

1.2. Functioning of government and political situation

1.2. Functioning of government and political situation

Nigeria’s political landscape is partly dominated by the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) party, which holds control of the executive branch, maintains a majority in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, and governs most of the country’s states18 (20).19

In February 2023, Bola Tinubu won the presidential election with approximately 37 % of the national vote. Tinubu was formally inaugurated in May 2023. The election process was marked by widespread irregularities. Incidents of violence were reported at multiple polling stations, alongside serious allegations of vote buying, voter suppression, and both technical and procedural failures. These issues contributed to delays in poll openings and in the announcement of official results. Domestic and international election observers raised concerns regarding the conduct of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), citing poor performance and a lack of transparency. Public confidence in the electoral process was low, and voter turnout reached a historic low of 27 %.20

Elected officials in Nigeria are tasked with making and implementing policy, though their capacity to do so is often limited by factors such as corruption, political polarisation, and limited governmental control in areas affected by militant activity. Observers noted that the legislature frequently aligns with the executive branch and has not consistently acted as an independent check on executive authority.21

Since the late 2000s, Nigeria’s regional influence has declined. Successive governments have experienced major domestic issues including political instability, economic downturns, and escalating security threats.22 The Nigerian government has continued to face significant challenges in consolidating democratic governance and implementing reforms in a petroleum-dependent economy, amid persistent issues of corruption and criminality.23 The government has taken steps to combat corruption, particularly in the oil and security sectors, though corruption remains widespread. Between May 2023 and May 2024, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) secured over 3 000 convictions and recovered millions of dollars. High-profile prosecutions in 2024 included those of former Kogi State Governor Yahaya Bello and former Central Bank Governor Godwin Emefiele.24 Both trials were ongoing by the time of drafting this report.25

Although progress has been made in combating corruption, the phenomenon has remained a major barrier to Nigeria’s development, undermining democracy, governance, and public trust. Efforts over the past 25 years have been uneven, hindered by politicisation, weak institutions, and double standards, leading to clientelism, impunity, and weak accountability.26 Corruption is also reported as endemic in the petroleum industry.27 In April 2024, President Tinubu dismissed the entire leadership of Nigeria's state-run oil company, the National Petroleum Company (NNPC). The restructuring is part of broader reforms aimed at addressing persistent corruption, political interference, and mismanagement in the oil sector. Despite past attempts at reform, the industry continues to face challenges undermining efficiency and public trust.28

President Bola Tinubu has been facing growing criticism within the country for allegedly favouring individuals from his Yoruba ethnic group for top-level appointments. Although the constitution mandates regional representation in cabinet positions, traditionally, federal appointments have followed an informal practice of balancing ethnic and religious representation to ensure national cohesion. Since assuming office in May 2023, Tinubu has appointed Yorubas to all eight of the most influential positions in government, from financial to security institutions. This concentration has sparked criticism, especially from the north, where many feel marginalised. Defenders of the president argue that he is choosing the most qualified candidates, regardless of ethnicity.29

Nigeria has continued to experience ‘an unprecedented wave of overlapping crises,’ including widespread insecurity and significant social and economic challenges.30 The North-West region has remained affected by persistent incidents of banditry and kidnappings, while the North-East continues to experience insurgent activities carried out by armed groups, like Boko Haram. In addition, the South-East is marked by ongoing separatist agitations, further contributing to national instability.31 In the North-West, increasing incidents of farmer-herder violence, criminal activity, and the effects of climate change (such as flooding and drought) have further aggravated the situation. Similarly, in the North-Central region, including Benue State, intercommunal tensions over land and water resources, compounded by recurrent flooding, have continued to drive instability and humanitarian need.32 For more information see EUAA COI Report – Nigeria Security Situation November 2025.

The country has also continued to face a protracted humanitarian crisis, particularly affecting the North-East, North-Central, and North-West regions, with millions impacted over the past 13 years. In the North-East, conflict involving non-state armed groups and ongoing military operations has resulted in large-scale displacement and widespread human rights violations.33

Rising living costs, especially for fuel and food, combined with human-made and natural disasters, have impacted millions of Nigerians. Extreme events, including record floods, alongside protracted crises, have exacerbated food insecurity, displacement, child malnutrition, and limited access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and sanitation. Over 133 million Nigerians feel the impact of multidimensional poverty, the highest number recorded globally.34 For more information see 3. Key socio-economic indicators.

World Bank, The World Bank in Nigeria, last updated 10 April 2025, url

- 19

  APC, APC Elected Members (2023 – 2027), n.d., url; Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, url

- 20

  Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, url

- 21

  Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, url

- 22

  International Crisis Group, Restoring Nigeria’s Leadership for Regional Peace and Security, 11 December 2024, url

- 23

  LSE blog, Navigating Nigerian Politics: Democratisation and Development, 23 April 2024, url

- 24

  Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, url

- 25

  Nigeria, EFCC, Yahaya Bello’s Alleged N80.2bn Fraud: How N1.09bn Vanished from Kogi Government’s Account in Three Days-Witness, 26 June 2025, url; Nigeria, EFCC, Alleged ₦7.8bn Fraud: EFCC Arraigns Emefiele for Unlawful Possession of 753 Housing Units, 16 June 2025, url

- 26

  Chatham House, Taking action against corruption in Nigeria – Summary, 18 March 2025, url

- 27

  Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 26 February 2025, url

- 28

  France24, Nigerian president sacks board of state oil company, 2 April 2025, url

- 29

  BBC News, Could Nigeria's careful ethnic balancing act be under threat?, 27 May 2025, url

- 30

  EEAS, 2024 Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World, 22 May 2025, url , p. 127

- 31

  World Bank, The World Bank in Nigeria, last updated 10 April 2025, url

- 32

  IOM, Nigeria Crisis Response, 2024-2025, url, p. 4

- 33

  IOM, Nigeria Crisis Response, 2024-2025, url, p. 4

- 34

  EEAS, 2024 Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World, 22 May 2025, url , p. 127

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu