4.2. Article 15(b) QD/QR: torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

COMMON ANALYSIS
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For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this section, see 'EUAA, Article 15(b) QD/QR: torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in the country of origin in *Country Guidance: explained*, February 2026'.

☐ 4.2.1. Arbitrary arrests, illegal detention and prison conditions

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: Country Focus 2025, 2.1.1., 2.1.3., 2.9.1., 2.18.1.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Nigerian security forces, including vigilante groups in the North-eastern part of the country, are frequently accused of human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests and detentions.

Nigerian detention conditions were described as harsh, with overcrowded, poorly maintained detention facilities, inadequate provisions for basic needs (e.g. food, health care), and cases of torture and ill-treatment.

As indicated under 3. Refugee status, some profiles of applicants from Nigeria may be at risk of arbitrary arrest, illegal detention and harsh prison conditions e.g. members and perceived supporters of pro-Biafra separatist movement and of political parties, individuals with perceived links to Boko Haram, journalists and other media workers, persons with diverse SOGIESC. If such risk is substantiated and reaches the threshold of persecution, those individuals would qualify for refugee status.

For other individuals, if conditions of arrest and/or detention amount to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and there is no nexus to a reason for persecution, Article 15(b) QD/QR would apply.

In some cases, the arrest, detention and imprisonment would have been imposed for a serious crime committed by the applicant, or for other acts falling within the exclusion grounds (Article 17 QD/QR) and, therefore, exclusion should be examined (see 7. Exclusion).

☐ 4.2.2. Criminal violence

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: Country Focus 2025, 2.2.3.; Security 2025, 1., 1.1.3., 1.2.3.; COI Update 2026, 2.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

From 2024, banditry and activities of gangs are one of the main drivers of violence in Nigeria. Criminal violence is mostly inflicted by bandit groups. Confraternities, also known as cult groups are also involved in criminality. See 2.2.4. Criminal groups.

?andit groups were mainly responsible for armed robberies, murders, rapes, kidnappings, cattle rustlings and armed raids and attacks in the northern part of Nigeria. Banditry-related violence intensified across Nigeria's North-West and North-Central zone and parts of the South-West, including Lagos. Highly mobile, armed motorbike-riding groups created widespread fear. Fatalities from rural banditry, cattle rustling, and related security operations rose sharply in 2024, especially in Katsina, Zamfara, and Kaduna, with another major surge reported in mid-2025 in Niger, Katsina, and Zamfara. In April 2025, the military launched several operations targeting bandit hideouts in the North-West.

Kidnappings for ransom increased nationwide from early 2024, with the highest numbers recorded in the North-Central zone and incidents widespread across urban areas, rural communities, and highways. Estimates of abductions by various armed groups often have significantly underestimated the true scale of the issue. By mid-2025, kidnappings remained pervasive, affecting a wide array of individuals, including villagers, travellers, large numbers of schoolchildren, IDPs, public figures, clergy, businesspeople and individuals perceived as being well-off. At the end of 2025, as a result of mass abductions of students by Islamist groups and criminal gangs, several schools had been indefinitely

shut down either partially or completely in eleven northern states.

Gang and cult networks dominate violence in the South-South and South-West, while the South-East has also experienced significant unrest. Cult groups were involved in extortion, smuggling and drug dealing in big cities such as Benin City, Lagos and Port Harcourt. They also clashed with rival groups and were involved in sex exploitation in European countries. Minors have been increasingly recruited into cult groups through aggressive tactics.

The lines between herder and farmer violence/conflict and banditry or cultism are often blurred. See also 3.6. Individuals belonging to herder or farmer communities and 4.3. Article 15(c) QD/QR: indiscriminate violence in situations of armed conflict.

A real risk of a violent crime, such as abduction, would meet the requirements under Article 15(b) QD/QR.

Personal circumstances such as social and economic situation, home area, age and activities are to be taken into account for the assessment of real risk of criminal violence. For example, persons originating from the North-West and North-Central region as well as persons perceived to be well-off and/or frequently travelling along affected highways would face a higher risk of serious harm from bandit groups. Furthermore, schoolchildren in northern Nigeria would also face a higher risk. Individuals originating from the southern part of the country, especially Edo, Lagos and Rivers states would face a higher risk of suffering serious harm by cult groups.

Where there is no nexus to a reason for persecution under the refugee definition, but there is a real risk for such a violent crime, Article 15(b) QD/QR would apply.

☐ 4.2.3. Trafficking in human beings

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: Country Focus 2025, 2.2.1., 2.2.2., 2.2.3.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Nigeria ranks first among the nationalities of trafficking victims identified within the European Union. It remains a source, transit and destination country for trafficking in human beings. The practice affects women, men and children for various forms of exploitation. Women and girls in precarious economic and social situation are the main victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and domestic servitude. Mostly, traffickers recruit their victims in their own families or environment, but they also operate among IDPs.

Most of the trafficking victims for sexual exploitation identified came from the southern region, especially Lagos, Edo and Delta states, and it appears that traffickers were mainly

linked to criminal groups such as confraternities. Plateau State (North-Central region) has been recently described as a human trafficking hotspot, particularly for cases involving the trafficking of children. Extremist groups such as Boko Haram also forcibly recruited, abducted and exploited children and women in the North-East region. See also 3.13. Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings.

Where there is no nexus to a reason for persecution, individuals at real risk of being subjected to trafficking would qualify for subsidiary protection under Article 15(b) QD/QR. Trafficking in human beings amounts to serious harm. Personal circumstances such as gender, age, social and economic situation and home area are to be taken into account for the assessment of real risk of trafficking in human beings.

☐ 4.2.4. Health care and socio-economic conditions

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: Country Focus 2025, 2.8., 2.16., 3.1., 3.2., 2.3.3., 3.3., 3.4., 3.4.1., 3.5., 3.7.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Nigeria is characterised by widespread poverty and limited access to food, basic sanitation, safe drinking water, secure housing and health care. Healthcare issues include limited access to healthcare services, and inadequate infrastructure, particularly for vulnerable people such as IDPs, women and persons with disabilities.

The country also faces its worst economic crisis in a generation, marked by high youth unemployment and predominance of informal employment, especially for people with disabilities. Nigeria is one of the poorest countries in the world. It ranked 110th out of 127 countries on ‘hunger severity’, with an estimated 3 million children suffering from severe acute malnutrition, an increase compared to 2024. Poverty, food security, and housing conditions are particularly dire in rural areas, in the northern regions of the country, as well as for IDPs and people forced to live into slums in cities such as Lagos and Abuja.

It is important to note that serious harm must take the form of conduct of an actor (Article 6 QD/QR). In itself, unless there is intentional conduct of an actor, the general unavailability of health care or other socio-economic elements is not considered serious harm meeting the requirements of inhuman or degrading treatment under Article 15(b) QD/QR.

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