

3.5.2. Lagos and Abuja

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According to a report by The World Bank and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs of Switzerland, ‘[w]hile Lagos has the smallest landmass among Nigeria’s 36 states (at 3,500 per square km), Lagos is the most densely populated state, with approximately 8,000 persons per square km, which is 40 times Nigeria’s average of 200 persons per square km’.1118 Sources indicated that the rising sea-level is making it harder to find suitable building grounds.1119 Coastal areas are particularly affected, and the local government has advised residents of Ikoyi, Lekki, Victoria Island, and the coastal areas of Epe and Badagry to be wary of backflow due to the high tide in the Lagos lagoon.1120 The Sun reported, however, that Lagos has undertaken land reclamation initiatives to restore land areas and transform submerged or waterlogged lands into inhabitable areas.1121

Sources blame the floodings to shoreline erosion as a consequence of waterfront development. 1122 Sources indicated that Lagos is facing a housing crisis.1123 According to a report by the Roland Igbinoba Real Foundation for Housing and Urban Development (RIRFHUD),1124 Lagos has about 2.58 million housing units and a housing deficit of 3.3 million units.1125 Sources reported that residents of Lagos are choosing co-living spaces due to unaffordability and housing deficits.1126 The RIRFHUD report indicated that over 618 000 units are ‘either structurally unsafe, severely overcrowded, or lacking essential services such as clean water, proper sanitation, and electricity’.1127 In January 2024, Punch reported that rents in Lagos increased by 91.32 % over the previous five years, with a two-bedroom apartment in Epe, one of the cheapest areas in the state, renting for as low as 350 000 Naira [197 Euros] per year.1128

Regarding Abuja, The Nation reported that rents in Abuja increased by over 50 % ‘in recent times’, and that the city is facing a shortage of over 1.7 million housing units.1129 Sources indicated that housing costs are ‘exorbitant’,1130 with rents for studio apartments ranging from 1 000 to more than 1 300 US dollars per year, considering that the average annual salary is less than 1 000 US dollars, forcing many into overcrowded slums or makeshift housing.1131 Nairametrics, a Nigerian news source, similarly reported that, according to locals, rent in Abuja is ‘outrageous’, with an apartment costing between 400 and 800 US dollars, plus agent fees and ‘other expenses’.1132 The Nation reported that, since most landlords rely on rental income, the rising cost of living leads to higher rent increases in a ‘vicious circle’ that affects the ‘financially strained’ who are forced into overcrowded and inadequate accommodations.1133

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