



NEWS SITUATION TRACKING - NIGERIA

SECURITY RAID ON ILLEGAL REHABILITATION CENTRES Vol.6

Location: NIGERIA

Issue: 907 PEOPLE INCLUDING 61 FEMALES AND OVER 91 CHILDREN RESCUED AT ILLEGAL REHABILITATION CENTRES IN KADUNA, KATSINA, ADAMAWA, KWARA AND OYO STATES.

Date: NOVEMBER, 4, 2019

COMMUNITY PROFILING	CRITICAL STAKEHOLDERS	INCIDENT PROFILING
<p>Population: The 2018 population estimate for Nigeria is 200,963,599¹.</p> <p>Basic Demography and Geography of Hotspots: Nigeria shares land borders with the Republic of Benin, Chad, Cameroun, Niger and the Gulf of Guinea of the Atlantic Ocean. The country has 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). There are 774 Local Government Areas (LGA's) divided across six (6) geo-political zones.</p> <p>Ethnicity: Nigeria has over 250 ethnic groups with Hausa-Fulani, Igbo, Yoruba in the majority. <i>The term 'Almajiri' is a Hausa word for pupil in the northern part of Nigeria and emanated from Arabic word 'AlMuhajir' which means seeker of Islamic religious knowledge. The Almajiri school system is commonly described as religious and rehabilitation centres.</i></p> <p>Economy: Information and communication technology, banking/insurance, education,</p>	<p>Direct Actors: Islamic proprietors and teachers at the illegal Rehabilitation facilities in Kaduna, Katsina (North-West), Adamawa (North-East), Kwara (North-Central) and Oyo (South-West).</p> <p>Affected Persons: Children and Adults (6-46 years old) from Kaduna, Katsina, Adamawa, Kwara and Oyo States in Nigeria, Niger, Cameroun, Mali, Burkinafaso.</p> <p>Interested Actors: Federal Government of Nigeria, Kaduna, Katsina, Adamawa and Kwara State Governments, Nigeria Police Force, Department of State Service, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Ja'amu Nasrul Islam, Almajiri Child Rights Initiative, Religious/Traditional leaders, Human Rights Organisations, Nigeria Immigration Service, Almajiri Foundation, State Emergency Management Agency, United Nations Children's Fund</p>	<p>The recent clampdown on illegal rehabilitation centres continues to attract criticisms largely due to the dehumanising and unhygienic conditions prevailing at the centres. The discovery has re-awakened debates on the 'Almajiri school system' (Islamic religious and rehabilitation centres) prevalent across the northern States of Nigeria. Despite their activities regarded as religious education centres, recent cases of physical abuse, starvation, poor sanitary and sexual assaults, amongst others have been prominent in a number of the 'Almajiri schools' operating illegally in the northern parts of the country.</p> <p>Between September 26 and November 4, 2019, data generated from the WANEP NEWS revealed series of security raid on eight (8) illegal rehabilitation facilities in Igabi and Zaria Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Kaduna State, Katsina-North LGA of Katsina State, Yola-South LGA of Adamawa State, Illorin-West LGA of Kwara State and Akinyele LGA of Oyo State by operatives of the Nigeria Police Force and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps². Additional reports have further revealed that illegal rehabilitation centre in Katsina State was uncovered following public demonstrations conducted by over 200 people who had escaped from the facility, over allegations of human rights violation³. In total, 907 people (including 61 females and over 91 children) were rescued from the facilities with 29 teachers including the proprietors of the centres arrested⁴. The rescued children are between the age range of 6 to 14 years old. A statistical analysis on the figures of rescued victims indicated that Kaduna State accounted for the highest number of 458 people, while Oyo, Kwara, Katsina and Adamawa States recorded 259, 108, 67 and 15 people respectively.</p> <p>Moreover, apart from being centres for teaching of Islamic education, the facilities are also regarded by families and caregivers as traditional/religious alternatives for addressing cases of juvenile delinquency, mental health concerns and drug addiction. In Kaduna State, some of the interviewed victims revealed that they were taken to the facility to be deradicalised following accusations of their conversion to Christianity⁵. Majority of the rescued victims were found in</p>

¹ <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/nigeria-population/>

² WANEP NEWS (www.wanep.org/news)

³ <https://www.channelstv.com/2019/10/14/breaking-police-uncover-another-islamic-centre-with-chained-maltreated-children-in-daura/>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ <http://nigeriannewsdirect.com/battering-nigerian-citizens-in-islamic-rehabilitation-centres/>

mining and local crafts, serves as a source of livelihood for the populace. Nigeria is also an agrarian economy with fishing, livestock rearing a major backbone of economic growth and source of income in the country.

Available minerals include: crude oil, natural gas, gold, tin, columbite, iron ore, coal, limestone, lead, zinc, etc. Major agricultural export products include cotton, cassava, cocoa, peanuts, rubber, sorghum, ginger and palm oil.

Religion: The major religion in Nigeria is Islam, Christianity and a minority with Traditional beliefs.

(UNICEF), National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and other Related matters (NAPTIP), National Human Rights Commission, National Youth Council of Nigeria

chains with visible scars. Another cause for concern was reported cases of sexual assaults, underfeeding; and unhygienic condition also prevail at the facilities⁶.

The deplorable condition prevailing at the centres and exposure of the victims to abusive treatment have psychological impact on the victims.

Importantly, considering the security challenges with terrorism and violent extremism in the country and the sahel, especially Mali, Burkinafaso and Niger where children and young people are being brought from, there is the risk of the illegal facilities serving as a platform for radicalisation and violent extremists recruitment. Again, prevalence of abuses at the centres raises further concerns regarding the effectiveness of Governmental policies especially, Child Rights Law and other related policies that focus on protection and welfare of children in the country. Sixteen (16) years after the passage of the Child Rights Bill by the Federal Government in 2003, 10 northern States (Adamawa, Katsina, Kano, Bauchi, Yobe, Sokoto, Borno, Zamfara, Gombe, Kebbi) are yet to pass the Child Rights Act.⁷ Religious and cultural concerns⁸ have been cited as key challenges hindering the domestication and effective implementation of the Bill in the States.

In response to the growing concern over the operations and preponderance cases of abuses in a host of illegal Almajiri schools, the Federal and State Governments have intensified efforts to track down other illegal/unregistered rehabilitation centres across the country and investigate their activities in order to ensure adherence to regulations and full compliance to operational standards. While the rescued victims are being profiled by the State Governments in collaboration with security agencies, some have been re-united with their families. Also, rescued foreign victims have been reunited with their families through collaboration with respective authorities in their countries.⁹ Others have also been taken to the hospital for medical treatment due to health complications.

A chronology of security raid on the illegal rehabilitation centres;

- September 26, 2019: A raid on an illegal Islamic school by operatives of the Police Force in Rigasa community, Igabi LGA of Kaduna State. 300 people were rescued including 77 children between the age of 6 and 10 years old¹⁰. The victims were from Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Mali. Seven (7) teachers were arrested in the incident.
- October 12, 2019: A raid on an illegal rehabilitation centre by operatives of the Police Force in Sabon Garin Daura area, Katsina-North LGA of Katsina State. 67 people between ages 7 to 40 years old¹¹ were rescued with two (2) teachers arrested.
- October 19, 2019: A raid on an illegal Islamic rehabilitation centre by operatives of the Police Force in Rigasa area, Igabi LGA of Kaduna State. 147 people including 22 females and 4 foreigners (from Cameroun and Niger Republic) were reportedly rescued with one (1) teacher arrested¹².
- October 22, 2019: A raid on two illegal rehabilitation centres by operatives of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in Zaria LGA of Kaduna State. 11 people including an 11 years old boy were reportedly rescued with five (5) teachers arrested.¹³ The rescued victims are between ages 11 and 40 years old.
- October 23, 2019: A raid on an illegal rehabilitation centre in Wuro Hausa community, Yola-South LGA of Adamawa State. 15 people including 13 adults and 2 teenagers were reportedly evacuated with four (4) operators arrested¹⁴. The rescued victims were between 22 and 46 years old.

⁶ <https://www.channelstv.com/2019/10/14/breaking-police-uncover-another-islamic-centre-with-chained-maltreated-children-in-daura/>

⁷ <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/health/health-features/336790-why-every-nigerian-state-must-domesticate-implement-child-rights-act.html>

⁸ Njoku G. and Oladiji S., "Calling on 15 States Left to Protect Their Children" THIS DAY, Nov 23, 2009. Available at <http://allafrica.com/stories/200911240582.html> accessed on 11 March 2015

⁹ <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/kaduna-to-hand-over-foreigners-evacuated-from-rehab-centre-to-immigration.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.channelstv.com/2019/09/29/modern-slavery-kaduna-govt-unites-140-victims-with-families/>

¹¹ <https://www.channelstv.com/2019/10/14/breaking-police-uncover-another-islamic-centre-with-chained-maltreated-children-in-daura/>

¹² <https://www.channelstv.com/2019/10/19/busted-147-victims-rescued-from-another-centre-in-kaduna/>

¹³ <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/security-agents-raid-another-rehab-centre-in-kaduna-arrest-four-teachers.html>

¹⁴ <https://punchng.com/police-rescue-15-in-adamawa-torture-chamber/>

- October 24, 2019: A raid on an illegal rehabilitation centre by operatives of the Police Force State at Gaa Odota area, Illorin-West LGA of Kwara State. 108 people including 103 males and 5 females were rescued with the owner of the facility arrested¹⁵.
- November 4, 2019: A raid on a illegal rehabilitation centre by operatives of the Police Force at Olore area along Lagos-Ibadan Expressway at Ojoo axis, Akinyele LGA of Oyo State. 259 people including 34 females, 10 children and an infant were rescued with the 9 people arrested including the owner of the centre in the incident¹⁶.

OPPORTUNITIES/RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Federal and State Governments, in partnership with traditional/religious institutions as well as security agencies should intensify its local surveillance and monitoring mechanisms to uncover illegal/unlicensed Islamic schools and rehabilitation centres. This should further lead to assessment of the conditions of registered centres in order to ensure that the facilities and curriculum are in compliance with standard operating procedures;
- The State and Local Governments, in partnership with relevant Ministries and Civil Society Organisations should ensure the domestication and/or implementation of the Child Rights' Act' at all levels to address cases of human rights violations including sexual assaults and child abuse and ensure protection of children across the States in the country;
- The resolution by the Federal Government and Northern State Governors to reform the Almajiri system of education (Islamic school) in the northern region should be done in partnership with Islamic religious institutions, development partners, civil society organisations and National Human Rights Organisation and also create space for children to access secular education.
- The State Governments should strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Health, health centres and partner with humanitarian agencies and other relevant development partners to provide adequate support to the rescued victims in order to ensure adequate access to psychosocial, health and livelihood assistance.

¹⁵ <https://punchng.com/ilorin-torture-centre-police-contact-victims-families/>

¹⁶ <https://www.channelstv.com/2019/11/05/police-rescue-259-people-from-another-illegal-detention-centre/>