



KIDNAPPING & SLAVERY IN NIGERIA

October 2021



Image by USAID on Flickr
(CC BY-NC 2.0)

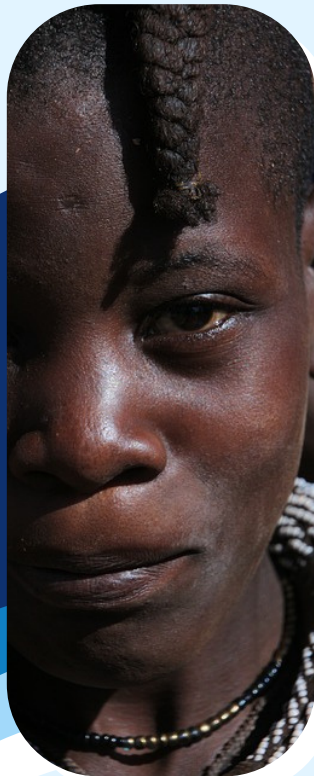


Image by Alheri Bawa
Magaji



CONTENTS:

- 01** What constitutes slavery and slavery-like conditions?
- 02** International, Regional, & Domestic Law Prohibiting Slavery
- 03** Religious Makeup of Nigeria
- 05** Regional History of Religious Fundamentalism and Rise of Extremism
- 09** Modern Manifestations of Slavery Perpetrated by Boko Haram
- 19** Modern Manifestations of Slavery Perpetrated by Fulani Militants
- 23** Conclusion & Recommendations
- 24** References

I. What Constitutes Slavery and Slavery-Like Conditions?

The majority of us in the Western World view slavery as an unjust, inhumane, and antiquated practice from which we seek to distance ourselves while simultaneously acknowledging our ancestors' direct or indirect complicity in. An uncomfortable truth, however, is that slavery in its multitude of forms persists to this day in nearly every country, even though we may not recognize it unless someone were to point it out to us. Unfortunately, our perceptions of what constitutes slavery are outdated, and we either unintentionally overlook or consciously ignore the myriad of modern practices taking place which subject human beings to some form of exploitation.⁽¹⁾ The International Labour Organization estimates that no fewer than 40.3 million people are subjected to modern slavery at any given time, 24.9 million of whom are currently entrapped in forced labor schemes (i.e., domestic, manual, sexual servitude) and the remaining 15.4 of whom are confined to forced marriages. Regrettably, a sizable portion of those vulnerable to modern slavery are women and children.⁽²⁾

The earliest international definition of slavery was included in the League of Nations' 1926 Slavery Convention, which explains that "slavery is the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised". It further clarifies that "the slave trade includes all acts involved in the capture, acquisition or disposal of a person with the intent to reduce him to slavery; all acts involved in the acquisition of a slave with a view to selling or exchanging him; all acts of disposal by sale or exchanging him; all acts of disposal by sale or exchange of a slave acquired with a view to being sold or exchanged, and, in general, every act of trade or transport in slaves."⁽³⁾ Later, the 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery further elaborated what practices constitute slavery, including: debt bondage, serfdom, forced marriage, and child sexual exploitation.⁽⁴⁾ Moreover, broader "slavery-like practices" include exploitation of migrant workers, trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation and forced prostitution, organ harvesting, and incest."⁽⁵⁾



II. International, Regional, & Domestic Law Prohibiting Slavery

There exist multiple international conventions prohibiting slavery and slavery-like practices. The aforementioned 1926 Slavery Convention stipulates that “the High Contracting Parties undertake, each in respect of the territories placed under its sovereignty, jurisdiction, protection, suzerainty or tutelage, so far as they have not already taken the necessary steps: (a) to prevent and suppress the slave trade; (b) to bring about, progressively and as soon as possible, the complete abolition of slavery in all its forms.”⁽⁶⁾ Nigeria ratified the Slavery Convention in 1961 and in 1993 also ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which in Article 8 states that “no one shall be held in slavery; slavery and the slave-trade in all their forms shall be prohibited”, and that “no one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour.”⁽⁷⁾ The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime prohibits trafficking in persons, which includes “slavery or practices similar to slavery”⁽⁸⁾; Nigeria ratified both the Convention and its Protocol in 2001.

With regards to regional and domestic provisions prohibiting slavery, Article 5 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights states that “every individual shall have the right to the respect of the dignity inherent in a human being and to the recognition of his legal status. All forms of exploitation and degradation of man particularly slavery, slave

trade, torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment and treatment shall be prohibited.”⁽⁹⁾ Nigeria has also included in its own national legislation provisions prohibiting slavery, and Article 34 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria nearly identically reflects the provisions of the African Charter, stating that “every individual is entitled to “no person shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment; no person shall be held in slavery or servitude; [and] no person shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour”.⁽¹⁰⁾ Article 369 of Nigeria’s Criminal Code Act of 1990 stipulates that any individual who trades, purchases, sells, holds, or transports any slave, or who receives any person in servitude, “is guilty of slave dealing and is liable to imprisonment for fourteen years”.⁽¹¹⁾



III. Religious Makeup of Nigeria

While there are few recent absolute statistics regarding the religious makeup in Nigeria, it is widely accepted that approximately half of the nation's residents identify as Muslim, with the remaining half identifying as Christian. For example, The Future of World Religions projects that 51% of Nigerians are Muslim, 47% are Christian, and that minority religionists including Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Baha'is, atheists, and others account for only an accumulated 2% of the population.⁽¹²⁾ Some other organizations, however, estimate that the gap between religious identification is much smaller, such as Open Doors who calculates that 95,358,000 Nigerians are Christian (46.3%), 95,300,000 are Muslim (46.2%), and the majority of remaining citizens are ethno-religionists (7.2%).⁽¹³⁾ A recent study based on multiple surveys in Nigeria suggests that the next twenty to thirty years will witness a gradual decline in identification with Christianity and a gradual increase in identification with Islam among Nigerian citizens, and that "the Muslim-identified population is likely on track to have become an absolute majority of Nigerian adults, possibly within a decade with widespread implications, including for electoral politics."⁽¹⁴⁾

Geographically, the northern half of Nigeria is home to the majority of the nation's Muslims and the southern half is primarily comprised of Christian citizens. This visible geographic-religious divide is due in part to the ethnic makeup of the country, as the predominantly Muslim Hausa-Fulani ethnic group lives in the North, and the predominantly Christian Igbo

ethnic group resides in the South; the Yoruba ethnic group which contains large proportions of both Muslims and Christians are generally located in the Southwest portion of the nation.⁽¹⁵⁾ Historically, Islam's presence in Nigeria can be traced back to pre-colonial times as trade routes and Muslim traders operated in the northern regions. Christianity was introduced later during the period of European colonialism and, by extension, Catholic missionary work that was generally confined to the southern Niger-Delta region.⁽¹⁶⁾ It is important to note that, while there certainly exists a discernible religious division between Nigeria's geographic regions, there are still portions of Christians who live in the north and Muslims who live in the south. For example, in some northern Nigerian states there are many isolated indigenous Christian communities that in the past have not been appropriately or sufficiently quantified and who remain vulnerable to religious persecution by the broader Muslim neighboring communities.⁽¹⁷⁾

The Middle Belt of Nigeria - consisting of the states Niger, Kwara, Kogi, Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, Adamawa, Taraba, and southern portions of Kaduna and Bauchi - has in recent years become an area of great concern as it has been the location of numerous confrontations between Muslims and Christians. Environmental degradation and terrorist activity in Northern Nigeria have driven predominantly Muslim Fulani herders southwards towards the Middle Belt, where Christian farmers reside.⁽¹⁸⁾ While land, water, and resource use has been a driver of violence in the region, it is undeniable that the violence has taken on a dimension of religious extremism, as radical Fulani militants

(only a small portion of the largely peaceful Fulani ethnic group) have waged targeted attacks primarily on Christian communities in which they brutally murder or otherwise seriously injure men, women, young children, and the elderly. Moreover, Christian churches have also become a target for destruction and arson by Fulani militants.⁽¹⁹⁾ Bishop William A. Avenya of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Gboko, Nigeria, stated in his remarks to the United States House Foreign Affairs Committee Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission in December 2020:

“Not intending to downplay the magnitude of the atrocities and mass killings in other parts of the country, especially in the north, it is depressing that our Middle Belt region has truly become a vale of tears, a region where mass burials are very common. [...] How can one explain a scenario where as many as a hundred innocent and defenseless villagers are killed in one single attack and no one says anything about it? Since the consistent attacks began some five years ago, there has hardly been a single day gone without killing in one part of the region or the other. [...] Besides, there is a high probability that the killings have a religious undertone. The targeted victims give a clear index to the religious connotation of this carnage. Also, the absolute impunity and unchallenged audacity with which these attacks are committed creates a feeling that it is a premeditated and pre-planned onslaught on the targeted populations and regions, especially when this is considered in the context of historical developments.”⁽²⁰⁾

It is also essential to note the legal context upon which Nigeria operates, and the influence of faith on governance and

jurisprudence. Nigeria’s president, chief justice, senate president, speaker of the house, and majority leader each identify as Muslim; Chief Justice Ibrahim Tanko Muhammad as recently as December 2019 advocated for more inclusion of Shari’ah law in the national constitution.⁽²¹⁾ The constitution already permits states to establish their own Shari’ah courts and draft criminal provisions based on Shari’ah interpretation, and twelve northern Nigerian states have done so: Zamfara, Kano, Sokoto, Katsina, Bauchi, Borno, Jigawa, Kebbi, Yobe, Kaduna, Niger, and Gombe. Though these courts are encouraged to only oversee cases of family law, Kano State’s Shari’ah court as recently as August 2020 charged a 22-year-old Islamic gospel singer Yahaya Sharif-Aminu with blasphemy for his song which allegedly contained derogatory remarks about the Prophet.⁽²²⁾ In late January 2021, another Shari’ah court in Kano charged with blasphemy and sentenced 16-year-old boy Omar Farouq to 10 years in prison after he had allegedly insulted Allah during an argument with a friend; fortunately, the court overturned Farouq’s conviction.⁽²³⁾ As is exemplified in the aforementioned cases, Kano State and numerous other northern states have implemented their own blasphemy laws which nearly identically reflect Nigeria’s national Criminal Code Act Article 204 stating that “any person who does an act which any class of persons considers a public insult on their religion [...] is guilty of a misdemeanor and is liable to imprisonment for two years”.⁽²⁴⁾ This is despite that the enforcement of blasphemy laws is inconsistent with international human rights, as has been determined by the United Nations Human Rights Committee in its General Comment No. 34 in 2011⁽²⁵⁾ and by UN Special Rapporteurs on numerous occasions.⁽²⁶⁾

IV. Regional History of Religious Fundamentalism and Rise of Extremism

“The establishment of an antistate, reformist religious community [in] itself is not an unusual development in the region’s history of insurrection and protest; however, no previous group in modern Nigerian history has perpetrated such widespread or sustained violence.”(27)

In the above excerpt, the author notes that criminal activity such as that of Boko Haram, which she is referencing, does not occur within a vacuum in Nigeria; rather, it is necessary to consider the multitude of interconnected factors that have created an environment conducive to radical religious activity. As previously mentioned, Islam had strong historical roots dating back to the 11th century height of commerce, and the religion began spreading more widely to Nigeria’s Hausa and Fulani communities by 14th century. It was around this time as well that Northern Nigeria experienced its first manifestation of religious fundamentalism with the jihad of Ali Yaji; in 1350, Yaji declared himself the first Sultan of Kano, dissolved the priesthood of the local Hausa animist religion of Bori, and set off to transform the regional Hausa kingdoms into Islamic sultanates.(28) In 1804, Fulani scholar Usman dan Fodio initiated a jihad “abolishing syncretistic beliefs and rituals, eliminating all innovations contrary to the Quran and Sharia”, and “encouraging less devout Muslims to practice orthodox or pure Islam”, and in the same year he established the Sokoto Caliphate which spread across regions in Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Nigeria, and which lasted until the introduction of British colonial rule in 1095.

(29) In the century between Usman dan Fodio’s jihad – which was later furthered by dan Fodio’s brother Abdullahi and son Mohammed Bello – and British rule, “the relationship between the Far North and the Middle Belt changed and was characterized by three major activities: slave raiding, slave trade and slavery.” Radical Hausa, Fulani, and Kanuri jihadists were primarily active in the Belt region capturing slaves they would forcefully siphon into the Trans-Sahara Trade Route for Arabs and the Trans-Atlantic Trade Route for Europeans.(30) Numerous individuals have pointed out that the locations where Fulani militant kidnappers are carrying out attacks and abductions today are nearly the same geographical regions where past radical Fulani jihadists were engaging in similar activities two centuries ago during reign of the Sokoto Caliphate and the following period of transforming relations in the Middle Belt.

During the turn of the century in the early 1900s, slave-raiding was also a common occurrence in the Mandara Mountain regions of northern Cameroon. One of the most notorious slave-raiders at the time, radical Fulani chief Hamman Yaji, lived “on the slaving frontier of the precolonial Sokoto Caliphate”, and kept a diary of his daily activities between 1912 and 1927 that shed light on the history of slavery in the West Africa region and influenced the activities of today’s militant groups such as Boko Haram in Nigeria. In just eight years between 1912 and 1920, for example Yaji and his subordinates kidnapped some 1600 slaves – predominantly girls and young women – as well as stole material goods

from civilians.⁽³¹⁾ Through the excerpts of Yaji's diary, it appears the targets of his plundering and castigation were people he referred to as "pagans", who Yaji and his group raided, enslaved, and brutally killed:

"On Tuesday the 30th Laihaji the pagans called Shikawa brought me 10 slave-girls. I also sent soldiers to Kamale, but they did not reach the Arnado's compound and only got a female slave whose hand had been cut off and who was as stupid as a goat. This made me very angry with them."

"On Tuesday the 27th of Haram Tumbindu Haramji I found that my slave-girl in the absence of her fellow slaves had said that she would not prepare my food for me. Why she would not cook for me I do not know, but anyway the result was that I got no food from her and was obliged to buy it."

"On Wednesday the 20th of Sumatendu Waube I sent my people to the pagans of Midiri and Bula and they captured 48 slave-girls and 26 cattle and we killed 5 persons."

"On Thursday the 27th of Juldandu I sent Fadhl al Nar with his men to raid Sukur and they captured 80 slaves, of whom I gave away 40. We killed 27 men and women and 17 children. On the same day I sent a force to raid Dufur and they killed 8 pagans. The pagans killed the leader of my forces and captured one rifle."⁽³²⁾

During the outset of British colonial rule in the early 1900s, the Northern Nigerian Protectorate operated via a system of indirect rule, and this actually solidified and centralized the authority of Hausa-Fulani leaders; the protectorate itself became a "distinct political unit in which Muslim and

non-Muslim communities were brought under the control of Hausa-Fulani Muslim rulers with clearly defined jurisdictions". Moreover, it was during this period of British history that Islamic law became formalized as the primary form of jurisprudence in Northern Nigeria, and this was also when slavery was first illegalized.⁽³³⁾ Concurrently, "British administrators strengthened Fulani conquerors and imposed their political hegemony on the 'subject' peoples of the region. However, this expedient system of local administration was incongruous with the diverse religious, social, and political realities of the vast region." The British authorities' initial preference towards Islamic political rule derived from Muslim leaders' acceptance and legitimation of indirect colonial rule. It was also at this time, however, that senior colonial officials became increasingly aware of how religious tensions could negatively affect local administration. Referred to as 'pagans', minority non-Muslim religious communities were in some areas of Northern Nigeria nearly completely subjugated by Fulani leaders, and in other regions were constantly in a state of rebellion. In Adamawa Province, for example, when Yunguru pagans' revolt against Hausa-Fulani tax collectors caused the death of a British-backed Hausa local leader, British authorities responded by massacring Yunguru villagers; "to local [pagan] 'tribes' in the Bauchi Plains, British colonial taxation was seen as an offshoot of the slave raids of Hausa-Fulani Muslims rulers after the Sokoto Jihad of the previous century." In the 1930s, under Commander Donald Cameron, Northern Nigeria underwent reformation that tore at the autonomy of non-Muslims and "set the stage for consolidation of an ethno-regional power structure vested in the educationally advanced Southern Nigerian Christian elite and Northern Muslim rulers" and thus caused religious identity to assume greater importance

during the decolonization process in the late 1950s.

More recently, Nigeria's 1999 transition to democracy via the newly introduced Constitution marked a visible decline in Nigerian state power and an increase in federal power. One of the largest debates in Nigeria at the turn of the millennium regarded whether predominantly Muslim northern states would be permitted to enforce Shariah law, and thus was born "religiopolitical patronage networks" by which politicians would encourage Shariah law implementation as a means to garner more "broad-based Muslim support to win office". Meanwhile, the northeast of Nigeria began to experience how "democratization did not act as an equalizer but rather entrenched the divide between the haves and the have-nots". It is at this point in time that Mohammed Yusuf, who would go on to form Boko Haram, became disillusioned with democracy as well as his and his peers' poor economic situation and lack of opportunities, involved himself in the Salafist movement, and grew frustrated that "political enthusiasm for sharia had been little more than a ploy for temporarily buying support." With his list of grievances, Yusuf carved out his own extremist ideology and sought to establish Boko Haram.(34)

Founded by Mohammed Yusuf as early as 2001 or 2002, Boko Haram, also known as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad, is an active radical Islamist militant organization opposed to Western civilization and the secularization in Nigeria.(35) Similar to other extremist "Salafi-jihadist" groups, Boko Haram declares those who don't align

with their interpretation of Islam as apostates, and they declare right and the duty to revolt against "allegedly infidel states" and establish "pure Islamic societ[ies]".(36) It is important to note, however, that many Salafi leaders, though they share theological perspectives on Islam, have generally denounced Boko Haram's use of violence, "even as Boko Haram borrows their rhetorical styles and poaches among their followers."

Within the past decade, during which Boko Haram experienced its greatest levels of terrorist activity, the militant group became infamous for its kidnappings of young students from schools. Scholars have noted that the inspiration for the group's variation of activities and locations of influence can be traced back to the operations of influential figures of the 19th and 20th centuries. Yusuf himself had looked to Usman dan Fodio's Sokoto Caliphate as an inspiration and model upon which it based its own ideal of Islamic expansion. Moreover,

"The links between some of these historical forms of violence and Boko Haram today are indirect: some border populations identify Boko Haram as slave-raiders, and indeed there are close parallels between the ways in which Boko Haram treats (especially) captives and the actions of slave raiders a century ago. [...] Madagali, Hamman Yaji's headquarters just a century ago, is only eighty kilometers from Chibok. In 2014, Boko Haram would kidnap hundreds of young women from the Government Girls Secondary School in that town, and they were of about the same age as the girls who were the most prized targets of Hamman Yaji's raids. [...] Today, non-Muslim people along the Nigeria-Cameroon

borderlands refer to Boko Haram as hamaji, a local term for 'slave-raider' derived from their memory of Hamman Yaji's depredations."(37)

It is also important to note that religious differences and religious fundamentalism are not the sole factors contributing to extremist and criminal activity in Nigeria at the hands of Boko Haram, radical Fulani militants, and Islamic state West Africa Province (ISWAP). For example, as previously mentioned, economic inequality and perceptions of political corruption have acted as grievances upon which to base militant activity; scholars have also emphasized how climate change and environmental degradation, poor governance, a proliferating arms trafficking network all plays roles in the disillusionment with society and subsequent radicalization process.(38) Meanwhile, the general climate of insecurity, the inefficiency of protective services such as police and military outfits(39), and the substandard criminal justice system(40) create a breeding ground for militant groups to operate with relative impunity. It is therefore no coincidence that Nigeria, which ranks third on the 2020 Global Terrorism Index and scores 8.3 out of 10 regarding "the impact of terrorism"(41) also holds a remarkably low human development index score of 0.539 (out of 1.0) and is positioned at 161 out of 189 countries and territories with regards to human development.(42)



V. Modern Manifestations of Slavery Perpetrated by Boko Haram

i. Kidnappings

For many years, Boko Haram was not generally considered a major threat to the nation's stability and they remained largely unheard of by the international community until April 2014, when they conducted the aforementioned mass abduction of 276 schoolgirls from Government Secondary School for Girls in Chibok. Though many of the original students have since been released, there still remain approximately 100 of the Chibok girls in Boko Haram captivity, and stories of the freed girls have shed light on the militant group's use of abductees for slavery and domestic servitude.⁽⁴³⁾ This incident, termed the Chibok Kidnapping, served as a "blueprint of sorts", as Boko Haram launched similar mass abductions in the years following.⁽⁴⁴⁾ Joe Parkinson, the Africa Bureau Chief for the Wall Street Journal, explains that Boko Haram's kidnappings are conducted with the ideological purpose of recruiting new members to carry out the group's mission, as well as obtaining women and girls who will serve the group and rear militant children. The 2014 Chibok Kidnapping also spurred bandits unrelated to Boko Haram to conduct copycat missions, though these are often carried out as a means to extort ransom payments;⁽⁴⁵⁾ however, with news of Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari's request that governors stop paying ransoms in exchange for the release of kidnapped students, we fear that militants may retain their victims and exploit them in ways similar to Boko Haram as a means of ensuring some

benefit from the kidnappings that they dedicate so much planning and many resources to.

Four years after the Chibok Kidnapping, Boko Haram faction group ISWAP launched a similar mass abduction of 110 schoolgirls from Government Girls Science and Technology College in Dapchi, Yobe State on 19 February 2018.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Five of the girls passed away during the kidnapping, a few were able to escape, and every single Dapchi girl was released the following month except for Christian girl Leah Sharibu. At 14 years old at the time of the abduction, Leah remains in captivity three years on and is the only Dapchi girl that Boko Haram/ISWAP has not freed. Some of the girls who spent time with Leah in captivity explain that this is because her refusal to renounce Christianity recite the Islamic declaration angered her abductors.⁽⁴⁷⁾ Now 18 years old, Leah has since been coerced to renounce her faith and convert to Islam, forced to marry a top Boko Haram commander, and has reportedly given birth to two children at a young age.⁽⁴⁸⁾ In October 2021, Aid to the Church in Need International was able to contact Protestant Reverend Gideon Para-Mallam who has worked on Leah's case for years. Reverend Para-Mallam confirmed that Leah remains in Boko Haram captivity and is both alive and healthy; unfortunately, however, there is not much opportunity for the Christian community to negotiate her release, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, Reverend Para-Mallam revealed that the recent death of Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau will unlikely have a positive impact on Leah's case, such as a possible release.



2015: 10-year-old Sema after her release from 8 months in Boko Haram captivity

Image by EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid on Flickr (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

It is important to note that over the past few years, Boko Haram has conducted fewer and fewer mass kidnappings from schools and educational institutions. While in 2014, Boko Haram was responsible for approximately 400 abductions, by 2018 the number had halved to 200, and in 2020 the militant group conducted 100 mass kidnappings, still a remarkably high number and yet just a fraction of the amount it had conducted six years prior.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Regardless, there still remain hundreds of kidnapped women and girls in Boko Haram captivity for years on end, and many of them continue to be subjected to sexual, domestic, and militant servitude and slavery-like conditions. While many of them were originally abducted some months and years ago and may have now assimilated into Boko Haram society, it is essential to remember the conditions under which these women and girls were acquired and the slavery-like circumstances in which they remain to this day.

For instance, as recently as August 2021, over 1,000 Boko Haram militants surrendered to the Nigerian government and brought along with them some of the female hostages the group had taken over the years. Two of the hostages, Chibok girls Ruth Pogu and Hassan Adamu, “emerged from the jihadist group’s Sambisa forest hideout in recent days, alongside men who called themselves their ‘husbands’ and children born in captivity”.⁽⁵⁰⁾ We remain concerned that tens of Chibok girls continue to remain in Boko Haram custody seven years on with no guarantee of freedom. Listed below are some of the slavery-like practices that survivors have attested to being subjected to at the hands of Boko Haram.

ii. Forced Marriage and Sexual Slavery

"A lot of young girls in Boko Haram camp[s] are married off ... if they discover you are pregnant, they cut the mother's womb, bring out the baby and slash it into pieces ... they believe the baby produced by the members of the sect are the truly pure beings while all others are infidels..." (51)

Indeed, numerous women and girls that have been released from Boko Haram captivity over the years have shed light on the reality of forced marriage and sexual exploitation. In April 2019, Lydia Musa, who was kidnapped at the young age of 14 by Boko Haram militants during an attack on her village on Borno State, revealed that she and two other girls were held at gunpoint and threatened with death if they refused to marry their captors; according to Anietie Ewang of Human Rights Watch, Boko Haram views kidnapped women and girls as "spoils of war", rewards for militancy.(52) One man who spent time in captivity revealed that each night he witnessed Boko Haram fighters enter the women and girls' area to pick individuals to have sex with. Sexual enslavement is a routine act of violence inflicted upon abducted girls and women, and pregnancy is one of the most common outcomes. Victims are forced to carry the children of their captors and rapists, and one survivor, Halima, who gave birth to a twin boy and girl while in Boko Haram captivity, revealed that while there is a huge celebration each time a boy is born into the camp - for the group has thus gained a future militant and child soldier - a baby girl is hardly welcomed. Should a woman ever resist her husband's sexual demands, she is often threatened with rape, physical

beatings, and sometimes food and water deprivation; as a result, "young female captives [are] tormented [...] so much that the only option to get anything was to use sex as [a] mode of exchange".(53) As a result of the nonconsensual and unsafe sexual activity that these women and girls are subjected to, many who have since been rescued from camps test positive for HIV/AIDS, Gonorrhea, Hepatitis, and other sexually transmitted infections and psychosomatic illnesses caused by trauma.

In May 2015, Nigerian soldiers found a 23-year-old mother of four, Asabe Aliyu, vomiting blood at the time of her rescue; she explained that during her time with Boko Haram, militants took turns raping her relentlessly, that she was impregnated, and that her captors were attempting to coerce her into an unwanted marriage at the time of her escape. Only days later, another rescued captive girl revealed that she was raped 15 times a day by 15 Boko Haram terrorists "throughout the time she was with the Islamic insurgents before she could escape from their den".(54)

In March 2021, the United Nations Secretary-General in their report to the Security Council revealed that Boko Haram and its relevant factions and splinter groups continued to engage in mass abductions in the northeastern and northwestern regions of Nigeria; "the Government's special investigations panel on sexual and gender-based violence documented 210 cases of conflict-related sexual violence committed in 2020, including rape and forced marriage, affecting 94 girls, 86 women and 30 boys, noting that such crimes continue to be

chronically underreported owing to stigma and harmful social norms". Regrettably, while the Office of the Attorney General established a special unit to evaluate sexual crimes committed by Boko Haram and its factions, no prosecutions have been made to date.⁽⁵⁵⁾

According to de Brouwer, de Volder, and Paulussen,

"In its terror campaign against the Nigerian state and its people, Boko Haram has used sexual violence/human trafficking as a deliberate strategy. The tactical sexual violence/human trafficking humiliates the Nigerian state and 'destroys the social fabric of society, where a high premium is placed on the chastity of its women, [and] has a devastating impact on the victims - physically as well as psychologically.' Women and girls have been 'targeted for abduction and sexual abuse ... as part of [Boko Haram's] financial calculus and self-perpetuation".⁽⁵⁶⁾

Image by [USAID](#) on Flickr ([CC BY-NC 2.0](#))



iii. Domestic Servitude

Boko Haram militants have routinely forced abducted girls and women into domestic servitude which leaves them working for hours, days, and weeks on end to maintain the militant camps and feed the very individuals who uprooted them from their schools and communities. In 2016, 21 released Chibok girls informed reporters that Boko Haram militants gave them two 'choices' upon being captured: either join the group and become the militants' wives and sex objects, or become domestic slaves tasked with preparing meals, repairing roads, treating injuries, cleaning the camps, maintaining the weapons, fetching water, and more. All the while, as they were forced to endure these hours of domestic and manual labor, many were deprived of sleep and fed very small amounts of food.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Scholars have indicated that Nigeria's history of upholding traditional gender roles has influenced Boko Haram's use of women for the above activities.

At the same time, female captives of Boko Haram are often forced to spy on and recruit other vulnerable women and girls to membership or servitude within the militant group, despite that they themselves are painfully aware of the life that these individuals will be subjected to.⁽⁵⁸⁾ For example, those abducted women who have succumbed to the militant group's pressure to convert to Islam and marry fighters are responsible for acting as role models and convincing newly kidnapped young women and girls to follow in their footsteps. Some are tasked with preparing other abducted women and girls for suicide missions, such as by painting their bodies with henna and styling their hair.

iv. Coercive Religious Conversion

"Boko Haram's concept of women is based on this Sunni ultra-Salafi radicalism. According to Lela Gilbert, women are traditionally treated as second-class citizens under this Salafi ideology. However, Christian women are in even worse straits than Muslims because they are the weakest members of an infidel outcast. Whatever abuses Muslim women and girls may suffer, Christian females' suffering is aggressively more intense and life-threatening."(59)

Abducted girls of the Christian faith, such as the aforementioned Leah Sharibu, face a unique situation upon abduction by Boko Haram and similar militant outfits, all due to their faith. Abubakar Shekau, who led Boko Haram from 2002 until his death in 2021, has solidified the group's stance that any individual who does not subscribe to Boko Haram's specific and strict interpretation of Islam are permissible as targets of conflict and abductions; by that logic, Boko Haram has historically targeted Christian girls, whom they regard as "infidels" and "apostates", in their abductions. It is important to note that, while Boko Haram and faction group ISWAP generally refrain from kidnapping women and girls they view as Muslims, "both groups have abducted Muslim women they consider to be apostates", and "Boko Haram has taken a much more expansive view as to what constitutes apostasy and has therefore captured far more Muslim women."(60) The Hausa-language name of the group Boko Haram in English translates to the phrase "Westernization is Sacrilege"(61) or other variations, including "Western education is a sin"(62), clearly establishes that the group

harbors hostility towards individuals – even Muslims – who attend western-style educational institutions or partake in allegedly westernized activities.

In March 2021, Naomi Adamu, who was 24 years old at the time of the 2014 Chibok kidnapping and who was referred to as 'Our Mother' by her younger classmates, published a book detailing her experiences during the three years she spent in Boko Haram captivity. Adamu had repeatedly and fervently refused to marry her captors, renounce Christianity, and convert to Islam. Rather, she and some of the other kidnapped girls used the diaries they were provided with – which they were directed to use to practice writing and reciting Islamic verses – to write Bible verses instead and detail their daily lives in captivity. In her own personal journal, Adamu told of how she was physically beaten and threatened with death each time she refused to convert and marry top Boko Haram commanders.(63)

In December 2017 in exchange for the release of five Boko Haram fighters from Nigerian prison, the militant group freed 82 of the original Chibok girls. They explained that, while "the militants assumed hard labor and deprivations would wear them down", the girls felt it only "strengthened their bond". A portion of the abducted Chibok girls were Muslim and were forced to endure sexual slavery, while the Christian girls – who accounted for the majority of the kidnapped students – were punished for their refusal to surrender to Islam:

"Christian girls who refused to yield were denied tents and forced to sleep under trees and in the rain. They cooked beans, rice and

yams for the militants, and ate little themselves, usually one meal near sunset. They were set to repair roads, treat injuries and amputate the limbs of wounded fighters. They buried the dead in shallow graves [...] To force the girls to study the teachings of Islam, the guards gave them flimsy notepads, some with cartoon characters on the cover, for transcribing recitations from the Quran. The girls were accustomed to copying lessons verbatim from the blackboard."(64)

One now-18-year-old Christian woman was abducted by Boko Haram in 2013 or 2014 and spent four years in captivity. She remembered that militants forced her and her fellow women and girls to learn Quranic verses, and that the punishment for failing to recite what they studied included physical assaults and lashings. She explained, "as a Christian, it meant they lashed me every day, because I could not learn. They'd lash me... and call me an infidel." Fortunately, she was able to escape alongside another female captive.(65)

In May 2017, Boko Haram circulated a video in which four of the original formerly-Christian Chibok girls were adorned in traditional Muslim clothing; the girls did not speak in the video and instead sat silently while their 'spokesperson' revealed that the girls did not wish to return home to their families because "they [their parents] are in the town (land) of kufr (disbelief). We want them [their parents] to accept Islam and join us in to practice the religion so we may rest in the Hereafter." Months later in 2018, Boko Haram released a similar video in which Chibok girls claimed that "we are very happy here. We thank God for his mercy on us. You are saying you will come and take us. Where will you take us to? Kufr? May God save us from disbelief. We are

the Chibok girls that you are crying to bring back. By God's will, we [will] never return to you."(66) With the exception of Stockholm Syndrome, the only explanation for these propaganda videos is that these abducted girls and women are forced to convert religions and act as if they are grateful for their new lives of total subjugation and servitude. It is also important to highlight the possibility that these girls are less-so resistant to being returned to their former lives and more-so fearful of their reception by their original communities. Scholars have noted that women associated with Boko Haram – whether by their abduction or willing participation in the group – face intense stigma by Nigerian society which views them as terrorists.(67)



2004: A Sunday School in Nigeria

Image by [Tom Miller](#) on Flickr (CC BY-SA 2.0)

In one final note on how Christian captives are viewed, treated, and utilized differently by Boko Haram than their Muslim counterparts, we can reference a few words spoken by Boko Haram former leader Abubakar Shekau himself. In response to the consideration over whether apostates could be enslaved, Shekau responded that "they said, it is not permissible for me to capture women participating in democracy, to fight them or to handle them as slaves. I replied to them that I will continue to capture and sell them just as our predecessors did. This is my creed."**(68)**

It is also important to note that Boko Haram's treatment of Christian captives does not occur within a vacuum, nor is it the militant group's only faith-centric violent activity. On Christmas Eve in 2020, Boko Haram killed more than 20 villagers of a Christian community in Borno State before kidnapping Pastor Bulus Yikura of the Church of the Brethren**(69)**; the group released him in March 2021 after receiving ransom.**(70)** A year prior, Boko Haram executed Pastor Lawan Andimi, who they had held in captivity for two weeks.**(71)**

v. Suicide Bombing and Militant Activity

It is no coincidence that an overwhelming majority of Boko Haram's suicide bombers are women; the militant group boasts an abhorrent record of training and grooming abducted girls and women to embark on suicide missions to instill terror on civilian populations. Numerous experts have made the important connection that Boko Haram's employment of female suicide bombers directly followed its April 2014 Chibok kidnapping of predominantly Christian girls

(72); it is horrifying to consider that some of the 100 remaining missing Chibok girls could have been forcibly converted to Islam and coerced into carrying out terrorist activities such as suicide missions. The Combating Terrorism Center reported that Boko Haram enlisted - possibly by force, deception/coercion, radicalization, etc. - 469 female suicide bombers between June 2014 and February 2018 in a total of 240 terrorist incidents resulting in 1,259 casualties (excluding the deaths of the suicide bombers).

*"There are further examples of women and girls who act under duress, with undue influence or drugs. In April 2017, the United Nations Children's Fund released a report detailing how 117 children, mostly girls, were manipulated, drugged or coerced into suicide missions. Some are suspected to be Chibok girls. [...] The story of Amina, who was abducted aged 16, forcibly recruited and deceived into detonating a bomb - something she ultimately did not go through with - is just one example."**(73)***

One girl who was 16 years old when she was kidnapped by the group in 2014, Hajja (pseudonym), was forced to marry the local commander; when her 'husband' perished during a Nigerian military airstrike, Hajja felt that becoming a suicide bomber would be her only opportunity to escape, as it would give her the chance to run away while out on a mission. In preparation for becoming suicide bombers, Hajja explains, women are brainwashed by Boko Haram commanders and led to believe that they would go to heaven if they "laid down their lives for Allah". She remembers that many of her female peers would fight for the chance to carry out

a suicide bombing mission. Another kidnapped girl, Aisha (pseudonym), revealed that sometimes Boko Haram militants would choose certain girls and women to be suicide bombers and, if they were resistant, would force them to ingest fruit pickled in some sort of liquid containing drugs which would make them euphoric, willing to take risks, and more easily subjugated.(74)

The aforementioned ability to subjugate and coerce women and girls to embark on suicide missions with the assistance of drugs is just one of the suspected reasons why Boko Haram uses female suicide bombers much more frequently and consistently than their male counterparts. Additionally, other reasons include that women and girls are regarded with far less suspicion and can move through large crowds easier than men, and that use of women and children as suicide bombers increases the shock factor tenfold; “female suicide bombing has been effective in hugely amplifying the key effects of terrorism as a tactic: creating fear, sending a symbolic message to diverse audiences, killing civilians, and asserting power over governments and communities.”(75) Other scholars have noted that female suicide bombers can easily conceal weapons in their conservative clothing, that women are more likely to evade body searches because of social rules, and that using women and girls allows the militant group to ‘save their men’.(76)

16-year-old Hadiza remembered that one night, she was asked to marry a Boko Haram militant; a day after she denied his request, one of the leaders explained that “she would be going to the happiest place she could imagine” and strapped to her waist a belt

outfitted with explosives. When she was coerced into embarking on her suicide mission alongside a 12-year-old girl, she escaped instead and sought the help of soldiers who were able to safely remove the detonation devices.(77) In November 2016, a young female suicide bomber surrendered to police and informed them that she had been abducted by Boko Haram two years prior and that she was being forced to conduct a suicide mission on Saint Hillary Catholic Church in Maiduguri.(78) 17-year-old Fatima explained that with a bomb strapped to her stomach and waist, she approached Nigerian soldiers with her hands in the air yelling, “I’m innocent! I’m not part of them [Boko Haram]! They forced me!” Other girls, including 14-year-old Maimuma, 15-year-old Falmata B., 14-year-old Fati, 16-year-old Falmata S., 16-year-old Amina, 16-year-old Maryam, and more, have told The New York Times their stories in which they are strapped with explosives, rushed out the door and into public, and ordered to detonate, all before realizing that “I knew very well that bomb would kill me” and that they wanted to escape before their lives were cut unfairly short against their will.

vi. Child Soldiers

Research over the past few years has also revealed Boko Haram’s tactic of recruiting abducted children – primarily boys – as child soldiers and militants. This is despite that Nigeria has ratified numerous accords which require the signatory governments to take measurable steps to eliminate the recruitment of child soldiers within their jurisdiction. For example, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of

Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict iterates that “States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that members of their armed forces who have not attained the age of 18 years do not take a direct part in hostilities” and that they “are not compulsorily recruited into their armed forces”.⁽⁷⁹⁾ It is important to note, however, that the optional protocol makes no mention of the forced recruitment of child soldiers by non-state actors such as militant groups and criminal gangs. Moreover, Article 22 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which Nigeria ratified in 2001⁽⁸⁰⁾, similarly stipulates that “States Parties to the present Charter shall take all necessary measures to ensure that no child shall take a direct part in hostilities and refrain in particular, from recruiting any child”.⁽⁸¹⁾ The charter does not make the distinction between recruitment of child soldiers by state or non-state actors, implying that signatory nations must work to combat child soldier recruitment in all instances regardless of the perpetrating entity.

Former Boko Haram captive Lydia Musa in April 2019 reflected on how she woke up each and every morning in the militant camp to see groups of boys as young as 10 years old wielding guns and learning how to carry out attacks and ambushes.⁽⁸²⁾ Also in April 2019, UNICEF released official numbers estimating that no fewer than 3,500 Nigerian children between the ages of 13 and 17 had been “recruited by non-state armed groups” such as Boko Haram from 2013 to 2017.⁽⁸³⁾ More Recently, in September 2020, authorities from the regional Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), which focuses on eradicating Boko Haram insurgency, highlighted a current uptick in the group’s use of child soldiers, as can be evidenced by recent videos showing children dressed in militant uniforms and holding assault rifles nearly as big as their own bodies.⁽⁸⁴⁾ And in July 2020, the United Nations Secretary-General reported the following:

“Boko Haram continued its campaign of recruiting and using children in Adamawa, Borno and Tobe States, mainly through abductions. The country task force verified the recruitment and use of 1,385 children (415 girls, 969 boys, 1 sex unknown) by the group, the majority of whom were recruited in 2017 (1,051), followed by 301 in 2018 and 33 in 2019. [...] Separately, with the spillover of Boko Haram’s activities beyond the borders of Nigeria, the United Nations verified the recruitment and use of children by Boko Haram in regions of countries bordering Nigeria, namely in the Far North Region of Cameroon (135 children), the Niger (46) and Chad (32).”⁽⁸⁵⁾



In 2020, Amnesty International interviewed 44 individuals who were kidnapped by Boko Haram while they were under the age of 18. A large portion of respondents were abducted from their communities in Michika and Madagali Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Adamawa State in the years 2014 and 2015. 12 of the interviewed individuals identified themselves as being kidnapped by the militant group and conscripted as soldiers against their will before the age of 15. At such young ages, the majority of these boys were forced to witness violence and even perpetrate acts of violence themselves.⁽⁸⁶⁾ The Nigerian military captured one 15-year-old boy who was recruited by Boko Haram to make bombs; in his five years of militancy, he estimated he had constructed some 500 bombs.⁽⁸⁷⁾

The New York Times in 2017 told the stories of 13-year-old fishermen Fannami, Zanna, and Mustapha (pseudonyms), who were abducted by Boko Haram and heard militants explain to them: "You people will know your mistakes. You have come to where you will enjoy your life. [...] It is God that chose you to be part of us to do the work of Allah. So if you cooperate, we work together. If you don't cooperate, whatever happens is left to you. We will train and equip you to go and kill pagans. Allahu Akbar!" Just a day after they were kidnapped, Fannami, Kolomi, and Mustapha had AK-47s with loaded ammunition shoved into their hands for training they had to participate in every single day. With the promise that if he performed poorly as a militant he would be beaten or killed, Fannami reluctantly killed innocent civilians and military personnel, kidnapped girls for rape, and engaged in atrocities that wracked him with guilt. Zanna

would long to escape and to avoid being recruited as a reinforcement on terrorist missions, saying to himself, "oh, this life, it is not reliable. Look at me, here I am doing what I did not bargain for." For a bit of time Mustapha had no reservations about his newfound power as a militant and participated in the killings until he became disillusioned: "We are always using blood to wash our hands. Blood of children or adults who are going to school. And that system may never stop." In weeks' and months' time and in separate incidents, Fannami, Zanna, and Mustapha escaped Boko Haram. When asked if he missed his life in Boko Haram activity and regrets his choice of escaping and becoming a driver, Mustapha responded that "I never in my life contemplated that the other life was better. That was life as an abductee, as a slave. This one is life in freedom."⁽⁸⁸⁾

Child soldiering places children not only in physical danger but also in lasting states of mental and psychological distress. For example, child soldiers are often placed on the front lines of terrorist attacks as a line of defense for older militants, and in the case of Boko Haram, they are sent out to their deaths on suicide missions so that the group can reserve the adult male fighters for activities with smaller probabilities of casualties.⁽⁸⁹⁾ Former child soldiers who have since escaped captivity and conscription often face many hardships in adapting to free society. In December 2019, former Boko Haram child soldier Ibrahim Kundiri revealed that he wishes he could return to the group, as his life since escape has been a struggle, with no opportunities to complete his education and find a suitable career; he similarly frets over the judgmental looks he receives when people find out he formerly worked for Boko

Haram. For Kundiri though, his participation in the group was a means of having food and shelter following the passing of his parents in 2014.(90)

VI. Modern Manifestations of Slavery Perpetrated by Fulani Militants

i. Kidnappings (And Related Attacks)

Over the past few years, we have seen more and more insurgents identified as likely Fulani militants conducting mass kidnappings similar to that which Boko Haram carried out at its height in between 2014 and 2018. Early in 2021, The Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar III, revealed during a meeting of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders' Association (MACBAN) that seven to eight out of every ten kidnappers arrested in Nigeria are Fulani. He does emphasize, however, that radical Fulani militants who engage in kidnapping, banditry, and other criminal activities do not represent the entirety of the Fulani people who are predominantly peaceful Muslims. (91)

On 24 August 2020, Fulani militants entered Chikun LGA, where they kidnapped three Christian students and a teacher from the Prince Academy School, and set fire to the local Aminchi Baptist Church; even after

some ransom money was paid, they were held until 11 October 2020.(92) In mid-February 2021, suspected Fulani militants abducted 42 individuals from the boarding Government Science College in Kagura, Niger state; of the 42 kidnapped individuals were 27 young students, three teachers, and 12 staff members and their family members. (93) About a week later on 26 February, some 100 suspected Fulani militants stormed the Government Girls Secondary School in Jangebe, Zamfara State, where they kidnapped 279 students between the ages of 10 and 17 before swiftly escaping in pick-up trucks and on motorbikes. The captors released all hostages days later on 2 March. (94) During the reunion celebrating the return of the children to their parents, which took place on 4 March, Nigerian armed forces allegedly opened fire after parents became disgruntled at the length of the ceremony and expressed urgency to leave before the roads became dark and unsafe.(95) On 11 March, unidentified gunmen ambushed the Federal College of Forestry Mechanization in Kaduna State by boring a hole in the school's perimeter walls; it is speculated that the assailants were radical Fulani militants, as ransom payments were made to an unnamed Fulani man in exchange for the release of the students in early May.(96) In late April, armed men believed to be Fulani militants violently entered Greenfield University in Kaduna State and kidnapped "an unspecified number" of individuals, though later estimates revealed that no fewer than 20 students and 3 staff personnel were were abducted; in the days following the incident, the captors killed a total of six students before releasing the remaining 14 in late May.(97) Also in May, Fulani militants abducted four Christian students from The King's School in

Plateau State's Barkin Ladi county, though three were able to escape and only one was transferred to a local Fulani militant camp.(98) On 5 July, suspected Fulani militants abducted nearly 180 students from Bethel Baptist High School in Maraban Rido, Kaduna State(99); in the months following the attack, the majority of the captive students were released appearing "weak, sick and tired".(100) On 1 September 2021, an abduction of 73 students from Government Day Secondary School by suspected Fulani militants caused Zamfara State authorities to temporarily close all primary and secondary schools across the state.(101)

One local Kwakware resident lamented the kidnapping, stating "this is one incident among many. It is the sustained and targeted kidnappings of Christian girls in northern Nigeria, after which they are forcefully converted to Islam and married off, thereby becoming sex slaves." Days before Hassana and Hussein's abduction, another teenage girl was kidnapped in Soba on August 30 and forced to convert to Islam. Earlier in the month of August and across the southern border in Katsina State, suspected Fulani militants killed ECWA pastor Reverend Alubara Audu and three other Christians as



2020: 3-year-old Evelyn, whose mother and older brother were killed by Fulani militants in front of her. She cries for her mother daily, and she sustained an injury on her head from a machete

Photos provided by Alheri Bawa Magaji

It is important to note that schools and other educational institutions are not the only targets for Fulani militant abductions and attacks. In late September 2020, suspected Fulani militants shot and wounded Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) elder Ibrahim Garba in Katsina State and kidnapped Garba's twin teenage daughters Hassan and Hussein.

well as kidnapped numerous individuals associated with ECWA: Sani Peter, 25; Esther Sani Peter, 20; Daniel Shuaibu; Abednego Paul; and Pius Gargai.(102) In late July 2021, Fulani militants killed the son of Christian woman Celina Ishaku, set the family's home on fire, and shot at funeral attendees; two years prior, the same group of militants killed

Ishaku's husband.(103) Also in July, Fulani militants kidnapped Reverend Danlami Yakwoi of ECWA in Kogi State alongside two of his sons and a nephew; one of his sons informed upon release that his father had been killed in captivity. Within the same week and also in Kogi State, Fulani militants abducted Christian Dr. Solomon Nidiamaka from General Hospital.(104) It is important to note that some abductions of clergy by Fulani militants are not accompanied by demands for ransom, implying that the vicious attacks perhaps have more to do with the faith of the victim than about securing money.(105)

ii. Adoption of Boko Haram Tactics

"More often than not, kidnapping is accompanied by bodily injury, sexual assault, or a demand for ransom. Interviews with women in Ladugga axis of Southern Kaduna, Numana in Sanga LGA as well as Godogodo in Jema'a LGA reveal that Christian women in the aforementioned locations have been kidnapped for varying periods, ranging from some days to months. It was revealed that the kidnapped Christian women were often subjected to sexual assault. Some of the affected women were kidnapped by [radical/militant] Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen either on their farms or on their way to streams to fetch water in the evening." (106)

Though there is no evidence yet as to whether Fulani militants have adopted Boko Haram's use of sex slavery of kidnapped

women and girls, it is important to highlight that some recent statements by local leaders and broader organizations have alleged this to be true. Jonathan Asake, president of the Southern Kaduna People's Union (SOKAPU) highlighted last year in May that Fulani militants have attacked numerous communities, such as Galiwyi in Chikun local government area (LGA), "chased away the men and turned their wives and daughters into sex slaves after occupying the community."(107) In June 2021, the Committee to Free Nigerian Slaves (CFNS) issued a public statement that "since 2001, Boko Haram terrorists, Fulani militants, and other extremist groups tied to the Islamic State and al-Qaeda, have raided Nigerian villages, killed tens of thousands, and enslaved an untold number of women and children" in domestic and sexual servitude, while kidnapped boys are "beaten and brainwashed into becoming child soldiers".(108)

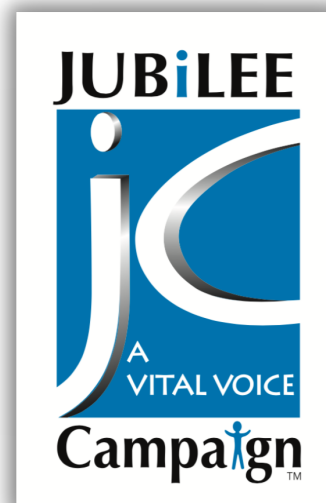
In March 2021, SaharaReporters revealed that they had been informed by military sources that in Yobe State, Boko Haram fighters and Fulani militants have formed a sort of coalition by which Boko Haram fighters train Fulani militants - including young underaged boys - how to use firearms and other weapons as well as how to coordinate attacks; in return, the Fulani militants will pay the Boko Haram fighters with cattle and foodstuffs. The known villages where such a partnership has been formed include Yobe State's Gonisaleri, Dawayya, and Abari villages of Geidam Local Government Area, as well as Tarmuwa and Yunusari LGAs and some parts of Adamawa State.(109) One of Jubilee Campaign's partner organizations, International Christian Concern, has highlighted that "The systematic

alliance is cause for great concern as Islamic extremism continues to spread throughout Africa. While many have tried to portray [militant] Fulani violence as back-and-forth exchanges between herders and farmers with no real religious motives, an alliance with Boko Haram further reveals the extremists agenda behind their attacks.”(110) We also would like to highlight that direct cooperation between the two groups has the potential to cause Fulani militants’ adoption of Boko Haram terror tactics; already, Fulani militants are engaging in mass kidnappings that surpass the frequency and proportions of those of Boko Haram. It is entirely possible that we may soon see Fulani militant groups partaking in enslaving captive girls and using them for domestic and sexual servitude; this prospect is only more plausible considering that Fulani militants may have already interacted with enslaved girls and women in Boko Haram camps.

Also in March 2021, the Institute for Security Studies reported that Boko Haram has been expanding its activities to north-western Nigeria and is teaming up with Fulani militants and other criminal bandits. One Boko Haram leader, Sadiku, is a Fulani individual, has been a major player in the partnership between militants; in 2019, Abubakar Shekau sent Sadiku to ensure that the planned murder of Adam Bitri (a member of Boko Haram who Shekau alleged betrayed him) would not negatively affect the cooperation radical Fulani militants and Boko Haram.(111)

In some cases already, the line between Fulani militants and Boko Haram has been blurred. In 2014, Abubakar Shekau’s Boko

Haram video, “Message to Fulanis” was circulated most notably in Niger and Katsina states in attempts to recruit radical Fulani to the terrorist organization.(112) Also in 2014, a group of radical Fulani in Taraba State confessed to their membership in Boko Haram and, by extension, their participation in terrorist activities and attacks in the region. (113) As recently as June 2020, Boko Haram circulated a video featuring fighters speaking multiple languages - English, Cameroonian French, Hausa - including Fulani, “greeting” militants in Zamfara and Niger States; this suggests that a portion of Boko Haram fighters in these states either have radical Fulani individuals among them or are in cooperation with Fulani militants. The Fulani-speaking individuals in the video called upon armed individuals across Nigeria and the broader Sahel to join the ranks of Boko Haram or otherwise to “strive harder for the sake of Allah” who has “instructed us to kill everyone unbelieving.” Experts on jihadi allegiance have reported that Hausa and Fulani militants in Nigeria’s Zamfara and Niger states have likely already come to an agreement or collaboration with Boko Haram.(114)



VII. Conclusion & Recommendations

Jubilee Campaign has observed over the past few years as the criminal activities of Fulani militants have increasingly resembled those of their predecessors and now potential co-conspirators, Boko Haram. There is yet to be any evidence that Fulani militants have used some of their captives for servitude, however recent news that they are learning directly from Boko Haram and are in contact with their camps concerns us greatly. It is also important to note that, while we cannot overestimate historical significance, we must remember that radical Fulani individuals in the past century have engaged in slave raiding activities; it would therefore not be an unprecedented terror tactic for radical militants.

Jubilee Campaign makes the following recommendations to the international human rights community:

1. Push for an independent, impartial commission of inquiry to investigate atrocities and crimes against humanity perpetrated by all sides in Nigeria.
2. Provide financial and material support to NGOs and other relief-focused civil society organizations in Nigeria that assist survivors of abduction and slavery at the hands of militants. Similarly, engage with journalists and other activists involved in evidence-gathering and reporting of such atrocities.
3. Hold the Nigerian government accountable to its human rights obligations as a State party to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights which in Article 5 prohibits "all forms of exploitation and degradation of man particularly slavery, slave trade, torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment and treatment". **(115)**
4. Hold the Nigerian government accountable to its human rights obligations as outlined in Article 34 of the Constitution, which states that "no person shall be subject to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment" and that "no person shall be held in slavery or servitude". **(116)**
5. Call for the appointment of a United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Nigeria.

References

- (1) Deutsche Welle, [“No country is free from modern slavery, but would you know it if you saw it?”](#), 25 March 2020.
- (2) International Labour Office, Walk Free Foundation, and International Organization for Migration, [Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage](#), September 2017.
- (3) League of Nations, [Convention to Suppress the Slave Trade and Slavery](#), 25 September 1926, 60LNTS 253, Registered No. 1414.
- (4) UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), [Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery](#), 7 September 1956.
- (5) David Weissbrodt and Anti-Slavery International, [Abolishing Slavery and its Contemporary Forms](#), HR/PUB/02/4, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2002.
- (6) *Supra note 3*.
- (7) UN General Assembly, [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), 16 December 1966, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 999 p. 171.
- (8) UN General Assembly, [Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime](#), 15 November 2000.
- (9) Organization of African Unity (OAU), [African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights \(“Banjul Charter”\)](#), 27 June 1981, CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I.L.M. 58 (1982).
- (10) [Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria](#) [Nigeria], Act No. 24, 5 May 1999.
- (11) [Nigeria: Criminal Code Act](#) [Nigeria], Cap C38 LFN 2004, 1 June 1916.
- (12) Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project, [Nigeria](#).
- (13) Open Doors World Watch Research, [Nigeria: Full Country Dossier](#), March 2021.
- (14) Andrew McKinnon, [“Christians, Muslims and Traditional Worshipers in Nigeria: Estimating the Relative Proportions from Eleven Nationally Representative Social Surveys”](#), *Review of Religious Research*, 2021.
- (15) *Supra note 13*.
- (16) ArcGIS, [Nigeria Religion Points](#), 10 October 2017.
- (17) Intersociety, [“Nigerian Islamic Jihadists Massacred 1,470 Christians in First Four Months of 2021”](#), *Genocide Watch*, 11 May 2021.
- (18) Ashley Young, [“Conflict Intensifies in Nigeria’s Middle Belt”](#), *Providence Magazine*, 29 July 2020.
- (19) All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief, [Nigeria: Unfolding Genocide?](#), June 2020.
- (20) Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, [Statement of Most Rev. William A. Avenya, Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Gboko, Nigeria](#), 17 December 2020.
- (21) Alfred Olufemi, [“Nigeria’s chief justice wants more Shari’a in constitution”](#), *Premium Times Nigeria*, 13 December 2019.
- (22) BBC News, [“Nigerian singer sentenced to death for blasphemy in Kano state”](#), 10 August 2020.
- (23) Stephanie Busari, [“Outrage as Nigeria sentences teenage boy to 10 years in prison for blasphemy”](#), *CNN*, 30 January 2021.; Stephanie Busari, [“‘They were unjust to me,’ says teenager freed after blasphemy sentence quashed in Nigeria”](#), *CNN*, 31 January 2021.
- (24) [Nigeria: Criminal Code Act](#) [Nigeria], Cap C38 LFN 2004, 1 June 1916.
- (25) United Nations Human Rights Committee (HRC), [General comment no. 34, Article 19, Freedoms of opinion and expression](#), 12 September 2011, CCPR/C/GC/34.
- (26) End Blasphemy Laws, [“The international human rights consensus against ‘blasphemy’ laws”](#).
- (27) Hilary Matfess, [“Boko Haram: History and Context”](#), *Oxford Research Encyclopedias: African History*, 26 October 2017.
- (28) Aminu Sumaila, [“Ten of the Greatest Kanoans in history”](#), 29 May 2019.
- (29) David Cook, [“The Rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria”](#), *Combating Terrorism Center Sentinel*, September 2011.

- (30) Raphael, [“North must apologise for atrocities committed against Middle Belt – Prof Yusuf Turaki”](#), The Sun, 24 April 2021.
- (31) Scott Maceachern, [“Boko Haram, bandits and slave-raiders” identities and violence in a Central African borderland](#)”, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 2020.
- (32) Assistant District Officer L.N. Reed, [Translation of Diary of Hamman Taji, D.H. Madagali: 1912-1927](#).
- (33) Olufemi Vaughan, [Chapter Two: Islam and Colonial Rule in Northern Nigeria](#), In *Religion and the Making of Nigeria*, 2017, Duke University Press. ; Rabiati Akande, [“Secularizing Islam: The Colonial Encounter and the Making of a British Islamic Criminal Law in Northern Nigeria, 1903-58”](#), *Cambridge University Press Law and History Review*, 2019.
- (34) Hilary Matfess, [“Boko Haram: History and Context”](#), *Oxford Research Encyclopedias: African History*, 26 October 2017.
- (35) Jideofor Adibe, [“Explaining the Emergence of Boko Haram”](#), *Brookings Institute*, 6 May 2014.
- (36) Alex Thurston, [“The disease is unbelief’: Boko Haram’s religious and political worldview](#)”, *Brookings Institute Center for Middle East Policy*, 2016.
- (37) Scott Maceachern, [“Boko Haram, bandits and slave-raiders” identities and violence in a Central African borderland](#)”, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 2020.
- (38) Dipa Patel, [“Who Shall Overcome? Islamic Extremism in Northern Nigeria”](#), *The London School of Economics and Political Science*, 21 January 2020. ; Oluwole Ojewale, [“Rising insecurity in northwest Nigeria: Terrorism thinly disguised as banditry”](#), *Brookings Institute*, 18 February 2021.
- (39) Aly Verjee & Chris Kwaja, [“Nigeria’s Security Failures: The Link Between EndSARS and Boko Haram”](#), *United States Institute of Peace*, 17 December 2020.
- (40) Oludara Akanmidu, [“Op-Ed: Here’s why Nigeria’s justice system isn’t working”](#), *CNBC Africa*, 6 July 2018.
- (41) Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP) & National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), [Global Terrorism Index 2020: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism](#), 2020.
- (42) United Nations Development Program, [Human Development Report 2020 – The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene](#), 2020.
- (43) Mayeni Jones, [“Nigeria kidnappings: The Chibok captive who defied Boko Haram”](#), *BBC News*, 9 March 2021.
- (44) NPR, [“Nigerians Are Being Kidnapped For Ransom – But This Time It’s Not Boko Haram”](#), 14 July 2021.
- (45) Jariel Arvin, “How kidnap-for-ransom became the ‘most lucrative industry in Nigeria’”, *Vox*, 2 August 2021.
- (46) Boko Haram, [“Nigeria Dapchi abductions: Schoolgirls finally home”](#), 25 March 2018.
- (47) Ruth Maclean, [“Boko Haram kept one Dapchi girl who refused to deny her Christianity”](#), *The Guardian*, 24 March 2018.
- (48) The Guardian Nigeria, [“Leah Sharibu gives birth to second baby in Boko Haram captivity”](#), 23 March 2021.
- (49) Neil Munshi, [“Why ‘the kidnapping industry is thriving’ in Nigeria”](#), *Financial Times*, 26 April 2021.
- (50) Joe Parkinson & Drew Hinshaw, [“1,000 Boko Haram Militants Surrender, Two Chibok Girls Walk Free”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 13 August 2021.
- (51) Funmilayo Idowu Agbaje, [“The objectified female body and the Boko Haram insurgency in northeast Nigeria: Insights from IDP camps in Abuja”](#), *African Security Review*, 2020.
- (52) Sam Olukoya, [“Women and Girls ‘Preyed on as the Spoils of War’”](#), *Inter Press Service News Agency*, 25 April 2019.
- (53) Funmilayo Idowu Agbaje, [“The objectified female body and the Boko Haram insurgency in northeast Nigeria: Insights from IDP camps in Abuja”](#), *African Security Review*, 2020.
- (54) Christiana E Attah, [“Boko Haram and sexual terrorism: The conspiracy of silence of the Nigerian anti-terrorism laws”](#), *African Human Rights Law Journal*, 2016.
- (55) Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, [Excerpt from Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council](#), S/2021/312, 30 March 2021.
- (56) Anne-Marie de Brouwer, Eefje de Volder, & Christophe Paulussen, [“Prosecuting the Nexus between Terrorism, Conflict-related Sexual Violence and Trafficking in Human Beings before National Legal Mechanisms: Case Studies of Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab”](#), *Journal of International Criminal Justice*, 2020.
- (57) Funmilayo Idowu Agbaje, *Supra note 49.* ; Joe Parkinson & Drew Hinshaw, [“Freedom for the World’s Most Famous Hostages Came at a Heavy Price”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 24 December 2017.

- (58) International Crisis Group, [Returning from the Land of Jihad: The Fate of Women Associated with Boko Haram](#), 21 May 2019.
- (59) Atta Barkindo, Benjamin Tyavkase Gudaku, & Caroline Katgurum Wesley, [Our Bodies, Their Battleground: Boko Haram and Gender-Based Violence against Christian Women and Children in North-Eastern Nigeria Since 1999](#), Nigeria's Political Violence Research Network [NPVRN], 2013.
- (60) Elizabeth Pearson & Jacob Zenn, [Boko Haram, the Islamic State, and the Surge in Female Abductions in Southeastern Niger](#), International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague, 2021.
- (61) Britannica, [Boko Haram – Nigerian Islamic Group](#).
- (62) BBC News, ["Who, What, Why: Exactly what does the phrase Boko Haram mean?"](#), 13 May 2014.
- (63) Chris Stein & Dionne Searcey, ["21 Chibok Schoolgirls, Reuniting With Parents, Tell of Boko Haram Slavery"](#), *The New York Times*, 16 October 2016.
- (64) Joe Parkinson & Drew Hinshaw, ["Freedom for the World's Most Famous Hostages Came at a Heavy Price"](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 24 December 2017.
- (65) Amnesty International, ["We Dried Our Tears": Addressing the Toll on Children of Northeast Nigeria's Conflict](#), 2020.
- (66) Rachel Bryson & Andu Bulama Bukarti, [Boko Haram's Split on Women in Combat](#), Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, 2018.
- (67) International Crisis Group, [Returning from the Land of Jihad: The Fate of Women Associated with Boko Haram](#), 21 May 2019.
- (68) Elizabeth Pearson, [Chapter 2: Wilayat Shahidat: Boko Haram, the Islamic State, and the Question of the Female Suicide Bomber](#), In *Boko Haram Beyond the Headlines: Analyses of Africa's Enduring Insurgency*, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 2018.
- (69) Patrick Egwu, ["Christian clergy are being kidnapped and killed in Nigeria"](#), *The Christian Century*, 29 March 2021.
- (70) Abdulkareem Haruna, ["Boko Haram frees kidnapped pastor who begged FG, CAN for help"](#), *Premium Times Nigeria*, 3 March 2021.
- (71) Jayson Casper, ["Boko Haram Executes Pastor Who Turned Hostage Video into Testimony"](#), *Christianity Today*, 21 January 2020.
- (72) John Campbell, ["Women, Boko Haram, and Suicide Bombings"](#), *Council on Foreign Relations*, 25 March 2020
- (73) Rachel Bryson & Andu Bulama Bukarti, [Boko Haram's Split on Women in Combat](#), Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, 2018.
- (74) The Mainichi, ["Marriage or slavery? For girls abducted by Boko Haram, suicide bombing an escape"](#), 4 April 2018.
- (75) *Supra* note 51.
- (76) Jason Warner & Hilary Matfess, [Exploding Stereotypes: The Unexpected Operational and Demographic Characteristics of Boko Haram's Suicide Bombers](#), Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 2017.
- (77) Dionne Searcey, ["Boko Haram strapped suicide bombs to them. Somehow these teenage girls survived."](#), *The New York Times*, 25 October 2017.
- (78) Vesna Markovic, ["Suicide squad: Boko Haram's use of the female suicide bomber"](#), *Women & Criminal Justice*, 2019.
- (79) UN General Assembly, [Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict](#), 25 May 2000.
- (80) African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, [Ratifications Table](#).
- (81) Organization of African Unity (OAU), [African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child](#), 11 July 1990, CAB/LEG/24.9/49 (1990).
- (82) Sam Olukoya, ["Women and Girls 'Preyed on as the Spoils of War'"](#), *Inter Press Service News Agency*, 25 April 2019.
- (83) UNICEF, ["More than 3,500 children have been recruited and used by non-state armed groups in north-east Nigeria since 2013"](#), 12 April 2019.
- (84) Sirwan Kajjo & Hassan Maina Kaina, ["Experts: Boko Haram Recruiting Children as Soldiers, Suicide Bombers"](#), *Voice of America*, 4 September 2020.

- (85) United Nations Security Council, [Children and armed conflict in Nigeria: Report of the Secretary-General, S/2020/652](#), 6 July 2020.
- (86) Amnesty International, [“We Dried Our Tears”: Addressing the Toll on Children of Northeast Nigeria’s Conflict](#), 2020.
- (87) Joe Parkinson & Drew Hinshaw, [“‘Please, Save My Life.’ A Bomb Specialist Defuses Explosives Strapped to Children”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 26 July 2019.
- (88) Sarah A. Topol, [“Trained to Kill: How Four Boy Soldiers Survived Boko Haram”](#), *The New York Times*, 21 June 2017.
- (89) Verity Hubbard, [“Explosive violence and ‘child soldiers’”](#), *Action on Armed Violence*, 6 April 2021.
- (90) The Mainichi, [“Ex-Boko Haram child soldier struggles in civilian life, wishes to go back”](#), 1 December 2019.
- (91) Sahara Reporters, [“Seven Out Of Every Ten Kidnappers Arrested Are Fulani – Sultan of Sokoto”](#), 30 January 2021.
- (92) Crux, [“Kidnapped Christians released in Nigeria”](#), 14 October 2020.
- (93) Emmanuel Akinwotu, [“Gunmen abduct dozens of schoolchildren in central Nigeria”](#), *The Guardian*, 17 February 2021.
- (94) International Christian Concern, [“Nigerian Schoolboys Released, 317 Schoolgirls Abducted”](#), 28 February 2021.
- (95) Afolabi Sotunde & Seun Sanni, [“Violence erupts as kidnapped Nigerian schoolgirls return to families”](#), *Reuters*, 4 March 2021.
- (96) Vanguard Nigeria, [“Relief, as kidnappers release 29 Afaka students”](#), 6 May 2021.
- (97) Nimi Princewill, [“‘They threatened to kill my sister and post it on YouTube,’ says brother of abducted Nigerian student as ransom deadline passes”](#), *CNN World*, 7 May 2021.
- (98) Anugrah Kumar, [“Nigeria: 3 students escape Fulani militants after attack on Christian missions school; 1 remains captive”](#), *The Christian Post*, 2 May 2021.
- (99) Morning Star News, [“Suspected Fulani Kidnap Christian High School Students in Nigeria”](#), 5 July 2021.
- (100) Evangelical Focus, [“Two months later, 57 kidnapped students of Bethel Baptist High School freed”](#), 2 September 2021.
- (101) Associated Press, [“Gunmen Kidnap 73 Students in Latest Attack on Nigeria School”](#), 1 September 2021.
- (102) Evangelical Focus, [“Pastor and three other Christians killed in Nigeria, twin sisters kidnapped”](#), 24 September 2020.
- (103) Andrea Morris, [“‘Killing Our People Has Become Routine’: Jihadists Kill Nigerian Pastor, Burn Woman’s Home After Murdering Son”](#), *CBN News*, 2 August 2021.
- (104) Morning Star News, [“Fulani Herdsmen Kill Pastor in North-Central Nigeria”](#), 28 July 2021.
- (105) Patrick Egwu, [“Christian clergy are being kidnapped and killed in Nigeria”](#), *The Christian Century*, 29 March 2021.
- (106) Abdulbarkindo Adamu, Alupsen Ben, & Gloria C, [Nigeria: Southern Kaduna and the atrocities of Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen \(May 2016 – September 2017\) Volume 1](#), January 2018.
- (107) AbdulGafar Alabelewe, [“Bandits have turned our women to sex slaves, cooks”](#), *The Nation*, 14 May 2020.
- (108) Ashlianna Kreiner, [“Committee to Protest Murder and Enslavement in Nigeria on June 5, Omaha”](#), *CNS News*, 4 June 2021.
- (109) SaharaReporters, [“EXCLUSIVE: How Boko Haram Fighters Have Been Training Fulani Herdsmen, Collecting Taxes”](#), 25 March 2021.
- (110) International Christian Concern, [“Boko Haram Fighters Train Fulani Militants”](#), 26 March 2021.
- (111) Malik Samuel, [“Boko Haram teams up with bandits in Nigeria”](#), *Institute for Security Studies*, 3 March 2021.
- (112) Jacob Zenn, [“Boko Haram’s Expansionary Project in Northwestern Nigeria: Can Shekau Outflank Ansaru and Islamic State in West Africa Province?”](#), The Jamestown Foundation, 28 July 2020.
- (113) Kingsley Omonobi-Abuja, [“Fulani herdsmen confess to membership of Boko Haram”](#), *Vanguard*, 23 April 2014.
- (114) Aliyu Dahiru, [“Militia Groups In North-West Nigeria In Process Of Sealing Allegiance With Boko Haram”](#), *HumAngle*, 16 June 2020.
- (115) Organization of African Unity (OAU), [African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights \(Banjul Charter\)](#), 27 June 1981.
- (116) [Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria](#) [Nigeria], Act No. 24, 5 May 1999.