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Nigeria: EUAA reports show escalating banditry-related violence, amid overlapping crises



The EUAA has just published two Country-of-Origin Information (COI) reports on Nigeria. The ‘ Country Focus’ report provides key information on Nigeria’s state structures, demographics, significant political developments and the human rights treatment of specific group profiles. The ‘ Security Situation’ report offers an overview of long-standing security challenges and major conflicts, including a breakdown by 36 states and Federal Capital Territory. These COI reports will inform the upcoming update of EUAA Country Guidance on Nigeria.

Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, continues to grapple with an extraordinary wave of overlapping crises, including widespread insecurity and significant social and economic challenges. Although the insurgency led by Boko Haram and affiliated Islamist armed groups had long been regarded as the primary threat to the country’s stability, by early 2024, **violence stemming from banditry had become more deadly** and widespread.

Clashes between herders and farmers over livelihoods, which persisted in the North-Central zone and other parts of the country, further saw a resurgence in the first half of 2025. Similarly, increasing criminality was reported in the Niger Delta, **together with activity by violent gangs in the South-South and South-West**. There was continued Biafran secessionist activity in the South-East, with clashes between pro-Biafran armed groups and Nigerian security forces. These manifold security issues have left the country's military and police forces overstretched.

Nigeria also continues to face significant human rights challenges. Despite constitutional safeguards, **ongoing abuses highlight systemic failures in rights protection**. Curbs on freedom of expression, poor access to justice, insecurity, and **discrimination against certain groups including women and LGBTIQ individuals**, all remain key issues. Journalists covering politically sensitive topics are frequently targeted with defamation laws and arrest. Security forces have continued to use excessive force against protesters, resulting in casualties. Various sources also report that the Nigerian army has committed abuses, **including extrajudicial killings and torture**, particularly during operations against insurgent groups in the North and separatist movements in the South-East.

In recent years, the Nigerian authorities have made several efforts to tackle trafficking in human beings, however the phenomenon remains a persistent and serious humanitarian concern in the country.

Rising living costs, combined with human-made and natural disasters, have impacted millions of Nigerians, exacerbating food insecurity, displacement and limiting access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and sanitation. By the end of 2024, about 50 % of Nigerians were living below the poverty line.

International protection situation for Nigerian nationals

Between January 2024 and August 2025, **Nigerians lodged nearly 26 000 applications** for international protection in the EU. Monthly applications peaked in April 2024 (2 000), when Nigerians lodged the most applications since May 2019, but then followed a predominantly downward trend, reaching the least applications in August 2025 (910) since May 2020. In fact, **compared to the previous 20 months, Nigerian applications decreased slightly in the EU+. Around 72 % of all Nigerians were first-time applicants** and there were few self-claimed unaccompanied minors. The main receiving country for Nigerians was **Italy**,

followed by Ireland, France and Germany.

During these 20 months, EU+ countries issued **approximately 26 000 decisions at first instance** on Nigerian applications, with 12% of the decisions granting refugee status and subsidiary protection. At the end of August 2025, there were 7 600 cases pending at first instance, down by nearly half compared to January 2024.

Background

The EUAA regularly updates its Country of Origin Information reports, which aim to provide accurate and reliable up-to-date information on third countries to support EU+ national asylum and migration authorities involved in migration and international protection procedures.

Download the COI Reports - Nigeria: Country Focus, and Nigeria: Security Situation.

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