



COUNTRY IN PERSPECTIVE

NIGERIA



*Abuja National Mosque
Flickr / Mark Fischer*

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*Aso Rock in Abuja
Flickr / Mark Fischer*

Chapter 1 | Nigeria in Perspective

Geography

Introduction

Nigeria is located on the coast of West Africa, near the northeastern corner of the Gulf of Guinea. The most populated country on the African continent, it is home to over 190 million people.¹ The nation's terrain ranges from coastal swamps and lowlands to rolling plains and mountain ranges. The Niger River enters the country in the northwest and ultimately flows to the southern coast, where it empties into the gulf through the vast Niger River Delta. The climate ranges from tropical in the south to semi-arid in the north.²

Nigeria shares land borders with four countries. Benin is to the west, Niger to the

north, Chad to the northeast, and Cameroon to the east and southeast. To the south lies the Gulf of Guinea, part of the Atlantic Ocean. Encompassing over 923,000 sq km (356,000 sq mi) of total area, Nigeria is more than twice the size of California.³

Geographic Divisions

Nigeria is administratively divided into 36 states. Based on natural features as well as social and cultural traditions, the country is divided into three geographic regions: south, central, and north.⁴

South



*Southern Nigeria
Flickr / satanoid*

The bulk of Nigeria's population and industrial development is concentrated in the south. All of Nigeria's oil fields are located there, as well as the Niger River Delta and the country's ports. The forests of the region are intensely exploited by small farmers and large plantations. The region is home to important cultural centers for the predominately Christian Yoruba, Edo, and Igbo-Ibibio people; it is also one of the most densely settled areas in sub-Saharan Africa.⁵

Central

The central region is the least developed and settled part of the country. It is populated by indigenous ethnic groups that are predominately Christian, and increasingly, by Muslim Hausa-Fulani settlers from the north. Religion reinforces the boundaries between the Christian and Muslim groups in both rural and urban areas.^{6, 7, 8}

The region grew in prominence following a 1975 administrative reorganization that created the Federal Capital Territory and relocated the national capital to Abuja.⁹

The Jos Plateau, formerly Bauchi Plateau, is located in central Nigeria. The plateau has a cool rainy climate and is the source of several rivers that feed the Niger River. Today the plateau consists of savanna grassland because original forests have been cleared for farming and mining. Jos is rich in mineral deposits. Most of the world's tin comes from the mines on the plateau.^{10, 11} Although the people of the area extracted

iron and tin from the plateau’s river beds before the arrival of the Europeans, the British started large-scale mining operations in 1904, attracting Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba to the region.^{12, 13}

North



Northern Nigeria
Flickr / Andrea

The north is characterized by savanna (grassland with scattered trees), stepped plateaus, and granite mountains. In the far northeast, an expanse of drier grassland—known as the Sahel—represents the transitional zone between the Sahara Desert to the north and the savanna region to the south.¹⁴ The north has been traditionally connected to North Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East through trans-Saharan trade routes. The region is largely dominated by the Muslim

Fulani and Hausa cultures. The major population centers are Sokoto and Kano-Katsina.¹⁵

Topography

The Nigerian landscape is dominated by plains and plateaus, with rolling hills, escarpments, and occasional granite mountains rising from the surface. The country’s highest elevations are found in the Jos Plateau—located in the center of the country—and the Cameroon Highlands of the southeast. Chappal Waddi, the country’s highest peak, is located along the Cameroon border with an altitude of 2,419 m (7,936 ft). There is also a low range in the southwest.¹⁶



Mountain view on Obudu plateau, Cross River state
Flickr / Adedotun Ajibade

The highland areas are separated by the Niger and Benue river basins, which cut across the country from the northwest and northeast. The waters of these two rivers merge in south-central Nigeria and ultimately flow into the Atlantic through the Niger River Delta, one of the largest river deltas in the world. Overall, the combined paths

of the Niger and the Benue form a large Y-shaped pattern. The delta region consists of swamplands and numerous small channels.¹⁷ The coastal plains spread out along the gulf on each side of the Niger River Delta.¹⁸

Climate



Rainy season in Lagos
Flickr / Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung

Nigeria has a tropical climate with regional variations according to latitude. In general, the country experiences increasing precipitation as one moves from north to south. This pattern of rainfall—which defines the country’s climate—is controlled by two air masses: the dry, northeast trade winds (winds in the tropics) flowing south from the continent, and the humid, southwest monsoon flowing north from the Atlantic Ocean. The flow of these air masses determines the country’s dry and

rainy seasons, which vary in length according to region.¹⁹

The rainy season begins in the south in February or March and gradually moves northward, reaching the central river valleys in April or May, and then the northern areas in June or July. The rainy season peaks in the northern areas around August, while the southern regions experience lower precipitation during this time. In the south, precipitation ranges from 1,200-4,000 mm (47-157 in) per year, with the southeastern areas receiving substantially more rainfall than the southwestern areas. The northern areas of the savanna receive 500-750 mm (20-30 in) of rain per year. Climate conditions for the rest of the year are influenced by the harmattan, the northeast trade winds that bring dust from the Sahara.²⁰

Throughout Nigeria, temperatures are generally high, although during the rainy season, they are moderated by the southwest monsoon. The city of Lagos, located on the southwestern coast, experiences average highs of 31°C (87.8°F) during the late dry season and average lows of 23°C (73.4°F) near the end of the rainy season. Inland areas experience greater extremes than the coast, with temperatures in the northeast rising to 44°C (111.2°F) before the rains reach the area, and falling to 6°C (42.8°F) from December to February.²¹

Bodies of Water

Niger River



Gurara Falls at the Niger River
Flicker / Mark Hillary

The Niger River, with a total length of about 4,200 km (2,610 mi), is the third-longest river in Africa and the longest river in West Africa. Its source lies in the Fouta Djallon Mountains in Guinea. Flowing eastward, the Niger passes through the countries of Mali and Niger before entering Nigeria from the northwest. From there, it flows generally southeast until it merges with the Benue River. The combined waters of the two rivers flow south and empty into the Atlantic Ocean through the Niger River Delta.²²

The Niger’s original name, egerou n-igereou, means “river of rivers.” For centuries, this river has provided regional inhabitants with a source of income, food, and water, even in times of drought. It is home to almost 250 species of fish, including 20 species not found anywhere else. The floodplains of the river help to sustain pastures for livestock and allow for the cultivation of rice. As populations along the river’s drainage area have grown and desertification has increased, the river has come under intense environmental pressures.²³

Benue River

The Benue River is the largest tributary of the Niger. Approximately 1,083 km (673 mi) in length, its initial leg of 240 km (150 mi) begins in neighboring Cameroon. Because it is navigable almost year-round, the Benue is an important trade route for cotton, peanuts, and petroleum.²⁴



River Benue Bridge in Yola
Flicker / Nwuanyi

Niger River Delta



Niger Delta
Flickr / Terry Whalebone

The Niger River Delta covers an area of approximately 70,000 sq km (27,027 sq mi) and makes up approximately 7.5% of Nigeria's land mass.^{25, 26} The river's many small distributaries weave their way through the delta and provide nourishment for the soil and the large number of animals that live in and off the river.²⁷

The delta sits atop fields of light, sweet crude oil which is the most valuable type of oil because it needs little refining.²⁸

About 2 million barrels of oil are extracted from this region each day.^{29, 30} The people who live off this land subsist on fishing and farming.³¹

Major Cities

City	Population ³²
Lagos	13,745,000
Kano	4,155,000
Ibadan	3,160,000
Abuja	2,940,000
Port Harcourt	2,075,000

Abuja

Abuja, Nigeria's capital, is located in the central part of the country, in the administrative division known as the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).³³ In the late 1970s, officials decided to move the nation's capital away from Lagos, where it had been for most of the 20th century. The area that is now Abuja FCT was selected for a variety of reasons, including its



Grand Mosque in Abuja
Flickr / Jeff Attaway

accessible central location and low population density. Abuja was the first planned city to be built in Nigeria and officially became the capital in 1991. Efforts to create a modern urban profile have included a ban on okada (commercial motorcycles), the importation of London cabs, and the demolition of illegal squatter settlements in and around the city.^{34, 35}

Lagos

Situated on the southwestern coast of Nigeria, Lagos was originally settled in the 15th century by Yoruba tribes, who called it Oko.³⁶ In recent decades, the city has experienced rapid population growth. From 288,000 in 1950, the city's population is now over 13 million, with several million more living in the surrounding areas outside the city proper.^{37, 38} The metropolitan area, comprising an estimated 300 sq km (115.8 sq mi), lies on the west side of the Lagos Lagoon. Traffic jams are a major problem in Lagos, where it can take hours to travel relatively short distances.^{39, 40} Other issues, such as poor sanitation, and air and water pollution have exacerbated the problems of rapid urbanization.^{41, 42, 43} Moreover, the city's population has grown faster than its infrastructure can handle.⁴⁴



City of Lagos
Wikimedia / akuppa John Wigham

Ibadan



Overlooking Ibadan City
Flickr / Babyspagetti1

Ibadan, the capital city of the Oyo State, is located in southwestern Nigeria. The city is an important commercial, industrial, and transportation hub. Ibadan has many thriving local crafts and small businesses, including weaving, pottery making, leather working, furniture making, and hospitality services. Marketplaces are located throughout the city, as are a major university and several research institutions.⁴⁵

Kano

Kano is located in northern Nigeria. It was once a powerful Hausa city-state, but it is now the core industrial city and shipping hub for Nigeria's north. Its industry revolves around peanuts, cotton, leatherwork, steel, and concrete. As a historic site of Islamic learning, it was among 12 northern states to introduce strict Sharia law. This caused sectarian riots between the Muslim population and the other religious minorities.^{46, 47}

Port Harcourt

Port Harcourt is the capital of Rivers State in southern Nigeria. It was built along the Bonny River, an eastern offshoot of the Niger River, 66 km (41 mi) upstream from the Gulf of Guinea. Petroleum, natural gas, coal, palm products, cocoa, and groundnuts are shipped from the city's deep-water port. The nearby Trans-Amadi Industrial Estate is a manufacturing site for aluminum products, tires, paper, and glass bottles. The Port Harcourt area houses several institutions of higher learning, including the Nigerian Naval College.⁴⁸



Gate to Emir's palace in Kano
Wikimedia / Shiraz Chakera

Environmental Concerns



Polluted water in the Niger Delta
Flickr / Milieudefensie

In the Niger River Delta, environmental issues tied to the extraction of oil remain a source of tension. When oil companies need to dispose of unwanted or unused gas, they burn it, which not only wastes energy but causes substantial environmental pollution.⁴⁹ The practice, known as gas flaring, involves burning gas at ground level, which spews toxins into neighboring communities and the atmosphere. Some flares are large enough to be visible from space. They emit large amounts of carbon dioxide, leading to acid rain and air pollution. Although the Nigerian

Supreme Court banned gas flaring in 2005, the law is weak and enforced unevenly. When fines are levied, they amount to less than the cost that would be required for oil companies to manage the fuel in an environmentally responsible manner, and thus they remain largely ineffective in halting the practice.^{50, 51}

Oil spills are a common occurrence in the Niger River Delta. Over 5,000 oil spills have been documented in the area between 2005 and 2014. Each year, some 240,000 barrels of oil are spilled into the delta. The spills cause carcinogens and other harmful substances found in crude oil to contaminate the water, land, and air. The contamination can cause infertility and cancer. Women living within 10 km (6.2 mi) of an oil spill prior to child conception face a sharp increase in the risk of infant mortality.^{52, 53} In 2018, the Nigerian government began planning the environmental cleanup of the Ogoniland region, east of Port Harcourt, that was affected by oil spills and pollution.^{54, 55}



*Oil spills
Flickr / Milieudedefense*

Deforestation due to logging, collection of firewood, and continuous expansion of subsistence farming is a serious problem. Nigeria is among the countries with the highest deforestation rates of primary (natural, untouched) forests, leading to the loss of 55.7% of its forests between 2000 and 2005. Each year, Nigeria loses 350,000-400,000 hectares (864-868-988,421 acres) of land to deforestation. Today, Nigeria's forests cover less than 6% of its territory.^{56, 57}



*Satellite image of Lake Chad's dramatic reduction
Wikimedia / European Space Agency*

Recurrent droughts, along with the impact of climate change, water mismanagement, and a rapidly growing human population, have decimated what was once the sixth-largest lake in the world, Lake Chad. Formerly situated on the borders of Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, Lake Chad has decreased in area by 90% since 1963. Experts predict further decline of the lake as a water

resource. Today, the lake has receded from Nigeria's northeastern corner and most of the water is found in Chad. A costly project to replenish the lake by diverting water from the Oubangi River in Central Africa is under consideration.^{58, 59, 60}

Wildlife

The Niger River Delta has the world's third-largest contiguous mangrove forest, which has historically supported a diversity of savanna animals, plants and birds, lizards, snakes, and marine life. However, human population growth, development, pollution from the oil industry, and other manmade environmental pressures have threatened many species and had a devastating effect on the delta's delicate ecosystem.^{61, 62}



*Elephants in Yankari National Park
Wikimedia / Tsumo9*

Most animals survive in minimally guarded national wildlife preserves. Because Nigeria never developed a safari tourism industry, there is little economic incentive for poor farmers to maintain the natural habitat. Poaching is common; live animals and bush meat from endangered species can be found in rural markets.^{63, 64}

Natural Hazards



*Flood at the rice field
Flickr / International Institute of Tropical*

A series of droughts in Africa's Sahel region between 1968 and 1985 has led to approximately 100,000 deaths from food shortage and diseases.⁶⁵ Drought in the Lake Chad Basin has left northeastern Nigeria with decreased crop yields.⁶⁶

Nigeria has lost over 63% of its farmland to desertification. The trend poses a threat to the country's food production and to the security of lives and property. In recent years, thousands of herdsmen from the northern region have been forced to migrate to the south in search of pastures,

prompting violent clashes with crop farmers. Encroachment by the desert is hastened by climate change as well as by human activities like deforestation, overgrazing, fuel wood extraction, faulty irrigation, and urbanization. The Nigerian government's efforts to address desertification have been unsuccessful.^{67, 68}

Flooding causes economic and environmental damage. In 2012, disastrous floods in 30 out of 36 Nigerian states caused hundreds of deaths and left 2 million people homeless. In August and September 2017, flooding in the central state of Benue due to heavy rains caused over 100,000 people to flee their homes.⁶⁹ A major contributing factor to flooding is climate change, which creates extreme storms and rising sea levels. Another cause is Nigeria's rapid but poorly planned urban growth.⁷⁰

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Nigeria in Perspective

Chapter 1 | Geography

Assessment

1. Nigeria's northern border is formed by the Gulf of Guinea.
2. Gas flaring causes substantial environmental damage in Nigeria.
3. Nigeria's oil fields are concentrated in the northeast, between the Sahara Desert and the savannah region.
4. FCT stands for Free Central Territories, a group of Hausa-majority states that advocate for autonomy.
5. The Benue River flows into the Niger River from the east.

Assessment Answers: 1. False; 2. True; 3. False; 4. False; 5. True



*A costume parade on Fulani tribe and Yoruba
Wikimedia / Magicc0077*

Chapter 2 | Nigeria in Perspective

History

Introduction

The Nigerian population is comprised of three major tribes: the Hausa-Fulani in the north, and the Igbo and Yoruba in the south. Although far from homogenous, the subgroups of each of the three major tribes share a common ancestry and mother tongue. The Hausa-Fulani, who are predominantly Muslim, founded the Sokoto Caliphate, a highly developed political entity that exercised authority over present-day northern Nigeria. They had a prominent presence in sub-Saharan Africa and established trade links with North Africa.¹

In the south, several civilizations and kingdoms with looser political structures evolved.

Contact with European explorers and traders began with the Portuguese in the late 15th century. The European demand for human captives for the North Atlantic slave trade had traumatic and destabilizing effects that spread inland from the coast. British colonization, which began in the 19th century, had uneven consequences across the country.²

During the colonial period, the north remained isolated and strongly influenced by Islam. The south was integrated into the emerging global economy by trade interests, and the inhabitants were introduced to Western education by Christian missionaries. Nigeria became independent in 1960, but the north-south disparities and their repercussions impeded the influence of a centralized national government and continued to generate ethnic conflicts and tensions.³

Repeated military coups, strongman rule, and a bloody civil war have shaken the fragile democracy. Since 1999, democratically elected leaders have had to contend with ethnic strife, Islamist terrorism, shrinking natural resources, and the growing toll of the country's reliance on the oil industry.^{4, 5}

Prehistory and Early Civilizations

Archeological evidence suggests that the region comprising modern-day Nigeria hosted human settlement by 9000 BCE. The oldest developed culture for which there is substantial evidence is the Nok culture, which dates from 500 BCE to 200 CE and takes its name from the main site of the archeological discovery. Spread throughout the Jos Plateau and the Benue River Valley, the Nok civilization produced finely crafted terracotta sculptures and worked in agriculture and animal husbandry. Evidence of the Igbo Ukwu culture, from around 800 CE, was found in southeastern Nigeria. Bronze artifacts found in Igboland constitute one of the richest bronze treasures of Nigeria.^{6, 7, 8}



*Nigerian Nok figures at the Yale Art Gallery
Flickr / Jeremy Weate*

The Development of City-States and Kingdoms

Throughout the last millennia, present-day Nigeria was home to numerous organized societies and kingdoms. The most important city-states and kingdom in terms of size, authority, and historical significance were those of the Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa-Fulani, and Benin (Edo).⁹

The Hausa-Fulani

Little has been verified about the origins of the Hausa city-state civilization of northern Nigeria. Local lore holds that Bayinjida, a native of Baghdad who had quarreled with his father, left home and ultimately traveled to the northern state of Daura, near the present-day city of Kano. There, he married the Queen of Daura and they had seven sons. Each son is believed to have founded a walled Hausa state: Kano, Rano, Biram, Zaria, Katsina, Daura, and Gobir—known as the seven Hausa City-States.^{10, 11}



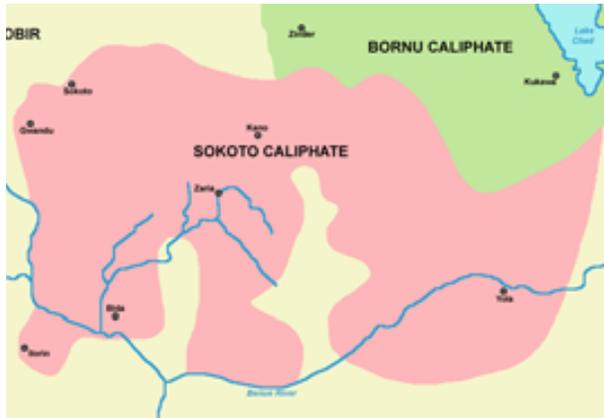
*Oduduwa, father of the Yoruba race
Flickr / the justified sinner*



*Quran from Hausa, Northern region
Flickr / Rept0n1x*

Historically, the Hausa people migrated to the area between 500 and 700 CE, and their city-states grew and consolidated power over the region by 1200. As the Hausa cities developed, their local governments created a specialized distribution of labor that utilized their strategic locations and natural resources. The seat of the government of Hausaland was initially located in Biram. Zaria specialized in capturing slaves for the other city-states and was therefore known as a source of labor.¹² Kano and Rano became known for indigo production. These vast plain states also harnessed the region's prime agricultural conditions for cotton cultivation. Over time, they became production centers for textiles, which were exported to other Hausa states and beyond by caravans.^{13, 14, 15} Because Katsina and Daura's respective locations put them on the route used by caravans crossing the desert from the north, they became commerce centers.^{16, 17} Located in the west, Gobir was known for

warfare because it had the responsibility of protecting the Hausa Empire from Ghana and Songhai.¹⁸ In the 14th century, Islam spread to the urban centers of Hausaland, after the religion had slowly been introduced to the area by Arab travelers using the northern trade routes.¹⁹



Sokoto Caliphate in the 19th century
Wikimedia Commons / panonian

fact that they were the victorious party, it was the Fulani who adopted the Hausa language, likely as a result of intermarriage with the Hausa tribes over the centuries. The Fulani’s ascendancy over the Hausa led to the widespread conversion of the northern populations to Islam.²⁰

The Fulani assumed high positions of authority within the Hausa governing system. At the top were states, known as emirates, ruled by an emir, or prince. A council of clerics chose the emirs from the ruling families. Emirs possessed the ultimate authority in administrative and judicial affairs of the state, but delegated the actual administrative work to subordinates.²¹

The Yoruba and Benin

The Yoruba tribes trace their history back to the Ife and Oyo kingdoms in western Nigeria. Dominant in the southwestern forests from the 11th to 15th centuries, the Ife kingdom established the precedents of monarchical rule and polytheistic worship that remained integral to Yoruba culture in the coming centuries. Located to the north of Ife, in the savanna west of the Niger River, the Oyo kingdom emerged



Yoruba copper mask of Obalufon
Wikimedia / WaynaQhapaq

in the 14th century and ultimately grew more powerful than its southern neighbor. Ife, however, remained an important religious center. Supported by a strong cavalry force, the Oyo developed an expansive trade network that involved shipping goods between northern and southern kingdoms, the latter of which included the Benin (or Edo) kingdom, based in south-central Nigeria.²² The western territories populated by the Yoruba tribes became known as Yorubaland. Meanwhile, the Benin kingdom expanded its reach to control much of southwestern Nigeria (west of the Niger River) by the 16th and 17th centuries.²³

The Igbo

While Yoruba society developed in the southwest, Igbo communities flourished in the southeast, with some of the earliest substantial evidence of Igbo society—the findings at Igbo Ukwu—dating back to the eighth or ninth centuries. While evidence is limited, historians characterize these pre-colonial Igbo communities as “stateless,” or lacking a centralized administrative structure. Igbo society is thought to have consisted primarily of autonomous villages or egalitarian coalitions of regional communities. Exceptions to this pattern include the Nri kingdom, which may have developed as early as the 9th or 10th century, and some of the communities in the western Igbo region that drew influence from Benin.²⁴

European Powers and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

From the outset, relations between Europe and Africa were driven by the lure of economic gains. Motivated by a search for gold and other commodities, Portuguese merchants arrived in West Africa in the late 1400s.²⁵ In addition to gold, West African merchants provided peppers, ivory, and other goods—all of which were already traded within Africa—to their European trading partners.²⁶ Human captives were also a major component of the trade relationship, and the Nigerian coast soon became an important center for the North Atlantic slave trade. Although the practice was pre-existing in Africa, the expansion of the slave trade to a transatlantic scale increased the market and imparted a heightened level of commercialization and cruelty.^{27, 28}



Slave Market in Lagos, Nigeria
Wikimedia / Spakinrinwa

As European slave traders established ports along the West African coast, their African trading partners expanded their slave-collecting operations in the interior. Europeans were not typically involved in the actual capturing of slaves, as such operations were conducted largely by native kingdoms and tribes (who often captured slaves in war) and indigenous slave trading networks. In the Nigerian region, the Yoruba and Igbo participated in the capture and delivery of slaves to European traders, as did the Benin kingdom until the 18th century, when it largely quit the practice. The demand for slaves came to dominate the economy of the southern coast in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. As a result, many parts of Africa, particularly Nigeria, were engulfed in violence.²⁹



Standard of the Governor-General of Nigeria
Wikimedia / Benchill

Britain, which had come to dominate the trade in the region, abolished its transatlantic slave trade in 1807 and imposed a naval blockade to enforce the ban. The ban was not highly effective because the demand for slave labor remained strong, particularly in the Americas.³⁰ Furthermore, because the blockade limited the supply to some extent, captives that were successfully smuggled to the New World increased in value.³¹ Overall, during the centuries-long transatlantic slave trade, an estimated 3.5 million captive people were shipped out of Nigeria alone, with a minimum of 12 million exported from greater Africa to the Americas.^{32, 33}

As the campaign to eradicate the lucrative slave trade—which included attempts to shift emphasis to other commodities, such as palm oil and timber—proved difficult, the British intervened in the affairs of the Nigerian coastal region during the 19th century. Ultimately, this led to the Crown’s decision to assume jurisdiction over the coastal area.³⁴

Colonization

Lagos, located in southwestern Nigeria, became a British colony in 1861.³⁵ The settlement served as a center for the expansion of trade, missions, and political influence.³⁶ Inland, Britain encouraged missionary societies to explore and trade along the Niger River.³⁷ In 1886, in an effort to forestall competition from France and Germany, the British Crown granted the Royal Niger Company a charter to control commerce on the river, administer internal territories, and extract mineral wealth. The protectorate was extended north in 1900.^{38, 39}

The Yoruba tribe in the southwest had a centralized administrative hierarchy that was amenable to indirect rule. On the other hand, the Igbo in the southeast had a decentralized system. As a result, the British imposed chieftaincies, and they selected local leaders who were loyal to the Crown as chiefs. Numerous smaller ethnic groups were also subjugated in this way.⁴⁰ In sum, power was exercised through a form of indirect rule that left actual governance to indigenous authorities.⁴¹

After British arrival, the selection of an emir in Hausaland had to be approved by the colonial government. Ultimately, this served to reinforce the position of the ruling Muslim elite, as they remained in control of an established system of taxation and administration from which the British were able to draw benefits.⁴²

One of the major British concessions was to discourage Christian missionary activity in Muslim northern Nigeria. This coincided with the interests of northern elites, who did not want European missionaries proselytizing because it could undermine the theocratic authority of the ruling Muslim class. The institution of separate governments in the north and the south was intended to strengthen British colonial control by preempting any coalition of resistance.⁴³



Oba of Benin, Oba Akenzua II
Wikimedia / Solomon Osagie Alonge

Unification

Frequent administrative reclassifications marked the 60 years of British colonial rule. The British made efforts to isolate ethnic groups from one another through the creation of multiple administrative units. In 1914, the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria and the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria were merged into one colony by Sir Frederick Lugard, the first Governor General.^{44, 45}



*Sir Frederick Lugard,
Governor-General of Nigeria
Wikimedia / elliot & fry*

Direct political exchange between the north and the south did not take place until 1946, when the British introduced a constitution that divided Nigeria into three regions: the North, the West, and the East.⁴⁶ By this time southern Nigerians, who had embraced the educational opportunities offered by Christian missionaries, were beginning to clamor for independence. Accordingly, the British split the south into two administrative regions, leaving the north intact as a single region. In effect, this move established the conditions for northern dominance in the political system.⁴⁷



*Northern Nigerian self government stamp
Wikimedia / British Government*

The Ibadan General Constitutional Conference of 1950 marked the beginning of a collaborative effort between the educated political class and the British to outline a constitution for an independent, self-governing state. During the conference, northern delegates lobbied for seats in a proposed legislature to be allocated according to population, which would have allotted them 50% of the legislators. Southerners called for regional representation, rather than population

size. Moreover, northerners favored allocation of resources on a per capita basis, which was more favorable to them, while southerners argued that volume of trade or need should be the determining factors.⁴⁸

Independence

When Nigeria gained independence on 1 October 1960, the new nation possessed many characteristics of a democratic government. Its federal constitution provided a large measure of autonomy for three (later four) regions. A parliamentary system and a functioning (although regionally based) multi-party system were established.⁴⁹

Yet, this was not enough to guarantee the survival of the republic. Gaps in economic development and educational opportunities between the regions quickly amplified longstanding ethnic and religious tensions. The south was ahead of the north in education and revenue production.^{50, 51}

In 1951, only one northerner obtained a university degree, while hundreds of Yorubas, Igbos, and other southerners earned graduate and postgraduate degrees during that same year.⁵² Degree holders easily obtained administrative jobs under the British. The northerners feared the southerners' continued overrepresentation in the government, while southerners feared that the northern Muslims would marshal a numerical majority and rule the country.⁵³

Nigeria's three regional states were united as a federation on the surface, but each state was controlled by an ethnic-based political party. This alignment produced destructive tendencies. Each party used the regional resources to enable its group to monopolize political power. The Nigerian government was prone to internal competition between parties.⁵⁴ On the sidelines were the hundreds of minority tribes.⁵⁵

Civil War

On 15 January 1966, a small group of army officers—mostly Igbos from the southeast—led by General Aguiyi-Ironsi, staged a coup. Under their leadership, the Nigerian administrative structure was reorganized into a national military government that consolidated regional and federal public services. The new arrangement placed northerners at a disadvantage since they could not compete against the better-educated southerners for positions in a unified civil service.⁵⁶



*Abubakar Tafawa Balewa,
first prime minister of an independent Nigeria
Wikimedia / Abubakar*

Rising tensions led to a countercoup 6 months later in which Aguiyi-Ironsi was killed.⁵⁷ After thousands of Igbo in the north were massacred, hundreds of thousands Igbo migrated to the Christian southeast.⁵⁸ The military government in Lagos attempted to negotiate an agreement that would reassure the Igbo and secure their safety, but the military governor of the eastern region was not persuaded. In May 1967, this oil-rich region declared independence as the Republic of Biafra.^{59, 60}



Republic of Biafra (1967 - 1970)
Wikimedia / Eric Gaba

In response to the declaration of independence, the military government moved to isolate the Igbo by undercutting their control of the oil fields and winning over neighboring minorities. Lagos launched an offensive against the secessionists after the Shell oil company, which was extracting oil in the contested region, agreed to pay royalties to Biafra, not Nigeria.⁶¹ The military government drafted the Petroleum Act of 1969, which gave the Nigerian federal government ownership of all the oil and gas inside the country's borders, including Nigeria's territorial waters and continental shelf.^{62, 63}

Before the surrender of the short-lived Biafran government in January 1970, a naval, land, and air blockade of the Igbo homeland caused mass starvation.⁶⁴ Between 500,000 and 2 million Biafran civilians died from starvation during the 3-year conflict. Charges of genocide ensued.^{65, 66, 67}

Late 20th Century

Following the civil war, the government turned to the task of economic development. Foreign exchange earnings and government revenues increased dramatically with the rise in oil prices in 1973 and 1974. In 1975, a bloodless coup brought General Murtala Muhammed to power; the general announced a timetable for the resumption of civilian rule by October 1979. Under the 1979 constitution, which was enacted by



Shehu Shagari only President of Nigeria's Second Republic
Wikimedia / CLAWSON

the military leadership, elections were held in July and August 1979. In October, power was handed over to a new civilian government, which was led by President Shehu Shagari.⁶⁸

Nigeria's Second Republic came into existence in the midst of great expectations. Oil prices were high and government revenues were on the rise. The promise of prosperity, however, proved short-lived amid the recession of the early 1980s. Plunging oil prices precipitated an economic decline and widespread corruption undermined public confidence in the Shagari government.⁶⁹

The military overthrew the Second Republic at the end of 1983, and Nigeria was governed by military leaders for the next 16 years.⁷⁰ General Muhammadu Buhari surfaced as the leader of Nigeria's new ruling body, the Supreme Military Council (SMC). His government was overthrown in a bloodless coup by the SMC's third-ranking member, Army Chief of Staff General Ibrahim Babangida, in August 1985. President Babangida pledged to restore civilian rule by 1990. This date was subsequently postponed until January 1993. On 12 June 1993, elections were held, with many independent observers judging them as the fairest in Nigeria's history.⁷¹



*General Ibrahim Babangida
Wikimedia / Seiperi*

Early election returns predicted that M. K. O. Abiola, a wealthy Yoruba businessman, would win.⁷² However, later in the month, Babangida annulled the election results, citing several pending lawsuits as a pretext. This act caused widespread social unrest.⁷³ Riots ensued, leading to the deaths of more than 100 people. On 27 August, Babangida agreed to hand over power to an “interim government” headed by Ernest Shonekan.^{74, 75}

In November 1993, Defense Minister Sani Abacha stepped in to assume power amid the chaos. Although he promised to return the country to civilian rule, he disbanded all democratic political institutions and placed military officers in government positions, which were previously held by elected officials. His harsh rule, which included the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa, an environmental and tribal rights activist whom many viewed as a victim of questionable charges, led most Western aid donors to withdraw from Nigeria. Abacha did not provide a timetable for a return to civilian rule until his 1 October 1995 Independence Day address, when he announced plans for a 3-year

transition from military to civilian rule.^{76, 77, 78}

In preparation for the 1998 elections, Abacha approved only five political parties, all of which nominated him as their presidential candidate.⁷⁹ Leading politicians made pro-regime declarations like, “No Abacha, No Nigeria.”⁸⁰ Even Abacha brand television sets, with the ruler’s picture on the box, appeared in 1997.⁸¹ Abacha was expected to succeed himself as a civilian president in October 1998, but he died in June of that year.⁸²

A Democratic Nigeria

A new democratic era began when Olusegun Obasanjo assumed office in May 1999. Obasanjo, a former general, had garnered public respect for his stand against the Abacha regime and its notorious human rights abuses. He also received acclaim for his 1979 attempt to restore civilian rule and his promise to look past religious differences in order to represent all Nigerians.^{83, 84}



*Olusegun Obasanjo, President of Nigeria from 1999 to 2007
Flickr / Matthew Jordaan*

President Obasanjo sought to establish a democratic system and reform the military and police. He was faced with religious tensions in northern and central Nigeria, where several states adopted Sharia law. In the south, he had to deal with demonstrations against oil policies, high fuel prices, and violent resistance to the operations of oil companies in the Niger River Delta.^{85, 86} After winning his second term, Obasanjo tried to change the constitution so he could run for a third term but was thwarted by the legislature.⁸⁷

Before Obasanjo took office in 1999, there was talk of alternating the presidency between the Christian south and the Muslim north. The 8 years of Obasanjo’s two-term presidency symbolized Christian control. During the 2007 elections, all the country’s major political parties chose Muslim candidates.⁸⁸

The consensus of outside observers was that the April 2007 election did not meet international standards for fairness and transparency.⁸⁹ The pre-election environment was marred by attempts to disqualify candidates based on the preferences of those



*President Bush shakes hands with President Yar'Adua
Wikimedia User / E. Happell*

already in power.⁹⁰ The new president, Umaru Yar'Adua, a Hausa Muslim from the north, was Obasanjo's preferred successor. Yar'Adua faced significant challenges in governance, particularly since the election was not considered free and fair. He immediately promised electoral reforms to prevent recurrence of the problems that characterized the election of 2007.⁹¹

Yar'Adua faced criticism that he was implementing reform too slowly.⁹² Some observers claimed that northerners in the government cared about holding onto power more than they cared about resolving issues that hurt Nigeria's economic growth.⁹³ In August 2009, the government granted amnesty to a prominent militant group, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta.⁹⁴

Yar'Adua's was plagued by health problems while in power, resulting in power struggles behind the scenes. In November 2009, he was flown to Saudi Arabia for emergency medical care for heart and kidney problems.⁹⁵ Yar'Adua's prolonged absence from office led the National Assembly to appoint Vice President Goodluck Jonathan as acting president in February 2010. He named corruption, the Niger River Delta peace process, energy, and electoral reforms as his top priorities.⁹⁶ Upon Yar'Adua's death on 6 May 2010, Jonathan was sworn in as president.⁹⁷

As president, Jonathan focused on tackling corruption, dealing with rebels in the Niger River Delta, and reforming the electoral process to make it fair and transparent. After some slight delays, the 2011 legislative and presidential elections proceeded and were considered to be largely free and fair. Jonathan won his first full term as president.⁹⁸

Jonathan's presidency coincided with the rise of Boko Haram, an Islamist terrorist group, which started attacking government targets and Christian churches in 2009. Jonathan resisted calls to negotiate with Boko Haram and declared it a terrorist group in 2013.⁹⁹ The terrorist attacks continued, and in 2014, the group kidnapped 276 schoolgirls in Chibok, northeastern Nigeria, drawing international condemnation. In 2015, Nigeria teamed up with its neighbors, Benin, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, to establish a regional military force to fight Boko Haram.¹⁰⁰

Going into the 2015 presidential elections, Jonathan faced criticism about his lack of action in dealing with Boko Haram as well as ongoing corruption and uneven economic progress. His primary challenger was Muhammadu Buhari, a former military leader and head of state with a reputation for being tough on corruption. Buhari won the poll and became president in May 2015, marking the first time in Nigeria's history when power passed orderly from one political party to another.¹⁰¹



*U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry with Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari
Wikimedia / U.S. Department of State*

Current Events

After his election, President Buhari struggled to tackle Nigeria's ongoing woes. In 2016, a group called the Niger Delta Avengers launched a campaign of sabotage against oil installations, causing Nigeria's oil output to decrease significantly. The Delta Avengers demand repairs and compensation for environmental damages caused by the oil industry and greater local ownership of oil resources.¹⁰² In the southeast, various groups demanded greater rights for the Igbo people, some even calling for independence from Nigeria, echoing the Biafra secession that led to the civil war of the 1970s. The groups accused Buhari of neglect and clashed with government troops during military exercises in the region in 2017.¹⁰³



*Parents of the victims of the 2014 Chibok kidnapping by Boko Haram mourn their daughters
Wikimedia / VOA*

In the middle belt, ongoing armed conflicts over land between Christian farmers and Muslim herders escalated, claiming hundreds of lives.¹⁰⁴ In the north, Boko Haram resumed the insurgency with renewed vigor, and pledged allegiance to the Islamic State. In 2016 and 2017, Boko Haram released over 100 of the 276 schoolgirls that were kidnapped in 2014. In February 2018, Boko Haram kidnapped more than 100 girls in Yobe state, only to release most of them in March.^{105, 106}

In 2016, Nigeria's economy entered a year-long recession caused by weak oil prices

and sabotage in the Niger Delta. The following year, President Buhari received medical treatment in Britain for undisclosed ailments. Concerns about the country's deteriorating security situation and economic woes, coupled with Buhari's failing health, led to calls for him to step down. However, in April 2018, Buhari declared he would be seeking a second term as president in the 2019 elections. That same month, the government urged people to be grateful for Nigeria's strengthening economy.^{107, 108}

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Chapter 2 | History

Assessment

1. A Fulani holy war to force Islam on the Hausa took place in the early 1800s.
2. The transatlantic slave trade ended in 1807 when the British made it illegal to engage in the slave trade throughout the British colonies.
3. The division of Nigeria into three regions by the British helped the country quickly achieve unity after independence.
4. Nigeria's Civil War was fought between the federal government and the secessionist state of Biafra.
5. President Goodluck Jonathan declared Boko Haram a terrorist organization under Nigerian law.

Assessment Answers: 1. True; 2. True; 3. False; 4. True; 5. True



*Nigerian fruit market
Flickr / Andrew Moore*

Chapter 3 | Nigeria in Perspective

Economy

Introduction

Nigeria is Africa's largest Economy, with a gross domestic product (GDP) of USD 481 billion in 2015. After consistent economic growth in the early 2000s, the economy began to slow down in 2014, primarily due to the decline in the world oil market. In 2016, Nigeria entered recession, with a contraction of 1.7%. The recession officially ended in late 2017, but economic gains have been uneven, with widespread unemployment and the majority of the population living in poverty. Nigeria's economy is based on oil production, but output has fallen, due to insurgent unrest in the Niger River Delta. Nigeria's low-cost labor pool and abundant natural resources give it great economic potential, but poor infrastructure, widespread corruption, lax and unevenly

enforced trade regulations, insecurity, and an ineffective bureaucracy have held back investment and economic growth.¹

Agriculture

Agriculture accounts for 21% of Nigeria's GDP and employs 70% of the labor force.² Most agriculturalists are small-scale farmers just beyond subsistence, who dominate both staple food and industrial crop production.³ Major agricultural products include cocoa, cotton, corn, peanuts, palm oil, millet, sorghum, rice, cassava (starchy, tuberous root) yams, timber and rubber. Livestock include sheep, goats, cattle, pigs, and fish.⁴ Agricultural production, particularly poultry and cocoa, has not kept up with the nation's rapid population growth.⁵



*Agricultural field
Flickr / e.r.w.i.n.*

The agricultural sector has suffered from mismanagement, poor policies, a poor transport system, and a lack of basic infrastructure for many years.^{6, 7, 8} Over 40% of perishable goods spoil after harvest due to a lack of refrigeration. Farmers are forced to rely on manual labor because of the prohibitive costs of operating large farm equipment. Poor roads prevent the transportation of crops to markets.⁹ Besides these obstacles, farmers must cope with land degradation due to desertification and drought in the north and heavy rain, flooding, and oil pollution in the south.^{10, 11, 12}



*Freshly caught tilapia in Nigeria
Flickr / Jeremy Weate*

Nigeria is the world's top producer of cassava, but cassava farming practices remain at the subsistence level; poor infrastructure prevents any significant export of the crop. The government has introduced measures such as diversifying cassava varieties and creating strategically located crop processing zones in an effort to modernize the cassava industry and boost cassava exports.^{13, 14}

Fisheries account for approximately 4% of

Nigeria's GDP. The sector is underdeveloped, and about 70% of the country's demand for fish is met by imports.¹⁵ The rise of Boko Haram in the past decade severely disrupted the fishing industry around Lake Chad in Nigeria's northeast. In 2017, the security situation became stable enough for the Nigerian military to lift a three-year ban on fishing in the region, which was imposed due to security concerns.¹⁶

Industry

Industry, dominated by the oil and natural gas sectors, accounts for 18% of Nigeria's GDP; about 10% of the labor force is employed by the industry sector. Within this sector, manufacturing was strong during the 1970s but declined after the oil boom. The overall industrial production growth rate for 2017 was minor due to Nigeria's 2016-17 economic recession. Major industries include crude oil, coal, tin, columbite (an iron oxide mineral), rubber products, wood, hides, textiles, cement, other construction materials, food products, footwear, chemicals, fertilizers, printing, ceramics, and steel.^{17, 18, 19}



*Factory in Lagos
Flickr / crashdburnd*

Most factories are in the Lagos area. A few industries, such as steel and paper mills, are located in remote areas. Traditional products and industries, such as hoes and hatchets, soap- and salt making, and pottery and woodcarving, are local.²⁰ Emerging industries include telecommunications and mining operations, such as coal, iron, uranium, and gold.²¹

Energy

Oil

Nigeria has significant renewable and non-renewable resources, some of which have not been fully exploited. The most profitable energy resources include crude petroleum, natural gas, and coal.²² Nigeria's oil reserves comprise 70% of the federal government revenue and 93% of the country's exports.^{23, 24} The country is the 13th largest oil exporter in the world, extracting 1.871 million barrels per day.²⁵ The major oil producers in Nigeria are Shell, Total, Chevron, Eni, and ExxonMobil, all in joint ventures

with the Nigerian National Petroleum Company.²⁶ Investments in Nigerian oil have declined since 2007, and the industry faces challenges from a 2014 price crash, the growth of shale oil extraction, and the ascendance of green energy. In early 2018, the Nigerian government was in the process of passing a long-awaited energy bill that would stimulate growth and increase transparency in the oil industry.^{27, 28} Most oil reserves are in onshore fields in the Niger River Delta.^{29, 30}



*Port Harcourt Refining Ltd in Alesa-Elemo
Wikimedia / sixoone*

Natural Gas

The Niger River Delta contains most of Nigeria's natural gas reserves, the largest in Africa and ninth-largest in the world.^{31, 32} Nigeria's gas production capabilities are greatly underdeveloped due to insufficient exploration, inadequate agreements with energy companies, poor incentives to increase reserves, low international gas prices, and security issues in the Niger River Delta. Some 12% of total gas output is flared, or burned, each year because oil fields are not capable of capturing natural gas associated with production. The country plans to develop a commercial framework that will create a shift from an oil-based economy to a gas-based economy.³³

Natural Resources

Coal



*Iva Vally coal mine in Enugu
Wikimedia / Martin Kudr*

Nigeria has significant but untapped reserves of coal. Most of the coal is used by power plants, railroads, and the metal industry. High transportation costs and low productivity hinder the coal mining industry.³⁴ In 2016, in an attempt to improve electricity generation, the government announced that it would issue coal-mining licenses only to companies that intend to use coal for generating electrical power.³⁵

Renewable Energy



*Solar powered data centre in Dutse
Flickr / Jeremy Weate*

In recent years, Nigeria has shown an increased interest in adopting renewable energy technologies. Nigeria was one of the early signatories of the 2015 Paris Climate Change Agreement, signifying a commitment to low carbon energy sources. Additionally, the government sees renewables as part of the solution to its energy troubles. It is estimated that Nigeria is currently generating only one-third of the electricity it needs and is losing tens of billions of dollars due to a lack of adequate power.^{36, 37, 38} More than 100 million of the country's 190 million people are not connected to the national power grid. For those who are connected, inadequate infrastructure makes the availability of electricity scarce and intermittent. Many households and businesses rely on fossil fuel generators, kerosene, and wood for energy.^{39, 40}

The Nigerian government has set a goal that 30% of its energy should come from renewable sources by 2030, and has signed over a dozen agreements with green energy developers. International companies are investing hundreds of millions of dollars to build solar power plants.^{41, 42} All of Nigeria, especially the arid north, is suitable for solar power production. Abundant winds make the coast suitable for wind turbines. Currently, some 15% of Nigeria's energy comes from hydropower, but the country has over 200 neglected or abandoned dams that could be updated and used for hydropower generation.^{43, 44}

Trade

Nigeria trades mostly with Asia, the United States, and Europe. India is Nigeria's leading export partner, accounting for 34% of exports. Other partners are the United States (9%), Spain (5.9%), and France (5.8%). Petroleum accounts for 95% of Nigeria's exports. Two other export commodities are cocoa and rubber.^{45, 46} In terms of Nigeria's imports, China leads at 20.3%, primarily for machinery, transport equipment, chemicals, manufactured



*Cargo ship in Lagos
Flickr / satanoid*

goods, and foodstuffs. Other import partners are the United States (8.3%), Belgium (7.6%), the United Kingdom (4.4%), and the Netherlands (4.1%).^{47, 48} Nigeria's trade environment is protectionist, with high tariffs and prohibitions on imported items, in an attempt to stimulate domestic agriculture and manufacturing.⁴⁹

Services

Services account for 60% of Nigeria's GDP, employing 20% of the labor force.⁵⁰ Banking and finance are the largest service sectors.⁵¹ The increasing mechanization of Nigeria's manufacturing sector has created greater demand for human intelligence, thus helping the growth of the service sector.⁵²

Tourism



A shrine in the Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Osogbo, Osun
Wikimedia / UNESCO

Nigeria is looking to tourism as a potential revenue and job generator, in anticipation of the diminishing role of oil in its economy. The country has numerous tourist attractions such as wildlife reserves, coastal beaches, diverse cultural groups, and museums. The Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove in Osun State and the Sukur Cultural Landscape in Adamawa State are UNESCO World Heritage Sites.⁵³ In the past, Nigeria's potential as a tourist destination has been undermined by military rule, political instability, and the threat of violence.⁵⁴ The government has recently taken steps to shore up tourism by improving the ease of doing business, increasing access to visitor visas, and improving airports. There are six international airports spread throughout the country.⁵⁵ Tourism constitutes only 1.7% of GDP, but that share is increasing.⁵⁶ In 2015, Nigeria received over 1.5 million tourists and

1.8 million the following year. Tourism expenditures account for over 9.5% of imports. Poor security, especially the continuing threat posed by Boko Haram, remains an obstacle to the further development of the tourism sector.^{57, 58}

Banking



Five naira banknote
Flickr / Shardayyy

Nigeria's national currency is the naira (NGN). As of May 2018, USD 1 was worth NGN 361.⁵⁹ The Central Bank of Nigeria, founded in 1959, is headquartered in Abuja. The bank provides financial and commercial banking services, manages Nigeria's financial sector, and implements the exchange rate and monetary policies. It issues legal currency, acts as the government's financial advisor and banker, and

promotes the country's monetary stability.⁶⁰ During Nigeria's 2016-17 economic recession, the CBN made unsuccessful attempts to prevent the naira from depreciating against the dollar.⁶¹

For access to cash, a majority of the population uses the informal sector, which includes private money lenders, friends, and credit unions; this has resulted in a largely cash-based economy.^{62, 63} Individuals, particularly women who lack collateral yet have a business plan, are enabled by microcredit to acquire the capital they need to actualize their proposals.⁶⁴ Rural communities still have little access to credit, and small businesses and the real-estate sector have poor access to loans.⁶⁵



The Central Bank of Nigeria Headquarters, Abuja
Wikimedia / GodwinPaya

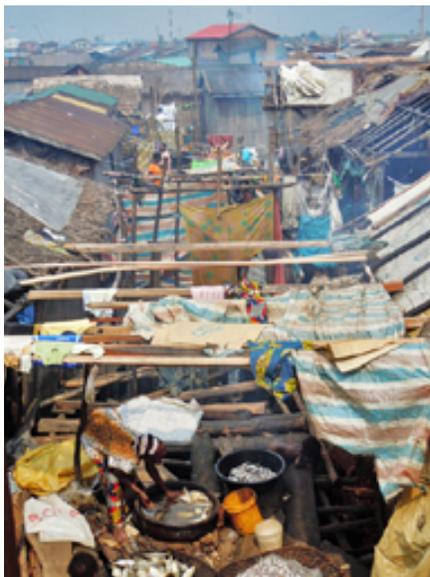
Islamic banking has been present in Nigeria since at least 2012. In accordance with the prohibition of moneylending under Sharia law, Islamic banking does not rely on charging interest. It operates on risk sharing rather than lending and borrowing. As of 2016, there was one certified Islamic bank in Nigeria, and two additional banks that offered Islamic banking services. Islamic banking is seen as a counterweight to Nigeria's conventional banks, which are known to charge high interest rates and take undue risks with customers' deposits. Islamic banking is especially popular in Nigeria's predominately Muslim north, where about 68% of the population is excluded from the conventional banking sector.⁶⁶

Finance

Foreign direct investment (FDI) in Nigeria comprised 1.09% of GDP in 2016, an increase from 0.65% the previous year.⁶⁷ FDI has diminished in recent years due to the low price of oil, Nigeria's primary industry.⁶⁸ The largest foreign investors in Nigeria are the United States, China, and the Netherlands. Nigeria offers investors significant incentives, such as abundant natural resources and cheap labor.⁶⁹ Yet there are some significant impediments to investment: inadequate infrastructure, a poor regulatory environment, restrictive trade policies, inadequate dispute resolution mechanisms, an ineffective court system, and crime and security concerns.^{70, 71}

Standard of Living

With over 190 million people and growing fast, Nigeria is Africa's most populous country and the seventh most populous country in the world. Life expectancy at birth is 53.8 years. The maternal mortality rate is 814 deaths per 100,000 live births, the fourth highest in the world. The infant mortality rate ranks the eighth highest, with 69.8 deaths per 100,000 live births.⁷²



Housing in Makoko
Flickr / Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung

Nigeria spends 3.7% of its GDP on health expenditures.⁷³ The major infectious diseases are bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A and E, typhoid fever, malaria, dengue fever, yellow fever, leptospirosis, schistosomiasis, meningococcal meningitis, and Lassa fever.⁷⁴ The top causes of death are malaria, lower respiratory infections, HIV, diarrheal diseases, road injuries, malnutrition, and cancer.⁷⁵

Over 67% of Nigerians live below the poverty line, with over 42% living in extreme poverty.⁷⁶ The World Bank defines extreme poverty as living on less than USD 1.90 per day. Nigeria's population is growing faster than its economy, leading to an increase in poverty. The population has tripled since independence in 1960. At its present growth rate,

Nigeria will surpass the United States to be the third most populous country in the world by 2050. Nigeria's economic dependence on oil production, coupled with a global decrease in oil prices, has also contributed to poverty.^{77, 78}

Nigeria's GDP per capita is USD 5,900.⁷⁹ Wealth in the country is very unevenly

distributed, and inequality has worsened significantly since 2004. Nigeria's richest man, the business magnate Aliko Dangote, earns 8,000 times more each day than an impoverished Nigerian would spend on their basic needs each year. Extreme income inequality is seen as a source of anti-government sentiment and a potential cause of future civil unrest.⁸⁰

Employment

In 2017, Nigeria's unemployment rate was 18.8%, an increase from 14.2% the previous year. An additional 21.8% of the workforce was underemployed. Although the economy technically ceased to be in recession in late 2017, several economic activities are still contracting and the unemployment rate is expected to peak in 2018. Nigeria's labor force, which makes up about 29% of the population, is growing, along with the overall population.^{81, 82} The country is facing a shortage of jobs for the many new participants in the job market.⁸³



*Workers at the construction site
Flickr / e.r.w.i.n.*

Nigeria's job market is becoming increasingly polarized. A small share of the population, primarily in the country's south, benefits from high-quality income opportunities created by an increasingly diversified economy. But a large share of workers, primarily in the north, is trapped in low-productivity subsistence employment. The polarization is also sector-based: Nigerians who work in agriculture are much more likely to belong to the poorest 40% of the population than those who are wage laborers.⁸⁴

Outlook

Nigeria's economy continues to recover from its 2016-17 recession. GDP is projected to keep growing, by 2.1% in 2018 and 2.5% in 2019. Higher oil prices and production and a strong agriculture are the factors projected to sustain this growth. The high inflation that resulted from the recession is projected to ease. The government is pursuing structural reforms to diversify the economy and avoid future downturns from overreliance on oil. The reforms aim to grow and improve Nigeria's



*A group of young ladies in the Asokoro section of Abuja
Flickr / Mark Fischer*

agriculture, manufacturing, solid minerals, services, construction and real estate, and energy sectors.⁸⁵ For the long term, however, Nigeria's economic growth must be sustained by increased transparency, diversification away from oil production, improved fiscal management, and modernization of energy and transportation infrastructure.^{86, 87}

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Assessment

1. Nigeria is the world's largest exporter of cassava.
2. Nigeria's currency is the West African lira (WAL).
3. Oil revenues account for the majority of Nigeria's earnings.
4. More than half of Nigeria's population has no access to electricity.
5. Islamic banks, which are popular in the north, do not charge interest.

Assessment Answers: 1. False; 2. False; 3. True; 4. True; 5. True



*Traditional drummers in Ekusa
Wikimedia / Hyperfocalstudios*

Chapter 4 | Nigeria in Perspective

Society

Introduction

Nigeria has the largest population of any African country, with over 190 million people, and is the most densely populated country on the continent. The country is home to over 250 ethnic groups with vast cultural, social, and linguistic differences. The cultures frequently blend when different groups live in proximity to others, and the boundaries between them become fluid. All groups share a commitment to preserving traditional cultural rituals. Indigenous festivals, music, storytelling, and dance performances are common, particularly in rural areas.^{1, 2}

Ethnic Groups

Ethnic population figures for Nigeria are unreliable and contentious because of political reasons. According to some estimates, the Hausa-Fulani in the north represent 29% of the population, the Yoruba in the southwest constitute 21%, and the Igbo (Ibo) in the southeast comprise 18%. Among smaller ethnic groups are the Ijaw (10%), Kanuri (4%), Ibibio (3.4), Egba, and Tiv.³

Yoruba



Yoruba groom and bride
Flickr / Olanike Olukunle

Yoruba does not refer to a cohesive ethnic group, but to many communities loosely linked by geography, language, history, and religion. The Yoruba reside in the southwestern part of Nigeria. Many Yoruba are farmers who live in urban areas away from their farmland. At the center of a traditional Yoruba town stands the large palace of the *oba*, the hereditary king. The Yoruba speak Benue-Congo, part of the Niger-Congo language family.^{4, 5, 6}

Many highly populated Yoruba towns have grown into modern cities. Today, the Yoruba are one of Nigeria's most urban groups, as evidenced by Lagos, the largest city in Africa, where they are the majority ethnic group.⁷

The Yoruba embraced both Christianity and Islam. About 20% of Yoruba observe the traditional religions of their ancestors, which may vary from village to village. According to these traditional religions, there is one Supreme Being and hundreds of minor deities called *orisha*. Yoruba culture spread to the Caribbean and South America, because many Yoruba were caught in the trans-Atlantic slave trade.⁸

Hausa

Hausa is the largest ethnic group in West Africa. The Hausa live in northern Nigeria and southeastern Niger. Most Hausa practice Islam, which was brought to the region by Arab traders during the Fulani Jihad (1804-1810). This period saw Islam become the dominant religion in northern Nigeria.^{9, 10}

The Hausa language was originally written in Arabic script; the British introduced the Latin script to Hausa in 1903. Hausa is often used as a lingua franca among the region's non-Muslims. Many Hausa can read and write Arabic and speak either French or English.¹¹



Hausa farmer
Flickr / International Institute of Tropical Agriculture

Hausa society remains largely feudal, and people use prominent tribal marks on their face and elsewhere on the body for tribal and kin identification. The dress code of the Hausa adheres to Islamic traditions. Men wear large flowing gowns, *babban riga*, or robes, *jalabia*. Women wear *hijabs*, shawls, and the *abaya* body wrap. Marriages are based on Islamic rites.¹²

Igbo



Igbo woman
Flickr / Jeremy Weate

The Igbo (Ibo) are the second largest ethnic group in southern Nigeria, after the Yoruba. Igboland is located in southeastern Nigeria. The Igbo consist of many subgroups that used to live in autonomous local communities. In the mid-20th century, they developed a strong sense of identity and tried to secede from Nigeria and establish the independent nation of Biafra.¹³

The Igbo language belongs to the Niger-Congo language family and has different dialects. It is a system of high and low tones that indicate different meanings and grammatical relationships.¹⁴

The Igbo religion is shared by Igbo-speaking people. The Igbo believe in a creator god, Chukwu Abiama; the earth goddess, Ala; and many minor gods and spirits that occupy forests and rivers. Many Igbo men practice polygyny, the taking of more than one wife. After the introduction of Christianity and civil marriage, professional and urban Igbo abandoned polygyny.^{15, 16}

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Traditionally, the Igbo leadership system is democratic and representative. Issues that affect the community are discussed and actions are taken after a vote. Every adult male is entitled to one vote, and the majority wins, regardless of the age or social status of the voters. The traditional leaders, or Chief Priests, are accountable to the people and have to act as role models. Because traditional leadership is based on seniority and achievement, elections are less contentious or rigged.¹⁷

Ijaw



Ijaw statue: The many faces of your enemies
Wikimedia / Quinn Dombrowsk

The Ijaw (Ijo) are the fourth-largest ethnic group in Nigeria, comprising approximately 10% of the population.¹⁸ The Ijaw are indigenous to the forested areas of the Niger River Delta. They are divided into numerous close-knit subgroups that speak various dialects of the Ijaw language, part of the Niger-Congo language family. The majority of Ijaw are Christian; some practice Christianity mixed with traditional religious traditions.¹⁹

During colonial times, the Ijaw economy was based on trading slaves and palm oil, fishing, and agriculture. Today, the Ijaw region comprises much of the territory where Nigerian sweet crude oil is located. The Ijaw are losing control of their land to the oil industry and protests erupt occasionally as oil companies violate

or fail to fulfill their promises and agreements.^{20, 21, 22} Goodluck Jonathan, the President of Nigeria between 2010 and 2015, is an Ijaw.^{23, 24}

Religion

Nigeria has no state religion. The 1999 constitution guarantees freedom of religion and prohibits religious discrimination. It also stipulates that the states should encourage interfaith marriages. The constitution gives Sharia courts jurisdiction over civil proceedings such as marriage, inheritance, and family issues. Sharia courts also handle criminal cases in 12 northern states, but they do not have authority over non-Muslims. Registration of religious groups is required to open bank accounts, receive tax exemptions, and build houses of worship.²⁵

The federal and state governments regulate mandatory religious instruction in public schools, but students do not have to attend classes in religions that they do not follow.



*The national mosque in Abuja
Flickr / Ethan Zuckerman*

The government does not prevent religious communities from teaching religion to students of their community.²⁶

The Nigerian government does not track religious affiliation in the national census. A 2012 survey by Pew Research estimates that the population is almost evenly divided between Christians (49.3%) and Muslims (48.8%). The remaining 2% claim other or no religion.²⁷ The *CIA World Factbook* estimates that Muslims account

for 50%, Christians 40%, and indigenous religions practitioners 10% of the population.²⁸ Many Muslims and Christians also follow the traditions and teachings of indigenous religions. Followers of the Aladura Church in Yorubaland practice Christianity mixed with indigenous religions that involve witchcraft and healing. The Bori cult is a mix of Islam and indigenous practices that involve spirit possession.²⁹

The Muslim population is divided between Sunni (38%) and Shia (12%). Other Muslims identify as Sufi, Salafist, and Ahmadi. Christian denominations include evangelicals, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Mormons, and Jehovah's Witnesses.³⁰



*Maukib procession for Islam's Qadiriyyah tradition in Kano
Flickr / ARC - The Alliance of Religions and Conservation*

The Hausa-Fulani and Kanuri who reside in the northern states are predominantly Muslim, although many Christians also reside in the north. Christians and Muslims reside in even numbers in central Nigeria and the southwestern states, where the Yoruba follow both Islam and Christianity. In the southeastern states where the Igbo reside, and in the Niger Delta, the majority is Christian.³¹

Relations between Christians and Muslims are tense in many regions and clashes have caused thousands of deaths. The debate over Sharia law in the northern states has provoked violence and mass demonstrations.³² Many non-Muslims perceive that Sharia law threatens their freedom, and the situation is compounded by continuous attacks on civilians and law enforcement personnel by fundamentalist Islamic groups such as Boko Haram.³³

Cuisine



Jollof rice with chicken
Flickr / chiolachic

Nigerian cuisine varies according to ethnic group and location. In the non-Muslim south, peppery stews are common, as well as palm wine, an alcoholic beverage made from palm trees, and home brewed beer. Grains, such as millet and sorghum, and beef are staples of the northern diet. Tomatoes are used in soups and in the popular *jollof* rice. Palm and coconut oil are used as a basic cooking ingredient throughout the country. Fried yam chips, plantains, and meat pastries are common

snacks. Popular dishes include vegetable soup (*efo*), goat head pepper soup (*isi-ewu*), and a dish called *tuwo*, which is made from maize, rice, or millet. Seafood is consumed along the coastal regions. Originating with the Hausa, *suya*, a form of barbecued meat, is also popular throughout the country.^{34, 35, 36}

Nigeria is the world's largest producer of cassava, a tuber. A common dish made from cassava is *gari*, which consists of toasted cassava flour served with a variety of sauces.^{37, 38} *Fufu* flour is a fermented wet-paste made from cassava. It is very rich in carbohydrates and popular among southern Nigerians.³⁹

Traditional Dress

In most urban areas in the south, both men and women wear western-style clothing, such as business suits for men and pants suits for women. Traditional Nigerian attire is more common in rural areas. Modes of dress differ depending on the region and ethnic group, but a common theme is modesty.^{40, 41}



Nigerian women wearing gele
Flickr / International Institute of Tropical Agriculture

Gele is the Nigerian traditional cloth that women wrap around their heads. Yoruba women wear the *iro*, a long wrap-around skirt. They also wear the *buba*, a loose blouse that falls just below the waist, with long sleeves and an open neckline. Hausa women wear the *abaya*, which is a colorful

wrapper with a matching blouse. All garments and their corresponding scarves and head covers are made of colorful materials.⁴²



Nigerian men in traditional costumes, Gombe
Flickr / Mark Fischer

A common form of men's wear all over Nigeria is a flowing, loose-fitting robe known as the *agbada* (in Yoruba) or a *babban riga* (in Hausa-Fulani). These floor-length robes have long, wide sleeves and are adorned with various patterns. Pants and an undershirt accompany the robe. An *agbada* is worn by men of stature for special occasions, such as weddings and funerals.^{43, 44}

Hausa men wear a traditional round cap called *fula* or *fila*. In the south, men wear the *buba*, a long, loose-fitting shirt and the *sokoto*, loose-fitting pants held with a string.⁴⁵

Gender Issues

There are no national laws that criminalize gender-based violence and compensate victims. The Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act of 2015 (VAPP) addresses many forms of violence and abuse including sexual and socioeconomic abuse, harmful traditional practices, forced eviction from the home, and political violence.⁴⁶ However, because many states did not adopt all the provisions of the VAPP Act, not much has been done to curb these practices outside of the Federal Capital Territory.⁴⁷



Women carrying bowls of cassava on their heads
Flickr / International Institute of Tropical Agriculture

Sexual harassment, rape, and domestic violence are prevalent in Nigeria. Almost 20% of college students surveyed reported at least one incident of rape, and in 2013, almost 30% of preadolescent and adolescent girls reported that their first sexual encounter was rape.⁴⁸

The police do not intervene in domestic disputes and usually blame the victim for provoking the abuse. In rural areas, police and the courts do not intervene on behalf of women who formally accuse their husbands of abuse if the abuse does not

exceed acceptable norms.⁴⁹ To compound the prevalence of domestic abuse, more than 30% of women ages 15-49 justify domestic violence against women under certain circumstances. About 30% of men and women claim to have been victims of domestic violence.^{50, 51}



*Nigerian women selling sweet potatoes
Flickr / Community Eye Health*

Purdah, the seclusion or confinement of women and pubescent girls, is widely practiced in the north and northeast. Seclusion of widows is a common practice that deprives widows of social interactions for a year. In some traditional communities in the south, widows are forced to drink the water used to wash their husbands' bodies. Although no law prohibits women from inheriting their husbands' land and property, traditional practices do not recognize women's right to inheritance, and many widows become destitute after their in-laws take all their property.⁵²

The law prohibits female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and punishes anyone who performs or aids in the procedure, but the federal government and state authorities do little to stop the practice.⁵³ In Nigeria, a little over 80% of the time, the procedure is done before the girl reaches the age of five. Over the last decade, this practice has declined, with only 15% of girls below 14 undergoing this procedure. Of the total female population in 2013, 64% thought that the practice should be abolished, and 62% of boys and men agreed with them.⁵⁴

Sharia law affects the lives of Muslim women in 12 northern states. The adoption of Sharia law in northern Nigeria created a legal climate that may have encouraged the terrorist group Boko Haram to kidnap hundreds of schoolgirls in 2014 and 2018.^{55, 56} The government was slow to respond and take action to rescue the abducted girls.^{57, 58} The Federation for Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN) and the Federation of Ogoni Women's Associations (FOWA) address women's issues and environmental justice.^{59, 60}

The Arts

Nigeria has a rich artistic heritage. Traditional art such as sculpture and dance used to be more functional than a form of expression. With the advance of modernization, several art forms began to disappear. The government launched several art revitalization programs to preserve traditional art forms.⁶¹

Famous pre-colonial art includes terracotta figurines from the Iron Age, masks of the Igbo, and sculptures created by the Yoruba. Nigerian ancient bronze work can be found in museums around the world; wood sculptures and colorful textiles are popular among tourists and art collectors.^{62, 63}

Music



Qadiriyyah drummers, Kano
Flickr / ARC - The Alliance of Religions and Conservation

Music is integral to Nigerian culture. Each ethnic group and region has its own musical style and instruments. The drum is the key traditional instrument in southern Nigeria. The most common drum among the Yoruba is the talking drum (*gangan/omele*). Another drum indigenous to the region is the *sakara*, a flat circular drum played with the fingers or a stick. In southeastern Nigeria, among the *Igbo*, the most common drum is the *igba*, a hollow tom-tom drum.⁶⁴

The music of the Hausa, Fulani, and Kanuri is controlled by religious, social, and political considerations. The most popular and common Hausa instrument is the *kakaki*, a long metal trumpet.⁶⁵ Other traditional Nigerian instruments include various types of flutes, trumpets, musical bows, xylophones, thumb-pianos, rattles, scrapers, and wooden clappers. Many instruments are made of local materials.^{66, 67}

One of the most popular types of music in Nigeria is *juju*, which uses traditional drums and percussion as backup to vocals and guitar. Afro-beat combines African melodies and rhythm with jazz and soul and is heavily influenced by American artists such as James Brown.⁶⁸

Dance



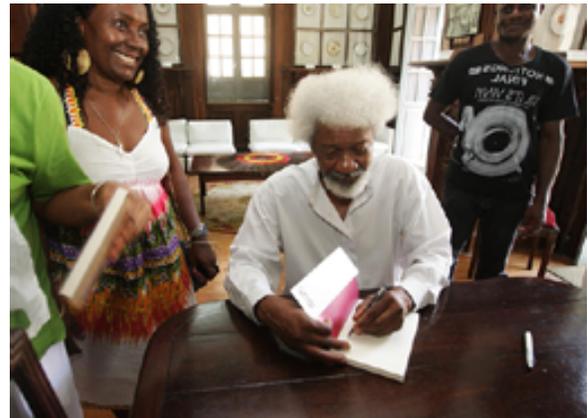
Traditional dance, Ibadan
Flickr / S Martin

Nigeria has a rich dance culture. Dances are performed in festivals and life celebrations. The Bata Dance is one of the traditional dances of the Yoruba. The dance is associated with the Yoruba god of thunder and is performed by men and women. The Karoto Dance is a traditional dance of the Fulani and Hausa of Kano State in northern Nigeria. The dance is performed by pairs of dancers who have to outdo one another in difficult movements. The Swange Dance is performed by Tiv men and women from Benue State; the dance is accompanied by a traditional horn called *al-gaita*.⁶⁹

In southeastern Nigeria, the Igbo perform a variety of dances during festivals and holidays. The War Dance, Ikipirikpi-ogu, was traditionally a welcoming dance for soldiers returning from battle. The most popular dance among the Igbo is the Mmanwu Dance (masquerades), which represents deities or messengers sent by deities to deliver judgments.⁷⁰

Literature

Wole Soyinka, an English-language playwright, poet, novelist, and essayist influenced by the traditions of his ethnic group, the Yoruba, comes from a long tradition of storytellers. An opponent of the civil war in Biafra, he spent two years in prison starting in 1969; upon release, he went into exile. In 1986, Soyinka became the first African writer to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature. Among his best known works is the 1959 play *The Lion and the Jewel*, an exploration of the tensions between modernity and tradition in Africa. Today, Soyinka is politically active, famous for his provocative proclamation that Africans are responsible for their predicament, rather than the former colonial powers.^{71, 72}



Wole Soyinka, an English-language writer
Flickr / Fotos GOVBA

Chinua Achebe's famous novel, *Things Fall Apart*, has been translated into 50

languages; over 10 million copies have been sold since it was published in 1958. The novel is set in an eastern Igbo village in pre-colonial Nigeria. It depicts the complex culture and traditions of the Igbo people, which fell into disarray with the appearance of Christian missionaries.⁷³ Achebe's writings challenged European ideas held by many of his compatriots and non-Africans alike that the African continent and its people had no meaningful history or culture. Achebe was also awarded the 2007 Booker Prize for literature. He died in 2013.^{74, 75}

Film

The Nigeria film industry, called Nollywood, produces more than 1,500 films every year, more than Hollywood and second only to India's Bollywood. Nollywood films are made in 300 languages and watched in urban and rural areas online and on video. The first film that brought Nigerian cinema to international attention was *Living in Bondage* (1992), about a man who sacrifices his wife to a satanic cult and is later haunted by her ghost. The film was made in one month and released straight-to-video; it sold more than a million copies. Nigerian filmmakers have had distribution arrangements with Netflix since 2013.^{76, 77}



Shooting a Nollywood movie
Wikimedia / Bestvillage

Sports

Soccer



Nigeria national football team
Wikimedia / Дмитрий Пукалик

Soccer is the sport that captures most public attention in Nigeria. The national team, known as the Super Eagles, achieved success on the international stage, winning the Olympic gold in 1996 and twice winning the African Nations Cup. The team reached the World Cup three times.⁷⁸

Dambe



*Dambe boxers fighting
Flickr / Jeremy Weate*

Nigerian boxers have fared well in international competitions, perhaps because of the sport's similarity to the indigenous martial art *dambe*.⁷⁹ *Dambe*, a traditional Hausa sport, has been described as both wrestling and kickboxing. The sport was originally practiced by butchers and drew large crowds of spectators. Today, with the help of YouTube, this sport is finding new fans throughout the world.⁸⁰

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Nigeria in Perspective

Chapter 4 | Society

Assessment

1. The Yoruba are one of Nigeria's most urban groups.
2. Wole Soyinka is the Supreme Being worshipped by the Igbo.
3. Most Hausa practice Islam.
4. Nigeria has no state religion.
5. Nigeria's film industry experienced a sharp decline after 12 states adopted Sharia law.

Assessment Answers: 1. True; 2. False; 3. True; 4. True; 5. False



*Nigerien soldiers participating in a special forces training exercise during Exercise Flintlock 2018
Flickr / USAFRICOM*

Chapter 5 | Nigeria in Perspective

Security

Introduction

After a bloody civil war and a succession of coups and military governments, continuous civilian rule has brought a measure of stability to Nigeria since 1999.¹ Today, as Africa's most populous country and second-largest economy, Nigeria plays an important role in regional and global geopolitics.² Abuja's stance on economic and political matters can have a significant impact on West Africa, and President Muhammadu Buhari was the first sub-Saharan African leader U.S. President Donald Trump contacted after taking office in 2017.³ Nigeria seeks to optimize trade and cooperation with its neighbors, but some tensions over border disputes and ethnic differences remain. Internally, the nine-year-old Boko Haram insurgency, the increasingly fierce herder-farmer conflict,

and the sabotage campaign of oil infrastructure in the Niger River Delta threaten stability. These conflicts are intertwined with more subtle, longer-term hazards like unchecked population growth, corruption, and environmental devastation.⁴

U.S.–Nigerian Relations



*U.S. Secretary of State Kerry with Nigerian President Buhari
Flickr / USAFRICOM*

Since relations began in the 1960s, the primary economic interests binding the two nations have been Nigerian oil and U.S. technology and investment. Counterterrorism cooperation in the wake of the 11 September 2001 attacks also boosted cooperation on security issues.^{5, 6} Relations have been generally good since the 1998 death of General Sani Abacha, whose government’s human rights abuses led the United States to impose sanctions on Nigeria (though exempting Nigeria’s trade in crude oil).⁷ Abacha’s death

provided a transition to democracy and paved the way for closer ties between the two countries.^{8, 9} Today, Nigeria serves as a key U.S. economic and security partner. The two countries set up the U.S.-Nigeria Binational Commission in 2010 to address good governance, energy and investment, food security and agriculture, the Niger Delta, and regional security cooperation.^{10, 11}

On Christmas Day 2009, a Nigerian student, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, attempted to bomb a Detroit-bound airliner after transiting through Lagos and Amsterdam.¹² As a result, the United States placed Nigeria on a list of over a dozen nations whose travelers would be subject to special screening upon arrival—a reaction the Nigerians considered “unfair” and potentially damaging to relations.¹³ The United States removed Nigeria from the special screening list in April 2010, and Nigeria announced plans to implement tougher airport security measures.^{14, 15}

In January 2018, Nigeria and other countries were shocked and offended at news reports that U.S. President Donald Trump made vulgar and disparaging remarks about African nations to his aides. Nigeria’s foreign minister summoned the top American diplomat at the U.S. embassy in Abuja to express dismay and demand an explanation. But in April 2018, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari became the first leader from sub-Saharan Africa to visit President Trump. The two leaders had a cordial meeting during which they

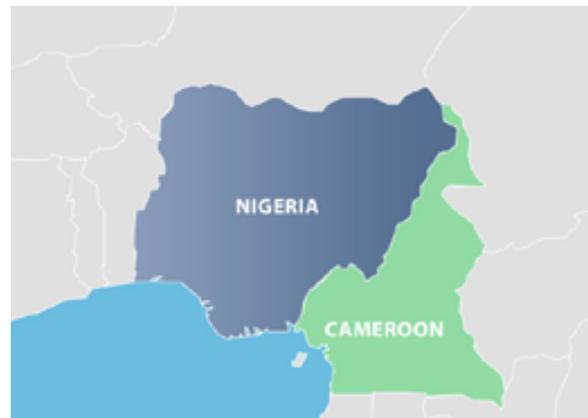
expressed mutual admiration and stressed U.S.-Nigerian collaboration in governance, security, and regional leadership. The White House used Buhari's visit to announce the approval of a delayed sale of military equipment to Nigeria.^{16, 17}

Relations with Neighboring Countries

Nigeria has been a leading advocate for African and regional issues, and its foreign policy is characterized by good neighborliness.^{18, 19} Nigeria has a strong record of commitment to peace and security in West Africa.²⁰ The country is engaged in several UN peacekeeping operations throughout the world, and its peacekeepers helped stabilize Liberia and Sierra Leone.²¹ In 1975, Nigeria was a founding member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a regional group formed to promote cooperation, trade, and self-reliance among African nations.²²

Cameroon

The territorial dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon over the Bakassi Peninsula has been one of the defining issues of their relations. Dating to the 19th century, this is just one of more than one hundred disputes across Africa resulting from arbitrary boundaries drawn by colonial powers.^{23, 24} The Bakassi Peninsula is next to a waterway that controls access to Nigeria's strategically important Calabar port.²⁵ The discovery of oil in the area heightened the stakes in the dispute, which periodically escalated into armed clashes.^{26, 27} Despite the Nigerian majority on the peninsula, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) granted sovereignty over most of the peninsula and its maritime rights to Cameroon in 2002.^{28, 29} Nigeria formally handed over the Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon in August 2008, after clashes claimed the lives of dozens and 100,000 people were relocated from the peninsula to Nigeria.³⁰

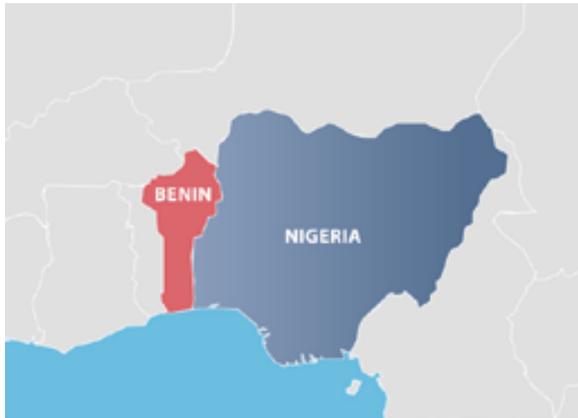


Location map of Nigeria and Cameroon
DLIFLC

Nigeria and Cameroon have maintained strong relations during the Buhari administration. In addition to cooperating in the fight against Boko Haram, the two countries have instituted business forums and have decided to build an international bridge over the Tiel River.³¹ Nigeria's longest international border, at 1,975 km (1,227 mi), is with Cameroon.³² Yet Cameroon has accused Nigeria of sheltering Anglophone insurgents

who want to establish an independent state in southern Cameroon. The insurgents reportedly launch attacks into Cameroon from bases in Nigeria. The Cameroonian government's crackdown on the rebels has caused some 7,000 Cameroonian refugees to flee across the border into Nigeria.³³

Benin



Location map of Nigeria and Benin
DLIFLC

Nigeria has stable relations with Benin, a major trading partner. The two countries share a porous western border that neither government has adequately policed.³⁴ A flourishing black market exists, especially for oil smuggled from Nigeria.³⁵ Since 2005, trade between the two countries has been regulated and restricted to companies with government licenses, and Nigeria has periodically closed the border in an effort to deter crime. The trafficking of Beninese women and children into Nigeria

has brought attention and reform proposals from the European Union.^{36, 37, 38} In 2018, Nigeria announced plans to modernize several border crossings on its border with Benin, to better track the movement of goods between the two countries.³⁹

Chad

Nigeria and Chad both attained independence in 1960. Relations were good until the discovery of oil under Lake Chad in the late 1970s, which led to competing jurisdictional claims that have since been resolved.^{40, 41, 42} Lake Chad, once West Africa's second-largest lake and an important wetland along the border between the two countries, has shrunk by 90% because of irrigation demands and drought, creating new disputes over water-use rights.^{43, 44, 45} Millions of people who depended on the lake for fishing, irrigation, and livestock rearing have been left impoverished.^{46, 47} Nigerians, disproportionately affected by the lake's reduction, have



Location map of Nigeria and Chad
DLIFLC

become environmental refugees.⁴⁸ In 2015, after Boko Haram began seizing land in northern Nigeria, Chad and Niger launched an armed intervention that rebuffed and weakened Boko Haram.⁴⁹

Equatorial Guinea



Location map of Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea
DLIFLC

Equatorial Guinea is a former Spanish colony and one of the smallest African countries in population and area. In 2000, Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea settled a maritime boundary dispute, allowing them to explore their respective sides of the border for oil.⁵⁰ In 2016, the two countries agreed to establish a combined maritime security committee to improve security in the Gulf of Guinea and deter oil theft and smuggling.⁵¹ The two countries are seeking to strengthen bilateral investments in maritime enterprises and manufacturing.⁵²

Niger

Niger's southern border region is inhabited by the Hausa ethnic group, who are also a majority group in northern Nigeria.⁵³ Niger was suspended from ECOWAS in October 2009 following the controversial re-election of President Mamadou Tandja, who dissolved parliament and changed the constitution to seek a third term in office.⁵⁴

After the adoption of Sharia law in northern Nigerian states along the border, many illicit activities, such as prostitution, moved to Niger. The border has also been identified as part of a human trafficking route in which Nigerien girls are trafficked to Nigeria for domestic servitude and boys for manual labor.^{55, 56}



Location map of Nigeria and Niger
DLIFLC

Military and Police Structure

The Nigerian military grew during the Nigerian Civil War. The number of uniformed personnel went from 10,000 in 1967 to over 250,000 in 1970. Although the military could not justify such a large force after the war, they were rewarded with budget increases under successive military dictatorships. Today, the military is among Nigeria's most trustworthy national institutions and seen as committed to national unity.^{57, 58}



*Nigerien soldiers participating in a special forces training exercise during Flintlock 2018
Flickr / USAFRICOM*

Nigeria has the largest military in West Africa. Active duty personnel number approximately 124,000. There are another 57,000 reservists, for a total of 181,000 military personnel. The army, the largest branch of service, possesses 148 combat tanks, 1,420 armored fighting vehicles, 25 self-propelled artillery, and 339 towed artillery. The air force possesses 124 total aircraft, including 9 fighters, 21 attack aircraft, and 42 helicopters. The navy possesses 4 frigates and 93 patrol craft.⁵⁹

The Nigerian military is active within its borders and throughout the world. Nigeria has supported peacekeeping operations in Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Angola, and Yugoslavia, and others.⁶⁰ As of March 2018, Nigeria has approximately 513 police, military experts, and troops serving UN missions in Haiti, Western Sahara, Central African Republic, Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Darfur, Lebanon, Abyei, and South Sudan.^{61, 62,}
⁶³ Over 150 Nigerians have died in UN peacekeeping operations.⁶⁴

Since the restoration of democracy in 1999, the federal Nigerian Police Force (NPF) has approximately doubled in size, to over 370,000. The NPF is divided into 36 commands grouped over 12 geographic zones and 7 administrative organs. The NPF is headed by the Inspector General of Police. The Criminal Investigation Department, the NPF's highest criminal investigation entity, investigates and prosecutes complex and serious crimes within and outside Nigeria.^{65, 66}



*Nigerian Police Officers
Flickr / AMISOM Public Information*



*Lagos State Task Force invaded Otodo Gbame shooting in the air to chase the residents out
Flickr / Justice & Empowerment Initiatives*

Both the military and police force need professional reform that focuses on respect for the rule of law, human rights, and effective civilian oversight. The Nigerian military and police have developed a reputation for dealing with civilians ruthlessly; their actions include unlawful executions, arbitrary arrest and detention, and excessive force. The military is inefficient, partly because of low morale and low education among recruits, who are inadequately paid and housed. Prisons and detention centers are

harsh and life threatening because of disease, poor ventilation, and a lack of medical supplies. Corruption in the police force is also widespread.^{67, 68, 69}

In the 12 northern states that adopted Sharia law, compliance is monitored by the unarmed Hisbah police, who lack the authority to issue warrants but may make arrests in some instances. Hisbah groups are required to register with the state government that funds and supports them.^{70, 71} Aside from questioning people whose behavior they deem suspicious, Hisbah groups' powers vary by state.⁷² People suspected of violating laws governing Muslim conduct (through actions such as prostitution or consuming alcohol) are turned over to the NPF because the Hisbah do not run their own detention facilities.^{73, 74}

Internal Threats

Insurgent Groups

The Niger Delta is an ongoing source of conflict between local groups, the federal government, and multinational oil corporations. The oil-rich area has remained impoverished despite five decades of oil production.⁷⁵ There is a commonly-held perception that the wealth generated by the region's natural resources does not go to the millions living in the delta, but rather to oil companies and corrupt federal officials. Poverty and unemployment among the population have led to popular protests against regional underdevelopment and the environmental degradation of the swamps and creeks where many residents work as fishermen.⁷⁶

A number of militant groups emerged in the 1990s, including the Movement for the

Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND).⁷⁷ MEND is a loosely linked group of armed factions who have kidnapped foreign oil workers, damaged pipelines, attacked oil fields, and fought the Nigerian military in order to bring attention to their grievances.⁷⁸ Their actions cut Nigerian oil production by one-third between 2006 and 2010, so the nation lost billions in revenue.^{79, 80} Their primary demand was a fairer share of the oil wealth to invest in the community for schools, roads, hospitals, power supplies, and clean water.^{81, 82}

In Abuja, the situation was viewed as a security problem, rather than one driven by unequal access to the oil revenues and the destruction of the local environment.⁸³ Accordingly, thousands of troops were deployed to deter oil thieves.⁸⁴ To avoid the risk of the militarized response uniting disparate groups against a common enemy, the Nigerian government offered amnesty in 2009 to both the jailed MEND leader, Henry Okah, and other insurgents.^{85, 86, 87}

In 2016, a new insurgent group, the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), proclaimed its presence through a wave of attacks on the region's oil infrastructure. The NDA posted its manifestoes and hinted at its future sabotage actions on its sleek website, demanding that the people of the Niger Delta have greater control over the region's oil resources and a greater share of the country's oil wealth.⁸⁸ Their attacks on oil facilities cut Nigeria's oil production and were one of the causes of Nigeria's 2016-17 economic recession.^{89, 90}

In the wake of the NDA's attacks, the Buhari administration held talks to address grievances over oil pollution and poverty in the Niger Delta. But there has been no progress toward addressing the grievances, leading to accusations that the government is merely stalling and not committed to change.⁹¹ In January 2018, the NDA's website promised renewed attacks in the face of government inaction.⁹² The Niger Delta's labyrinth of swamps and creeks makes it difficult to protect oil infrastructure, including about 1,000 oil wells connected by 6,035 km (3,750 mi) of pipeline.⁹³



*Fishing boats on polluted water in Niger Delta
Flickr / Milieudedefense*

Separatist Groups



Biafra location map
Wikimedia / Eric Gaba

Recent years have seen renewed calls for the independence of southeastern Nigeria, a region known as Biafra and primarily inhabited by the Igbo people. The secession calls, echoing the 1967-70 Nigerian Civil War, have drawn rebukes from the federal government. In 2017, the Nigerian army held a military exercise in the area as a show of force, during which soldiers were accused of human rights abuses against the local people.^{94, 95} Three prominent Biafran independence groups, the Indigenous

People of Biafra (IPOB), the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), and the Biafra Independence Movement (BIM), have emerged at the forefront of the movement. While claiming to represent the interests of the Igbo people in the region, the three groups have sometimes been at odds with each other over specific policies or courses of action. In 2017, the Nigerian government labeled the IPOB a terrorist organization and raided the home of its leader, Nnamdi Kanu, causing him to go into hiding.^{96, 97}

The Boko Haram Insurgency

Boko Haram (meaning “Western education is sinful” in the Hausa language) is a militant Islamic group that has been active in northern Nigeria since 2003. They demand full adoption of Sharia law in northern Nigeria. In 2009, the group launched an insurgency from northern Nigeria, which spread to the borders of Niger, Chad, and Cameroon.^{98, 99} The group has claimed solidarity with the al-Qaeda terrorist group and, in 2015, with the Islamic State.^{100, 101} Boko Haram recruits include the young, the jobless, and university students, as well as citizens of neighboring countries.^{102, 103} The group’s current leader is believed to be Abu Musab al-Barnawi, a son of the group’s founder, who was killed by Nigerian troops in 2009.¹⁰⁴



Self-defense militias against Boko Haram in Gombi
Wikimedia / VOA



*Bomb attacks by Boko Haram on Christmas Day at churches killed over 27 people
Flickr / CJM 312*

Boko Haram's tactics range from suicide bombings in large cities to guerilla style tactics in towns and rural areas, to mass abductions of children and women. Harsh crackdowns by the Nigerian government starting in 2009 prompted numerous attacks against police and military targets, costing hundreds of lives. Civilians in northern Nigeria organized themselves into vigilante groups to protect against Boko Haram as well as against the government's brutal counterinsurgency campaigns.^{105, 106} While some religious leaders condemned Boko

Haram's actions, others criticized the use of excessive force by the police and the government's failure to resolve the social problems that motivated the violence. Boko Haram vowed to continue the attacks and to avenge the Muslims killed by security forces.^{107, 108}

By 2013, the Nigerian government declared Boko Haram and its affiliates terrorist organizations and joined forces with Niger and Chad to reclaim territory taken over by the group. In April 2014, Boko Haram kidnapped 276 teenage schoolgirls in Chibok, Borno state, sparking worldwide outrage. Other abductions of women and girls followed. In 2016 and 2017, over 100 of the kidnapped Chibok schoolgirls were released through negotiations between Boko Haram and the Nigerian government. It is estimated that the Boko Haram insurgency has cost the lives of 20,000 people and has displaced 2.6 million since 2009. UNICEF states that Boko Haram has kidnapped more than 1,000 children in northeastern Nigeria since 2013.^{109, 110}

Farmer-Herder Conflict

Communal violence is most prevalent in Nigeria's middle belt, where the Muslim north and Christian south meet. The violence has complex roots, and ethnic divisions are a contributing factor.^{111, 112, 113} The ravages of desertification, the shrinking of Lake Chad, and Nigeria's soaring population have also intensified the conflict, as more people are competing for increasingly scarce resources.^{114, 115} The region's Hausa-Fulani Muslims live alongside Yoruba and Igbo Christians, but northern Muslim cattle herders collide with southern Christian farmers over land use and the threat posed to crops by encroaching livestock.^{116, 117} As established residents and newer settlers battle over

jobs, resources, and political patronage, their religious affiliations often motivate violence against each other, either as a primary justification or as a substitute target for political or social discontent.^{118, 119, 120}



*Fulani herder, Gashaka
Flickr / Rosemary Lodge*

Ineffective and inadequate action at all levels of government to address the poverty and discrimination at the root of the conflict has led to criticism and a climate of impunity.^{121, 122, 123} In 2016, the conflict had an estimated death toll of 2,⁵⁰⁰. In the first 10 days of 2018, more than 120 people were killed in communal clashes. President Buhari, a cattle-owning northerner, has promised impartial justice for all involved, even amid accusations of favoritism.^{124, 125}

Issues Affecting Stability

Poverty



*Poverty and displacement of people
Flickr / Roberto Saltori*

Over 67% of Nigerians live below the poverty line.¹²⁶ This figure has worsened in recent decades despite the country's billions in oil revenues and its attainment of middle-income status.^{127, 128} Oil profits have not been invested in education, health care, and public works, which could increase productivity and generate economic development for the benefit of all Nigerians. Rather, the vast majority of energy profits have been pocketed by a privileged class who enjoys lavish lifestyles.¹²⁹

Poor conditions in rural areas and the economic marginalization of the agriculture sector force many residents to migrate to urban areas. Urban migrants usually find work in the informal economy and have a marginally better life, but some end up in

shantytowns or slums where inadequate sanitation creates problems.^{130, 131} Even with a committed government, the volatility of international oil prices makes it hard to provide the resources necessary for improving the lives of the impoverished majority.¹³²

Corruption

Corruption in Nigeria is pervasive in both government and society.¹³³ Transparency International's 2017 Corruption Perception Index ranked Nigeria 148th out of 180 nations.¹³⁴ An EU-funded survey found that corruption and crime were the major disincentives to doing business in Nigeria. Over one-third of firms indicated they were forced to pay bribes while dealing with the public sector—specifically to police and customs services.¹³⁵ Despite a strong legal anticorruption framework, bribery and gift-giving are the norm in business.¹³⁶



*A street banner regarding President Buhari's corruption
Flickr / Clara Sanchiz*

Continued corruption over many decades has impeded economic growth and stalled poverty reduction. This has particularly exacerbated the conflict in the Niger Delta.^{137, 138, 139}

Fighting corruption was a major theme of President Buhari's electoral campaign. Since Buhari took office in 2015, the government has claimed significant progress in anticorruption efforts, with nearly 500 convictions and billions of naira recovered. Yet the perception of corruption and biased public officials persists.^{140, 141} In April 2017, Nigeria's anticorruption agency recovered USD 43.4 million in various currencies from an empty apartment in Lagos. Accusations, denials, and claims of ownership from high-ranking officials followed, but no clear answer about the money's origin emerged.¹⁴²

Sharia Law in Northern Nigeria

Since 1999,¹² Nigerian states in the north have established Sharia law in their criminal codes.^{143, 144, 145} After independence in 1960, the new nation's leaders created a legal code that drew from British common law and Sharia, but they maintained separate jurisdictions for the two. Those convicted in secular courts were punished with prison

time. By contrast, family and civil matters (such as divorce) were handled by Sharia courts for Muslims. Public floggings are common for those who are found guilty under Sharia law, but harsher punishments, such as amputations, are rare.¹⁴⁶

Cyber Security

Nigeria is notorious for 419 fraud, such the “Nigerian Prince” scam emails, in which a West African “noble” requests thousands of USD in exchange for the promise of millions. Despite increased public awareness and international efforts to combat these scams, the Nigerians who perpetrate them, often as part of well-organized gangs, have only grown more savvy and successful. The targets of the email scams have expanded, from sending “phishing” emails to launching malware attacks on international companies. A well-executed attack can give the perpetrators significant access to a company’s finances. Between October 2013 and December 2016, there were over 40,000 business email scam incidents worldwide, resulting in USD 5.3 billion in losses.¹⁴⁷ In 2016, Interpol arrested the leader of a Nigeria-based fraudulent email network that had scammed USD 60 million from companies throughout the world.¹⁴⁸



*Nigerians using computers
Flickr / Michael Sean Gallagher*

Internally, Nigeria loses nearly USD 500 million to cybercrime annually. Major cyber threats in the country are email-perpetrated fraud, ransomware, assisted online kidnapping, cyber-bullying, and impersonation.¹⁴⁹ In 2015, Nigeria passed legislation that increased penalties for cybercrimes and made them easier to prosecute. The law has been criticized as ineffective against cybercrime, while at the same time being misused to silence journalists who use the internet to report unfavorable information about public officials.¹⁵⁰ In 2017, the Lagos State Police announced the creation of an anti-cybercrime unit.¹⁵¹

Looking Ahead



*Registering Nigerians who have been displaced by Boko Haram violence, Maiduguri
Flickr / USAID U.S. Agency for International Development*

Nigeria faces an array of risks to its future political stability and national security. The most prominent threat is perhaps the ongoing Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast. Despite some successful Nigerian and multinational military efforts against the terrorists, the insurgency remains resilient, recruiting new members and finding common cause with transnational Islamist groups.^{152, 153} The conflict between Muslim cattle herders and Christian farmers in the middle belt promises to only intensify as the

population grows and natural resources become scarcer, likely leading to thousands more deaths and deepening tribal and sectarian mistrust.¹⁵⁴ The open-ended campaign of sabotage against oil infrastructure in the Niger River Delta is a manifestation of Nigeria's endemic corruption and dispossession of local peoples in favor of a money-hoarding elite.¹⁵⁵ The renewed calls for secession in the southeast are a stark reminder of ever-present ethnic tensions and pose a warning that Nigeria's progress toward stability and the rule of law is fragile and reversible. In the long term, addressing the underlying social, economic, and institutional issues that create unrest, corruption, and poverty is the key for Nigeria to realize its potential as a leader among African states.¹⁵⁶

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Nigeria in Perspective

Chapter 5 | Security

Assessment

1. The IPOB is a militant group fighting to create an Islamic caliphate in central Nigeria.
2. Inadequate infrastructure and endless red tape are the two major deterrents for doing business in Nigeria.
3. Nigerian Prince is the code name given to the leader of MEND, the armed group responsible for attacks on oil fields and foreign oil workers.
4. In 2009, a Nigerian student attempted to bomb an airliner flying from Lagos to Detroit.
5. Millions of Nigerians who depend on the water of Lake Chad are losing their livelihood.

Assessment Answers: 1. False; 2. False; 3. False; 4. True; 5. True

Nigeria in Perspective

Further Readings and Resources

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Nigeria in Perspective

Final Assessment

1. Attacks by Boko Haram have disrupted fishing in Lake Chad.
2. Hausa is often used as a lingua franca in northern Nigeria.
3. Nigeria has the largest military in West Africa.
4. The British were the first Europeans to land on the coast of Nigeria.
5. Deforestation has decimated Nigeria's primary forests.
6. The crisis in Anglophone Cameroon is hurting relations between Nigeria and Cameroon.
7. Nigerian coal is used primarily for electricity generation.
8. The Ijaw are a small ethnic minority persecuted for their practice of animism.
9. The Niger Delta Avengers are Nigerian vigilantes who fight Boko Haram and their sympathizers.
10. Lagos is the capital of Nigeria.

11. Most of Nigeria's Muslims reside in the north of the country.
12. The Bakassi Peninsula is the ancient homeland of the Igbo who claim rights to the oil fields recently discovered there.
13. A Ghana-based multinational monetary organization regulates Nigeria's currency.
14. Home to Africa's largest natural gas reserves, Nigeria's economy is moving away from an oil-based economy to gas-based economy.
15. The slave trade dominated the economy of the southern coast of Nigeria during the 17th and 18th centuries.
16. The violence between ethnic groups in Nigeria's middle belt is the result of conflicts over land rather than religion or ethnic differences.
17. Many Muslim and Christian Nigerians follow traditions and teachings from indigenous religions.
18. The Jos Plateau is located in central Nigeria.
19. The Ife and Oyo kingdoms were the predecessors of the Yoruba.
20. Dambe is a two-headed drum played by Hausa-Fulani men during the harvest festival.

21. Most high-quality income opportunities in Nigeria are offered in the south.
22. The Niger River separates Nigeria from Chad.
23. Hisbah is a large base from which Boko Haram launches terror attacks and kidnappings.
24. Muhammadu Buhari, a former military leader and head of state, assumed the presidency in 2015 after a bloodless coup.
25. The Igbo are the largest ethnic group in central Nigeria.

Assessment Answers: 1. True; 2. True; 3. True; 4. False; 5. True; 6. True; 7. False; 8. False; 9. False; 10. False; 11. True; 12. False; 13. False; 14. False; 15. True; 16. True; 17. True; 18. True; 19. True; 20. False; 21. True; 22. False; 23. False; 24. False; 25. False