

**PUBLIC LECTURE HOLDING AT THE**  
**UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, IBADAN NIGERIA.**

**TOPIC: NIGERIA, FROM WHERE COMES OUR  
HELP?**

**DELIVERED BY: PROF. MIKE OZEKHOME**  
**(SAN), CON, OFR, FCI Arb, LL.M, Ph.D, LL.D., D.Litt, D.Sc,**  
**DA, DHL.**

**DATED: 27<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2025**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION: NIGERIA- FROM WHERE COMES OUR HELP? ....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>THE HISTORICAL BURDEN.....</b>	<b>6</b>
▪ <b>The Leadership Question.....</b>	<b>6</b>
▪ <b>The Socio-Economic Quagmire.....</b>	<b>7</b>
▪ <b>The Identity Crisis &amp; Insecurity.....</b>	<b>8</b>
▪ <b>Youth &amp; Diaspora: Seeds of Hope.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>THE STATE OF THE NIGERIAN UNION – PROBLEMS DEFINED.....</b>	<b>10</b>
▪ <b>Political Instability and Governance Deficits.....</b>	<b>11</b>
▪ <b>Insecurity and the Failure of the State’s Core Function.....</b>	<b>12</b>
▪ <b>Economic Hardship and Poverty.....</b>	<b>13</b>
▪ <b>Brain Drain and the Crisis of Youth Disillusionment.....</b>	<b>13</b>
▪ <b>Institutional Weakness and Corruption.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HEART RENDING BUDGET PADDING.....</b>	<b>15</b>
▪ <b>N390b for 1,477 Streetlights, N114m for 538 Boreholes, other Insertions in FG Budget.....</b>	<b>15</b>
▪ <b>Senate’s Shocking Revelation.....</b>	<b>16</b>
▪ <b>Ethno-Religious Division and the Fragile Union.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS AND THE SEARCH FOR INTERNAL RENEWAL.....</b>	<b>18</b>
▪ <b>Origin and Legitimacy of the 1999 Constitution.....</b>	<b>19</b>
▪ <b>Structural Centralization and the Federal Question.....</b>	<b>19</b>
▪ <b>Restructuring and Devolution of Powers.....</b>	<b>12</b>
▪ <b>Legal Pathways to Constitutional Amendment.....</b>	<b>23</b>
▪ <b>Civic Movements and the Demand for a New Constitution.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>FOREIGN AID, MULTILATERAL HELP, AND THE LIMITATIONS OF EXTERNAL SOLUTIONS.....</b>	<b>25</b>
▪ <b>History and Structure of Foreign Aid to Nigeria.....</b>	<b>25</b>
▪ <b>Focus Areas and Achievements of Foreign Aid.....</b>	<b>26</b>

▪ Security Assistance and Military Support.....	27
▪ Debt Burden and Conditionalities of Financial Assistance.....	27
▪ Aid Mismanagement and Lack of Transparency.....	28
▪ Limitations and the Case for Self-Reliance.....	29
<b>THE ROLE OF THE NIGERIAN DIASPORA</b>	
<b>AND CIVIC AWAKENING.....</b>	<b>29</b>
▪ Economic Contribution of the Diaspora.....	30
▪ Knowledge Transfer and Professional Excellence.....	31
▪ The Rise of Civic Movements and Youth Engagement.....	31
▪ The Diaspora as a Political Force.....	32
▪ Youth Mobilization and the Not Too Young To Run Act.....	33
▪ Challenges to Diaspora and Civic Engagement.....	34
<b>THE MORAL QUESTION: FAITH, ETHICS,</b>	
<b>AND NATIONAL REDEMPTION.....</b>	<b>35</b>
▪ A Religiously Devout Yet Ethically Troubled Society.....	35
▪ Religious Institutions and Public Influence.....	36
▪ The Ethical Collapse of Leadership.....	37
▪ Citizens, Complicity, and the Collective Conscience.....	38
▪ The Spiritual Dimension of National Redemption.....	39
<b>DANGERS OF A ONE-PARTY-SYSTEM.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>CORRUPTION INDEX AND STIFF PENALTIES</b>	
<b>IN ONE-PARTY STATE.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>CONCLUSION: WHERE THEN LIES OUR HELP? .....</b>	<b>44</b>

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION: NIGERIA- FROM WHERE COMES OUR HELP?

Nigeria, a country endowed with vast human and natural resources, holds a central position in the African geopolitical and economic landscape. With a population of over 220 million people<sup>1</sup> and significant crude oil reserves, it stands as the continent's most populous country and one of its richest in terms of natural endowment. Yet, in the face of such wealth and demographic strength, Nigeria continues to struggle with enduring challenges that undermine its national potential. These challenges include insecurity, political instability, widespread poverty, youth unemployment, institutional decay, and a general lack of trust in public leadership. In light of these contradictions, a growing number of Nigerians have begun to echo a timeless question: from where comes our help?

The question is derived from the first verse of Psalm 121 in the Christian Bible, which reads, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help?"<sup>2</sup> It is a question that is not merely spiritual but deeply existential, especially in the Nigerian context. It reflects the desperation of a people caught between national promise and persistent dysfunction. It articulates the psychological fatigue of citizens who, despite their resilience, continue to suffer under the weight of political mismanagement, corruption, violence, and socio-economic dislocation.

The Nigerian Constitution, which came into effect in 1999 at the beginning of the Fourth Republic which proclaims that: **"the security and welfare of the people shall be the**

---

<sup>1</sup>WorldMeter, 'Nigeria Population' <<https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/nigeria-population/>> Accessed on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>2</sup>Psalm 121:1 KJV.

**primary purpose of government.”<sup>3</sup>** Despite this declaration, the lived experiences of millions of Nigerians suggest otherwise. Armed conflict in the northeast, kidnappings across the middle belt and southern regions, rampant banditry in the northwest, and urban violence in major cities all point to a severe failure of the state’s primary function<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, public infrastructure remains poor, healthcare systems are overstretched, and the education sector continues to suffer from underfunding and industrial actions<sup>5</sup>. About sixty-three (63) percent or 133 Million Nigerians are classified as multidimensionally poor according to a 2022 report by the National Bureau of Statistics<sup>6</sup>. This national predicament has caused many citizens, particularly young people, to seek opportunities abroad. The mass migration phenomenon, popularly referred to as “Japa,”<sup>7</sup> has become symbolic of the growing loss of faith in the Nigerian system<sup>8</sup>. Professionals, including doctors, engineers, and academics, are leaving the country in large numbers, further weakening an already strained domestic workforce. Trust in electoral processes has also declined, with the 2023 general elections drawing criticism over logistical failures, voter suppression, and credibility questions<sup>9</sup>.

---

<sup>3</sup>Section 14(2)(b) 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (As amended).

<sup>4</sup>Nsirimovu, Okwuwada, ‘The modern day Consequences, Causes, and Nature of Kidnapping, Terrorism, Banditry, and violent crime in Nigeria: A comprehensive analysis’ (2023) <[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371691686\\_The\\_modern\\_day\\_Consequences\\_Causes\\_and\\_Nature\\_of\\_Kidnapping\\_Terrorism\\_Banditry\\_and\\_violent\\_crime\\_in\\_Nigeria\\_A\\_comprehensive\\_analysis](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371691686_The_modern_day_Consequences_Causes_and_Nature_of_Kidnapping_Terrorism_Banditry_and_violent_crime_in_Nigeria_A_comprehensive_analysis)> Accessed on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>5</sup>ibid

<sup>6</sup>National Bureau of Statistics (2022) <<https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/news/78>> Accessed on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>7</sup>ThisDay News, ‘Nigeria and Burden of Japa Syndrome’ (2023) <<https://www.thisdaylive.com/2023/05/02/nigeria-and-burden-of-japa-syndrome/>> Accessed on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>8</sup>ibid

<sup>9</sup>Dii, Christian, ‘Voters’ disposition and the outcome of 2023 general elections in Nigeria’ (2023)*International Journal of Development and Management Review*18 (1).

## 2.0 THE HISTORICAL BURDEN

Nigeria’s modern history is a tapestry of promise, pain, and unresolved contradictions. At independence, we inherited a nation bursting with potential—vast natural resources, a young and aspirational population, and a promising institutional framework. Instead, what followed was a pattern of squandered opportunities and structural erosion.

Enshrined in our national narrative is the repeated failure to translate constitutional gains into real development. Despite over six decades of self-rule, we remain “geometrically vast in population but arithmetically poor in growth and maturity”<sup>10</sup>. We are a country blessed with human and material wealth, yet we see systemic neglect that has left us living in poverty, craving justice, and struggling for basic dignity<sup>11</sup>.

The collapse of industrial capacity—from Ashaka Steel and UAC to defunct national carriers—presents a haunting symbol of our reversal<sup>12</sup>. We once ranked among the world’s fastest-growing economies, yet today we languish as the poverty capital of the world<sup>13</sup>. Security, once taken for granted in our communities, has become a luxury beyond reach<sup>14</sup>. These are not isolated anomalies; they are the symptoms of deep-seated historical neglect and institutional decay.

### 2.1 The Leadership Question

If historical roots reveal the weeds, leadership is the rot at the core. Professor Chinua Achebe famously described our national pathology as “a failure of leadership.” Today,

---

<sup>10</sup> Ozekhome, Mike, Nigeria @60: No social justice, religious and inter-ethnic tolerance (commentary, 2020), The Niche, The Vanguard Nigeria, <https://thenicheng.com> and <https://www.vanguardngr.com>. (accessed June 2025)

<sup>11</sup> Ozekhome, Mike, [Ibid. n.3]

<sup>12</sup> Mike Ozekhome, *Me Celebrate Nigeria at 60? Sorry, No!!! – HARD FACTS*, 2020. ([newswirelawandevents.com](http://newswirelawandevents.com)) (accessed June 2025)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid n.3

<sup>14</sup> Ozekhome, Mike, *Me Celebrate Nigeria at 60? Sorry, No!!! – HARD FACTS* (2020), Newswire Law & Events, <https://newswirelawandevents.com>. (accessed June 2025)

this remains painfully true<sup>15</sup>. Leadership in Nigeria has too often been about power without purpose, about patronage instead of public service—about self-enrichment rather than national enrichment.

We have seen leaders who see themselves not as servants of the people, but as lords over them. They are shielded from accountability by institutional fragility, surrounded by sycophants, and driven by self-interest—all while democratic forms mask oppressive realities<sup>16</sup>.

Our leaders have weaponized ethnicity and religion to divide us, perpetuate fear, and justify incompetence. Where there should be bridges, they construct walls. Where there should be unity, they sow discord<sup>17</sup>. Boko Haram's emergence is not simply about ideology—it is also a bitter outcry against exclusion and injustice perpetrated by the centre<sup>18</sup>.

Yet all is not lost. Countries like South Korea, Singapore, and Rwanda—once in situations far worse than ours—found their way through transformative leadership committed to national unity and long-term planning<sup>19</sup>. These nations remind us: leadership matters. It can be the fulcrum on which fortunes change, or the pivot by which potentials perish.

## **2.2 The Socio-Economic Quagmire**

Nigeria's socio-economic landscape is stuck in a vicious cycle of poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment. Our nation, blessed with abundant natural and human resources, finds

---

<sup>15</sup> Ozekhome, Mike, *Is This the Nigeria of Our Dream?* (lecture, 2015), Mike Ozekhome Chambers, <https://mikeozekhomeschambers.com>. (accessed June 2025)

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> Ozekhome, Mike, *Me Celebrate Nigeria at 60? Sorry, No!!!* (2020), Newswire Law & Events, <https://newswirelawandevents.com>. (accessed June 2025)

<sup>18</sup> Ozekhome, Mike (quoting James Madison on Boko Haram), *A New Nigeria of Our Dream* (2015), The Eagle Online, <https://theeagleonline.com.ng>. (accessed June 2025)

<sup>19</sup> Ibid n.2

itself paradoxically impoverished—a phenomenon that Ozekhome aptly referred to as “economic insecurity,” where even formal recession looms amid plenty<sup>20</sup>.

Consider the widening chasm between rich and poor. Oil revenues—our supposed lifeline—fuel government coffers but barely trickle to rural communities, where most Nigerians toil<sup>21</sup>. The result is an economy that offers few jobs, delivering neither dignity nor hope. Amid this landscape, disillusionment festers: “poor compensation or remuneration breeds inequality and affects productivity,” and, ultimately, fosters instability<sup>22</sup>.

Infrastructure, a critical foundation of development, often exists more as blueprint than reality—pipelines rusting unused, railways decaying, power grids failing to deliver. Industrial capacity has collapsed, smothered by theft, neglect, and foreign neglect. The country that could build steel now depends on soup-imported cans—and cooks with candles dusk till dawn.

Such socio-economic dislocation does more than impoverish—it erodes civic trust, deepens regional inequality, and fuels insurgencies. When work is scarce, and wages low, people withdraw from the system; some even take up arms. This quagmire, thus, is not merely about money—it is about hope, dignity, and the breach of the social contract.

### **2.3 The Identity Crisis & Insecurity**

The insecurities of Nigeria are not solely a breakdown of public order; they are symptoms of a fractured national identity. Ozekhome has observed this as the “national question,”

---

<sup>20</sup>Ozekhome, Mike, “Economic Insecurity” (commentary, 2025), Mike Ozekhome Chambers Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/ozekhomemikeSAN/> (accessed June 2025).

<sup>21</sup> Wikipedia, Poverty in Nigeria, 2025, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty\\_in\\_Nigeria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty_in_Nigeria) (accessed June 2025).

<sup>22</sup>Ozekhome, Mike, Minimum Wage, Maximum Rage (2024), BarristerNG, <https://barristerng.com/minimum-wage-maximum-rage-by-professor-mike-ozekhome-san-con-ofr/> (accessed June 2025).

rooted in exclusion and aggravated by systemic non-inclusiveness—where minorities feel neither seen, heard, nor represented, and unity becomes a fragile facade<sup>23</sup>.

Violent extremism, whether Boko Haram in the northeast or Biafra agitation in the southeast, is often less about ideology, more about grievance. The latter can be traced to hunger, unemployment, arbitrary governance, and perceived marginalisation in citizenship and opportunities<sup>24</sup>.

Similarly, farmer-herder clashes, kidnappings, and communal violence act as distress calls from a society convulsed by contest for survival and dignity. These conflicts, often labeled as ethnic or religious, are more accurately a byproduct of structural failure—an economy and polity unable to ensure order, equity, or access.

We witness, then, an erosion of the sense of "Nigerian" as anything more than a temporary label. Instead, we retreat into sub-national identities—ethnic, regional, sectarian—because the larger nation has failed to guarantee basic rights and security.

## 2.4 Youth & Diaspora: Seeds of Hope

Amidst the prevailing gloom, Nigeria's youth and its diaspora emerge not just as observers, but as **active catalysts for transformative change**. As I pointed out in a discourse on democracy and governance, **our youth are the architects of national renewal**—the energy, innovation, and creativity they bring forward is Nigeria's greatest untapped asset<sup>25</sup>.

The diaspora, too, plays a critical complementary role. Often maligned as detached, they are in fact **bridges across continents**, channeling ideas, remittances, and global advocacy

---

<sup>23</sup>Ozekhome, Mike & Sani, Shehu, "Ozekhome, Sani Others Seek Constitution Review to Address Nationality Problem" (2023), The Guardian Nigeria, <https://guardian.ng/news/ozekhome-sani-others-seek-constitution-review-to-address-nationality-problem/> (accessed June 2025).

<sup>24</sup> Vanguard, "Ozekhome on IPoB and National Inclusivity" (2022), <https://www.vanguardngr.com> (accessed June 2025).

<sup>25</sup> Ozekhome, Mike, Has Democracy Led to Good Governance for Nigerians? (Part 1) (2025), Mike Ozekhome Chambers, <https://mikeozekhomeschambers.com/nigerias-political-leadership-since-1960-and-rhythms-of-corruption-part-8/> (accessed June 2025).

for reform. In recent contributions, I highlighted how diaspora legal professionals, working in concert with civil society, can offer invaluable support to our institutions—whether advocating for judicial independence or providing technical training to Nigerian lawyers and judges<sup>26</sup>.

Consider these real-world interventions:

- Diaspora groups funding leadership training and gender quotas, inspired by models like Canada’s Equal Voice program—boosting inclusivity and representation<sup>27</sup>.
- Financial and technical support flowing to local initiatives such as BudgIT and Enough is Enough—vital for fostering budget transparency and youth engagement in political processes<sup>28</sup>.
- Remittances—nearly \$20 billion sent home in 2023 alone—acting as economic lifelines for millions of families, directly sustaining education, healthcare, and small enterprises. These accomplishments are neither anecdotal nor peripheral; they are **deep wells of possibility**. They show that while the state may falter, individual Nigerians—especially the young and those abroad—continue to build, innovate, advocate, and reconnect Nigeria to global opportunities.

If "help" is to come from anywhere, **it must come in part from the hands, hearts, and minds of these citizens**—those within and beyond our borders who refuse to surrender to despair. They are our seeds of hope.

### 3.0 THE STATE OF THE NIGERIAN UNION – PROBLEMS DEFINED

---

<sup>26</sup>Sight News, “The Role of Nigerian Diaspora Groups in Enhancing Electoral Processes, Governance and Democracy,” by Ozekhome (May 2025), <https://thesightnews.com/2025/05/01/the-role-of-nigerian-diaspora-groups-in-enhancing-electoral-processes-governance-and-democracy-by-prof-mike-ozekhome-san/> (accessed June 2025).

<sup>27</sup> Sight News, [Ibid.] (ref. 19).

<sup>28</sup> Sight News, [Ibid.] (ref. 19).

The Nigerian state, more than six decades after independence, continues to grapple with deep-seated challenges that threaten its stability, unity, and development. These challenges are not merely administrative or policy-based but structural, existential, and systemic in nature. They stem from a long history of colonial legacy, military authoritarianism, flawed constitutional arrangements, and a political culture rooted in patronage rather than public service. To understand the urgency behind the question “from where comes our help?”, it is essential to first define the critical problems confronting Nigeria today.

### **3.1 Political Instability and Governance Deficits**

Since the return to civilian rule in 1999, Nigeria has operated under a democratic framework<sup>29</sup>. However, its democracy remains fragile, characterized by weak institutions, electoral fraud, lack of accountability, and systemic corruption<sup>30</sup>. While general elections are held every four years, they are frequently marred by irregularities including voter intimidation, ballot snatching, vote-buying, and violence. The 2023 general elections, for instance, witnessed numerous allegations of manipulation and disenfranchisement, with international and domestic observers raising concerns about the integrity of the process<sup>31</sup>.

Public trust in democratic institutions such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the judiciary, and the legislature has eroded significantly<sup>32</sup>. Many

---

<sup>29</sup>John Campbell and Jack McCaslin, ‘Abacha, Abiola, and Nigeria’s 1999 Transition to Civilian Rule’ Council on foreign relation <<https://www.cfr.org/blog/abacha-abiola-and-nigerias-1999-transition-civilian-rule>> Accessed on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>30</sup>ibid

<sup>31</sup>ibid

<sup>32</sup>OLAJIDE Olufunsho Ayobolu et al, ‘DEMOCRATIC RULE, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND DIVIDENDS OF DEMOCRACY: AN IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATIONS IN NIGERIA SINCE 1999’ *African journal of social science* (2025) 8 (1).

citizens perceive these institutions as politicized or ineffective<sup>33</sup>. The Nigerian judiciary, which should serve as the last hope of the common man, has often been accused of partisanship and selective justice. Highprofile cases involving political actors are frequently delayed or dismissed, further weakening the credibility of the rule of law.

### **3.2 Insecurity and the Failure of the State's Core Function**

Security is a fundamental responsibility of any government. The 1999 Constitution of Federal republic of Nigeria (As amended), in **Section 14(2)(b)**, clearly provides that **“the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government.”** Yet, Nigeria continues to experience an alarming deterioration in internal security. The Boko Haram insurgency, which began in the northeast in July of 2009, has led to the deaths of over 35,000 people and displaced more than 2 million, according to data from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs<sup>34</sup>.

Beyond Boko Haram, newer threats have emerged. Banditry in the northwest has become endemic, with armed groups operating semi-autonomously, kidnapping for ransom, and attacking rural communities<sup>35</sup>. In the middle belt and southern regions, farmer-herder conflicts have escalated, fuelled by environmental degradation, ethno-religious tensions, and weak land-use policies<sup>36</sup>. Kidnappings, especially along major highways, have also increased, affecting both the elite and ordinary citizens. These developments point to the

---

<sup>33</sup>ibid

<sup>34</sup>Global centre for the responsibility to project, 'Nigeria' (2025) <<https://www.globalr2p.org/countries/nigeria/>> Accessed on the 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2025.

<sup>35</sup>Tosin Osasona, 'The question of definition: Armed banditry in Nigeria's North-West in the context of international humanitarian law' (2023) <<https://international-review.icrc.org/articles/the-question-of-definition-armed-banditry-in-nigeria-923>> Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>36</sup>ibid

existence of ungoverned spaces and a failing security architecture incapable of protecting lives and property.

### **3.3 Economic Hardship and Poverty**

Despite being Africa's largest economy by GDP, Nigeria remains one of the poorest nations in terms of human development<sup>37</sup>. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2022), over 133 million Nigerians are classified as multidimensionally poor<sup>38</sup>. This includes deficiencies in health, education, access to clean water, housing, and employment. The unemployment rate, particularly among youth aged 15 to 34, is dangerously high, exacerbating social unrest and encouraging illegal migration<sup>39</sup>.

Inflation and currency devaluation have eroded purchasing power. The naira continues to depreciate against major global currencies, making imports expensive and weakening the overall economic outlook. Despite government policies such as the Social Investment Program (SIP) and interventions by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), poverty remains widespread<sup>40</sup>. The Nigerian economy suffers from over-dependence on crude oil, which

---

<sup>37</sup>Oxfam, 'Nigeria: extreme inequality in numbers' <<https://www.oxfam.org/en/nigeria-extreme-inequality-numbers>> Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>38</sup>ibid

<sup>39</sup>Mary T. Olaitan et al, 'Factors that encourage increase in international migration among younger persons in Enugu State, Nigeria' (2025) *Journal of Social Work in Developing Societies* 7(1).

<sup>40</sup>Roseline Onah et al., 'National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) and Sustainable Poverty Reduction in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects' (2020).

contributes over 80 percent of export earnings but employs less than 10 percent of the labour force<sup>41</sup>.

### **3.4 Brain Drain and the Crisis of Youth Disillusionment**

One of the most telling signs of national distress is the increasing number of Nigerians seeking to emigrate. The so-called “Japa” syndrome<sup>42</sup>. A Yoruba slang meaning “to run away” has become a national metaphor for escape from hardship. Between 2020 and 2023, tens of thousands of Nigerian professionals, including doctors, nurses, academics, and IT specialists, have left the country for better opportunities abroad<sup>43</sup>. According to data from the United Kingdom’s Home Office, Nigeria ranks among the top sources of skilled migrants to the UK, Canada, and the United States<sup>44</sup>.

This mass exodus reflects a lack of confidence in the Nigerian system. Many of those who leave are not only fleeing poverty but also seeking freedom from insecurity, institutional inefficiency, and a corrupt environment where merit is often subordinated to connections<sup>45</sup>. The loss of these skilled individuals undermines national development and represents a silent but significant national crisis.

### **3.5 Institutional Weakness and Corruption**

Nigeria's anti-corruption fight has produced few tangible results, despite several high-profile investigations and arrests. Institutions like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) have

---

<sup>41</sup>ibid

<sup>42</sup>ibid

<sup>43</sup>Voafrica, ‘Nigeria Copes With Growing Shortage of Doctors, Nurses’ (2024) <<https://www.voafrica.com/a/nigeria-copes-with-growing-shortage-of-doctors-nurses-/7562463.html>> Accessed on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>44</sup>Gift habib, ‘52,000 Nigerians relocated to the UK in 2024 – Report’ Punch News <<https://punchng.com/52000-nigerians-relocated-to-the-uk-in-2024-report/>> Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2025.

<sup>45</sup>ibid

had some successes, but their efforts are often hindered by political interference, judicial bottlenecks, and weak enforcement mechanisms<sup>46</sup>. Transparency International ranked Nigeria 140th out of 180 countries in its 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index<sup>47</sup>, reflecting the public's disillusionment with government efforts.

## **HEART RENDING BUDGET PADDING**

### **N390B FOR 1,477 STREETLIGHTS, N114M FOR 538 BOREHOLES, OTHER INSERTIONS IN FG BUDGET**

BUDGIT, a Civil-Tech Organisation, that works in the USA, Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra-Leon on financial reports flagged off mind-bugling allocations as examples of financial mismanagement in this government, raising concerns about transparency and accountability in the 2025 federal budget and its alignment with the needs of the citizens.

### **Overall Budget Insertions**

According to BUDGIT, the National Assembly inserted 11,122 projects worth N6.93 trillion into the 2025 Federal Government (FG) budget. This figure represents 12.5% of the total budget of N54.99 trillion approved for the year 2025. These findings were made by BUDGIT, a Civil Society Organization (CSO).

### **Specific Project Insertions And Costs (By Category):**

#### **Street Lights:**

Accounted for the largest share of insertions.

---

<sup>46</sup>Izuchukwu Adamaagashi et al., 'Corruption and Governance: Examining the Impact on Political Stability in Nigeria' (2024) *International journal of social science and management research* 10 (2).

<sup>47</sup>Trading Economics, 'Nigeria corruption rank' <<https://tradingeconomics.com/nigeria/corruption-rank#:~:text=Nigeria%20is%20the%20140%20least,source:%20Transparency%20International&text=The%20Corruption%20Perceptions%20Index%20ranks,and%20territories%20in%20the%20index.>> Accessed on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June, 2025.

Total allocation: N393.29 billion  
Estimated cost per Street Light: N266 million

**Boreholes:**

Number of projects: 538 boreholes  
Total cost: N114.53 billion  
Average cost per Borehole: N212.88 million

**ICT Projects:**

Number of projects: 1,122 ICT projects  
Total allocation: N505.79 billion  
Average cost per project: N449.9 million

**Community Town Halls:**

Amount earmarked: N17.23 billion  
Number of estimated projects: 53 Community Town Halls  
Estimated cost per Town Hall: N325.09 million

**Health Projects:**

Amount earmarked: N420.09 billion  
Number of projects: 319 Health Projects  
Approximately N1.04 billion per project

**Security:**

Number of Vehicles:  
24 Security Vehicles procurement: N117 billion  
Average cost per Vehicle: N487.5 million

**SENATE'S SHOCKING REVELATION**

The Nigerian Senate spines and chilling uncovered of financial irregularities in NNPCCL audited account from 2017 to 2023. The Senate uncovered ₦210 trillion in financial irregularities, ₦103 trillion in so-called “accrued expenses”, and another ₦107 trillion in unaccounted “receivables.” No documentation. No accountability. No consequences, Peter Obi lamented in a post on X last week.

He said: “This is not just another scandal, it is a clear and damning confirmation of a nation held hostage by monumental corruption. Describing Nigeria as a “crime scene”, Obi gave startling analysis as follows:

“Our national budget within the said period of 2017 to 2023 is as follows:

2017 ₦7.440 trillion.

2018 ₦9.120 trillion

2019 ₦8.916 trillion

2020 ₦10.590 was initially approved and in June revised to ₦9.974 trillion due to COVID.

2021 ₦13.588 trillion.

2022 ₦17.130 trillion

2023 ₦21.830 trillion

Total: ₦88.010 trillion”

According to him, “Our total national budget within the said period was not up to 50% of the said financial discrepancies and irregularities.”

No doubt, the above revelation amounts to institutionalization of criminality and betrayal against the Nigerian people. I dare say no same nation can ever develop along this line. The effigy of such bare-faced stealing and ground larceny must be hurriedly dismissed.

“No responsible nation can continue to function like this without confronting this truth. This criminality masquerading as governance must be stopped and dismantled for a better Nigeria,” he said adding that “A new Nigeria is possible.”

Corruption undermines service delivery, weakens institutions, and contributes to citizen apathy. Funds meant for education, health, infrastructure, and social welfare are frequently misappropriated. Reports of embezzlement at state and local government levels are common, and procurement fraud remains a major problem.

### **3.6 Ethno-Religious Division and the Fragile Union**

Nigeria's diversity is one of its strengths, but poor management of ethnic and religious plurality has resulted in deep divisions. Ethno-regional grievances continue to shape national politics. Many groups feel marginalized in the distribution of resources, political representation, and access to federal appointments. These perceptions fuel agitations such as those of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the Southeast and various regional calls for restructuring or even secession.

Religious conflict, particularly between Muslims and Christians in parts of the North-Central region, has also contributed to instability. While Nigeria is constitutionally secular, political leaders often manipulate religion for electoral advantage, further polarizing the populace.

## **4.0 CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS AND THE SEARCH FOR INTERNAL RENEWAL**

Nigeria's persistent governance challenges cannot be fully understood without examining the constitutional framework that underpins the political and administrative operations of the state. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which currently governs the country, has long been the subject of intense debate. Critics argue that it is fundamentally flawed, both in origin and substance, and that it perpetuates a system of governance that undermines national unity, accountability, and development. As Nigeria grapples with escalating crises, many believe that genuine national help must begin with a deep, internal transformation of its constitutional and federal structures.

#### **4.1 Origin and Legitimacy of the 1999 Constitution**

The 1999 Constitution was promulgated by the military regime of General Abdulsalami Abubakar following years of military rule<sup>48</sup>. It was based on the recommendations of a hand-picked constitutional drafting committee and did not emerge from a truly participatory or democratic process<sup>49</sup>. Despite its preamble which begins with the phrase “We the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria...”, there was no referendum or mass consultation to legitimize the document.

Legal scholars such as Femi Falana (SAN) and Olisa Agbakoba (SAN) have repeatedly argued that the 1999 Constitution is a military decree masquerading as a democratic charter<sup>50</sup>. They point to the fact that it was enacted through Decree No. 24 of 1999, without

---

<sup>48</sup>Reuben Kenrick Udo et al., ‘Military regimes, 1983-99’ Britannica (2025)  
<<https://www.britannica.com/place/Nigeria/Military-regimes-1983-99>> Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2025.

<sup>49</sup>ibid

<sup>50</sup>Emmanuel Oluwatosin Adewusi et al., ‘The impact of United Nations' human rights mechanisms on Nigerian Civil Society’ (2017).

the input or consent of the Nigerian people<sup>51</sup>. As a result, the constitution is often criticized as being imposed, unrepresentative, and unsuitable for a diverse and complex federation such as Nigeria.

## **4.2 Structural Centralization and the Federal Question**

One of the most pressing constitutional issues in Nigeria is the over-centralization of power at the federal level. Despite Nigeria being nominally a federation, the 1999 Constitution grants disproportionate authority to the central government. This is evident in the composition of the Exclusive Legislative List, which includes critical sectors such as policing, mineral resources, electricity, railways, ports, and taxation<sup>52</sup>. States have limited control over these areas, and their dependence on federal allocations undermines true fiscal federalism<sup>53</sup>.

For instance, the Nigerian Police Force, as provided for in Section 214 of the Constitution<sup>54</sup>, is centrally controlled, limiting the capacity of states to manage security within their jurisdictions. Calls for the establishment of state police have grown louder in response to rising insecurity. Several state governors and civil society organizations have consistently called for a decentralized policing system that would empower local authorities to respond swiftly and effectively to community-specific security threats. In direct response to these calls, HB 617, titled “A Bill for an Act to Alter the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 to Provide for Establishment of State Police and

---

<sup>51</sup>ibid

<sup>52</sup> Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999. Schedule 2, paragraph 1.

<sup>53</sup>Tarila Ayibaebi Ekeuwei & Idongesit Michael Akpan, ‘Fiscal Federalism and Resource Control in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects’ *AKSU Journal of Administration and Corporate Governance* 2 (1).

<sup>54</sup>1999 Constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria (As amended).

for Related Matters,”<sup>55</sup> seeks to amend the constitution by transferring "Police" from the Exclusive to the Concurrent Legislative List, thereby granting states the constitutional authority to establish their own police forces. Key provisions of the bill include the creation of autonomous State Police Service Commissions, federal grants to support state policing, a coordination framework to ensure accountability and operational standards, and safeguards limiting federal intervention to strictly defined emergencies<sup>56</sup>. This legislative shift aims to decentralize law enforcement, improve accountability, and enhance the responsiveness of security forces to local crises. Since its introduction by Deputy Speaker Rt. Hon. Benjamin Kalu CFR and co-sponsors, and during its second reading led by Rep. Tolani Shagaya, HB 617 has been positioned not merely as a legal reform but as a crucial intervention to bolster Nigeria’s fragile security architecture. This perspective was echoed during a recent Legislative Dialogue themed “Nigeria’s Peace and Security: The Constitutional Imperatives,” which emphasized the urgency of community-based policing and federal-state coordination. The critical need for this reform was tragically underscored by the June 14, 2025 massacre in the Yelweta community of Benue State, where over 200 people lost their lives due to the federal police’s inability to deploy rapidly or leverage local intelligence<sup>57</sup>. By empowering local governments to build community-trusted security structures, deploy personnel trained in local intelligence gathering, and respond to threats without waiting for federal directives, HB 617 presents

---

<sup>55</sup>Bond Udeagha, ‘The Urgency of HB 617: A Case for State Policing in Nigeria’ National assembly library trust fund <<https://naltf.gov.ng/the-urgency-of-hb-617-a-case-for-state-policing-in-nigeria/>> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>56</sup>ibid

<sup>57</sup>ibid

a timely and pragmatic solution<sup>58</sup>. Far from being a political formality, it represents an essential national security intervention, one that could restore public confidence, save lives, and align Nigeria's policing system with federalist best practices from around the world.

Additionally, resource control has been a contentious issue, particularly in the Niger Delta region. The derivation principle, which governs how revenues from natural resources are shared, has been criticized as unfair<sup>59</sup>. States that produce oil and gas receive only thirteen percent of revenues, while the federal government retains the majority share. This imbalance has fuelled<sup>60</sup> militancy and agitation for greater control over resources.

### **4.3 Restructuring and Devolution of Powers**

The concept of restructuring has emerged as a central theme in the discourse on constitutional reform. Restructuring refers to a comprehensive reconfiguration of Nigeria's political, economic, and administrative systems to promote fairness, inclusivity, and efficiency. Proponents argue that the current arrangement fosters dependency, weakens local governance, and breeds ethnic tension.

Several national figures and organizations have championed restructuring, including Afenifere (a Yoruba socio-political group), Ohanaeze Ndigbo, the Middle Belt Forum, and the Pan-Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF)<sup>61</sup>. These groups have called for a return to the

---

<sup>58</sup>ibid

<sup>59</sup>Sabastine Nwankwo et al., 'The Politics of Resource Control Agitation and Its Effects on the Socio-Economic Development of the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria' (2021) *International journal of development and public policy* 1(5).

<sup>60</sup>ibid

<sup>61</sup> Ademola Adegbite, 'Afenifere promises collaboration with Ohanaeze for Nigeria's progress' Punch News (2025) <<https://punchng.com/afenifere-promises-collaboration-with-ohanaeze-for-nigerias-progress/>> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

principles of the 1963 Republican Constitution, which granted significant autonomy to regions and encouraged competition and development<sup>62</sup>.

In 2014, President Goodluck Jonathan convened a National Conference composed of over 490 delegates representing various sectors of Nigerian society<sup>63</sup>. The conference produced more than 600 recommendations covering governance, resource control, security, electoral reform, and judicial independence<sup>64</sup>. However, the report was shelved by the succeeding administration and has yet to be implemented.

#### **4.4 Legal Pathways to Constitutional Amendment**

The process of amending the Nigerian Constitution is complex and deliberately stringent. Section 9 of the 1999 Constitution of federal republic of Nigeria (As amended) outlines the amendment procedure, which requires approval by two-thirds of both chambers of the National Assembly and ratification by at least two-thirds of the 36 State Houses of Assembly<sup>65</sup>. This high threshold makes it difficult to enact significant reforms, especially those that threaten the political interests of entrenched elites.

---

<sup>62</sup>ibid

<sup>63</sup>Wikipedia, '2014 National Conference, Nigeria' <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2014\\_National\\_Conference,\\_Nigeria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2014_National_Conference,_Nigeria)> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>64</sup>ibid

<sup>65</sup>Section 9 (1) - (4) of the 1999 constitution: (1) The National Assembly may, subject to the provision of this section, alter any of the provisions of this Constitution.

(2) An Act of the National Assembly for the alteration of this Constitution, not being an Act to which section 8 of this Constitution applies, shall not be passed in either House of the National Assembly unless the proposal is supported by the votes of not less than two-thirds majority of all the members of that House and approved by resolution of the Houses of Assembly of not less than two-thirds of all the States.

(3) An Act of the National Assembly for the purpose of altering the provisions of this section, section 8 or Chapter IV of this Constitution shall not be passed by either House of the National Assembly unless the proposal is approved by the votes of not less than four-fifths majority of all the members of each House, and also approved by resolution of the House of Assembly of not less than two-third of all States.

Despite numerous attempts, most constitutional amendment efforts have achieved only limited success. Amendments such as the Not Too Young To Run Act in 2018, which reduced the age requirements for elective offices, were significant symbolic victories but did not alter the fundamental power dynamics within the federation<sup>66</sup>.

The National Assembly has repeatedly rejected bills proposing state police, fiscal autonomy for local governments, and judicial independence<sup>67</sup>. These rejections reflect the reluctance of the political class to cede control or embrace transformative change.

#### **4.5 Civic Movements and the Demand for a New Constitution**

In response to institutional inertia, civil society organizations, religious leaders, and youth movements have intensified calls for a new people-driven constitution. Groups such as the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), Enough is Enough Nigeria (EiE), and Yiaga Africa have played key roles in civic education, public advocacy, and legislative engagement<sup>68</sup>.

These groups argue that meaningful national renewal must be rooted in a constitutional document that reflects the collective will of the Nigerian people. They emphasize

---

(4) For the purposes of section 8 of this Constitution and of subsections (2) and (3) of this section, the number of members of each House of the National Assembly shall, notwithstanding any vacancy, be deemed to be the number of members specified in sections 48 and 49 of this Constitution.

<sup>66</sup>Wikipedia, 'Not too young to run' <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Not\\_Too\\_Young\\_To\\_Run](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Not_Too_Young_To_Run)> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>67</sup>Abdulateef salau, 'Constitution Review: State Assemblies Reject Financial Autonomy For LG' Daily trust <<https://dailytrust.com/constitution-review-state-assemblies-reject-financial-autonomy-for-lg/>> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>68</sup>Serap, 'SOCIO-ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT (SERAP)' <<https://uncaccoalition.org/socio-economic-rights-and-accountability-project-serap/>> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

participatory processes, inclusivity, gender equality, and regional balance as essential components of any new legal framework.

Moreover, the experiences of countries like South Africa, Kenya, and Chile demonstrate that constitution-making can be a unifying national exercise, capable of healing divisions and setting a clear vision for the future<sup>69</sup>. In South Africa, for example, the post-apartheid constitution was the product of widespread consultation and negotiation, culminating in one of the most progressive legal instruments in the world<sup>70</sup>.

## **5.0 FOREIGN AID, MULTILATERAL HELP, AND THE LIMITATIONS OF EXTERNAL SOLUTIONS**

The international community has played an active role in Nigeria's development and crisis management for decades. From financial assistance and security support to technical aid and humanitarian interventions, foreign aid and multilateral institutions have invested heavily in Nigeria's progress. However, despite billions of dollars in development funding and international support, Nigeria continues to face deeply entrenched challenges in governance, security, and economic growth.

### **5.1 History and Structure of Foreign Aid to Nigeria**

Nigeria began receiving significant foreign aid shortly after independence in 1960. Aid flows increased following the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970), with Western countries, multilateral organizations, and philanthropic foundations supporting post-war

---

<sup>69</sup>Cheryl Saunders, 'Constitution Making in the 21st Century' *International law review* 4.

<sup>70</sup>Wikipedia, 'Negotiations to end apartheid in South Africa'  
<[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiations\\_to\\_end\\_apartheid\\_in\\_South\\_Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiations_to_end_apartheid_in_South_Africa)> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

reconstruction and development<sup>71</sup>. In more recent decades, foreign assistance has expanded to cover a range of areas including health, education, economic reforms, climate change, agriculture, and humanitarian relief, particularly in conflict zones<sup>72</sup>.

Today, key foreign partners include the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and bilateral donors such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, and China. Aid is disbursed in various forms including grants, concessional loans, technical assistance, and humanitarian relief.

## **5.2 Focus Areas and Achievements of Foreign Aid**

Foreign aid to Nigeria has recorded some achievements, particularly in the health and education sectors. For example, USAID has supported malaria prevention, HIV/AIDS treatment, and maternal health through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)<sup>73</sup>. The Global Fund and GAVI have significantly improved Nigeria's immunization coverage and reduced the prevalence of infectious diseases<sup>74</sup>.

Similarly, the World Bank's various Country Partnership Frameworks have targeted structural reforms, social investment, and youth empowerment. The National Social

---

<sup>71</sup>Michael Aaronson, 'The Nigerian Civil War and 'Humanitarian Intervention' in book: *The History and Practice of Humanitarian Intervention and Aid in Africa* (pp.176-196).

<sup>72</sup>U.S congress, 'Foreign Assistance: An Introduction to U.S. Programs and Policy' <<https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R40213>> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>73</sup>U.S mission to Nigeria, 'PEPFAR' <<https://ng.usembassy.gov/pepfar/>> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>74</sup>ibid

Safety Nets Project (NASSP), funded by the World Bank, provides conditional cash transfers to poor households across Nigeria.

Humanitarian assistance from the UN and other global partners has also played a critical role in the conflict-ridden northeast. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), over eight million people in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states require urgent humanitarian aid as of 2023<sup>75</sup>. Aid agencies have delivered food, healthcare, shelter, and psychosocial support to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and communities affected by Boko Haram insurgency.

### **5.3 Security Assistance and Military Support**

Nigeria has also received military aid and counter-terrorism support from foreign governments. In 2017, the United States approved the sale of twelve A-29 Super Tucano light attack aircraft to Nigeria, which were later delivered in 2021 to aid in the fight against insurgents<sup>76</sup>. Intelligence sharing, joint training, and military logistics have also featured in Nigeria's partnerships with the United States, the United Kingdom, and France.

However, the effectiveness of these interventions remains limited. Despite years of international support, Nigeria continues to face persistent insecurity. This has led many analysts to question whether foreign security assistance addresses the root causes of

---

<sup>75</sup>OCHA, 'Nigeria: Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe (BAY) states - Situation Report, 18 June 2025' <<https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/nigeria/nigeria-borno-adamawa-and-yobe-bay-states-situation-report-18-june-2025>> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>76</sup> Valerie Insinna, 'US approves A-29 Super Tucano sale to Nigeria' Defense News <<https://www.defensenews.com/air/2017/08/03/us-approves-a-29-super-tucano-sale-to-nigeria/>> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

violence, which include poverty, youth marginalization, weak local governance, and impunity. Critics argue that military solutions alone cannot resolve what are fundamentally political and socio-economic crises.

#### **5.4 Debt Burden and Conditionalities of Financial Assistance**

While foreign aid includes grants and humanitarian aid, much of Nigeria's external support comes in the form of loans. Nigeria's public debt reached ₦97.3 trillion (about \$108 billion) as of December 2023, according to the Debt Management Office (DMO)<sup>77</sup>. A significant portion of this debt is owed to multilateral institutions and bilateral creditors including China<sup>78</sup>.

Debt servicing now consumes a large share of national revenue. In 2022, Nigeria spent over 70 percent of its revenue on debt servicing, leaving little room for investment in social infrastructure<sup>79</sup>. The IMF and World Bank have issued repeated warnings about Nigeria's fiscal vulnerability and called for reforms in taxation, subsidy removal, and governance.

Many financial assistance packages come with conditions that require recipient countries to implement structural adjustment programs. In the 1980s and 1990s, Nigeria adopted a series of IMF-backed economic reforms under the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), which liberalized the economy but also led to mass unemployment, inflation, and

---

<sup>77</sup>Donatus Anichukwueze, 'New Domestic Borrowing Pushes Nigeria's Debt To ₦97.34tn In Q4 2023 – DMO' (2024) Channels News <<https://www.channelstv.com/2024/03/23/new-domestic-borrowing-pushes-nigerias-debt-to-₦97-34tn-in-q4-2023-dmo/>> Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>78</sup>Eric Olander, 'Nigeria's Debt to China Edges Higher' China global south project <<https://chinaglobalsouth.com/2024/03/26/nigerias-debt-to-china-edges-higher/>> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>79</sup>Sodiq Omolaoye, 'Nigeria loses \$18b to Illicit financial flows as debt servicing gulps 70% revenue' The Guardian News (2025) <<https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria-loses-18b-to-illicit-financial-flows-as-debt-servicing-gulps-70-revenue/>> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

social unrest<sup>80</sup>. More recently, reforms such as the removal of fuel subsidies and foreign exchange adjustments have been seen as donor-driven policies that impose hardship on ordinary citizens.

## **5.5 Aid Mismanagement and Lack of Transparency**

One of the most persistent criticisms of foreign aid in Nigeria is that much of it is mismanaged or siphoned off through corruption. Reports by international agencies and Nigerian civil society organizations have documented the diversion of donor funds, inflated contracts, and lack of accountability in the implementation of aid-funded projects. This weakens the impact of aid and reinforces a cycle of dependency without long-term development.

A notable example is the alleged mismanagement of funds during the COVID-19 pandemic. Billions of naira in relief and donations were either unaccounted for or distributed through opaque channels<sup>81</sup>. The Nigerian government has also been criticized for failing to publish comprehensive reports on donor aid flows and outcomes.

## **5.6 Limitations and the Case for Self-Reliance**

While foreign aid has helped to mitigate immediate challenges, especially in the health and humanitarian sectors, it cannot serve as a substitute for internal leadership, institutional reform, and national planning. Aid can provide temporary relief but does not

---

<sup>80</sup>Danladi Abah, 'Structural Adjustment Programme in Nigeria and its Implications on Socio-Economic Development, 1980-1995'.

<sup>81</sup>Dirisu Yakubu, 'Reps uncover mismanagement in COVID-19 funds disbursements' Punch News <<https://punchng.com/reps-uncover-mismanagement-in-covid-19-funds-disbursements/>> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

solve the structural causes of underdevelopment. Moreover, donor-driven policies can undermine national sovereignty, distort local priorities, and create cycles of dependency.

African scholars and policy advocates have long argued that true development must come from within. Countries such as Rwanda and Botswana have demonstrated that with sound governance, local ownership, and institutional capacity, nations can move beyond aid dependency<sup>82</sup>. Nigeria, with its human capital, resources, and vibrant diaspora, is capable of charting a similar course.

## **6.0 THE ROLE OF THE NIGERIAN DIASPORA AND CIVIC AWAKENING**

In the face of institutional failure and growing disillusionment with traditional state mechanisms, attention has increasingly turned to non-state actors and alternative sources of hope for national renewal. Among these, the Nigerian diaspora and the resurgence of civic activism represent powerful forces shaping the nation's trajectory. The diaspora provides economic strength, global influence, and intellectual capital, while civic movements within the country are redefining the relationship between citizens and the state. Together, they form a potent source of help from within and outside the nation, challenging the notion that national salvation must solely come from political elites or international actors.

### **6.1 Economic Contribution of the Diaspora**

---

<sup>82</sup>Muhammad Ali Pate and Philippe Duneton, 'Africa's Shift From Aid Dependency' Think global health <<https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/africas-shift-aid-dependency>> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

One of the most significant ways the Nigerian diaspora supports the nation is through remittances. According to the World Bank's 2022 report, Nigeria received over 20 billion US dollars in diaspora remittances, making it one of the top recipients of remittances globally and the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa<sup>83</sup>. These remittances contribute more to Nigeria's foreign exchange inflow than oil exports in some years, playing a crucial role in sustaining families, small businesses, and local economies.

Diaspora remittances are particularly important given the country's currency volatility and the dwindling value of the naira. They provide an alternative economic buffer for many households and contribute to social investments in education, healthcare, and housing. Moreover, many diaspora Nigerians are now engaging in direct investment, venture capital, and startup incubation across sectors such as fintech, agribusiness, and healthcare.

## **6.2 Knowledge Transfer and Professional Excellence**

Beyond financial remittances, the Nigerian diaspora is distinguished by its wealth of expertise and global exposure. Nigerians abroad are excelling in medicine, academia, technology, business, and public service. Nigerian doctors form one of the largest cohorts of foreign-trained physicians in the United Kingdom and the United States<sup>84</sup>. In academia, Nigerian scholars hold professorial and administrative positions in top global universities.

---

<sup>83</sup>Kabir Yusuf, 'Nigerians abroad remitted \$20.1bn in 2022 – Report' Punch Times  
<<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/627122-nigerians-abroad-remitted-20-1bn-in-2022-report.html?tztc=1>>  
Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>84</sup>Adebusola Adebayo, "“What Are You Really Doing in This Country?”: Emigration Intentions of Nigerian Doctors and Their Policy Implications for Human Resource for Health Management' (2021) *Journal of International Migration and Integration / Revue de l'integration et de la migration internationale* 23(1).

Tech entrepreneurs of Nigerian origin are leading innovation hubs in Silicon Valley and London.

This growing body of intellectual and professional capital represents a vital asset for Nigeria. Many diaspora professionals contribute to national development through advisory roles, mentorship programs, and consultancy for domestic institutions. Platforms such as the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), established by the federal government in 2019, aim to formalize and increase diaspora engagement in national development<sup>85</sup>. However, bureaucracy and insecurity often limit the scope and impact of these engagements.

### **6.3 The Rise of Civic Movements and Youth Engagement**

Within Nigeria, the last two decades have witnessed the emergence of vibrant civic movements that seek to hold the government accountable and promote democratic values. The most prominent of these in recent years was the #EndSARS movement, a youth-led protest against police brutality that erupted nationwide in October 2020. Although it began as a call to abolish the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), the movement quickly evolved into a broader critique of state failure, corruption, and institutional impunity<sup>86</sup>.

#EndSARS demonstrated the power of organized, decentralized, and tech-savvy civic action. Young Nigerians used social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp to mobilize support, coordinate logistics, and amplify their message globally<sup>87</sup>.

---

<sup>85</sup>Michael Olugbode, 'Tuggar: Nigeria Can Be Propelled to Economic Growth with Effective Harnessing of Diaspora Strength' This day News <<https://www.thisdaylive.com/2025/02/27/tuggar-nigeria-can-be-propelled-to-economic-growth-with-effective-harnessing-of-diaspora-strength/>> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>86</sup>Wikipedia, 'End SARS' <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/End\\_SARS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/End_SARS)> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>87</sup>ibid

The Feminist Coalition, a group of young Nigerian women, provided financial and legal support to protesters while ensuring transparency and accountability in donations. The movement drew international attention, prompting statements of concern from global celebrities, diplomats, and human rights organizations.

Other civic initiatives such as Enough is Enough (EiE) Nigeria, BudgIT, and Yiaga Africa have also contributed significantly to civic education, electoral monitoring, and public accountability<sup>88</sup>. These organizations have utilized data analytics, open governance platforms, and legal advocacy to engage citizens, particularly the youth, in democratic processes.

#### **6.4 The Diaspora as a Political Force**

In recent years, the Nigerian diaspora has begun to push for greater inclusion in national governance. While the Constitution permits every Nigerian citizen to vote and be voted for, the country currently does not allow diaspora voting. Many have argued that excluding over 17 million Nigerians living abroad from electoral participation undermines democratic inclusivity and deprives the nation of valuable perspectives<sup>89</sup>.

Proposals for constitutional amendments to enable diaspora voting have been introduced at the National Assembly but have so far failed to gain sufficient political traction. Advocates argue that countries such as Ghana, South Africa, and Kenya have successfully implemented diaspora voting mechanisms, and Nigeria should follow suit. Enabling

---

<sup>88</sup>Civil society efforts <<https://budgit.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Joinbodi-report-digital-2024.pdf>> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2025.

<sup>89</sup>Abba Amsami Elgujja (2021) Paving the Way for Entrenching the Diaspora's Voting Rights under the Nigerian Laws: Legal Prospects, Challenges and Potential Solutions, *Turkish Journal of Diaspora Studies*, 1(2).

Nigerians abroad to participate in the democratic process would strengthen political legitimacy and deepen national unity.

## **6.5 Youth Mobilization and the Not Too Young To Run Act**

A notable legislative success of civic engagement is the Not Too Young To Run Act, passed in 2018 after sustained advocacy by youth-led organizations<sup>90</sup>. The law amended sections of the 1999 Constitution to reduce the minimum age requirement for elective offices. For example, the age requirement for contesting for the House of Representatives was reduced from 30 to 25, and that for the presidency from 40 to 35<sup>91</sup>.

This legislative milestone opened political space for younger Nigerians and signaled a recognition of their role in national development. In the 2019 and 2023 elections, a growing number of youth candidates contested and won various offices, though challenges such as funding, political violence, and party structures remain formidable barriers<sup>92</sup>.

## **6.6 Challenges to Diaspora and Civic Engagement**

Despite their potential, the contributions of the diaspora and civic movements face numerous challenges. Many diaspora professionals are reluctant to invest or return due to concerns over corruption, bureaucratic red tape, insecurity, and lack of infrastructure. Within the country, civic space is shrinking, with increasing clampdowns on protests, press freedom, and digital expression. The use of state instruments to suppress dissent, as

---

<sup>90</sup>ibid

<sup>91</sup>Library of congress, 'Nigeria: Constitution Amended to Allow Independent Candidacy, Lower Age Requirement for Holding Elected Offices' <<https://www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2018-06-11/nigeria-constitution-amended-to-allow-independent-candidacy-lower-age-requirement-for-holding-elected-offices/>> Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2025.

<sup>92</sup>Election Watch, 'Political Violence and the 2023 Nigerian Election' (2023) <<https://acleddata.com/2023/02/22/political-violence-and-the-2023-nigerian-election/>> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

witnessed in the aftermath of #EndSARS, raises serious concerns about Nigeria's commitment to democratic values<sup>93</sup>.

Furthermore, a fragmented and often disillusioned political culture hinders sustained activism. While online engagement is high, translating digital awareness into electoral outcomes remains a work in progress. Bridging the gap between civic enthusiasm and political power requires greater coordination, funding, and institutional reform.

Ultimately, the Nigerian diaspora and civic movements represent critical sources of national help, resilience, and transformation. Through remittances, professional expertise, and advocacy, the diaspora contributes to the country's socio-economic development. Civic movements within Nigeria, led largely by the youth, are redefining the nation's democratic aspirations and demanding accountability. Although constrained by systemic obstacles, these forces signify a reawakening of national consciousness and offer a viable path toward internal renewal. For Nigeria to fully harness this potential, it must foster a more inclusive, secure, and enabling environment for all its citizens at home and abroad.

## **7.0 THE MORAL QUESTION: FAITH, ETHICS, AND NATIONAL REDEMPTION**

In examining the origins and possible sources of national redemption for Nigeria, it is impossible to ignore the moral and spiritual foundations of society. Nigeria is a deeply religious country. From churches to mosques, spiritual symbols are present in every sphere of public and private life. Religion permeates political discourse, family values, business transactions, and even educational systems. Yet, despite this widespread religiosity, the

---

<sup>93</sup>ibid

nation remains plagued by moral contradictions: corruption is endemic, impunity thrives, and public trust is eroded. These paradoxes suggest that the crisis facing Nigeria is not only political or economic, but also deeply moral.

### **7.1 A Religiously Devout Yet Ethically Troubled Society**

The contrast between Nigeria's spiritual devotion and its moral failures has often been described as a national irony. According to Pew Research Center's 2022 report, over 98 percent of Nigerians identify as religious, with Islam and Christianity accounting for the vast majority of the population<sup>94</sup>. Churches and mosques are among the most frequented public institutions, and religious leaders command significant influence over their followers and political leaders alike.

However, this religiosity has not translated into widespread ethical behaviour or civic responsibility. Nigeria continues to rank among the most corrupt countries in the world, positioned 140th out of 180 on the 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index released by Transparency International<sup>95</sup>. The persistence of electoral fraud, abuse of office, embezzlement of public funds, and social injustice starkly contradicts the values preached by religious institutions. The failure to bridge the gap between faith and ethics has left many disillusioned with religion's role in society.

### **7.2 Religious Institutions and Public Influence**

---

<sup>94</sup>Amadu Kaba, 'The Numbers and Percentages of Christians and Muslims in Africa, 2020' <[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/382214185\\_The\\_Numbers\\_and\\_Percentages\\_of\\_Christians\\_and\\_Muslims\\_in\\_Africa\\_2020](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/382214185_The_Numbers_and_Percentages_of_Christians_and_Muslims_in_Africa_2020)> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>95</sup>ibid

Religious institutions in Nigeria wield considerable power in shaping public opinion and political culture. Leading clerics often act as moral authorities, mediators in political crises, and social commentators. For instance, Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah has gained national recognition for his annual Christmas Day messages that critique governance failures and call for ethical leadership<sup>96</sup>. Similarly, Islamic scholars like Sheikh Ahmad Gumi have intervened in national security dialogues, albeit contentiously.

Despite this moral authority, many religious institutions have become complicit in legitimizing power structures that undermine accountability. Prosperity theology, which links divine favour to material wealth, has become prominent in many churches, encouraging the veneration of success over integrity. Clerics often associate with corrupt politicians, offer blessings at political rallies, or remain silent in the face of injustices. In doing so, they lose their prophetic role and compromise their moral capital.

Nonetheless, there are also numerous religious actors who continue to advocate for justice, peace, and reform. Faith-based organizations such as the Justice, Development and Peace Commission (JDPC), the Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC), and interfaith groups have led voter education campaigns, promoted peaceful coexistence, and offered humanitarian assistance in times of crisis<sup>97</sup>. These efforts reflect the potential of religion to serve as a force for national healing rather than division.

---

<sup>96</sup>Animashaun Salman, 'Kukah urges action on unemployment, extremism to tackle insecurity' Punch News (2024) <<https://punchng.com/kukah-urges-action-on-unemployment-extremism-to-tackle-insecurity/>> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

<sup>97</sup>OGBE, MONDAY ADAH, 'THE ROLE OF FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF JUSTICE, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE/CARITAS' (JDPC) INTERVENTIONS IN KANO STATE' <<https://kubanni-backend.abu.edu.ng/server/api/core/bitstreams/bd634942-4c7b-4555-8e7e-c2abe39f2d74/content>> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

### **7.3 The Ethical Collapse of Leadership**

One of the central moral issues confronting Nigeria is the consistent failure of leadership to act in the public interest. Leaders are often driven by personal ambition, ethnic loyalty, or patronage networks rather than a sense of duty or justice. This has created a political culture in which power is used not to serve but to dominate, enrich, and silence.

Chinua Achebe's seminal 1983 work, *The Trouble with Nigeria*, diagnosed the nation's central ailment as a failure of leadership. He wrote, "The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian character."<sup>98</sup>

Four decades later, Achebe's observation remains disturbingly accurate. Nigeria's leadership deficit is not merely about competence or capacity, but about the absence of moral vision the lack of ethical clarity and the courage to act rightly in the public arena.

This failure is not limited to politicians. Business leaders, civil servants, traditional rulers, and community heads often mirror the same patterns of selfishness, corruption, and impunity. The rot is widespread and systemic, reflecting the deep moral crisis that afflicts the nation.

### **7.4 Citizens, Complicity, and the Collective Conscience**

A comprehensive understanding of Nigeria's moral crisis must also consider the role of ordinary citizens. Corruption is not only top-down; it is also embedded in everyday interactions from offering bribes to traffic officers, to manipulating exam results, to

---

<sup>98</sup>Arif R. Shah, 'Editorial Preface From the Desk of Managing Editor'

<[https://www.academia.edu/41230312/Editorial\\_Preface\\_From\\_the\\_Desk\\_of\\_Managing\\_Editor](https://www.academia.edu/41230312/Editorial_Preface_From_the_Desk_of_Managing_Editor)> Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2025.

evading taxes<sup>99</sup>. Many Nigerians simultaneously lament the state of the country while engaging in the very practices that sustain its dysfunction.

This raises fundamental questions about the collective conscience of the nation. Why has dishonesty become normalized? Why is public property treated with contempt while private wealth is revered? These questions indicate that the challenge Nigeria faces is not just in leadership but in the values that govern individual and communal behaviour.

Civic education, moral instruction, and public accountability must therefore be part of any conversation about national transformation. A new national ethos must emerge, one that redefines success not by wealth or connections but by service, integrity, and contribution to the common good.

## **7.5 The Spiritual Dimension of National Redemption**

In seeking national redemption, Nigerians often turn to divine intervention. The expression “from where comes our help?” echoes Psalm 121, a declaration of faith that help comes “from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” In the Nigerian context, this is not merely a religious affirmation but a reflection of the enduring hope of a people who believe that, despite hardship, divine justice will prevail.

However, the invocation of divine help must not become an excuse for inaction. Faith, in its deepest sense, requires responsibility. The call for help must be accompanied by a willingness to be instruments of change. The biblical and Quranic traditions both

---

<sup>99</sup>Susan Rose-Ackerman, ‘Corruption and government’

<[https://institutes.abu.edu.ng/idr/public/assets/docs/Corruption%20and%20Government\\_%20Causes,%20Consequences,%20and%20Reform%20\(%20PDFDrive%20\).pdf](https://institutes.abu.edu.ng/idr/public/assets/docs/Corruption%20and%20Government_%20Causes,%20Consequences,%20and%20Reform%20(%20PDFDrive%20).pdf)> Accessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2025.

emphasize that nations rise or fall not only based on divine will, but on the conduct of their people.

Religious devotion must therefore be harnessed not as a retreat from reality, but as a force for ethical engagement, civic action, and national renewal. From pulpits and prayer grounds must arise not only prayers for prosperity but bold calls for justice, righteousness, and truth.

### **DANGERS OF A ONE-PARTY-SYSTEM**

The following are some of the dangers inherent in a one-party system should be avoided in favour of more liberal or democratic ones as will be discussed anon. They include:

- (a) **Prone to Dictatorship:** In a one-party system, the ruling party sees itself as the state (L'Etat, c'est moi – I am the state – by King Louis XIV of France, 13<sup>th</sup> April, 1655).
- (b) **Breeds unbridled Corruption in Governance:** It is said of power that it corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely (Lord Acton).
- (c) **Lack of Accountability:** In a one-party system where the government is not answerable to anybody but itself, the government acts according to its whims and caprices.
- (d) **Undemocratic:** As the government is but a select class of the populace, the vast majority of the people are shut out of participation in the administration of their government. Democracy is stifled and the aspirations of the people asphyxiated.
- (e) **No Freedom of Choice:** In a one-party system, imposition of leadership is the order of the day. The most unpopular, clueless candidate could be imposed on the nation without the opportunity given for his screening.
- (f) **Hinders Development:** A one-party system inhibits social development because important governmental policies, programmes and decisions are taken without consulting widely and subjecting same to constructive criticisms and input.

- (g) **Breeds civil unrest and culminates** in such social vices as armed banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery, insurgency, terrorism and bloody insurrections, revolutions and overthrows.
- (h) **The laws of the land could be amended** at any time to serve the needs or ends of the government at the expense of the governed.
- (i) **Civil rights are often abrogated.** In these political enclaves, citizens exist rather than love. Fear hangs in the air, as the Big Brother might be watching, hearing and seeing!

### **CORRUPTION INDEX AND STIFF PENALTIES IN ONE-PARTY STATE**

People who argue about the beauty of a one-party state in countries like China, North Korea, Cuba, Vietnam and Eritrea must also understand now such countries deal severely with crimes, embezzlement, bribery and corruption, money laundering and narcotics. Can we in Nigeria stand these in a country where a Public Officer steals over 500 billion naira from the public treasury and is slapped on the wrist with few months imprisonment with an option to pay a ridiculous and laughable sum in lieu of prison?

#### **CHINA:**

Death Penalty for Money Laundering, Embezzlement, Bribery and Corruption – involving large sums; fraud and illegal fundraising.

#### **NORTH KOREA**

Death Penalty for Money Laundering/Financial Crimes, Bribery and Corruption, Drugs and Narcotics.

#### **CUBA**

Death Penalty and up to 30 years imprisonment for Drugs and Narcotics, Bribery and Corruption, Money Laundering.

Vietnam

Death Penalty and 20 years and above for Bribery and Corruption, Money Laundering, Drugs and Narcotics.

Eritrea

Secret trials, disappearance, indefinite detention, forced labour for Money Laundering, Bribery and Corruption, Drugs and Narcotics.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Convening a Sovereign National Dialogue for Constitutional Renewal**

Nigeria must undertake a bold, participatory constitutional overhaul through a sovereign national dialogue that is inclusive, ethnically balanced, and people-driven. The 1999 Constitution, widely perceived as a military imposition, has failed to capture the aspirations of Nigeria's diverse populace. A truly federal constitution, reflective of contemporary democratic norms and equitable power-sharing, is essential for national healing, integration, and sustainable governance. Such a step must lead to having a people's Constitution that is indigenous, autochthonous, legitimate and subject to a people's referendum as in many countries like Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, South Africa, Kenya, Switzerland, India, etc.

### **2. Institutionalizing State Police within a Federated Security Architecture**

The persistent failure of Nigeria's centralised policing system to address localised security threats such as banditry, insurgency, and communal violence which necessitates the urgent establishment of state-controlled police forces. These would be constitutionally empowered, locally accountable, and structurally coordinated with federal security

agencies. This reform, embodied in HB 617, must transcend legislative debates and become a transformative instrument for peace and justice.

### **3. Designing a Meritocratic and Ethical Leadership Framework**

Nigeria's leadership deficit is not merely a function of competence but a consequence of moral bankruptcy. A new leadership paradigm is required, one that prioritizes ethics, public accountability, national unity, and developmental vision. Legislative and constitutional mechanisms must institutionalize leadership vetting standards based on service records, integrity audits, and public transparency.

### **4. Reviving Industrialization and Diversifying Economic Production**

The erosion of Nigeria's industrial base, once symbolized by thriving steel, textile, and automotive industries has left the economy vulnerable and extractive. A strategic re-industrialization blueprint must be pursued, with emphasis on value-added manufacturing, renewable energy, local innovation, and agro-industrial hubs. This will mitigate over-dependence on oil and foster inclusive, job-intensive growth.

### **5. Establishing a National Civic Education and Moral Renaissance Program**

The document highlights the moral contradiction of a religiously fervent yet ethically compromised society. To recalibrate societal values, Nigeria must institutionalize civic education from primary to tertiary levels, instilling values of integrity, communal responsibility, and patriotism. Faith-based organizations must also be repositioned as agents of ethical activism rather than complicit political patrons.

### **6. Engaging the Diaspora as Strategic Development Partners**

With over \$20 billion in annual remittances and rich professional capital abroad, the Nigerian diaspora must be structurally integrated into national planning. Policies must incentivize diaspora investment, knowledge transfer, and political participation including legal provisions for diaspora voting. Institutions like NiDCOM should be strengthened to serve as real-time bridges between the diaspora and home-based stakeholders.

### **7. Institutionalizing Transparent Electoral and Judicial Reforms**

Nigeria's democratic process remains undermined by voter suppression, electoral malpractice, and judicial compromise. A new Independent Electoral Tribunal System (IETS) should be created, insulated from executive influence, with time-bound rulings. Additionally, INEC must be restructured for neutrality, and judges involved in electoral matters must undergo ethical screening by independent panels.

### **8. Launching a National Youth Development and Innovation Mission**

The youth bulge represents Nigeria's greatest asset and its greatest risk if ignored. A National Youth Innovation Fund (NYIF), governed by youth themselves, should be created to invest in tech startups, agritech, green economy ventures, and civic technology. The NYIF must be backed by legislation and protected from political capture.

### **9. Restructuring the Fiscal Federalism and Resource Control Regime**

The current derivation formula which grants oil-producing states a mere 13% of generated revenue breeds resentment and inequality. A revised fiscal framework should ensure greater autonomy over natural resources for states, while maintaining inter-state solidarity via redistribution mechanisms. This will incentivize local productivity and environmental stewardship.

## **10. Institutional Mainstreaming of Civic Movements in Governance**

The rise of civic platforms like #EndSARS, BudgIT, and Yiaga Africa reflects a citizen awakening that must not be repressed but institutionalized. Civic organizations should be granted formal observer status in legislative oversight, policy monitoring, and anti-corruption agencies. A Citizens-Government Liaison Council (CGLC) should be formed at federal and state levels to integrate civic feedback into governance processes.

### **CONCLUSION: WHERE THEN LIES OUR HELP?**

Nigeria today stands at a historic inflection point. We are not suffering from a lack of means but from a lack of will, purpose and moral clarity. This work has not merely dissected the nation's maladies; it has offered a sweeping diagnosis of a republic battling both visible wounds and invisible rot. And it has dared to provide some solutions.

To ask "From where comes our help?" is no longer just a theological musing drawn from Psalm 121. In the Nigerian context, it is a sociopolitical lament wrapped in spiritual desperation. But unlike the Psalmist whose gaze is fixed upon divine hills, the Nigerian must now glance inward before looking upward. For if help is to come, it must rise first from within the belly of our national conscience before the heavens respond. Nigeria's help will not come from foreign donors who send aid with one hand and extract wealth with the other. Nor will it come from career politicians whose promises are as ephemeral as election posters. It will not arrive in the shape of IMF conditionalities, nor in the rusting military equipment of global powers. Our help must come from within, from our capacity to confront our history, disrupt our complacency, and engineer a new national ethos.

Leadership, or more precisely, transformative leadership, is the linchpin of national rebirth. We must move beyond the Achebean lament of failure and begin cultivating leaders who embody humility, competence and sacrificial service. A nation does not rise because its leaders shout slogans but because they build systems. Vision without structure is mere fantasy, and structure without justice is oppression with paperwork. The future belongs not to those who shout the loudest on Twitter, but to those who quietly lay bricks of reform in education, justice, infrastructure and human dignity.

The youth, often the casualties of state negligence, are paradoxically our greatest hope. They are hungry not just for food but for meaning. They have shown, through civic movements like #EndSARS and innovation hubs from Yaba to Port Harcourt, that they are not waiting for permission to build. The Nigerian diaspora, often unfairly caricatured as disconnected, continues to wire billions home, lead in global industries, and advocate for the nation's renewal on distant shores. If only we could connect the innovation of our youth with the influence of our diaspora and the conscience of our institutions, we may yet script a new national story.

There is no messiah waiting in the wings. The idea that some saviour will emerge to fix Nigeria with magical decrees is both lazy and dangerous. We must save ourselves through civic courage, legal reform, economic restructuring and moral revival. Yes, let us look to the hills if we must. But let us also look to the classroom, the courtroom, the ballot box and the village square.

In the end, Nigeria's help will not fall from the sky like manna. It will rise, inch by inch, from the soil of our collective resolve. And perhaps that, after all, is how nations are truly redeemed.

Ask the Asian Tigers how they made it. Even the Bible tells us in Deuteronomy 28:12, “The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow”. God only blesses the work of our hands, not idleness or complacency.

Psalm 121 answers this troubling question fully, “I will lift up my eyes to the hills – From whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth”.

But there is a rider in Deuteronomy 28:12: He can only bless the works of our hands.