



## Nigeria

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Nigeria is a federal republic composed of 36 states and a capital territory, with an elected president and a bicameral legislature. On May 29, 1999 President Olusegun Obasanjo of the Peoples Democratic Party was inaugurated to a 4-year term after winning elections in February 1999 that were marred by fraud and irregularities perpetrated by all contesting parties, but most observers agreed the elections reflected the will of the majority of voters. These elections marked the end of 16 years of military-led regimes. On May 5, 1999, the Abubakar Government signed into law a new Constitution based largely on the suspended 1979 Constitution; the new Constitution entered into effect on May 29, 1999. The Constitution provides for an independent judiciary; however, in practice the judicial branch remains susceptible to executive and legislative branch pressure, is influenced by political leaders at both the state and federal levels, and suffers from corruption and inefficiency.

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

The economy has declined for much of the last three decades. Most of the population of approximately 120 million was rural and engaged in small-scale agriculture. Agriculture accounted for less than 40 percent of gross domestic product but employed more than 65 percent of the work force. The agriculture and manufacturing sectors deteriorated considerably during the oil boom decades. The collapse of market agriculture contributed significantly to the country's urbanization and increased unemployment. Although the great bulk of economic activity is outside the formal sector, recorded gross domestic product per capita was \$250. Much of the nation's wealth continued to be concentrated in the hands of a tiny elite mostly through corruption and nontransparent government contracting practices. During the year, petroleum accounted for over 98 percent of the country's export revenues, most of the government's revenues, and almost all foreign investment. During the year the economy was static, with growth still impeded by grossly inadequate infrastructure, endemic corruption, and general economic mismanagement. The country's ports, roads, water, and power infrastructure are collapsing. Chronic fuel shortages which afflicted the country for several years continued to be a problem. Food production has not kept pace with population growth. An estimated two-thirds of the country's more than 120 million people live in poverty and are subject to malnutrition and disease. Since the end of military rule in 1999, the Government has made progress in liberalizing the exchange rate regime, reducing controls on the private sector, and increasing expenditures for key social sectors.

The Government's human rights record was poor; although there were some improvements in several areas during the year, serious problems remain. The national police, army, and security forces continued to commit extrajudicial killings and used excessive force to quell civil unrest and ethnic violence, although they did so less frequently than under previous military governments. Army, police, and security force officers regularly beat protesters, criminal suspects, detainees, and convicted prisoners; however, there were no reports of torture of political dissidents. The Government took steps to curb torture and beating of detainees and prisoners, including the dismissal and arrest of senior officials known for such practices. Shari'a courts sentenced persons to harsh punishments including caning and amputation. Prison conditions were harsh and life

threatening, and along with the lack of food and medical treatment, contributed to the death of numerous inmates. At different times in the year, the Government released several hundred prisoners in an attempt to ease prison congestion. In May 1999, the Government repealed the State Security (Detention of Persons) Decree of 1984 (Decree 2), which allowed prolonged arbitrary detention without charge; however, police and security forces continued to use arbitrary arrest and detention. Prolonged pretrial detention remains a major problem. The judiciary is subject to political influence, and is hampered by corruption and inefficiency. The judicial system was incapable of providing citizens with the right to a speedy, fair trial. The Government continued to infringe on citizens' privacy rights; however, there were no reports of members of the armed forces looting property, destroying buildings, or driving persons away from their homes. The Government generally respected freedom of speech and of the press; however, there were some exceptions. Security force beatings of journalists, government seizures of newspaper print runs, and harassment of newspaper printers, advertisers, and distributors continued to decline. The Government continued to relax its restrictions on the rights of freedom of association and assembly. The Government occasionally restricted freedom of movement. The Government restricts freedom of religion in certain respects, and religious freedom deteriorated during the year due to the expansion of Shari'a law in several northern states. In June 1999, the Government established a governmental panel, the Human Rights Violations Investigation Panel (HRVIP), to review cases of human rights violations since 1966; in October the panel began public hearings.

Domestic violence against women remained widespread and some forms were sanctioned by traditional, customary, or Shari'a law. Discrimination against women remained a problem. Female genital mutilation (FGM) remained widely practiced, and child abuse and child prostitution were common. Localized discrimination and violence against religious minorities persisted. Ethnic and regional discrimination remained widespread and interethnic, religious, and regional tensions increased significantly. Thousands of persons were killed in various local ethnic and religious conflicts throughout the country. In February and May rioting between Muslim and Christian groups over the proposed expansion of Shari'a law resulted in the deaths of more than 1,500 persons. Some members of the Ijaw ethnic group in the oil-producing Niger Delta region who seek greater local autonomy continued to commit serious abuses, including killings and kidnappings. The police often could not protect citizens from interethnic, interreligious, communal, and criminal violence. The Government took steps to improve worker rights; however, some restrictions continued. Some persons, including children, were subjected to forced labor. Child labor continued to increase. Trafficking in persons for purposes of forced prostitution and forced labor is a problem and collusion of government officials in trafficking was alleged. Vigilante violence increased throughout the country, particularly in Lagos and Onitsha, where suspected criminals were apprehended, beaten, and sometimes killed.

## RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

### Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From:

#### a. Political and Other Extrajudicial Killing

National police, army, and security forces committed extrajudicial killings and used excessive force to quell civil unrest under the Obasanjo Government, although they did so less frequently than under previous military regimes. The Government largely ceased using lethal force to repress nonviolent, purely political activities; however, lethal force was used when protests or demonstrations were perceived as becoming violent or disruptive, or in the apprehension and detention of suspected criminals. The state anticrime task forces remained the most egregious human rights offenders. Neither the task forces, the police, nor the armed forces were held accountable for excessive, deadly use of force or the death of individuals in custody. They operated with impunity in the apprehension, illegal detention, and sometimes execution of criminal suspects. Since taking office, President Obasanjo largely resisted pressure to call in military troops to quell domestic unrest, which reduced the risk that the armed forces would overreact or harass civilians. Instead, Obasanjo preferred to let the police deal with clashes between rival ethnic groups and only sent in military reinforcements when the police were unable to restore order; however, the President threatened to use military troops in various states to reinforce the police. In February and May, the military was deployed in Kaduna state to stem ethnic violence that arose following the proposed introduction of Shari'a law. Multinational oil companies and Nigerian oil producing companies subcontract police and soldiers from area units particularly to protect the oil facilities in the volatile Niger Delta region.

On May 5, a member of Lagos deputy governor's security detail allegedly killed a young woman when she obstructed the security detail as it was trying to clear traffic for a motorcade. Reports vary as to whether she was in a car or was a pedestrian. The security officer was charged with murder by a magistrate court. At year's end, the case had not been transferred to a court with jurisdiction over murder cases and a trial date had not been set.

Police and military personnel used excessive and sometimes deadly force in the suppression of civil unrest, property vandalization, and interethnic violence, primarily in the oil and gas regions of Lagos, Kaduna and Abia states. Confrontations between increasingly militant "youths" (who tend to be unemployed males between the ages of 16 and 40), oil companies, and government authorities continued during the year. Reportedly 28 Delta youths were killed in such conflicts over protests or suspected vandalization near oil flow stations.

The use of excessive force to suppress protests was not confined to conflicts pertaining to oil company activities. For example, in March and April police conducted operations in Ogoniland, Rivers State, home of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), which resulted in the killing of several civilians, the destruction of a number of buildings, and the arrest of several Ogoni activists, including Ledum Mitee, the MOSOP leader. In June police killed two persons in Abuja and injured hundreds of persons who were involved in a 5-day petrol increase strike (see Section 6.a.). In July police killed one person while dispersing a strike by state workers outside of the Lagos State secretariat complex (see Section 6.a.). In July police in Lagos used tear gas to disperse a demonstration by striking public sector workers. One person died in the violence (see Section 6.a.). In August the police protecting President Obasanjo's motorcade killed a Nnamdi Azikiwe University student who was protesting the removal of Senate President Chuba Okadigbo (see Sections 2.a. and Section 3).

On many occasions during the year the Government authorized the use of deadly force to combat crime, and police, military, and anticrime taskforce personnel committed numerous extrajudicial killings in the apprehension and detention of suspected criminals. For example, police used deadly force against suspected vandals near oil pipelines in the Niger Delta Region. In June the police killed at least five persons for suspected vandalization. Police were instructed by the Federal Government to use deadly force in conflicts in Lagos State with the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC) vigilante group. By August police in Lagos reported killing 509 armed robbers and injuring 113, during the course of making 3,166 arrests; not all of those killed were OPC members. No legal action was taken against these security officials by year's end.

Violence and lethal force at police roadblocks and checkpoints was reduced greatly during part of the year; however, some instances of such violence continued. Obasanjo's order in 1999 to reduce the number of checkpoints and roadblocks also applied to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), and resulted in a decrease in the use of violence and lethal force at NDLEA checkpoints and roadblocks. By year's end, the number of roadblocks and checkpoints at major intersections increased again as authorities sought to prevent criminal activity from reaching major cities (see Section 1.f.); however, the violence associated with roadblocks, as reported in the previous year, did not increase.

Criminal suspects died from unnatural causes while in official custody, usually as the result of neglect and harsh treatment. The Civil Liberties Organization (CLO) (a credible human rights organization) filed a petition with the National Human Rights Commission and the Justice Pout Panel concerning the death of Godfrey Opuoru while in detention in 1999. Sunday Aghedo, the Lagos state police commissioner under whose command the death occurred was replaced by Mike Okiro on August 2, 1999. The case was referred to a magistrate rather than the High Court, and the case was pending at year's end.

In Anambra State, the state government supported the extrajudicial activities of the vigilante group known as the Bakassi Boys. Like most vigilante groups, the Bakassi Boys kill suspected criminals rather than turn them over to police; however, in some cases, the Bakassi Boys have chosen to cut off the hands or arms of perpetrators, rather than killing them outright. They also were accused of harassing and threatening political opponents of the state government.

Harsh and life threatening prison conditions and denial of proper medical treatment contributed to the death of numerous inmates (see Section 1.c.).

In October the HRVIP began hearings into 150 cases of killings by members of the security forces (see Section 4).

The Government did not address the November 1999 leveling of Odi in Bayelsa State by federal troops. The Government did not hold accountable any of the soldiers involved in the destruction of the town and the killing of several hundred inhabitants; there were newspaper reports that some of the soldiers were promoted. Trials against Keniwer Imo Neweigha, Monday Diongoli, Timi Epengele, Onoriode David, Ebi Clifford Saibu, Derioteidou Aganaba, Timinepre Keren, Joshua Godspower, John Zitua, and Benson Odiwei for the alleged murders of 12 policemen and 6 civilians that sparked the Odi incident, were ongoing at year's end. When the prosecution could not produce Odiwei for trial in October, the case was postponed to a later date.

The prosecution of Hamza al-Mustapha, Mohammed Abacha, Mohammed Rabo Lawal, Lateef Shofalan, Mohammed Aminu and Sergeant Rogers Mshiella for the 1996 murder of Kudirat Abiola, a prominent

prodemocracy activist and the wife of Moshood Abiola, was adjourned repeatedly during the year; defense lawyers for each individual had filed numerous motions for adjournment in the Lagos High Court. The Government continued to investigate and detain former Abacha government officials and family members, including former Minister of the Interior Capital Territory Jerry Useni, former National Security Advisor Ismaila Gwarzo, Abacha's wife Maryam, Abacha's son Mohammed, and Colonel Ibrahim Yakassai, for the murder and attempted murders of other prominent prodemocracy activists in Lagos from 1996 to 1998. All of the cases were ongoing at year's end.

In 1999 the trial against former Army Chief of Staff Ishaya Bamaïyi for the attempted murder in 1996 of Guardian newspaper publisher Alex Ibru began. Hamza al-Mustapha, former Lagos Police Commissioner James Danbaba, and Colonel Yakubu, also were charged in the attempt on Ibru but their trials were pending at year's end. All of the defendants were being held at Kiri Kiri maximum-security prison at year's end.

Organized vigilante groups in large cities, particularly Lagos, Kano, and Onitsha, committed numerous killings of suspected criminals. These vigilante groups engage in lengthy and well-organized attempts to apprehend criminals after the commission of the alleged offenses. In Lagos State, the vigilante group known as the OPC clashed repeatedly with the police over their protection of Yoruba neighborhoods and over political issues. In October an OPC demonstration against Libya's expulsion of several Nigerian citizens resulted in a number of injuries and the death of a guard at a foreign embassy. On October 14, clashes broke out between members of the OPC and police in Ilorin. The violence spread to Lagos over the following 2 days; however, the fighting in Lagos was between members of the mainly Yoruba OPC and members of the Hausa ethnic group and originated in a dispute over the capture and killing of alleged robbers of the Hausa ethnic group by members of the OPC. The rioting resulted in the deaths of over 100 persons, the destruction of buildings in Lagos and the outlawing of the OPC by the Government. In some southern states, such as Anambra, vigilante groups like the Bakassi Boys are supported and paid by the state government.

There also were numerous reports of street mobs apprehending and killing suspected criminals. The practice of "necklacing" criminals (placing a gasoline-soaked tire around a victim's neck or torso and then igniting it, burning the victim to death) caught in the act occurred in several cities.

During the year, there was an upsurge in lethal interethnic and intraethnic violence throughout the country (see Section 5). In February and May, rioting between Muslim and Christian groups over the proposed extension of Shari'a in Kaduna caused the deaths of more than 1,500 persons and massive property destruction (see Section 2.c.). Over 500 persons, predominantly of the Hausas ethnic group, were killed in reprisal violence that took place in Abia, Imo, and other eastern states. Religious and ethnic violence resulted in deaths in other communities as well (see Section 2.c.). For example, one person was killed and one Christian church was destroyed in Sokoto when "area boys" (neighborhood criminals) took advantage of the absence of police—who were managing a pro-Shari'a student demonstration elsewhere in the city—to attack and loot the church and its rectory in the predominantly Christian part of town. In Damboa, Borno, one person was killed and five churches were burned in a dispute concerning the location of a Christian church in a predominantly Muslim neighborhood. In May the discovery of a corpse sparked riots by Christians in the Narayi neighborhood in Kaduna; at least 500 persons were killed. A National Assembly member, Ibrahim Abdullahi, was burned alive in his car during the rioting.

Clashes between the Ife and the Modakeke ethnic groups caused the deaths of as many as 50 persons and much property destruction in Osun State (see Section 5).

In the east, over 150 persons were killed in border disputes between Cross River and Akwa Ibom states (see Section 5).

A clash between rival groups for the throne of the Owo in Ondo state cost the lives of at least five persons and the destruction of a number of homes and businesses (see Section 5).

#### b. Disappearance

There were no confirmed reports of politically motivated disappearances by government security forces during the past year; however, the OPC charged that the police were responsible for the disappearance of at least two of its members in January (see Section 1.a.).

Members of minority ethnic groups in the oil-producing areas kidnaped foreign and local oil company employees throughout the year to press their demands for more redistribution of wealth generated by joint ventures with the state-controlled petroleum corporation and for specific projects in their areas. Minority youth groups took as many as 250 persons hostage during the year. In all instances the victims were released

unharmed after negotiations between the captors and the oil firms; the firms usually paid ransoms and promised improved conditions.

In addition to the political rationale for kidnaping, there were numerous instances of strictly criminal kidnaping, in which the perpetrators' sole objective was ransom for the release of the victims. Some kidnapings appear to have been part of longstanding ethnic disputes. For example, in July a group of youths boarded a boat of traders from Okuagbe in Delta State and took all of the passengers captive. The attack was believed to be part of a dispute between the Ijaw and Urhobo ethnic groups. During the year, kidnapings by criminals to extort money were more numerous than those perpetrated for "political" reasons. Due to limited manpower and resources, the police and armed forces rarely were able to confront the perpetrators of these acts, especially in the volatile Delta region. A lack of resources prevented judicial investigations from taking place so that kidnapings were routinely left uninvestigated.

#### c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The Constitution prohibits torture and mistreatment of prisoners, and the law provides for punishment for such abuses; however, although there were no reports of torture of political dissidents during the year, army, police, and security force officers regularly beat protesters, criminal suspects, detainees, and convicted prisoners. Police regularly physically mistreated civilians in attempts to extort money from them. Detainees often were kept incommunicado for long periods of time. The 1960 Evidence Act prohibits the introduction into trials of evidence obtained through torture.

The extension of Shari'a law in many northern states generated a public debate on whether Shari'a punishments such as amputation for theft, caning for fornication and public drunkenness constituted "torture or... inhuman or degrading treatment" as stipulated in the Constitution. Caning as a punishment is available under Nigerian common law, the Northern Nigerian Penal Code, and Shari'a law and has not been successfully challenged in the court system as a violation of the cruel and inhuman punishment clause of the 1999 Constitution. In March in Zamfara state, Malam Buba Bello Jangebi's hand was amputated after he was convicted of cattle rustling in a Shari'a court. Jangebi chose not to appeal his sentence. In September a Sokoto Shari'a court handed down a sentence of amputation for a thief; the sentence had not been carried out by year's end. The first sentence handed down by Zamfara's Shari'a courts was for caning for a pregnant unwed mother and her boyfriend; both had confessed to fornication. In September Bariya Ibrahim Magazu, a 17-year old-girl, was sentenced to 100 lashes for engaging in fornication and 80 additional lashes for naming in court but not being able to prove who the possible father of the unborn child was. Magazu's sentence was suspended until 3 months after the birth of her child and at year's end had not been carried out. In August two motorcycle taxi drivers were caned for carrying Muslim female passengers in violation of the law in Zamfara State (see Section 5). A non-Muslim was pulled from a motorcycle in Zamfara State for breaking the new rule requiring separate transportation for women.

In the numerous ethnic clashes that occurred throughout the year (see Sections 1.a. and 3.c), hundreds of persons were beaten and injured severely. Police and security forces failed to respond to many criminal acts in a timely manner and were unable to protect Christians and Muslims caught in sectarian unrest in Kaduna, Kano, Lagos, and Abia states. For example, during the Kaduna riots of late February (see Section 2.c.), Kaduna residents at the Baptist Theological Seminary called upon police for protection from the roaming mobs that were firebombing their buildings. The police told the seminarians that they would have to protect themselves because they were too busy to respond to further calls; five persons were killed in the seminary's compound during the 2 days of rioting that followed. Mosques and Muslim adherents also were attacked during the rioting but were denied police protection despite pleas for assistance to the authorities. Order was restored only after the military was brought in to quell the disturbances.

No action was taken against army personnel responsible for rapes and other abuses in Delta, Bayelsa and Rivers states as reported in 1999.

After the November 1999 release of Jerry Needam, Editor of the Ogoni Star newspaper, the Government representatives failed to appear in court for any hearings relating to his case. Police reportedly beat Needam, forced him to sign a confession, and did not allow him access to medical treatment during his detention in 1999.

In June police killed two persons and injured hundreds of others during a 5-day petrol strike (see Section 1.a.).

In August police reported killing 509 persons and injuring 113 in pursuit of robbers in Lagos state (see Section 1.a.).

On a number of occasions security forces beat and detained journalists (see Section 2.a.).

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

In practice women and juveniles are held with males, especially in rural areas. The extent of abuse in these conditions is unknown.

The Government acknowledged the problem of overcrowding as the main cause of the harsh conditions common in the prison system. According to government sources, approximately 45,000 inmates were held in a system of 148 prisons (and 83 satellite prisons) with a maximum designed capacity of 33,348 prisoners. Some human rights groups estimate a higher number of inmates--perhaps as many as 47,000. The Controller-General of prisons estimated that two-thirds of prisoners are detainees awaiting trial who have not been charged (see Section 1.d.) and further admitted that the number of such inmates increased by 83 percent in the first half of the year. In May the Yobe state Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Alhaji Audu Mohammed Lawson, announced publicly that 287 inmates were awaiting trial and that at least 2 prisons, in Gashua and Potiskum, were at full capacity. Local officials blamed the lack of functioning police transport vehicles for the overcrowding since the state had no other means to transport prisoners to court securely.

Several times during the year, authorities attempted to ease congestion in some smaller prisons. For example, in honor of the Eid-El-Kabir holiday in March, the Governor of Kano State released 159 prisoners, 52 of whom were pretrial detainees held without charge. Those released also were provided with travel funds to return to their homes.

In September President Obasanjo directed the Ministry of Justice to create a judicial administration committee to address the questions of overcrowding, prison conditions, and rehabilitation.

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

#### d. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile

The Constitution prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention; however, the Government rarely observed these prohibitions. Police and security forces continued to use arbitrary arrest and detention.

Police and security forces were empowered to make arrests without warrants if they believed that there was reason to suspect that a person had committed an offense; they often abused this power. Under the Fundamental Rights Enforcement Procedures Rules of the Constitution (based on those of the 1979 Constitution), police may arrest and detain persons for 24 hours before charging them with an offense. The law requires an arresting officer to inform the accused of charges at the time of arrest and to take the accused persons to a station for processing within a reasonable amount of time. By law police must provide suspects with the opportunity to engage counsel and post bail. However, police generally did not adhere to legally mandated procedures. Suspects routinely were detained without being informed of the charges, denied access to counsel and family members, and denied the opportunity to post bail for bailable offenses. There

was no functioning system of bail, so many suspects were held in investigative detention. Numerous suspects alleged that police demanded payment before they were taken to court to have their cases heard. If family members attend court proceedings, an additional payment is demanded by police.

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

In March and April, police operations on Ogoniland, Rivers State resulted in the killing of several civilians, the destruction of buildings, and the arrest of several Ogoni activists (see Section 1.a.).

In May, alleged perpetrators of rioting between Christians and Muslims in Kaduna state were detained, but eventually were released without standing trial (see Section 5).

Lengthy pretrial detention remained a serious problem. According to the Constitution, persons charged with offenses have the right to an expeditious trial; however, in practice this right was not respected (see Section 1.c.). Serious backlogs, endemic corruption, and undue political influence continued to hamper the judicial system (see Section 1.e.). Estimates of the percentage of pretrial detainees held without charge in the prison population range from 33 to 65 percent of the estimated 44-47,000 detainees (see Section 1.c.). Many prisons held 200 to 300 percent more persons than they were designed to hold, and many of the pretrial detainees held without charge had been detained for periods far longer than the maximum allowable sentence for the crimes for which they were being held. Police cited their inability to securely transport detainees to trial on their scheduled trial dates as one reason why so many of the detainees were denied a trial.

Persons who happen to be in the vicinity of a crime when it is committed normally are held for interrogation for periods ranging from a few hours to several months. After their release, those detained frequently are asked to return repeatedly for further questioning. Police and members of the NDLEA continued the practice of placing relatives and friends of wanted suspects in detention without criminal charge to induce suspects to surrender to arrest, although this was done much less often than under the Abacha regime (see Section 1.f.). There were reports that Imo state prison officials work with some pretrial detainees to blackmail those who knowingly or unknowingly purchased stolen goods from the detainees. These persons, usually prominent individuals residing in larger cities such as Abuja and Lagos, are remanded to Imo state custody and told that they will be prosecuted also for the transfer of stolen goods; however, if they pay a bribe, they are released as is the pretrial detainee who colluded with the prison officials.

On a number of occasions security forces beat and detained journalists (see Section 2.a.).

Students in general are no longer singled out for arrest because of political activities; however, on October 1, police arrested two student leaders, Philip Suaib and Olusegun Oluwole, of the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) for disrupting Independence Day activities. The students claim that they were only pass