

Written evidence submitted by CSW (IRN0014)

About CSW

CSW¹ is a human rights organisation specialising in the right to freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) that works on over 20 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. Nigeria is one of CSW's focus countries.

This submission focuses on the country's critical security situation and growing repression, which militate against investment and sustainable development.

Overview of the Security Situation

1. Despite an electoral victory in 2015 bolstered by President Muhammadu Buhari's military credentials and stated aim of defeating the Boko Haram terrorist insurgency, his administration has overseen a relentless decline in security.
2. Resurgent terrorist factions continue to launch deadly attacks in the northeast. In the northwest attacks by diverse armed gangs of Fulani ethnicity primarily effect the predominantly Hausa Muslim farmers. Attacks perpetrated by assailants alternatively termed armed Fulani herders, Fulani militants or Fulani militia are reported regularly from central states, particularly Benue, Kaduna and Plateau.² These attacks are now occurring in southern Nigeria with increased frequency.
3. There is a long history of disputes between nomadic herders and farming communities across the Sahel, occasioned by competition for land and water, and exacerbated by desertification and other factors. However, current attacks are so asymmetric in terms of

frequency, organisation and weaponry that this nomenclature no longer suffices.

4. The violence has mutated into a deadly campaign with outworkings that increasingly reflect Nigeria's main religious fault line. Religion and ethnicity function as effective rallying points for the militia. In a region where ethnicity generally correlates with religion, these attacks appear to constitute a campaign of ethno-religious cleansing.
5. The government's seeming inability – or unwillingness – to address this violence definitively contrasts with its harsh treatment of civil society and ordinary members of the public who peaceably express concern or dissent.
6. In a 2020 report CSW highlighted Nigeria's critical security vacuum,³ having warned earlier that "this pivotal West African nation [was] close to failing."⁴ In December CSW warned again of the urgent need "to ensure protection for Nigeria's besieged citizens, and to avert the nation's descent into failed statehood." However, by May 2021, seasoned observers had concluded that Nigeria's inability to "provide peace and stability" for its citizens has converted what was a "weak state" into a failed one. "Nigeria has become a fully failed state of critical geopolitical concern. Its failure matters because the peace and prosperity of Africa and preventing the spread of disorder and militancy around the globe depend on a stronger Nigeria."⁵

Non-State Actors: Boko Haram/Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)

¹ <https://www.csw.org.uk/about.htm>

² These terms are not a condemnation of an entire people group, as some have claimed erroneously; they are used in an effort to distinguish this irregular trained and well-armed faction from law abiding Fulani communities who have lived peaceably alongside farming communities, and who are often stigmatised and, infrequently, targeted due to their shared ethnicity with these perpetrators of violence.

³ <https://www.csw.org.uk/2020/06/15/report/4689/article.htm>

⁴ <https://www.csw.org.uk/2020/01/30/press/4542/article.htm>

⁵ <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/05/27/nigeria-is-a-failed-state/>

7. Violations of the right to freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) have occurred for decades in northern states, bolstered by a comprehensive marginalisation of minority faiths dating back to the colonial era.⁶ Longstanding impunity for religion-related crimes has assisted in creating an enabling environment for the emergence of extremist groups with an antipathy towards FoRB that allows for violence.⁷
8. Terrorist factions operating in the northeast continue to mount campaigns of murder, rape, and abduction. Both Boko Haram factions have been gaining ground since 2018, despite official proclamations of their “technical defeat” in 2015.
9. Boko Haram reportedly controls 8 out of 10 local government areas (LGAs) in Borno State. In January, at least 25 soldiers died when a suicide bomber rammed an explosives-laden truck into a military convoy in Goniri, on the border of Yobe and Borno states. In February, at least 20 soldiers died in an ambush in Malari, Borno State. Ten people were killed and 47 injured in a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) attack on two districts in the Borno state capital, Maiduguri. An attack in May on the remote town of Ajiri in Borno state killed 10 civilians, 12 vigilantes and five soldiers. The violence continued throughout the Ramadan season.
10. During 2020, the Abubakar Shekau faction progressively secured alliances with bandits operating in Niger and Zamfara states in the northwest and was reportedly formalising links with some in Katsina and Sokoto states, as well as in Adamawa, Kogi and Taraba states in the centre. By September 2020 the governor of Kano, a state which has yet to be affected, called for an increased military presence, as terrorists were beginning to gather in the Falgore Forest area.⁸
11. In May 2021 news emerged that ISWAP had overrun the original Boko Haram’s Sambisa Forest headquarters, compelled Shekau to surrender, and asked him to step down. He chose to take his own life instead by detonating a suicide vest.⁹
12. In June ISWAP reportedly arrested 30 commanders loyal to Shekau and appointed Abu-Musaab Al Barnawi, son of Boko Haram’s founder Mohammed Yusuf, to replace Shekau in Borno.¹⁰
13. The ramifications of Shekau’s death are still manifesting. The sect could either be weakened by fissures, or consolidate behind ISWAP’s dogma, which includes ensuring Muslim communities are not harmed unless they are deemed apostate.¹¹
14. It also remains to be seen whether ISWAP’s emphasis on safeguarding the Muslim community will facilitate an alliance with the al Qaeda affiliate known as Ansaru, which is operating again in the northwest following a six-year hiatus.¹²

⁶ Non-Muslims in Shari’a states report being unable to enjoy rights to which they are constitutionally entitled, including difficulty or denial of access to schools, social amenities, and work in the security sector, among others, and the denial of promotions beyond a certain level. In most Shari’a states, the construction of churches is severely restricted; most congregations cannot purchase land for church construction, nor obtain certificates of ownership for land purchased for this purpose. In many Shari’a states, and particularly in rural areas, the education of female minors from minority faith communities is frequently curtailed by abduction, forcible conversion and marriage without parental consent, undertaken by local men, often with the complicity of traditional leaders and religious institutions.

⁷ More recent incarnations include Maitatsine in the 1980s, Kata Kalo in 2009

Non-State Actors: Militia Violence

⁸ <https://humangle.ng/fear-as-terrorists-invade-falgore-forest-in-kano/>

⁹ <https://humangle.ng/boko-haram-strongman-shekau-dead-as-iswap-fighters-capture-sambisa-forest/>

¹⁰ <https://guardian.ng/news/albarnawy-replaces-shekau-as-iswap-boko-haram-leader/>

¹¹ Such designations are undertaken in accordance with IS’ *Takfiri* ideology.

¹² Ansaru split from Shekau because its members objected to attacks on Christian and government targets in which members of the Muslim community were increasingly becoming collateral damage. However, al Qaeda does not quite adhere to a same *Takfiri* ideology as IS.

15. Violence perpetrated by an irregular armed faction comprising members of Fulani ethnicity has been reported in Plateau state since March 2010. Attacks on non-Muslim farming communities elsewhere in central Nigeria have been ongoing since 2011 but increased exponentially in 2015.¹³ In a region where ethnicity generally correlates with religion, ethnic minorities are invariably also religious minorities. Consequently, these attacks may constitute ethno-religious cleansing, as land is frequently occupied after its owners flee to safety.
16. According to the Southern Kaduna Peoples Union (SOKAPU), the attacks have displaced at least 143 southern Kaduna communities. “Over 160,000 persons, mostly women and children, [are] now living under very harsh and dehumanising conditions devoid of food, medication, and other necessities of life,”¹⁴ because there are no official camps for tens of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Attacks occur almost daily; a recent attack on the Goska community in Jema’a LGA during the afternoon of 31 May claimed four lives. In the previous week, Godogodo town and Golkofa village in Jema’a LGA experienced similar attacks.
17. Plateau state also continues to experience worrying levels of militia violence. On 20 May a young mother and a 19-year-old man were murdered during an attack on Jebbu Miango village in the Miango area. A father of one and a father of two died when the militia invaded Kpachudu village the following evening. Then on 23 May 14 people, including two children, were killed in an attack on Kwi village in Riyom
- LGA, while eight were killed in Dong village, Jos North LGA.
18. Benue, the first state to ban open grazing of cattle in 2018 following significant militia attacks, also experiences ongoing violence. On 20 March the state’s governor, Samuel Ortom, narrowly escaped assassination when he was ambushed on his farm in the Tyomu community.¹⁵ Blaming the leadership of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) for the attack, the governor said he was marked for elimination, but would not be intimidated into restoring open grazing. While MACBAN denied involvement, the Fulani Nationality Movement, (FUNAM), which had previously asserted ownership of Nigerian land from Sokoto to the Atlantic, claimed responsibility in a press release. Stating that it acted on behalf of millions of Fulani in 15 countries, FUNAM called the governor an infidel who was attempting to destroy Fulani values and inheritance: “Wherever you are, once you are against Fulani long term interest, we shall get you down.”¹⁶
19. In April over 70 people were killed and many more were wounded in a series of attacks within a two-week period on Agatu, Guma, Gwer West and Makurdi LGAs, with many others wounded. On 26 April 10 people were killed and nine injured when a camp accommodating 7,000 IDPs along the Makurdi-Lafia highway was attacked.¹⁷

¹³ The increasingly well-armed militia has particularly targeted farming communities in Bauchi, Benue, southern Kaduna, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba states. While this violence predates the advent of the Buhari administration, its ability to increase the frequency and scope of its operations exponentially since his election in 2015 is attributed by many to the president’s shared ethnicity with the perpetrators: [How Fulanis are being stigmatised in Minna IDP camps | Dailytrust](https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/01/19/sokapu-bandits-displaced-160000-people-in-southern-kaduna/)
¹⁴<https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/01/19/sokapu-bandits-displaced-160000-people-in-southern-kaduna/>

¹⁵ Governor Ortom described his assailants as “people who were dressed in black and from experience we now discovered that these are Fulani militias”

<https://www.sbmintel.com/2021/03/daily-watch-inec-suspends-violent-ekiti-bye-election-fulani-group-claims-responsibility-for-attack-on-ortom/?fbclid=IwAR3YT4D21vzbYly46TXlOPQf-2-FmPjzUJqp4xRZn6jdY0PyolKjYiuAbYc>

¹⁶

<https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/05/04/samuel-l-ortom-when-a-governor-has-to-flee/>

¹⁷ According to Governor Ortom there are now over a million IDPs in Benue state.

20. On 2 June Governor Ortom's Senior Special Assistant (SSA) on Security, retired Assistant Inspector General Christopher Dega, was assassinated by three gunmen who had reportedly trailed him to the Plateau state capital, Jos.¹⁸

Non-State Actors: Rural Banditry

21. Inadequate official intervention to stem the violence in central Nigeria and a concomitant proliferation of small arms have facilitated a general rise in lawlessness, which terrorist factions in the northeast are exploiting increasingly.
22. Organised gangs stationed in forested areas are targeting communities in northern Kaduna State, and the north-western states of Katsina, Niger, Sokoto and Zamfara States. Many thousands of villagers have been killed, brutalized, raped, and abducted by perpetrators who are largely of Fulani ethnicity, including some from neighbouring countries.¹⁹
23. In late April 2021, the Governor of Niger state confirmed that unspecified terrorists had displaced 3000 people, abducted women and planted their flag in Kaure and Shiroro LGAs, a two-hour drive from the federal capital, Abuja. Ten of Niger's 25 LGAs are, reportedly, now under siege. In the absence of effective state intervention, some communities negotiated a ceasefire in return for paying taxes to, farming for, and catering to any additional demands of these insurgents.^{20, 21}

¹⁸

<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/465354-how-ortoms-security-aide-was-killed-police.html>

¹⁹ "This intrareligious and broadly ethnic conflict dates back to 2012. Its genesis is obscured in a history of cattle rustling, mining interests and vigilantes, with Hausa communities generally suffering at the hands of all three, and it now resembles 'an attempt at clearing villages in parts of the area of people.'" CSW, 'Submission to the 126th Human Rights Committee'

<https://www.csw.org.uk/2019/06/18/report/4368/article.htm>

²⁰ [Shiroro residents negotiate ceasefire with bandits after government neglect | Dailytrust](#) ; [Boko Haram imposes VAT, income taxes on residents of Shiroro, other Niger communities](#)

Non-State Actors: Attacks in Southern Nigeria

24. Attacks by assailants of Fulani origin are occurring in the southwest and southeast with increasing frequency. The United States has also warned the Nigerian government of plans by al-Qaeda and Islamic State (IS) to penetrate Southern Nigeria.²²
25. The government's continued inaction²³ in the face of rising crime by Fulani assailants, including the destruction of farmlands, rape, and abduction for ransom, gave rise to the creation by the governors of Nigeria's six southwest states of a security force named 'Operation Amotekun' on 9 January 2020, and increased support for secession and the creation of the Oduduwa Republic.²⁴
26. In the southeast, these unchecked violations eventually led in December 2020 to the creation of a militia named the Eastern Security Network (ESN), the regional security wing of the *Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)*, a

- [Wardesk News](#)

²¹ Details are slowly emerging of an attack in which at least 88 people were killed in Koro, Kimpi, Gaya, Dimi, Zutu, Rafin Gora and Iguenge villages in Danko/Wasagu LGA, Kebbi state.

²²<https://www.sbmintel.com/2021/03/daily-watch-inec-suspends-violent-ekiti-bye-election-fulani-group-claims-responsibility-for-attack-on-ortom/?fbclid=IwAR3YT4D21vzbYly46TXI0PQf-2-FmPjzUJqp4xRZn6jdY0PyolKjYiuAbYc>

²³ In some instances there may even be complicity. For example, in August 2020, during an attack on Apyiako village in southern Kaduna, residents who hid among maize crops saw a truck resembling an armoured military vehicle and military motorcycles drive into the village square as the attack was underway but make no effort to intervene. In March 2021, three members of the Yoruba organisation the Oodua Peoples Republic (OPC) who captured notorious Fulani gang leader Iskili Wakili whose gang abducted, raped, extorted and generally terrorised communities in the Ibarapa area of Oyo state were arrested as they attempted to hand him over to the police, and were later charged with arson and murder, which they deny: <https://tribuneonlineng.com/wakili-released-opc-members-speak-deny-killing-anyone-committing-arson/>

²⁴ In a recent example of militia violence in the southwest, around 20 people were killed and the traditional ruler's palace was destroyed in an attack on the Igangan community in Ibarapa North LGA, Oyo state. The violence began at 11.00pm on 5 June and continued into the early hours of 6 June. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/06/updated-gunmen-kill-20-in-igangan-in-fresh-attack/>

- secessionist organisation. Then in May, all 17 southern governors resolved to ban open grazing in their states.²⁵
27. Initially, IPOB organised peaceful pro-secessionist protests and enjoyed limited support. However, the government's excessively militarised and lethal response to these protests, ongoing detentions and enforced disappearance of Igbo men and boys, and the swift designation of the IPOB as a terrorist group merely for advocating secession triggered a steady growth in support for secession.
28. The government, which blames IPOB for attacks on police stations and a polling station, responded by launching "Operation Restore Peace."²⁶ In their search for IPOB supporters, security services stand accused of indiscriminate use of arbitrary detentions and air assaults in civilian areas, as homes, student hostels, and even churches²⁷ are raided ostensibly in a search for IPOB sympathisers:
29. "Among the [26] Eastern communities physically and psychologically targeted and attacked since January 2021 by soldiers of the Nigerian Army, Air Force and the Nigeria Police Force are communities of Ubokoro-Atta, Okporo, Uda Orsuihiteukwa and Okwudor and others located in Orlu, Njaba, Oru East and Orsu LGAs in Imo and Orsumoghu, Lilu, Ukpok, Unubi, etc in Ihiala and Nnewi South LGAs of Anambra State.

²⁵

<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/462883-analysis-how-southern-governors-ban-on-open-grazing-may-reduce-farmer-herder-crisis.html>

²⁶ In a possible indication of impending human rights violations, when launching the initiative acting Inspector General of Police Usman Baba said the following: "*Don't mind the media shout; do the job I command you. If anyone accuses you of human rights violation, the report will come to my table, and you know what I will do. So, take the battle to them wherever they are and kill them all. Don't wait for an order. What another order are you waiting for when Mr. President had ordered you to shoot anybody carrying AK-47 rifle? Quote me, even a dead policeman can be tried and dismissed from the force and his family will not get his benefits.*"

<https://punchng.com/ig-declares-war-on-biafran-agitators-criminal-elements/>

²⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRnk850FVmk>

30. Others raided and attacked in April 2021 include Ohaji, Osu, Agwa and Izombe, etc in Ohaji/Egbema LGA of Imo and between April and this month of May 2021, Onicha-Igboeze community and neighboring others in Ebonyi State and Etche, Iriebe and Obigbo communities as well as Port Harcourt and Borokiri in Rivers State and several others in Akwa Ibom and Cross River states have come under heavy military and police attacks including killings and late night abduction of dozens of defenceless citizens.
31. "Few days ago, there were reports of resumption of military air bombardments and ground troops' killings and abductions in the Communities of Amuzi and Odenkwume and other neighboring communities in Ihite/Uboma LGA as well as Arondizogu and neighboring others in Ideato North LGA, all in Imo."²⁸
32. On 6 June Barrister Ifeanyi Ejiofor, who provides legal assistance to IPOB members, was seized from his home by a force consisting of army, police, Department of State Services and Civil Defence personnel, who killed his personal assistant and abducted four members of his household.²⁹

Non-State Actors: Kidnapping for ransom

33. Kidnapping is the fastest growing criminal enterprise. While asserting, correctly, that not all kidnapers are Fulani, the Sultan of Sokoto recently acknowledged that seven or eight of every 10 arrested kidnapers are Fulani.³⁰
34. Kaduna state is an epicentre of kidnapping and banditry activity despite being the

²⁸ <http://saharareporters.com/2021/05/26/how-army-police-terrorised-26-communities-abducted-scores-men-south-east-over-suspected>

²⁹ The barrister issued the following Tweet as the raid was underway: "Alert: Joint team of the police and Army are presently in my house shooting sporadically on sight, to arrest me. As a lawyer i hve committed no offence known to law. My life is unde[r] serious threat . People are being killed and i don't know what will happen to me next"

<https://twitter.com/EjioforBar/status/1401371769014001666?s=20>

³⁰ <https://gazettengr.com/seven-to-eight-kidnappers-arrested-are-fulani-sultan-abubakar/>

headquarters of 11 military installations, and levels of insecurity in some areas almost match those in the northeast. According to SOKAPU in 2020 the people of southern Kaduna paid out over N900 million in ransom, with many killed after relatives of victims were unable to raise the ransom, or at times even when ransom had been paid.³¹ Christian leaders, their families, and congregations are particularly targeted.³² While the state's governor asserts vociferously his decision to no longer pay ransoms, he has not attempted to rescue victims or apprehend perpetrators.

35. Since 2020, there has been a particular uptick in the abduction of students across the country, including:

- a. 11 December 2020: 344 boys were abducted from their boarding school in Kankara in Katsina state. They were released on 17 December following negotiations by a 'repentant bandit' (who subsequently backslid³³), and undisclosed ransom.
- b. 19 December 2020: 113 Quranic students from Mahuta, Katsina state were abducted as they returned from a religious ceremony, and were rescued by vigilantes on 21 December.
- c. 24 January: heavily armed gunmen abducted eight children and two adults from an orphanage in Abuja, threatening to "waste" them if N10 million (approximately £ 17,108.00) was not forthcoming. They were released on 31 January, allegedly following payment of a reduced ransom.

³¹

<https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2021/01/19/sokapu-bandits-displaced-160000-people-in-southern-kaduna/>

³² The following are examples from 2019, 2020 and 2021

<https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/one-christian-killed-12-kidnapped-in-nigeria/>; [Image may contain: one or more people, people standing, crowd and outdoor](#);

<https://www.csw.org.uk/2021/04/26/press/5238/article.htm>; <https://dailypost.ng/2021/06/05/pastors-wives-injured-as-bandits-set-assemblies-of-gods-church-on-fire-in-kaduna/>

³³ [EXCLUSIVE: Mastermind of Kankara abduction makes u-turn, returns to forest | Dailytrust](#)

- d. 26 February: 279 girls were abducted from their school in Zamfara state. They were released on 2 March.
- e. 12 March: 39 students were abducted from the Federal College of Forestry Mechanisation, located close to military installations on the outskirts of the Kaduna state capital. Their kidnappers released videos of the students being mistreated, demanding a N500 million (around £945,000) ransom. A few were released due to ill-health. The remaining 27 were released on 5 May, following a protest in Abuja by their parents and a possible ransom payment.
- f. 20 April: 19 students and three staff were seized during an attack on Greenfield University, a private institution in Kaduna state. Their assailants killed five of them, after threatening to murder three students daily if a N800 million (approximately £1.5 million) was not met. The remaining abductees were released on 29 May, after parents negotiated payment of a N180 million (around £307,860) ransom.
- g. 30 May: 136 students were abducted from Salihu Tanko Islamic School in Tegna, Niger state.

Increasing Repression

36. Even while failing to protect civilians from violent non-state actors, the government clamps down very quickly on peaceful expressions of concern or dissent. Bloggers, journalists, and even members of victim communities, are regularly harassed into silence or face incitement charges. The government has also introduced legislation restricting freedom of expression, including an amendment to the Broadcasting Code that imposes heavy fines for output deemed to embarrass the government, and vaguely worded Social Media and Hate Speech bills.³⁴

³⁴ The Protection from Internet Falsehood and Manipulation Bill 2019, or Social Media Bill, would enable the government to unilaterally order the shutdown of the internet. It prohibits statements that are "likely to be prejudicial to national

37. In October 2020 peaceful protests erupted across Nigeria against the notorious police unit, the Special Armed Robbery Squad (SARS). They ended on 20 October, following an intense military crackdown in which unarmed protesters were fired on at the Lekki Toll Gate in Lagos. Estimates of casualties range from nine to over 70. Video footage appears to confirm assertions by survivors that bodies were removed from the scene in armoured vehicles to obscure the death toll.
38. Three media houses were fined N3million (around £5,150.00) each for their #EndSARS coverage,³⁵ and the restrictive social media bill passed a second reading. The bank accounts of 19 people and a public affairs company deemed to have played prominent roles in the protests were frozen for 90 days³⁶, and several well-known protestors had to flee the country.
39. On 1 January Omoyele Sowore, former presidential candidate and Convener of #RevolutionNow, suffered a broken nose when he and four others were arrested and assaulted after organising a peaceful candlelit procession for an end to bad governance and insecurity.³⁷ On 31 May he was shot in the thigh by a policewoman wielding a federal riot gun at the start of a protest against worsening insecurity.³⁸
40. On 4 June Nigeria “suspended” Twitter “indefinitely” after the removal of Tweets and a video where President Buhari appeared to threaten south-eastern youth generally, while referencing Nigeria’s bloody civil war.³⁹

security” or to “diminish public confidence” in the government, proposing a fine, a three-year sentence, or both. The Hate Speech Bill prescribes sentences that include life imprisonment for those deemed to have used words that stir up ethnic hatred or from which ethnic hatred is likely to be stirred up, and a the death penalty if this causes any loss of life.

³⁵ <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/10/27/nbc-under-fire-for-fining-arise-news-channels-ait/>

³⁶ This decision was eventually down in court <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/441864-updated-court-orders-cbn-to-unfreeze-20-endsars-protesters-bank-accounts.html>

³⁷ <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/01/serap-drags-fg-to-un-over-arbitrary-detention-torture-of-sowore-others/>

³⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vuD5l-dPkEM>

³⁹ [https://punchng.com/breaking-fg-suspends-twitter-](https://punchng.com/breaking-fg-suspends-twitter-operations-in-nigeria/?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1622821655-1)

Recommendations

“Nigeria has long teetered on the precipice of failure. But now, unable to keep its citizens safe and secure, Nigeria has become a fully failed state of critical geopolitical concern. Its failure matters because the peace and prosperity of Africa and preventing the spread of disorder and militancy around the globe depend on a stronger Nigeria.”⁴⁰ Restoring security, assisting all IDPs, averting an unnecessary additional crisis in the southeast, safeguarding civic space and rebuilding institutional resilience are essential to ensuring local and regional stability, sustainable development, and profitable investment. The British Government must urge and assist the Nigerian Government to:

1. Address every source of violence in a decisive and unbiased manner, providing sufficient protection for every vulnerable community, regardless of their religion or ethnicity.
2. “Rebuild the policing and justice system [...] to ensure that nobody is above the law. There must be even application of the law.”⁴¹
3. Fully implement the Safe Schools Initiative, extending it beyond the northeast.⁴²

[operations-in-nigeria/?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1622821655-1](https://www.punchng.com/breaking-fg-suspends-twitter-operations-in-nigeria/?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1622821655-1) Between one to three million died between 1967 and 1970 in the brutal civil war, also known as the Biafra war. Most of those killed were from the Igbo tribe, whose civilians endured rape, extrajudicial killings, mass executions, and starvation as a weapon of war in what is possibly an unrecognised genocide. In his Tweets the president also referenced his own participation in the fighting. On 5 June Nigeria’s Attorney General has since declared that anyone caught using Twitter will be prosecuted

⁴⁰ [Buhari’s Nigeria Is a Failed State \(foreignpolicy.com\)](https://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2021/06/04/buhari-s-nigeria-is-a-failed-state)

⁴¹ Recommendations made by Hon. Rimamnde Shawulu Kwewum, Member of the Nigerian House of Representatives for Donga/Ussa/Takum/Special Area in Taraba State, in “Understanding Nigeria’s worsening security situation” republished on 31 May 2021: [Understanding Nigeria’s worsening security situation | Amazing Times NG](https://www.amazingtimesng.com/understanding-nigerias-worsening-security-situation/)

⁴² Both the UK and Nigeria are signatories to Safe Schools Declaration, and one of the first areas targeted for safe schools was northeast Nigeria. However, the initiative appeared to grind to a halt under the current administration. In October Nigeria will host the 4th Conference session of the Declaration in Abuja this year

4. Respect the right to peaceful assembly and withdraw impending legislation, or amend existing laws, that impinge on press freedom or freedom of expression.
5. Prioritise de-escalation, reconciliation, and rehabilitation⁴³ in the southeast.
6. Formulate initiatives to tackle chronic youth unemployment.⁴⁴

HMG must also lead international efforts to:

7. “Ensure that people and organizations involved in electoral malpractices or any activity affecting the security of the country are sanctioned [...]. Flawed elections are, indeed, the worse form of corruption.”⁴⁵

Finally, HMG must:

8. Extend the humanitarian assistance currently focused on the northeast to IDPs in central Nigeria, and particularly those in Kaduna state, who are neither recognised nor assisted by the authorities.

⁴³ Boko Haram is a far greater threat to the nation, yet 600 “repentant” Boko Haram fighters had been rehabilitated under a De-radicalisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDR) programme by July 2020 despite high-level opposition, and a Bill was proposed in the National Assembly in 2020 to create an agency for the rehabilitation of repentant terrorists.

⁴⁴ According to the International Labour Organization the estimated youth unemployment rate (ages 15 to 24) in Nigeria was at almost 14.2 percent in 2020. Engaging youth in gainful activity will give them a stake in society, rendering them less susceptible to extremism or criminal activity such as abduction for ransom.

⁴⁵ Recommendations made by Hon. Rimamnde Shawulu Kwewum, Member of the Nigerian House of Representatives for Donga/Ussa/Takum/Special Area in Taraba State. In this article in which he also calls on the international community to “*be more proactive in Nigeria. The belief that the security agencies have been compromised is increasing in Nigeria. The increased weakness of the state, amplified by the fact that no arrests and prosecution of perpetrators of violence are being undertaken, would inevitably lead to more arms flowing to groups and individuals outside the control of the state.*” [Understanding Nigeria’s worsening security situation | Amazing Times NG](#)

June 2021