

# **NIGERIA**

## **COUNTRY ASSESSMENT**

**COUNTRY INFORMATION AND POLICY UNIT,  
ASYLUM AND APPEALS POLICY DIRECTORATE  
IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY DIRECTORATE**

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## **I. SCOPE OF DOCUMENT**

**1.1** This assessment has been produced by the Country Information and Policy Unit, Immigration and Nationality Directorate, Home Office, from information obtained from a variety of sources.

**1.2** The assessment has been prepared for background purposes for those involved in the asylum determination process. The information it contains is not exhaustive, nor is it intended to catalogue all human rights violations. It concentrates on the issues most commonly raised in asylum claims made in the United Kingdom.

**1.3** The assessment is sourced throughout. It is intended to be used by caseworkers as a signpost to the source material, which has been made available to them. The vast majority of the source material is readily available in the public domain.

**1.4** It is intended to revise the assessment on a 6-monthly basis while the country remains within the top 35 asylum producing countries in the United Kingdom.

**1.5** The assessment has been placed on the Internet ([http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/asylum/asylum\\_contents02.html](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/asylum/asylum_contents02.html)). An electronic copy of the assessment has been made available to:

Amnesty International UK

Immigration Advisory Service

Immigration Appellate Authority

Immigration Law Practitioners' Association

Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants

JUSTICE

Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture

Refugee Council

Refugee Legal Centre

UN High Commissioner for Refugees

## **II. GEOGRAPHY**

**2.1.** The Federal Republic of Nigeria currently consists of 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) containing the capital Abuja. It is a West African coastal state bordered by Benin to the west, Niger to the north, Chad to the north-east and Cameroon to the south-east. Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa, the 1991 national census found there to be 88.5 million Nigerians. The current unofficial estimate is over 100 million. Nigeria is a former British colony, and many influences are visible in contemporary Nigeria with English recognised as the official language, although the many tribal based languages remain mother tongue to large sections of the population. [1]

## **III. ECONOMY**

**3.1** The Nigerian economy has consistently not realised its potential, hindered in particular by persistent corruption, mismanagement and strikes. Nigeria is heavily dependent on crude oil production, which now represents over 90% of her export revenue. All these factors have contributed to a lack of investment in Nigeria's physical and social infrastructure, which has resulted in a marked decline affecting fundamental sectors such as transport, health and education. Living standards for the mass of the Nigerian population have deteriorated markedly in the last 15 years. Nigeria's per capita income is about \$280 at present, which is amongst the lowest in the world. However, some positive developments within all the budgets since 1995 has seen some improvements in the Nigerian economy in particular with the rate of inflation having fallen from 72.8% at the end of 1995 to 14.1% at the end of 1997. The proposed privatisation of some state owned enterprises has been a feature of the last two budgets. [1] President Obasanjo has expressed his support for privatisation [154] and on 29 July 1999 he set out a three-stage plan for privatisation. He has also created a National Council on Privatisation to ensure that assets were correctly evaluated and their sale properly managed. [155]

**3.2** President Obasanjo has announced a fiscal policy to encourage farming and manufacturing, along with a job creation scheme to create 20,000 new jobs in the year 2000. The economy remains moribund and the infrastructure poor, but the increase in oil price has assisted the civilian government in its economic policies, and has led to a drop in inflation to 7.5% in 1999. [2] A large section of the population survives on subsistence farming or very low incomes. There is no central social welfare system in Nigeria and this has intensified the anxiety associated with job insecurity. There is still a huge need for investment in the infrastructure and hundreds of thousands of half-educated young people are looking for non-existent jobs. It is reported that 67% of the population are living in poverty, without adequate access to clean water, education, health care or employment. President Obasanjo has stated that he will create a panel to address these problems. [156] The World Bank has pledged its support for poverty alleviation, and has promised to assist by reducing the interest on Nigeria's outstanding loans, and allowing a ten year grace period for economic improvement. [157]

**3.3** On 4 January 2000 it was announced that the Nigerian government would set up a Poverty Alleviation Council to improve peoples lives. The remit of this council will include job creation, industrial development and a review of public service wages. The Nigerian government has also stressed its commitment to improving agricultural productivity, by clearing land, providing fertiliser, seed and other resources to farmers. [243]

## **IV HISTORY**

### **Post-Independence Historical background**

**4.1** Nigeria achieved independence on 1st October 1960, but with a legacy of regional, ethnic and religious problems that have remained. These have been major factors in Nigeria's experience of military rule, which accounts for 25 out of the 35 years since independence. In this time Nigeria has experienced two elected civilian governments and more recently one unelected predominately civilian "interim" government.

**4.2** During the 8 year tenure of Major-General Ibrahim Babangida - (1985-1993), political activity was unbanned in May 1989 and 2 national political parties were created on 7 October 1989, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). The SDP and NRC contested a series of local, state governorship, and federal assembly elections, culminating in a presidential election on 12 June 1993. The presidential election, were believed to have been won by the SDP candidate Chief Moshood Abiola. However, the full results were never announced and the Babangida Government annulled the election. This precipitated a period of political uncertainty that was not dissipated by Babangida's appointment of a short-lived, Interim National Government (ING). This was headed by the businessman Chief Ernest Shonekan but with continuing military influence in the guise of Defence Minister General Sani Abacha. On 17 November 1993 General Abacha ousted the ING and reinstated military rule. [1]

### **Recent History**

**4.3** On 11 June 1994 Chief Moshood Abiola declared himself President, which led to his arrest on 23 June 1994. His trial on charges of treason was repeatedly adjourned and he remained in custody until his death on 7 July 1998. In the aftermath of his arrest, over a hundred pro-democracy activists were arrested in protests centred on the South-west cities of Lagos and Ibadan. During July and August 1994 an oil workers strike in support of the installation of Abiola as President was joined by other unions, bringing Lagos to a virtual standstill, although the impact on other regions was limited. The strike was called off after nine weeks by officials of the two oil workers unions. [1][3]

**4.4** The Aziza Military Tribunal was established by the PRC in June 1995 to hear in secret evidence concerning an alleged conspiracy to remove the Abacha Government that was "uncovered" in early March. On 14 July it was announced that of the 51 defendants that had been produced before it, 40 had been convicted including two leading political figures, former Head of State retired General Olusegun Obasanjo and retired General Shehu Yar'Adua, a leading member of the NCC, and previously Obasanjo's deputy. The Tribunal released without charge 8 people including elder statesman Chief Michael A. Akinloye. On 10 October 1995 it was officially confirmed that 43 soldiers and civilians were convicted by the Tribunal and following review by the PRC the 11 death sentences (including that on General Yar'Adua) had been commuted to lengthy prison sentences. The remainder had received sentences ranging from 15 years (including General Obasanjo and Beko Ransome-Kuti, Chairman of the Campaign for Democracy [CD] pressure group) to retirement from the army. The Tribunal was formally dissolved in August 1995. [1] [4]

**4.5** At the end of October 1995 Kenule Saro-Wiwa and a further eight Ogoni activists were sentenced to death by a special military tribunal on charges of murder following the killing of some Ogoni chiefs. Six other defendants, including the deputy president of MOSOP were

acquitted. On 10 November 1995 the nine convicted Ogonis were executed, prompting immediate condemnation by the international community and following which Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth. [1]

**4.6** A transition to civilian rule including fixed phases culminating in an envisaged handover to an elected President on 1 October 1998 was unveiled during the 1 October 1995 presidential address. [5] On 30 September 1998 NECON announced the registration of five political associations as parties for the next Republic had been approved. Those registered were the United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP); Committee for National Consensus (CNC); National Centre Party of Nigeria (NCPN); Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN); Grassroot Democratic Movement (GDM). All political associations that did not qualify for registration were dissolved. [6]

**4.7** The first party-based elections since the annulled 1993 presidential elections were held throughout Nigeria on 15 March 1997. There were a number of reports of irregularities. Shortly afterwards Abacha introduced a Decree giving him authority to remove any elected officer. By April 1998 all five legal political parties, probably through a mix of bribery and coercion adopted Abacha as their presidential candidate and the electoral commission accepted this. Until Abacha's death he had not formally accepted the offer to stand in the election. The state assembly elections that took place as planned on 6 December 1997 were marked by a low turnout. As in the local government elections the UNCP were the emphatic winners capturing 637 seats in the 36 states. [7] [8] [9] [10] [11]

**4.8** On 21 December 1997 Abacha's second in command General Oladipo Diya was arrested along with others and accused of plotting a coup. On 20 April 1998 it was announced that 16 alleged coup plot suspects had been cleared by the Special Military Tribunal, and released. These included Colonel E M Shoda (former military assistant to General Diya, and Colonel Daniel Akintonde (former military administrator of Ogun State).[12] On 28 April 1998 the Special military Tribunal passed the sentences and verdicts on the remaining 30 accused persons who had been brought to trial. Six of those accused were sentenced to death, including Lieutenant General Oladipo Diya. Four were sentenced to life in prison, and fourteen were released. The rest were sentenced to prison terms ranging from two to fourteen years. [13]

**4.9** On 25 April 1998 elections were held for representatives to the two houses of the National Assembly. There was a very low turnout. The United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP) won more than 70% of the seats in the Senate and House of Assembly. [14]

### **Death of Abacha and related events**

**4.10** On 8 June 1998 General Abacha died, reportedly of natural causes according to official Nigerian sources. General Abdusalami Abubakar previously the Chief of Defence Staff under Abacha was appointed as the new head of state by the Provisional Ruling Council. On 12 June 1998 there were demonstrations in Lagos and Ibadan against Abubakar's succession. There were also protests in some other cities. However in the capital Abuja and most of the rest of Nigeria there appeared to be no sign of disturbances. [15] [16] [17]

### **Release of political detainees**

**4.11** On 16 June 1998 General Abubakar ordered the release of nine high profile detainees including: General Obasanjo, the former head of state, and Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti, the leader of



the Campaign for Democracy (CD). [18] [19] [20] By September 1998 it was estimated that hundreds of political prisoners had been released. [21][82][83][110] The police also withdrew treason charges against 15 pro-democracy activists, including Professor Wole Soyinka, Chief Anthony Enahoro and Lt. General Alani Akinrinade as a result of a Federal Government directive. They have all since returned to Nigeria on a visit. Those that have been released or who have had charges against them dropped have been free to participate in the transition to democracy. [22][111]

### **Abubakar's speech of 20 July 1998**

**4.12** On 20 July General Abubakar addressed the nation, setting out his plans for transition to civilian rule. He announced that there would be a series of elections starting with local government elections on 5 December 1998, elections for state governors and for members of the state houses of assembly on 9 January 1999, a National Assembly poll on February 20 and a presidential election on 27 February 1999, which would result in the handover to civilian rule on May 29 1999. [30][31] The National Electoral Commission was scrapped and new Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was set up. [32] [33] [34]

**4.13** Also in the 20 July speech President Abubakar admitted that the previous transition programme was flawed, and that it was therefore cancelled. He also announced that all five existing political parties were dissolved. Abubakar's speech continued with the promise to publish and widely circulate the draft constitution drawn up at the Constitutional Conferences of 1994 and 1995 prior to consideration and approval by the Provisional Ruling Council. Abubakar also pledged commitment to human rights - in particular freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association. Abubakar also promised extensive prison reform, and to put in place measures to reduce the level of corruption, and bring an air of openness and accountability into government. [122]. On the 38th anniversary of independence, 1 October 1998, Abubakar addressed the nation. He reiterated his commitment to the democratic process, and the handover to a democratically elected government on May 29 1999. He also restated his resolve to ensure a free political environment and protect human rights. [126] [127]

### **Death of Chief Moshood Abiola**

**4.14** Chief Moshood Abiola, who was jailed after appearing to win the annulled Presidential elections of 1993, died suddenly whilst still in captivity on 7 July 1998. He was taken ill while meeting a visiting U S delegation. Some of his family and supporters claimed he had been murdered. Rioting was reported in several Nigerian cities following the announcement of Abiola's death, including Lagos, Ibadan and Abiola's home town of Abeokuta. Up to 60 people were reported to have died. The situation returned to normal within a few days. [24] [25] [28]

**4.15** Pathologists from Britain, Canada and the United States carried out an independent autopsy on Abiola. The result of the autopsy was released in early August and indicated that Abiola had died of natural causes. In August 1998 Abubakar visited the Abiola family home to pay his condolences to the family. [26] [27]

### **Coup plotters convicted under General Abacha**

**4.16** Amnesty International reported that most of the prisoners, accused of involvement with the 1990, 1995 and 1997 coup attempt, had been released by 31 March 1999. The prisoners reported as still being detained, are Lieutenant Colonel Ibrahim Yakassai, who is accused of involvement

in a hit squad, which is implicated in the assassination of Kudirat Abiola amongst others. Retired Trooper Innocent Ofem Anang and retired Lance Corporal Lucky Iviero, both of whom have had their life sentences commuted to ten years imprisonment. Warrant Officer I Samson Ako Elo and Warrant Officer II Augustine Ogbere, who were among those released, were later re-detained. [158]

### **Party registration**

**4.17** Guidelines announced by the INEC are designed to ensure political parties are not based solely in one region. Prospective political parties were invited to register with the INEC for recognition, and twenty-five prospective parties had registered by the deadline of 9 September 1998. [35][36] The deadline was subsequently extended until 16 October 1998. [123] On 19 October 1998 it was announced that nine parties met the requirements to contest the elections laid down by the Independent Electoral Commission. A voter registration exercise was also completed in October 1998. [115] On 10 September 1998 a coalition of 12 Nigerian human rights groups including the Civil Liberties Organisation announced the formation of a body to monitor the plan to restore civilian rule - the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG). [37]

**4.18** In September 1998, as promised in the 20 July speech, General Abubakar released the new draft constitution. It had been drafted in 1995 when Abacha was head of state, but never published. General Abubakar stated that all comments and views on the proposed constitution would be presented to the Provisional Ruling Council for consideration prior to publication. [38]

### **The release of the Ogoni 20**

**4.19** On 9 September 1998 Twenty Ogoni activists held on suspicion of murdering Ogoni chiefs were released from jail where they had been held without trial since 1994. Justice A C Woryi said their detention without trial had been "unconstitutional, unlawful, illegal null and void". Also released was Mrs Daughter Dilosi, another Ogoni who had been arrested in September 1997. [23]

### **Return of Political Exiles**

**4.20** Many prominent political exiles have returned to Nigeria, including in October 1998, Ledum Mitee - the leader of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). [112] Wole Soyinka returned on 14 October 1998 after 4 years in exile after treason charges had been dropped by the administration of General Abubakar. [113] Most NADECO members have now returned. [114]

### **Investigations into fraud and corruption during the Abacha regime**

**4.21** Abubakar stated his intention to clamp down on the corruption that is endemic in Nigerian society and government. He said the government has started investigations into the conduct of certain government departments. Many of Abacha's former aides are in detention for misappropriation and embezzlement of state funds. [39] [40] [41] Abubakar began to investigate claims that billions of pounds of oil revenues had gone missing under the Abacha administration.

**4.22** President Obasanjo's has continued to investigate allegation of corruption and fraud committed under the Abacha regime. An anti-corruption agency has been set up [159], and President Obasanjo has proposed an anti-corruption bill, which has been passed into law.

Property belonging to Sani Abacha's family has been confiscated, and efforts made to recover money, believed to have been fraudulently obtained. The Nigerian government believes that a substantial amount of this money has been deposited in foreign Banks, some of which are based in the United Kingdom. The Nigerian authorities have also stated that they intend to recover money defrauded by Abacha's family members, by suing them as individuals in foreign court, but it is believed that efforts will be made to settle these claims before they come before a full court hearing. [160][161][162][163][164][236]

**4.23** In July it was reported that the Nigerian government had recovered US \$66 million. The Swiss Federal Banking Commission published a report in September, and continues to assist with investigations into the amount of money transferred illegally to overseas accounts. No firm figure for these illegal transactions has been established, but it is believed to amount to many billions of Dollars. [29]

### **International Response**

**4.24** The Independent National Electoral Commission created by Abubakar has received delegations from the Commonwealth and the United Nations to help it set up and monitor the elections. The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) held a meeting in London on 8-9 October 1998. CMAG commended the government of General Abubakar for the positive steps it had taken which had already significantly changed the political environment in Nigeria. It welcomed in particular the transition programme and the measures taken to promote human rights and the rule of law. CMAG recommended member states begin to lift sanctions in existence against Nigeria. CMAG decided it would assess the progress of Nigeria again after the presidential elections of 27 February 1999 with a view to making a recommendation to the Heads of Government regarding the full return of Nigeria to the Commonwealth. [124]. All members of the Commonwealth agreed that Nigeria's suspension should be lifted on the 29 May 1999, following the transfer of power to a civilian government. The then Commonwealth Secretary-General Chief Emeka Anyaoku also promised immediate assistance in economic and social development.[165][166]

**4.25** The Nigerian government invited a United Nations Special Rapporteur-Soli Jehangir Sorabjee- to visit the country for the first time to check on the human rights situation. His visit took place in the third week of November 1998. [116] Soli Jehangir Sorabjee said he believed there had been "several far reaching developments and a qualitative change for the better in the political atmosphere of the country. Several political prisoners had been released, and the constraints on organised labour and professional associations had been relieved." However he stated that human rights were still violated in Nigeria. He questioned in particular the independence and authority of the judiciary and also criticised Decree 2 of 1984 (see paragraph on Judiciary) which then remained in force and allows the authorities to detain an individual indefinitely. [117] [118] His report acknowledged the efforts that the Abubakar regime had made in areas relating to the media, electoral reform and its attempts to enforce rule of law, but it highlighted problems relating to women's right, the rights of the child and the continuing problems in the Niger Delta. The UNCHR decided in April 1999 to conclude its consideration of the human rights situation in Nigeria. [167] [237]

**4.26** On 1 November 1998, in recognition of the progress being made towards respect for human rights and the restoration of democratic civilian Government the European Union adopted a new Common Position on Nigeria. This lifted most of the measures which had been in place since

1993 (all visa restrictions; the ban on high level visits; the ban on sporting contracts; the ban on sporting contracts; the ban on the appointment of European military personnel to diplomatic missions in Nigeria and Nigerian military personnel in the European Union). [42] [119] [125] On the 31 May 1999, the European Union lifted all remaining sanctions against Nigeria, and has commenced negotiations on the allocation of 330 million euros in development aid, which had been suspended following the executions of nine Ogoni leaders in November 1995. [168]

### **Local elections 5 December 1998**

**4.27** The local elections were dominated by the People's Democratic Party, which won 459 chairmanship positions and 4, 650 councillor seats. The All People's Party was second and the Alliance for Democracy was the third placed party. All three parties were registered to compete in the next round of elections. International monitors said they were largely satisfied by the voting procedures. [130]

### **9 January 1999 Governorship elections and House of Assembly elections**

**4.28** Elections for Governors and members of the House of Assembly took place on 9 January 1999. The People's Democratic Party won the governorship of 20 states, the All People's Party won nine and the Alliance for Democracy won 6. In the State House of Assembly elections the People's Democratic Party again emerged as the largest party. Independent international monitors observed the elections, including some from the Commonwealth. The then Commonwealth Secretary General Emeka Anyaoku commended the conduct of the elections and said he believed they were credible. [131]

**4.29** Although the elections generally passed off peacefully, there were a few trouble spots, and elections were delayed in some areas because of violence. [131] In Rivers State the Independent National Electoral Commission declared that the results were inconclusive as no results were received from several wards, and the result received from 11 wards in Port Harcourt was cancelled due to irregularities. [133] A re-run of the elections in these wards were re-run the following Saturday. State elections in Bayelsa State were postponed because of violence but later held peacefully on 30 January. [134]

### **Parliamentary elections - 20 February 1999**

**4.30** The national legislative elections took place on 20 February 1999. The People's Democratic Party emerged once again as the biggest party in the parliament, winning the majority of seats in the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Alliance for Democracy came second, and the All People's Party trailed in third place. [135]

**4.31** The European Union observer mission to Nigeria expressed satisfaction with the conduct of the parliamentary elections. He commended the dedication of the Independent National Electoral Commission officials, and praised them for the freedom of access to information granted to the observers. There were however reports of irregularities in some areas, which the EU spokesman said did not undermine the credibility of the overall result. [136]

### **Presidential Elections - 27 February 1999**

**4.32** Two candidates contested the elections. General Obasanjo, heading the People's Democratic Party won by 63% of the vote, against 37% for Chief Olu Falae, head of a coalition of the

Alliance for Democracy and the All People's Party. However there was criticism of the conduct of the elections by Chief Obasanjo's opponent and international observers. The European Union in a statement said that despite serious irregularities the result "reflects the wish of the Nigerian people". [137] The international observer mission led by Jimmy Carter said that because of the irregularities it was not possible to make an accurate judgement about the outcome of the elections. [138] [152] The president elect General Obasanjo was a former military ruler, who handed power to an elected president in 1979. [139]

## **Recent Events**

**4.33** Olusegun Obasanjo was sworn-in as president on 29 May 1999. Among his first act as president was to suspend all recent commercial contracts agreed by the previous military regime, pending a review by a panel appointed for this purpose. Lucrative oil contracts were included within these contracts. [169][170][171] On 5 June 1999 President Obasanjo created a panel to investigate human rights abuses between January 1994 and 28 May 1999, and to identify the people responsible. [172] On 29 June 1999 President Obasanjo abolished the Petroleum Trust Fund, a body which had been tasked with allocating the revenue from oil production, as he believed that it was irrelevant within a constitutional framework. [173] All military officers, who held political posts between 1985 and 1999 were retired on 10 June 1999, the reason given for this action was to promote professionalism, to protect democracy and to ensure that the armies remained subordinate to the civil authority. It was emphasised that the dismissal of these officers was not meant to imply that they were involved in any wrongdoing. [174]

**4.34** The first anniversary of the death of Chief Bashorum Moshood Abiola passed without incident on 7 July. [175][176] On 10 July 1999 Obasanjo appoint his full cabinet of 49 ministers. He also appointed 12 Special Advisers on 12 July 1999, their role is to advise and assist the president. [178][179][180]

**4.35** In September 1999, Hamza Al-Mustapha and Sergeant Rogers Mshiella were charged with the murder Kudirat Abiola, the wife of Chief Abiola, who was shot in Lagos on 4 June 1996. They have also been charged with a number of other crimes, and the hearing of these cases continues. [47] On 29 September, Mohammed Abacha, the son of the late General Abacha, was also arrested in connection with the investigation into the assassination of Kudirat Abiola. A verdict in these cases has yet to be given. [248]

## **V HUMAN RIGHTS: INSTRUMENTS OF THE STATE**

### **POLITICAL SYSTEM**

**5.1** Nigeria is a democratic federal republic. Local, parliamentary and presidential elections have been held, and the handover to the elected civilian president Olusegun Obasanjo took place on 29 May 1999 without incident. The cabinet is nominated by the president; subject to the confirmation of the Senate.

### **THE CONSTITUTION**

**5.2** The 1999 Constitution was based closely on the 1979 constitution. Basic political rights are enshrined in Chapter IV of the 1999 Constitution. They include the right to personal liberty, the right to a fair trial, the right to freedom of expression and of the press and the right to dignity of the human person. Under the Abubakar regime in the second half of 1998, the PRC government

stopped exercising judicial power and also ceased to deny the courts the authority to review its actions. [44] [47] [181]

**5.3** The 1999 Constitution prohibits torture and the mistreatment of prisoners. The Constitution protects individual rights before the judiciary, including a presumption of innocence, the right to be present, to confront witnesses, to present evidence, and to be represented by legal counsel. However these have been undermined by a lack of respect for the rule of law. [43] [47] [181]

## **THE JUDICIARY**

**5.4** Under the 1999 Constitution, in ascending order of precedence, the judiciary is made up of magistrate or district courts, the Federal and State trial courts, State Appeal courts, the Federal Court of Appeal and the Federal Supreme Court. Certain states (with a majority of Muslims) have a Sharia Court of Appeal and others a Customary Court of Appeal to consider civil cases where, in principle, both the plaintiff and defendant agree to it. [47]

### **Past Practise**

**5.5** Trials in the regular court system are public and generally respect constitutionally protected individual rights as outlined in the 1979 Constitution. General Abacha formally restored this Constitution on 21 November 1993 and hence it underpinned civil law decisions and a proportion of criminal work. However, the provisions of the 1979 Constitution have been overridden in specific areas by presidential decrees. On 5 September 1994 General Abacha extended these areas with new decrees that affected the judiciary directly. Decree No.11 of 1994 tightened Decree No.2 of 1984 and was itself supplemented by the removal of habeas corpus thereby theoretically enabling the indefinite detention without trial of those deemed a security risk. The retroactive Decree No.12 of 1994 granted the Abacha Government power to promulgate its existing and future decrees without binding judicial scrutiny.

**5.6** The State Security (Detention of Persons) Decree No. 2 of 1984 which allowed the government to detain a suspect indefinitely without bringing them to trial has been condemned by international observers, including the U N Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. In 1996 the Working Group declared a number of detentions carried out under the decree to be arbitrary, and requested that the government take steps to remedy the situation. In July 1996 the government announced some amendments to Decree No. 2. A panel was also established to review cases of detention. However the main clause in Decree No. 2 preventing the courts questioning the legality of a detention order remains in place. The Abubakar administration pledged to review decree 2 and not to make use of it or any other draconian decrees that impinge on the rights of the Nigerian people. This Decree was annulled in May 1999. [45] [46][194] There were no reports of decree 2 being used during General Abubakar period as president, and the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) repealed it on 28 May. [182]

**5.7** Those involved in Nigeria's legal system were concerned by the Abacha Government's appointment of military or special tribunals which circumvented the regular judicial process. These tribunals were allocated greater resources and better paid staff, which led to a decline in the number of competent judges and staff to work in the ordinary courts. Decree No.1 of 1984 first established a parallel system of special tribunals with sole jurisdiction over certain offenses, such as coup plotting, corruption, armed robbery, and illegal sale of petrol. An amendment in 1991 outlined that only sitting or retired civilian judges may chair tribunals hearing non-military cases. [45] [46]

**5.8** A seven man Special Military Tribunal was set up by general Abacha to try the 26 people suspected of involvement in the alleged coup plot of December 1997. The trial was held behind closed doors and sentenced six people to death although these sentences were later commuted to prison terms under the new Abubakar administration, and the Provisional Ruling Council ordered their release in March 1999. [48] [129]

**5.9** Trials in the court system are public and generally respect individual rights written into the constitution, including the right to be present, to present evidence and to be represented by legal counsel. However there is a view that judges can be bribed, and that courts cannot always be relied upon to be impartial. [47] Administrative and financial problems can also hinder the work of the courts. Criminal justice procedures call for trial within 3 months of being charged. However inefficient administration procedures, petty extortion and poor communication between police and prison officials can lead to long delays which can amount to several years in bringing suspects to trial. [47]

### **Present Position**

**5.10** Decree 63 of 26 May 1999 repealed many of the decrees that impinged on human rights including Decree 2. [238] The 1999 constitution enshrined basic political rights including the right to a fair trial. [181] President Obasanjo has prepared a code of conduct signed by his ministers and advisors reminding them of the need for probity and accountability in public life. On 10 June 1999 it was reported that all legislation that was not in accordance with the 1999 Constitution and the spirit of democracy had been repealed. On 24 June 1999 a new head of the Civil Service was appointed, and President Obasanjo took the opportunity to remind Civil Servants of the need for impartiality and respect for the rule of law. There have been no reports of interference in the actions of the Judiciary by President Obasanjo's administration. [183][184][185][186]

**5.11** President Obasanjo has committed his government to a review of human rights abuse under previous military governments. He has also taken action against those who have been accused of human rights abuses committed during the Abacha regime. Colonel Ibrahim Yakassai has been prosecuted for the killing of pro-democracy activists in Lagos. In November 1999 the case against Hamza-Al-Mustapha, Mohammed Abacha, Mohammed Rabo Lawal, Lateef Shofalan and Mohammed Aminu for the murder of Kudirat Abiola was moved to Lagos High Court. Former Lagos Police Commissioner James Danbaba, General Bamaiyi and Colonel Yakuba have been charged with attempting to murder of Newspaper publisher Alex Ibru on 2 February 1996. Other prominent security officials from the Abacha era are being investigated or have been detained, including Brigade General Ibrahim Sabo former Director of Military Intelligence, who has been detained because of his suspect involvement in the torture of people while working for the Abacha regime. [47][244]

### **LEGAL RIGHTS/DETENTION**

**5.12** Police and security services are allowed to make arrests without warrants if they believe there is reason to suspect an individual has committed an offence. This power has in the past been abused. The law requires the individual being arrested to be informed of the charges and take the accused to the station. By law police must also provide suspects with the opportunity to have access to a lawyer. However police routinely did not adhere to these safeguards, and suspects have been held incommunicado for long periods without charge. [47]

**5.13** The State Security (Detention of Persons) Decree of 1984 (Decree Two) allowed the Government to detain without charge persons suspected of acts prejudicial to state security or harmful to the economic wellbeing of the country, this Decree was repealed in May 1999. [47] Despite the release of hundreds of political prisoners since 9 June 1998 by the General Abubakar administration, Decree No. 2 remained in force. However, there were no reports of this Decree being used by General Abubakar, and the PRC revoked this Decree before it left office. [122] [126] [127] [182]

**5.14** Despite recent improvements there are still reports of individuals being detained for long periods without trial. [47][49] [50] The Internal Affairs Minister Sunday Afolabi in a visit to Ekuje on 6 July 1999 acknowledged the delay in court hearings, and the importance of prison reform. However, prison conditions remain poor, and corruption and neglect are common. The Obasanjo government has embarked on a program of prison reforms. [186][187][188][239]

## **THE SECURITY SERVICES**

**5.15** Previous regime enforced their authority through the military, the State Security Services (SSS) and the Police. All have committed human rights abuses. There are credible reports that the security forces have in the past used torture in order to extract confessions. Incidents of abuse have reduced under the present government, but the use of excessive force by police and military personnel, together with arbitrary arrests are still reported, particularly in the Niger Delta area. [47]

**5.16** The Rivers State Internal Security Task Force (RSISTF), which was accused of gross violations of human rights, has now been withdrawn by the new administration. A decision praised by the United Nations Special Rapporteur Mr Sorabjee in his country report on Nigeria. [167] However the response of the security forces to threats to oil production in the Niger Delta continue to be heavy handed. [47] [140] (also see section on ethnic minority groups - Ogonis, and section on the situation in the Niger Delta.)

**5.17** The army peacefully transferred power to a civilian government on 29 May 1999. One hundred and fifty Senior officers, who held post under the military regime, have been obliged to retire from military service. President Obasanjo has attempted to maintain good relations with the military, citing the need for improved barracks in his speech on taking office, and attending a dinner for retiring military officers. In a speech at the National War College on 24 July 1999, President Obasanjo described the military as being one of Nigeria most important institutions, with a duty to defend the country and serve the nation. On 17 August 1999 the Defence Minister Theophilus Danjuma stated that the government wish to reform and re-structure the army. President Obasanjo has also announced his intention to reform and re-professionalise the armed forces, the international community is assisting with this especially in peacekeeping training. [190][191][192][193][196]

## **POLICE**

**5.18** On 18 September 1998 police were reported to have killed 15 members of a Moslem group led by Ibrahim El ZakZaky who had been detained since 1996. About 2,000 demonstrators were protesting around the central mosque in Kano about El ZakZaky's continued detention. The police fired into the crowd after they had failed to respond to police requests to disperse causing death and injury. Only 3 weeks previously approximately 5 people were reported to have been



killed in clashes between police and supporters of El ZakZaky. [51]

**5.19** Abubakar attempted to look into the issue of how police powers are exercised. A seminar aimed at finding solutions to conflicts that arise from the exercise of police powers and the protection of fundamental rights of the citizen took place in Abuja at the end of July 1998. It was organised by the Constitutional Rights Project, the National Human Rights Commission and the Nigerian Police. The seminar emphasised the importance of curtailing police excesses on crowd control, checkpoints and police stations. [52]

**5.20** In September 1998 Abubakar ordered the compulsory retirement of 10 top police officers for misconduct. Fifteen other officers were also retired. The Office of the Inspector General of Police said those compulsorily retired had earlier faced a disciplinary committee that had recommended them for immediate retirement. [53]

**5.21** The United Nations report of 14 January 1999, praised the ending of Operation Sweep, a controversial military operation set up to deal with crime in Lagos. [167] A Rapid Response Squad has replaced this, these are police units dealing with the growing problem of gang related crime. There has been an increase in criminal activity countrywide, following the return to civilian rule, and the withdrawal of military unit from law enforcement duties. However, many Nigerians believe that the police cannot control this crime wave. As a result of this perception, vigilante groups have been formed, and in June it was reported that twenty suspected robbers were killed in vigilante attacks. On 24 July 1999 the United States, acknowledging the assistance of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, by granting it certification as co-operating in the prevention drug trafficking. [194][195][197][198][199]

**5.22** The new Police Minister has publicly told his force the need to respect human rights. He also announced increased funding for the police force. In February 2000, the Nigerian government announced plan to recruit 40 000 police officers. A number of Nigeria's 36 state are seeking greater control of their local police, but it is feared that this may result in politicized local police forces, loyal to regional or political groups, which could be divisive in a country as diverse as Nigeria. On 28 February 2000 Tell magazine reported that the conditions for police officers, their equipment and terms of employment remained poor. As a result moral is low, and the standard of officers recruited is not as high as it could be. The underlying reasons for these problems, and the neglected of the police force over a long period, was given as the dominance of the military in political and social affairs. This has resulted in erosion of the role of the police in society generally. The problems are serious, and it is accepted that it will take a lot of effort to bring the police up to the level of efficiency that the Nigerian government would like. However they have started to address some of the problems. [245][246]

## **PRISON CONDITIONS**

**5.23** Prison conditions are poor, in particular the lack of clean drinking water, insanitary conditions and overcrowding.

**5.24** Medical treatment is often unavailable, and in some prisons inmates, particularly those awaiting trial, are rarely allowed out of their cells. Many prisoners have to provide their own food. Prison officials are reported to have denied prisoners access to medical facilities or food as a punishment or to extort money from them. There are many deaths in custody because of the

conditions or denial of medical treatment. In December 1997 retired Major General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua died in custody. He had been convicted of treason for allegedly plotting to overthrow the government in 1995. The United State Department of State in their report on Human Rights Practices describes Prison conditions as "harsh and life threatening" and has reported the death of at least one inmate a day in Kiri Kiri prison in Lagos during 1999. As proper records are not kept nationally, the true figure for deaths in custody cannot be ascertained, but the report indicates that neglect of inmates remains a problem in Nigerian prisons. [47][54][26]

**5.25** Reports of torture of detainees are widespread. The " Ogoni twenty" who were released in September 1998 after spending over 4 years in prison say they shared overcrowded cells and were forced to drink contaminated water. They all claim to have been tortured. One of the Ogonis died in custody because he was denied medical treatment for his diabetes. [56]

**5.26** In July 1998 the government ordered the release of prisoners who had served their full sentence, but were still being detained. [57] By January 1999 it was reported that the Presidential Committee on Prisons Decongestion had released 2,433 prisoners of various categories in the last five months. [141] There have also been reports of minors being detained in adult prisons. [58]

**5.27** The present government has committed itself to addressing these problems, and has taken action against Prison Officers suspected of corruption. However, overcrowding, neglect and delays in bring case to court are still being reported. The prison service released a number of prisoners in September to reduce over crowding. [47][187][188][189][240]

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE**

**5.28** The low national income per capita of Nigeria has impeded adherence to the economic and social aspects of the Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights. Indeed the socio-economic structure of education, social services, health and environmental programmes has deteriorated since its ratification by the Nigerian Government in July 1993. Illiteracy, malnutrition and inadequate health care continue to affect large sections of the Nigerian population. A high infant mortality of 1,259 per 100,000 live birth has been report for the 1991 to 1997 period. Pollution, neglect, corruption and underdevelopment are also major problem in the Niger Delta region, and these have lead to unrest and resentment of the foreign oil companies working there. [47][167][200]

**5.29** There is a Basic Health Service Scheme in Nigeria that aims to provide primary health care for the whole population. However, the quality and provision of care is still dependent on the ability of the patient to pay and long term care may not be covered by this scheme. [1]

**5.30** HIV and AIDS are serious problems in Nigeria. The Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) wishes to introduce a free multi-drug treatment for AIDS sufferers. For phase one of the strategy 500 Nigerians with HIV and AIDS would benefit from a one years supply of anti-retroviral drugs free of charge. The United Nations Special Rapporteur in his country report stated that Nigeria had 25% of all new AIDS case in 1998. [60][167] According to a recent World Health Organisation report, Tuberculosis is endemic in Nigeria, and this is due, in part, to the prevalence of HIV infection. [201] President Obasanjo has made tackling AIDS a priority of his government, and has instituted an education and treatment campaign to address this problem. The Lagos State government has responded by setting up a testing programme, and it is intended that counselling will be provided for those found to be infected. However AIDS is an increasing

problem, as the rate of infection amongst adult Nigerian has risen from 1.8% in 1990 to 5.4% in 1999, health experts estimate that more than 2.6 million Nigerians are infected with the virus. [247]

**5.31** Niger State has attempted to address the problem of HIV/AIDS by a screening and education program set up in July 1999. The present Nigerian Government has committed itself to reforming national health care, ensuring access to care for all. The Health Minister has said that resources and trained personnel will be made available to support this initiative. [202][203][204]

**5.32** Sickle Cell Anaemia is a very common condition in Nigeria this illness has many complications, the main ones being respiratory and circulation problems. The severity of its symptoms varies from case to case, and it is characterised by acute attacks of ill health and lethargy which are referred to as a "crisis". This condition is usually diagnosed in childhood, often before the sufferer is a year old. This condition can be life threatening, and limit the ability of a patient to lead a normal life. There are provisions for its treatment in Nigeria, but patients are usually expected to meet some of the costs of this care. [1][59]

## **EDUCATION**

**5.33** Although the government has increased spending on education over the last few years, schools have deteriorated. Many children do not attend school and the requirement for compulsory primary education is rarely enforced. [47]

**5.34** In 1994 the total enrolment at primary schools was 89% of children in the relevant age group, 100% of boys and 79% of girls. According to UNESCO estimates the rate of adult illiteracy in 1995 averaged 42.9%. However, a more recent estimate for adult literacy has placed this at 54%. [1][55] UNICEF have urged the new Nigerian government to adopt a bill on children's rights drafted in 1993, which made provisions for support of education and the elimination of child labour. [205]

**5.35** The Abubakar government introduced drugs education into the Nigerian school curriculum as a way of trying to cut drug use and drug trafficking. [61]

## **VI HUMAN RIGHTS: ACTUAL PRACTICE WITH REGARD TO HUMAN RIGHTS**

### **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

#### **i. The Abacha era: November 1993 - 8 June 1998**

**6.1** The Abacha period in Nigeria -November 1993 until June 8 1998 was marked by severe human rights abuses. The procedures of the Aziza Special Military Tribunal investigating the alleged March 1995 conspiracy contravened most rights of a defendant and fair trial standards enshrined in the Constitution and international obligations. Likewise the seven person Special Military Tribunal set up to try the 26 people who were brought to trial for their alleged part in the December 1997 coup plot contravened most rights enshrined in the constitution. The

Tribunal was headed by army General Victor Malu rather than a judge and was held behind closed doors.

**6.2** The unconstitutional powers assigned to civil disturbance tribunals in Nigeria under Abacha were evident during the Auta Tribunal hearings into the death of 4 Ogoni tribal leaders in May 1994. Its proceedings violated many judicial principles and culminated in the arbitrary execution of 9 Ogonis, including Ken Saro-Wiwa. A UN General Assembly resolution condemning, in particular, these executions after a flawed judicial process and urging a return to democratic rule in Nigeria was adopted in December 1995. [62] [63]

**6.3** Nigeria was condemned by the ILO in 1997 for violation of its Convention on Freedom of Association. The most serious violation was the detention without charge of Frank Kokori and Milton Dabibi, the Secretary-Generals of the 2 oil workers unions that went on strike in 1994 in support of the installation of Chief Abiola as President. Following the replacement of the previous executive by a single government appointed administrator, elections to the executive of the Nigerian Labour Congress took place between 29-31 May 1996. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) at a national level was banned in May 1996, although university student unions remained legal during this period. A human rights commission was set up in June 1996, but it had little success in addressing the underlying problems of human rights abuse during the period of Abacha's rule. [64] [66]

## **ii. Abubakar era**

**6.4** General Abubakar who replaced General Abacha as head of state on 8 June 1998 took several steps to improve the poor human rights record in Nigeria. 7 He released most of the political prisoners in Nigeria, including leading pro-democracy and human rights activists Dr Frederick Fasehun who is the Acting Chairman for the Campaign for Democracy and Chief Olu Falae a leading member of the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO).

**6.5** Many of those released had been held without charge or trial under the State Security (Detention of Persons) Decree, No. 2 of 1984. Three others had been arrested following pro-democracy protests in May 1998, Olisa Agbakoba, a human rights lawyer who was involved with the United Action for Democracy, Chief Ayo Opadokun, a lawyer and NADECO Secretary General and Olusegun Maiyegun, a leading member of the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights and the Campaign for Democracy. [67] [68]

**6.6** In early September 1998 the 20 Ogoni political prisoners who had been in detention since 1994 for the murder of 4 Ogoni chiefs (the same charges as the late Ken Saro-Wiwa) were released after a High Court judge in Port Harcourt dropped all the charges. Their release was unconditional. [69] In March 1999 it was announced that most of the coup plotters imprisoned after unfair trials would be released. These included those imprisoned after the 1990, 1995 and 1997 coup plots, and most of these were release in late March. [129]

**6.7** The Abubakar Government withdrew soldiers who manned checkpoints throughout Ogoniland in the Rivers State of the Niger Delta. Free movement has now been allowed after years of restriction on travel in the area. Abubakar promised to reform a commission, which was set up to develop the oil-producing areas, which local people believe had been ineffectual. [70]

**6.8** It was announced on 17 September 1998 that treason charges against fifteen of those accused of involvement in the 1995-7 bomb attacks had been dropped. Amongst those against who

charges have been dropped are Professor Wole Soyinka, Chief Anthony Enahoro, Lt. General (rtd) Alani Akinrinade and Dr Amos Akingbe. They have since returned to Nigeria for visits. [71]

### **iii Current human right situation**

**6.9** President Obasanjo created a panel to investigate human rights abuses between January 1966 and 28 May 1999, and to identify the people responsible. The panel has been sworn in under Justice Oputa, and has received approximately 11000 petitions. [172][241]

**6.10** In a recent background brief on Nigeria, issued to coincide with President Clinton's visit, Human Rights Watch acknowledged the efforts of the Nigerian government in addressing human rights. Human Rights Watch while approving of the government's efforts, highlighted concerns regarding legal reforms, law enforcement, the Niger Delta, Sharia law and communal violence. Many of these problems are long standing, and Human Rights Watch urges the present Nigerian government to continue with its efforts to correct them. [279]

## **VII.HUMAN RIGHTS: GENERAL ASSESMENT**

### **SECURITY SITUATION**

**7.1** Nigeria is a major regional power, and as such is a prominent member of the Economic Community of West African States and contributes a large military contingent to its monitoring force in Liberia and Sierra Leone (ECOMOG). There is a longstanding dispute with the Cameroon over the Bakassi peninsula, which lies to the extreme south of their shared border. The issue is currently before the International Court of Justice in The Hague. [72]

**7.2** The deteriorating economic, political and social conditions have in the past contributed to a relatively unstable internal security situation. In late 1996 and 1997 Nigeria endured a spate of bombings, mainly against military targets in Lagos. Despite the arrest of a number of suspects, more generally government ineffectiveness has been manifest in the contemporary prevalence of lawlessness centred on cities such as Lagos where violent street crime and armed robberies are commonplace. Official recognition of the scale of the problem came during May 1996 when 4,000 extra police and soldiers were deployed in Lagos. The alleged coup attempt of December 1997, although not causing major disruption in Nigeria's main cities was another indication of the perceived instability of Nigeria's power base under the late General Abacha.

**7.3** During General Abubakar's time as Head of State the situation became more stable, as the programme for transition to civilian rule had been started. The main exception has been in some areas of the Niger Delta where disaffected Ijaw youths have become more militant in their demands for a share of the area's oil wealth. [47] Unrest in the Niger Delta still continues under the civilian government, and efforts to address this by legislation have met with little success. A bill has been passed establishing a Niger Delta Development Commission. [177]

### **FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY/OPINION**

#### **i. The situation under General Abacha 17 November 1983 - June 8 1998**

**7.4** Nigeria has acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. However political activity was proscribed by the PRC on 18 November 1993. Political debate was sanctioned within the forum of the NCC from its inauguration in June 1994. [73]

**7.5** General Abacha announced a relaxation of the ban in August 1994 allowing, in principle, individuals and groups to canvass political ideas. On 27 June 1995 he announced a conditional lifting of the ban on political activity, with immediate effect. This was hedged by a warning not to indulge in political campaigning until the lifting of this restriction. A formal repeal of the decree banning the formation of political parties was announced on 12 February 1996. [73]

**7.6** The intermittent arrests, and predominantly short-term detention, of some pro-democracy activists continued under Abacha despite official declarations on permitted political activity. The leader of the National Conscience Party (NCP) Gani Fawehinmi was arrested on 30 January 1996 ostensibly to prevent him from addressing a public rally at the University of Lagos and was detained until November 1996. [74][75]

**7.7** Numerous political parties, groups and associations were active in Nigeria during the Abacha regime and prominent activists (see Annex C) involved in such groups did face difficulties with the Nigerian authorities at this time. [76]

**7.8** There were long term detainees under the Abacha regime, which predominantly fell into three categories of opponent. These were prominent opposition political figures (such as national executives of pro-democracy or human rights organisations), senior journalists in opposition newspapers and national trade union officials. [77]

**7.9** The hostile attitude of the Abacha government and harassment of their leaders did not prevent a number of Nigerian human rights groups such as the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO) and the Constitutional Rights Project (CRP) from documenting and publicising abuses throughout Nigeria which have been drawn upon by international monitors. [78] [79]

## **ii The situation under General Abubakar 9 June 1998-29 May 1999**

**7.10** General Abubakar set Nigeria on the path to transition from military dictatorship to a civilian government. Prospective political parties were invited to register with the INEC for recognition. Nine parties fulfilled the criteria for registration. Guidelines announced by the INEC were designed to ensure political parties were not based solely in one region. [80] Parties were not allowed to form along tribal lines. Some of the new parties that have been formed include former Abacha supporters and associates, such as the All People's Party. [81]

**7.11** Local, parliamentary and presidential elections went ahead as planned. Although there were reports by international monitors of some irregularities, they concluded that the results reflected the wishes of the Nigerian people. General Obasanjo was inaugurated president on 29 May 1999. [197] [131] [132] [133] [134] [135] [136] [137] [138] [139]

**7.12** In June 1998 Abubakar released the trade union leaders imprisoned by Abacha. In August 1998 he repealed decrees which had prevented Trade Unions from striking or organising on a national level which had been passed in 1994. The new decree signed by Abubakar also gave a legal backing to the reconstitution of the Academic Staff Union of Universities, which had been banned in 1996. The government also abrogated the decrees outlawing the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) which had been passed by Abacha, the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers and Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria. [84] [85]

**7.13** From August 17 to 21 1998 the International Labour Organisation undertook a direct

contacts mission to Nigeria. They had previously been unsuccessful at obtaining permission for such a visit from the Abacha administration. The direct contacts mission had meetings with trade unions. Their conclusion was that there had been many positive developments since June 1998, including the release of trade union leaders, the repeal of many restrictive trade union decrees including decrees 9 and 10 which had dissolved the NUPENG and PENGASSAN Unions, as well as the re-opening of dialogue at international level. The direct contacts mission recommended that Nigeria consolidate the progress made so far by continuing to repeal the remaining of the restrictive decrees, in order to bring the legislation into greater conformity with freedom of association principles and standards. [128]

**7.14** There have been no reports of harassment of human rights organisations under President Obasanjo, or infringements of peaceful protest or union activity.

## **MEDIA FREEDOM**

### **i. The situation under Abacha -November 1993- 8 June 1998**

**7.15** Nigeria has a long tradition of a vibrant and independently minded press. However, the Abacha administration cracked down on those involved with reporting which was critical of the regime. This resulted in the arrest and detention of a number of journalists - some senior - particularly those perceived to have written anything critical of Abacha. Hence high profile journalists or editors critical of the Abacha or the government, or overtly political in the content of their work may have faced harassment and persecution during the Abacha era. [86]

### **ii. The situation under General Abubakar 9 June 1998-29 May 1999**

**7.16** General Abubakar released most political prisoners who had been detained under the Abacha regime, including the journalists Chris Anyanwu, Ben Charles Obi, George Mbah and Kunle Ajibade. The last three had been sentenced in connection with the 1995 coup plot. In March 1999 the Diet editor Niran Malaolu was freed. He had been imprisoned following conviction for participation in the 1997 coup plot. It is understood that he was the last remaining journalist in prison. [129]

**7.17** Under General Abubakar the press operated with few restrictions, and without the intimidation that characterised Abacha's rule. The Nigerian press, while critical of the government, were not harassed by the security services, as happened under the previous regime. [121] There was a significant reduction in reports of attacks on the press following Abubakar's appointment as head of state. However there were still some minor incidents of harassment of the press during Abubakar regime. [153]

## **Television and radio**

**7.18** Private television stations are restricted to local rather than national broadcasting. The Nigerian government has not sought to restrict access to the internet or other forms of media, but its use is limited as the service is unreliable. [47]

**7.19** The Political Parties Registration and Activities Decree No 35 of 1998 was passed to ensure equal allocation of time and similarity of subject matter in political broadcasts by registered parties leading up to and during the period of the elections during the transition process. All stations were directed to set up a complaints committee to examine complaints and appeals from

political parties. [142]

### **The situation under the present government**

**7.20** The present civilian government has introduced a bill to abolish the 1962 official secrets act, which severely curtails press freedom, and has called for the responsible use of press freedom. [206][207] The press remains active and is able to freely investigate and report, for example, the News magazine recently exposed the speaker of the Nigerian House of Representatives Mr Ibrahim Salisu Buhari as being unqualified for his position, and as a result he resigned on 22 July. This is one example of the press being permitted to investigate politicians. [208] [209]

**7.21** The 1999 Constitution guarantees the freedom of the press, and President Obasanjo's government generally respects this right. However, there have been occasions where the Security Forces have infringed press freedom. On one occasion, in October 1999, the editor of the Ogoni Star Newspaper Jerry Needham was detained, it is reported that he was ill-treated while in detention in an attempt to force him to sign a confession. He was also denied access to medical treatment while detained, but was released on bail on 2 November 1999; his case has yet to be heard. In November, the army prevented reporters interviewing people injured in clashes in Bayelsa State. [47]

### **FREEDOM OF RELIGION**

**7.22** Nigeria is a secular state and this has been enshrined in all Nigeria's Constitutions since independence, and this was re-affirmed by the 1999 Constitution. The 1999 Constitution guarantees freedom of belief. [47] This is an area that has not been overridden by any subsequent presidential decree and revision. The main religions are Islam and Christianity with a sizeable minority subscribing to traditional African beliefs, although there are no accurate contemporary figures for the relative number of believers. However it is generally accepted that most of the population in the North are Muslims and most Southerners are Christians. [87]

**7.23** Traditional religious beliefs are widespread in Nigeria, some of these are described as witchcraft or Ju-Ju. Nigerians are generally free to follow these traditional beliefs, but where these practises may have resulted in criminal activity, the Nigerian police have investigated them. As these practises are often secret and take a wide variety of forms, it is very difficult to obtain reliable information regarding the nature of these religious beliefs. [249]

**7.24** The traditional leader of Nigerian Muslims was dethroned by the government in April 1996 and investigated in connection with his business affairs. The removal of Ibrahim Dasuki as Sultan of Sokoto and his replacement by Mohammed Maccido was a cause of celebration in Sokoto. [88] There is a history of religious tension between Muslims and Christians particularly in Northern states, most notably Kano, Kaduna and Katsina. [89]

**7.25** On 12 September 1996 radical Muslim leader Ibrahim El ZakZaky was arrested with other leaders. The following day 14 people were reported killed in clashes in Zaria between Muslims and police. Protests also took place in Kaduna and Katsina. The leadership of El ZakZaky's group, the Muslim Brothers, threatened to attack the police if he was not released by 17 September 1996. On 18 September 1996 a violent demonstration of some 10,000 people erupted. There were shootings and six people, including police officers were killed. The following day armed soldiers were reported to have killed 50 people in Kaduna, but by 22 September Kaduna



was reported to have become calm with people going about their normal business. El ZakZaky was released from detention at the end of 1998. [90] [143]

**7.26** On 28 December 1996 police in the Northern State of Sokoto arrested 43 members of a Muslim group allegedly planning to breach the peace in the area. The State Police Commissioner stated that they were picked up for inciting and making intimidating statements. They had also been abusing the police, army and other people in authority. All 43 faced charges of unlawful assembly, illegal preaching, incitement and disturbance of public peace. [91]

**7.27** On 7 February 1997 five people were feared dead following an uprising in Kano. Residents said that trouble flared when members of the Muslim Brotherhood fundamentalist group tried to break up prayers at the end of the Ramadan fast. Reports suggest that the police appealed to the group to stop but in response were attacked by stones. Police replied by firing at the crowd leaving at least five dead as the crowds dispersed. [92]

**7.28** In April 1998 another demonstration by the Muslim Brotherhood calling for the release of Ibrahim El ZakZaky took place in Kaduna. It was reported by opposition radio station Radio Kudirat, which broadcasts from South Africa that six protestors had been shot by the police. Some protestors were arrested for public order offenses. The wife of El ZakZaky was also briefly arrested. [93] [94]

**7.29** In Mid September 1998 two Moslem protesters were killed as a result of a clash with security forces during a protest by members of the Muslim Brotherhood to commemorate the second anniversary of the arrest and detention of El ZakZaky. Also in September another prominent member of this group Alhaji Abdul Saadu Magaji died in Prison where he had been detained since the 1996 Kaduna unrest. [95]

**7.30** Although El ZakZaky was finally released at the end of 1998, his supporters continued to cause disturbances. In late 1998 some supporters were convicted and sentenced to between five and eight years imprisonment in northern Nigeria following the occupation of a university campus in which a security guard was killed. [212]

**7.31** On 27 May 1998 it was reported that at least 12 people had been killed, including 4 policemen, when supporters of a quasi Moslem sect the Maitatsine attacked police with bows and arrows in Lagos. [96]

**7.32** On 21 August 1999 in the city of Katsina, Shi'ite youths burned seven, mostly Christian, owned hotels on 21 August 1999, after the hoteliers challenged the local government recent ban on the sale of alcohol. [210]

#### **i. The introduction of Sharia law, and subsequent events.**

**7.33** Nigeria's Constitution enshrines Nigeria as a secular state. Sharia Law has existed in Nigeria for many years, and the Constitution contains provision for Sharia courts to deal with issues of family law. However, on 27 October 1999 Zamfara State announced that they would introduce Sharia Law for criminal cases. This legislation contains provision that non-Muslims will not be subject to Sharia Law, but this has not assuaged the concerns of the Christian communities, who fear discrimination. Other northern states, with predominantly Muslim communities, have introduced, or are considering similar legislation. Zamfara's legislation came

into force on 27 January 2000. Niger and Kebbi States signed similar laws in early February and Kano later the same month. The legislation cannot be formally introduced for at least three months until after signature. There is a question over whether the introduction of the Sharia penal code is constitutional; this will have to be resolved by the Nigerian courts. [250][257][278]

**7.34** Violent riots broke out on 21 and 22 February in Kaduna, following a demonstration by the Christian community against the imposition of the Sharia penal code in Kaduna State. It is not clear who started the violence, but the situation quickly deteriorated into serious violence with Christians and Muslims burning each other's properties, businesses and places of worship. Hundreds of people were reported to have been killed during this violence. [251][252] [278]

**7.35** Retaliatory violence against Muslim communities broke out in Abia, Imo and Akwa Ibom States when some of the bodies of the Kaduna victims were returned to their home states. Over four hundred people were killed. [251] [253] [257] [278]

**7.36** Following the Kaduna riots, President Obasanjo called a crisis meeting on 29 February of the National Council of States, a body which includes the President, Vice-President, former Heads of State and the governors of all the States. After this meeting, Vice-President Abubakar announced that the introduction of Sharia would be suspended. However, some of the States have not implemented this, and Zamfara State carried out the first judicial amputation under Sharia on 23 March, and further sentences have subsequently been carried out. Human Rights Watch expressed concern about the imposition of these sentences and the Nigerian governments response in it recent report. [255] [256] [258] [278] [279]

**7.37** An inter-religious council covering all northern Nigeria has been established to try and reduce tensions. Similar organisations have also been set up by individual States. On 4 April the governors of all 19 northern states agreed to establish a panel of Christian and Muslim leaders to examine how Sharia Law can operate under Nigeria's existing penal code. A human rights group, Human Rights Law Service (HURILAWS), is supporting a challenge to the constitutionality of the introduction of Sharia in Zamfara by residents of the State, a previous challenge by the same organisation was dismissed. [254] [257] [258] [278]

**7.38** In late May there was further rioting in Kaduna, following a demonstration where Christians clashed with Muslim youths. This violence lasted for two days and it is reported that three hundred people were killed. Security forces restored order, and this violence was limited to the Kaduna area. Eight northern states introduced some form of Sharia law by October 2000, Borno, Zamfara, Niger, Katsina, Jigawa, Sokoto, Yobe and Kano, and other states have expressed their intention to introduce similar laws. [280][281]

## **ETHNIC GROUP**

**7.39** There are over 250 ethnic groups with different languages and dialects in Nigeria, which accounts for her cultural diversity. In descending order the Muslim Hausa-Fulani centred on the north, the Yoruba centred on the south-west, and the predominately Christian Ibo (or Igbo) centred on the south-east are the largest ethnic groups comprising around 70% of the population. Yet no single tribe encompasses a majority of the population. There is no federal policy of discrimination against any of Nigeria's ethnic groups and legislation is designed not to favour one group over another. This is largely respected provided that a group does not pursue secessionist demands.

**7.40** An alleged dominance in the military and government is occasionally levelled at Hausa-Fulanis, with the converse claim that other ethnic groups are discriminated against. Ibos formed the Biafran rebels during the 1967-70 civil war but have since regained prominence in the professions and commerce, and became government ministers, without encountering government repression. [1]

**7.41** Ethnic and religious tensions between Hausas and Ibos mixed with economic hardship degenerated into rioting in Kano on 30 May 1995. The investigation panel established declared 17 people had died, and the state administrator announced several measures to forestall future violence including the creation of a civil disturbances tribunal to try the 54 arrested. Despite the deaths that resulted in Kano, the episode did not precipitate unrest elsewhere and the authorities' prompt actions contained the violence to that single day.

**7.42** Violent clashes between the Hausa and Yoruba tribes occurred in Shagamu, A Yoruba dominated town, on 17 July 1999, it is reported that at least sixty people have been killed. This violence followed the death of a Hausa woman, who was killed when she was found watching a Yoruba religious ceremony, which was forbidden to outsiders. The Nigerian authorities deployed police reinforcements in the towns. [211] [212] This violence spread when Hausas fled to Kano, and the local population attacked Yorubas resident there. The violence was brought under control after a few days. [213][214][215][216][222]

**7.43** There were reports of confrontations between two communities in the Osun state city of Ile-Ife (the home of the senior Yoruba traditional leader the Ooni of Ife). This was triggered on 16 August 1997 by the relocation of the local government headquarters from Modakeke to Oke-Igbo. This sudden outbreak of violence in Ife is similar to that which has affected Warri since March 1997 following relocation of local government headquarters there. [98] The violence in Warri has continued throughout 1998 and 1999. Killings have occurred in clashes between the Itsekiris and Ijaw ethnic groups in early 1999. [217] A serious ethnic clash between Fulani and Karimjo people erupted at Karim Lamido in Taraba State during April 1996. Approximately 80 people were killed in the violence and 20 people were arrested as soldiers and police restored order. [97] [99]

**7.44** Hausa-Fulani cattle dealers clashed with local Yoruba traders in Ibadan on 23 June 1999. A Hausa killed a local man during an argument over a goat, and the riot started after the police released the man accused of the killing. Seven people were reported killed in the fighting, which lasted for several hours, and the police made ten arrests. [218]

**7.45** It is reported that twenty-eight people were killed in three separate ethnic clashes in Taraba State on 24 and 25 June 1999. Tivs fought with Fulanis, Kutebs fought with Jukuns and Wurukum farmers with Fulani herdsman, these conflicts are reported to be caused by land disputes. Clashes between Tiv and Jukuns in Benue and Taraba States continued throughout 1999 resulting in the deaths of several hundred people, this violence stems from long standing land disputes between these two groups. [47][219]

**7.46** In the riots following the death of Moshood Abiola in July 1998 there was an indication that some of the violence took on an ethnic dimension. Abiola's tribe the Yoruba majority based in south west Nigeria attacked the Hausas from the north who have been politically dominant in the past by keeping a tight grip on the military. Estimates of the number killed vary but estimates put it at between 50 and 100. [100]

**7.47** In clashes between Ijaw and Ilaje in Ondo State and Western Delta State during July and August 1998, hundreds were reportedly killed. There have been renewed clashes between these two tribes in July and August 1999, with three hundred people being reported killed, the army were sent to the region to restore order, a significant move in light of the withdrawal of military forces under Abubakar. [144] [220] [221]

## **FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT IN NIGERIA**

**7.48** Internal migration has contributed to the multi-ethnic and multi-religious composition of many Nigerian cities including Lagos. The 1999 Constitution entitles Nigerians to move freely throughout the country and to live where they wish and this is generally observed. The present Nigerian government generally permits its citizens to travel within Nigeria, and to leave the country without being subject to restrictions. [47]

## **VIII: HUMAN RIGHTS: SPECIFIC GROUPS**

### **POLITICAL GROUPS/PRO DEMOCRACY GROUPS/HUMAN RIGHTS ASSOCIATIONS**

**8.1** Under the Abacha regime political parties were declared legal on 27 June 1995. However only five parties qualified for registration, and all of these supported Abacha's bid for the Presidency in the cancelled elections of August 1998.

**8.2** Under General Abubakar most of the political prisoners who were detained by General Abacha were released. These include: Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti, the leader of the Campaign for Democracy who was serving 15 years for involvement in the 1995 coup attempt, NADECO activists that were imprisoned under General Abacha Chief Olabiyi Durojaye, who had been in detention without charge since 1996, and Olu Falae. [19][101]

**8.3** General Abubakar had talks with opposition parties/pressure groups including NADECO prior to the elections on how to manage the transition to civilian democratic rule. Political parties and human rights groups are now free to operate without fear of harassment, and many of those who have been released have participated freely in the process of transition to democracy. All charges have been dropped against 15 political exiles abroad and Abubakar has asked them to return to help with the process of transforming Nigeria into a democracy. Many exiles are reported to have returned home Air Commodore Dan Suleiman, Vice Chairman of NADECO and Wole Soyinka, and none appear to have been harassed on their return. [47] [102]

### **ODUA PEOPLE'S CONGRESS**

**8.4** However, the Nigerian government has taken action against groups thought to be pursuing an agenda of independence for their particular ethnic group. The Odua people's Congress (OPC) are a Yoruba group, led by Dr Frederick Fasheun. It was affiliated to JACON and widely believed to advocate an independent Yoruba state (although Fasheun has denied this). In early November 1998 it was reported that 5 members of the OPC were killed by police in Lagos. They were allegedly attacked by the police after finishing a meeting. Further clashes between police and OPC youths took place in February and early March 1999 following attacks, by elements of the OPC, on police stations in Lagos and Ogun State.

**8.5** The OPC are believed to have been involved in riots in Lagos port, in which a number of

people were reported to have been killed. [145][242] On 9 September 1999 there was a serious riot at the port of Lagos, and it was reported that militants linked to the OPC were involved. The cause of this violence was an attempt by sacked workers to return to work, which was supported by the militants, but opposed by other workers. There was also an ethnic element to this violence as the rioters also sought to secure Yoruba domination over business conducted in the port. After several hours of fighting between the rival groups the police restored order, but it is reported that sixteen people were killed. [259]

**8.6** In November 1999 in and around Lagos there were clashes between the OPC and Hausas over market trading, which resulted in the deaths of at least twenty seven people, and a vigorous police response. On 25 November 1999 President Obasanjo ordered that police shoot OPC members on sight if they did not surrender, as a result the police adopted a confrontational line with the OPC. There were also clashes between OPC and Ijaws in Lagos at around the same time, see paragraph 8.20 regarding these events. [260][261]

**8.7** The OPC has also split into two factions, one under the leadership of Dr Frederick Fasheun and the other under the leadership Mr Ganiyu Adams, and these factions clashed in January 2000, resulting in at least six deaths. In another incident in January 2000 a senior police officer in Lagos was kidnapped and killed by OPC members attempting to free a member accused of robbery. This incident resulted in a crackdown by the police in which one hundred people were killed, and over two hundred OPC members detained on criminal charges. The Adam's faction has been identified as being involved in most of this criminal activity, and has also acted as a vigilante organisation in Lagos. On 13 January 2000 President Obasanjo complained about the Governor of Lagos Bola Tinubu's handling of these incidents in a letter. His comments were met with a robust defence from the Governor of his administration. The Nigerian government has set up an ad hoc Senate committee to investigate both factions of the OPC, and present proposals as to how this organisation should be dealt with in the future. [262][263][264][265][266][267]

**8.8** The OPC have continued to be involved in vigilante violence. In August, after a number of violent clashes, including attacks on the police, the Nigerian police announced a crackdown on OPC members involved in these crimes. The attitude of the public, in the Lagos area, to the OPC is ambivalent, as they are seen as attempting to impose order in areas where the police have been unsuccessful, and some Yorubas sympathise with their aims, if not their methods. The Nigerian police have targeted their action against members of the OPC involved in violence, and ordinary members generally appear to be able to express their views without harassment. [282][283][284]

## **MINORITIES/ETHNIC GROUPS**

### **THE Ogoni**

**8.9** Many of the minority tribes of the Niger Delta have in recent years expressed their discontent over their local environmental, economic and social infrastructure problems. Much of the ethnic unrest has centred on Ogoniland, a densely populated area of approximately 400 square miles in Rivers State near to but not encompassing Port Harcourt. Along with some other ethnic groupings in the Niger Delta the estimated 500,000 Ogonis live in one of the most polluted parts of Nigeria. Most of the pollution is the result of intensive exploitation of the area's oil reserves. Many Ogonis accuse transnational oil companies (in particular Shell) and Nigeria's Federal military Government of responsibility for their plight. [103]

**8.10** During the last few years the Ogonis have been involved in occasionally violent disputes with other local minority groups. This situation was heightened by demands from the Ogoni political movement founded in 1990, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). In particular MOSOP has campaigned for political autonomy and a greater share of oil revenue in compensation for the environmental degradation allegedly caused by on-shore oil production in Ogoniland. Although MOSOP initially appeared to command strong support among the Ogoni it was clear by 1993 that some of its leaders were more disposed to compromise with the federal Military Government and the authorities of Rivers State than others. The opposing faction was led by the renowned author Kenule ("Ken") Saro-Wiwa, who became MOSOP's President in June 1993. MOSOP demands became more uncompromising from 1993 onwards under his leadership. There is some evidence that some MOSOP activists and particularly those of its youth wing the National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP) resorted to intimidation of their fellow Ogonis. In April 1994, spurred by this escalation in unrest, the Abacha Government deployed an "Internal Security Unit" inside Ogoniland comprised of large numbers of police and military.

**8.11** On 21 May 1994 a meeting was held at the Palace of Gbenemene of Gokana (a traditional ruler) in Giokoo. A number of Saro-Wiwa's opponents attended. The meeting was attacked by a large mob and four chiefs were killed. In the days and weeks after the killings a large number of people were arrested by the security forces. Among those arrested in late May were Saro-Wiwa, Ledum Mitee and Dr Kiobel. Fifteen members of the Ogoni ethnic minority were brought to trial before the Ogoni Civil Disturbance Special Tribunal for their alleged roles in the killings of the four Ogoni chiefs. On 31 October 1995, the Tribunal announced guilty verdicts and death sentences for Saro-Wiwa and eight other activists. The PRC confirmed this decision on 8 November 1995 and all nine were executed on 10 November 1995. [1][104][105]

**8.12** MOSOP and NYCOP activists were subjected to harassment and persecution by the Nigerian authorities during the Abacha regime. After Abubakar became head of state in June 1998 the situation in Ogoniland improved. In early September 1998, 20 Ogoni political prisoners who had been in detention since 1994 for the murder of 4 Ogoni chiefs (the same charges as the late Ken Saro-Wiwa) were released after a High Court judge in Port Harcourt dropped all the charges. Their release was unconditional. [106]

**8.13** General Abubakar withdrew the Internal Security Task Force from Ogoniland in the Rivers State of the Niger Delta. Free movement is now possible after years of restriction on travel in the area. Many Ogoni exiles have been able to return, and MOSOP have been able to hold rallies once again. Shell was driven from Ogoniland in 1993 after MOSOP activists sabotaged installations demanding compensation for pollution. MOSOP says Shell must meet their demands before they will permit its return. Abubakar promised reform of a commission which was set up to develop oil-producing areas but which local people believe has been ineffectual. [107]

**8.14** President Obasanjo has attempted to deal with some of the underlying problems in Niger Delta region, and on 12 July 1999 he presented a bill to the National Assembly proposing to set up a development fund for the region together with a Commission to oversee development. [223] The oil companies operating in the region would contribute to this fund. This was rejected by MOSOP on 4 August 1999, after a meeting at Bori in Ogoniland, the proposals, in their opinion, would make the situation worse, and they believe that the proposed Commission would be a tool of the central government and not act in the interest of local people. [224] On 14 August 1999 it

was reported that Ogoni leaders and MOSOP had attended a meeting with Royal Dutch Shell (RDS), the company that was forced out of the Ogoni region in 1993. This meeting was seen as a sign that both the Ogonis and RDS wished to reach an accommodation regarding the future development of the region. RDS has said that it will only return to the region with local approval, and in interim has offered to sponsor development projects. [225]

**8.15** In April 2000 there were violent confrontations in K-Dere between rival factions of MOSOP, over a road building project in that village. Amnesty International has accused the police of using this violence as a means of harassing and detaining Ogoni activists. A house belonging to Ledum Mitee, the president of one of MOSOP's faction, was destroyed. He was also detained in connection with this violence and bailed, but there are charge still outstanding against him. [285][286][287][288] In May Nwibari Obani claimed leadership of a rival faction of MOSOP. Ledum Mitee has challenged the legitimacy of his election. [289] In July MOSOP reiterated its opposition to RDS operating in the region, and accused it of attempting to re-start operations clandestinely, without addressing the concerns of the local people or paying compensation. [290]

### **General situation in the Niger Delta**

**8.16** The situation in the Niger Delta during the latter part of 1998, and early 1999 has become increasingly volatile. Disaffected youths were involved in taking oil workers hostage and sabotaging pipelines, they have accused the oil companies of indifference to their economic plight and demanding compensation from the oil companies for the environmental impact of their operations. [120] Many Ijaw youths have been arrested for involvement in criminal activity, although concern has been expressed by some Ijaw groups that innocent Ijaws have also been arrested. [146] During 1999 the Security Forces operating in the Delta were again accused of using excessive, and sometime lethal force on a number of occasions, which has been a long-standing problem in the area. [47][140]

**8.17** President Obasanjo has attempted to address the situation in the Niger Delta, on 25 June he negotiated a cessation of hostilities between the Itsekiris, Ijaw and Urhobos, and has proposed legislation to assist in the regions development (as detailed above). [226] However, this initiative has been rejected by the Ijaw, Urhobo, Isoko and Ndokwa communities, and the Ilaje community have requested amendments. [227][228] There have also been ethnic clash in the region is between Ilaje and Ijaw communities in Ondo State. [229][230] The National Assembly has passed the Niger Delta Development Commission Bill. [177]

**8.18** In early November there were clashes between Ijaws of the Egbesu cult and the OPC in Ajegunle district of Lagos. The OPC, were acting in support of the Ilajes, a Yoruba sub-group tribe in the Delta State, who have been involved in a violent conflict with the Ijaw for the past two years. Fifteen people were reported to have been killed in this violence and over fifty-six arrested. [268]

**8.19** In early November 1999 it was reported that twelve policemen were killed by Ijaw youths, in retaliation for the large number of Ijaws arrested by the police during the Lagos riots. [269] On 20 November 1999 in response to this incident, the Nigerian armies were order by the civilian governor to surround the town of Odi in Bayelsa State. This was the town in which the policemen were killed, and where it was believed that the Ijaws responsible were hiding. The military came under fire and over-reacted, severely damaging the town. It is not known how

many people were killed, but the local residents claim that over 500 died. Over 2000 people were detained, but it is not known if those responsible for the deaths of the police officer were among those detained or killed. An inconclusive investigation was launched into this incident. President Obasanjo later apologised for the excessive force used by the military, but no action has yet to be taken against any of the soldiers involved. [47][270][271]

**8.20** On 1 February 2000 a peace agreement was reached between the Ijaw and Itsekiri. The Delta State Government were commended for its part in brokering this peace agreement, and it is hope that this agreement may result in a general peace in the Warri region. [272]

**8.21** Disruption of oil production and kidnapping of employees of oil companies has continued in the region, most of those kidnapped are released unharmed after a short period of time. Oil pipeline have also been vandalised, either by local people or by criminals intent on stealing oil. These incidents have resulted in a number of recent explosions and fires, which have killed or injured many local people. The Nigerian government is attempting to address this problem and has expressed its intentions to deploy security force to protect pipelines. [47][231][232][291][292]

**8.22** In September MOSOP called on the Nigerian government to drop charges against those accused of damaging pipelines, stating that lack of pipeline maintenance, rather than organised criminal activity was the cause of this problem. MOSOP stated that the oil companies failure to abide by international standards had resulted in pipeline leakage, and that their activities they were responsible for this problem. [293]

## **WOMEN**

**8.23** Freedom from discrimination based on gender is specifically provided for by the 1999 Constitution. Customary and religious discrimination against women persist in many communities and the police do not usually intervene in domestic disputes, except where alleged physical abuse exceeds customary norms. This failure to provide adequate legal protection, was criticised in a recent report by World Organisation against Torture a Swiss based organisation. [233] Women are not barred from seeking redress through the courts, although the expense precludes many. There are no legal impediments relating to either female employment or political participation, although women frequently have to encounter prejudice in male dominated fields such as law and politics. [47]

**8.24** The government publicly opposes female genital mutilation (FGM). Nigeria co-sponsored a resolution at the Fourth World Health Assembly urging states to eliminate harmful health practices, including FGM. In 1984, a Nigerian National Committee was founded to campaign against FGM and it has subsequently obtained the collaboration and limited financial support from the Ministries of Health, Education and Information. The Ministry of Health and non-governmental organisations have sponsored public awareness and education projects informing communities of the health hazards associated with FGM. FGM is a traditional practice within local communities, and consequently it has proved difficult for federal government to effectively confront. However, the cultural nature of the practice in Nigeria determines that the mothers of young daughters are able to veto treatment if they oppose it. FGM is practised by communities from all of Nigeria's major ethnic groups and religions, although adherence is neither universal nor nationwide. A 1985-6 survey found that it was not practised at all in 6 of the 19 states surveyed. Estimates about the proportion of women who have undergone genital mutilation



varies from between 50 to 90% in Nigeria as a whole. However most experts agree that the number of girls now facing FGM is declining, and in July 2000 it was reported that Edo, Cross River and Ogun states had banned FGM. [47][108][294] The United Nations Special Rapporteur highlighted some of these issues in his country report. He also pointed out that women were denied education opportunities open to their brothers because of the expense, and they were also denied equal inheritance rights because of cultural or religious views. [167] A coalition of 32 NGO met in Lagos in August 1999, specifically to address the discriminatory way that land is inherited transferred or purchased, when the person obtaining this land is a woman, and called on the government to address this. [234]

**8.25** A growing problem is the cross border trafficking of Nigerian women for the purpose of forced prostitution in Europe. Mrs Titi Abubakar, wife of the Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, has set up the Women-trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF). This organisation intends to combat this trade and help rehabilitate victims of this traffic who have been deported back to Nigeria, by providing vocational training, and financial assistance to set up businesses at the end of this training. The Nigerian authorities are aware of this exploitation and are attempting to stop this trade, they are also seeking international assistance to address this problem. [295]

**8.26** There are no legal provisions barring women from testifying in a civil court of law. However the testimony of women is given less weight in a Muslim Sharia court, and this may have implications in States where a Sharia legal code has been introduced. However, as this code is still being introduced, its long term effects remain to be seen. [47]

**8.27** President Obasanjo has been criticised by women's groups for his failure to appoint more women to ministerial posts, and there appears to be a perception of institutionalised discrimination against women in Nigerian society. [235] In July, it was reported that the UNICEF representative for Nigeria had praised Nigeria's efforts to improve the lot of women. She cited the appointment of women to ministerial posts and the encouragement of girls to enrol in school. The Legal Defence and Assistance Project, an NGO of lawyers and human rights workers, has also commended the Nigerian government's efforts to address women's rights. [294][296]

## **CHILDREN**

**8.28** Although the law forbids the imprisonment of children, it is reported that children are regularly detained with criminals. (See also section on prisons)

**8.29** Although the authorities have condemned child abuse and neglect it has made little attempt to stop customary practices such as the sale of young girls into marriage with older men. Young girls were reported to be frequently forced into marriage as soon as they reached puberty. The International Labour Organisation has expressed concern over the increasing occurrence of child labour and prostitution. [47]

**8.30** As referred to above, UNICEF have urged the new Nigerian government to adopt a draft bill on children's rights drafted in 1993, which made provisions for support of education, the elimination of child labour and early marriage. This bill also proposed a ban on FGM and skin scarification or tattoos, which are used by some tribal groups to show affiliation. [205] The United Nations Special Rapporteur in his country report highlighted a number of childcare problems in Nigeria, but he praised Nigeria's joint project with the UNICEF Programme of Co-operation aimed at reducing child and maternal mortality, and improving access to education.

This programme also seeks to promote a healthy environment and access to safe drinking water. [167]

## **STUDENT CULTS**

**8.31** Student cults, secret societies based on student fraternities, have been responsible for many crimes in Nigerian universities. However, the Nigerian police have made efforts to investigate these crimes, and convict cult members involved.

**8.32** Following the murder, by cult members, of students at Obafemi Awolowo University in July 1999, the Nigerian authorities took action to suppress these cults. In August 1999 the Nigerian government ordered Chancellors to eradicate cults from their campus. The government said that it would hold Chancellors responsible for failures to maintain order amongst their students. The universities have since been having some success in encouraging students to renounce cult membership. [273][274][275][276]

**8.33** On 10 March President Obasanjo commented on a report from Justice Okoi Itam into the events at Obafemi Awolowo University, he re-affirmed his government's commitment to eradicating student cults, which he described as undermining both education institutions and society in general. Justice Itam stated that the government must provide funds to implement the recommendations of his report, and also deal with the problem of Cults in both Federal and State educational institutions. He also reminded University authorities that they should monitor their students and staff for cult related activities. [277]

## **HOMOSEXUALS**

**8.34** Male homosexual conduct is prohibited by Nigerian law. Homosexuals can be subject to prosecution. The penalty for convicted homosexual behaviour varies from 3 months to 3 years imprisonment or a fine and/or corporal punishment. The justice system considers homosexual behaviour with a varying degree of statutory punishment.

**8.35** Homosexual males in Nigeria are likely to face discrimination and occasional violence if they are overt about their sexual orientation, but not on an organised or systematic scale. Society is not openly hostile but homosexuals can be subject to ridicule. There are some areas in Nigeria where it is possible to live openly as a homosexual - such as in a large city like Lagos. There have been instances of homosexuals being subjected to violence, but they usually keep themselves to themselves and are usually left alone. [147]

## **THE OGBONI**

**9.1** There are many cults in Nigeria. Probably the best known is the Ogboni. The Ogboni are a secret society of the Yoruba tribe, and it is therefore hard to obtain reliable information about them. [148] [149] As a secret society it has been banned in Nigeria, and its power curtailed. However this ban is hard to enforce, and it is still active and alleged to be involved in satanic practices. [149] [150]

**9.2** The title Ogboni is only conferred on the elders, i.e. senior members of the society. These are usually men but women, usually six in number, were traditionally included to represent the interests of women in the community. Membership of the society is usually, but not always,

passed through patrilineal descent. [148] [149]

**9.3** The Ogboni traditionally played a significant role in Yoruba religion and society, and were involved in the installation of new kings. Historically an Ogboni could be said to have combined the powers of a local magistrate, with those of a member of the local government and a religious leader. [148] [149]

**9.4** The Ogboni engaged in animal sacrifice. There is no firm evidence to suggest that they engaged in human sacrifice. However, in the event that a king abused his power they could compel him to commit suicide. They could also impose sanctions against other members of the community if they believed that these were justified. The Ogboni are reputed to threaten its members with death should they break their oath of secrecy regarding its rituals and beliefs. It is still regarded as being a powerful organisation throughout Nigeria. [148] [149] [150]

**9.5** It is believed that the Ogboni is a purely Yoruba cult, but there are a number of Yoruba sub tribes who also may be involved. [148]

### **The Reformed Ogboni Fraternity (ROF)**

**9.6** This was founded in 1914, and is not a religious organisation, although the members believe in God. The ROF is not a secret organisation, it is not banned, and is open to men and women regardless of race, colour, creed, religion, or political opinion.

**9.7** The ROF is an indigenous African organisation that promotes African culture, advocates charitable and good works, believes in the brotherhood of man and self-improvement. It disassociates itself from cults, specifically the Ogboni, and does not participate in politics. However, it should be noted that members of the ROF can also be Ogboni, due to their position within Yoruba society, as was the case with the late leader **Sir Adetokunbo Ademola**, which may imply that the reputation of the Ogboni as a sinister cult has been exaggerated. [151]

## **MONITORING**

**9.8** International human rights organisations are active in Nigeria and regularly reported allegations of human rights abuses.

**9.9** General Abubakar attempted to improve relations with the international community while Head of State, and appeared to be more receptive to criticisms about human rights issues than his predecessor. He addressed the United Nations General Assembly, and allowed a UN Special Rapporteur to visit Nigeria in November 1998. [109] In August 1998 a direct contacts mission from the International Labour Organisation was allowed to visit Nigeria. [128] There are no reports of the present government obstructing or preventing the activities of international human rights organisations in Nigeria.

## **INTERNAL FLIGHT**

**9.10** Individuals who fear persecution by non state entities, for example, those involved in tribal disputes, problems with cult membership, religious difficulties and so forth, the option of internal flight is a real possibility in Nigeria, taking into account its size and population (for details see section on geography).

## **ANNEX A**

### **INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS**

#### A. Formal obligations

1. Of the 14 human rights instruments that the United Nations (UN) is depository to, Nigeria has acceded to

9 and signed 1 other.

#### Acceded to:

i. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

ii. Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid.

iii. Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination.

v. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

v. 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees

vi. 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees

vii. Convention on the non-applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and crimes against humanity

viii. Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women

ix. Convention on the rights of the child

#### Signed but not ratified:

i. Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

2. Nigeria has signed and ratified the Organisation of African Unity's (OAU) African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and is a member of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Nigeria is also the only country in Africa that has domesticated the application of the African Charter on the human and peoples' rights by transforming it into its local legislation.

## **ANNEX B**

### **MAIN POLITICAL PARTIES/PRO-DEMOCRACY GROUPS/HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS**

#### **Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC)**

The SDP and NRC were created by the Babangida regime in October 1989 following the lifting of the ban on political parties in May 1989 and in March 1990 membership registration began for both parties. Chief Tom Ikimi and Baba Gana Kingibe were elected as chairmen of the NRC and SDP respectively in July 1990. In March 1993 following the National party congresses Chief Moshood Abiola and Alhaji Bashir Tofa were selected to stand in the Presidential elections which took place on 12 June 1993. Initial results indicated that Abiola had won the majority of the vote however on 23 June the results of the election were declared invalid which led to unrest. General Abacha the newly installed military ruler dissolved all democratically elected institutions and banned both parties in November 1994. Abiola declared himself President in a symbolic ceremony on 11 June and was arrested on 23 June on charges of treason. He died in prison in July 1998 whilst still awaiting trial, and just when it was widely believed that he was about to be released. Following the return to civilian rule, political parties are now allowed to function and register as political organisations.

#### **Parties**

After political parties were declared legal on 27.6.95, a multitude of newly founded political organisations sprang up. They are mostly only listed by their titles in literature. Only five parties qualified for registration:-

**United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP)**

**Committee for National Consensus (CNC)**

**National Centre Party of Nigeria (UCPN)**

**Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN)**

**Grassroot Democratic Movement (GDM)**

These parties were dissolved by Abubakar in July 1998. They were viewed as being vehicles to secure Abacha's candidacy for the presidential elections that were to have taken place in August 1998.

#### **Campaign for Democracy (CD)**

This group was founded in November 1991 and involves an alliance of 25 human rights organisations, which oppose the present military regime. CD was established in advance of the 1993 elections and raised many criticisms of the weakness of the two-party system. Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti is the Chairman of the organisation and was re-elected at a conference in Ibadan at the beginning of February 1994. On 27.7.95 Dr Ransome-Kuti was arrested in connection with the alleged March 1995 conspiracy against the Abacha Government. He was later convicted by

the Aziza Tribunal and finally sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment on 1 October 1995. He was released from detention by Abubakar on 16 June 1998. On 25 June 1998 Frederick Fasehun, who had been imprisoned by the Abacha regime, was also released from prison. The CD's General Secretary, Sylvester Odion Akhaine, was released from detention at the beginning of 1996 during which time Ms Joe Okei had taken the role of Acting General Secretary. On his release from detention Mr Odion-Akhaine assumed that Ms Okei would hand over the running of the organisation to him but what followed was a leadership struggle which led to the expulsion of Ms Okei and two others in the light of alleged corruption charges.

### **Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR)**

A human rights group with a strong record of criticizing government abuses. Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti is the Chairman of this organisation. He was imprisoned by General Abacha but released by General Abubakar in June 1998.

### **National Democratic Coalition (NADECO)**

NADECO is a political pressure group. The organisation was founded on 15.5.94. In 1994 Chief Michael Ajasin was Chairman of the organisation, General Secretary was Oyo Opadokun. In 1995 Chief Ajasin was joined by Chief Anthony Enahoro as co Chairman and who fled into exile in 1996. Following the death of Ajasin on 3 October 1997 Abraham Adesanya was promoted from his role of acting chairman to lead the organisation. Ayo Adebajo is regarded as another leader of the organisation. In June 1998 Abubakar released two members of NADECO from prison. Chief Olabiyi Durojaye who had been in detention without charge since 1996, and Olu Falae who is a leading member of NADECO.

General Abubakar had several meetings with NADECO to discuss the transition plans leading to a handover to a democratically elected civilian government, prior to the transfer of power on 29 May 1999. Several prominent NADECO exiles have now returned from abroad.

### **Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO)**

The CLO is one of the most vocal groups involved in the promotion of human rights in Nigeria. It has been active in documenting human rights issues including prison conditions, refugee rights and abuses of the legal process. The CLO began its activities in 1987. The president from this time was Olisa Agbakoba who has now been replaced by Ayo Obe.

### **National Democratic Alliance (NDA) of Association for a Better Nigeria (ABN)**

The ABN was founded in 1993 at the time of the 1993 elections and advocates the continuation of military rule. The leader is Chief Francis Arthur Nzeribe and it has recently changed its name to the NDA.

### **Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP)**

MOSOP was formed in 1990 and has campaigned for political autonomy and a greater share of the oil revenue derived from their land. It has its origins in the Ogoni Bill of Rights produced in 1990. MOSOP has been led since 1993 by Ken Saro Wiwa however he was arrested in 1994 for his involvement in the murder of 4 Ogoni chiefs. On 10 November 1995 he and 8 others were executed following a highly criticised trial. Ledum Mitee, acquitted at the trial in which Saro Wiwa was convicted is acting President of MOSOP. He has recently returned to Nigeria after a

period in exile in the United Kingdom. The twenty Ogonis who were convicted with Saro-Wiwa and sentenced to prison sentences were released from prison in September 1998, and all charges against them were dropped.

### **MOSOP (UK)**

Originally called the Ogoni Community Association (UK) this organisation was set up in 1993 by Ogoni people living in Britain. MOSOP (UK) is an affiliate of MOSOP and aims to focus world attention on the plight of the Ogoni's.

### **National Conscience Party (NCP)**

Although named party this organisation is unregistered. It was formed on 1.10.94 and is led by the radical lawyer Gani Fawehinmi.

### **Constitutional Rights Project (CRP)**

The CRP was established in November 1990 and is registered as a nongovernmental organisation. It produces a journal and newsletter and is especially concerned about constitutional questions and the independence of the courts. Its executive director is Clement Nwankwo.

### **National Liberation Council (NALICON)**

Founded by Wole Soyinka in June 1995 regarded as the militant section of NADECO. The treason charges against Soyinka have now been dropped and on 14 October he returned to Nigeria for a visit following a period spent in exile abroad.

### **United Action for Democracy**

An umbrella movement for approximately 30 Nigeria-based human rights/pro democracy groups opposed to the regime. The UAD was inaugurated in May 1997. Its leaders are the human rights lawyer, Olisa Agbakoba, CD General-Secretary Sylvester Odion Akhaine and pro democracy activist Chima Ubani.

Olisa Agbakoba had been imprisoned under Abacha on 8 May 1998 but was released by General Abubakar on 25 June 1998.

### **Joint Action Committee of Nigeria (JACON)**

This is an alliance of human rights and pro-democracy groups that formed a coalition in April 1998 to campaign against continued military rule. It is led by Gani Fawehinmi. Twenty six anti military rule groups signed a communique calling for an end to military rule including United Action for Democracy (UAD), National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), National Conscience Party, Civil Liberties Organisation, Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR), Eastern Mandate Union and Campaign for Democracy (CD).

### **Movement for Justice in Nigeria (MOJIN)**

The President is Abdulkarim Daiyabu. This group believes in the 12 June 1993 mandate given to Mashood Abiola in the Presidential elections.

### **Nigeria Labour Congress**

An affiliation of trade unions. Taken over in August 1995 by the Abacha regime. Handed back to the Nigerian unions in September 1998 by the Abubakar regime.

### **Youths Earnestly Ask for Abacha**

A group supporting Abacha in the Presidential election of August 1998 - which was cancelled following Abacha's death on 8 June 1998. This party has now become the **Mass Democratic Party**.

There are three registered parties that contested the 1999 election: -

### **Alliance for Democracy (AD)**

### **All People's Party (APP)**

### **People's Democratic Party (PDP)**

NB: The AD and the APP contested the 1999 elections in coalition.



## **ANNEX C**

### **PROMINENT PEOPLE (PAST AND PRESENT)**

Nnamdi Azikiwe - leader of National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC). Following independence became first President of Nigeria in 1963 deposed in coup 1966, now deceased.

Chief Yabuku Gowon - army chief of staff chosen to head government (1966-75) overthrown in peaceful coup on 29 July 1975.

General Murtala Mohammed - succeeded Gowon, died as result of attempted coup on 13 February 1976.

General Olusegun Obasanjo - as chief of army staff succeeded Mohammed. Returned country to civilian rule in 1979. Arrested on 13 March 1995 and sentenced to life for concealment later commuted to 15 years. Released by General Abubakar in June 1998. Won 27 February 1999 presidential election, and took office on 29 May 1999.

Shehu Shagari - leader of National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and last civilian President of Nigeria (1979-83).

Major General Mohammed Buhari - took power following coup on 31 December 1983.

General Ibrahim Babangida - succeeded Buhari on 27 August 1985.

Chief Ernest Shonekan - head of ING installed on 27 August 1993.

General Sani Abacha - army chief of staff in Babangida's regime. Took power on 17 November 1993. Died 8 June 1998

Chief Moshood Abiola - presidential candidate for Social Democratic Party (SDP). Arrested 24 June 1994 after he declared himself President of Nigeria on 11 June 1994. Died whilst still in custody on 7 July 1998.

Alhaji Ismailab Gwarzo - former security adviser under Abacha regime. Currently detained for allegedly misappropriating 2.5 bn dollars of public money.

Dr Frederick Fasehun - Chairman of Movement for Economic and Social Justice and self proclaimed chairman of CD in Boko Ransome Kuti's absence. Arrested 18 December 1996 in connection with recent bombings. Abubakar ordered his release on 25 June 1998.

Chief Olu Falae - former finance minister and SDP presidential aspirant. Arrested on 10 January 1997 also in connection with bombings. Released 25 June 1998.

Major General (rtd) Shehu Musa Yar'adua - Obasanjo's number 2 and leading light in SDP and leader of now defunct People's Democratic Movement. Arrested on 9 March 1995 and sentenced to death for conspiracy to commit treason. Later commuted to 25 years. Died in detention on 8 December 1997. Granted posthumous pardon by General Abubakar.

Chief Frank Kokori - secretary general of National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG). Arrested on 20 August 1994 for leading the July/August 1994 oil workers strike.

Released 16 June 1998.

Major Gideon Orkar - leader of 22 April 1990 attempted coup. Was executed for his involvement on 27 July 1990 along with 42 others.

Milton Dabibi - General secretary of Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN). Arrested on 21 January 1996 for his role in 1994 oil workers strike.

Released 16 June 1998.

Chief Olabiyi Durojaiye - former presidential aspirant for SDP and NADECO chieftain. Arrested on 3 December 1996 in connection with recent bombings in Lagos. Released 16 June 1998.

Umaru Dikko - former minister of transport under Shagari. Declared wanted by Buhari regime. Was in self imposed exile until invited to be a delegate at National Constitutional Conference.

Chief Michael Adekunle Ajasin - part of National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) leadership and regarded by many as the leader. Also leader of a Yoruba group named Afenifere. Died from natural causes on 3 October 1997.

Chief Gani Fawehinmi - radical lawyer and leader of National Conscience Party (NCP). Arrested on several occasions under the Abacha regime. Has acted as counsel for other prominent people including Dele Giwa and Ken Saro Wiwa.

Femi Falana - leader of National Association of Democratic Lawyers. Detained on a number of occasions the last being on 14 February when he was held until 20 November 1996.

Sylvester Odion Akhaine - General secretary of CD released from detention without charge on 31 December 1995 following his arrest on 17 January.

Beko Ransome Kuti - Chairman of Campaign for Democracy (CD) and president of CDHR. Arrested on numerous occasions the last being on 27 July 1995 when he was found guilty of committing an act sub judicial to the Aziza Tribunal. Sentenced to life imprisonment which in October was commuted to 15 years. Released 16 June 1998.

Colonel Lawan Gwadabe - regarded as key figure in 1995 coup plot. Convicted of treason and sentenced to death later commuted to life. Ordered to be released in March 1999.

Ken Saro Wiwa - President of Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). Arrested on 22 May 1994 in connection with murder of 4 Ogoni chiefs. Executed on 10 November 1995 along with 8 other MOSOP members.

Ledum Mitee - vice president of MOSOP prior to Ken Saro Wiwa's death. Now Acting President was acquitted at the same trial as Saro Wiwa. Ledum Mitee returned to Nigeria from exile in London in late 1998.

Wole Soyinka - on 16 June 1995 founded National Liberation Council (NALICON) allied to NADECO. Left Nigeria in November 1994. Charges that had been made against him by General Abacha were dropped by General Abubakar. returned to Nigeria for a visit in October 1998.

Babafemi Ojuda - Managing Editor of THE NEWS- imprisoned for 8 months by Abacha. Freed 24 July 1998.

Kunle Ajibade - Executive Editor - THE NEWS - Imprisoned 1995 for "an accessory after the fact of treason". He was released in July 1998.

Baba Gana Kingibe - National Chairman of SDP and running mate of Abiola in 1993 elections. Was power and steel minister in Abacha's Federal Executive Council (FEC).

Chief Tom Ikimi - ex NRC chairman held position of Foreign Minister in FEC under Abacha.

Alhaji Bashir Othman Tofa - 1993 presidential candidate for NRC.

Chief Francis Arthur Nzeribe - leader of Association for a Better Nigeria founded in 1993.

Ayo Obe - President of Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO)

Olisa Agbakoba - ex President of CLO.

Abdul Oroh - executive director of CLO.

Clement Nwankwo - co founder of CLO executive director of CRP.

Malam Ibrahim El ZakZaky - leader of militant group the Islamic Liberation Movement which was involved in the Katsina religious disturbances in April 1991. Imprisoned from 1996 until late 1998.

Kudirat Abiola - senior wife of Chief Abiola. Vociferous in calls for her husbands release and for him to be President. Arrested in May 1996 just prior to her assassination on 4 June 1996.

Chief Anthony Enahoro - vice chairman of NADECO. Arrested on a number of occasions and fled to US in May 1996.

Ayo Opadokun - Secretary General of NADECO.

Dele Giwa - founding editor in chief of Newswatch magazine. Killed on 19 October 1986 by a parcel bomb delivered to his home. It is widely believed that the government had a hand in his death

Abraham Adesanya - chairman of NADECO. Detained in 1996 and survived an attempt on his life in 1997.

Alfred Rewane - former secretary to Obafemi Awolowo, regarded as financial pillar of NADECO. Assassinated on 6 October 1995 following appearance of an advert in the national press placed by Rewane deriding Babangida's regime.

Joe Okei - in opposition with Odion-Akhaine with regard to position of general secretary of CD.

Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki - deposed as Sultan of Sokoto (premier traditional ruler of Nigeria and leader of Muslim community) on 20 April 1996 for alleged financial irregularities.

Alhaji Muhammadu Maccido - replaced Dasuki as Sultan of Sokoto on 21 April 1996.

General Abdusalam Abubakar head of state between 8 June 1998 until 29 May 1999.

## **ANNEX D**

### **CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN NIGERIA**

**DECEMBER 1991**- The seat of government moved from Lagos to Abuja.. On 14 December National elections for governors and state assembly representatives, in which the SDP won 14 and NRC 16 governorships.

On 18 December the ban on former politicians running for office is lifted with the exception of those convicted of committing offenses whilst in office. Subsequently 13 former politicians released from detention.

Violence erupted in Taruba following a long-standing land dispute between 2 ethnic groups (Tiv and Jukun). The conflict continued in subsequent months, by March 1992 5000 people were reported to have been killed.

**JANUARY 1992** - On 1 January Babangida announces that the Presidential elections will be by open ballot. Managing director of Daily Times dismissed for publishing an article critical of open ballot system. A revised transition programme was announced, the installation of civilian government and the implementation of a new constitution were now to take place on 2 January 1993, rather than 1 October 1992. The presidential elections were to take place on 5 December 1992.

Muslim fundamentalists demonstrated in Katsina demanding the imposition of Shari'a (Muslim) law. The demonstrations were forcibly suppressed.

**FEBRUARY** - 30 people were killed in clashes in Kaduna between Hausas (mainly Muslim) and Katafs (mainly Christian). Mobile police units are initially withdrawn but then reinstated at checkpoints around the country following the shooting of a bus driver. They are finally withdrawn again in September following more deaths.

**MARCH** - Legislation was introduced to allow the NEC to disqualify candidates deemed unfit to hold office. 11 civilians released following almost 2 years in detention in connection with 1990 coup attempt - 9 of these are relatives of suspects.

On 20 March the edition of the Nigerian Tribune is arrested and charged with "incitement, defamation and publication of false news" after publishing an article critical of police.

**APRIL** - On 9 April the Concord group of publications is closed down by the police for undermining the national interest and only reopened following an apology from Chief Abiola.

**MAY** - Rioting erupted in protest at increases in transport fares, culminating in several demonstrations calling for the government's resignation. These were violently suppressed by the security forces, several people were reported killed in the following weeks.

Further rioting broke out in Lagos after CD Chairman Ransome-Kuti was arrested on 19 May for accusing the government of provoking violence to delay the transition to civilian rule. 2 other CD members are arrested on same day and on 29 May Gani Fawehinmi is also arrested.

300 people were reported killed in violence between the Hausa and Kataf in Kaduna. A curfew was briefly imposed and 250 people were arrested. 2 tribunals were set up to try people

suspected of involvement in the riots including Zamani Lekwot leader of the Kataf's and former military governor of Rivers State. The tribunals are criticised by human rights groups for political and ethnic bias and this leads to the resignation of 1 tribunal member.

The government imposed a ban on associations with a religious or ethnic interest. A security force, known as the national guard, was to be established to reduce the role of the army in riot suppression.

**JUNE** - A number of Human Rights activists, including Ransome-Kuti, were released on bail, pending trial later that year on charges of conspiring to incite the riots in May. The SDP and NRC hold primaries for the elections to the House of Representatives and Senate. The NEC disqualifies more than 30 candidates from both parties.

**JULY** - On 1 July the government is ordered to pay Ransome Kuti 50,000 naira in damages for unlawful arrest. The government ignores an order by the Ikeja High Court to produce 50 other detainees held since the May riots.

National Assembly elections took place on 4 July. The SDP secured a majority of 52 seats in the senate and 314 seats in the house of representatives. Inauguration, scheduled for 27 July, was postponed to 2 January 1993. On 22 July the government bans the striking Academic Staff Union of Universities.

**AUGUST** - SDP & NRC presidential candidature elections commenced on 1 August, but were suspended owing to widespread electoral malpractice. Jennifer Madike a prominent detainee held under Decree 2 was released

**SEPTEMBER** - Further polls to select presidential candidates took place. 4 leading candidates emerged: Gen Shehu Musa Yar'Adua and Chief Olu Falae (SDP), and Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi and Malam Adamu Ciroma (NRC).

**OCTOBER** - In October the government cancelled all stages of the presidential primary exercise, pending an NEC investigation into alleged incidents of electoral malpractice. Local, State and National committees of both the NRC and SDP were dissolved and replaced by caretaker committees.

The government announced that the SDP and NRC would be permitted to proceed with internal structuring after they had both been audited following alleged bribery in the September polls.

**NOVEMBER** - Babangida announced that the presidential election, scheduled for 5 December, was to be postponed to 12 June 93, and the transition to civilian rule to 27 August 93. All aspirant presidential candidates who had contested the discredited primaries in September 92 were disqualified as presidential candidates.

**DECEMBER** - Protests in Kano against the postponement of return to civilian rule which leads to arrests.

**JANUARY 1993** - On 2 January the governing Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) was replaced by the National Defence and Security Council (NDSC).

On 4 January the Civilian Transitional Council replaces the Council of Ministers and is chaired by Ernest Shonekan.

**FEBRUARY** - CLO offices are raided and the homes of President Olisa Agbakoba and Chima Ubani are searched.

**MARCH** - On 1 March SSS members arrest the editor of the Reporter newspaper. National party congresses took place from 27-29 March. Those selected to contest the presidential election were, for the NRC, Alhaji Bashir Othman Tofa, and for the SDP, Chief Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola.

**APRIL** - Abiola chose Baba Gana Kingibe as his vice-presidential candidate and Tofa selected Dr Sylvester Ugoh. Abiola and Tofa began campaigning throughout Nigeria.

**MAY** - On 1 May the ban placed on National Association of Nigerian Students in 1987 is lifted. The Treason and Treasonable Offenses Decree issued on 2 May which allowed the death penalty for anyone who "disrupts the general fabric of the country" was suspended on 21 May but not repealed. The ASUU call another strike over their members conditions of service. On 22 May The News magazine is closed and its journalists declared wanted.

**JUNE** - The leaders of the Association for a Better Nigeria (ABN) secured an interim injunction prohibiting the presidential election from taking place, pending the results of its appeal for the extension of military rule until 1997. The NEC declared the injunction invalid and the election went ahead although without the participation of MOSOP.

After results for 14 of the 30 states were released the NEC announced that the remaining results would not be released until further notice, following a further injunction secured by the ABN that prohibited the declaration of the results. Several other applications were presented in a number of courts, in an attempt to delay or suspend the electoral process.

The CD released the election results which indicated that Abiola had won the majority of votes in 19 states and Tofa in 11 states. These results were not challenged by Tofa.

On 23 June the NDSC declared the results of the election to be invalid, halted all court proceedings pertaining to the election, suspended the NEC, and repealed all decrees relating to the transition to civilian rule.

Babangida said that he was still committed to the transition on 27 August. In order to meet this schedule a reconstituted NEC was to supervise the election of new SDP and NRC presidential candidates.

**JULY** - A demonstration organised by the CD led to rioting, prompted by resentment at political developments and long-standing economic hardship. Security forces violently suppressed protests, however, sporadic unrest was reported throughout the country.

The SDP said that it would boycott any electoral process that superseded its 12 June victory.

The NDSC proscribed 6 media houses: Punch, Concord Press, Sketch, Abuja Newsday, Ogun State Broadcasting Corporation and The Observer.

Babangida announced plans to establish an Interim National Government (ING) because there was insufficient time to permit the scheduled transition to civilian rule on 27 August.

Abiola stated his intention to form a parallel government, but fled abroad after alleged death

threats.

On 13 July Ken Saro Wiwa and 2 others are charged in connection with the Ogoni boycott and the election but all are released later in the month.

On 29 July Nigeria signs the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

**AUGUST** - On 12 August the ban on ASUU is lifted however the following day a professor at Obafemi Awolowo University is arrested in connection with his pro democracy activities.

Several prominent CD members were arrested to prevent further CD protests, additional restrictions were imposed on the press. Numerous strikes and demonstrations organised by CD, the Nigerian Labour Congress and striking oil workers unions. At the end of August the CD staged a 3 day strike. The Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas workers (NUPENG) also announced industrial action in support of a civilian administration headed by Abiola.

Babangida announced his resignation on 26 August.

On 27 August an interim Federal Executive Council (FEC), headed by Ernest Shonekan, was installed. Following negotiations between the FEC and the NLC several journalists and prominent members of CD, including Ransome-Kuti were released.

**SEPTEMBER** - Abiola returned to Lagos. A Pro-Abiola CD demonstration in Lagos was violently dispersed by security forces some prominent CD members, including Ransome-Kuti, were arrested.

The ASUU ends its strike and all universities closed since May are reopened.

**OCTOBER** - Members of a previously unknown organisation, Movement for the Advancement of Democracy (MAD) hijacked a Nigerian aircraft whose passengers included senior officials, MAD issued demands including the resignation of the ING in favour of Abiola. Abiola personally appealed for them to surrender, but they were overpowered by security forces. Other MAD members were later arrested in Lagos.

**NOVEMBER** - State subsidies on petroleum were withdrawn, prices rose dramatically, leading to widespread anti-government demonstrations.

On 15 December a general strike was called by the NLC (National Labour Congress) and the Democratic Movement starts.

On 17 November Shonekan resigned and transferred power to Abacha. He dissolved all organs of state and bodies established under the transition process, replaced state governors with military administrators, prohibited political activity and announced the formation of a Provisional Ruling Council (PRC). Restrictions placed on the media were suspended and July's publishing ban was revoked.

On 18 November Abacha announces that a constitutional conference will be held to decide the future from of Nigerian government a number of the delegates are military appointees.

On 21 November legislation to restore the 1979 constitution was introduced.

**DECEMBER** - On 16 December clashes between Ogoni's and Okrika's. The government issues 10 New decrees. There are reports of a government sanctioned attack on the Ogoni's in Rivers State leading to a high number of deaths.

**FEBRUARY 1994** - On 10 February clashes between Christian and Muslim students in Kano.

**MARCH** - 6 people including General Lekwot convicted following the ethnic riots in Kaduna (May 1992) are released from prison.

**APRIL** - The government announced a programme to establish a national constitutional conference (NCC) comprising of 273 elected delegates and 96 government nominated delegates.

5 people were reported killed in fighting between Christians and Muslims in Jos. 10 people died in inter-ethnic clashes in South-Eastern Nigeria.

**MAY** - On 22 May Ken Saro-Wiwa was arrested in connection with the deaths of 4 Ogoni electoral candidates. Shell suspends operations following mass destruction of its equipment.

The National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) was formed. It demanded that Abacha relinquish power by the end of the month and urged a boycott on the NCC. The boycott was widely observed in the south-west with low voter participation reported. NADECO is declared illegal on 31 May.

**JUNE** - Violent anti-government demonstrations were reported following the expiry of the deadline given by NADECO for the military administration to resign.

The CD led a campaign of civil disobedience. Ransome-Kuti was later charged with treason.

On 11 June a symbolic ceremony was held in which Abiola was publicly inaugurated as president and head of a parallel government. A warrant for his arrest was issued on charges of treason and his publishing company and home are sealed off. He was later arrested on 23 June. The editor of Punch magazine is arrested and later released.

On 27 June the NCC was installed in Abuja.

**JULY** - NUPENG initiated strike action, subsequently joined by the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association (PENGASSAN), demanding Abiola's release and installation as president. By mid-July members of affiliate unions had joined the strike, effectively suspending economic activity in Lagos and other commercially significant areas of the south-west. Protestors are severely dealt with.

On 6 July Abiola is produced in court but later refused bail.

6 Senators charged with treason in June are released on bail however some are rearrested and other are put under surveillance.

**AUGUST** - Abiola is granted bail however refuses to accept the terms. His trial was adjourned after a defence appeal that the Abuja High Court had no jurisdiction over an offence allegedly committed in Lagos. The court decided that it had jurisdiction but the presiding judge withdrew from the trial.

The Guardian newspaper was banned following a report indicating that divisions existed within



the government as to whether to proceed with the charges against Abiola.

Abacha replaced the senior officials of NUPENG & PENGASSAN and ordered petroleum workers to end strike action. On 20 August NUPENG general secretary Frank Kokori is arrested.

Abacha announced legislation extending the period of detention without trial to 3 months and prohibited legal action challenging government decisions.

Bomb attack on Gani Fawehinmi's home one of 5 such attacks against the regimes opponents.

On 31 August close to 100 people are reported killed following a student demonstration in Edo.

**SEPTEMBER** - Detention of NUPENG's president Wariebi Kojo Agameme.

Abacha issues new decrees in an attempt to exempt his government from the rule of law. He fires all civilian members of the PRC and introduces a new all military council with an increased membership.

**OCTOBER** - Under a proposed transitional time table, a new constitution was to be adopted by March 1995, the ban on political activity was to be rescinded and multi-party elections were to take place at local and national level in 1996, prior to the installation of a new government in January 1997. An increase in fuel prices sparks more riots.

**NOVEMBER** - The Federal Court of Appeal in Kaduna granted Abiola unconditional bail, however, the government refused to comply with the court order providing for Abiola's release, on the grounds that he was charged with a capital offence.

Amnesty claimed that the government was responsible for the imprisonment or execution of large numbers of opposition members, and particularly condemned Human Rights violations perpetrated against the Ogoni's. Wole Soyinka flees the country and Ransome Kuti is arrested again on 9 November.

The government issues a decree suspending the right of Habeas corpus. Another decree prevents the courts from hearing any legal challenge to the practice of indefinitely detaining arrestees.

**DECEMBER** - On 6 December the constitutional conference recommends a return to civilian rule by 1 January 1996.

On 17 December NADECO's second chairman, Anthony Enahoro was released having been detained since 19 August.

Representatives from Amnesty International are prevented from meeting detainees, members of the Ogoni community and pro democracy activists.

**JANUARY 1995** - On 7 January Muslim fundamentalists and students clash in Kano leading the authorities to ban student union activity on campus.

The trials of Ken Saro-Wiwa and 14 other Ogoni activists commenced. They were charged with complicity in the murder of 4 Ogoni traditional leaders.

NADECO's founding member Chief Cornelius O. Adebayo was released from detention having been detained since 19 August 1994.

On 12 January Femi Falana, Beko Ransome Kuti and Sylvester Odion Akhaine are arrested. Falana and Ransome Kuti are released on bail shortly afterwards however Odion Akhaine remained in detention.

Union leaders Frank Kokori, Waiebi Agamene and FA Addo remain in detention without charge.

**FEBRUARY** - On 6 February charges of murder and incitement were brought against Saro-Wiwa and four other Ogoni's.

Writer Mohammed Sule is detained without charge because of his intention to produce a documentary concerning Nigeria.

Delegates to the constitutional conference agree the presidency should alternate between north and south Nigeria.

**MARCH** - Some 150 military officials were arrested following confirmation by the government of reports, which they previously denied, of an attempted coup. The government's opponents claimed that the coup was fabricated with the aim of suppressing dissent within the armed forces. Maj-Gen Shehu Yar'Adua (a prospective presidential candidate in the 93 elections and vice-president from 1976-79 ) and Olusegun Obasanjo were among the prominent critics of the government who were arrested.

On 10 March Bayo Onanuga editor in chief of a Lagos press agency is arrested and on 15 march another journalist Chris Anyanwu is also arrested. Both were released later in the month.

On 17 March the parallel trial started against ten other Ogoni at the same court which brought charges against Saro-Wiwa.

General Abacha forms a new enlarged FEC comprising 36 ministers (7 army officers).

**APRIL** - Editor in chief of Majesty Weekly Bala Dan Abu is arrested in Lagos after publishing an article Abiola in trouble.

**MAY** - Ken Saro-Wiwa's trial, which had been suspended while he received medical treatment, resumed. On 23 May Femi Falana was arrested thus preventing him from representing Ken Saro Wiwa at this trial. Joe Okei of CD arrested to join other CD activists Odion Akhaine and Shehu Sanni.

Ethnic and religious tensions between Hausas and Ibos mixed with economic hardship degenerated into rioting in Kano on 30 May 1995. The investigation panel established declared 17 people had died, and the state administrator announced several measures to forestall future violence including the creation of a civil disturbances tribunal to try the 54 arrested. Despite the deaths that resulted in Kano, the episode did not precipitate unrest elsewhere and violence was contained to that single day.

A bomb explosion in Ilorin is attributed by the government to anti government forces.

**JUNE** - A number of pro-democracy campaigners were arrested after a bomb attack at an official function in Kwara State killed 3 people.

40 people, including civilians, were arraigned before a special military tribunal in connection with the coup attempt of March. Chris Anyanwu is arrested again for publishing an article concerning the coup.

Further arrests of pro-democracy activists occurred as the government attempted to pre-empt protests on the anniversary of the annulled election. However, a 1 day strike, supported by CD, was widely observed.

On 27 June Abacha rescinded the ban on political activity and the NCC submitted its draft constitution.

Ken Saro Wiwa's defence team withdraw from the case as a protest.

**JULY** - On 13 July General Abacha approved the repeal of the publishing ban on The Guardian newspaper.

On 14 July it was announced that of the 51 defendants that had been produced before the Aziza Tribunal, established to hear in secret evidence concerning the alleged coup plot, 40 were convicted including Olusegun Obasanjo and Shehu Yar'Adua. The Tribunal also released without charge 8 people.

Hundreds of people were reported killed in Bauchi State in clashes between Christians and the predominant Muslims. 38 villages were destroyed, of which 31 were Christian. 1500 homes were wrecked and churches and Mosques were burnt. The dead included 17 school children "hacked to pieces" in their school and 36 people murdered inside a church.

**AUGUST** - The Aziza Tribunal was formally dissolved on 7 August. On 13 August one of the Ogoni detained since May dies in detention. The government creates a 39 man committee to review the draft constitution submitted on 27 June.

**SEPTEMBER** - 5 Students at the Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria are killed in ethnic clashes.

**OCTOBER** - On 1 October General Abacha announced a timetable for transition to civilian rule with fixed phases culminating in an envisaged handover to an elected president on 1 October 1998. He outlined key elements of the new constitution, which the PRC later announced will come into effect on the handover date. He also announced the lifting of the ban on the remaining 2 proscribed media groups and the establishment of a national human rights Commission, by Decree No 22 of 1995.

On 6 October Chief Rewane an opposition politician was murdered at his home in Ikeja. 7 people are arrested in connection with this.

On 10 October it was officially confirmed that 43 soldiers and civilians were convicted by the Aziza Tribunal. Following a review by the PRC the 11 death sentences, including that on General Yar'Adua, were commuted to lengthy prison sentences. The remainder received sentences ranging from 15 years (including both Obasanjo and Ransome-Kuti) to retirement from the army.

On 20 October the government announces the creation of a human rights commission in Nigeria.

On 30 October five of the Ogoni's charged were sentenced to death and on 31 October another

four were charged, among them Saro-Wiwa.

**NOVEMBER** - Ken Saro-Wiwa and 8 other Ogoni's were convicted to the death sentence by the Auta tribunal. All 9 were hanged at 11.30 a.m. at Port Harcourt Prison on 10 November.

On 12 November Nigeria are suspended from the Commonwealth and shortly following this EU foreign ministers adopt sanctions against Nigeria which involve an arms embargo and refusal to issue visa's to members of the military junta and their families.

Reports suggest that 19 Ogoni activists have been accused in the May 1994 murders of 4 Ogoni chiefs.

**DECEMBER** - On 5 December thousands of students demonstrated against the execution of Ken Sao Wiwa and 8 others.

An "All Politicians' Summit" of more than 450 civilian politicians from all over Nigeria was held in Lagos in mid-December.

In Sokoto 20 people are killed and others injured and arrested in clashes between Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups.

All six committees to facilitate General Abacha's transition programme were appointed.

During December the offices of "Tell" magazine were ransacked, copies of two issues were confiscated by security agents, four staff were arrested and briefly held and the editor-in-chief Nosa Igiebor was also detained.

Opposition politician and Abiola follower Prince Ademola Adeniji-Adele released from detention having been detained since 19 August 1994.

Police ban a number of demonstrations in December and arrest several CD members.

On 28 December Abacha creates the National Reconciliation Committee to aid the transition to democracy.

**JANUARY 1996** - MOSOP claimed that 60 Ogoni's attending mass celebrations on Ogoni day, 4 January, were either killed, shot, tortured, or arrested by the security forces. However it is widely reported that 22 Ogoni's charged with holding an unauthorised rally, by a magistrates court, were released on bail. Paul Adams, a British Financial Times journalist, was detained for a week before being released on bail on 11 January after receiving a MOSOP document during an investigative visit to Ogoniland.

On 17 January General Abacha's son was killed in a plane crash. A previously unknown group called the United Front for Nigeria's Liberation (UFNL) claimed responsibility, but a more likely explanation for the crash was contaminated fuel.

2 explosions on 18 and 19 January in Kaduna and Kano respectively.

On 29 January 1996 it was announced that the new constitution would not be instituted until the eve of the handover to an elected civilian President.

On 30 January the leader of the National Conscience Party (NCP) Gani Fawehinmi was arrested,

ostensibly to prevent him from addressing a public rally at the University of Lagos.

**FEBRUARY** - On 2 February the publisher of The Guardian Alex Ibru is injured in an armed attack, 9 people are arrested and a few days later a group named the Revolutionary Movement for Hausa-Fulani Interest claimed responsibility.

On 3 February several people were killed in clashes between Nigerian and Cameroonian troops in the disputed Bakassi Peninsula. Also a further bomb blast occurs at Zaria police station.

On 7 February the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) released guidelines for the local government elections scheduled for March.

On 12 February the Government proclaimed the formal repeal of the decree banning the formation of political parties.

During February 60 Sayawa Christians from the predominantly Muslim Bauchi State were accused of provoking the religious clashes which occurred in that State in July 1995.

**MARCH** - Students of the University of Calabar attack a village in a revenge attack that leads to violent police intervention and the closure of the University.

In Enugu state 13 people are killed and approximately 10000 displaced in a territorial dispute involving the Egbo, Ide and Iziogo communities.

CD offices raided and an official arrested.

From 16 to 23 March non-party local government elections took place across Nigeria. Official estimates claimed that 60% of those eligible voted. However, opposition politicians and pro-democracy activists asserted that the true figure was considerably lower than that.

**APRIL** - In a move welcomed by many Nigerian Muslims, the traditional leader of Nigerian Muslims, The Sultan of Sokoto, was dethroned by the government. Ibrahim Dasuki was investigated in connection with his business affairs and was replaced by Muhammed Maccido.

A serious ethnic clash between Fulani and Karimjo people erupted at Karim Lamido in Taraba State. Approximately 80 people were killed in the violence and 20 people were arrested as soldiers and police restored order.

In April a UN fact-finding mission visited Nigeria. The UN team of 4 were invited by the Nigerians to investigate the execution of the Ogoni 9 in November 1995. While in Nigeria, the UN team spent 3 days visiting Rivers state, where they met and spoke openly with members of the Ogoni tribe. However, after the visit there were unconfirmed reports of reprisals against those who had spoken against the government. Whilst in Nigeria the team also visited 4 political detainees (although they had asked to see 15) and met with Kudirat Abiola, the senior wife of Chief MKO Abiola. However, NADECO officials who came to meet the team were denied access to them, and were removed to a police station by government officials.

Further clashes in the Bakassi Peninsula between Nigerian and Cameroonian troops were reported in April.

**MAY** - Kudirat Abiola was arrested with 2 others on 7 May. They were all 3 charged with "conspiracy and false publication". All pleaded not guilty and were released on bail. The trial

was adjourned until 28 May.

John-Paul Mokuolu, a 13 year old boy with dual British/Nigerian nationality, living in London, was freed from detention in Lagos on 23 May. He was visiting relatives in Nigeria and had been detained since 22 April. His father is believed to be a cousin of former military ruler Olusegun Obasanjo, who is also detained for his alleged involvement in the March 1995 coup plot.

Elections to the executive of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) took place between 29 & 31 May.

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) at a national level was banned in May 1996.

The Nigerian authorities undertook to make major judicial reforms following recommendations made by the UN fact-finding mission which visited Nigeria in April.

Further clashes in the Bakassi Peninsula between Nigerian and Cameroonian troops were reported in May. However, 20 detained Nigerians were reported to have been released by Cameroon.

**JUNE** - On 4 June 1996 Kudirat Abiola was shot dead in her car. The Nigerian Government undertook to investigate the circumstances of her death promptly and to bring those responsible to justice. However, many suspect that the Nigerian authorities were behind the murder.

As many as 20 members of the Abiola family were reportedly arrested for questioning in connection with the murder, as were four NADECO officials, but no charges were made.

On 7 June an independent National Human Rights Committee was established comprising representatives from human rights organisations, the media, the legal profession and from relevant government ministries. Its 16 members include its head P.K. Nwokedi, retired Supreme Court justice, Kunle Fadikpe of the CLO and Ray Ekpou, chief executive of Newswatch magazine. The committee was given powers to conduct investigations into allegations of human rights violations referred to it.

On 11 June Wole Soyinka's pirate radio station, "Radio Democrat International" began test broadcasts. Its inaugural broadcast was transmitted the following day. The station had been transmitting since early 1996 under the name "Radio Freedom Frequency".

On 12 June the government announced the reform of 2 decrees. With immediate effect no military person would sit on special disturbances tribunals, such as the one that convicted the Ogoni 9. Also, the tribunal would now attract a right of appeal.

On 17 June the guidelines for political parties seeking official recognition were announced by NECON. The requirements included a card-carrying membership of at least 40,000 in each of the 30 states (15,000 in the FCT), a non-returnable deposit of N500,000, as well as a short profile of the party with copies of the constitution and the manifesto. The deadline for parties seeking registration was 26 June. 23 organisations sought registration forms. On the same day the Human Rights Commission was officially inaugurated in Abuja.

On 20 June, 3 to 8 students were reportedly killed in clashes between Muslim students and police in Kaduna.

The editor-in-chief of Tell magazine, Nosa Igiebor, who had been detained since December

1995, was released during June.

**JULY** - On 31 July Akina Deesor, an Ogoni and a radio station producer in Ogoniland was allegedly detained for broadcasting an Ogoni song.

During July, 6 of the detained members of the Abiola family were released from detention without charge.

In July it was reported that 3 of the 11 people detained for their alleged involvement in the Orkar Coup attempt of April 1990 were released unconditionally. The remaining 8 were to undergo further screening and, if found guilty, would face court martial and dismissal.

Of the 23 organisations that sought registration as political parties, only 18 met the deadline of 25 July.

**AUGUST** - 3 people, including a police officer, were killed in a riot in Azare in Bauchi State.

At least 3 people were killed in clashes in Kano state following a disagreement between Shi'ite and Yankuri Muslims.

On 13 August 15 Ogoni's were allegedly arrested for planning to seek meetings with the Commonwealth Mission

On 15 August General Abacha sacked and replaced all 30 state chief executives.

In mid-August 2 opposition journalists from "The News" were released from detention without charge. They had been detained for one week.

On 23 August, General Abacha proscribed the 3 major university unions; The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), The Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU), and The Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU).

On 26 August 4 members of proscribed ASUU were arrested at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria

On 27 August "Radio Democrat International" changed its name to "Radio Kudirat Nigeria".

Of the 23 political organisations who sought registration forms, 18 submitted them. Following application for mergers from 7 of these organisations 14 organisations remained in the registration process. The names of those organisations approved for registration was expected to be revealed by the end of September.

**SEPTEMBER** - Shi'ite leader Ibrahim El ZakZaky was arrested with other Shi'ite leaders "for security reasons" on 12 September. The following day 14 people were reported killed in clashes in Zaria between Shi'ite Muslims and police. Protests also took place in Kaduna and Katsina. The leadership of El ZakZaky's group, the Muslim Brothers, threatened to attack the police if he was not released by 17 September. On 18 September a violent demonstration of some 10,000 people erupted. There were shootings and 6 people, including police officers, were killed. The following day armed soldiers were reported to have killed 50 people in Kaduna, but by 22 September Kaduna was reported to have become calm, with people going about their normal

business.

On 30 September the result of the party registration process was announced by NECON. Of those that sought registration only 5 were successful. They were:

The United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP)

The National Centre Party of Nigeria (NCPN)

The Committee for National Consensus (CNC)

The Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN)

The Grassroots Democratic Movement (GDM)

It was announced that all of those political organisations which failed to attain registered status were to be dissolved with immediate effect.

**OCTOBER** - On 1 October 1996 General Abacha made his annual independence day speech. As part of the speech he announced the creation of 182 local government areas. He also announced the creation of six new states:

Bayelsa State

Ebonyi state

Ekiti State

Gombe State

Nassarawa State

Zamfara State

On 3 October, Chima Ubani and Ayo Opadokun were released from detention. Chima Ubani (a member of a CD offshoot called the Democratic Alternative) had been held in detention since June 1995. Ayo Opadokun (secretary of NADECO) had been detained since October 1994. Reports also stated that Dr Doyin Okupe, was well known politician and former NRC publicity secretary was detained on the same day as the releases. No explanation was given for the arrest.

On 14 October three NADECO leaders, Mr Adesanya, Mr Adebajo and Mr Dawodu were released from detention. They had been detained since the 17 June following the assassination of Kudirat Abiola.

Batom Mitee a MOSOP activist, who was previously reported detained during October, was released unconditionally later in the month.

**NOVEMBER** - six human rights groups (Community Rights Project, Civil Liberties Organisation, Media Rights Agenda, Niger Delta Human and Environmental Rescue Organisation, Campaign for Democracy and the Nigeria Section of Amnesty International) held a joint press conference on 6 November. They announced plans for a "Walk for Life", calling for the abolition of the death penalty.



No major incidents were reported on the anniversary of Ken Saro-Wiwa's execution (10 November) and the authorities imposed a dawn to dusk curfew.

On 14 November 4 or 5 men entered the home of Alhaja Suliat Adedeji (NCPN council member, well-known NADECO sympathiser and prominent Yoruba). She was shot several times and died on the way to hospital.

On the same day there was a bombing incident at Murtala Mohammed Airport. The police have linked the bombing to NADECO and Wole Soyinka's National Liberation Council (NALICON) and some arrests were made. All allegations were categorically denied by NADECO.

On 19 November Gani Fawehinmi, Femi Falana and Femi Aboshirade, critics of the military government were released from detention as the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group visits.

**DECEMBER** - The Ogoni 19 have their application for release rejected by the Port Harcourt High Court on 3 December and a new application was submitted. There were also unconfirmed reports that Joseph Kpakol, a MOSOP activist, died in detention at the State Intelligence and Investigation Bureau in Port Harcourt.

NADECO Chieftain Ptunba Olabiyi Durojaiye was reported to have been arrested on 3 December but no other details have been released.

On 7 December Ondo State Military Administrator banned NADECO meetings in the house of the organisation's leader, Chief Ajasin.

On 10 December World Human Rights Day most of the major human rights and pro-democracy movements issued statements condemning the regime's human rights. The day went off without incident but the planned "Walk for Life" was called off following news that State Security agents had impounded the passport of an Amnesty International Official.

Nigerian Appeal court confirms supremacy of the African Charter on Human Rights over internal decrees and urges Government to consider the total repeal of Decree No 2.

On 18 December sources report an explosion in Ikeja. 12 members of the task force were injured and eight people were arrested in connection with this bombing. No group have claimed responsibility for the act but reports suggest that the authorities again suspect NADECO involvement.

Local press and human rights organisations report further detentions during the second half of December. The Campaign for Democracy confirmed the arrest of their former National coordinator, Frederick Fasheun. An official of the Amalgamated Union of Public corporations, Civil Service Technical and Recreational Services Employees, Mr Ayodele Akele, and a unionist with the Lagos State Development and Property Corporation, Mr Adeniran Raman, were also arrested.

On 22 December the electoral commission NECON and the political parties announced that the municipal elections which should have been held at the end of December would now take place on 15 March 1997.

On 28 December police in the northern state of Sokoto arrested 43 members of a Shi'ite Moslem

group allegedly planning to breach the peace in the area.

**JANUARY 1997** - On 7 January a bomb blew up a Nigerian army bus inside a military camp in Lagos, killing two soldiers and wounding 15 people in the third bombing against army targets since December.

On 8 January thirty-seven detainees were freed after being held for up to ten years without charge.

On 9 January The Nigerian Liberation Organization, a previously unknown group, claimed responsibility for the 7 January Lagos bombing.

On 11 January Olu Falae, a leading member of NADECO was detained by the police in connection with the recent bombing and Senator Abraham Adesanya, another leading NADECO member accused the military government of attempting to assassinate him.

Senator Abraham Adesanya, a leading member of NADECO accused the government of sending gunmen to assassinate him on 14 January.

Political columnist for the Vanguard, Dele Sobowale was released from detention after five days on 30 January having been questioned about a news analysis.

**FEBRUARY** - On 5 February the Government released six people held in police custody for between 6 and 12 years without trial in compliance with a court order which ruled that their detention without trial was illegal and void.

On 7 February up to five people were reportedly killed during a riot between radical Moslems and the police in Kano.

Registration of voters began on 10 February and NECON announced that the elections to local government would take place on 15 march.

A further bomb attack in Lagos on 12 February again aimed at military targets.

Lagos High Court ordered that Frederick Fasehun, chairman of CD, detained since December 1996, should be released because his detention is a violation of human rights. The SSS appealed against the order.

A Nigerian court grants the 19 Ogoni's in detention the right to challenge their continued detention.

Royal Dutch Shell award 560 scholarships to the best Nigerian university students.

Shell announce that they have begun a training programme to equip 350 Ogoni's with job skills.

The Nigerian government invites 2 U.N. human rights investigators to visit with the specific intention of studying the issues of extrajudicial killings.

**MARCH** - Eight lecturers at the University of Nigeria were charged with sedition and arson. The eight were among those detained in February after student riots.

UN call off a visit by their two special investigators, due to the refusal of the Nigerian government in allowing them to visit detainees.

On 8 March an African mission from the Gambia based African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights arrived in Nigeria to conduct a two week visit.

On 12 March the Nigerian government charged 16 "dissidents" with treason in connection with the recent spate of bombings. Those charged included self-exiled members of NADECO including Wole Soyinka and in Nigeria Frederick Fasheun and Olu Falae.

On 14 March SSS agents kidnapped Miss Jane Nwagu, secretary to the Institute for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law based in Port Harcourt.

On 15 March the local government elections took place across Nigeria and independent observers from the US found them to be peaceful, free and fair. On the same day Chief Etiebet, leader of the National Centre party was arrested and detained for about 48 hours.

On 22 March the wife of Dapo Olorunyomi, opposition editor of The News was arrested. 129 employees of Shell were held hostage by Ijaw tribesmen. All hostages were released by 27 March.

On 24 March councillors and chairmen of town halls elected were sworn into office. Results of the elections showed an overwhelming victory for the United Nigeria Congress Party and the Democratic Party of Nigeria.

**APRIL** - On 4 April Don Etiebet quit his membership of the National Centre Party of Nigeria and joined the United Congress Party whilst declaring his support for Abacha to stand as President.

The Abacha government criticised groups calling for Abacha to stand as President and Abacha was insistent that his government would hand over to a civilian president.

Article 19 a UK based human rights group produced a report stating that journalists in Nigeria are the target of frequent attacks ordered by the government and have faced torture, unfair trials and arbitrary detention.

On 9 April clashes took place between the Panyam and Gindiri community's in the village of Changai during which 8 people were killed. On 10 April approximately 15 people were killed in ethnic clashes near Jos. Following these clashes in Plateau state a curfew was imposed.

Following the lifting of a dusk till dawn curfew, on 12 April 44 people were killed in Ikpokpo village Delta state when it was attacked by armed men mostly from the Ijaw tribe.

On 17 April a man was killed in Warri when police fired teargas to separate youths from the feuding Ijaw and Itsekiri tribes.

On 18 April 5 more people died in Warri when their village was burnt down. These incidents led the Nigerian navy to send a ship to the Warri area to safeguard the production of crude oil.

On 20 April youths attacked an oil services company boat and kidnapped its captain.

On 21 April more people were killed in Warri. Shell closed Warri flow station and warned that

because of the hostilities output was running below normal.

Soldiers were sent to patrol Warri on 23 April in an attempt to restore the peace however violent outbreaks were still reported and on 24 April Tamtu an Itsekiri village was set ablaze and 8 people killed. The government issued a warning that it would not tolerate violent behaviour of this kind being used to express political grievances.

On 26 April violence spread to Koko when 5 people were attacked (one killed) and property set ablaze.

Calls continue for Abacha to stand as a civilian in the presidential elections scheduled for 1998 these include: The National Mobilisation and Persuasion Committee, Youths Earnestly As for Abacha and the General Sani Abacha for 98 Presidency movement.

**MAY** - Godwin Abroko (editor of "The News" magazine), Mrs Ladi Olorunyomi and George Onah (defence correspondent for Vanguard) were released from detention on 6 May, 8 May and 14 May respectively.

On 7 May there was a bomb attack on an army vehicle in the Lagos suburb of Yaba.

On 9 May a hearing of the treason case involving Wole Soyinka took place. The next hearing is scheduled for 23 May.

On 10 May Abiola's doctor Ore Falomo met with him for the first time in 14 months.

On 11 May fighting in Bayelsa State over relocation of Nembe headquarters and local government and further clashes between rival tribes in Warri led to the death and injury of more people.

On 12 May there was a further bomb attack in Ibadan on another military target. This was the first incident of its kind outside Lagos since 1995. A further 2 bombs exploded in Onitsha on 16 May however these were not directed at a military target.

On 20 May 33 human rights and pro democracy groups formed an alliance called the United Action for Democracy following a meeting in Lagos.

Following the coup in Sierra Leone on 25 May hundreds of Nigerian troops were sent into the country in an attempt to reinstate ousted civilian president Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

**JUNE** - On 4 June members of the Abiola family and close friends got together to mark the anniversary of Kudirat Abiola's murder which passed off peacefully.

On 15 June there was further violence in Warri following which the town was placed under heavy armed guard.

**JULY** - On 2 July the government published a detailed revised timetable of the return to democracy programme:

State Assembly elections due in 3rd quarter of 1997 have been put back until 6 December;

National Assembly elections remain unchanged for 25 April 1998;

Governorship elections due in the 4th quarter of 1997 scheduled for 1 August 1998 (to coincide with presidential elections);

Swearing in of elected governors due on 21 September 1998. Swearing in of the President and inauguration of the National Assembly scheduled for 1 October 1998.

On 3 July deadline given of 8 July for Shell to leave oil producing area.

From 7-11 July the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) met to gather information for a meeting in September which will finalise its recommendation to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to be held in October.

On 8 July Matthew Erebeng president of the Niger Delta Oil-Producing Development Organisation was arrested. He was released on 11 July.

On 9 July Abraham Adesanya (one of the leaders of NADECO) had his expired passport returned by the authorities which had been seized in 1994.

On 15 July the Inspector General of the Nigerian Police announced that the authorities wished to question the US Ambassador over the recent bomb blasts.

There were more ethnic clashes as soldiers and civilians fought in Biu Borno state and there were problems in Bayelsa state.

On 22 July a Federal High Court ordered the release of 7 army officers who were jailed for their alleged involvement in the 1990 coup and were then granted amnesties.

On 27 July Nigerian journalist Mohammed Adamu was detained after writing an article critical of General Sani Abacha.

On 29 July further peace talks took place in Abidjan headed by Nigeria's Foreign Minister Tom Ikimi concerning the situation in Sierra Leone however these were to break down later.

Wole Soyinka, Anthony Enahoro, retired General Alani Akinrinade and Bola Tinubu were placed on the wanted list which stated they were being sought for "conspiracy and treason."

**AUGUST** - On 6 August there was a bomb blast in Port Harcourt. This incident occurred near the Corpus Christi Catholic Cathedral.

On 18 August a protest took place in Aleibri against oil companies in the area in particular Shell caused by their appeal against a court ruling which stated they must pay compensation of 30 million naira to 4 villages in Delta state where an oil spillage took place in 1982.

Confrontations between 2 communities in city of Ile-Ife caused by relocation of local government secretariat led to a number of deaths and the imposition of a curfew.

On 25 August activists hoping to celebrate Chief Abiola's 60th birthday at his home were turned away by members of his family.

On 28 August Tunji Abayomi chairman of Human Rights Africa was arrested.

**SEPTEMBER** - On 2 September a bomb attack took place in Ekiti state in an attack on the military governor of the state.

Reports of a bomb attack at a christian convention in Lagos however these were denied by police. Also attack on home of Alex Akinleye chairman of National Reconciliation Committee.

Police intervened in a farewell party for the American Ambassador Walter Carrington. Tensions had arisen between the authorities and Carrington following his critical attitude towards the regime.

Further clashes between the Ife and Modakeke communities in Ife. Reports of Abacha's ill health officially denied. Human rights activist Tunji Abayomi arrested twice the second occasion along with 70 others attending a conference on democracy in Jos.

On 17 September 4 soldiers were kidnapped by members of the Ijaw community in Warri.

**OCTOBER** - On 1 October Abacha made the traditional independence day speech which contained few surprises.

On 2 October soldiers attacked the village of Ekeremor Zion in Warri following the kidnapping of four soldiers by youths in the area.

On 3 October the leader of NADECO Michael Ajasin died. The cause of death was attributed to natural causes.

The associate and assistant editor of Tempo magazine (Ademola Abimboye and Gbenga Alakija) were arrested on 17 October.

From 24-27 October the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting took place Edinburgh. It concluded by announcing the continued suspension of Nigeria from the Commonwealth with any action suspended to await the result of the transition programme in October 1998.

Thousands of candidates from the five political parties put their names forward for participation in December's state assembly elections.

On 25 October the editor of "African Concord" Soji Omotunde was arrested.

**NOVEMBER** - On 8 November the process of screening candidates for the state assembly elections began and the government released the guidelines for this process.

On 8 & 9 November respectively 2 senior editors - Jenkin Alumona and Onome Osifo-Whiskey were arrested.

Clashes between the Ife and Modakeke tribes in Ile Ife continued with further loss of life.

The second anniversary of the execution of Ken Saro Wiwa passed off peacefully following the deployment of extra police and the banning of all public meetings.

On 17 November, the fourth anniversary of his succession to power Abacha made a speech which proposed to release certain detainees who did not pose a threat to national security and also dissolved the Federal Executive Council.

On 20 November the five registered political parties were given grants of 50m naira each.

**DECEMBER** - On 6 December the state assembly elections took place. Voting was generally peaceful despite the postponement of voting in Warri and Ife where violent clashes among the community continued.

Results of the elections announced later in the month showed an emphatic victory for the United Nigeria Congress Party with their nearest rivals being the Democratic Party of Nigeria , mirroring the results of the local government elections in March.

On 9 December a peace treaty was signed by community leaders of the Ife and Modakeke tribes.

On the same day the former vice president Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, who was serving a 25 year jail sentence for his part in the 1995 alleged coup plot, died in detention. No official confirmation of the cause of death has yet been given.

On 12 December the UN adopted a resolution which called for the release of prisoners detained in connection with the 1993 elections.

An accidental explosion occurred at Abuja airport on 13 December which led to one death of a security guard.

On 15 December the reconstituted FEC was announced which included 17 individuals from the previous FEC and 16 "new" appointments. A number of the old guard retained their old positions whilst a small number were transferred to different portfolio's.

On 20 December Abacha's No 2 Lieutenant General Oladipo Diya along with twelve others (the majority from the Yoruba tribe) were arrested for their part in an alleged coup attempt. These arrests were followed shortly by the appointment of a Special Investigation Board to investigate the coup plot.

Nine people including four foreigners were taken hostage by oil workers in the Niger delta area.

**JANUARY 1998** - The budget for 1998 was unveiled in January.

On January 20 riot police occupied 26 banks after an order for their liquidation had been given. The government said that the banks' bad debts would result in loss of savings for investors.

On January 22 the Abacha Solidarity Movement (ASOMO) inaugurated in Abuja.

**FEBRUARY** - On 14 February the trial by military tribunal of 26 people arrested for planning to overthrow the government began in Jos, Plateau State.

Also in February the Nigerian led ECOMOG force drove out the military dictator Lt Col Johnny Paul Koroma from Sierra Leone. He had taken control in a coup in May 1997.

**MARCH** - In early March thousands of Abacha supporters held a two day rally in Abuja, calling on Abacha to transform to a civilian president.

An opposition rally by the opposition United Action for Democracy in Lagos was dispersed violently by police using teargas. The UAD leader Olisa Agbakoba was arrested along with 37 others. He was later bailed.

The lawyer and human rights activist Femi Falana was reported to have been arrested.

The pope made a 3 day visit to Nigeria. He called on Abacha to respect human rights and move towards democracy. He beatified a Nigerian monk in Onitsha.

**APRIL** - On 21 April Radio Kudirat reported that six protestors in the city of Kaduna who had been protesting for the release of Muslim leader Ibrahim El ZakZaky were shot by police.

On 22 April the release of the military personnel cleared of involvement in the December 1997 coup plot trial was ordered. Those released included:

Col. E.M. Shode

Col. Daniel O. Akintonde

Col T. E. C. Chiefe

Gp. Captain A. Andria

On 28 April it was announced that six people had been found guilty of involvement with the coup plot and had been sentenced to death.

These were:

1. General Oladipo Diya
2. Lieutenant-Colonel Olu Akiode
3. Major General Abdulkareem Adisa
4. Major General Tajudeen Olanrewaju
5. Major Oluseun Fadipe
6. Engineer A. Adebajo

Four other people were sentenced to life imprisonment and 14 were released. The rest were sentenced to between 2 and 14 years.

On 25 April 1998 elections were held for representatives in the two houses of the National Assembly. The turnout was low. By 27 April preliminary results indicated that the Nigeria Congress Party were ahead with about 80% of the vote.

Five people were killed and 14 injured by what was believed to have been a bomb in the city of



Ile -Ife. There was also a bomb explosion in Lagos.

The government freed some political detainees including journalists Soji Omotunde, (editor of African Concord magazine) Mohammed Adamu, (a journalist with the African Concord magazine) and Onome Osifo Whiskey, (Tell magazine editor).

Seven staff working for the opposition newspaper P M news were reported to have been arrested.

Nigeria's pro-democracy and human rights groups agreed to form an alliance of opposition groups called the Joint Action Committee of Nigeri (JACON). Among the groups joining the coalition were the United Action for Democracy (UAD), National Democratic Coalition NADECO, and the Civil Liberties Organisation.

**MAY** - On 1 May thousands of people protested against military rule at a demonstration in the city of Ibadan organised by the opposition coalition United Action for Democracy. Several deaths were reported when the police opened fire on the demonstrators.

On 6 May the Moslem leader Ibrahim El ZakZaky appeared in court in Kaduna to defend himself against charges of inciting dissent. The case was adjourned.

On 12 May three people were reported to have been killed, and others reported missing in continuing clashes between the Ife and Modakeke groups in Osun state.

On 27 May it was estimated that at least 12 people had been killed including 4 policemen, when supporters of a quasi Moslem sect the **Maitatsine** attacked police with bows and arrows in Iagos.

**JUNE** - On 8 June 1998 General Abacha died, reportedly of a heart attack. The following day General Abdusalalam Abubakar, previously Chief of Defence staff and third in command under General Abacha, was sworn in as the new Head of State after his appointment by the Provisional Ruling Council.

General Abubakar promised a transition to an elected civilian government.

On 16 June General Abubakar ordered the release of 9 high profile detainees.

**General Obasanjo**    **Former head of State**

## Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti Leader of Campaign for Democracy

The above were serving 15 years for alleged involvement in the 1995 coup attempt.

**Chris Anyanwu** **Journalist**

**Frank Kokori Trade Union leaders in detention without charge since 1994 and 1996 respectively**

**Milton Dabibi**

**Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki**      **Deposed Sultan of Sokoto**

**Chief Olabiya Durojaye NADECO leader - in detention without charge since 1996**

## **Chief Bola Ige Politician in detention since April 1998**

**Mr Uwen Udoh**

On 25 June General Abubakar ordered the release of 17 more political prisoners:

**Olisa Agbakoba      Human rights lawyer and leader of United Action for democracy**

**Olu Falae              Leading member of NADECO**

**Frederick Fasehun      Acting Chairman of CD**

**Abubakar Rimi**

**Moses Akinmola**

**Lewis Aimola**

**Olayinka Festus Adebayo**

**Mashood Yahaya**

**Musa Okoiyafo**

**Sukere Mohammed**

**Olugbenga Odumade**

**Mashood Raji**

**Adeyemo Femi**

**Layi Odumade**

**Sule Lamido**

**Segun Maiyegun**

**Ayo Opadokun**

There were protests against the Abubakar regime. On 12 June there was a large protest in Lagos coinciding with the fifth anniversary of the 1993 elections which were annulled when Mashood Abiola looked as if he was poised to win them. There were no reports of death or serious injuries.

There were also demonstrations in other cities.

**JULY** - Chief Mashood Abiola, who was jailed for proclaiming himself President after appearing to win the annulled presidential elections of 1993, died suddenly whilst still in captivity on 7 July 1998. He was taken ill whilst meeting an American delegation who were rumoured to be discussing terms for his release from prison. He had recently had a visit from

Kofi Annan the Secretary General of the U. N.

Rioting followed the announcement of Abiola's death in many Nigerian cities. As many as one hundred people are believed to have been killed. The worst areas affected by the rioting were Lagos, Ibadan, Akure and Abeokuta. Some of the violence took on an ethnic dimension, with battles being fought between the Yorubas of the southwest and the Hausa of the north.

On 8 July 1998 Abubakar appeared on national television and said that he had dissolved his cabinet or Federal Executive Council.

Abiola was buried in his home compound in Lagos on 11 July. Thousands of people gathered around his home in the Ikeja area of the city. At one point hundreds of youths became violent and threw stones at the police who had been deployed in large numbers. The police used tear gas to disperse them.

On 9 July the ruling military Provisional Ruling Council commuted to prison sentences the death sentences passed in connection with the alleged coup plot of December 1997. Abacha's former deputy Lieutenant-General Oladipo Diya and two other convicted plotters, Major General Taludeen Olanrewalu and Major General A Adisa had their sentences cut to 25 years in prison. Three more death sentences were commuted to 20 year prison terms, those for Lieutenant Colonel O Akinyode, Major A Fadipe and A Adebajo. Ten other people sentenced to prison terms had the length of their sentences reduced. Among these was journalist Niran Malaolu, whose sentence was reduced from life to 15 years.

Major General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua was granted a posthumous pardon. He had died in prison following conviction of involvement in the 1995 coup plot.

On 12 July a group of independent international pathologists announced that the initial results of the post-mortem on Abiola showed that he had died of heart disease.

On 14 July General Abubakar held a meeting with leaders of the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO). The meetings objective was to discuss the proposed handover to civilian rule.

By July at least one NADECO exile is known to have returned to Nigeria -Dr Wahab Dosumu.

On 15 July the government ordered the release of prisoners who had served their full sentence, but were still being detained. A number of prisoners in the country's jails have completed their sentences but overlooked for release.

On 20 July General Abubakar pardoned 10 people sentenced over the **1995 coup plot**. They included journalists Ben Charles Obi, George Mbah and Kunle Ajibade.

On 20 July General Abubakar announced that there would be a series of elections starting with local government elections on 5 December 1998, elections for state governors and for members of the state houses of assembly on 9 January a National Assembly poll on January 20 and a presidential election on 27 February 1999, which would result in the handover to a civilian rule on May 29 1999. The National Electoral Commission was to be scrapped and new Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was set up.

31. Prospective political parties were invited to register with the INEC for recognition, and

twenty five prospective parties had registered by the deadline of 9 September 1998. Guidelines announced by the INEC are designed to ensure political parties are not based solely in one region. The deadline was subsequently extended until 18 October 1998.

A seminar aimed at finding solutions to conflicts that arise from the exercise of police powers and the protection of fundamental rights of the citizen took place in Abuja at the end of July.

**AUGUST** - The full results of the autopsy on Abiola were announced. The results of tests on tissue samples supported conclusively the earlier finding that Abiola had died of natural causes and had not been murdered as some of his supporters claimed.

**SEPTEMBER** - On 10 September 1998 a coalition of 12 Nigerian human rights groups including the Civil Liberties Organisation announced the formation of a body to monitor the plan to restore civilian rule - the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG).

In September 1998 General Abubakar released the new draft constitution. It had been drafted in 1995 when Abacha was head of state, but never published. General Abubakar stated that all comments and views on the proposed constitution would be presented to the Provisional Ruling Council for consideration prior to publication.

Abubakar has stated his intention to clamp down on the corruption that is endemic in Nigerian society and government. He said the government has started investigations into the conduct of certain government departments. In September he announced that a substantial amount of money had been recovered from the family of the former head of state General Abacha. Many of Abacha's former aides are in detention for misappropriation and embezzlement of state funds. Maryam Abacha, the wife of the former dictator has been prevented from leaving Nigeria and is restricted to Kano, her home town, while investigations are being made into her financial affairs. Abubakar has also begun to investigate claims that billions of pounds of oil revenues had gone missing under the Abacha administration. There is no evidence to suggest administrations other than the Abacha one are being investigated.

In the light of the improved human rights situation in Nigeria the European Union made a declaration stating that it was ready to review the sanctions that had been imposed in 1995.

In early September 1998 the 20 Ogoni political prisoners who had been in detention since 1994 for the murder of 4 Ogoni chiefs (the same charges as the late Ken Saro-Wiwa) were released after a High Court judge in Port Harcourt dropped all the charges. Their release was unconditional.

**OCTOBER** - On 1 October general Abubakar addressed the nation on the 38th anniversary of Nigerian independence. He pledged to handover to civilian rule by May 1999.

In early October voter registration began to prepare for the series of polls leading to the handover of power to a civilian government.

Some more prominent exiles returned to Nigeria including Dan Suleiman of NADECO and Wole Soyinka, who had the treason charges against him dropped.

The leader of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), Mr Ledum Mitee

has also returned to Nigeria after three years in self-exile.

**NOVEMBER** - Five members of the Odua People's Congress killed in Lagos by police.

Prominent Ijaw leader Mr Shokare Clark was assassinated by unknown assailants.

United Nations Human Rights Special Rapporteur Soli Sorabjee visited Nigeria for a week to investigate human rights issues.

**DECEMBER** - Local elections took place on 5 December. They were dominated by the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

A dusk to dawn curfew was imposed in the oil producing Niger Delta following the declaration of a state of emergency.

A week of clashes between the Tiv and Ibo ethnic groups near the town of Gboko resulted in the deaths of at least 32 people.

Lt. Colonel Olu Akinyode, who was serving a prison sentence for his part in the alleged December 1997 coup plot died in prison.

**JANUARY 1999** - Dusk to Dawn curfew in Niger Delta area lifted.

On 9 January elections took place for Governors and members of the House of Assembly. The People's Democratic Party (PDP) emerged as the largest party.

**FEBRUARY** - Parliamentary elections took place on 20 February. The PDP emerged as the largest party in the Senate and the House of Representatives.

On 27 February the presidential elections took place. General Obasanjo, a previous military ruler who handed over power to a democratically elected government in 1979 was elected. There have been accusations of vote rigging by international monitors.

**MARCH** - Coup plotters are pardoned, and all but three are released by the end of March.

The result of the presidential election is widely seen as free and fair by international observers.

On 11 March five people are reported to have died after two days of fighting in Ogun State, between The O'odua People's Congress and the police.

On 22 March over 767 Million Dollars recovered by the Military government. The money was part of the funds that went missing during the Abacha regime.

On 24 March Major General Tunde Idiagbon died, he had been deputy leader of Nigeria between 1984 and 1985.

Vandalism and unrest continues in Warri throughout March. On 16 March a Presidential Committee on development presents its report, which is highly critical of the failure to develop the region, or address its problems.

The International Court of Justice ruled against Nigeria in its continuing dispute with Cameroon over the Bakassi Peninsula on 29 March. The Court took the view that Cameroon had the right to determined ownership of the disputed region.

Since the start of 1999 at least one hundred people had died in clashes between Muslim Fulani herders and Christian and Animist farming tribes. The reasons for this dispute is primarily access to farming and grazing land, but ethnic and religious difference exacerbate these disputes.

**APRIL** - On 6 April the Nigerian Court of Appeal uphold a decision to reject a challenge to the election of Olusegun Obasanjo as president. Chief Olu Falae who had been the presidential candidate for the All People's Party and the Alliance for Democracy made the challenge. On 14 April Chief Falae said he would not proceed with any further challenge to the Court's decision.

In Kaduna more than 1,000 Shi'ite Moslems demonstrated on 7 April, to demand the release of forty Islamic activists held in detention. The protest was led by Ibrahim El ZakZaky, who is campaigning for the imposition of Islamic law in Nigeria. The Civil Rights Congress (CRC) on 30 April supported the claim that members of the Islamic Brotherhood were being persecuted. CRC stated that Moslem activists were being illegally detained, denied access to higher education, and barred from attending and preaching in mosques. Most of Nigeria's Moslems are Sunnis and they do not approve of the views and aspirations radical Shi'ites organisations like the Islamic Brotherhood.

Unrest continues in the Niger Delta, it was claimed that a number of Oil company instillation were occupied, in an attempt to obtain compensation from Mobil Corp for an oil spill in the region in January; this action was not confirmed. On 10 April General Abubakar hosted talks on the Niger Delta region, with over two hundred delegates attending.

There was serious unrest in Ijebu-Ode between 7 and 14 April, after the death of a soldier led to rioting by his comrades.

At least one hundred people died in a land dispute near the village Aguleri in the first three weeks of April. This continued to around the 23 April when the police restored order. Over seven hundred people have died in violence between two local Igbo speaking communities over the past five years.

On 18 April over three hundred prisoners were granted pardons in Kaduna State, as part of a move to free up space in prisons and improve human rights. Most of those released had been in prison for about six years without trial.

The United Nations dropped an enquiry into Nigeria's human rights record on 23 April, and acknowledged the progress Nigeria had made in establishing an accountable democratic government.

On April thirty Iteskiri youth attacked a tanker on the Escravos River, the ship was damaged and the crew only freed after a ransom had been paid.

**MAY** - There were renewed clashes between Ijaw and Itsekiri youths in the Niger Delta on 1 May, following an attack on an Ijaw boatman. These clashes continued for two weeks, it is reported that twenty people were killed, and twenty-five soldiers were either injured or captured by the groups involved in this violence. The Nigerian government deployed reinforcements to restore order and free the captured soldiers. This violence flared up again in Warri on 30 May, when fifty people were killed in an attack on an Itsekiris village.

Ibadan University was closed following protracted students' protest against fees.

On 5 May the new constitution was signed into law.

Three people were killed and three villages burned to the ground, in a dispute between cattle herders and farmers in Kirikasmma in Jigawa State.

Ethnic Ogonis protest outside Royal Dutch Shell offices in Port Harcourt on 7 May. MOSOP accuses Shell of destroying the environment.

Unidentified gunmen murdered human rights activist Kazino Uzuazebe on 6 May.

Six people die in riots on 19 May following rumours of the death of president-elect Obasanjo.

Five military officers, part of Operation Sweep, were being sought by police on 21 May. They were accused of involvement in the death of a bus driver who was shot when he failed to stop when challenged; two commuters and the bus conductor were also killed.

There were violent clash in Kafanchan during the installation of Alhaji Muhammadu Isa Mohammed as new Emir of Jem'a on 22 May. It is reported that one hundred and two people were killed during this violence, and a curfew was imposed and the installation delayed. The reason for this violence, was opposition to the Emirate system from the local population. Order was restored in the area, after a visit from the state administrator, Col Umar Faruk Ahmed, and the deployment of security personnel reinforcements in the area.

On 24 May, unidentified Cult members killed three students. They were shot while take their exams in Enugu State University of Technology.

On the 25 May the Saro-Wiwa family announced their intention to sue Shell in the United States. Their application to take this action is due to be heard in New York later this year.

The military units involved in Operation Sweep were withdrawn on 26 May. On 28 May the outgoing military government repealed decree 2, and on 29 May President Obasanjo takes power, and the new constitution comes into effect.

Nigeria rejoined the Commonwealth on 29 May, and the European Union lifted all remaining sanctions.

**JUNE** - President Obasanjo suspended all contract signed by the outgoing military regime on 2 June, pending a review.

On 3 June the Nigerian national assembly is opened, and on 4 June President Obasanjo sets up a panel to review human rights abuses since January 1994.

President Obasanjo retires all officers who held political office under the military government, 149 senior officers are effected.

On 6 June fighting is reported between Urhobos and Itsekiri, and two hundred people are reported to have been killed. Clashes between the Itsekiri and Ijaw were also continuing in the region. Soldiers were deployed in the area, and a curfew was imposed to try and alleviate the situation; by 9 June the region was reported to be tense but calm.

On 10 June, all legislation that is inconsistent with the 1999 constitution or the spirit of democratic government is repealed. All tribunals created by the military to try certain offences are also dissolved.

President Obasanjo visits the Warri area on 11 June, and appeals for calm. He also said that he would set up a development body, to oversee development in the region. On 26 June he obtains the agreement to a suspension of hostilities from the leaders of the Itsekiris, Ijaws and Urhobos, to allow the government time to find long term solutions to the regions problems.

Vigilantes killed five suspected armed robbers on 13 June, over twenty people are reported to have died since the beginning of June as a result of Vigilante violence. There has been an upsurge in crime following the return to civilian government.

On 24 June an outbreak of cholera was reported in the Northern State of Kaduna, it is reported that at least sixty people had died of the disease during June.

There were violent clashes in Ibadan on 25 June, when a riot broke out between Yoruba traders and Hausa cattle dealers, seven people were killed before order was restored. Twenty-eight people were killed in three separate ethnic clashes in Taraba State on 24 and 25 June 1999. Tivs fought with Fulanis, Kutebs fought with Jukuns and Wurukum farmers with Fulani herdsman.

On 26 June, President Obasanjo required his prospective ministers to sign a code of ethics, which covered issues of probity, transparency and accountability in government. The intention of this document is to encourage just and honest government. A code of conduct has also been drawn up for Ministers advisers.

On 27 June a helicopter operated by Shell and its two-man crew were seize by Ijaw youths.

On 30 June President Obasanjo abolishes the Petroleum Trust Fund, which had been created to oversee the allocation of revenue from oil production.

Three people died during the rescue of two local oil workers kidnapped in the Niger Delta. The rescue was organised by local youths from a neighbouring village.

**JULY** - The Nigerian government cancels all crude oil contracts on 2 July, pending re-negotiation, as some of the companies involved are linked to ex-army officer. On the 6 July the Nigerian government outlines its guidelines for future oil contract, these include a commitment to development in Nigeria and a performance bond of one million dollars, which will forfeited in the event of failure to invest in development. The oil companies agreed to a 0.5% levy for the



development of the Niger Delta region on the same day.

The International Court of Justice allows a counterclaim from Nigeria regarding the Bakassi peninsula on 3 July.

Ten Nigerian POW in Sierra Leone, are released by the Revolutionary United Front, and arrive back in Nigeria on 3 July.

On the 7 July the first anniversary of the death of Chief Kashimawo Abiola passes without any serious incidents being reported.

On 8 July President Obasanjo recalls all recently appointed diplomats and place them on compulsory leave. On the same day the full Nigerian cabinet is appointed after, with the approval of the Senate.

The Nigerian intends to begin a phased withdrawal from Sierra Leone, following the implementation of the Lome peace agreement. However, some of its force will remain as part of Ecomog (Economic Community of West African States Cease-Fire Monitoring Group), and will help with reconstruction.

On 9 July, President Obasanjo swears in eight advisors to assist him and his government.

On 11 July five students were killed during an attack on a hostel at Obafemi Awolowo Teaching Hospital. Members of an unidentified cult were involved in this incident, and three other students later died as a result of their injuries. Mr Wale Omole, the Vice Chancellor of the University, was indefinitely suspended from his post, because of his failure to address the problems of cults in the University, and a number of suspected cult members were detained. However, this failed to satisfy many of the students, and on 14 July they stormed a police station where the suspected cult members were being held and removed one suspect]. Students kidnapped Mr Omole's wife, in an attempt to discover his whereabouts; they also blocked roads to the University, and boycotted lectures. The Nigerian government has said it will take measures to address the problems of cults in Universities.

On 13 July, President Obasanjo presents a bill for development in the Niger Delta, he proposes that a Commission be set up to oversee development in the region, financed, in part, by contributions from the oil companies. The Ijaw Youth Council rejected this proposal on 15 July.

On 17 July Alhaji Muhammad Waziri, one of President Obasanjo's recently appointed special advisors, escaped an assassination attempt at his home in Abuja. However, he suffered serious injuries as a result of the attack.

There were serious clashes between Hausas and Yorubas in Shagamu on 17 July following the murder of a Hausa woman who had observed a secret Yoruba religious ceremony. Over sixty people are reported to have been killed, before order is restored.

These clashes trigger further clashes between Hausas and Yorubas in Kano on 22 July. Over seventy people are reported to have been killed before order is restored, but accounts of the exact number vary. One hundred and fifty people are subsequently arrested.

On 24 July the speaker of the House of Representative Alhaji Ibrahim Salisu Buhari is required to resign his post, because he had misrepresented his academic qualifications.

On 26 July Isoko youths free sixty oil workers who had been held for two days.

On 29 July it is reported that over one hundred and twenty people have died in clashes between two communities in Anambra State, the cause is a long-standing land dispute.

The former minister of sport, Air Commodore Anthony Ikazoboh was shot and killed at his home in Lagos on 29 July.

MOSOP said it identifies with the Nigerian government's efforts to resolve the problems in the Niger Delta on 29 July.

There were clashes between Ijaws and Ilajes in Ondo State in late July, over a land dispute, at least fifty people were reported killed.

**AUGUST** - On 4 August Ex-speaker Alhaji Ibrahim Salisu Buhari is sentenced to one year in prison, on two counts of perjury and forgery, but is given the option of a 2,000 naira (about 19 US dollars) fine.

Communities in the Ilaje local government area, make proposed amendments to the Niger Delta bill on 6 August. They want an ambiguity in representation of local people clarified.

On 7 August MOSOP reject the bill, as they believe that the commission would not be able to assist in development, and it also objects to the government definition of the states in the Niger region.

On 9 August soldiers are sent to Ondo State to restore order. Both the Ijaws and Ilajes had failed to abide by the terms of a peace agreement, and thousands of Ijaws have fled the fighting, and hundreds are reported killed.

On the 10 August there were demonstrations at the National Assembly against the allowances given to legislators.

It is reported that two hundred people were killed by Nigerian troops in the village of Lebambo in Taraba State. The soldiers had retaliated against the ethnic Kutebs after they had been attacked. Taraba State has been the scene of many ethnic clashes, because of dispute about grazing and land.

Five kidnapped oil workers were freed on 12 August.

On 14 August Ogoni leaders met with representatives of Royal Dutch Shell to discuss their differences, and to attempt to agree a formula for Shell to return to the Ogoni Region.

On 18 August the death of a British Oil worker Mr Richard Lintot was reported. He died on 15 August, as a result of injuries sustained during a robbery at Sapele in the Niger Delta on 9 August.

On 18 August Ijaw youths attacked the regional parliament in Bayelsa State, and two MPs were stabbed. The Ijaws were protesting against the parliamentary speakers and other officials involvement in an oil compensation bill.

Texaco said in a statement on 19 August, that one hundred and fifty youths occupied its offices in Warri.

President Obasanjo submitted a list of one hundred and three ambassadorial nominees for the Senate's consideration on 19 August.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has expressed its approval of Nigeria's government, and intends to send a special mission to Nigeria in September to discuss development and co-operation. UNDP hopes to assist in areas relating to job development, national planning, social development and food security. The UNDP already has approximately three hundred projects in Nigeria.

On 21 August, Shi'ites burned down hotels in Katsina, in a protest over an application to repeal a ban on alcohol.

President Obasanjo announced a wide-ranging program of poverty relief on 23 August, addressing health care and education provisions. He also stated that agricultural reform was also a high priority.

Taraba and Benue states were reported to be calm after a two-year period of ethnic clashes.

On 22 August students at Osum State Polytechnic rioted after the police allegedly killed five students, a local radio station was closed briefly for fear that the students would occupy it.

President Obasanjo approved the release of one thousand four hundred prisoners on 27 August.

**SEPTEMBER** - The army denied that it had maltreated civilians in Ondo State during operations to quell disturbances between Ijaw and Ilaje tribal groups. On 4 September the army suspended its withdrawal from Sierra Leone.

On 7 September Mr Justice Oputa requested more time to examine the cases submitted to his human rights panel for consideration. The panel is sworn in on 16 September, with the support of President Obasanjo.

Bandits in Northern Nigeria killed at least twenty people including a police officer during a robbery on 8 September.

On 9 September there was a serious riot at the port of Lagos, and it was reported that militants linked to the OPC were involved. The cause of this violence was an attempt by sacked workers to return to work, which was supported by the militants, but opposed by other workers. After several hours of fighting between the rival groups, the police used live ammunition to restore order, and it is reported that sixteen people were killed. In an unrelated incident, Hausa and Yoruba traders clashed in Abuja, two people are reported to have been killed. On the same day the high court ruled that the cancellation of a contract with Heritage Oil and Gas Co was legal.

On 13 September it was reported that police had killed fifty Ijaw youths in the Niger Delta, all were supposed to be members of the Egbesu cult. The police have subsequently denied involvement in these deaths.

On 17 September it is report that two hundred people had died from Cholera in Borno State.

Disturbances continue in the Niger Delta, with attacks on oil installations and ethnic unrest. On 15 September two oil workers were kidnapped, but were later released. The most serious incident occurred on 20 September, when a crowd of local residents attacked a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) plant at Finima in the Bonny Rivers State. Production was resumed by 28 September, after an agreement was reached between the company Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas Ltd and the local community. President Obasanjo visited the region on a fact-finding mission.

23 September President Obasanjo addressed the U.N. General Assembly, and requested international assistance in recovering funds misappropriated by previous Nigerian and other African regimes. He said that this and debt relief would assist in African development.

**OCTOBER** - 4 October, members of Okrika and Ogonis communities in Port Harcourt, clashed in a dispute over the ownership of a refinery site, the police restored order

On 5 October President Obasanjo order the human rights commission, under Mr Justice Oputa, to cover events back to the first military government in 1966.

Twenty broadcast licenses held by TV companies are revoked for failure to pay licensing fees.

Zamfara State takes measures to introduce Shia'ra law on 27 October. It was anticipated that the trained personnel and courts necessary to support this law would be in place by January 2000.

**NOVEMBER** - In early November there were clashes between Ijaws of the Egbesu cult and the OPC in Ajegunle district of Lagos. The OPC, were acting in support of the Ilajes, a Yoruba sub-group tribe in the Delta State, who have been involved in a violent conflict with the Ijaw for the past two years. Fifteen people were reported to have been killed in this violence and over fifty-six arrested. It was reported that twelve policemen were later killed by Ijaw youths, in retaliation for the large number of Ijaws arrested by the police during the Lagos riots.

Itshekeris and Ijaws were reported to have been involved in clashes in the Niger Delta in early November. In Bayelsa State ten soldiers guarding an oil instillation were reported to have been killed.

17 November former army chief General Ishaya Bamaïyi was released from house arrest, he was under investigation by the human rights commission. On the same day Mohammed Abacha appeared in court charged with the murder Kudirat Abiola.

On 18 November it was reported that more than forty people had been killed in clashes between two Isoko communities in the Niger Delta. The dispute was over the allocation of oil pipes donated to local people by RDS. On the same day the Senate President Evan Enwerem was removed from office.

On 20 November 1999, in response to the killing of police officers in early November, the Nigerian army surrounded the town of Odi in Bayelsa State. This was the town in which the policemen were killed, and where it was believed that the Ijaws responsible were hiding. In the ensuing operation it is claimed by the local community that over five hundred residents were killed, and two thousand detained, it is not known if those responsible for the deaths of the police officer were among those detained or killed. An inconclusive investigation was launched into this incident. President Obasanjo later apologised for the excessive force used by the military.

Barnabas Gemade is elected chairman of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party.

Former army chief General Ishaya Bamaïyi appear in Lagos Chief Magistrates court on 24 November, charged with conspiracy to murder former newspaper publisher Alex Ibru. His co-defendants Maj. Hamza Al-Mustapha and police supt. Mohammed Rabo Lawal, are also charged with involvement in the death of Kudirat Abiola.

In late November 1999 in and around Lagos there were clashes between the OPC and Hausas over market trading, which resulted in the deaths of at least twenty-seven people, many Hausas fled Lagos because of this violence. On 25 November 1999 President Obasanjo ordered that police shoot OPC members on sight if they did not surrender.

**DECEMBER** - On 8 December the trial of Mohammed Abacha is adjourned, as his defences require time to study new charges against him.

There were riots in Ilorin on 18 December 1999, no deaths were reported, but eighteen churches were destroyed.

On 21 December, police dispersed Trade Unionist protesting outside the national parliament in Abuja against the repeal of fuel subsidies.

**JANUARY 2000** - The Nigerian government announced that prisoners who had been on death row for twenty years or more would be pardoned. Others who have been on death row for over ten years would have their sentences commuted to life imprisonment.

On 5 January violence flared in Ibadan between local Yorubas and Hausas, when a Hausa lorry driver collided with a taxi carrying Yorubas, and then fled the scene. Seven people were killed in the accident, and four died in the ensuing violence.

The OPC has split into two factions, one under the leadership of Dr Frederick Fasheun and the other under the leadership Mr Ganiyu Adams. Mr Adams' faction is seen as being more hard line and less willing to compromise with the Nigerian authorities. These two factions clashed on 6 January 2000, resulting in at least six deaths. In another incident a senior police officer in Lagos was kidnapped and killed by OPC members attempting to free a member accused of robbery. Mr Ganiyu Adams remains wanted because of his suspected involvement in the Lagos clashes in November 1999.

The Ganiyu Adams' faction of the OPC was believed to have been involved in vigilante violence in the Mushin area of Lagos. The police attempted to curb this violence, but these vigilantes killed at least forty people, before order was restored on 7 January

There were reports of an increase in tension between Nigeria and Cameroon over the disputed Bakassi peninsula. The Nigerian military authorities denied this, but the possible cause of any rise in tensions, is the military assistance Cameroon has been receiving from France.

Soldiers averted a clash between Itsekiri and Urhobo in Warri, the cause was a land dispute.

Charges against Former army chief General Ishaya Bamaïyi, Police Commissioner James Danbaba, former Zamfara State Administrator Col. Bala Yakubu, Chief Supt. Of Police Mohammed Rabo Lawal and the late General Abacha Chief of Security Maj. Hamza Al-Mustapha were withdrawn on 13 January. These charges related to the attempted murder of Mr Alex Ibru. However, the charges against Al-Mustapha, Rabo Lawal, Mohammed Abacha and Lateef Shofolahan arising from the murder of Kudirat Abiola remain. As do charges against Al-Mustapha and Col. Frank Yakassai arising from the murder of Maj-Gen Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. General Bamaïyi remain in detention as there are other charges outstanding against him.

14 January thousands of Christians in Kaduna State protest against plans to introduce a Shari'a law code.

Two hundred members of the OPC were detained by the police, and charged with crimes connected to the recent violence in Lagos. There are reports that as many as one thousand members of Ganiyu Adams' OPC faction may have been detained.

Ogonis and RDS continue discussions aimed at reaching agreement about RDS returning to Ogoniland.

Fulani herders fought with villagers in central Nigeria, ten people were killed including two policemen.

Youth in Imo State seized some oil production installation on 18 January, in protest at Imo being excluded from the Niger Delta Development Commission Bill.

On 22 January the city of Kano approves Sharia law, subject to the consent of the State's Governor. On the 27 January Zamfara formally introduced the Sharia penal code, and the first punishments under this code were carried out from that date.

**FEBRUARY** - On 4 February police occupy the office of the Alliance for Democracy, as this party had split into two factions and the police feared a violent confrontation.

On 21 February there were marches against the introduction of Shir'ia law by Christians in Kaduna, during these marches serious disturbances were reported as Muslims and Christians clashed. On 22 February there was extensive rioting in Kaduna, and it is reported that more than three hundred people were killed over a three-day period. On the same day Sokoto became the third state to adopt a Sharia based penal code.

The residence of the Sultan of Sokoto was also attacked on the 21 February. The attackers

belonged to two rival Muslim factions who were disputing the leadership the Sultan Bello Mosque.

On 28 February violence spread to Aba, as youths from the mainly Christian Igbo tribe attacked local Muslims in reprisals for attacks on Christians living in Kaduna. The Central Mosque in the town was torched during this riot and around fifty people killed. In both incidents the police imposed a curfew. The army was also called in to support the police.

In light of the Constitutional implications of this law, a human rights group led by Olisa Agbokoba has made a legal challenge against this law.

On 29 February Vice-President Atiku Abubakar announced that as a result of a meeting of all state governors Sharia law would be suspended. The response from the three states involve has been ambiguous, and they have been reluctant to confirm unequivocal that they would abide by the decision of the council. A number of other northern states have re-affirmed their intention to introduce a Shia'ra based legal system.

**MARCH** - President Obasanjo who had been criticised for not taken a decisive lead on Shir'ia, appealed for calm and understanding in a national television broadcast on 2 March 2000.

There were clashes between two Yoruba communities in Ife on 5 March, over a long-standing land dispute.

On 7 March violence spread to Sokoto, when students rioted and demanded the immediate introduction of Sharia, order was restored after a curfew was imposed. Unrest was also reported in Lagos after a Hausa lorry driver lost control of his truck and killed twenty people. Local Yorubas clashed with Hausas, and a curfew was imposed. There have been conflicting reports on the total death toll in February and March due to religious based unrest, and a true figure is hard to determined.

On 13 March thirty-two oil workers and two soldiers were abducted from a gas plant at Utorogu near Warri. On 14 March at least fifty people were killed in Umuichieichi-Umungbede village in a pipeline explosion.

**APRIL** - Dr Fredrick Fasheun president of the OPC was briefly detained by the SSS, who were enquiring into the activities of the OPC.

Around 11 April There were violent confrontations in K-Dere between rival factions of MOSOP, over a road building project. Amnesty International has accused the police of using this violence as a means of harassing and detaining Ogoni activists. A house belonging to Ledum Mitee, the president of one of MOSOP's faction, was destroyed. He was also detained in connection with this violence and bailed, but there are charge still outstanding against him.

**MAY** - On 7 May Nwibari Obani claimed leadership of a rival faction of MOSOP. Ledum Mitee has challenged the legitimacy of his election.

In Late May there was further rioting in Kaduna. This violence lasted for two days and it is reported that three hundred people were killed. The security forces restored order, and this violence was limited to the Kaduna area

**JUNE** - On 8 June Nigerians went on a stay-at-home strike in answer to a call from the umbrella Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) to protest against a 50% increase in fuel prices announced a week ago by the government. News organisations reported that all private businesses were closed and transport vehicles were off the streets after the talks between the government and the NLC, which wants the increases scrapped, proved inconclusive. There had been a number of protest in Lagos and other cities against the price hike, which was also opposed by the Senate and the governments of some states.

There were four separate incidents of pipeline sabotage on 3 June on the Warri-kadunna pipeline, a number of suspects were detained. An undetermined number of people died in the fires caused by this damage.

On 13 June the NLC called off a week-long strike after reaching agreement with government to scale down the fuel-price rise decreed last week.

On 20 June there was a pipeline explosion at Okuedjegba near Warri the number of killed and injured is not known.

The northern city of Kano on issued an official proclamation of Sharia in that state on 21 June.

Two oil workers were kidnapped while working on a boat on 21 June, but were later released when the Nigerian navy stormed the boat.

**JULY**- On the 5 July a Kano court imposed a sentence of eighty strokes of the cane and fifteen months in prison on a man convicted of drinking alcohol. In Zamfara a man was sentenced to eighty strokes of the cane for falsely accusing his wife of adultery.

On 6 July The authorities in Ondo state imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew in the town of Ikare-Akoko following 20 deaths resulting from clashes between supporters of two rival monarchs there. The violence, which began last weekend, dates back to 1992 when the Owaale, one of the monarchs in question, was recognised by the government even though the Olukare was reportedly already the traditional ruler.

On 10 July two hundred and fifty people were killed in an oil pipeline explosion in Adeje near Warri.

Civil servants in Lagos State suspended a three-week-old wage strike on 11 July to restart negotiations with the state government over the disputed minimum wage. Adams Oshiomhole, president of the Nigeria NLC announced the suspension of the strike after talks with Lagos State Governor Bola Tinubu. Oshiomhole said that the strike would only be called off when an agreement had been reached.

On 16 July there were clashes in Lagos between police and OPC, twenty people were killed including two police officers. Thirty people were killed in a pipeline explosion in Warri.

On 20 July FGM was declared illegal in southeastern Cross River State.

On 31 July, Ijaw militants held one hundred and sixty five oil workers hostage. They were released in early August.

**AUGUST** - Katsina becomes the fifth state to adopt Sharia law on 1 August. Jigawa adopts



Sharia law on 2 August.

There is agitation in the Southern states, to prevent young people from the South serving in the National Youth Service Corp in North. This is a compulsory form of non-military national service, and this action has been taking because of a fear for their safety following the introduction of Sharia law in some Northern states. Many Southern Christian youths are reported to have refused to be sent to serve in states that have adopted Islamic law.

President Clinton paid a visit to Nigeria and expressed his support for the civilian government, and pledged \$ 20 Million to support efforts to combat AIDS, Malaria and polio.

**SEPTEMBER** - Ten people died in clashes between Christians and Muslims in Gombe state on 11 September, following protest against the proposal to introduce Sharia law into that state.

President Obasanjo paid a short visit to the United Kingdom on 13 September, and amongst the subjects discussed, were debt relief and the recovery of funds looted under previous regimes.

**OCTOBER** – There were clashes between the OPC and Hausas in Ilorin and Lagos. As a result of this violence, military units were deployed in Lagos State.

## ANNEX E

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