



Home Office

Country Background Note Nigeria

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Preface

Purpose

This note provides a summary of and links to country of origin information (COI) for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims. It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into two main sections: (1) general background to the country concerned, including demography and geography; and (2) issues which may be relevant to protection claims. Unlike country policy and information notes, it does **not** contain an assessment of risk, availability of protection or reasonableness of internal relocation.

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual, 2013](#). Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

The structure and content of the country information section follows a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to this note.

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after this date is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available, and is from generally reliable sources. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion.

Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information, and
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate, balanced and corroborated, so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture at the time of publication is provided of the issues relevant to this note.

Information is compared and contrasted, whenever possible, to provide a range of views and opinions. The inclusion of a source, however, is not an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a brief footnote; full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve our material. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this note, please email [the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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Country information

Section updated: February 2019

1. Geography and demography

1.1 Key geographic and demographic facts

- 1.1.1 The official name of the country is the Republic of Nigeria¹. See the link for images of and information about the [Nigeria flag](#).
- 1.1.2 The total area of the country is 923,768 sq km, with a land mass of 910,768 sq km and water mass of 13,000 sq km². Nigeria is approximately four times bigger than the United Kingdom.³
- 1.1.3 A July 2018 estimate of the population was 203,452,505 with Nigeria having the seventh highest population in the world⁴.
- 1.1.4 The capital city is Abuja⁵.
- 1.1.5 Nigeria 'is bordered to the east by Cameroon and Chad while the west is bound by Benin. Niger is to the north of Nigeria while the northeast of Nigeria is bordered by Lake Chad. The coast of the nation in the south lies along the Gulf of Guinea.'⁶
- 1.1.6 Nigeria is composed of more than 250 ethnic groups: Hausa 27.4%, Igbo (Ibo) 14.1%, Yoruba 13.9%, Fulani 6.3%, Tiv 2.2%, Ibibio 2.2%, Ijaw/Izon 2%, Kanuri/Beriberi 1.7%, Igala 1%, other 28.9%, unspecified 0.2% (2013 est.)⁷.
- 1.1.7 A 2013 estimate of distribution of religions in the country indicated Muslim 51.6%, Roman Catholic 11.2%, other Christian 35.7%, traditionalist 0.9%, unspecified 0.5%⁸.
- 1.1.8 See the CPIN on [Nigeria: Internal relocation](#) for more information on geography and demography.

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1.2 Administrative divisions

- 1.2.1 Nigeria is divided into 36 states and one territory:
'Abia, Adamawa, Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Bauchi, Bayelsa, Benue, Borno, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, Edo, Ekiti, Enugu, Federal Capital Territory [Abuja], Gombe, Imo, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Lagos, Nasarawa, Niger, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Plateau, Rivers, Sokoto, Taraba, Yobe, Zamfara.'⁹

¹ Perm Cmttee for Geographic Names/FCO, 'Country Names', last updated 25 May 2018 [url](#)

² CIA World Factbook, 'Nigeria', (Geography), updated 29 January 2019, [url](#)

³ My Life Elsewhere, 'Country Size Comparison', undated [url](#)

⁴ CIA World Factbook, 'Nigeria', updated 29 January 2019, [url](#)

⁵ CIA World Factbook, 'Nigeria', updated 29 January 2019, [url](#)

⁶ World Atlas, 'Which Countries Border Nigeria?', undated [url](#)

⁷ CIA World Factbook, 'Nigeria', updated 29 January 2019, [url](#)

⁸ CIA World Factbook, 'Nigeria', updated 29 January 2019, [url](#)

⁹ CIA World Factbook, 'Nigeria', updated 29 January 2019, [url](#)

1.3 Maps

- 1.3.1 Please see the Perry Castaneda Library Map Collection for thematic maps of Nigeria [Thematic Maps of Nigeria](#).
- 1.3.2 The OnTheWorldMap website provided [administrative](#) and [political](#) maps of Nigeria.

1.4 Physical geography

- 1.4.1 The climate of the country varies, it is equatorial in south, tropical in the centre and arid in north¹⁰. Southern lowlands merge into central hills and plateaus with mountains in southeast and plains in north¹¹.

1.5 Population density and distribution

- 1.5.1 The density of Nigeria is around 212.04 individuals per sq km. The country has the highest population of any African nation, and much of the population resides in the south and south west areas¹².
- 1.5.2 The Nigerian cities with a population of over a million were Lagos, Kano, Ibadan, Kaduna, Port Harcourt, Benin city and Maiduguri¹³. The same source noted that 'the Lagos State Government estimates the population of Lagos at 17.5 million, although this number has been disputed by the Nigerian government and found to be unreliable by the National Population Commission of Nigeria, which put the population at over 21 million in 2016.'¹⁴

Section 2 updated: February 2019

2. Economy

2.1 Key economic points

- 2.1.1 The currency in Nigeria is the Naira. 1 GBP = 467 Naira (at 18 February 2019)¹⁵.
- 2.1.2 The Trading Economics website noted that 'the gross domestic product in Nigeria was last recorded as 2412.41 US Dollars (USD) in 2017. The GDP per capita is equivalent to 19 percent of the world's average. GDP per capita in Nigeria averaged 1661.41 USD from 1960 to 2017.'¹⁶
- 2.1.3 The CIA World Factbook noted in its overview of the country's economy:
'Nigeria is Sub Saharan Africa's largest economy and relies heavily on oil as its main source of foreign exchange earnings and government revenues...oil-rich Nigeria has been hobbled by inadequate power supply, lack of infrastructure, delays in the passage of legislative reforms, an

¹⁰ CIA Factbook, 'Nigeria', updated 29 January 2019, [url](#)

¹¹ CIA Factbook, 'Nigeria', updated 29 January 2019, [url](#)

¹² World Population Review, 'Nigeria 2018' [url](#)

¹³ World Population Review, 'Nigeria 2018' [url](#)

¹⁴ World Population Review, 'Lagos Population 2019', 30 March 2019 [url](#)

¹⁵ XE Currency Converter [url](#)

¹⁶ Trading Economics, 'Nigeria GDP per capita' [url](#)

inefficient property registration system, restrictive trade policies, an inconsistent regulatory environment, a slow and ineffective judicial system, unreliable dispute resolution mechanisms, insecurity, and pervasive corruption. Regulatory constraints and security risks have limited new investment in oil.’¹⁷

- 2.1.4 A Voice of America (VoA) article from December 2018 (quoting National Bureau of Statistics and Brookings Institute) noted that ‘Nigeria’s unemployment numbers jumped by nearly 30 percent this year to 16 million... less than forty percent of Nigeria’s nearly 200 million people are fully employed... Nigeria overtook India this year as having the largest number of people living in extreme poverty — 87 million.’¹⁸
- 2.1.5 According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Nigeria has approximately 71.2 million hectares of available agricultural land, about half of which was currently being utilised, and is heavy dependent on imports for food¹⁹.
- 2.1.6 See the CPIN on [Nigeria: Internal relocation](#) for more information on the economy.

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3. History

- 3.1.1 The [Encyclopaedia Britannica](#) provided a short history of the country.
- 3.1.2 The BBC Nigeria Country Profile Timeline noted some key dates in the country’s history:
 - ‘16-18th centuries – Slave trade sees Nigerians forcibly sent to the Americas to work on plantations.
 - ‘1850s – Britain establishes presence, which it consolidates over the next 70 years as the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria. In 1922, part of former German colony Kamerun is added under a League of Nations mandate.
 - ‘1960 – Independence, with Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa leading a coalition government. He is killed in a coup in 1966.
 - ‘1967 – Three eastern states secede as the Republic of Biafra, sparking a bloody three-year civil war.
 - ‘1983 – Major-General Muhammadu Buhari seizes power in a bloodless coup, ushering in a period of political instability capped by the 1999 presidential and parliamentary elections.
 - ‘2000 – Adoption of Islamic law by several northern states in the face of opposition from Christians.
 - ‘2009 – Boko Haram jihadists launch a campaign of violence that spreads to neighbouring countries. One high-profile incident involves the kidnapping of 200 school girls in 2014.

¹⁷ CIA Factbook, ‘Nigeria’ (Economy), updated 29 January 2019, [url](#)

¹⁸ Voice of America News, ‘Nigeria Struggles Against Unemployment, ...’, 3 Dec 2018 [url](#)

¹⁹ Food and Agriculture Org. of the UN, ‘Country Pasture/Forage Resource Profiles, Nigeria’, 2009 [url](#)

‘2015 – Muhammadu Buhari wins presidential election – first opposition candidate to do so.’ ²⁰

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4. Media and telecommunications

4.1 Key media and telecommunications points

4.1.1 The country calling code is +234²¹

4.1.2 The time in the country can be seen in the [World Clock](#).

4.1.3 The internet domain is .ng²².

4.1.4 The BBC Nigeria Media Profile noted:

‘State radio and TV operate at federal and regional levels. All 36 states run at least one radio network and a TV station.

‘There are hundreds of radio stations and terrestrial TV networks, as well as cable and direct-to-home satellite offerings.

‘Radio is a key source of information.

‘...State TV says it reaches tens of millions of viewers, while the main privately-owned networks are market leaders in some cities.

‘There are more than 100 national and local press titles, some of them state-owned. They include well-respected dailies, tabloids and publications which champion ethnic interests.’ ²³

4.1.5 The Freedom House 2017 Freedom of the Press Report described the country’s status as ‘partly free.’ ²⁴ The US State Department 2017 Human Rights Practices Report noted that ‘a large and vibrant private domestic press frequently criticized the government, but critics reported being subjected to threats, intimidation, and sometimes violence.’ ²⁵

4.1.6 The Freedom House 2018 Freedom on the Net report noted:

‘Nigeria has one of the largest populations of internet users in sub-Saharan Africa, with over 89 million citizens online. According to the latest data from the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), Nigeria’s internet penetration rate was 26 percent in 2016. Most of the growth in internet use can be attributed to the proliferation of mobile phone services. As of December 2017, the sector regulator reported a mobile phone teledensity of 103 percent and nearly 145 million active mobile internet subscriptions on GSM networks.

‘...YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and other communications platforms are freely available and widely used. The complex nature of Nigeria’s internet infrastructure makes it difficult to carry out systematic filtering or censorship.

²⁰ BBC, ‘Nigeria Country Profile’, 2019 [url](#)

²¹ Countrycode.org, undated. [url](#)

²² Worldstandards.eu, undated. [url](#)

²³ BBC, ‘Nigeria Media Profile’, August 2017 [url](#)

²⁴ Freedom House, ‘2017 Freedom of the Press Report’, 2018 [url](#)

²⁵ US State Department, ‘2017 Human Rights Practices Report’ (section 2a), April 2018 [url](#)

‘...Power cuts frequently disrupt service and access, despite Nigeria’s status as an oil-rich country. Nigerian households reported slight improvements in electricity access in recent years, receiving an average of ten hours of power supply per day in February 2017, up from less than six hours the previous year. Those with the financial wherewithal are able to rely on private generators and standby battery-powered inverter systems to stay online during outages.’²⁶

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5. Citizenship and nationality

5.1.1 The 1999 [Constitution](#) (Chapter 3, paragraphs 25 to 32) sets out the rules of citizenship in the country.

5.1.2 According to the Constitution, Chapter III, citizenship can be acquired in different ways, namely by birth, registration and naturalisation:

‘By birth: one person born in Nigeria is granted citizenship of Nigeria provided that either parents or any of whose grandparents belonged to an indigenous community in Nigeria before the date of independence; or provided that either of whose parents or any of whose grandparents is a citizen of Nigeria after the date of independence.

‘By registration: any woman who is or has been married to a citizen of Nigeria or any person of full age and capacity born outside Nigeria any of whose grandparents is a citizen of Nigeria may be registered as a citizen of Nigeria if the President is satisfied with his good character, if he/she has shown a clear intention of his desire to be domiciled in Nigeria, if he has taken the Oath of Allegiance prescribed in the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution.

‘By naturalization: a person shall be qualified to apply for the grant of naturalization provided that he satisfies the President with a number of specified requirements.’²⁷

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6. Official documents

6.1 Birth certificates

6.1.1 The US State Department Reciprocity Schedule noted:

‘The birth of every child born in Nigeria shall be registered by the Registrar of the National Population Commission or any person working under his authority...Issuance of birth certificates is free for infants under 2 years of age. Fees may be required for children more than 2 years old...They are typically printed on white paper with green background lettering. Seals are inked, most often in blue, black or purple. Bio-data may be typed or handwritten.’²⁸

6.1.2 A Vanguard article from August 2018 noted that ‘for every 10 Nigerian children that are at least five years old, there are no records about the birth

²⁶ Freedom House, ‘Freedom on the Net’, 2018 [url](#)

²⁷ Federal Republic of Nigeria, ‘Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria’, 1999 [url](#)

²⁸ US State Department, Travel, ‘Nigeria Reciprocity Schedule’, undated [url](#)

of seven. Even though these children have names, their births are not registered by the relevant authorities and their identity is therefore questionable...such children's access to basic services was under threat and...their official "invisibility" increases their vulnerability to abuse and exploitation.' ²⁹

6.1.3 A Premium Times article from September 2018 noted:

'The National Population Commission (NPopC) has restated that the registration for birth and death certificates in Nigeria are offered free by the commission.

'The chairman of NPopC, Eze Duruiheoma, made this known in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Wednesday in Abuja.

'Mr Duruiheoma was reacting to allegations by some Nigerians that they were being charged various sums from N2,000 upwards at the different registration points established by the commission across the country.

"The Commission does not charge for issuance of birth or death certificates, but rather the private organisations engaged for the job," he explained.

'According to him, the certificate is free for children from 0-days to 17 years of birth, after which a N2,000 penalty is imposed on defaulters who must also produce an affidavit from a law court.' ³⁰

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6.2 National identity cards

6.2.1 The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia [DFAT] 2018 Country Information report noted:

'In September 2014, Nigeria launched the National Electronic Identification Card (known as eID card). The eID card is intended to eventually act as a travel document between ECOWAS [Economic Community of West African States] countries. The card is intended to harmonise all national identity databases including drivers' licences, voter registration, health, tax, and National Pension Commission, into a single 'shared' services platform. Individuals will receive a Unique national Identification Number with their eID card. Nigerians who do not have an eID card by 2019 will be unable to vote or use other government services. To obtain a card, a citizen must attend an NIS Enrolment Centre in their state to record their photographs, fingerprints, iris scan and signatures. The card is currently undergoing a trial and is several years from full implementation. Previous attempts to introduce a national identity card in Nigeria have failed.

'The National ID Card Management Commission (NIMC) manages administration of the card and the National Identity Database. The government has been criticised for developing the card in partnership with MasterCard, ensuring it also provides access to financial services for millions of Nigerians.' ³¹

²⁹ Vanguard, 'Most African children without birth certificates are Nigerians', 21 August 2018 [url](#)

³⁰ Premium Times, 'Nigeria birth, death certificates are free — Popn Commission', 19 Sept 2018 [url](#)

³¹ DFAT, 'Nigeria Country Information Report', 9 March 2018 (page 33) [url](#)

- 6.2.2 The US State Department Reciprocity Schedule noted that such were 'available, but not widely used. All Nigerians should have a national identification number; however, registration for this number is rarely completed.' ³²

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6.3 Passports

- 6.3.1 The Australia DFAT 2018 Country Information report noted:
- 'Passports are the most commonly used travel document in Nigeria. The NIS [Nigerian immigration Service] issues and manages passports. Nigeria rolled out ePassports in 2011 to reduce passport fraud. The ePassport has an embedded microchip that stores the personal information of the holder. An ePassport costs 8,750 Nigerian Naira [c.£18.60].
- 'Applicants may apply for a passport online or in person. All applicants are required to attend an interview at a local NIS office in their state. Current requirements for adult passport applicants include a valid National Identity Card or driver's license, marriage certificate (where relevant), father's letter of consent for minors under 16 years signed by both parents, birth certificate or age declaration, letter of identification from an individual's local government and a guarantor's form witnessed by a commissioner of oaths.' ³³
- 6.3.2 The US State Department Reciprocity Schedule noted 'Diplomatic and Official Passports are Free. Regular Passports when paying in Nigeria cost N8,750 [£18.60] (\$65 when paying from abroad) for applicants aged 0-17 years, N15,000 [c.£32] (\$94 when paying from abroad) for applicants aged from 18-59 years and N8,750 [£18.60]...for applicants aged 60 years and above. These are for the 32 paged passports. For the 64-paged Passports, the fee is N20,000 [c.£42] (\$125 when paying from abroad) across the board.' ³⁴

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6.4 Fraudulent documents

- 6.4.1 John Campbell, a former US ambassador to Nigeria, wrote in a book in 2011 that 'Benin City [South of Nigeria] is a center of the engraving industry, and practically any falsified document can be procured there, from birth certificates to diplomas.' ³⁵
- 6.4.2 The Australia DFAT 2018 Country Information report noted:
- 'Nigeria experiences high rates of document fraud. Most documents, from birth certificates to diplomas, can be falsified and procured. The Nigeria Police Force has established a Special Fraud Unit and the Penal Code and the Criminal Code address fraud and the falsification of documents. [It is understood that] the Special Fraud Unit actively investigates and prosecutes suspects but very few cases have thus far resulted in convictions. The NIS

³² US State Department, Travel, 'Nigeria Reciprocity Schedule', undated [url](#)

³³ [DFAT], 'Nigeria Country Information Report', 9 March 2018 (page 33) [url](#)

³⁴ US State Department, Travel, 'Nigeria Reciprocity Schedule', undated [url](#)

³⁵ John Campbell, 'Dancing on the Brink', (page 122) published 2011 [url](#)

[Nigerian Immigration Service] has a forensic laboratory for the examination of travel documents and monetary instruments.

'Many businesses provide false documents in Nigeria. [It is understtod that] it is neither difficult nor expensive to obtain a fraudulent driver's licence or other documents that can be used to obtain a genuine passport (marriage certificate, birth certificate or age declaration, letter of identification from an individual's local government etc.). Corruption at local NIS offices also enables the fraudulent production of genuine passports.' ³⁶

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³⁶ DFAT, 'Nigeria Country Information Report', 9 March 2018 (page 34) [url](#)

Key issues relevant to protection claims

The issues below are not meant to be exhaustive; rather the key topics which may be relevant to protection claims. They are listed in alphabetical order.

Section updated: February 2019

7. Children

7.1 Infant mortality

7.1.1 Unicef country profile statistics noted that the under five mortality rates were 100 per 1,000 births. Further details can be found in the [Unicef: Nigeria Country Profile](#)

7.1.2 A Premium Times article from 2017 noted:

‘The Nigerian Minister of Health, Isaac Adewole, had earlier this year described the high mortality rate of under-five[s] in the country as unacceptable.

‘He said the government has however made significant progress in reducing the rate of new-born deaths in the country as it has declined from 201/1000 live births to 128/1000 live births in 2013.

‘Every single day, Nigeria loses about 2,300 under-five year olds and 145 women of child bearing age, making the country the second largest contributor to under-five and maternal mortality rate in the world.’³⁷

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7.2 Education and child labour

7.2.1 The US State Department of Labour (USDOL) noted in its 2017 report that 31.1% of 5 to 14 year olds were working; 76.2% of 5 to 14 year olds attended school; 26.8% of 7 to 14 year olds combined work and school; and primary school completion rate was 73.8%. Please see [2017 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor](#).

7.2.2 The same USDOL report noted:

‘In 2017, Nigeria made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor...However, despite these efforts, children continue to be engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in quarrying granite and gravel, commercial sexual exploitation, and armed conflict. The legal framework has inconsistencies regarding child labor, and the minimum age for work is below international standards. There are not enough labor inspectors to provide sufficient coverage of the workforce. In addition, social programs are not sufficient to address the scope of the problem.

‘...Although free and compulsory education is federally mandated by the Education Act, little enforcement of compulsory education laws occurs at state level. School fees are often charged, and the cost of materials can be prohibitive for families. Access to education is further hindered by a lack of teachers and inadequate sanitation facilities, particularly for girls. Many families favored the enrollment of boys over girls in elementary and

³⁷ Premium Times, ‘Nigeria has third highest infant mortality rate in the world – WHO’, 20 Oct 2017 [url](#)

secondary school.. Furthermore, government armed forces have previously occupied schools in their campaign against Boko Haram and the Islamic State-West Africa.’³⁸

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7.3 Child marriage

7.3.1 The Girls Not Brides organisation noted:

‘44% of girls in Nigeria are married before their 18th birthday and 18% are married before the age of 15.

‘Child marriage is most common in the North West and North East of Nigeria, where 68% and 57% of women aged 20-49 were married before their 18th birthday. Child marriage is particularly common among Nigeria’s poorest, rural households and the Hausa ethnic group.

‘...Nigeria ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, which sets a minimum age of marriage of 18, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1985, which obligates states to ensure free and full consent to marriage.

‘In 2016, Nigeria launched the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa.

‘In 2001 Nigeria ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, including Article 21 regarding the prohibition of child marriage.

‘In 2004 Nigeria ratified the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, including Article 6 which sets the minimum age of marriage as 18.

‘As a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Nigeria has adopted the Strategic Framework for Strengthening National Child protection Systems under which protecting children from marriage is a priority.

‘...There are several different laws related to the minimum legal age of marriage in Nigeria.

‘Under the Marriage Act 1990 the minimum legal age of marriage 21 years for boys and girls, although they are able to marry before this with written consent from a parent or guardian.

‘Under the Child Rights Act 2003, the minimum legal age of marriage is 18 years. However as of May 2017 there were still 12 Nigerian States (11 of which are located in the north of the country) that did not include the Child’s Rights Act 2003 in their internal legislation. It follows that in those States local laws are applied, most of which are Islamic Law provisions, and the minimum age of marriage in some of those States is as low as 12 years. In 2013, the government stated that efforts have been made to sensitise states about the Child Rights Act in order to improve enforcement.

³⁸ US State Department of Labor, ‘2017 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor’, 2018 [url](#)

‘There is also a lack of harmonisation between the Child Rights Act 2003 which sets 18 years as the minimum age of marriage and the Sexual Offences Bill 2015 which sets the minimum age of sexual consent at 11 years.’³⁹

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7.4 Violence against children

7.4.1 Unicef information on child protection in Nigeria noted:

‘Abuse in all its forms are a daily reality for many Nigerian children and only a fraction ever receive help. Six out of every 10 children experience some form of violence – one in four girls and 10 per cent of boys have been victims of sexual violence. Of the children who reported violence, fewer than five out of a 100 received any form of support. The drivers of violence against children (VAC) are rooted in social norms, including around the use of violent discipline, violence against women and community beliefs about witchcraft, all of which increase children’s vulnerability.’⁴⁰

7.4.2 See report [Unicef-Violence against Children in Nigeria: Findings of a National Survey 2014](#).

7.4.3 See article [‘Witch children’ in Nigeria](#).

7.4.4 See CPINs on [Nigeria: Women fearing gender-based harm or violence](#); [Nigeria: Female Genital Mutilation](#).

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8. Political system/situation

8.1 Political system

8.1.1 The Nigeria Embassy in Berlin website noted:

‘Nigeria is a federal republic with a presidential system. The constitution provides for separation of powers among the three branches of government. General elections held in February 1999 marked the end of 15 years of military rule and the beginning of civilian rule based on a multiparty democracy.

‘...Executive power is vested in the president, who is simultaneously chief of state and head of government. The president is eligible for two four-year terms. The president’s Federal Executive Council, or cabinet, includes representatives from all 36 states. The National Assembly, consisting of a 109-member Senate and a 360-member House of Representatives, constitutes the country’s legislative branch. Three senators represent each of Nigeria’s 36 states, and one additional senator represents the capital city of Abuja. Seats in the House of Representatives are allocated according to population. Therefore, the number of House members from each state differs. Members of the National Assembly are elected to a maximum of two four-year terms.

‘...Each of Nigeria’s 36 states has an elected governor and a House of Assembly. The governor is elected to a maximum of two four-year terms.

³⁹ Girls Not Brides, ‘Nigeria’, undated [url](#)

⁴⁰ Unicef, ‘Child Protection’, 2017 [url](#)

The number of delegates to the House of Assembly is based on population (three to four times the number of delegates each state sends to the Federal House of Representatives) and therefore varies from state to state within the range of 24 to 40. Nigeria's states are subdivided into 774 local government areas, each of which is governed by a council that is responsible for supplying basic needs. The local government councils, which are regarded as the third tier of government below the federal and state levels, receive monthly subsidies from a national "federation account."⁴¹

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8.2 Recent elections

8.2.1 The Guardian provided a summary of the outcome of the presidential election in February 2019 [Buhari wins Nigerian election](#).

8.2.2 The BBC provided information on the [Nigerian election in 2019](#).

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8.3 Biafra

8.3.1 An African Arguments article from May 2017 provided background information:

'Separatists contend that since the Biafra War, the Igbo, one of the country's three major ethnic groups, have been marginalised. They note that no Igbo has been elected to lead the country since Nnamdi Azikiwe's ceremonial presidency in the 1960s or to be vice president since Alex Ekwueme (1979 to 1983).

'This persisted even under military rule. The only Igbo head of state in this period, Major General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi, was killed after only seven months.

'Administrative structures decreed by northern-led military governments have also undermined the region' Of the country's six geo-political zones, all but the south east contain either six or seven states. The south east has just five, while it accounts for only 96 of Nigeria's 774 local governments. Representation in government and the flow of federal resources are based on those administrative units.

'Today, the south east, like much of the country, suffers deficient and dilapidated infrastructure and widespread youth unemployment. But many believe this is structural. They point out that as federal revenue allocation is based on number of states and local governments, the south east receives the least of all zones.'⁴²

8.3.2 A Council on Foreign Relations September 2017 article provided a historical perspective:

'...The Biafra of the civil war was a territorial state. It inherited the administrative structures of one of the three regions that then made up Nigeria, and its army was led by officers who had defected from the Nigerian army. As it was a territorial state, the Nigerian federal forces defeated it by

⁴¹ Nigeria Embassy, Berlin, 'Political Structure', undated [url](#)

⁴² African Arguments, 'Nigeria: How to solve a problem like Biafra', 29 May 2017 [url](#)

taking back the seceded territory...The current movement for Biafra is more diffuse and administers no territory. The formal institutions of government in the region are opposed to secession, as has been made clear by the southern governors. Nor is it clear that the current movement has the widespread domestic support that Biafra enjoyed, at least during the early days of the civil war.’⁴³

8.3.3 A November 2018 African Arguments article noted:

‘Until a couple of weeks ago, Nnamdi Kanu hadn’t been seen or heard publicly for over a year. The outspoken leader of the separatist group, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), went missing after a military raid on his home in September 2017.

‘...It was a huge shock then when Kanu resurfaced, seemingly alive and well, last month in Israel. He claims he escaped from his home last year before Nigerian soldiers could reach him and went into hiding.

‘The details of Kanu’s getaway and past year or so remain unclear, but since his dramatic reappearance, the IPOB leader has quickly returned to his previous ways. He has reiterated demands for a separate state of Biafra and called on the Nigeria’s south east zone to boycott elections until the government agrees to hold a vote on independence.

‘IPOB has been highly active in organising large protests a couple of years ago, but the government’s designation of it as a terrorist group and the military clampdown last year significantly curtailed the group’s activities. In the wake of Operation Python Dance II, Biafran activists organised general strikes and stay-aways, but their calls for protests and election boycotts over the past years have not been influential as previously.

‘Some analysts suggest the separatists’ appeal among the Igbo community has declined. Many people in the South East believe the region has long been politically marginalised in Nigeria, but observers suggest that they are no longer looking to IPOB to address these grievances.

‘...[Jonah Onuhoa, professor of political science at the University of Nigeria] suggests that appetite for the strategy of boycotts has diminished. Instead, he believes, people are more interested in supporting candidates from the South East in Nigeria’s crucial 2019 elections and beyond.’⁴⁴

See [Background on Biafra](#); and [Nigeria's Biafran Separatist Upsurge](#).

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9. Prison conditions

9.1.1 See the CPIN on [Nigeria: Prison conditions](#).

9.1.2 See the [World Prison Brief Data for Nigeria](#).

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10. Religious conversion

10.1.1 The USSD’s 2017 International Religious Freedom Report noted:

⁴³ Council on Foreign Relations, ‘Biafra is Back’, 20 September 2017 [url](#)

⁴⁴ African Arguments, ‘Biafra separatist leader is back from the dead. Will it matter?’, 6 Nov 2018 [url](#)

‘The constitution stipulates neither the federal nor the state governments shall establish a state religion and prohibits discrimination on religious grounds. It provides for freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, including the freedom to change religion and to manifest and propagate religion “in worship, teaching, practice, and observance,” provided these rights are consistent with the interests of defense, public safety, order, morality, or health, and protecting the rights of others. The constitution also states it shall be the duty of the state to encourage interfaith marriages and to promote the formation of associations that cut across religious lines and promote “national integration.”’⁴⁵

- 10.1.2 The US Commission on International Religious Freedom annual report noted that ‘The group [Boko Haram] has killed and harmed people for being “nonbelievers,” including prominent religious leaders. Some of the most affected are women and girls, who have been abducted and subjected to forced marriage, forced conversion, sexual abuse, and torture.’⁴⁶
- 10.1.3 A November 2017 article in the Catholic Register referred to the occurrence of conversions from Muslims to Christianity⁴⁷.
- 10.1.4 A World Watch Monitor article from January 2018 noted that ‘A Nigerian university student who converted from Islam to Christianity has been arrested by state security forces, as has the man who introduced her to Christianity.’⁴⁸

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11. Security situation

- 11.1.1 See the CPIN on [Nigeria: Boko Haram](#).

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12. Sexual orientation and/or gender identity

- 12.1.1 See the CPIN on [Nigeria: Sexual orientation and gender identity](#).

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13. Women

- 13.1.1 See the CPINs on [Nigeria: Women fearing gender-based harm or violence](#); [Nigeria: Female Genital Mutilation](#); and [Nigeria: Trafficking of women](#).

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⁴⁵ US State Department, ‘2017 International Religious Freedom Report’, 2018 [url](#)

⁴⁶ US Commission on International Religious Freedom, ‘Annual Report’, 2018 [url](#)

⁴⁷ National Catholic Register, 17 November 2017 [url](#)

⁴⁸ World Watch Monitor, 16 January 2018 [url](#)

Terms of Reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of what the CPIN seeks to cover. They form the basis for the [country information section](#). The Home Office's Country Policy and Information Team uses some standardised ToRs, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Geography and demography
 - Key geographic and demographic facts
 - Administrative divisions
 - Maps
 - Physical geography
 - Population density and distribution
- Economy
 - Key economic points
- History
- Media and telecommunications
- Key media and telecommunications points
- Citizenship and nationality
- Official documents
 - Birth certificates
 - National identity cards
 - Passports
 - Fraudulent documents
- Key issues relevant to protection claims
 - Children
 - Infant mortality
 - Education and child labour
 - Child marriage
 - Violence against children
 - Political situation
 - Recent elections
 - Biafra
 - Prison conditions
 - Religious conversion

- Security situation
- Sexual orientation and/or gender identity
- Women

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Version control

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **1.0**
- valid from **9 May 2019**

First version of this note

First version of country background note.

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