluck Jonathan to extend the ongoing state of emergency in the three states by another six months. The state of emergency gives the military power to continue to conduct arrests and house to house searches in the affected states. Despite the ongoing state of emergency, information received by Amnesty International suggests that violations and abuses of human rights in north-eastern Nigeria have not reduced. [...]

➤ [IRIN, Detainee abuses "monumental" in northern Nigeria, 15 November 2013](#)

[...] As attacks by militant group Boko Haram (BH) continue to spread terror across northeastern Nigeria, the government's response is also causing widespread fear among civilians. Mass sweep-ups of BH suspects, led by the military's Joint Task Force (JTF), have led to mounting reports of detainees dying or disappearing in custody. According to rights group Amnesty International (AI), in the first six months of 2013, at least 950 people in the northeastern cities of Maiduguri, in Borno State, and Damaturu, in Yobe State, died in military custody. Most of the alleged victims were suspected members of BH, but they were largely held without being charged or tried. [...]

➤ [Human Rights Watch, Nigeria: UPR Submission March 2013, 17 October 2013](#)

[...] II. Human Rights Issues

[...] C. Security Force Abuses

During its 2009 UPR, Nigeria accepted to take “all practical measures” to end “extrajudicial executions” and “step up its measures to halt torture.” Since then, however, government security forces have been implicated in numerous extrajudicial killings, torture, and other serious human rights abuses. [...]

The Nigeria Police Force continues to be implicated in numerous human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests, torture, extrajudicial killings, and other extortion-related abuses. There are many documented cases where the police extort money from victims of crimes to investigate the matter and solicit bribes from suspects to drop investigations. Police funds have been embezzled or mismanaged by senior police officials, who also often demand monetary “returns” from their subordinates from money extorted from the public. Despite promising public statements by the inspector general of police, Mohammed Abubakar, corruption and abuse remain widespread in the police force, and those responsible are rarely brought to justice. [...]

- [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Summary prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 \(b\) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, 31 July 2013](#)

[...] 40. STP [Society for Threatened People, Göttingen, Germany] stated that the security forces lacked credibility with residents in northern Nigeria, who feared the deliberate use of violence by the security forces. Four students from Nasarawa University were allegedly killed by soldiers deployed on 25 February 2013, to quell the protest over lack of water on campus. [...]

- [Amnesty International, Amnesty International Annual Report 2013 - Nigeria, 23 May 2013](#)

[...] Boko Haram

[...] *Responses by the police and security forces*

[...] Nigeria's security forces perpetrated serious human rights violations in their response to Boko Haram – including enforced disappearance, extrajudicial executions, house burning and unlawful detention. Scores of people were unlawfully killed by the Joint Task Force (JTF) – army, police and other security forces – set up to deal with the violence, or police; others were subjected to enforced disappearance from police or JTF custody.

People in at least five communities in Maiduguri had their houses burned down by the JTF, often following raids and arrests in the areas and in some cases seemingly as a punitive measure. [...]

Unlawful killings

Unlawful killings were carried out by the police across Nigeria. In March 2012, the Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Governing Council said an estimated 2,500 detainees were summarily killed by the police every year. [...]

- [Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2013 - Nigeria, 9 May 2013](#)

[...] The escalation of Boko Haram activity was matched by a harsh and somewhat indiscriminate response from the military and police, reportedly including extrajudicial killings and arbitrary arrests. [...]

[...] In addition to extrajudicial killings of criminal suspects and prisoners, torture and general ill-treatment of detainees are widespread in Nigeria, and such abuses are reportedly used to force confessions and extort bribes. [...]

- [U.S. Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2012: Nigeria, 19 April 2013](#)

[...] Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

The government or its agents committed numerous arbitrary or unlawful killings.

During the year Joint Task Forces (JTFs), composed of elements of the military, police, and other security services, conducted raids on militant groups and criminal suspects in Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Kano, Kaduna, Kogi, Niger, Plateau, Sokoto, and Yobe states, resulting in numerous deaths and injuries to alleged criminals, militants, and civilians. According to credible eyewitness accounts, JTF members committed illegal killings during attempts to apprehend members of the extremist group Boko Haram in

several states, including Borno, Kano, Kaduna, and Yobe states and surrounding areas. Local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international human rights groups, and political and traditional leaders from the affected states accused the security services of indiscriminate and extrajudicial killings, illegal detention, inhumane treatment of detainees, and torture during the year. [...]

Credible reports also indicated other uniformed military personnel and paramilitary mobile police carried out summary executions, assaults, torture, and other abuses throughout Bauchi, Borno, Kano, Kaduna, Plateau, and Yobe states (see section 1.g.). The national police, army, and other security forces committed extrajudicial killings and used lethal and excessive force to apprehend criminals and suspects, as well as to disperse protesters. [...]

c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

[...] JTF use of excessive force during raids on militant groups and criminal suspects in the Niger Delta and many states in the North resulted in deaths, injuries, mass rape, displacement of civilians, and other abuses. [...]

According to credible reports, during the year security forces committed rape and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls with impunity. [...]

d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

The constitution and law prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention; however, police and security forces continued to employ these practices. The JTF arbitrarily arrested hundreds of persons during sweeps for militants, and security force personnel made arbitrary arrests during the national elections. [...]

g. Use of Excessive Force and Other Abuses in Internal Conflicts

The JTF committed numerous killings during the year. The government claimed these JTF members faced disciplinary charges, but there were no reported cases in which a JTF member faced a discharge or criminal charges. The JTF allegedly committed numerous killings in Bauchi, Borno, Kano, and Yobe states after attacks by Boko Haram.

Security forces used excessive force in the pursuit of Boko Haram suspects, often resulting in arbitrary arrest, detention, torture, or extrajudicial killing of civilians. [...]

Impunity for abuses

- [Amnesty International, Amnesty International Annual Report 2013 - Nigeria, 23 May 2013](#)
[...] Independent and impartial investigations were rarely carried out into allegations of human rights violations by the security forces and, when they were, the findings were not made public. [...]
- [Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2013 - Nigeria, 9 May 2013](#)
[...] Security forces commit abuses with near impunity, and corruption pervades their ranks. [...]
- [U.S. Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2012: Nigeria, 19 April 2013](#)
Executive Summary
[...] Impunity remained widespread at all levels of government. The government brought few persons to justice for abuses and corruption. Police and security forces generally operated with impunity. Authorities did not investigate the majority of cases of police abuse or punish perpetrators. Authorities generally did not hold police accountable for the use of excessive or deadly force or for the deaths of persons in custody. [...]
- [Human Rights Watch, World Report 2013: Nigeria, 31 January 2013](#)
[...] The failure of Nigeria's government to address the widespread poverty, corruption, police abuse, and longstanding impunity for a range of crimes has created a fertile ground for violent militancy.
[...] Conduct of Security Forces
[...] Meanwhile, the authorities have still not prosecuted members of the police and military for the unlawful killing of more than 130 people during the 2008 sectarian violence in Jos, Plateau state, the soldiers who massacred more than 200 people in Benue State in 2001, or soldiers involved in the complete destruction of the town of Odi, Bayelsa State, in 1999. [...]

Lack of investigative resources

➤ [Human Rights Watch, "Leave Everything to God" : Accountability for Inter-Communal Violence in Plateau and Kaduna States, Nigeria, 12 December 2013](#)

[...] IX. The Anatomy of Impunity

Nigerian authorities have rarely brought to justice those responsible for serious crimes committed during episodes of inter-communal violence over the past 25 years in Plateau and Kaduna states. This section, based on Human Rights Watch interviews with police officers, lawyers, federal and state prosecutors, judges, and religious and civil society leaders, looks at the most common responses by the Nigerian authorities to communal violence and examines why criminal investigations and prosecutions have often failed. [...]

Evidence Lost at Time of Arrest

Even when the security forces arrest perpetrators of violence caught in the act, they often fail to collect or maintain the evidence necessary to enable the suspects to be successfully prosecuted, judges, prosecutors, and defense lawyers said. A chief magistrate in Kaduna, who has handled communal violence cases, explained that the security services usually just "arrest people and dump them" at police stations without any statement as to "why they were arrested or what they were doing when they were arrested." [...] A lawyer in Jos, who has represented defendants in communal violence cases, described a similar picture. From his perspective, the main problem with the cases occurs "during the arrest." As he put it: "They arrest many people and collect the weapons they arrest with them. When they reach the station, they cannot identify which weapon was with a particular person. The arresting officer doesn't write a police report saying this is the person found with this weapon."

Since the priority for the security services during the ongoing violence is to protect the public, members of the security services tend not to think about future criminal investigation, prosecutors said. The deputy head of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in Kaduna pointed out that during the April 2011 violence, "The effort of the security [forces] was to curtail the violence and protect lives and property." [479] This problem is especially acute among military personnel who have not been trained in law enforcement operations. A defense lawyer in Jos, who has represented defendants arrested during communal violence, noted that soldiers usually dumped people at the police station, and the investigating police officer only had the soldier's name. The lawyer added that when the police officer later tried to determine why the people had been arrested, "Most of the military men had difficulty in remembering the incident." [480]

The head of State CID in Jos acknowledged that "[t]he army is not trained to investigate cases" but soldiers often "effect arrests." He pointed out that when he took up his post at State CID the police investigators had "difficulty identifying the exhibits that belonged to each particular suspect." Since then, however, he said the police have trained the military to "label the exhibit," such as a weapon found on a suspect "at the scene of the arrest" and "attach it to each particular suspect." He added that "we have been able to overcome those challenges" and the quality of the evidence collected at arrests in Plateau State has improved. [481] [...]

Suspects Charged to Court Without Evidence

Judges and prosecutors observed that after the security services arrest people, the police will often simply gather all the detainees together, and charge them, en masse, before a magistrate's court. A chief magistrate in Kaduna, who has presided over some of these cases, described the quality of evidence in these cases as "substantially bad." [...]

Failure to Investigate: The Weak Link

The failure of the police to investigate crimes, by proactively investigating incidents of violence, pursuing credible leads, and following through on criminal investigations, is one of the major impediments in securing accountability for these serious crimes. [...]

The Police Won't Take Any Action

When Human Rights Watch asked witnesses why they had not reported the crime to the police, witnesses often responded that it would be futile to go to the police because the police would not do anything. In the words of the son of the district head in Gidan Maga, Kaduna State, who was killed in April 2011, "Even if we report it to the police, nothing will happen. The police will take no action." [494] [...]

Police Fail to Pursue Leads

Although many witnesses interviewed by Human Rights Watch said they had not come forward to speak with the police, in many other cases witnesses did go to the police to report the crimes, including cases of murder and arson of homes and property. As the report documents above, Human Rights Watch interviewed witnesses from Kuru Karama, Tim-Tim, and rural Fulani or Berom villages in Plateau State, and from Zonkwa, Maraban Rido, Matsirga, and Christian villages in Soba local government area in Kaduna State who reported crimes to the police, but there were no arrests in any of these incidents.

Human Rights Watch spoke with police officials at State CID and the Legal Department at police headquarters in Kaduna. The deputy head of CID—who has been with the investigations department since before the April 2011 violence—said he did not know whether witnesses reported to the police in these cases, but shifted the blame to the witnesses, insisting that they were responsible for the police failing to follow up on the investigation. “If they came here [to report a crime], they should follow up with us,” he said.[514] The officer in charge of the Legal Department was even more candid. “If they don’t follow up, the case doesn’t move,” she said. “The investigating police officers have to be reminded.”[515]

But some witnesses said they did follow up on their complaints without any success. In Plateau State, for example, a Fulani man in Mangu local government area, who saw his father and two other Fulani neighbors killed, went back twice to follow up on his complaint. The police eventually “told me not to come back,” he said. “They said I should just go away.”[516] Similarly, in Soba local government area, Hausa-Fulani Christians whose homes and churches were burned by a mob of Hausa-Fulani Muslims said they went to the divisional police headquarters in Maigana to follow up on the initial police investigation, but the police have taken no action.[517]

Senior police officials insisted that the victims should take the complaint up the chain of command. “If you are not happy with the response at one level, you address the complaint to the higher level,” Kaduna State’s deputy commissioner of police told Human Rights Watch. “You don’t regress into your shell.”[518] Similarly, the head of State CID in Plateau State said, “If there is any case that you have reported to the police and the police have not taken action, report in writing to the commissioner of police, and action will be taken.”[519] But witnesses who have taken the matter up the chain of command have also had little success. Fulani leaders in Plateau State, for example, said they went all the way to police Force Headquarters in Abuja to following up on their complaints about attacks on Fulani in January 2010, but the police did nothing.[520] [...]

Challenges Prosecuting Mass Violence

Defense lawyers and prosecutors pointed to shoddy police investigations and sloppy police work as one of the major factors undermining the cases. As one defense lawyer, who represented some of the defendants from the 2010 violence in Plateau State, put it, “In most of the cases the investigation is very poor. Most of the people discharged and acquitted has to do with the shoddy way the police handle the matter.”[524] The director of public prosecutions in Plateau State likewise noted the quality of the police investigations is poor. “Most of these investigating officers are not well trained,” he said. “When the quality of the investigation is poor, you can’t succeed in prosecutions.” He added that, “Apart from a confessional statement, or there is an eyewitness, or the victim himself identifies the person, it is very difficult to succeed in conviction.”[525] A senior lawyer in Kaduna State put it even more bluntly. “The police concentrate on torturing people and extracting confessions—that’s all,” he said. “Once they get that, they don’t investigate. If you have a good counsel during trial to test the voluntariness of the confessional statement, it collapses and that’s the end of it.”[526] [...]

Defense lawyers said many of the 2010 cases prosecuted in Federal High Court in Jos were sloppily prepared. In some cases, Christian and Muslim suspects, arrested in different locations, were lumped together on the same charge sheet and charged with conspiracy to commit terrorism, they said. Many of the cases were later dismissed, or the accused persons were acquitted at trial.[527]

The two federal court judges handling the cases also spared no words in their criticism of the police and prosecution. In one case where a Christian and a Muslim suspect were charged together with terrorism, the federal judge, A.L. Allogoa, acquitted them, finding that there was “no iota of evidence against the accused persons.”[528] [...]

Police and state prosecutors observed that one of the other main challenges is that the arresting officer—often a soldier or a police officer deployed from another state to help quell the violence—can be redeployed after the violence, making it difficult to bring the arresting officer back to testify at trial. Funding to transport the witness back is often not available. As the director of public prosecution in Plateau State pointed out, “A police officer will not take money from his pocket and [come back to] give evidence. If he doesn’t come, that is the end of the matter.” [531] The head of the Legal department for

the police in Jos acknowledged: "There have been cases that have been dismissed because the arresting officer did not appear." He explained that when the prosecution sends a witness summons to the arresting officer, who could be a soldier, the arresting officer will say, for example, "I'm already in Lagos-oh.... If I come who will pay my allowance." The legal officer added that "if he does not come, that is the end of that case," yet "nobody will be responsible for his allowance." [532] [...]

➤ [United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, USCIRF Annual Report 2013 - Countries of Particular Concern: Nigeria, 30 April 2013](#)

Background

[...] The constitution's provisions on federalism create jurisdictional conflicts between federal and state entities, which have negatively impacted religious freedom by creating a confused rule of law system. The system impedes successful prosecutions as federal and state attorneys often fight over jurisdictional questions regarding the prosecution of cases. The frequent result is no prosecutions. Additionally, to prevent and address Nigeria's history of coups by security forces, the police force is a federal entity. Officers are routinely rotated to new locations (and never in their home areas). This hinders the ability of police to gain the trust of local populations, which is needed for successful investigations. The process also leads to slow police responses to outbreaks of sectarian violence, as federal approval is necessary for a full deployment of troops to conflict areas.

➤ [U.S. Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2012: Nigeria, 19 April 2013](#)

[...] c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

[...] In September the Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (NOPRIN) released the findings of a civil society panel convened in February to explore police reform. The report highlighted an inadequate and outdated NPF mission statement ill-suited for a liberal democratic society; a legal framework that has led to politicization and lack of professionalism in the force; overcentralization of power in the hands of the IGP; a lack of functional specialization among NPF officers; a duplication of policing functions in outside agencies; weak oversight agencies, especially the Police Service Commission; and an ineffectual performance appraisal system. The panel also discovered continued corruption and lack of public confidence in the force; ineffective training and a deficient training infrastructure; insensitivity to crimes against women; and funding problems including low budgetary allocation, incomplete release of budgeted funds, and late release of funds, all of which feed corruption. [...]

Corrupt, slow and overburdened judiciary

➤ [Human Rights Watch, "Leave Everything to God" : Accountability for Inter-Communal Violence in Plateau and Kaduna States, Nigeria, 12 December 2013](#)

[...] IX. The Anatomy of Impunity

[...] Nigerian authorities have rarely brought to justice those responsible for serious crimes committed during episodes of inter-communal violence over the past 25 years in Plateau and Kaduna states. This section, based on Human Rights Watch interviews with police officers, lawyers, federal and state prosecutors, judges, and religious and civil society leaders, looks at the most common responses by the Nigerian authorities to communal violence and examines why criminal investigations and prosecutions have often failed. [...]

Criminal Prosecutions: The Rare Exceptions

The rare cases in which suspects have been charged before federal or state High Court, following the completion of a criminal investigation by the police, have faced an uphill battle at trial. In Plateau State, defense lawyers generally credited the federal prosecutors and judges for holding speedy trials for the cases they brought related to the 2010 violence. By the end of 2010, the first judgments were handed down, including several convictions. Since then, however, one of the High Court judges has been deployed out of Plateau State, which has substantially delayed the remaining cases.[523] The federal trials were not without problems. At this writing, many of the accused persons had been acquitted or the charges against them dropped. [...]

- [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Summary prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 \(b\) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, 31 July 2013](#)
[...] 60. AI stated that widespread corruption and disregard for due process and the rule of law continue to blight the criminal justice system. [...] Court processes were slow and largely distrusted, and court orders were often ignored by police and security forces. [...]
- [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Summary prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 \(b\) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, 31 July 2013](#)
[...] 60. AI stated that widespread corruption and disregard for due process and the rule of law continue to blight the criminal justice system. [...] Court processes were slow and largely distrusted, and court orders were often ignored by police and security forces. [...]
- [Amnesty International, Amnesty International Annual Report 2013 - Nigeria, 23 May 2013](#)
[...] Death penalty
In September, the High Court of Lagos State declared the mandatory imposition of the death penalty to be unconstitutional, in a case brought in 2008 by the Legal Resources Consortium (LRC), assisted by Nigerian NGO LEDAP (The Legal Defence and Assistance Project).
But the death penalty remained mandatory in Nigeria's penal laws for a wide range of crimes. There were approximately 1,002 inmates on death row by the end of 2012 including people who were juveniles at the time of the crime. Many were sentenced after blatantly unfair trials or after spending more than a decade in prison.
- [Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2013 - Nigeria, 9 May 2013](#)
[...] Ordinary defendants frequently lack legal representation and are often ill-informed about court procedures and their rights. [...]
- [U.S. Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2012: Nigeria, 19 April 2013](#)
[...] Arrest Procedures and Treatment While in Detention
[...] The shortage of trial judges, serious trial backlogs, endemic corruption, and undue political influence continued to hamper the judicial system. Multiple adjournments in some cases resulted in serious delays. Many detainees did not have trials because police had insufficient vehicles to transport them to court on their trial dates. [...]
Section 4. Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government
[...] There was a widespread perception judges were easily bribed and litigants could not rely on the courts to render impartial judgments. Citizens encountered long delays and alleged requests from judicial officials for bribes to expedite cases or obtain favorable rulings. [...]

2.3 Internal Relocation

The OGN states in relation to internal relocation that:

Excerpt from December 2013 Nigeria OGN

2.3 Internal relocation.

2.3.1 Caseworkers must refer to the AI on Internal Relocation and in the case of a female applicant, the AI on Gender Issues in the Asylum Claim, for guidance on the circumstances in which internal relocation would be a 'reasonable' option, so as to apply the test set out in paragraph 339O of the Immigration Rules.

2.3.2 It is important to note that internal relocation can be relevant in both cases of state and non-state agents of persecution, but in the main it is likely to be most relevant in the context of acts of persecution by localised non-state agents. If there is a part of the country of return where the person would not have a well founded fear of being persecuted and the person can reasonably be expected to stay there, then they will not be eligible for a grant of asylum.

2.3.3 Similarly, if there is a part of the country of return where the person would not face a real risk of suffering serious harm and they can reasonably be expected to stay there, then they will not be eligible for humanitarian protection. Both the general circumstances prevailing in that part of the country and the personal circumstances of the person concerned including any gender issues should be taken into account.[...]

2.3.7 The constitution and law provide for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation; however, security officials restricted freedom of movement at times. Despite the Inspector General of Police's (IGP) order for police to dismantle all roadblocks, illegal roadblocks and checkpoints remained, often to help police extort money from travellers. Security officials continued to use excessive force at checkpoints and roadblocks.

2.3.8 During 2012 state officials imposed dusk-to-dawn curfews in response to sectarian conflicts. For example, authorities imposed curfews in July and August in areas of Kaduna and Plateau states, following reprisal attacks and ethno-religious violence. At various times throughout 2012 the federal, state, or local governments imposed curfews or otherwise restricted movement in Bauchi, Borno, Kano, Kaduna, Kogi, Plateau, and Yobe states in the aftermath of Boko Haram attacks. Numerous states also imposed curfews or otherwise restricted movement during the January fuel subsidy protests.

2.3.9 Conclusion Nigeria is a large country and internal relocation will generally be a viable option for those who fear, or who have experienced ill-treatment at the hands of non state agents. In addition to considering the ability of the persecutor to pursue the claimant in the proposed site of relocation, case workers also need to consider the particular circumstances of the individual concerned including their age, gender, health, ethnicity, religion, financial circumstances and support network of the claimant, as well as the security, human rights and socio-economic conditions in the proposed area of relocation, including the claimant's ability to sustain themselves.

The OGN highlights the importance of conducting an IFA assessment that includes the reasonableness and relevance analyses that must be undertaken in order to assess whether relocation is possible. However, extremely limited COI is included in this section; paragraphs 2.3.7 and 2.3.8 only inform about the restrictions on freedom of movement imposed through curfews, thereby covering one aspect of the assessment required under the 'relevance analysis'. As set out below, the OGN fails to include COI in this section on the security situation and the potential reach of non-state actors, such as Boko Haram and Ansaru or the risk of new harm in the proposed site of relocation. This section of the OGN further fails to provide any COI on the reasonableness of internal relocation, for example, on the situation of single lone women, which would be of particular use for the analysis of 'undue hardship'.

The UNHCR Guidelines on 'Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative' set out the two main analyses that must be undertaken in order to assess whether there is a relocation possibility, which it is useful to base issues for COI research on:

[UNHCR, Guidelines on International Protection No. 4: "Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative" Within the Context of Article 1A\(2\) of the 1951 Convention and/or 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, 23 July 2003](#)

I. The Relevance Analysis

- a) Is the area of relocation practically, safely, and legally accessible to the individual? If any of these conditions is not met, consideration of an alternative location within the country would not be relevant.
- b) Is the agent of persecution the State? National authorities are presumed to act throughout the country. If they are the feared persecutors, there is a presumption in principle that an internal flight or relocation alternative is not available.
- c) Is the agent of persecution a non-State agent? Where there is a risk that the non-State actor will persecute the claimant in the proposed area, then the area will not be an internal flight or relocation alternative. This finding will depend on a determination of whether the persecutor is likely to pursue the claimant to the area and whether State protection from the harm feared is available there
- d) Would the claimant be exposed to a risk of being persecuted or other serious harm upon relocation? This would include the original or any new form of persecution or other serious harm in the area of relocation

II. The Reasonableness Analysis

- a) Can the claimant, in the context of the country concerned, lead a relatively normal life without facing undue hardship? If not, it would not be reasonable to expect the person to move there.

Whilst individualised research specific to a claimant's profile and to the proposed place of internal relocation is required, the following provides an indication of the relevant issues that need to be addressed in order to follow UNHCR's approach in assessing the possibility of internal relocation within Nigeria, together with some recommended sources.

I. The Relevance Analysis

a) Is the area of relocation practically, safely, and legally accessible to the individual? If any of these conditions is not met, consideration of an alternative location within the country would not be relevant

Following on from the above, COI research is required on:

- Restrictions on entering the proposed site of internal relocation: e.g. the existence of checkpoints and curfews
- Security situation in the proposed site of internal relocation e.g. attacks by Boko Haram, Ansaru
- Security situation on route to the proposed site of internal relocation

For suggested sources to consult when researching the security situation in a particular area of relocation see the [sources database](#) in the Appendix.

I. The Relevance Analysis

b) Is the agent of persecution a non-State agent? Where there is a risk that the non-State actor will persecute the claimant in the proposed area, then the area will not be an internal flight or relocation alternative. This finding will depend on a determination of whether the persecutor is likely to pursue the claimant to the area and whether State protection from the harm feared is available there.

In order to assess whether internal relocation is a possibility to escape the risk of persecution from a particular (and known) armed group, such as Boko Haram or Ansaru, information is required on the following issues:

THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD BE USED AS A TOOL FOR IDENTIFYING RELEVANT COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION. IT SHOULD NOT BE SUBMITTED AS EVIDENCE TO THE HOME OFFICE, THE TRIBUNAL OR OTHER DECISION MAKERS IN ASYLUM APPLICATIONS OR APPEALS © Still Human Still Here 2013

- Origins and ideology
- Affiliates
- Strength and regions of operation
- Recent activities and targets of attacks

Sources recommended to consult on these issues include:

Databases [search by keyword]

[European Country of Origin Information Network \(ECOI\)](#)

[UNHCR Refworld](#)

General Sources [search by publication date and keyword]

[African Arguments](#), Nigeria country page

[Amnesty International](#)

[Human Rights Watch](#), Nigeria country page

[International Crisis Group](#), Nigeria country page

[International Institute for Strategic Studies \(IISS\)](#)

[Long War Journal](#)

[START- National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism](#)

[Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium](#)

Specific reports

- [IRIN news, Updated timeline of Boko Haram attacks and related violence, 12 December 2013](#)
- [Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation: ecoi.net featured topic on Nigeria: Boko Haram, 27 September 2013](#)
- [U.S. Department of State, Country Report on Terrorism 2012, May 2013](#)
- [BBC News, Boko Haram timeline: From preachers to slave raiders, 15 May 2013](#)
- [United States Institute of Peace, Special Report: What is Boko Haram?, June 2012](#)

Also see the COI presented above in section 3.8 Religious Persecution on:

- [Targets and reach of Boko Haram and Ansaru](#)
- [State protection against Boko Haram and Ansaru \(particularly in north Nigeria\)](#)

I. The Relevance Analysis

d) Would the claimant be exposed to a risk of being persecuted or other serious harm upon relocation? This would include the original or any new form of persecution or other serious harm in the area of relocation.

In addition to researching the risk of harm arising from a claimant's particular profile, it will be necessary to research any new human rights abuses that might affect the claimant in the proposed new area of relocation based on their personal circumstances, for example arising from their gender, ethnicity, religion, political opinion etc .

For the situation of lone women see the COI presented further below on the:

- [Economic situation for women](#)
- [Discriminatory practices against women](#)

- [Risk of violence against women](#)
- [Lack of effective protection by the Nigerian police force](#)
- [Lack of services available to single lone women](#)
- [Restrictions on women's freedom of movement](#)

For the treatment of religious minorities see the COI presented above in section 3.19 Religious persecution on:

- [State abuses of religious freedom](#)

[State treatment of Muslims \(particularly in south Nigeria\)](#)

[State treatment of Christians and non-Muslims \(particularly in in north Nigeria\)](#)
- [Societal violence and discrimination \(not including attacks by Boko Haram\)](#)

[Societal violence and discrimination against Muslims \(particularly in south Nigeria\)](#)

[Societal violence and discrimination against Christians and non-Muslims \(particularly in in north Nigeria\)](#)
- [Inter-communal and religious violence in the central states](#)
- [Effective state protection available for persons fearing religious and communal violence](#)

II. The Reasonableness Analysis

a) Can the claimant, in the context of the country concerned, lead a relatively normal life without facing undue hardship? If not, it would not be reasonable to expect the person to move there.

According to the UNHCR Guidelines on Internal Relocation, on this point it is necessary to assess (emphasis added):

- [UNHCR, Guidelines on International Protection No. 4: "Internal Flight or Relocation Alternative" Within the Context of Article 1A\(2\) of the 1951 Convention and/or 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, 23 July 2003](#)
- **The applicant's personal circumstances** (Of relevance in making this assessment are factors such as age, sex, health, disability, family situation and relationships, social or other vulnerabilities, ethnic, cultural or religious considerations, political and social links and compatibility, language abilities, educational, professional and work background and opportunities, and any past persecution and its psychological effects. In particular, lack of ethnic or other cultural ties may result in isolation of the individual and even discrimination in communities where close ties of this kind are a dominant feature of daily life. Factors which may not on their own preclude relocation may do so when their cumulative effect is taken into account. Depending on individual circumstances, those factors capable of ensuring the material and psychological well-being of the person, such as the presence of family members or other close social links in the proposed area, may be more important than others)
- **The existence of past persecution** (Psychological trauma arising out of past persecution may be relevant in determining whether it is reasonable to expect the claimant to relocate in the proposed area. The provision of psychological assessments attesting to the likelihood of further psychological trauma upon return would militate against finding that relocation to the area is a reasonable alternative)

- **Safety and security, respect for human rights**
- **Possibility for economic survival** (If the situation is such that the claimant will be unable to earn a living or to access accommodation, or where medical care cannot be provided or is clearly inadequate, the area may not be a reasonable alternative. It would be unreasonable, including from a human rights perspective, to expect a person to relocate to face economic destitution or existence below at least an adequate level of subsistence)

For suggested sources to consult when researching the humanitarian situation in a particular area of relocation see the [sources database](#) in the Appendix.

With specific regards to the possibility of relocation for a single woman, the following non-exhaustive, illustrative sources exemplify the economic difficulties, discriminatory practices, risk of violence and lack of effective protection by the Nigerian police force, lack of services available to single women and restrictions on freedom of movement that are prevalent throughout Nigeria that might impact on a woman's ability to internally relocate option:

- [Economic situation for women](#)
- [Discriminatory practices against women](#)
- [Risk of violence against women](#)
- [Lack of effective protection by the Nigerian police force](#)
- [Lack of services available to single lone women](#)
- [Restrictions on women's freedom of movement](#)

Economic situation for women

➤ [OECD's Social Institutions & Gender Index, Nigeria, Undated \[Last accessed: 17/12/2013\]](#)

Nigeria is ranked 79 out of 86 in the 2012 Social Institutions and Gender Index. The country was ranked 86 out of 102 in the 2009 Social Institutions and Gender Index. Nigeria's Human Development Index score for 2011 is 0.459, placing it in 156th place (out of a total of 187 countries). The country is not ranked in the most recent Gender Inequality Index (for 2011). Nigeria is ranked 120th in the 2011 Global Gender Gap Index (out of 135 countries), with a score of 0.6011.

[...] Restricted Resources and Entitlements

Nigerian women have very limited ownership rights. Civil law entitles women to have access to land, and a few states have enshrined equal inheritance rights into law, but certain customary laws stipulate that only men have the right to own land. For women without the means to purchase land on their own, in practice, their ability to obtain land flows solely through marriage or family. Data from the government indicates a significant gender gap in land ownership. For free use, women make up only 24% of land owners and for distributed land, women make up only 26% of owners.

Under civil and Islamic law, married women have the right to have access to property other than land. However, JICA reports that for livestock, expensive cows or draught animals are more likely to belong to males rather than females.

In daily life in Nigeria, men generally make decisions regarding property. According to the 2008 DHS, nearly 62 percent of women reported that men make most or all of the decisions about major household purchases; 83.5 percent of men reported control over these decisions.

Women's access to bank loans is restricted by their limited financial resources and the difficulties they have obtaining the necessary guarantees. In certain cases, financial institutions demand prior consent of the woman's husband before granting a loan. The National Poverty Eradication Programme and other micro-credit schemes offer low-interest, business-oriented loans and other micro-credit and vocational training programs for women, but access is still low; statistics show that less than one-third of loans in Nigeria are awarded to women. Occasionally, women receiving loans have to turn control of the resources over to their husbands, which dilutes their effectiveness [...]

➤ [International Organization for Migration, Country Fact Sheet: Nigeria, August 2013](#)

[...] V. HOUSING

1. General Description of the Housing Situation

[...] Accommodation for returnees without family in home countries:

They can rent a home in any part of Nigeria they wish to settle in for a fee. There is no special accommodation for returnees. They should however be aware that rents are high and difficult to come by in major cities.

[...] VI. EMPLOYMENT

1. Labour Market Situation

Various surveys carried out by National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), National Directorate for Employment(NDE), National Manpower Board and Centre for Investment, Sustainable Development, Management and Environment, have revealed that over 80% of Nigeria's labour force are unemployed [...]

- [Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada: Nigeria: Whether women who head their own households, without male or family support, can obtain housing and employment in large northern cities, such as Kano, Maiduguri, and Kaduna, and southern cities, such as Lagos, Ibadan, Port Harcourt; government support services available to female-headed households \[NGA103907.E\], 19 November 2012](#)

[...] 2.Socio-economic Status

Daily Trust, an Abuja-based newspaper, reports that, according to the Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development, speaking about "gender inequality" in the country after the release of the Gender in Nigeria Report 2012, there are very large geographical disparities in Nigeria (8 June 2012). She reportedly said that "human development outcomes" for girls and women are worse in the north, and that sometimes poverty levels in the north are double those in the south (Daily Trust 8 June 2012). The University of Kansas assistant professor stated that, in northern Nigeria, "women without male or family support face an array of social and economic challenges" (18 Oct. 2012).

According to the British Council in Nigeria, women "rely on a male breadwinner for survival" (UK 2012, 17). A project coordinator at Women's Rights Watch Nigeria, a Nigerian women's rights advocacy organization (Global Fund for Women n.d.), in correspondence with the Research Directorate, indicated that the survival of a family headed by a woman relies on a woman's socio-economic status (Women's Rights Watch Nigeria 18 Oct. 2012). Okeke stated that women living without male or family support face a "major challenge" in the "cost of running a home" (26 Oct. 2012). According to Country Reports 2011, women face "considerable economic discrimination," and women who head their own households face challenges in accessing commercial credit, tax deductions and rebates (US 24 May 2012, 42).

According to the University of Nigeria professor, it is easier for a woman to live alone without male support if she is educated and has a high social status because she can use "family connections," and is more likely to gain employment through connections to powerful individuals and politicians than through education (5 Jan. 2012). The Women's Rights Watch Nigeria project coordinator stated that if women are educated, it is "easier to cope" with running a household without male or family support (18 Oct. 2012). However, sources indicate that there is a very high rate of unemployment in Nigeria (Professor 5 Jan. 2012; Women's Rights Watch Nigeria 18 Oct. 2012), including for graduates (Professor 5 Jan. 2012).

According to the Women's Rights Watch Nigeria project coordinator, in the "majority of cases [of women heading households] there is a high level of poverty, especially among widows" (18 Oct. 2012). Leadership, an Abuja-based newspaper, reports that many widows are uneducated or lack the skills necessary to be self-reliant (24 June 2012).

About divorced women, in correspondence with the Research Directorate, Ayesha Imam, an independent consultant on women's rights, NGO development and sustainable development, and the former head of the Department of Culture, Gender and Human Rights at the UN Population Fund, said that women are "usually economically worse off after marriages are dissolved" (20 Oct. 2012). Sources indicate that, after divorce, men do not pay alimony to their ex-wives (Women's Rights Watch Nigeria 18 Oct. 2012; VOA 22 Mar. 2012). Imam indicated that, in Muslim law and customary law, divorced women "are not entitled to maintenance (except during iddah-the waiting period)" (20 Oct. 2012). She added that, in Christian marriages and secular marriages, although "maintenance orders" can be made, they are rarely enforced (Imam 20 Oct. 2012). Imam also stated that, since state "social provisions" and pensions do not exist, divorced women who do not have custody of their children face the challenge of not having their children's assistance in old age and not being able to benefit from their children's labour (ibid.). Voice of

America (VOA) reports that the Executive Director of Voice of Widows, Divorcees and Orphans Association of Nigeria (VOWAN), an organization that it describes as providing skills training and setting up marriages for women in Kano state, indicated that, since no alimony is paid, divorced women heading their own households "barely make ends meet" (VOA 22 Mar. 2012). The Executive Director of VOWAN reportedly also stated that these divorced women may turn to prostitution or other criminality to survive (ibid.).

Okeke indicated that there is a Nigerian societal belief that single women need men to survive (26 Oct. 2012). According to Imam, the societal belief that all women should be married can lead to problems for single, divorced, or widowed women, including sexual harassment and discrimination in employment (20 Oct. 2012). Imam goes on to say that, in southern Nigeria, especially in the southeast, which is largely Christian, "there is social stigma against divorced women," while in northern Nigeria, which is largely Muslim, "women may divorce and re-marry several times without stigma" (20 Oct. 2012). However, Imam qualified this latter assessment by saying that a woman who divorces more than three or four times will be viewed as a "difficult" woman (20 Oct. 2012).

3. Employment

Sources indicate that obtaining employment in Nigeria is very difficult (Professor 5 Jan. 2012; Women's Rights Watch Nigeria 18 Oct. 2012). According to Pambazuka News, a web forum for social justice in Africa (n.d.), in Nigeria, women have higher rates of unemployment than men (24 Nov. 2010). The Nigeria NGO CEDAW Coalition, a national network of Nigerian women's rights NGOs (18 July 2008, ix), states that there is a high unemployment rate among educated women in urban areas (18 July 2008, 25). The US Country Reports 2011 reports that women face discrimination in accessing formal employment (US 24 May 2012, 42). The British Council in Nigeria says similarly that women in Nigeria struggle for an equal opportunity to earn a living (UK 2012, 17). According to Country Reports 2011, some traditional and religious practices, rather than laws, prohibit women from work (US 24 May 2012, 42). Country Reports 2011 also states that women face discrimination in obtaining promotions and salary equity, as well as keeping jobs while pregnant, due to a policy of many businesses to fire women upon becoming pregnant (ibid.). According to the Nigeria NGO CEDAW Coalition, educated women face discrimination in almost all private industries (18 July 2008, xii). Although women are underrepresented in the formal economy (UK 2012, 17), they are present in the informal economy (Nigeria NGO CEDAW Coalition 18 July 2008, xii; Daily Trust 8 June 2012; Pambazuka News 24 Nov. 2010). Pambazuka News states that, when women can find jobs, it is most often in the informal sector in areas such as agriculture and "petty trading" (ibid.).

3.1 Employment in the South

The University of Nigeria professor indicated that a woman living without male support "can only get a reasonable job" in Lagos, Ibadan or Port Harcourt with the help of someone "in authority or very rich" (5 Jan. 2012). He said that, when a woman can find a job, it is usually a "low paying and high demanding" job in the informal sector, which is "equally difficult to come by" due to the "almost stagnant" economy, poor infrastructure, and underdeveloped industrial sector (Professor 5 Jan. 2012). The Women's Rights Watch Nigeria project coordinator stated that, although times are changing because more women are going to school, it is "generally easier" for women in the south to obtain work than women in the north, although they often end up working in "difficult" jobs, such as "petty trading" and subsistence agriculture (18 Oct. 2012). Okeke indicated that educated women in the south can obtain employment, but "many of them face sexual harassment" (26 Oct. 2012).

3.2 Employment in the North

According to the Women's Rights Watch Nigeria project coordinator, women in the north are "usually secluded" while men "do everything" (18 Oct. 2012). The Executive Director of VOWAN reportedly stated that "women have been relegated to the background in northern Nigeria" (VOA 22 Mar. 2012). According to the University of Nigeria professor, a woman who is not Muslim but lives in the north "may be less bound by the religious values of the North to look for employment" than Muslim women (5 Jan. 2012).

Voice of America reports that, according to the Executive Director of VOWAN, divorced women in the north do not have the skills required to earn a living (VOA 22 Mar. 2012). Action Health Incorporated, a non-governmental organization striving to improve the health of adolescents in Nigeria (n.d.), indicates that, according to statistics, women in the north have less education than women in the south, and that 68 percent of women in the northeast and 74 percent of women in the northwest do not have any formal education (2011). According to the University of Kansas assistant professor, many women in large cities in the north work in the informal sector but "these activities rarely are able to support an entire household" (18 Oct. 2012).

4. Housing

The Women's Rights Watch Nigeria project coordinator indicated that it is "very difficult" for women who run their own households without male support to obtain housing (18 Oct. 2012). She added that there is no government-funded housing (Women's Rights Watch Nigeria 18 Oct. 2012). According to Okeke, landlords often refuse women as tenants if they are unmarried or not living with their husbands (10 Apr. 2010). Okeke also indicated that, if a landlord rents to a single woman, male "sureties" are required (26 Oct. 2012). Okeke added that "women who travel and wish to reside in areas different from where they are known are assumed to be prostitutes" (10 Apr. 2010). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

4.1 Housing in the South

According to the University of Nigeria professor, a woman heading her own household can obtain housing if she can afford the "steep rents" in places like Lagos, Ibadan and Port Harcourt (5 Jan. 2012). He stated that, in urban areas, people usually have to pay two to three years of rent in advance of obtaining a home, plus paying commission to the rental agents (Professor 5 Jan. 2012). Digital Journal, a global media network based in Canada (n.d.), similarly indicates that, in Lagos, landlords charge two to three years of rent in advance, and reports that sometimes fees paid for the rental agreement and for the agent exceed the amount of the rent (22 Mar. 2012). According to Digital Journal, some agents in Lagos are fraudulent and take money without providing a home, and some take advantage of "the seeming desperation" of the person searching for a home (22 Mar. 2012).

Okeke indicated that it is difficult for uneducated women in the south, particularly in the cities, to obtain housing, although women in southern villages may be able to obtain housing through their extended family (26 Oct. 2012)

4.2 Housing in the North

The University of Kansas assistant professor stated that, from her experience residing in urban areas, "it is extremely uncommon for single women of marriageable age to live alone" (18 Oct. 2012). According to the University of Nigeria professor, other than a "few exceptional cases," "most house owners" would not rent their houses to single women due to Islamic and traditional values (5 Jan. 2012). He added that these women would be considered by society to be "wayward and unlady like" (Professor 5 Jan. 2012). The University of Kansas assistant professor stated that housing requires "substantial savings," and tenants must pay one to two years of rent in advance of obtaining a home (18 Oct. 2012). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Okeke indicated that in the north, in some cases, a woman's family will "take care of housing" (26 Oct. 2012). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

➤ [British Council/DFID, Gender in Nigeria Report 2012: Improving the lives of girls and women in Nigeria – Issues, Policies, Action, 14 August 2012](#)

[...] Executive Summary

[...] Key Findings

1. Gender Inequality of Opportunity

The challenge: Nigeria's 80.2 million women and girls have significantly worse life chances than men and also their sisters in comparable societies. Violence compounds and reinforces this disadvantage and exclusion.

[...] 3. Jobless Growth, Inequality and Poverty

54% of Nigerians still live in poverty and the proportion has doubled since 1980 (when about 28% were classified as poor). Nigeria's human development indicators are also worse than those of comparable lower middle-income countries. 42% of Nigerian children are malnourished. The averages hide a context that is worse for women and girls. Nearly six million young women and men enter the labour market each year but only 10% are able to secure a job in the formal sector, and just one third of these are women.

4. Rising Income Inequality Hits Women Hardest

Nigeria is among the thirty most unequal countries in the world with respect to income distribution. The poorest half of the population holds only 10% of national income. Significant rural-urban differences in income distribution impact particularly on women, because 54 million of Nigeria's 80.2 million women live and work in rural areas, where they provide 60-79% of the rural labour force. Inequality harms social cohesion and may exacerbate conflict, especially when some social groups are perceived to be excluded

from opportunities. Conflict adversely impacts on women and girls, reducing their mobility and inhibiting participation in social, economic and political life.

5. Pronounced Regional Gender Disparities

Nigeria is marked by huge geographical disparities. Human development outcomes for girls and women are worse in the North, where poverty levels are sometimes twice as high as parts of the South (72% in the NorthEast compared with 26% in the South-East and a national average of 54%).

[...] The impact of inequality on the lives of girls and women is reflected starkly in health and education outcomes, nationally and between North and South. Levels of gender violence are also high, notably in the South where inequality is greatest.

6. Livelihoods and Productive Enterprise: Obstacles for Women

Economic independence is an essential dimension of women's empowerment. Improving their access to and control over resources increases investment in human capital which in turn improves children's health, nutrition, education and future growth. Business has overtaken subsistence farming and formal employment as the main source of income. Women compose the majority of informal sector workers. Though many women are involved in subsistence agriculture and off farm activities, men are five times more likely than women to own land. Women own 4% of land in the North-East, and just over 10% in the South-East and South-South.

[...] Women with dependants pay more tax than men, who are automatically defined as bread winners.

[...] Women in formal employment are paid less than men. Income inequality in the formal sector has also grown since 1999. Only one in every three employees in the privileged non-agricultural formal sector is a woman. Regardless of their educational qualifications, women earn consistently less than their male counterparts. In some cases they earn less than men with lower qualifications. Women occupy fewer than 30% of all posts in the public sector and only 17% of senior positions [...]

➤ [United Kingdom: Home Office, Report of Joint British-Danish Fact-Finding Mission to Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria \(9-27 September 2007 and 5-12 January 2008\), 29 October 2008](#)

[...] 1. Internal relocation for women

[...] Possibilities to escape domestic violence, FGM and forced marriage

[...] 1.18 UNIFEM added that attractive young, single women, in particular, are very vulnerable to abuse, harassment and trafficking when relocating to another area without economic means or family networks. Regarding internal relocation, UNIFEM explained that the vast majority of women seeking protection against domestic violence, forced marriage or FGM, including women who wish to protect their daughters against FGM, have the tendency to first relocate to a safe place not far from their home area. They may even relocate several times within their familiar locality if necessary.

1.19 BAOBAB stated that from a legal point of view, internal relocation is an option for any woman in Nigeria because there is full freedom of movement in the country. However, this first step - even to take a bus - can be difficult as women are dependent on their relatives, family or husbands, and may not have the money to allow them to relocate. As a consequence of this, a woman will need relatives in her new location who are ready to accommodate her. It was emphasized that it is technically possible for victims of domestic violence, FGM or forced marriage to relocate in Nigeria, but economically it is not easy. Even language might pose a problem for women who relocate to areas where members of their own ethnic group do not live.

1.20 It was emphasized by BAOBAB that a woman can obtain physical protection by relocating to another area in Nigeria. Women who are economically independent, in particular, would stand a much better chance of sustaining themselves than women who are not. BAOBAB added that it is difficult to separate the question of physical protection from the social, cultural and/or humanitarian constraints involved in relocating. However, even women who have access to economic means could face difficulties in finding accommodation or a job as they are often stigmatised. BAOBAB further added that young women and/or single women, in particular, who have relocated within Nigeria, are vulnerable to unscrupulous men that may target these women. Some of them might even end up as commercial sex workers.

[...] Social and humanitarian constraints

1.79 Representatives of a UN organisation explained that there are a number of social and humanitarian constraints on women who consider relocating in Nigeria. These constraints include:

- Lack of information on the part of the women themselves.
- Level of empowerment.

- Fear of leaving their own environment and to be seen as defiant of their own cultural norms and practices.
- Lack of accommodation and job opportunities. Fear of losing their own social network.
- Poverty.

1.80 WACOL believed that, in general, it would be difficult for a girl or a woman to relocate in Nigeria without relations who can assist her. WACOL considered that if an underage girl does not want to enter into a marriage, and she is ready to relocate elsewhere in Nigeria in order to escape the marriage, it is a precondition that she has a family member or relative in the new location that is ready to support her. Furthermore, regarding forced marriage it was emphasized that internal relocation might be much more difficult for a daughter/woman of an influential family than for a daughter/woman of an ordinary family. A daughter/woman from an influential family might find it more difficult to find a location in the country where she would not be recognised and maybe returned to her family or husband.

[...] 1.83 UNIFEM considered that, in practical terms, if a woman chooses to relocate she could face a number of economic and social constraints depending on her situation. The woman would be in a more favourable situation if she has an economic foundation of her own in the form of savings, which can sustain her until she can get a job. There is no social security system in Nigeria that can support a woman without any means of existence.

1.84 It would also be easier for a woman to relocate if she has a relative or a friend in the new location who would be willing to support her in the initial phase. Married women may have two families to choose from when it comes to whom they turn to for protection and safety. If the woman has no one to receive or accommodate her she might end up living in the street. According to Sections 405-409 of the Penal Code (Northern States) Federal Provisions Act 1960, she might then even be arrested in the northern part of the country as a 'vagabond'. The question of the economic and social constraints facing a woman who has decided to relocate very much depends on the specific situation of the woman.

[...] 1.88 BAOBAB explained that social welfare structures in Nigeria are not well equipped to perform their statutory and social functions. Accordingly women who have relocated will find that there are no shelters to protect them, no jobs, no access to justice, and they may find it difficult to be accommodated. In addition, gender stereotyping labels single women as "unattached" and they easily become vulnerable. Finally, laws are very often not implemented or enforced. [...]

Discriminatory practices against women

➤ [US Department of State, 2012 International Religious Freedom Report - Nigeria, 20 May 2013](#)

[...] Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom

[...] While the law prohibits religious discrimination in employment and other activities, some businesses continued to discriminate based on religion or ethnicity in hiring. Muslim women in the south reportedly continued to face job discrimination in the private sector, especially when applying for jobs requiring interactions with customers. [...]

➤ [US Department of State: Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2012 - Nigeria, 19 April 2013](#)

[...]Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

[...]Discrimination: The constitution provides for equality and freedom from discrimination; however, women experienced considerable economic discrimination. No laws bar women from particular fields of employment, but women often experienced discrimination under traditional and religious practices. The country's NGO coalition expressed concern over continued discrimination against women in the private sector, particularly in access to employment, promotion to higher professional positions, and salary equity. According to credible reports, many businesses operated with a "get pregnant, get fired" policy. Women remained underrepresented in the formal sector but played active and vital roles in the informal economy, particularly in agriculture, processing of foodstuffs, and selling of goods at markets. The number of women employed in the business sector increased every year, but women did not receive equal pay for equal work and often encountered difficulty in acquiring commercial credit or obtaining tax deductions or rebates as heads of households. Unmarried women in particular endured many forms of discrimination. Some women made considerable progress in both the academic and business worlds, but women overall remained marginalized. No laws bar women from owning land, but some customary land tenure systems allowed only men to own land, and women could gain access to land only through marriage or family.

Many customary practices also did not recognize a woman's right to inherit her husband's property, and many widows became destitute when their in-laws took virtually all the deceased husband's property. Women in the 12 northern states were affected to varying degrees by Sharia. In Zamfara State local governments enforced laws requiring the separation of Muslim men and women in transportation and health care. The Kano State prohibition on commercial motorcycle taxis taking women as passengers remained in place; however, authorities did not strictly enforce the prohibition [...]

- [Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada: Nigeria: Whether women who head their own households, without male or family support, can obtain housing and employment in large northern cities, such as Kano, Maiduguri, and Kaduna, and southern cities, such as Lagos, Ibadan, Port Harcourt; government support services available to female-headed households \[NGA103907.E\], 19 November 2012](#)

1. Overview

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, the Director of Widows for Peace through Development (WPD), a UK-based advocacy organization for widows in developing countries (12 Oct. 2012), indicated that "it is very difficult to generalize" about the situation of women who head their own households, and pointed out that many factors must be considered, including a woman's tribe, sub-clan, geographical location, level of education, and socio-economic status (WPD 15 Oct. 2012). According to the United States (US) Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011, however, in Nigeria, "unmarried women in particular endured many forms of discrimination" in 2011 (US 24 May 2012, 42). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a professor of Sociology and African Development at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, said that women who live without male support are worse off living in large northern cities than in the south (Professor 5 Jan. 2012). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, Uju Peace Okeke, a lawyer and sexual-and-reproductive-rights activist in Nigeria, indicated that there are more female-headed households in large southern cities than in large northern cities (26 Oct. 2012). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an assistant professor of Anthropology at the University of Kansas stated that,

[i]n northern contexts, there are firm expectations in Islam about the support husbands and fathers must provide for their wives and children. While there exist Shari'a courts to settle disputes when these expectations are not met (whether women are divorced or widowed, for example), few women avail themselves of them, particularly if they lack male advocates, economic resources, or extensive education. (18 Oct. 2012)

The Assistant Professor indicated that, although she does not have experience in southern Nigeria, she believes that this applies to all Muslim women in the country (18 Oct. 2012). When asked about the ability of women to live without male support in multi-ethnic cities such as Lagos, Ibadan, Port Harcourt, Kano, Maiduguri and Kaduna, the University of Nigeria professor said that Christians living in the north may be at risk due to "recurrent religious conflicts" (5 Jan. 2012). He also said that ethnicity plays a large role in obtaining employment in the public sector or in the government in the north, adding that a southerner who is not Hausa or Fulani will usually face difficulties in obtaining employment (Professor 5 Jan. 2012). He indicated that ethnicity is also a factor in obtaining employment in the south, although "to a lesser degree" (ibid.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

[...] When asked whether there were laws protecting women who head their own households, the University of Nigeria professor indicated that no laws "specifically protect women as a sub-group of the population" in Nigeria (5 Jan. 2012)

2. Socio-economic Status

Daily Trust, an Abuja-based newspaper, reports that, according to the Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development, speaking about "gender inequality" in the country after the release of the Gender in Nigeria Report 2012, there are very large geographical disparities in Nigeria (8 June 2012). She reportedly said that "human development outcomes" for girls and women are worse in the north, and that sometimes poverty levels in the north are double those in the south (Daily Trust 8 June 2012). The University of Kansas assistant professor stated that, in northern Nigeria, "women without male or family support face an array of social and economic challenges" (18 Oct. 2012).

According to the British Council in Nigeria, women "rely on a male breadwinner for survival" (UK 2012, 17). A project coordinator at Women's Rights Watch Nigeria, a Nigerian women's rights advocacy organization (Global Fund for Women n.d.), in correspondence with the Research Directorate, indicated that the survival of a family headed by a woman relies on a woman's socio-economic status (Women's

Rights Watch Nigeria 18 Oct. 2012). Okeke stated that women living without male or family support face a "major challenge" in the "cost of running a home" (26 Oct. 2012). According to Country Reports 2011, women face "considerable economic discrimination," and women who head their own households face challenges in accessing commercial credit, tax deductions and rebates (US 24 May 2012, 42).

According to the University of Nigeria professor, it is easier for a woman to live alone without male support if she is educated and has a high social status because she can use "family connections," and is more likely to gain employment through connections to powerful individuals and politicians than through education (5 Jan. 2012). The Women's Rights Watch Nigeria project coordinator stated that if women are educated, it is "easier to cope" with running a household without male or family support (18 Oct. 2012). However, sources indicate that there is a very high rate of unemployment in Nigeria (Professor 5 Jan. 2012; Women's Rights Watch Nigeria 18 Oct. 2012), including for graduates (Professor 5 Jan. 2012).

According to the Women's Rights Watch Nigeria project coordinator, in the "majority of cases [of women heading households] there is a high level of poverty, especially among widows" (18 Oct. 2012). Leadership, an Abuja-based newspaper, reports that many widows are uneducated or lack the skills necessary to be self-reliant (24 June 2012).

About divorced women, in correspondence with the Research Directorate, Ayesha Imam, an independent consultant on women's rights, NGO development and sustainable development, and the former head of the Department of Culture, Gender and Human Rights at the UN Population Fund, said that women are "usually economically worse off after marriages are dissolved" (20 Oct. 2012). Sources indicate that, after divorce, men do not pay alimony to their ex-wives (Women's Rights Watch Nigeria 18 Oct. 2012; VOA 22 Mar. 2012). Imam indicated that, in Muslim law and customary law, divorced women "are not entitled to maintenance (except during iddah-the waiting period)" (20 Oct. 2012). She added that, in Christian marriages and secular marriages, although "maintenance orders" can be made, they are rarely enforced (Imam 20 Oct. 2012). Imam also stated that, since state "social provisions" and pensions do not exist, divorced women who do not have custody of their children face the challenge of not having their children's assistance in old age and not being able to benefit from their children's labour (ibid.). Voice of America (VOA) reports that the Executive Director of Voice of Widows, Divorcees and Orphans Association of Nigeria (VOWAN), an organization that it describes as providing skills training and setting up marriages for women in Kano state, indicated that, since no alimony is paid, divorced women heading their own households "barely make ends meet" (VOA 22 Mar. 2012). The Executive Director of VOWAN reportedly also stated that these divorced women may turn to prostitution or other criminality to survive (ibid.).

Okeke indicated that there is a Nigerian societal belief that single women need men to survive (26 Oct. 2012). According to Imam, the societal belief that all women should be married can lead to problems for single, divorced, or widowed women, including sexual harassment and discrimination in employment (20 Oct. 2012). Imam goes on to say that, in southern Nigeria, especially in the southeast, which is largely Christian, "there is social stigma against divorced women," while in northern Nigeria, which is largely Muslim, "women may divorce and re-marry several times without stigma" (20 Oct. 2012). However, Imam qualified this latter assessment by saying that a woman who divorces more than three or four times will be viewed as a "difficult" woman (20 Oct. 2012).

[...] 5. Land Ownership

This Day, a Lagos-based newspaper, reports that, according to the Director General and CEO of the National Centre for Women Development, statistics show that "house ownership by the women folk in Nigeria is less than 5 percent" (1 Apr. 2010). According to Daily Trust, the Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development said that women own 4 percent of the land in the northeast and just over 10 percent in the southeast and the "[s]outh-[s]outh" (Daily Trust 8 June 2012).

Country Reports 2011 states that there is no statutory law against women owning land (US 24 May 2012, 42). Okeke notes that the rights of married women to acquire property have been upheld in some courts (10 Apr. 2010), and that the states of Oyo, Kaduna, Sokoto and Zamfara have enacted married women property laws (10 Apr. 2010, note 67). However, she states that "[t]hese married-women-empowering laws discriminate against unmarried women as only married women have the right to acquire, hold, dispose of any property and have personal liability in contractual matters" (Okeke 10 Apr. 2010). Okeke also states that women face obstacles in obtaining loans required to own property (ibid.). For example, lending institutions usually give loans to men, and if they agree to give a woman a loan, a male guarantor is still required (ibid.).

Country Reports 2011 states that "some customary land tenure systems allowed only men to own land, and women could gain access to land only through marriage or family" (US 24 May 2012, 42). However,

sources state that many customary laws prohibit women from inheriting property (ibid.; Women's Rights Watch Nigeria 18 Oct. 2012; Nigeria NGO CEDAW Coalition 18 July 2008, 61). The Nigeria NGO CEDAW Coalition states that these prohibitions exist in most parts of Nigeria (ibid.). Okeke states that women are allowed to inherit property from family "only on rare occasions" (10 Apr. 2010).

In the case of divorced women, the Nigeria NGO CEDAW Coalition states that all of the property acquired during the marriage belongs to the husband (18 July 2008, 61). Sources indicate that after a divorce, women are often evicted (VOWAN n.d.; Women's Rights Watch Nigeria 18 Oct. 2012).

Sources state that many widows become "destitute" after the family of their late husbands take their late husbands' property (US 24 May 2012, 42; Women's Rights Watch Nigeria 18 Oct. 2012). Sources note that some widows are evicted after their husbands' death (ibid.; Leadership 4 Jan. 2012). According to the Women's Rights Watch Nigeria project coordinator, her organization has received "many cases of forcible ejection of widows from their homes by their husband's families" (18 Oct. 2012). Sources add that widows themselves often become the property of their late husband's family (Leadership 4 Jan. 2012; Okeke 10 Apr. 2010). Leadership reports that widows may be forced to marry a specified male relative of their late husband (4 Jan. 2012), and Okeke indicates that decisions that the widow makes must be approved by her late husband's family (10 Apr. 2010) [...]

Risk of violence against women

- [OECD's Social Institutions & Gender Index, Nigeria, Undated \[Last accessed: 17/12/2013\]](#)
[...] Restricted Physical Integrity
[...] Although accurate figures as to prevalence are unavailable, rape and sexual violence is recognised as a widespread, serious problem in Nigeria.
[...] Sexual harassment is considered to be widespread, and includes the practice of demanding sexual favours in return for employment or grades in university. Sexual violence has also emerged as a significant feature of the ongoing conflict in the Niger Delta, with reports of state security forces using rape as a tool to intimidate the local population and as a way of 'revenging' attacks by militants on oil installations. [...]
- [Human Rights Watch, Boko Haram Abducts Women, Recruits Children: Hundreds 'Disappeared' by Security Forces; Vigilante Movement on the Rise, 29 November 2013](#)
Boko Haram has abducted scores of women and girls, used children as young as 12 in hostilities, and killed hundreds of people in recent attacks, Human Rights Watch said today.
[...] Commanders of the Civilian Joint Task Force, working with security forces, said that they had rescued 26 abducted women and girls from a Boko Haram stronghold in Maiduguri and later in Sambisa Forest. Some of the women and girls were pregnant; others had babies. The commanders told Human Rights Watch that a number of the girls had been abducted while hawking wares on the street or working on farms in remote villages. Many girls who were rescued or had escaped were sent off by their families to distant cities like Abuja and Lagos to avoid the stigma of rape or pregnancy outside of marriage, activists said. [...]
- [Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada: Nigeria: Whether women who head their own households, without male or family support, can obtain housing and employment in large northern cities, such as Kano, Maiduguri, and Kaduna, and southern cities, such as Lagos, Ibadan, Port Harcourt; government support services available to female-headed households \[NGA103907.E\], 19 November 2012](#)
[...] 6. Violence
The University of Kansas assistant professor indicated that violent crimes are "highly prevalent" across Nigeria, and that "women who lack the economic resources to access safe housing are disproportionately exposed to this risk" (18 Oct. 2012). When asked if women who head their own households without male or family support are exposed to a risk of violence, the Women's Rights Watch Nigeria project coordinator said that "[w]omen in both [the] north and south risk armed robbery attacks and there are increasing incidents of rape" (18 Oct. 2012). Further, according to the British Council in Nigeria's Gender in Nigeria Report 2012, "women who have never been married are more likely to have been attacked than married women" (UK 2012, vii).

Okeke indicated that, mainly in the south, women are more likely to be abused when they are no longer with a male partner (26 Oct. 2012). Okeke added that women who head their own households in the south are "stigmatized" and exposed to "psychological violence" (26 Oct. 2012). The British Council in Nigeria report says that almost "half of unmarried women in parts of southern Nigeria have experienced physical violence" (UK 2012, 2) [...]

➤ [British Council/DFID, Gender in Nigeria Report 2012: Improving the lives of girls and women in Nigeria – Issues, Policies, Action, 14 August 2012](#)

[...] Executive Summary

[...] Key Findings

[...] 10. Violence Against Women and Girls

Violence against women and girls cannot be ignored. One in three of all women and girls aged 15-24 has been a victim of violence. Women who have never married are more likely to have been attacked than married women.

[...] Institutionalised violence. Research has suggested, disturbingly, that violence is endemic in some public institutions, including the police and certain educational bodies, where an "entrenched culture of impunity" protects perpetrators of rape and other violence. These crimes are under-reported and very few cases are brought to court. Fear of violence hinders Nigeria's development. It not only deters girls from going to school but impacts on almost every aspect of women's lives as productive and active citizens.

[...] 7. Gender violence in Nigeria

The violence or threat of violence that women and girls face is a consistent thread running through this review: domestic violence, traditional harmful practices, fear of standing for elected office, sexual harassment of young women training to be teachers, bullying of girls who challenge boys' "no go" areas in schools, or fear of corporal punishment when parents cannot pay school levies. Violence takes many forms, and has consequences that constrain women's autonomy and life chances.

[...] 7.1 Structural violence

Much structurally induced gender violence against women stems from social norms which define what constitutes abuse of women in both domestic and public contexts. The literature suggests an acceptance of cultural practices that condone and even encourage certain forms of violence.

[...] One in five women has experienced some form of physical violence. Women in the 'never married group' are more likely to have suffered physical violence than women who have been married. Women in urban areas are also more likely to have experienced violence than those in rural areas. The highest proportion of women who experience physical violence is found in the South-West and South-South. The North-East and North-West report relatively fewer cases of domestic violence, although this could be an indication that violence in households is under-reported. Much but not all of the physical, sexual and psychological violence experienced by women in Nigeria is reported to be at the hands of family members, especially husbands, partners and fathers. For this reason it is puzzling and surprising that the data show that unmarried women are more likely to have experienced violence than their married counterparts. None of the research on Nigeria that we reviewed explains this puzzle.

[...] 7.2 Institutions and Gender Violence in Nigeria

Certain forms of violence are institutionalised. Much of the blame is placed on plural legal systems. The law as currently constituted does not offer women and girls adequate protection from violence (Mahdi, 2011; Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition, 2008). Although progress has been made (for example, the Violence against Women Prevention, Protection and Prohibition Act 2002), only four Nigerian states (Ebonyi, Jigawa, Cross Rivers and Lagos) have enacted domestic violence laws, while just six (Enugu, Edo, Bayelsa, Delta, Cross Rivers and Ogun) have passed laws against female genital mutilation (FGM). The literature identifies statutory, religious and customary laws in Nigeria that permit violence against women. The Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition report (2008), for example, identifies the penal code (section 55(4)), applicable in the Northern regions, that legalises 'corrective' beating of a child, pupil, servant or wife, as long as this does not cause grievous hurt. For some, this is the root cause of violence against women. Similarly, marital rape is excluded from the definition of rape in penal legislation in the North and under the criminal code in the South.³⁴ An Amnesty report, "Rape: The Silent Weapon", makes the point that differences in the definition of rape in federal, State, Sharia and customary legal systems create a plural justice system that potentially will undermine women's rights to seek legal redress in such cases. Indeed,

current legislation may penalize the victim rather than the perpetrator. Muslim women can face particular problems when they seek justice and redress for rape under Sharia law, because the need for a witness makes successful prosecution more difficult (Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition, 2008).

[...] 7.5 Gender Violence: Emerging Issues

One in three Nigerian women and girls aged 15-24 have been the victims of violence (DHS 2008). Violence against women and girls cannot be ignored. Women who have never married are more likely to have been attacked than their married counterparts. [...]

➤ [Global Rights, State of Human Rights in Northern Nigeria, July 2011](#)

[...] Chapter Three: Women's Rights

[...] 3.3. Gender based violence

[...] In Northern Nigeria, the most common forms of gender based violence include intimate partner violence, sexual violence, verbal abuse, and financial deprivation, food deprivation, child/forced marriage, torture and stigmatization on alleged involvement in witchcraft. The application of Shar'ia laws may also amount to gender based violence, where for example it mandates widows to fulfill a compulsory mourning period of four months and 10 days before the expiration of which they not permitted to marry. The stated justification for the law is to prevent women pregnant by their late husband from getting married to other men. Muslim women who disobey this law can thus be accused of adultery and punished accordingly [...]

Lack of effective protection by the Nigerian police force

➤ [US Department of State: Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2012 - Nigeria, 19 April 2013](#)

[...] Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from

[...] c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

[...] According to credible reports, during the year security forces committed rape and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls with impunity. In 2010 the Open Society Justice Initiative reported that rape was "a routine but unspoken aspect of policing" and was regarded by police as "one of the fringe benefits attached to night patrol." This report on corruption within the police force highlighted the rape of arrested prostitutes by police. The report described police officers raping women who could not pay 1,000 naira (\$6.40) for their release. Police allegedly raped women who came to report crimes at police stations. The report also claimed officers, both male and female, sodomized women with bottles and metal pipes. Also in 2010 HRW released a report detailing widespread police abuse of power, including acts, or threats, of rape or sexual assault, to extort bribes from female detainees or women traveling between road checkpoints. In May the minister of the interior denied allegations some female inmates were impregnated while serving time in prison. AI reported in 2009 police frequently raped women in detention but victims did not report the abuse because of the social stigma attached to rape and the fact that police officers had committed these crimes.

➤ [British Council/DFID, Gender in Nigeria Report 2012: Improving the lives of girls and women in Nigeria – Issues, Policies, Action, 14 August 2012](#)

[...] Executive Summary

[...] Key Findings

[...] 7. Gender violence in Nigeria

[...] 7.5 Gender Violence: Emerging Issues

[...] More disturbing are suggestions that violence is "endemic" in some public institutions such as the police and certain educational institutions, where an "entrenched culture of impunity" for the perpetrators of rape and other violence is reported to exist (Amnesty International, 2006). One recent survey in Northern Nigeria found that the Nigerian Police Force was the least trusted state institution (Ladbury, 2011). Crimes such as rape are under reported and very few cases are brought to court. The fear of violence hinders development progress in Nigeria. It not only deters girls from going to school, but impacts potentially on every aspect of women's lives as productive and active citizens. [...]

➤ [Global Rights, State of Human Rights in Northern Nigeria, July 2011](#)

[...] Chapter Three: Women's Rights

[...] 3.3. Gender based violence

[...] 3.3.2 Sexual violence

Sexual violence was of major interest in this project given its prevalence and lack of responsiveness from the state in prosecuting offenders or creating a secure environment for women and children. Although the law recognizes and criminalizes these offences by providing penalties for those convicted of the offence, however societal pressure and the stigma associated with sexual violations ultimately affects the number of reported cases

[...] The laws of Nigeria and particularly those applicable in the north are also a barrier to prosecutions of rape or sexual assault. The definition of rape in the Penal Code applicable to northern Nigeria is not as strong as the provision under the Criminal Code applicable in southern Nigeria states, because it only includes the penetration of the vagina with a penis³² and thus precludes penetration with other objects, sodomy, fellatio or other invasive acts that ought to fit within the definition of rape

[...] 3.6 Enforcement of Shar'ia Law Against Women

The Hisbah groups are Islamic vigilante groups commissioned by the government in some Shar'ia practicing states to enforce adherence to the Shar'ia penal and moral codes. The Arabic term 'Hisbah', means "an act which is performed for the common good or with the intention of seeking a reward from God". In some cases, these groups have the power to arrest but are required by law to hand over suspects to the police. In practice, however, they are often the 'police, the jury and the judge'. The Task Force on Shar'ia Implementation in Bauchi State considers the Hisbah organization to be the backbone of the Shar'ia judicial system. The Hisbah groups active in Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Bauchi and Zamfara states often violate the rights of poor and vulnerable groups, especially women, in these states. There have also been several reports of vicious attacks on women who are considered 'inappropriately dressed' by the Hisbah group. Northern Nigeria is predominantly Muslim but has a sizeable population of Christian and other non-Muslim settlers. Most Hisbah victims are Christians, southerners and western dressed northerners. Thus, most non-Muslim women have also been forced to adopt the Islamic dress culture to avoid harassment and physical assault from the Hisbah groups. [...]

Lack of services available to single lone women

➤ [International Organization for Migration, Country Fact Sheet: Nigeria, August 2013](#)

[...] IX. VULNERABLE PERSONS

1. Assistance to Women and Mothers returning alone (Gender Projects)

There is no specific program for assisting the above mentioned group. There are various organizations (international, national, NGOs) in Nigeria working on gender issues but their projects mostly focus on awareness raising, advocacy, research and for those who have undertake assistance programs for women returnees their focus has been on trafficked persons subject to availability of funding. [...]

➤ [Institute for Public Policy Research, Homecoming: Return and Reintegration of Irregular Migrants from Nigeria, April 2013](#)

[...] 2.4.3 Social stability and networks

[...] Migrants also made clear the importance of social support when they discussed the barriers to their reintegration. For some, the stigma they faced upon returning or being deported presented major social hurdles – particularly for those who had been victims of trafficking. [...]

➤ [Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada: Nigeria: Whether women who head their own households, without male or family support, can obtain housing and employment in large northern cities, such as Kano, Maiduguri, and Kaduna, and southern cities, such as Lagos, Ibadan, Port Harcourt; government support services available to female-headed households \[NGA103907.E\], 19 November 2012](#)

[...] 7. Support Services

According to the University of Kansas assistant professor, "few widows or divorcees" she knows access social or economic support from the government, adding that there are "effective" HIV services, which "rarely include other forms of economic support" (18 Oct. 2012). However, other sources indicate that there are no government support services for women who head their own households (Women's Rights Watch Nigeria 18 Oct. 2012; Professor 5 Jan. 2012). Those same sources also point out that there are, in

general, no government social services (ibid.; Women's Rights Watch Nigeria 18 Oct. 2012), such as welfare or social security (ibid.). According to the University of Nigeria professor, the Ministry of Women's Affairs provides very little in the way of services (5 Jan. 2012).

The University of Nigeria professor stated that some NGOs exist; however, they are driven by the "lure" of available funding, "hardly effective," and, when services are provided, the follow-ups are "poor" and they do not do much to "deepen the capacity of the beneficiaries" (5 Jan. 2012). The University of Kansas assistant professor indicated that in the north "there are few state or religious-based organizations to provide women a 'safety net' in providing for their children, generating income, or repaying debt" (18 Oct. 2012). Further information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

7.1 Women Housing Plan Initiative

Sources reported in 2010 on the launch in Abuja of a program called the "Women Housing Plan Initiative," which aimed to "assist and empower" single, widowed, and married women to own homes "in support of their immediate families" (This Day 1 Apr. 2010; Vanguard 7 Mar. 2010). These sources added that the federal government supported the initiative (ibid.; This Day 1 Apr. 2010). Further information about the Women Housing Plan Initiative and the government support for this program could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

7.2 Marriage Programs

Sources report on marriage programs that have been created to wed unattached women to men in Kano (VOA 22 Mar. 2012; AFP 3 May 2012; Leadership 19 Mar. 2012) and Zamfara (Vanguard 6 Oct. 2012). In Kano, VOWAN and the Hisbah board, also known as the "Islamic police," have been matching men with widows and divorcees (AFP 3 May 2012; VOA 22 Mar. 2012), sometimes in a "mass wedding" (Euronews 19 May 2012; Christian Science Monitor 18 May 2012). According to Agence France-Presse (AFP), the Hisbah board pays the necessary dowries and provides small grants to the couples getting married (3 May 2012). Media sources list a variety of reasons why this program was created, which include:

Women need husbands for "social security" (Leadership 19 Mar. 2012).

Divorce rates are increasing (VOA 22 Mar. 2012).

Dowries are expensive for men (AFP 3 May 2012). Imam also makes reference to the inability of poor men to afford the costs associated with marriage (20 Oct. 2012).

To fight the stigma of divorce for the divorcee (Christian Science Monitor 18 May 2012).

Women need financial support after divorce (VOA 22 Mar. 2012). Similarly, Imam states that the program was created due to the economic difficulties of widows (20 Oct. 2012).

The VOWAN website states that there has been great interest in this program, which led the Kwankwaso [Kano State governor (Kano State n.d.)] administration to increase the number of marriages performed in the initial stage of this program from 100 to 200 (VOWAN n.d.). Although local officials reportedly say that women participate voluntarily (AFP 3 May 2012), activists reportedly have expressed concerns that women, some of whom are victims of domestic violence from their first marriage, are being pressured into "potentially dangerous new relationships" (Euronews 19 May 2012). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

[...] Shelter facilities

1.23 According to representatives of a UN organisation, many women relocate to escape domestic violence, forced marriage or FGM, even within their local or state area. However, women prefer to go to friends or relatives, rather than to a shelter. The general perception amongst Nigerians is that shelters hide battered women and women with many problems who have no relatives to turn to. Many women, even victims of violence themselves, do not want to be associated with such women. Moreover, women relocating from their homes are seen as violators of their own culture and may feel ashamed as a result. However, when there are no other alternatives women will seek protection in a shelter.

1.24 Project Alert confirms that the shelter option is often sought as a last resort when all other options such as the religious angle, the family, friends, and relatives have failed. One result of Project Alert's evaluation of its shelter (named Sophia's Place and located in Lagos) was that a majority of the respondents "articulated the need to publicize the shelter and its services more to the general public as many victims out there still don't know where to go for help". [18a] (Annex D)

[...] Support provided by churches and mosques

[...] 1.76 Most women have strong confidence in their religious leaders, who have an enormous influence in local communities, but in Nigeria, as in most parts of Africa, religious beliefs run deep and the fear of

the supernatural is absolute. As a result, religious leaders wield absolute power and command unquestioning devotion from their adherents. There are reported examples of such leaders having abused women who sought refuge in their care. [20] (Annex D)

Risk of being tracked down and found by relatives

1.77[...] UNIFEM believed that, should a husband know where his wife has fled to, there is a high risk that he would try to contact her or force her to return home.

[...] 1.88 BAOBAB explained that social welfare structures in Nigeria are not well equipped to perform their statutory and social functions. Accordingly women who have relocated will find that there are no shelters to protect them, no jobs, no access to justice, and they may find it difficult to be accommodated. In addition, gender stereotyping labels single women as “unattached” and they easily become vulnerable. Finally, laws are very often not implemented or enforced. [...]

Restrictions on women’s freedom of movement

➤ [OECD’s Social Institutions & Gender Index, Nigeria, Undated \[Last accessed: 17/12/2013\]](#)

[...] Restricted civil liberties

Women’s freedom of movement is restricted in that in some cases they are obliged to obtain their husbands’ permission to obtain a passport or to travel outside the country. Women in purdah (in Muslim communities in northern areas) cannot leave their homes without permission from their husbands and must be accompanied by a man at all times when in public. Purdah also restricts women’s freedom of dress in that Muslim women must be veiled in public. Widows in these regions face the greatest degree of discrimination: they are confined to the home and must keep their heads shaven and wear mourning dress. [...]

Witchcraft

The OGN has not included any information on the risk to children or women accused of witchcraft. The following non-exhaustive, illustrative COI available in the public domain documents the practice being committed in Nigeria and the lack of effective state protection, which is worth noting on this issue. The COI listed below should be read in conjunction with that included above in sections [2.2 Actors of protection](#) and [2.3 Internal Relocation](#).

This section ends with a list of sources providing non-country specific contextual background on witchcraft accusations and refugee protection.

- [Children accused of witchcraft](#)
- [Women accused of witchcraft](#)
- [Contextual background information on witchcraft](#)

Children accused of witchcraft

Relevant sources have been grouped under the following issues:

- [Profiles of children accused of witchcraft](#)
- [Treatment of children accused of witchcraft](#)
- [Effective protection available for children accused of witchcraft](#)

Note that extracts have not been provided for specific thematic-country reports due to the size of these reports; instead the relevant entries of the content pages have been included:

- **Profiles of children accused of witchcraft**
- [GlobalPost, Nigeria's "witch children" find refuge at center, 23 January 2012](#)
[...] More than 100 Nigerian children have been branded as witches by church ministers and have been cast out by their families and shunned by society. Some of the children pariahs have suffered violence from their families and from others. The campaign against the "witches" has been pursued by some zealous preachers associated with small Christian sects that also incorporate some animist Nigerian beliefs. Those who identify the "witches" are encouraged by evangelical pastors, according to human-rights groups in the area. Drawing on the community's fears, preachers sometimes denounce specific children as witches, leading the young ones to be abused, abandoned and even murdered.
[...] So-called witches are identified by powerful religious leaders from local churches where Christianity and traditional beliefs combine to produce a deep-rooted belief in, and fear of, witchcraft. The ministers spread the message that child-witches bring destruction, disease and death to their families. And they say that, once possessed, children can cast spells and contaminate others.
[...] The religious leaders offer help to the families whose children are named witches, but at a price. The churches hold evening exorcisms, where the pastors attempt to drive out the evil spirits. Only they have the power to cleanse the child of evil spirits, they say. The exorcism can cost the families up to a year's income. [...]
- [Stepping Stones Nigeria, UK, Report on Accusations of Witchcraft Against Children in Akwa Ibom State, December 2010](#)
[...] Contents
[...] 2. Witchcraft accusations against children in Akwa Ibom State [...]

- [Stepping Stones Nigeria, UK, Witchcraft Stigmatisation and Children's Rights in Nigeria: Report prepared for the 54th Session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, May 2010](#)

Contents

[...] 5.1 Children with disabilities

[...] 5.2 HIV/AIDS

[...] 5.5. The environmental context

[...] 7.1 Refugees/internally displaced children and children affected by communal conflict

[...] 7.2 Street children

- [UNICEF, The Causes and Prevalence of Accusation of Witchcraft Among Children in Akwa Ibom State, June 2008](#)

[...] Table of Contents

[...] Key Findings

Analysis [...]

- [The Guardian, Children are targets of Nigerian witch hunt, 9 December 2007](#)

[...] In the small delta state of Akwa Ibom, the tension and the poverty has delivered an opportunity for a new and terrible phenomenon that is leading to the abuse and the murder of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of children. And it is being done in the name of Christianity.

Almost everyone goes to church here. Driving through the town of Esit Eket, the rust-streaked signs, tarpaulins hung between trees and posters on boulders, advertise a church for every third or fourth house along the road. Such names as New Testament Assembly, Church of God Mission, Mount Zion Gospel, Glory of God, Brotherhood of the Cross, Redeemed, Apostolic. Behind the smartly painted doors pastors make a living by 'deliverances' - exorcisms - for people beset by witchcraft, something seen to cause anything from divorce, disease, accidents or job losses. With so many churches it's a competitive market, but by local standards a lucrative one.

But an exploitative situation has now grown into something much more sinister as preachers are turning their attentions to children - naming them as witches. In a maddened state of terror, parents and whole villages turn on the child. They are burnt, poisoned, slashed, chained to trees, buried alive or simply beaten and chased off into the bush.

Some parents scrape together sums needed to pay for a deliverance - sometimes as much as three or four months' salary for the average working man - although the pastor will explain that the witch might return and a second deliverance will be needed. Even if the parent wants to keep the child, their neighbours may attack it in the street. [...]

- **Treatment of children accused of witchcraft**

- [UN Human Rights Council, Compilation prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 \(b\) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21, 9 August 2013](#)

[...] B. Right to life, liberty and security of the person

[...] 27. In 2010, the special rapporteurs on torture and summary executions sent a communication regarding allegations of torture and killing of children suspected of witchcraft in Akwa Ibom State, and the death threats against the coordinator of a local nongovernmental organization that cared for children accused of witchcraft. [...]

- [U.S. Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012, 19 April 2013](#)

[...] Section 6

[...] Children accused of witchcraft were abused in some states. Children accused of witchcraft suffered kidnapping, torture, and death. According to two local NGOs that operated shelters, Stepping Stones Nigeria (SSN) and the Child Rights and Rehabilitation Network (CRARN), attackers drove nails into children's heads, cut off fingers, tied children to trees, and abandoned them in the jungle.

[...] In June 2011 police raided a hospital in Aba, Abia State, and rescued girls allegedly being held to produce babies for sale for use in witchcraft rituals. The police rescued 32 of the girls, ages 15 to 17. Male babies reportedly sold for up to one million naira (\$6,400) for use by trafficking rings or in witchcraft

rituals. The owner of the hospital claimed the hospital served as a shelter for pregnant teenagers. Authorities held him for trial at year's end.

[...] Self-proclaimed "bishop" Sunday Williams publicly claimed to have killed 110 child witches and asserted Akwa Ibom State had as many as 2.3 million witches and wizards among its population of 3.9 million. In 2008 authorities arrested Williams and charged him with torture and murder; authorities arraigned him in 2009, and the case continued at year's end. [...]

➤ [GlobalPost, Nigeria's "witch children" find refuge at center, 23 January 2012](#)

More than 100 Nigerian children have been branded as witches by church ministers and have been cast out by their families and shunned by society. Some of the children pariahs have suffered violence from their families and from others.

[...] Stella is one of the children now at the center after she was accused of being a witch. Abandoned by her family, vulnerable and frightened, she wandered the streets in southeastern Nigeria, struggling to stay alive. Stella was found by Jehu Tom, a network rescue officer who lives at the center with 160 other children who have been branded witches, blamed for all their family's woes, and abandoned. Before being pushed out of their homes, many were beaten or slashed with knives, thrown onto fires, or had acid poured over them as a punishment or in an attempt to make them "confess" to being possessed. In one case, a young girl called Uma had a three-inch nail driven into her skull. [...]

➤ [Stepping Stones Nigeria, UK, Witchcraft stigmatization in Nigeria: Challenges and successes in the implementation of child rights, 2012, International Social Work 56\(1\)](#)

Contents:

[...] 1. Accusations of witchcraft against children in Nigeria

[...] 2. The effect of witchcraft stigmatization on children's rights

➤ [Fund For Peace, Nigeria: Ongoing Turbulence: April – September 2011, 28 October 2011](#)

[...] Reported Human Rights Violations

The Commission into Witchcraft and Child Abuses in Akwa Ibom (State 4) obtained evidence of allegations of witchcraft against children and the infliction of cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment of such children. The Commission intends to examine allegations that children have been threatened, tortured, and killed on the grounds of being witches or wizards.

[...] A police officer arrested a woman in Rivers (State 33) for battering her child because her religious leader told her that the child was a witch and was responsible for all the calamity the family is going through.

[...] There were two reports of kidnapping in Eket (LGA 12), both of which were likely politically motivated aiming at intimidating political opposition. There was also a report of severe child abuse of a large number of children who had been accused of being witches and wizards.

[...] Obio/Akpor

A woman battered her child who was said to be a witch by a religious leader. [...]

➤ [Stepping Stones Nigeria, UK, Report on Accusations of Witchcraft Against Children in Akwa Ibom State, December 2010](#)

[...] Contents

[...] 2. Witchcraft accusations against children in Akwa Ibom State

➤ [UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Fifty-fourth session: Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Concluding observations: Nigeria, 11 June 2010](#)

[...] Children accused of witchcraft

67. The Committee notes with appreciation the measures taken by the State party to address the phenomenon of children accused of witchcraft, including the passing of state legislation prohibiting such practice in Akwa Ibom State, the arrest and prosecution of offenders, ongoing awareness-raising and rehabilitation programmes, and successful family reunification projects. The Committee nevertheless remains extremely concerned at the reportedly widespread practice of the witchcraft stigmatization of children in the State party and reports that these children are tortured, abused, abandoned and even

killed as a result of such stigma and persecution. The Committee is particularly concerned at the reported roles of certain churches and the film industry in promoting the belief in child witchcraft and that already vulnerable children, including children from poor families and children with disabilities, are at greater risk of witchcraft stigmatization. In this respect, the Committee express utmost concern at reports of arbitrary killings of children during the course of activities designed to extract a confession of witchcraft or resulting from exorcism ceremonies.[...]

➤ [The New York Times, On a Visit to the U.S., a Nigerian Witch-Hunter Explains Herself, 21 May 2010](#)

[...] At home in Nigeria, the Pentecostal preacher Helen Ukpabio draws thousands to her revival meetings. Last August, when she had herself consecrated Christendom's first "lady apostle," Nigerian politicians and Nollywood actors attended the ceremony. Her books and DVDs, which explain how Satan possesses children, are widely known.

So well-known, in fact, that Ms. Ukpabio's critics say her teachings have contributed to the torture or abandonment of thousands of Nigerian children — including infants and toddlers — suspected of being witches and warlocks. Her culpability is a central contention of "Saving Africa's Witch Children," a documentary that will make its American debut Wednesday on HBO2. [...]

➤ [Stepping Stones Nigeria, UK, Witchcraft Stigmatisation and Children's Rights in Nigeria: Report prepared for the 54th Session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, May 2010](#)

Contents:

- [...] 1.4 Independent monitoring
- 1.5 Data collection
- [...] 2.1 Non-discrimination
- [...] 2.2 Right to life
- [...] 2.3 Best interest of the child and respect for the views of the child
- [...] 3.1 Torture
- [...] 4.1. Children deprived of a family environment and alternative care
- [...] 4.2 Violence, abuse and neglect
- [...] 5.3 Health and health services
- [...] 6.1 Education
- [...] 6.2 Film
- [...] 7.3 Sexual exploitation and child pornography
- [...] 7.4 Sale, trafficking and abduction
- [...] 7.5 Economic exploitation
- [...] 7.6 Juvenile justice
- [...] 7.7 Imprisonment

➤ [UNICEF, The Causes and Prevalence of Accusation of Witchcraft Among Children in Akwa Ibom State, June 2008](#)

- [...] Table of Contents
- [...] Key Findings
- Analysis
- [...] Challenges [...]

➤ [The Guardian, Children are targets of Nigerian witch hunt, 9 December 2007](#)

[...] Mary Sudnad, 10, grimaces as her hair is pulled into corn rows by Agnes, 11, but the scalp just above her forehead is bald and blistered. Mary tells her story fast, in staccato, staring fixedly at the ground.

'My youngest brother died. The pastor told my mother it was because I was a witch. Three men came to my house. I didn't know these men. My mother left the house. Left these men. They beat me.' She pushes her fists under her chin to show how her father lay, stretched out on his stomach on the floor of their hut, watching. After the beating there was a trip to the church for 'a deliverance'.

A day later there was a walk in the bush with her mother. They picked poisonous 'asiri' berries that were made into a draught and forced down Mary's throat. If that didn't kill her, her mother warned her, then it would be a barbed-wire hanging. Finally her mother threw boiling water and caustic soda over her head

and body, and her father dumped his screaming daughter in a field. Drifting in and out of consciousness, she stayed near the house for a long time before finally slinking off into the bush. Mary was seven. She says she still doesn't feel safe. She says: 'My mother doesn't love me.' And, finally, a tear streaks down her beautiful face.

Gerry was picked out by a 'prophetess' at a prayer night and named as a witch. His mother cursed him, his father siphoned petrol from his motorbike tank and spat it over his eight-year-old face. Gerry's facial blistering is as visible as the trauma in his dull eyes. He asks every adult he sees if they will take him home to his parents: 'It's not them, it's the prophetess, I am scared of her.'

Nwaeka is about 16. She sits by herself in the mud, her eyes rolling, scratching at her stick-thin arms. The other children are surprisingly patient with her. The wound on her head where a nail was driven in looks to be healing well. Nine-year-old Etido had nails, too, five of them across the crown of his downy head. It's hard to tell what damage has been done. Udo, now 12, was beaten and abandoned by his mother. He nearly lost his arm after villagers, finding him foraging for food by the roadside, saw him as a witch and hacked at him with machetes.

Magrose is seven. Her mother dug a pit in the wood and tried to bury her alive. Michael was found by a farmer clearing a ditch, starving and unable to stand on legs that had been flogged raw.

Ekemini Abia has the look of someone in a deep state of shock. Both ankles are circled with gruesome wounds and she moves at a painful hobble. Named as a witch, her father and elders from the church tied her to a tree, the rope cutting her to the bone, and left the 13-year-old there alone for more than a week. There are sibling groups such as Prince, four, and Rita, nine. Rita told her mum she had dreamt of a lovely party where there was lots to eat and to drink. The belief is that a witch flies away to the coven at night while the body sleeps, so Rita's sweet dream was proof enough: she was a witch and because she had shared food with her sibling - the way witchcraft is spread - both were abandoned. Victoria, cheeky and funny, aged four, and her seven-year-old sister Helen, a serene little girl. Left by their parents in the shell of an old shack, the girls didn't dare move from where they had been abandoned and ate leaves and grass. The youngest here is a baby. The older girls take it in turn to sling her on their skinny hips and Ikpe-Itauma has named her Amelia, after his grandmother. He estimates around 5,000 children have been abandoned in this area since 1998 and says many bodies have turned up in the rivers or in the forest. Many more are never found. [...]

○ **Effective protection available for children accused of witchcraft**

- [UN Human Rights Council, Compilation prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 \(b\) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21, 9 August 2013](#)

[...] B. Right to life, liberty and security of the person

[...] 26. CRC [UN Committee on the Rights of the Child] urged Nigeria to (a) combat the belief in witchcraft involving children; (b) criminalize such accusations; (c) prosecute the authors of crimes committed on the basis of this belief; (d) undertake awareness-raising programmes; and (e) regulate those religious institutions found to have engaged in such practices. [...]

- [U.S. Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012, 19 April 2013](#)

[...] Section 6

[...] According to two local NGOs that operated shelters, Stepping Stones Nigeria (SSN) and the Child Rights and Rehabilitation Network (CRARN), attackers drove nails into children's heads, cut off fingers, tied children to trees, and abandoned them in the jungle. The state governor, reacting to international press stories of persecution of children accused of witchcraft in Akwa Ibom, issued arrest warrants for the leaders of the SSN and the CRARN for alleged misappropriation of funds and personal gain. The cases remained pending at year's end, with outstanding warrants for the shelter's directors. During a senior level foreign official's visit to Akwa Ibom in August, the SSS detained CRARN administrators who were released only after the official's intervention.

[...] In September 2010 the media reported public criticism and efforts by the government, particularly in Akwa Ibom State, had caused a drop in new reported cases of children abused for alleged witchcraft. In November 2010 the government of Akwa Ibom State set up the Commission of Inquiry into Witchcraft

Accusations and Child Rights Abuses. On May 10, the commission adjourned, but its findings were not available by year's end. [...]

➤ [Al Jazeera, Nigeria outlaws accusing children of sorcery, 1 November 2012](#)

The Nigerian state of Akwa Ibom has introduced a law that makes it illegal to accuse children of witchcraft and sorcery.

The state has spent significant amounts of money to aid the hundreds of Nigerian children that had been branded witches in Akwa Ibom for years.

But some say churches in the impoverished state where unemployment is rampant, must also be reigned in.

Some activists cite the churches as the source of the belief that children are sorcerers or witches.

Al Jazeera's Yvonne Ndege reports from Uyo.

➤ [Stepping Stones Nigeria, UK, Witchcraft stigmatization in Nigeria: Challenges and successes in the implementation of child rights, 2012, International Social Work 56\(1\)](#)

Contents:

[...] 3. Legislative and policy responses [...]

➤ [Fair Play for Children, Humanist anti-witchcraft campaigner Leo Igwe 'brutalised' in police custody, 22 January 2011](#)

ON on-going campaign of intimidation against Nigerian humanist Leo Igwe took a sinister new twist when Igwe, a representative of the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) in West Africa, was beaten up while in police custody.

Igwe, Director of the Centre for Inquiry in Nigeria who has been bravely campaigning against religious leaders and their supporters who stigmatise children as "witches", was arrested earlier this month by the police in Akwa Ibom State. His arrest is thought to be part of a campaign by state Governor Goodwill Akpabio to clamp down on activists involved in the rescue of children accused of witchcraft.

Akpabio, according to this report, had vowed to jail the activists for bringing his administration into disrepute over the campaign against the harmful traditional practice, which violate the rights of children in the state.

Later it was reported that Igwe, following numerous calls to the Nigerian authorities by concerned human rights campaigners around the world, had been released, with the police claiming that his arrest had been the result of "mistaken identity"

Igwe said after his release:

It was a terrible encounter my hands were tied behind me and they beat me mercilessly. My head was swollen ... I was kept incommunicado and had no contact with either my family or my lawyers.

He added:

During my interrogation I discovered that my case was worsened by the fact that I was an anti-witchcraft advocate; they kept saying that I was a fraudster making money from the child witch phenomenon, so it was funny for them to say that it was a case of mistaken identity.

Governor Akpabio had promised to make life uncomfortable for NGO's working on children's rights in the state when he ordered the arrest of Sam Ikpe-Itauma in a radio broadcast last year. Reacting to a report aired by CNN on the child witch situation, the Governor reportedly promised that "heads will roll".

Igwe, along with Sam Ituama, who runs a homeless shelter for rescued child "witches," has been working tirelessly against child abuse in Akwa Ibom State. Their successful campaigns have exposed the depth of the harmful practice in the state. But it has also pitched the activists against the state Governor, who recently accused them of "corruption".

In 2009 Igwe was assaulted by supporters of a lunatic Pentacostal "witch-hunter" Helen Ukpabio. She and her church, the Liberty Foundation Gospel Ministries, have run a campaign of terror against children and those committed to fighting for their rights. The conference had been organised by the Nigerian Humanist Movement and the UK charity Stepping Stones Nigeria in response to the widespread abandonment, torture and killing of children branded as "witches" in Akwa Ibom and Cross River State.

➤ [Stepping Stones Nigeria, UK, Report on Accusations of Witchcraft Against Children in Akwa Ibom State, December 2010](#)

[...] Contents

[...] 3. Work undertaken by Stepping Stones Nigeria and partners to combat witchcraft accusations against children

4. Recommendations to Commission of Inquiry for future action [...]

- [UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Fifty-fourth session: Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Concluding observations: Nigeria, 11 June 2010](#)

[...] Children accused of witchcraft

67. The Committee notes with appreciation the measures taken by the State party to address the phenomenon of children accused of witchcraft, including the passing of state legislation prohibiting such practice in Akwa Ibom State, the arrest and prosecution of offenders, ongoing awareness-raising and rehabilitation programmes, and successful family reunification projects. The Committee nevertheless remains extremely concerned at the reportedly widespread practice of the witchcraft stigmatization of children in the State party and reports that these children are tortured, abused, abandoned and even killed as a result of such stigma and persecution.[...]

- [Stepping Stones Nigeria, UK, Witchcraft Stigmatisation and Children's Rights in Nigeria: Report prepared for the 54th Session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, May 2010](#)

Contents:

[...] 1.1 Legislation

[...] 1.2 Coordination

[...] 4.1. Children deprived of a family environment and alternative care

[...] 7.7 Imprisonment

- [UNICEF, The Causes and Prevalence of Accusation of Witchcraft Among Children in Akwa Ibom State, June 2008](#)

[...] Table of Contents

[...] Key Findings

Analysis

Stakeholder Efforts

Success Stories

Challenges [...]

Women accused of witchcraft

Though extremely limited the following source specifically describes the situation for women accused of witchcraft in Nigeria. Note also some of the background material presented further below which contains information on women accused of witchcraft more generally:

- [Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada: Nigeria: Whether Yoruba and Ibo cleansing rituals for women in their thirties include circumcision in the states of Ogun, Niger, Anambra, and Adamawa; whether women who have been accused of killing a family member through witchcraft would be circumcised during a cleansing ritual \(2012-April 2013\) \[NGA104392.E\], 29 April 2013](#)

[...]2. Accusations of Witchcraft

[...]The CDHR [Committee for the Defence of Human Rights]representative stated that "witch branding" takes place when a woman is blamed for a negative incident that occurred in the community and labelled a witch (25 Apr. 2013).

The CWSI representative indicated that if a woman has been accused of witchcraft, she may have to carry out "traditional rites," but this depends on the area and cultural beliefs (CWSI 24 Apr. 2013). She indicated that one such traditional rite could be giving the community gifts like gold (ibid.).

The CDHR representative said that a woman accused of witchcraft could be killed by "close relations" or "kinsmen" (CDHR 25 Apr. 2013). She added that this practice is "rampant" in some states, such as Akwa Ibom, Cross River, but is also practiced in other states as well (ibid.). The Director of Widows for Peace through Democracy (WPD), a UK-based advocacy organization for widows in developing countries (n.d.), without specifying ethnic groups, stated that:

WPD is well aware ... that women, especially older widowed women, may, in some ethnic groups, particularly in rural areas, be accused of being witches where unexplained deaths occur, (for example, in context of HIV and AIDS), unprecedented natural disasters happen, or harvests inexplicably fail. Expulsion from the village and the community; exclusion or forced seclusion; in extreme cases death by stoning might be carried out. (WPD 25 Apr. 2013) [...]

Contextual background information on witchcraft

The following sources are not country-specific but provide context and a useful background on how to deal with claims raising witchcraft:

- [UNHCR, Voodoo, Witchcraft and Human Trafficking in Europe, October 2013](#)
Contents:
 - [...] Freedom of religion and belief
 - [...] Child witches in Europe
 - [...] Abuses linked to witchcraft rituals [...]
- [Franciscans International, Written statement submitted by Franciscans International \(FI\), a non-governmental organization in general consultative status, 25 February 2011](#)
Contents:
 - [...] Children accused of witchcraft
 - [...] The infanticide of the so-called "witch-children" in Benin
- [UNHCR, Breaking the spell: responding to witchcraft accusations against children, January 2011](#)
Contents:
 - [...] The practice of witchcraft and accusations of witchcraft
 - [...] Children and witchcraft
 - [...] Child accusations of witchcraft: a growing concern for UNHCR
 - [...] Violence and witchcraft
 - [...] Location and witchcraft accusations
 - [...] Witchcraft allegations within the displacement cycle
 - [...] Witchcraft accusations and children within a human rights framework
 - [...] Reference to witchcraft allegations amongst human rights bodies
 - [...] Witchcraft accusations of children within a child rights framework
 - [...] National legislation pertaining to witchcraft
 - [...] Witchcraft accusations and the response of UNHCR
 - [...] The work of other organizations [...]
- [UNICEF, Children Accused of Witchcraft: An anthropological study of contemporary practices in Africa, April 2010](#)
 - [...] Contents
 - [...] 1.1.Ambiguous terminology
 - 1.2.Anthropological studies of witchcraft
 - 1.2.1.Historical overview
 - 1.2.2. Witchcraft in contemporary Africa
 - 1.3. The witch
 - 1.4.Witchcraft accusations
 - 2.1.Areas documented

- 2.2. Predominance of Christianity
- 2.3. What is the profile of a child accused of witchcraft?
 - 2.3.1. The right age for accusations?
 - 2.3.2. The profile of children targeted by accusations
 - 2.3.3. Boys or girls?
 - 2.3.4. The power of child witches
- 2.4. Why children are accused
 - 2.4.1. Transformation of representations – from the old witch to the child witch
 - 2.4.2. “Child witches” as the result of the “multi-crisis”
- 3.1. Witchcraft fantasies and the other world
- 3.2. “Abnormal” births
- 3.3. Albino children on the market
- 3.4. Twins – Sacred monsters
- 4.1. The deliverance of childwitches
 - 4.1.1. Revivalist churches
 - 4.1.2. Deliverance and the “spiritual war”
 - 4.1.3. The role of pastor-prophets and “spiritual” treatment
 - 4.1.4. Miracle Merchants
- 4.2. Treatment by traditional healers
- 4.3. The judicial system
- 5.1. Anti-witch violence
 - 5.1.1. The victimization process – the double victimization of children
- 5.2. Infanticide
- 5.3. Abandonment and street children
- 5.4. Schooling
- 5.5. Stigmatization and discrimination
- 6. Results of protection policies for children accused of witchcraft [...]

- [ECPAT UK, Safeguarding children controlled through belief in ritual oaths, ‘child witches, or religious and traditional practices, 2009](#)

Contents:

- [...] 1. Definitions and Trends
- [...] 2. Control
- [...] 3. Indicators
- [...] 4. Practitioner Response
- [...] 5. Resources and Contacts

- [Stepping Stones Nigeria, Witchcraft Accusations: A Protection Concern for UNHCR and the Wider Humanitarian Community?, 6 April 2009](#)

Contents:

- [...] 3. The Belief in Witchcraft: An Overview
- 4. Groups at Risk of Witchcraft Accusations
 - 4.1 Risk Groups – Women
 - 4.2 Risk Groups – The Elderly
 - 4.3 Risk Groups – Children
 - 4.4 Risk Groups – Albinos
- 5. Scenarios Where Witchcraft Accusations are Likely to Occur
 - 5.1 Post-conflict Situations
 - 5.2 Environmentally Devastated Landscapes
 - 5.3 Regions in the Grip of Public Health Crises
- 6. Impacts of Witchcraft Accusations
 - 6.1 Refugees
 - 6.2 Asylum Seekers
 - 6.3 Trafficking [...]

➤ [UNHCR, Witchcraft allegations, refugee protection and human rights: a review of the evidence, January 2009](#)

Contents:

[...] When accusations occur
[...] Accusations over time and around the globe
[...] Asia
[...] Middle East
[...] Latin America
[...] Europe
[...] Women as a risk group
[...] The elderly as a risk group
[...] Children as a risk group
[...] Albinos as a risk group
[...] Accusations linked to HIV/AIDS
[...] Internally displaced persons
[...] Refugee camps
[...] Repatriation and reintegration
[...] Witchcraft in developed countries
[...] States and armed conflict
[...] Witchcraft persecution claims
[...] Convention grounds [...]

➤ [Africans Unite Against Child Abuse, What is Witchcraft Abuse?, Undated \[Last accessed: 18/12/2013\]](#)

Contents:

[...] 3 What is Witchcraft?
4 What is Witchcraft Abuse?
5 Why Are Children Branded as Witches or As Possessed?
6 Religion, Witchcraft and Spirit Possession
7 Exorcism and Deliverance
8 Religious Leaders and Witchcraft Abuse
9 How Are Victims of Witchcraft Branding Abused?
10 What Are the Signs of Witchcraft Abuse?
11 What Are the Effects of Witchcraft Abuse
12 How Wide-spread is the Belief in Witchcraft?
[...] 14 Protecting Children from Witchcraft Abuse: What to do? [...]

➤ [ECPAT UK, Discussion Paper: Vulnerability and Control of African Child Victims of Trafficking – UK Experience, Undated \[Last accessed: 18/12/2013\]](#)

Contents:

[...] 'Child Witches', Abandonment and Child Trafficking
[...] Ritual Oaths to Control Children Who Are Trafficked [...]

Useful sources to consult on the security and humanitarian situation in Nigeria

Source	Type of source (information taken directly from website)	Website's search function
All Africa Nigeria country page	Repository of news articles organised by country and by theme. Country pages include sections on: Headlines	- Country page does not have a search function - All Africa has a simple search function which allows for Keyword searches only, but does order search results in date order (recent first)
The Fund for Peace (FFP): Unlock Nigeria	The UNLock Nigeria Program is a participatory early warning system conducted in partnership with local stakeholders to improve conflict assessment and prevention. The UNLock Nigeria program is conducted in partnership between The Fund for Peace and Institute for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law. Useful UNLock publications include: Monthly Conflict Bulletins by state	N.A.
Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) Nigeria country page	The IDMC is an international body which monitors conflict-induced internal displacement worldwide. Its country pages include: - Statistics - Maps - Internal Displacement Profile - IDP News alert Key documents; news and reports from other organisations on the situation and treatment of IDPs and returnees.	- Country and thematic pages - Advanced search function which allows for: - BOOLEAN searches (AND, OR, NOT) - Searches for phrases ("...") - It is not possible to search within particular time frames
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Nigeria news	The ICRC focus in Nigeria is to protect and assist people affected by violence, particularly in the Niger Delta and certain states in the north that are prone to inter-communal and political violence. It promotes international humanitarian law and other rules that protect people in situations of violence. Finally, the ICRC supports the emergency-response work of the Nigerian Red Cross. The Nigeria country page contains: - Reference Documents - Latest News - Annual report - Highlights	- Country pages - Simple search function which allows for: - keyword searches - organises search results by relevance and date
International Crisis Group, Nigeria page	The ICG is a leading independent NGO recognised as a source of analysis and advice to governments and intergovernmental bodies such as the UN on the prevention and resolution of deadly conflict. It publishes: - Thematic reports - Crisis watch (a monthly bulletin which briefly summarises developments in situations of current or potential conflict, including on Somalia)	Simple search function which allows for keyword and BOOLEAN searches (AND, OR, NOT) and searches for phrases ("...") only (cannot order search results by date)
IRIN News Nigeria country page	IRIN is a service of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. It provides:	- Country and thematic pages - Advanced search function

	Humanitarian news and analysis by country and theme.	- which allows for ○ Keyword searches (Exact Wording; All the Words; Any Words) ○ Limits searches by Services; Country; Theme; Report Type ○ Searches within time frames (From: To)
OHCHR Nigeria country page	Key documents Include: ○ Security Council Resolutions ○ Reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council ○ Country visits by Special Procedures News archives	• Advanced search function which allows for searches by: ○ Phrase; ALL words; ANY words ○ Limits search by categories and date range
Relief Web Nigeria country page	Relief Web is a specialised service of UNOCHA (see below) which provides reliable disaster and crisis updates and analysis to humanitarians. It provides: ○ In-depth country profiles ○ Updates and analysis from more than 4,000 global information sources ○ Maps and info-graphics on crises and natural disasters	• Country and thematic pages • Advanced search function which allows for BOOLEAN searches (AND, OR, NOT) and searches for phrases (“....”) • Limits searches by: Country; organisation; theme; content format; feature; disaster type; vulnerable groups; publication date (by month); language
Thomson Reuters Foundation	AlertNet: AlertNet provides information on the most pressing humanitarian issues of our time, including natural disasters, conflicts, refugees, hunger, diseases and climate change.	• General search page that allows to limit searches by: Keyword; date; content format; theme; author; source, region; country; and topic
UNHCR, Nigeria country page	UNHCR is mandated to lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. UNHCR country pages provide: ○ Statistical snapshot ○ Latest news ○ UNHCR fundraising reports ○ Background, analysis and policy ○ Statistics ○ Maps ○ UNHCR research and evaluation papers on Afghanistan ○ Operational updates ○ Afghanistanpolicy papers (including Eligibility Guidelines)	○ Country page does not have a search function ○ UNHCR home page has an advanced search function which allows for BOOLEAN searches (AND, OR, NOT, ALL) and keyword by title ○ Limits searches by category, country of origin, country of asylum ○ Searches within time frames
UN News Centre ‘Advanced Search’	Provides news and key UN resources: ○ Latest developments ○ Maps of the region ○ Statement from the UN Secretary General; Security Council; General Assembly ○ Aid/development: UN Agencies & Programmes	• The advanced search function allows for: ○ 3 distinct key word/set phrases ○ Searches within time frames ○ Searches limited by subject

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