

NIGERIA AT THE EDGE: DEMOCRACY UNDER SIEGE, CITIZENS UNDER THREAT

A NATIONAL CALL TO CONSCIENCE
AND COLLECTIVE ACTION.



Executive Summary

Nigeria is entering one of the most consequential periods in its democratic history. The convergence of political tension, economic hardship, widespread insecurity, and a failing health system has created a national emergency that demands urgent, coordinated, and principled action.

Recent political developments—including heightened institutional contestations, deepening executive–legislative tensions, and the weaponization

of state institutions—mirror the instability witnessed in Nigeria's political crisis. These trends underscore a broader national pattern: democratic norms are weakening, accountability mechanisms are eroding, and citizens are increasingly vulnerable.

This policy brief synthesizes CHRICED's analysis of Nigeria's governance trajectory and outlines actionable pathways to restore democratic integrity, economic justice, human security, and social welfare.

1. Democracy in Retreat: Shrinking Civic Space and Institutional Fragility

Nigeria's democratic institutions are under unprecedented strain. The warning signs are clear:

- **Mass defections** of opposition lawmakers and state governors ahead of the 2027 elections are undermining political pluralism and weakening legislative independence.
- **Persistent allegations of bribery**—including claims of ₦1–₦3 million inducements to present motions or



bills—remain uninvestigated.

- **Reports of influence-peddling within the Presidency**, including alleged payments for access, continue without transparent inquiry.
- **Escalating political tensions**, such as those seen in Kano, reveal how quickly institutions can be manipulated and how fragile the rule of law becomes when political actors prioritize power over constitutionalism.

These trends reflect a broader pattern across Nigeria: *Democracy is not collapsing dramatically—it is eroding quietly, systematically, and dangerously.*



CHRICED warns that such erosion weakens institutional integrity, undermines public trust, and threatens the foundations of democratic governance.

2. Economic Hardship: When Macroeconomic Gains Fail to Reach Citizens

Despite official claims of improved inflation figures, Nigerians continue to face severe economic distress. The disconnect between macroeconomic indicators and lived realities is widening.

Key drivers of hardship include:

- **Fuel subsidy removal**, which triggered

nationwide price surges.

- **Rising electricity tariffs**, further burdening households and small businesses.
- **Aggressive taxation**, disproportionately affecting low-income earners.



- **Continued government borrowing**, despite meeting 2025 Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) targets.

CHRICED notes that “economic policies are failing to deliver inclusive growth, pushing millions into poverty and insecurity.”

Youth unemployment remains a national

emergency, contributing to:

- Increased crime
- Social unrest
- Irregular migration
- Loss of national productivity

Nigeria's economic model is not merely underperforming—it is structurally excluding the majority.



“CHRICED notes that economic policies are failing to deliver inclusive growth, pushing millions into poverty and insecurity.

3. Insecurity as the New Normal: A Nation Under Siege



Nigeria's security landscape continues to deteriorate, with violence becoming normalized across regions.

Recent incidents—including the kidnapping of six Defence Ministry directors in Kogi—highlight the fragility of state authority.

Persistent threats include:

- Banditry
- Terrorism

- Communal clashes
- Ritual killings
- Urban crime

“CHRICED warns: The government's failure to protect lives and property undermines its legitimacy and deters investment. The political distractions and institutional paralysis seen in Kano's crisis illustrate how insecurity thrives when governance is weakened by elite conflict.

4. Health System Collapse: A Humanitarian Crisis in Slow Motion



Nigeria's health sector is approaching systemic failure.

Critical indicators include:

- Only **5%** of the national budget allocated to health (far below the **15% Abuja Declaration** commitment).
- Only **36%** of capital health funds released.
- **80%** of health facilities

dysfunctional.

- **75%** of healthcare spending paid out-of-pocket.
- Regular nationwide doctors' strike crippling service delivery.

“CHRICED concludes: The health system is on the brink of collapse, endangering millions of lives. A nation that cannot provide basic healthcare cannot guarantee human dignity.

5. CHRICED's Impact: Demonstrating What Works in a Failing System



Amid national challenges, CHRICED's work in Kano State offers a model for citizen-centered governance.

Through the Free Maternal and Child Healthcare (FMCH) Law project, CHRICED

has:

- Developed a costed implementation plan
- Trained civil society, media, and community monitors
- Launched multilingual radio

campaigns

- Distributed 4,000 simplified FMCH Law copies
- Convened town halls and consultative forums

“ These interventions have strengthened accountability, improved public awareness, and enhanced access to maternal and child healthcare. This demonstrates a critical truth: **When citizens are empowered, governance improves—even in difficult environments.** ”

6. Justice for Indigenous FCT Communities: Addressing Historical Injustice



The indigenous people of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) remain:

- Dispossessed of ancestral lands
- Economically marginalized
- Politically excluded

CHRICED calls for:

- Recognition of their rights
- Restoration of dignity
- Constitutional inclusion

“ A capital city built on exclusion cannot symbolize national unity. ”

Policy Recommendations: A Pathway to National Renewal

A. Rebuild Democratic Integrity

- Investigate and prosecute political corruption.
- Strengthen legislative independence and protect political pluralism.
- Ensure transparency in executive decision-making.
- Safeguard electoral institutions from political interference.

B. Deliver Economic Justice

- Halt unsustainable borrowing and publish a debt accountability framework.
- Prioritize youth employment through local industry development.
- Reform taxation to protect low-income households.
- Expand social protection programs.

C. Secure the Nation

- Restructure security architecture with intelligence-led and community-based policing.
- Increase security funding with strict oversight.

- Protect vulnerable groups—farmers, students, women, rural communities.

D. Rescue the Health System

- Meet the Abuja Declaration funding target.
- Release and track all allocated health funds.
- Resolve the doctors' strike through fair negotiation.
- Expand health insurance and rehabilitate primary healthcare facilities.

E. Protect Civic Space

- Safeguard press freedom and civil society.
- Strengthen civic education and grassroots mobilization.
- Promote citizen oversight of public budgets.

F. Restore Justice to Indigenous FCT Communities

- Enact laws guaranteeing land rights and political representation.
- Provide economic, cultural, and social protections.

Conclusion: A Call to Courage and Collective Responsibility

Nigeria stands at a defining moment. The choices made now will determine whether the nation moves toward renewal or deeper crisis.

CHRICED's call is clear:

- Citizens must organize and demand accountability.
- Civil society and media must remain vigilant and courageous.
- Government must prioritize people over politics.
- International partners must support grassroots democratic resilience.

**NIGERIA IS AT A CROSSROADS. THE TIME IS NOW. THE RESPONSIBILITY IS OURS.
THE FUTURE IS STILL POSSIBLE.**

© Resource Centre for Human Rights and Civic Education (CHRICED), 2026

ISSN: 3121-8873

All rights reserved. This publication is protected by copyright. It may be reproduced without charge for advocacy, campaigning, and educational purposes, provided it is not sold. Users are requested to notify CHRICED of any such reproduction for impact-assessment purposes.

For reproduction in any other context—including commercial use, reuse in other publications, translation, or adaptation—prior written permission must be obtained from the publishers.

For permission requests or inquiries, contact CHRICED at the address on this page.

First Published in 2026 by

Resource Centre for Human Rights and Civic Education (CHRICED)

Upper Floor, Ahmadiyya Hospital Building,

52 Bompai Road, Kano, Kano State, Nigeria.

Website: www.chriced.org.ng

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this publication are those of CHRICED and do not necessarily represent the positions or views of the **Misereor KZE, Germany**.

About CHRICED

The Resource Centre for Human Rights and Civic Education (CHRICED) is a trailblazing Nigerian nonprofit with nearly two decades of impact in advancing human rights, democratic governance, and civic empowerment. With special consultative status at the United Nations ECOSOC and certification by NGOsource as equivalent to a U.S. public charity, CHRICED offers donors a high-impact, low-risk investment in community-led development.

We believe that informed citizens are the bedrock of democracy—and we've built a reputation for turning that belief into measurable change.

Mission & Strategic Alignment

CHRICED exists to build a democratic, inclusive, and accountable society by empowering citizens to actively shape governance and demand transparency. Our work is rooted in globally recognized frameworks:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

- Nigerian Constitution

We align seamlessly with donor priorities such as:

- Strengthening democratic institutions
- Promoting transparency and accountability
- Supporting marginalized and indigenous communities
- Advancing gender equity and social inclusion
- Expanding access to education and healthcare

What Sets CHRICED Apart

We don't just implement projects—we design scalable solutions that shift systems. Our core strengths include:

- Evidence-based research & advocacy
- Civic education & grassroots mobilization
- Project management & rigorous M&E
- Strategic communication & public engagement
- Legislative advocacy & policy reform
- Coalition-building across sectors

Our multidisciplinary team, robust financial systems, and proven donor compliance make us a trusted partner for long-term impact.

CHRICED ...Fighting for Justice to Guarantee Peace

Issued by:



Abuja Office: Abubakar Momoh House, Hse 5, Malcolm X Street, 451 Road, 1st Avenue, Gwarimpa, FCT Abuja, Nigeria
+234 (0) 703 981 2527, 0901 753 2907 www.chriced.org.ng info@chriced.org.ng [facebook](https://www.facebook.com/chricedng) [instagram](https://www.instagram.com/chricedng) [linkedin](https://www.linkedin.com/company/chricedng)

With support from:

MISEREOR
• IHR HILFSWERK