

2.9. Members and perceived supporters of political parties and separatist movements

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The legal framework guarantees the right for Nigerians to organise in different political parties as well as the equal participation in political life for all cultural, religious, and ethnic groups.584 The 1999 Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, and of the press.585 In practice, legislation relating to sedition, criminal defamation, and the dissemination of false information have constrained these rights (see also Journalists and media workers). In some cases, authorities have banned online content; and occasionally, internet service providers have blocked access to websites, particularly those promoting separatist agendas, such as pro-Biafra platforms, following directives from the Nigerian Communications Commission. 586 In April 2025, for instance, authorities prohibited radio stations from airing a song that criticises President Bola Tinubu and his administration's policies.587 While the Constitution guarantees the right to peaceful assembly, federal and state authorities routinely prohibit or disperse public gatherings deemed to pose a threat to national security or likely to provoke political, ethnic, or religious unrest.588 See also 2.7 Protesters.

In Nigeria, political actors, parties (and separatist movements589) frequently mobilise support along ethnic and religious lines. According to Freedom House, some communities may experience underrepresentation or neglect, particularly in regions where they constitute a minority or where their affiliated political parties do not hold power.590 Separatist groups in the South-East as well as militant factions in the Niger Delta advocating for regional autonomy have continued to enjoy varying levels of local support.591 These movements are particularly active in areas where communities perceive themselves as politically, economically, and culturally marginalised.592

In an interview with the EUAA, a senior security advisor 593 described the attitude by the Nigerian government and its agents towards separatist agitation as ‘very negative, combative and repressive’. The same source noted that authorities are especially sensitive towards the Biafran agitation given its longer history and the consequences that led to the war between 1967 and 1970.594

Local and international organisations reported that the Nigerian army has perpetrated various abuses, including extrajudicial killings and torture, particularly during operations against insurgent groups in the North and separatist movements in the South-East.595 (See also EUAA

COI Report – Nigeria Security Situation November 2025).

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  Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report Nigeria, 19 March 2024, url, p. 9

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  The source is a Nigerian senior security advisor, working for an international research organisation that monitors conflict dynamics across the world. The source wished to remain anonymous for security and operational reasons.

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  Nigerian senior security advisor, online interview with EUAA, 30 July 2025

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