

Nigeria



Capital City: Abuja.

Background: British influence and control over what would become Nigeria grew through the 19th century. Independence came in 1960. Following nearly 16 years of military rule, a new constitution was adopted in 1999 and a peaceful transition to civilian government was completed. The reform of a petroleum-based economy, institutionalising democracy, tackling corruption and defusing longstanding ethnic and religious tensions are the current challenges. Nigeria is experiencing its longest period of civilian rule since independence.

Geography:

- **Location:** Western Africa, bordering the Gulf of Guinea, between Benin and Cameroon.
- **Area comparative:** More than 13 times the size of Ireland.
- **Climate:** Equatorial in south, tropical in centre, arid in north.
- **Natural resources:** Natural gas, petroleum, tin, iron ore, coal, limestone, niobium, lead, zinc, arable land.
- **Natural hazards:** Periodic droughts; flooding.
- **Environment issues:** Soil degradation; rapid deforestation; urban air and water pollution; desertification; oil pollution – water, air, and soil; has suffered serious damage from oil spills; loss of arable land; rapid urbanization.

Religion: Muslim 50%, Christian 40%, indigenous beliefs 10%.

People:

- **Population:** 131,859,731
- **Birth rate:** 40.43 births per 1,000.
- **Infant mortality:** 97.14 deaths per 1,000 live births.
- **Life expectancy:** *Total population:* 47.08 years, *male:* 46.52 years, *female:* 47.66 years.

**Government:**

- **Type of government:** Federal republic.
- **Administrative divisions:** 36 states and 1 territory.
- **Independence:** 1 October 1960 (from UK).
- **National holiday:** Independence Day (National Day), 1 October (1960).

Economy:

- **Unemployment:** 2.9%
- **Population below the poverty line:** 60%
- **Agricultural products:** Cocoa, peanuts, palm oil, corn, rice, sorghum, millet, cassava (tapioca), yams, rubber; cattle, sheep, goats, pigs; timber; fish.
- **Industries:** Crude oil, coal, tin, columbite; palm oil, peanuts, cotton, rubber, wood; hides and skins, textiles, construction materials, food products, footwear, chemicals, fertilizer.

Education:

- **Literacy:** *Definition:* age 15 and over can read and write. *Total population:* 68%, *male:* 75.7%, *female:* 60.6%.
- **Language:** English (official), Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo (Ibo), Fulani.

Communication:

- **Telephone lines:** Landlines: 1,395,786, Mobile lines: 21,571,131.
- **TV stations:** 3
- **Internet users:** 1,769,700

Asylum: The Irish Government considers Nigeria a 'safe country of origin'. Nevertheless in 2005 there was 1,278 asylum claims by Nigerian nationals, while in the first ten months of 2006 there were 840 asylum applications (23.4% of the total).

Internally displaced persons: There are no reliable statistics on internally displaced persons in Nigeria; the last available UN estimate was 200,000, which was calculated in November 2004.

Migration: In the first ten months of 2006 the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment issued 77 work permits to Nigerian nationals.

Sources:

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