

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	593
Land:	Nigeria
Kilde:	EU
Titel:	Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2021 – Nigeria
Udgivet:	30. marts 2022
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	1. september 2022

to Niger's National Gendarme Forces and National Guard (EU delegation) and support to the National Police (EUCAP).

In support of gender equality, the EU and Member States adopted a Common Local Implementation Plan of the third Gender Action Plan in 2021. Gender is a priority also in both Team Europe Initiatives, both in terms of gender equality and women empowerment. At the demand of the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Child Protection, a dialogue framework has been set up in 2021.

5. Multilateral context: Niger did not ratify the Maputo Protocol forbidding non-consensual marriage and has not fixed marriage age at 18 by law. The country continues to adhere to the Geneva Consensus Declaration questioning female sexual and reproductive rights. Niger has not abolished the death penalty, though has a de facto moratorium on it.

Nigeria

1. Overview of the human rights and democracy situation: In 2021, Nigeria saw a continuing trend in the deterioration of its human rights and security situation, where almost every part of the country now experiences violence and crime. The recent surge of insecurity is also a result of the staggering economic situation and poverty across Nigeria due to the combined effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation and the drop in oil prices. Nigeria, especially the North, continues to have some of the worst development indicators in sub-Saharan Africa. Media freedom is slowly being eroded, curtailing the space for public debate and free speech. On 5 June 2021, the government suspended Twitter from operating in the country, accusing it of providing a platform for critics and opponents. After months of negotiations with the platform, the ban was lifted only in January 2022. At present, bills seeking to restrict media activities, both print and electronic, are pending before the parliament. A bill is also pending which proposes regulating the activities of civil society groups. Although Nigeria is a signatory to the main international human rights instruments and has passed important laws to protect the rights of its citizens, implementation and fulfilment of these legal obligations has proven challenging especially in conflict and post conflict situations across Nigeria. Challenges include: widespread sexual and gender-based violence, child marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), trafficking in human beings, arbitrary harassment of journalists and citizens, discrimination against LGBTI persons, death penalty (albeit with a de-facto moratorium is in place since December 2016) and indiscriminate violence against civilians by non-state and State actors. There are a number of on-going controversial individual cases of human rights violations, the most emblematic cases being Sharif Aminu, Omar Farouq and Mubarak Bala. Nigeria's democratic landscape remains stable but volatile, and it is expected that this will remain the case in the run up to the 2023 general elections.

2. EU action - key focus areas: EU priorities in Nigeria include:

- Gender equality and women's empowerment which are mainstreamed in all EU programmes. In 2021, emphasis was placed on the role of justice and to advocacy for the establishment of specialised courts dealing with sexual and gender-based violence.
- Rights of the child: The EU focusses on providing justice services and community rehabilitation and reintegration for children in conflict, such as Almajiri children and

children forcibly returned to Nigeria from abroad. Several interventions targeted at protecting the right of the child to education have been carried out in Borno State.

- **Rights of LGBTI persons:** The EU provides support towards the rights of LGBTI persons through an ongoing project with a Nigerian NGO. The EU delegation also hosted a discussion with interlocutors from the LGBTI community on the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia.
- **Freedom of religion or belief:** The EU and Member States have closely worked together on the cases of Mubarak Bala, a Nigerian human rights activist as well as, Sharif Aminu and Omar Farouq, both charged for blasphemy. The EU has also engaged with religious leaders to exchange on freedom of speech and the freedom of religion or belief, and works with traditional and religious leaders in broader development areas.
- **Human Security, protection of civilians and the rights of IDPs:** An important focus area in 2021 was on police reform, following the #EndSARS protests that took place in 2020. In addition, the EU has a geographical focus on North East and North West Nigeria, where it implements projects on the protection of civilians and reconciliation efforts.
- **Democratic consolidation and support for elections:** The EU's short, medium and long-term political and technical support, based on the assessment and recommendations offered by the EU EOM deployed to the 2019 elections, has been largely successful in consolidating democracy and building the capacity of the Election Management Bodies and key civil society actors. The EU delegation deployed a Diplomatic Watch mission to the Anambra Gubernatorial election in November 2021.
- **Digital rights:** The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) influenced the development of the Nigeria Regulation (NDPR), particularly the Data Protection provisions on cross-border data transfer and the current national law on data protection in Nigeria.

3. EU bilateral political engagement: Since mid-2021, the EU and Nigeria have engaged around a joint EU-Nigeria Ministerial roadmap, which aims to operationalise the commitments made in the joint communique, agreed at the seventh EU-Nigeria Ministerial Dialogue in November 2020. Policy dialogues also took place during the consultations on the Multiannual Indicative Programme and the Gender Action Plan, among others

4. EU financial engagement: The EU-UN Spotlight Initiative and the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption programme are the EU's gender flagship initiatives, which aim at eliminating all forms of violence against women, and to improve access to justice for women and children. In 2021, the EU launched a new regional project with UNICEF on 'Access to Justice for Children on the Move', advocating for the enactment of the Child Rights Act and implementation and enforcement of laws on child rights and child protection in a number of states in Nigeria.

The EU has also provided human rights defenders emergency funding to Avocats Sans Frontières to support the defence of Sharif Aminu and Omar Farouq.

Regarding the protection of civilians, the EU supports projects implemented by Civilians in Armed Conflict (CIVIC) with the overall objective of strengthening the capabilities of security forces and other security actors to protect better civilians, mainly through training activities.

In 2021, the EU also continues to implement several programs with the International Organization for Migration and other UN agencies (UNICEF, UNDP) on Disengagement, Disassociation, Reintegration and Reconciliation (DDRR).

In 2021, a new project, 'Contributing to the mitigation of conflict over natural resources between farmer and herder communities in Adamawa state' was launched, in order to strengthen conflict resolution mechanisms. Sustained support to the democratic process is channelled through 'EU Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) phase II' programme.

5. Multilateral context: The most recent Universal Periodic Review of Nigeria took place in 2018. The next review is due in November 2023.

Rwanda

1. Overview of the human rights and democracy situation: During 2021, the overall picture of the human rights situation in Rwanda remained broadly unchanged. While the Rwandan Government continues to show its strong developmental ambition in the areas of economic and social rights, it also continues to face allegations of serious human rights violations – excessive use of force, suspicious deaths in custody, extra-judicial killings, and enforced disappearances. Human rights advocates continue to report on arbitrary detentions and use of inhuman or degrading treatment in detention facilities. With regard to the court case against the EU citizen Paul Rusesabagina and his co-accused, concerns were expressed about the rights of defence.

Freedom of expression remains limited. Vague wording of the genocide ideology law is exploited to stifle public dissent or criticism creating an environment of self-censorship for journalists, bloggers and citizens fearing reprisal and prosecution. In 2021, law enforcement and justice investigated and put on trial a number of 'citizen journalists' that publish information and commentaries on their YouTube channels. Prosecution indicted these persons mainly for violation of the genocide denial provisions and stirring up public unrest. Yet, some media (especially online media) seem to enjoy some editorial liberty and run critical articles or inform on misconduct of public authorities.

Freedom of association remains stifled in Rwanda, with burdensome and discretionary registration processes to create new parties or NGOs, in particular to deal with human rights, diversity or gender equality. Some NGOs are unable to complete their registration or took extraordinary long time, as local district authorities did not accept to provide necessary endorsement letters.

While the legal framework addressing women's rights in Rwanda is good, the weak implementation of laws and policies coupled with discriminatory social norms hamper the realisation of women's rights. The enjoyment of sexual and reproductive health and rights, including access to reproductive health services, access to modern contraceptive methods and sanitary products is not guaranteed for all women, in particular for women in rural areas.