

## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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# NIGERIA: ACCOUNTABILITY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS REMAINS ELUSIVE

### *Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Nigeria*

Amnesty International welcomes Nigeria's cooperation with the review process and its positive response to some of the recommendations made by other states in the UPR Working Group.

However, Amnesty International remains deeply concerned about pervasive violence against women, including rape of women and girls in internally displaced persons camps,<sup>1</sup> as well as sexual violence against female detainees by police, sometimes in order to extract confessions.<sup>2</sup> These violations have continued, despite the passage of the Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act in 2015. While welcoming Nigeria's acceptance of recommendations to intensify efforts to combat gender-based violence,<sup>3</sup> the organization urges the government to ensure that victims throughout the Federation can seek legal redress for gender-based violations, in line with the provisions of the VAPP.

Since the beginning of the armed conflict in northeast Nigeria in 2009, Amnesty International has documented war crimes and other human rights abuses by Boko Haram and serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law by the security forces, including arbitrary arrests, torture, enforced disappearances, unlawful killings and extrajudicial executions.<sup>4</sup> Amnesty International welcomes Nigeria's acceptance of recommendations to conduct prompt, thorough and independent investigations into allegations of violations by government forces during counter-insurgency operations.<sup>5</sup> However, the organization remains concerned by the lack of accountability for crimes committed by Boko Haram, as well as by government forces in the fight against Boko Haram, and call on the government to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice in fair trials.

Several states called on Nigeria to strengthen the protection of the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.<sup>6</sup> In order to promote these rights, Amnesty International recently launched a campaign on freedom of expression in Nigeria,<sup>7</sup> calling on the government to ensure that journalists and other media professionals can operate without fear of arrests or other reprisals.

Nigeria accepted two of these recommendations,<sup>8</sup> but rejected another two calling for these rights to be extended to all "without distinction", including on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.<sup>9</sup> Amnesty International urges Nigeria to confirm the universality of these rights.

### **Background**

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Nigeria on 14 March 2019 during its 40<sup>th</sup> session. Prior to the adoption of the report of the review Amnesty International issued this statement.

Amnesty International also contributed to the information basis of the review through its submission on Nigeria: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/8529/2018/en/>

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