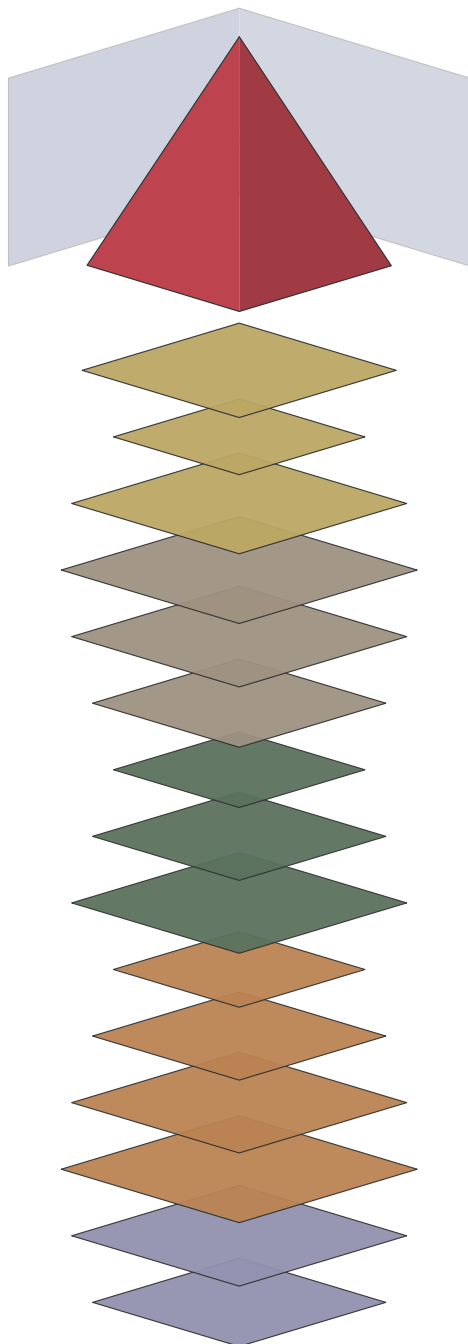


# NIGERIA



7.28

## CRIMINALITY SCORE

2<sup>nd</sup> of 54 African countries

1<sup>st</sup> of 15 West African countries



### CRIMINAL MARKETS

**7.37**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	7.5
HUMAN SMUGGLING	6
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	8
ARMS TRAFFICKING	8.5
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	8
ILLCIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	7
FLORA CRIMES	6
FAUNA CRIMES	7
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	8
HEROIN TRADE	6
COCAINE TRADE	7
CANNABIS TRADE	8
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	8.5
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	8
FINANCIAL CRIMES	7



### CRIMINAL ACTORS

**7.2**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	5.5
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	8.5
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	7.5
FOREIGN ACTORS	7.5
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	7.5



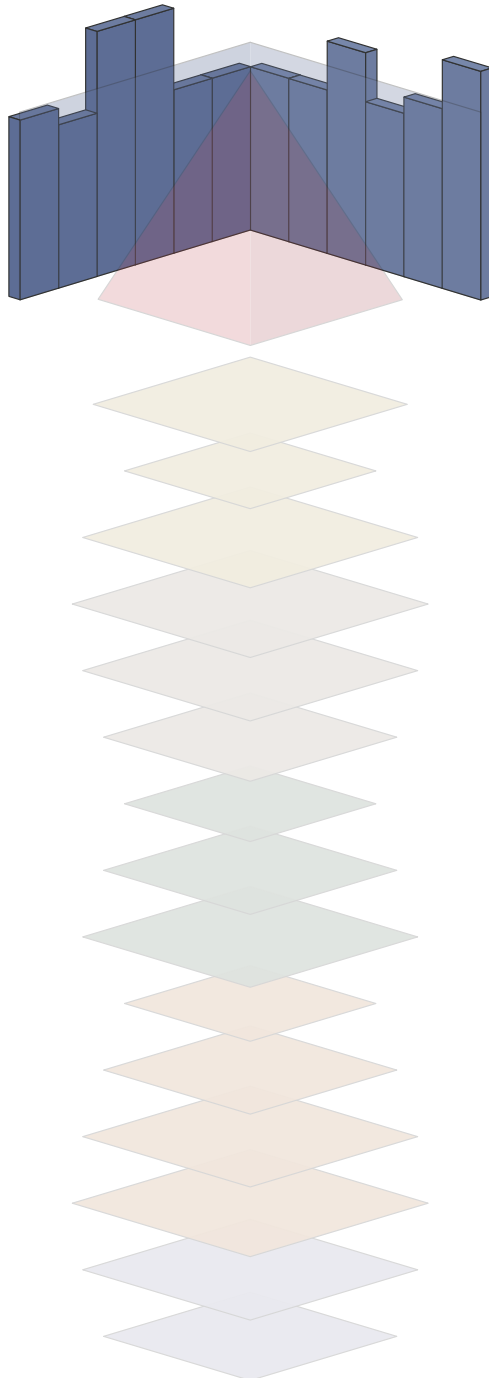
5.79

## RESILIENCE SCORE





# NIGERIA



5.79

## RESILIENCE SCORE

2<sup>nd</sup> of 54 African countries

2<sup>nd</sup> of 15 West African countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	5.5
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	5
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	7.5
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	7.5
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	5
LAW ENFORCEMENT	5
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	5
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	6.5
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	5
PREVENTION	5.5
NON-STATE ACTORS	7



7.28

## CRIMINALITY SCORE



CRIMINAL MARKETS **7.37**



CRIMINAL ACTORS **7.2**



# CRIMINALITY

## Criminal Markets

### PEOPLE

Human trafficking is a significant issue in Nigeria, affecting men, women, and children. Networks operating from southern Nigeria, particularly Benin City in Edo State, specialize in sex trafficking within West Africa and Europe. Other networks focus on labour exploitation, especially involving children, for domestic work, begging, small commerce, mining, and farming within the country and the West African region. So-called baby factories, where pregnant, unmarried women from impoverished backgrounds are deceived and promised large sums of money in exchange for their babies, have also emerged, particularly in the south-east region. Trafficking for both sexual and labour exploitation, including of children, has been reported in the country's largest cities, notably Abuja, Lagos, Kano, Port Harcourt and Onitsha. The socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic worsened the scale of trafficking in the country, while increasing violence and insecurity have resulted in displacement and a loss of livelihood, leaving many children vulnerable to exploitation. Armed groups involved in the continuing conflict in north-east Nigeria, notably Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), are also known to recruit children and use them as child soldiers in various roles.

Human smuggling is also widespread in Nigeria, driven by factors such as population size, increasing levels of poverty, and porous borders. Nigerian human smuggling networks primarily target European countries, and often pass through North African nations such as Niger and Mali. Compared to other West African countries, human smuggling from Nigeria to North Africa and Europe tends to be more organized. Nigerian diaspora communities facilitate the process by assisting victims, and transnational criminal organizations are often involved as well. A desperation to leave Nigeria for education and work, combined with the economic downturn caused by falling oil prices, contributes to the widespread human smuggling in the country. While levels of violence are relatively low, corruption and a sense of impunity among state officials are endemic. Smugglers are often perceived as benefiting the community.

Kidnapping for ransom, extortion, and protection racketeering pose significant security challenges in Nigeria. Kidnappings often involve clashes between

the perpetrators themselves, and have targeted foreign nationals residing in residential compounds, people travelling on public roads, as well as offshore and land-based oil facilities. Sometimes kidnapping for ransom is conducted as a non-violent transactional crime, but, on many occasions, it can involve lethal violence. The prevalence of 'kito', a crime whereby predators target and extort primarily LGBTQ+ individuals through dating apps, increased since the implementation of an anti-LGBTQ+ law, in January 2014. In northern Nigeria, the extremist group ISWAP has assumed quasi-governance functions within some communities, offering protection arrangements in insecure areas, in order to establish trust and support in local communities. Notably, where exercising an element of a governance function, ISWAP has opted to tax livelihood owners instead of engaging in cattle rustling activities in order to maintain a more favourable relationship with communities. However, the dynamics remain extremely violent.

### TRADE

Arms trafficking is a significant security concern in Nigeria, owing to the country's geographical location and regional security dynamics. Nigeria is a transit and destination country for illicit weapons, which are smuggled through land borders, air borders, and the vast coastline. Arms trafficking is driven by various factors, such as armed violence, conflict with violent extremist groups, and banditry. Cross-border trade plays a notable role, with arms smuggling networks connecting conflict zones in Nigeria to other parts of West and North Africa, expanding the arms market beyond Nigeria's borders. There is evidence of looted firearms from Libyan stockpiles flowing to Nigerian armed groups, and of weapons imported by extremist organizations being sold to organized crime groups in Nigeria and other conflict zones such as Libya and Yemen. As insecurity levels rise, local communities and vigilantes feel compelled to stockpile arms for self-defence, contributing to the demand and proliferation. Artisanal gun manufacturers also feed the domestic arms market, supplying local communities, self-defence groups, and criminal actors with cheaper, locally made firearms.

Counterfeit goods are a significant issue in Nigeria, with organized crime playing a prominent role in the industry. Nigeria is among several African countries that have fallen short in terms of intellectual property protection. The market in Nigeria is flooded with low-quality counterfeit



products that closely resemble or are identical to genuine items. This has resulted in a loss of profit for many registered brands, as fake products are particularly appealing to Nigerian consumers who cannot afford genuine items. Various types of products are commonly counterfeited in Nigeria, including packaged foods, automotive parts, footwear, clothing, and cosmetics. Counterfeit pharmaceuticals also pose a serious challenge, with antibiotics and drugs for treating malaria and pain being among the most frequently counterfeited.

The illicit trade of excise goods, particularly through land borders, is also problematic in Nigeria. The smuggling of commodities such as cigarettes and alcoholic beverages is prevalent owing to porous borders, corruption, and the inefficiency of border management agencies. It is worth noting that the securitized response by customs and immigration agencies has resulted in violence and instability in previously peaceful areas. In addition, second-hand car smuggling also occurs through the border between Benin and Nigeria. This activity is not perceived as criminal by local communities, as it has long been a vital source of livelihood for many people.

## ENVIRONMENT

With regard to flora crimes, the illegal exploitation of timber, driven by demand from foreign timber merchants, is a notable concern in Nigeria. A considerable number of incidents of illegal logging have been reported across many states of the country, including Edo, Ondo, Cross River, Taraba, and Ogun states. The illegal logging of rosewood in Cross River State, for instance, continues to be a significant issue. There are also allegations that such activities benefit violent extremist groups. This illicit activity is on the decline, however, as tree stocks, particularly rosewood, have been drastically depleted, as a consequence of previous illegal overexploitation for export, especially to China. As a result, timber is being illegally logged in Cameroon and then trafficked to Nigeria, where it is shipped to Vietnam, ultimately ending up in China's timber markets. Weak law enforcement, the lack of a bilateral response from Nigeria and Cameroon, and poor forestry governance contribute to the ongoing timber trafficking in the region, posing a threat to both the environment and the livelihood of small-scale loggers.

The illegal wildlife trade and a lack of effective control in Nigeria are leading to the destruction of the local fauna. Nigeria has become a significant transit country for wildlife trafficking, particularly for pangolin scales and ivory from Central Africa, destined for China and Vietnam. Criminal networks are able to traffic large volumes of ivory, facilitated by corruption and weak

law enforcement. Despite laws criminalizing the killing and trading of protected animal species, traffickers and poachers often go unpunished. The COVID-19 pandemic, with its accompanying travel restrictions and reduced law enforcement capacity, had some impact on wildlife trafficking, with a decrease in seizures reported. However, the trafficking of ivory and pangolin scales continues, as evidenced by significant seizures in recent months. Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing has also increased in Nigeria's coastal waters, leading to substantial economic losses for the government as well as environmental degradation. Nigeria is home to endangered species such as the West African lion, Cross River gorilla, and Cameroonian forest shrew, but their populations are declining owing to ineffective conservation measures and anti-smuggling efforts.

The theft and illegal trade of non-renewable resources poses a significant challenge in Nigeria. Widespread illegal oil bunkering results in substantial financial losses for the government. Despite efforts by Nigeria's law enforcement and military officials to deactivate illegal refineries and arrest smugglers, the indirect involvement of security forces in these activities through the acceptance of bribes remains a concern. Oil facilities are frequently vandalized and targeted by militant groups, exacerbating the problem. Additionally, the Nigerian government has at times engaged known militants to protect oil pipelines, indicating a lack of capacity within the security forces to secure this vital infrastructure. Stolen Nigerian oil finds its way to markets such as China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Israel, and South Africa. While the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily disrupted illegal oil bunkering, the activity persists both on- and offshore. Furthermore, illegal mining, particularly in states such as Zamfara, Niger, and Kaduna, is linked to conflict and instability, and there have been instances of high-profile individuals being intercepted while attempting to smuggle significant amounts of gold out of the country.

## DRUGS

Nigeria has emerged as a major transit point for the global heroin trade, with drug traffickers using the country to smuggle large quantities of heroin to Europe and North America. Nigerian trafficking groups collaborate with drug cartels in South America, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, and state corruption facilitates these operations. The country also experiences a relatively high rate of heroin use, driven by factors such as easy drug access, poverty, job insecurity, and unemployment. Nigeria also serves as a significant transit point for trafficked cocaine, destined for various global markets. Nigerian actors are prominent on the intra-African trade routes,



particularly on air trafficking routes. Nigerian networks are also prominent in air trafficking of cocaine shipments primarily from Brazil to markets in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, utilizing a network of co-conspirators within the diaspora. Authorities have reported multiple large cocaine seizures and subsequent arrests.

Nigeria serves as a significant hub for the cannabis trade, being a country of origin, departure, and transit for the drug. The cultivation of cannabis is prevalent in Nigeria, particularly in the south-west region, with its favourable weather conditions. Notably, Nigeria experiences large-scale seizures of cannabis. This illicit trade is facilitated by institutional weaknesses, porous borders, and widespread corruption within the country. The Nigeria–Chad border, specifically through Maiduguri, is notorious for cannabis smuggling. Additionally, authorities have found evidence of a new type of cannabis trafficked from Ghana, believed to possess superior quality, processing, and packaging compared to locally produced cannabis.

Nigeria plays a significant role in the trade of synthetic drugs, including psychotropic substances such as tramadol and amphetamines. The smuggling of tramadol, in particular, is prevalent, with Lagos serving as a major market for the drug, which originates from other continents such as Asia and enters the country through Benin. Tramadol is distributed both legally and illegally from Lagos to various parts of Nigeria, notably Edo and Kano states. Nigeria's porous borders and the complicity of government officials contribute to the ease with which tramadol and other substances are illicitly traded. Indian manufacturers are known to rebrand synthetic opioids extremely similar, or equivalent, to tramadol as 'Tafrodol' to avoid detection by customs officials at entry points in Nigeria.

## CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cybercrime poses a significant threat in Nigeria, targeting both Nigerian citizens and individuals from other countries. Instances of cybercrime have expanded beyond the large cities in southern Nigeria and are now prevalent in the northern region. Authorities recently raised concerns about new malware strains that infect mobile devices through malicious links. While cyber-dependent crime targeting individuals has experienced a significant rise, it is considered less severe than the more serious cyber-dependent crime committed to attack major organizational systems, national security, and critical infrastructure databases. Nonetheless, the prevalence of cybercrime remains a concern in Nigeria, and increased efforts are necessary to enhance cybersecurity measures and combat these illicit activities.

## FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crime, including electronic banking fraud, poses a significant challenge in Nigeria. The government's implementation of a cashless policy, intended to promote digital transactions, inadvertently led to an increase in attempted cyber-enabled fraud through mobile channels, web platforms, and point-of-sale systems. Additionally, the country's inconsistent exchange rate regimes and reliance on deficit spending and borrowing have reinforced rent-seeking behaviour and corruption. The financial policies of the Nigerian Central Bank are influenced by the government's irregular approach, further exacerbating these issues. Organized crime groups, both within and outside Nigeria, are involved in cyber-enabled financial crime. Notorious local gangs have been implicated in internet scams resulting in substantial financial losses. Among the most prevalent financial scams committed by these groups are business email compromise, payment channel fraud, phishing, impersonation, and cyber fraud.

## Criminal Actors

Organized crime groups in Nigeria typically differ from traditional hierarchical and permanent mafia-style groups. Instead, they often operate as smaller, loose criminal networks, organized along familial and ethnic lines. These include the Fulani armed bandit groups that have been involved in deadly acts of violence since 2011. Their activities encompass large-scale violence, cattle rustling, kidnappings for ransom, extortion, and various other criminal actions, contributing to insecurity and instability in the north-west region of Nigeria. Other groups primarily pursue economic and political objectives, with some involvement in the country's oil-producing region. Recently, attention has been drawn to Nigerian gangs involved in human trafficking that are characterized by secret initiation rituals and highly loyal members. These gangs have infiltrated political structures and engage in scams and cross-border killings. Referred to as 'cult groups', they originated as university confraternities in the 1960s but have since transformed into well-organized gangs. Their activities mainly revolve around drug and human trafficking, especially from Nigeria to European countries such as Italy, Spain, and the UK. Other criminal networks in the country engage in crimes such as cyber-attacks, oil bunkering, extortion, and kidnapping, demonstrating a significantly large international reach in comparison to equivalent regions.

Foreign criminal actors operating in Nigeria are involved in various illegal practices, including illicit financial flows, maritime crime, fauna and flora crime, illegal mining, oil



and gas activities, and drug trafficking. Many of these criminal actors originate from Asia. Lebanese networks are also known to operate in Nigeria and across West Africa, leveraging their contacts within the diaspora and import/export businesses to facilitate the trafficking of gold and drugs. Latin American actors have been known to engage in the drugs trade in Nigeria. Furthermore, foreign networks are involved in arms trafficking, and it is understood that Mexican cartels cooperate with Nigerian businesses to this end within Nigeria.

Corruption is prevalent in Nigeria, particularly in public procurement, and there is collusion between state-embedded actors and members of national and multinational corporate entities. Despite attempts to address these challenges, corruption remains pervasive

at all levels of politics. In addition, the police force in Nigeria is widely perceived as corrupt, unhelpful, and untrustworthy. State-embedded actors in the country can be classified into two major types: those who collude with or sponsor individuals engaged in corruption and similar crimes, particularly in procurement, and those who protect criminals for economic or political reward, these commonly being law enforcement and judicial officials.

Private sector actors are involved in various criminal markets in Nigeria to a significant degree, facilitating crimes such as drug trafficking, fauna and flora crime, illegal mining, oil theft, illicit financial flows, and tax evasion. Often, they collude with or receive protection from public officials. In Nigeria's north-east, logistics suppliers were also found to be working for Boko Haram fighters.

# RESILIENCE

## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The Nigerian government has been faced with public dissatisfaction and protests – including protracted strike action by academic staff at public universities – exacerbated by growing insecurity, high inflation rates, and increasing poverty levels. Political leadership and governance in Nigeria face significant challenges in enforcing laws and delivering services effectively. In fact, insurgents are gaining control of ungoverned spaces, establishing their own forms of governance, and challenging the government's monopoly on violence. Additionally, the democratic process is often undermined by vote buying, intimidation, and the influence of powerful economic interests. The divisive rhetoric used by the political elite deepens intergroup polarization and tension, further eroding public trust and legitimacy. Nigeria is widely regarded as one of the most corrupt countries in West Africa; people have little trust in the state and remain pessimistic about prospects for change. Although Nigeria has recorded a significant number of corruption complaints and convictions and undertaken various government reforms and initiatives, corruption is worsening rather than improving.

Nigeria has ratified many relevant international treaties and conventions to fight organized crime and has been a major contributor of troops and police to UN peace operations, serving in dozens of missions. In the face of capacity challenges, Nigeria has been making efforts to strengthen its laws, policies, and institutions to

combat transnational organized crime. The country has incorporated international standards against organized crime into its national laws, positioning itself as one of the most compliant countries in Africa in this regard.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The Nigerian judicial system faces numerous challenges that significantly impact its effectiveness and credibility. While Nigerian judges are generally competent, the system is hindered by outdated practices, resistance to change, inadequate resources, poor working conditions, and corruption among some judges. These constraints contribute to trial delays and prolonged pre-trial detention, which the government has acknowledged as issues requiring reform. Corruption within the judiciary has eroded public trust and damaged its reputation. Overcrowded prisons and human rights violations exacerbate the situation. The lack of access to legal representation for detainees coupled with reports of torture and other ill-treatment underscore the systemic problems within the Nigerian criminal justice system. Additionally, funding remains a significant challenge, with ongoing disputes between the state-level judiciary, legislatures, and the federal government over financial autonomy.

Nigerian law enforcement comprises various agencies responsible for general and specialized policing duties. The Nigerian Police Force serves as the leading centralized federal force, while specialized agencies focus on areas



such as road safety, drug control, anti-corruption, and human trafficking at federal and state levels. However, the country's law enforcement agencies face significant challenges and require urgent reforms. Law enforcement agents endure poor remuneration and welfare, with many living in dilapidated housing. Corruption and extortion are widespread, with law enforcement personnel known to engage in unlawful practices such as extorting motorists and colluding with criminals. These factors contribute to a lack of public trust and a strained relationship between the police and the public. The surge in violence and instability across various regions of the country since 2011, coupled with the diminishing trust in state police forces, has led to the emergence of state-sponsored vigilante groups, like Amotekun, in the south-west. This development carries noteworthy implications for human rights norms, communal relations, and the state's monopoly over the utilization of force. In addition, the military has faced censure for extrajudicial killings and human rights abuses in operations against separatist movements and counterinsurgency efforts. Nigeria's law enforcement agencies also grapple with capacity limitations and resource constraints. The police force, notorious for bribery, corruption, and impunity, operates under significant operational challenges and relies heavily on capacity-building projects and assistance from international organizations. The involvement of state security forces in the illicit economy further undermines their legitimacy as a regulatory body.

Nigeria's territorial integrity faces challenges owing to porous land borders and criminal activity. The country shares borders with Benin, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger, and informal routes enable smuggling operations to go undetected by customs and immigration officials. The extensive length of the Niger–Nigeria border, and the rivers and dense forests that provide cover, makes effective border policing difficult. The area has also been heavily impacted by the Boko Haram insurgency, leading to cross-border refugee flows and a state of lawlessness. The presence of anti-government violent extremist groups, bandits, and separatist groups in many regions poses a significant threat to security. The government continues to equip the military and other security agencies while employing limited non-kinetic approaches to address this threat. There has been a decrease in attacks against major infrastructure and security formations in urban areas.

## ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Nigeria has made efforts to improve its anti-money laundering framework, but the crime remains a significant concern. The most prevalent forms of money laundering

predicate crimes are corruption, fraud, and cybercrime, particularly within the oil industry. Multiple agencies are responsible for investigating and prosecuting money laundering cases, and coordination is limited or lacking. As a result, many offences go unprosecuted, including foreign predicate offences. Nigeria also lacks effective legal and operational frameworks for international cooperation, asset recovery, and repatriation. Additionally, the country faces challenges in providing timely and accurate information on legal entities and offering constructive assistance to its international counterparts during money laundering investigations. The use of peer-to-peer transfers, especially by means of mobile payment services, is widespread in Nigeria, and transnational organized crime groups have adopted this technology for various illicit activities, including extortion, money laundering, terrorism, and the trafficking of wildlife, firearms, humans, and drugs.

Doing business in Nigeria is rife with uncertainty. While the setting up of businesses could be expedited by easing certain registration regulations, to make doing business sustainable requires significant policy changes and substantial investment in infrastructure and institutions. However, it is important to note that organized crime groups do not seem to control any specific economic areas in the country.

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Nigeria falls short of meeting the minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking, although the government has made efforts to identify victims. However, the services provided to victims remain insufficient. While formal procedures are in place to guide law enforcement and social services personnel in proactively identifying trafficking victims, the resources available to the anti-trafficking unit are inadequate to provide specialized care for all victims. Nigeria also faces significant challenges in responding to the needs of victims of crime and violence. Many internally displaced people and those affected by violence lack access to basic social amenities, including healthcare, sanitation, and shelter. This indicates a broader problem, as the country is unable to support victims of crime and provide essential services to those affected by violence and displacement.

Prevention is a key mandate for all anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria, however, effective and measurable policy implementation is lacking. Local communities have implemented initiatives to respond to organized crime, but these have resulted mainly in the creation of vigilante groups, rather than advocacy or awareness programmes. The phenomenon of vigilantism appears to



have arisen owing to ambivalence and discontent towards state authority. Various international organizations have implemented programmes with a specific emphasis on crime prevention among the youth.

Nigeria benefits from an active and diverse civil society ecosystem, comprising NGOs, media organizations, academics, and think tanks, which contribute to public discourse and policy implementation. However, the government has encountered resistance from civil society organizations in its attempts to introduce laws regulating the activities of NGOs and registered associations. While many of these organizations focus on good governance, gender issues, and development, their work is constrained by limited funding and unconducive political circumstances. There has been an increase in the number of pro-government NGOs since the current

government came into power. Some of these organizations are seen as having personal and ethnic ties to the ruling party and may operate only briefly before disappearing. Nigeria's media landscape is pluralistic, encompassing print, electronic, traditional, and new media outlets. Historically, the Nigerian media was known for its professionalism and its criticism of government policies. However, media professionalism has declined, leading to a perception of journalistic corruption. Fake news, hate speech, and political influence have become more prevalent, contributing to a significant level of distrust between the media and the government. Journalists in Nigeria face dangers such as surveillance, physical attacks, arbitrary arrests, and even killings. Overall, press freedom has declined in the country.

