







NULAI NIGERIA

Published by

Network of University Legal Aid Institutions  
(NULAI NIGERIA)

A111W Brains & Hammers City Estate,  
Life-Camp Abuja.

Authorship by Network of University Legal Aid Institutions (NULAI NIGERIA) and  
Action4Justice.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

End users are allowed to copy, distribute, display, and perform the work — and derivative works based upon it — but for non-commercial purposes only and although their new works must also acknowledge the author and be non-commercial, they do not have to licence their derivative works on the same terms.

The publication was funded by a grant from the Heinrich Böll Foundation, Abuja Office. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Heinrich Böll Foundation.

[nigeria.action4justice.org](http://nigeria.action4justice.org)

   @justiceeedung





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER 1</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Freedom of expression</b>	
How does the law protect my freedom of expression in Nigeria?	5
What does my freedom of expression look like?	5
How do I check that the limitations of my right to freedom of expression are legal?	5
How do I protect my right to freedom of expression against accusations of defamation?	7
How can my right to freedom of expression be violated?	8
<b>CHAPTER 2</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Freedom of assembly</b>	
How does the law protect my right to freedom of assembly in Nigeria?	9
How to exercise the right to freedom of assembly?	9
Can the Nigerian government, police or authorities limit my right to assembly?	10
Right to Protest; Organising and participating in rallies or protests	10
In what ways can my right to free assembly be violated during a protest?	11
Detention after an arrest at a protest or rally	14
<b>CHAPTER 3</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Right to political participation</b>	
Who oversees regulating my right to vote, create a political party or other matters related to political participation?	17
Will I be allowed to exercise my right to vote despite suffering from any form of disability?	19
What can I do if I want to stand in an election?	19
How do I form a political party?	19
What constitutes violations of the right to political participation?	21
Gender-based discrimination in political participation	21
<b>CHAPTER 4</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Steps to challenge violations to freedom of assembly, freedom of expression and the right to political participation</b>	
Complaints to the National Human Rights Commission	23
Going to court: The Fundamental Rights Enforcement Procedure (FREP)	24
Other courts available to seek justice on human rights violations	25
How to challenge the denial of registration of a political party, challenge election outcomes and protect the right to political participation in court	26
Evidence and remedies	27
<b>CHAPTER 5</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Available support</b>	





## ABOUT THE GUIDE

### What is the purpose of this guide?

The purpose of this guide is for you to have quick access to the questions and answers and use them in your own life as thinking steps on how to protect your rights.

The first three chapters focus specifically on how to exercise **freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and the right to political participation** and what to do in particular situations where you need to protect them.

Read the final chapter to learn more about legal action that can be taken in Nigeria to challenge violations of these three rights.

### Where can I find more information?

If you want to access more information about these topics, please visit Action4Justice Nigeria at <https://nigeria.action4justice.org/>. The Guide is not a substitute for legal advice. If, after reading the Guide, you want to explore the possibility of taking litigation further, seek a lawyer or an organisation that could help you develop your case.





## Right to Freedom of Expression

Every person is entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference.

Every person is entitled to own, establish and operate any medium for the dissemination of information, ideas and opinions.

— The Nigerian Constitution (Section 28 Sub-section 1 and 2) (1999)—

### Categories of Expression

Spoken words



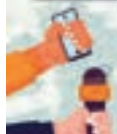
Use of social media



Newspaper articles and other publications



Radio and TV broadcasts



© @sociochung  
nigeriaactionjustice.org

## Some Breaches to the Right to Freedom of Expression

Criminalizing dissent or attack on criticisms focused on the government



Illegal censorship



Refusal to disclose information



Blackmail and threat of harm



Freezing bank accounts



Arresting individuals for criticizing the conduct of the government



Seizing international passports of protesters



Internet shutdown



© @sociochung  
nigeriaactionjustice.org





## CHAPTER 1 FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION



### How does the law protect my freedom of expression in Nigeria?

Everyone in Nigeria is protected by law to freely hold their own opinions and share such opinions through different platforms.

The Nigerian Constitution in Section 39 extends the right to include the right “to own, establish and operate any medium for the sharing of information, ideas and opinion”.

### What does my freedom of expression look like?

The government has the responsibility to protect freedom of expression, which includes the following instances:

**The right to free speech and to express your opinion:** including speeches at protests that criticize the government, speech, art, music and other forms of creative communication.

**The right to online expression:** Access to the internet and the freedom to share opinions on social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter without illegal restrictions.

**The right to freedom of the press:** Journalists and media outfits have the right to receive and share information through television, radio, newspapers, blogs and websites.

**The right to seek, receive and share information:** Every person has the right to request certain classes of information in the custody of the government and to share such information with others without any form of intimidation.

### How do I make an access to information request in Nigeria?

The Freedom of Information Act (2011) ensures that public information can be accessed by anyone. To do this:

1. Ask the public institution you are interested in who is the officer in charge of receiving requests.
2. Write a letter or make an oral request to that officer who must put down your request in writing.
3. The institution must give you a response in 7 days.
4. If the request is denied, you can apply to the Court for a review within 30 days after the request is denied.

### How do I check that the limitations of my right to freedom of expression are legal?

There are some situations when the law permits the government to limit the enjoyment of the right.





**Limitations on media outlets:** The Nigerian constitution in sections 39 (2 & 3) requires the licensing and authorization requirements from the president before owning and operating a radio or television station.

**Limitations on everyone:** The Nigerian constitution in sections 39(3) and 45 allow for the restriction of the right to freedom of expression:

- For preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence
- For maintaining the authority and independence of the courts
- As a result of occupying a certain office in the government
- For belonging to the military, police or any other security agencies
- In the interest of security, public safety, public order, public morality, and public health
- To protect the rights and freedom of other people.

#### **Examples of limitations/restrictions**

- If a confidential relationship exists, such as between a lawyer and his client,
- If it is an order of a competent court

- To prevent the sharing of information received in the course of duty by a government official, military personnel, a police officer, etc.

However, these limitations/restrictions are not automatic, and as such must meet the three-part test of legality, legitimacy and necessity/proportionality.

#### **The three-part test to determine the legality of limitations/restrictions**

##### **How do I check if a restriction on my right meets the three-part test?**

For this to be met, check that:

1. The restrictions are created by law. The government cannot enforce a restriction if the law does not create the restriction. Also, the law must identify the circumstances when the restriction should be applied.

*Hint: When the government limits freedom of expression, a good response from the citizens should be: what law permits the government to do this?*

2. Check that the reason for the restriction is legitimate, real and important. The government can only restrict freedom of expression under the limitations explained above and even then, it must meet the three-part test.

3. Check that the restriction is necessary and proportional. This means that the restriction must be applied as a last resort, only when necessary and in a way that does not over restrict the right.

For instance, the government's Twitter suspension and threat to persecute users of Twitter did not meet the three-part test because the suspension did not state appropriate law or outline any threat to public safety. Also, a whole ban is not proportionate.







*Hint: Ask yourself if a restriction is necessary, whether other options could be used instead and if the restriction is proportionate to the need to restrict the right to freedom of expression.*

*If there are restrictions you think do not meet this test, think about following the steps in chapter 4, including making a complain to the National Human Rights Commission or a Fundamental Rights Enforcement Procedure.*

## How do I protect my right to freedom of expression against accusations of defamations?

Activists, journalists or civil society organisations are sometimes threatened with defamation to stop their activism.

### So, what is defamation and what could I be accused of?

Defamation can be in one of two forms: Libel or Slander.

**Slander** is a harmful statement made in a non-permanent form such as by speech or gestures. Those accusing someone of slander have to prove that the harmful statement has caused some loss, which could be financial or moral.

**Libel** refers to a harmful statement made in a permanent or written form such as books, newspapers, letters, paintings, photographs, film, radio or television broadcast. The motive of malice or having suffered a loss is not necessary to prove libel.

### What should I check before making a statement?

As an activist, if you are thinking of making a statement, check that the statement is not defamatory. A statement must have the following effect to be defamatory:

- Lower the person in the estimation of right-thinking members of society generally.

- Expose him/her to hatred, contempt or ridicule.
- Cause other persons to shun or avoid him/her
- Discredit a person's office, trade or profession; or
- Injures his/her financial credit.

### How can I defend myself from allegations of defamation?

The Nigerian courts have accepted the following defences:

**Justification:** You must prove that the statement made is true in substance and fact, irrespective of whether the statement was made out of malice or as fair comment. The duty of proving the truth of the statement is on the defendant.

**Privilege:** The law allows specific people such as judges or members of the National Assembly to speak or write without fear or restraint even at the expense of the reputation of another.

**Fair Comments:** If the statement complained of is made in good faith or a subject of public interest, it is a fair comment. However:

- The statement must be an opinion not a statement of fact.
- The facts on which the comment is made must be true.
- The comment must be free of bias or impartial.
- The comment must not be actuated by malice.
- The comment must concern something of legitimate public interest.

### Is there a time limit to start a defamation claim?

Claims for defamation can be started up to six years from the day the act was committed.





## How can my right to freedom of expression be violated?

A right is violated when the government does not protect the citizens against others stopping its use or stops people from enjoying their rights through limitations that do not meet the standard of the three-part test.

### Examples of how the right to freedom of expression is violated:

- When the government bans privately owned schools or censors school curricula.
- Banning or suppressing news, music or other forms of art, or the restriction of a license to run a media house.
- Refusal to grant access or make available information that is of public interest by public bodies.
- Government's harassment or threats to citizens for participating in a protest or for a post on social media.
- Internet shutdown, suspension of social media platforms and use of firewalls.
- Illegal surveillance, interception of communication and collection of personal data.
- Penalizing the use of citizen's native language.

To find out how to challenge violations of freedom of expression, think about following the steps in Chapter 4.





## CHAPTER 2 FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY



### How does the law protect my right to Freedom of Assembly in Nigeria?

Freedom of assembly refers to the right of individuals and groups to come together for a common purpose, either to express their views publicly, exchange ideas or to hold a peaceful protest.

### What does peaceful assembly mean?

An assembly is deemed peaceful if its organizers have professed peaceful intentions and the conduct of the assembly is generally non-violent.



### Where is the right to freedom of assembly regulated and protected?

- The Nigerian Constitution, which allows every person to assemble freely and associate with others as well as form or belong to any political party, trade union or any other association.

- Public Order Act 1979: The Public Order Act is primarily concerned with the regulation of assemblies and protests in Nigeria. However, most sections of the act were abolished.

- The Trade Union Act 2004: Section 43 of the Act makes it lawful for any member or person acting on behalf of a trade union to engage in strike actions or protests.

- The Child's Right Act 2003 protects the right of children to assemble.

### How to exercise the right to freedom of assembly?

The government is responsible to make sure there are no obstacles for persons to freely assemble and to ensure they are protected from harm when such assembly is held. Assemblies include rallies, protests, marches, religious gatherings, conferences, dialogues, town halls, cultural events etc.

### Who has the right to assembly?

Every person; individuals, groups, associations (whether registered or unregistered), religious bodies, legal entities, and trade unions. It also extends to children, refugees, stateless persons, temporary visitors, migrants, and foreign nationals.

*This was confirmed in the case of Inspector General of Police v. All Nigeria People's Party (2008) 12 WRN 65, by the Nigeria Court of Appeal.*

*However, bear in mind that the Public Order Act 1979 in Section 1 of the Act empowers a State Governor to prescribe the route by which and the times at which any procession may pass.*





- Violently disrupting a peaceful protest or rally.
- Imposition of fines or penalties for conducting a peaceful assembly.
- Causing physical harm to peaceful protesters.
- Preventing the conduct of a peaceful assembly.
- Arresting or detaining a peaceful protester.

This list is not exhaustive.

### **Right to Protest. Organising and participating in rallies or protests**

#### **Do I need to notify the police before conducting a protest or rally?**

Prior notification of the police before conducting an assembly is not necessary under international human rights law and Nigerian law. This has been judicially accepted as the law in Nigeria on various occasions.

Notification is essential when the organizers of an assembly require police protection during the assembly.

#### **Should I obtain a permit before conducting a protest or rally?**

The issuance of police permits for rallies, or any other assembly is not a requirement for the exercise of this right.

#### **Can the Nigerian government, police or authorities limit my right to assembly? What are the limitations to this right?**

The constitution has laid down certain circumstances in which this right can be limited, which include:

- Public order
- Public morals
- Public safety
- Public health
- Protection of the rights and freedom of others
- National security
- Derogation in times of war or another public emergency

However, these restrictions must be justifiable in a democratic society so authoritarian restrictions or restrictions without a justification cannot limit the right to assemble.

#### **What actions will be a violation of freedom of assembly?**

- Restricting the right to assemble not on any of the grounds for limitations permitted by law.





In this case, if the general public will be notified about this requirement prior to the rally.

In addition, while the use of uniforms for assembly is permitted by Section 7 of the Act, the Commissioner of Police in the relevant state may prohibit its use if it is offensive or is likely to cause a breach of the peace.

However, the police cannot rely on the Act to demand people to apply for permits before organizing an assembly.

### **What should I do if I am asked for a permit at a rally?**

Inform the security agents that the law does not require the issuance of a permit before a rally can be organised.

### **TIPS**

- Print Inspector General of Police v. All Nigeria People's Party (2008) permitting the organizing of rallies on placards during the rally.
- If it is very likely the rally will be obstructed, see the Fundamental Rights Enforcement Procedure steps at the end of this guide to get a court injunction before holding a rally.

### **What can I do if a protest or rally is banned?**

If a protest or rally is banned, take care not to clash with the police. See the Fundamental Rights Enforcement Procedure steps to protecting your rights following Chapter 4 of this guide.

### **Some tips for the citizen when organising assemblies, rallies or protests:**

- Provide and publish goals, objectives, and a statement on applicable laws on rights and responsibilities of protesters and a policy statement on peaceful protest.

- Organizers of assemblies should cooperate with law-enforcement agencies to ensure that participants in their assemblies comply with the law. This can be done by obtaining police presence at protests.
- Organizers and participants should avoid violent activities or statements that could lead to violence.
- Organizers should consider what risks are presented by their assembly and how they would deal with them, should they materialize.
- Provide information to participants on mechanisms for protection, types of personal protective equipment to wear, resources available for medical care, and legal support.



### **In what ways can my right to free assembly be violated during a protest?**

- If I am a victim of police brutality at a rally or protest. This will include police use of chemical gas, force, beatings, and shooting to disperse a peaceful protest.
- If I am a victim of arrest and detention for participating in a rally or protest.
- If I am a victim of torture for participating in a rally or protest.
- If I lose my job, school privileges or am suspended for participating in a rally or protest.





## Arrests during peaceful protests or rallies

### What is an arrest and who can arrest in the context of a protest/rally?

An arrest is an act of apprehending and taking a person into custody.

When a person is arrested, their right to freedom of assembly is affected. Their right to liberty is also affected which is protected by Section 35(1) of the Nigerian Constitution. It says that personal liberty can only be deprived by law:

- to bring a person before a court in execution of the order of a court, or
- upon reasonable suspicion of having committed a criminal offence, or
- to such extent as may be reasonably necessary to prevent his committing a criminal offence.



### Arrest during protests and rallies?

In the context of protests and freedom of assembly, arrests can be made by the Police Force, but they must be justified. The Police Force's power of arrest is found in Section 4 of the Police Act. Arrests can be employed for:

- the prevention and detection of crime,
- the apprehension of offenders,

- the preservation of law and order,
- the protection of life and property and
- the due enforcement of all laws and regulations with which they are directly charged.

### What should I look out for when the police arrest protestors or activists?

When witnessing an arrest, make sure to look out for the reasons for the arrest to take place. These include:

1. That the arresting officer saw the suspect committing a crime, or
2. The police officer is in hot pursuit of a person immediately after the commission of a criminal offence or
3. Existence of a probable cause, and
4. For any of these three options also following the procedure for a lawful arrest.

### What is the probable cause?

Police can also execute an arrest where there is probable cause.

Probable cause refers to there is a reasonable suspicion that an individual is suspected to have committed a crime, is committing a crime or is likely to commit a crime.

For example:

- If someone in a protest was struck with a dangerous object, and you were found close to the victim, with bloodstains on your hands and clothes, there's probable cause to arrest you.
- If you were found in the act of damaging a parked motorcycle in a protest, then there's probable cause to arrest you.

*Probable cause is largely based on facts available rather than just an officer's suspicion, prejudice, gut feeling or malice.*





When a person is arrested, this will be evaluated by a judge after considering the facts presented before him. If a judge believes there is no probable cause, the person will be released.

This does not make the arresting officer liable for wrongful arrest if he in good faith had reasonably believed that with the facts there was probable cause to arrest that person.

### **What happens if I plead guilty to any of the charges arrested for?**

If the arrested person pleads guilty to ANY of the charges upon arrest, subsequent claims for wrongful arrest due to lack of probable cause would not be entertained.

*However, how the arrest is made must be legal and follow procedure (even if you plead guilty). The confession must not have been obtained by torture, or force.*

### **So even if the Police have a reason to arrest a protester or activist, do they still need to follow a legal procedure when making the arrest?**

Yes.

### **What should I look out for when the police arrest protestors or activists?**

Make sure to look out for the rights stated in Section 4 of the Criminal Procedure Act and the relevant sections of the Criminal Procedure Law of various States in Nigeria which include:

1. That the protestor is not handcuffed or be subjected to unnecessary restraint except by:
  - order of the court, or
  - unless there is a reasonable apprehension of violence, or
  - an attempt to escape, or
  - unless the restraint is considered necessary for the safety of the person arrested

2. At the point of arrest, the person must be informed of his or her rights which include:

- the right to remain silent and refuse to answer questions until the person has consulted with his/her lawyer, relative or friend

3. Within 24hrs of the arrest be informed in writing and in the language he or she best understands of the facts and the reason for his or her arrest, and:

- be brought before a court within a reasonable time (24-48hrs, depending on the proximity of the court).
- the right to speak with a lawyer before speaking to the police and to have the lawyer present during questioning now or subsequently.
- If the person cannot afford a lawyer, one should be provided for him or her before questioning if they wish.
- if the person decides to answer questions without a lawyer, he/she still has the right to stop answering any time until he/she talks to a lawyer.
- the person needs to be informed that anything he/she says may be used against him in the court of law.
- the person is entitled to bail.
- the person has the right against any form of torture or maltreatment.

4. An arrested person must be charged with the offence (s) for which they have been arrested, not a different offence.

5. An arrested person can only be held at a police cell, a similar facility in a law enforcement agency, or the holding cell of a court. It will be illegal to be detained in a private home, or office.

Where the arrest fails to comply with the provided procedures by law, the arrest would be said to be unlawful.





### Can a lawful arrest become unlawful?

Yes. There are circumstances where an arrest initially secured lawfully may become unlawful:

- If the reasons for keeping the person in custody is no longer valid,
- If after arrest, the person is not arraigned in court within the 24 hours or a maximum of 48 hours if the court is far away from the detention facility, and/or
- If the police do not follow the rules and procedure.

### What do I do if I am arrested at a protest or rally?

Can I resist arrest? If you are about to be arrested and you feel your arrest is unlawful, you can do the following:

- Do not attempt to resist arrest or engage in a physical altercation with the police/law enforcement agent. Civilly speak with them.
- Bring the fact that your arrest is wrongful to the attention of the arresting officer.
- The police may request for you to provide some evidence to prove that the arrest is wrongful.
- Provide the requested evidence. For instance, where you were when the incident took place.
- Where evidence provided is sufficient, then the arresting officer can no longer proceed with the arrest.
- If, however, regardless of the proof produced countering the arrest, the arresting officer goes ahead to arrest you, you can share the same proof to your lawyer while in custody.
- Note that if you want to prove that your arrest is unlawful, the burden of proving such rests on you. Video evidence and witnesses can be helpful to prove that your arrest was unlawful.

### Implications of resisting arrest:

Questioning your arrest should be done following the process above. However, where there is physical resistance, the arresting officer may apply reasonable force. Therefore, if the arresting officer persists in securing your arrest, you should comply with the officer. If indeed the arrest was wrongful, your lawyer can challenge it.

### Detention after an arrest at a protest or rally

#### After arrest, what to do when detained?

Once you are at the police station or detention centre ask to be allowed to speak to your lawyer or family. Immediately inform them of where you are being detained and why.

Take note of the events surrounding your detention. You may want to challenge your detention in court as being unlawful.

#### What are my rights when detained?

Section 35 of the 1999 Constitution lays out rights that you are entitled to:







- You do not have to write a statement or say anything while in detention. You have the right to remain silent – anything you say may be used against you by the police in court.
- You have a right to consult with your lawyer privately.
- The law mandates the police to inform you of the facts and grounds for your detention in writing within 24 hours and in a language that you understand.

### How long can I be detained for?

You must be brought before a court of law within a reasonable time.

The expression, 'a reasonable time' means to be brought before a competent court within 24 hours (a period of one day) or 48 hours (within a period of two days) as a general rule. However, the court has the discretion as an exception to determine the reasonableness of the length of detention based on the facts/circumstances of each case.

You may be remanded (kept) in custody for a longer period of more than 2 days, but a court has to order such remand.

After this period, you must be released on bail except for cases where you are suspected to have committed capital offences such as murder, armed robbery. **Bail is free.**

### How do I make a complaint about unlawful arrest or detention?

In the case of harm or disturbance by a police officer, a report should first be made to the Commissioner of Police.

- First, seek medical attention and obtain medical reports and pictures of the harm done.
- Contact a lawyer, human rights organization or National Human Rights Commission for assistance.

- Notify the appropriate authority in charge of the offender (the AIG or Human Rights Department of the Nigerian Police Force Complaint Response Unit (CRU), in the case of an offending police officer)
- Attach the medical reports and pictures to the notice. You could ask a lawyer to write a petition. to the authorities in charge of the offender
- You can forward such to their mails – [complaint@npf.gov.ng](mailto:complaint@npf.gov.ng) or [npfcomplaint@gmail.com](mailto:npfcomplaint@gmail.com) or [npf.gov.ng/complaint](http://npf.gov.ng/complaint).

### Can I challenge unlawful detention in court?

Yes. If no positive response is received, then you can evaluate with legal support whether to proceed to file a case in court to seek the enforcement of your right.

*A real-life case:*

*CHIEF IBRAHIM SALAMI v. PA JOSIAH OYEDIRAN OLAOYE & ANOR (2018) LPELR-47256(CA) – The appellant was detained for a period of three days without reasonable cause for the delay. The arrest and detention were adjudged unlawful by the Court of Appeal .*

You can challenge an unlawful arrest or detention by using the Fundamental Rights Enforcement Procedure. Follow the steps in the last section of this pocket guide.





## Harmed by security forces during a protest?

Here's what to do!



Seek medical attention and take medical records and pictures of your injuries.



Contact a lawyer, human rights organization, or National Human Rights Commission for assistance.



Notify the appropriate authority in charge of the offense, with medical reports and pictures to support your case.

**Still no justice? Proceed to court to enforce your right!**

## Right to Freedom of Assembly

Every person shall be entitled to assemble freely and associate with other persons, and in particular, he may form or belong to any political party, trade union or any other association for the protection of his interests.

- The Nigerian Constitution (Section 40) 1999

Am I required by law to notify the Police before conducting a protest or rally?

NO

Do I need to obtain a permit?

NO

Can I damage properties or cause harm to the opposition during a protest or rally?

NO

Should I notify the Police before conducting a protest or rally? ( Nigerian Police Protocol)

YES

Should I respect the right of presence of others who are not participating in the protest or rally?

YES

Should I follow the basic guidelines of law enforcement officials during a protest or rally?

YES

## Violations to Peaceful Protest

- ❑ Proposing laws that seek to restrict the right to free assembly
- ❑ Use of force or firearms to disrupt a peaceful gathering
- ❑ Imposing fines or penalties for conducting a peaceful protest
- ❑ Causing physical harm to peaceful protesters
- ❑ Preventing a peaceful protest for not having a permit
- ❑ Arresting or detaining peaceful protesters





## CHAPTER 3 RIGHT TO POLITICAL PARTICIPATION



### Is political participation a right?

This is a critical right in any democracy, without which democracy does not exist. The most common forms of this right include:

- Voting desired candidate during election,
- Standing for elections,
- Volunteering for a campaign,
- Public consultations,
- Leading or joining an activist or interest group,
- Engaging in citizen's action like protest, boycotts,
- Holding a public office,
- Signing a petition,
- Donating to a cause/ campaign,
- Writing a letter to a public official/ representative,
- Joining or creating a political party.

### Where is the right to political participation protected?

- The Nigerian Constitution in section 7 and 14 ensures the participation of every citizen in political activities.

Section 40 specifies that every person is entitled to assemble freely and associate with other persons, and to form or belong to any political party, trade union or any other association.

- Section 77 of the Constitution allows every citizen of Nigeria over 18 years and residing in Nigeria to vote.
- The Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2019 under Section 4 recognizes, without discrimination, the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the participation of its government.

### Who oversees my right to vote, to create a political party or other matters related to political participation?

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is an independent body that regulates how elections are conducted. It arranges and conducts the registration of persons qualified to vote and maintains the register of voters. It sets the guidelines for political parties' registration and participation in electoral processes.

### What do I need to do to vote?

You must be a citizen of Nigeria and be at least 18 years old.

- Go to the registration officers of the Independent National Electoral Commission for registration and collection of a voter card.
- Attend on election day and follow the guidelines laid down by INEC.





## Where and how can I get a voter's card?



Every voter will be asked to present a voter's card before exercising his/her voting right.

To be an eligible voter at election, these are the things to do:

- Visit any INEC registration centres located in your constituency/area. Note: it is only INEC that is allowed to issue a valid voter card to eligible voters.
- The registration officers will collect necessary information including your picture, contact details and thumbprint.
- The Commission will give you a date for the collection of voters' cards before election day.

### **What can I do if after registration my name is omitted in the voter register?**

If your registration is denied, you can challenge this by:

- Going to INEC and asking who is the person appointed to hear and determine claims for an objection to any entry or an omission from the preliminary list of voters.
- Make a written complaint. In the complaint mention that you have met all the requirements (citizenship and age) to be registered as a voter.

*If you are not pleased with the decision reached by the Revision Officer, you have 7 days to approach the Resident Electoral Commissioner in charge of the State you reside in whose decision is final.*

If this is not effective see the section on Chapter 4.

### **What steps do I take if I misplace my voter's card?**

You would have to make an application for another voters' card no later than 60 days before election day.

In the application, you must state how the misplaced voters' card got missing.

The application would be directed to the Electoral Officer or any other officer who is in charge for the purpose of issuing another valid voter's card.

**Note:** On the voters' card that will be given to you, DUPLICATE will be written on it for easy identification. You can only have one voter's card.

### **What steps do I have to take if I move to another residence different from where I registered?**

First, you would have to make an application informing the INEC's Resident Electoral Commissioner of the State you reside on the change of location. This must be done at least 60 days before election day.

To achieve this, necessary information such as a copy of your voter's card and other relevant evidence that indicate the change of location would be needed.

An Electoral Officer will then ensure your voters' card is transferred to the constituency of your choice and issue a new voters' card to you.





### **Will I be allowed to exercise my right to vote despite suffering from any form of disability?**

Yes. It is clear that no one can be prevented from enjoying his/her voting right based on physical disability. There are procedures in place to facilitate the exercise of this right. They are:

Inform the Presiding officer the nature of your disability. This can be done also by a person of your choice who can accompany you.

Assistive aids like the braille ballot guide and magnifying glasses are also to be provided for voters who are visually impaired or with low vision, respectively.

Other special communication materials are to be provided to aid voters with a disability at the polling units.

Above all, the Commission is required to make adequate provisions for every category of persons to participate in elections.

### **What can I do if I want to stand in an election?**

- You must be a citizen of Nigeria as recognized by the Constitution for most posts. However, to run for President and for Governor of a state, only a citizen of Nigeria by birth can contest.
- You must have met the age requirements as provided by law at the time of contesting for elective office. 35 years for the office of President, Governor or, senator; 25 years for House of Representative and for members of House of Assembly of each state in Nigeria.
- For the Local Council elections, check your State Electoral Laws for age and other requirements.
- You must be a member of any political party of your choice registered by the Independent National Electoral Commission.

- You must participate in the primary elections conducted by the political party you belong to.
- The political party must sponsor you and thereafter submit your names as her only candidate for a particular office to the Independent National Electoral Commission at least 60 days before Election Day.
- Once your political party has nominated you through the proper process and met all deadlines, you cannot be disqualified or substituted by The Independent National Electoral Commission.

### **What can I do to challenge a disqualification?**

- Get a lawyer to file a suit on your behalf in the Federal High court within 14 days of the disqualification.
- Argue that you meet the requirements above and that the disqualification is not justified.
- Present witness evidence or documentary evidence to support your case.

### **How do I form a political party?**

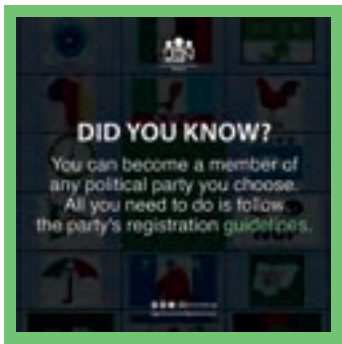
There are certain requirements that a political association must fulfill before it is registered as a political party by INEC:

- The names and addresses of the party's national officers must be registered with the Independent National Electoral Commission.
- Assure that the membership of the association is not discriminatory. i.e., the membership must be open to every citizen of Nigeria irrespective of his place of origin, circumstance of birth, sex, religion, or ethnic grouping.
- That the association has its constitution registered with INEC.
- That the name of the association, its symbol or logo does not contain any ethnic or religious connotation or give the appearance that the activities of the association are confined to a part only of the geographical area of Nigeria.





- The association has its headquarters located in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.



Proceed to registration of the political party at least 6 months to the general election and obtain a Certificate of Registration issued by INEC.

In a situation where the application for registration fails, INEC is required to send a notification on the failure of the Registration to you. You have 30 days after this notification to fulfill all necessary requirements.

### **What can I do if an application for registration is denied by the Independent National Electoral Commission?**

You can:

- Approach the Federal High Court through your lawyer to challenge the denial of registration by INEC.
- Argue that you meet the requirements above for registration.
- Present witness evidence or documentary evidence to support your case.
- You have 30 days to challenge INEC's decision to deny registration.

### **What can I do if I am denied membership to a political party?**

You are expected to inform the Commission about the situation by writing a letter of notification.

- In the letter, you would have to include the following: (name, age, address, name of the party, state of origin, etc.)

*Note: If the Commission takes a decision that you are not pleased with, you have the right to approach a competent court of law and start a Fundamental Human Rights Procedure claim. See Chapter 4 for more information.*

It is advisable that you keep the letter of rejection given to you safely or any other relevant evidence that will be useful in making your claim in court.

### **How do I resolve disputes between political parties or within a political party?**

Political parties in Nigeria usually have a dispute resolution panel required to look into complaints brought by members of the party. This panel usually resolves disputes between the disputing parties without the need of approaching a law court.

The claims this panel entertains may include: The Inability to participate in an election either as a voter or candidate aspiring for a public office in party's primary elections; increase of nomination form fees and withdrawal of names from candidates list. Note: The complaint will be directed to the Secretary, Dispute Resolution Panel (DRP).

*Here are certain things needed to be included in the complaint.*

1. Name of the complainant. Note: "Complainant" is a person who brings a claim.
2. Date of the violation done to you.
3. Story of what happened.
4. Details of the violator.
5. Relevant evidence that will support your claim.
6. Things you desire the Panel to do.
7. Your signature.





## **Electoral Alternative Dispute Resolution (EADR)**

This also serves as an alternative to litigation whereby a Directorate in INEC will look into the complaint and settle the misunderstanding. This is usually done mostly after the declaration of the winner in an Election matter. It should be noted that approaching this Panel depends on the choice of both parties. You will be required to do the following

1. Identifying the wrongs in the concluded election.
2. What you want the Panel to do to you.

### **What constitutes violations of the right to political participation?**

- Where political rights are denied without any lawful reasons provided by law.
- Where INEC denies the registration of political parties that have met the conditions as required by law.
- Where a political party changes or substitutes the candidate submitted to INEC on the basis other than the death of the candidate or withdrawal of the candidate by himself.
- Any actions of the government or conditions of any law where a person is prevented from participating.
- Where INEC unlawfully excludes a candidate after it is established that the candidate was lawfully nominated by the political party sponsoring him.

### **Gender-based discrimination in political participation:**

Section 42 Sub-Section 1 Paragraph (A & B) of the Nigerian Constitution maintains that a citizen of Nigeria enjoys the right of equality and not to be discriminated against on the basis of ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion, or political opinion nor any form of discrimination.

## **Women and rights to political participation**

In any given society, women's full and effective political participation is a matter of human rights, inclusive growth, and sustainable development.

Therefore one can go to court to seek redress if as a woman your right to participate in election is violated based on the fact that the constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of one's sex. For more information on going to court, see Chapter 4.

### **Persons with disabilities and rights to political participation: The Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018**

provides that persons with disabilities shall be encouraged to fully participate in politics and public life. **Section 30(2)** further states that the government has the responsibility to create environments that would enable effective participation of persons with disabilities in:

- The conduct of public affairs without discrimination
- Non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.
- Activities and administration of political parties.

For more information on going to court, see Chapter 4.





## Courts that can try human rights cases

- 01 State High Court 
- 02 Federal High Court 
- 03 National Industrial Court 
- 04 ECOMAS Court of Justice 
- 05 African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights 

## How to Enforce Your Rights through Legal Action

Get a lawyer to file an application in court on your behalf.



Your application should be supported with an affidavit explaining the facts of your case.







A written address containing a brief argument in support of your case should also be attached.



The court will formally inform your alleged offender of your application and give them reasonable time to respond.






## Guidelines for Arrest — 1/2

- The arresting officer should inform the person of the reason for their arrest 
- The arresting officer should present a warrant of arrest if the arrest must be carried out with a warrant. 
- The arrested person must be informed of their rights in the language that they understand. 
- The arrested person has the right to remain silent until they have consulted with a lawyer. 

1/2

## Guidelines for Arrest — 2/2

- An arrested person must be given a written copy of the reasons for arrest in the language that they understand within 24 hours. 
- An arrested person must be charged to court or granted bail within 24 or 48 hours of arrest. 
- An arrested person can only be detained at a Police or other law enforcement agency cell or the holding cell of a court. 

2/2







## CHAPTER 4

# STEPS TO CHALLENGE VIOLATIONS TO FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY, FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, AND THE RIGHT TO POLITICAL PARTICIPATION



There are different avenues and steps that can be taken to challenge rights violations and get remedies. These could range from petitions, campaigns, to going to court.

### **What if I do not want to go to court? What other steps can I take to defend freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, and the right to political participation?**

There are non-judicial enforcement options available. Some of these options include:

**Petitions:** which can be written to the National Human Rights Commission, The African Union or United Nations, requesting for intervention.

**Letters:** can be written to authorities within a country or a state to bring to their knowledge the occurrence of a violation going on within their territory. For example, a letter could be written to the National or State Assembly, the governor or president, or the Attorney General of the State, informing them about a violation being done, especially by a public officer.

A letter can also be written to embassies or human right organizations seeking help and protection especially when the person's life is under threat.

**Social Media Advocacy/Campaigns:** It is recommended to seek support from a human rights organisation that could help you with these strategies.

### **Complaints to the National Human Rights Commission**

The National Human Rights Commission is established for the promotion and protection of human rights in Nigeria. If you feel your rights have been violated, you can file a complaint to the Commission.

### **Functions of the Human Rights Commission**

1. Investigation of all matters relating to the promotion and protection of human rights.
2. Monitoring and investigating all alleged cases of human rights violation in Nigeria and make appropriate recommendations to the federal government for prosecution and such other actions as it may deem expedient in each circumstance.
3. Assisting victims of human rights violations and seeking appropriate redress and remedies on their behalf.

### **What is required to complete a human rights complaint form?**

- Name, address, email, and telephone of the complainant. Note: "Complainant" is a person who brings a claim.
- In the body of the complaint, include a story of what happened and the name of the violator (individual/ institution).
- Alongside the complaint, you are advised to include necessary documents that will serve as evidence of the violation.
- You are required to provide the contact details (Name, address, telephone) of any witnesses.





● At the end of the complaint, you must state certain things you want the Commission to do and ensure your signature is attached.

To know more about the format of a formal complaint, visit <https://nhrc.gov.ng/index.php/complaint-form>. You can also visit the State branches of the National Human Rights Commission to lodge the complaint.

The details of all state branches of NHRC can be accessed on <http://www.nhrc.gov.ng/index.php/regional-offices#lagos>.

The Commission has quasi-judicial powers. This means to help with your complaint it can:

- summon persons and evidence.
- visit any place of detention with a view to ensuring that detainees' rights are not violated.
- award compensation and enforce its decisions.

The decisions of the commission are enforced by taking that decision to the High Court and asking for it to be enforced.

## Going to court

### The Fundamental Rights Enforcement Procedure

FREP provides the platform if you have suffered violations to freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, and the right to political participation.

### Is there a time limit to seek justice at the courts on human rights violations?

No. However, it is advisable you bring a lawsuit as early as possible, to preserve the necessary evidence that may support a decision in your favour (such as death of witnesses, missing records, loss of memory to remember crucial events, etc).



### At what point can I start a process to ensure enforcement of my rights?

You don't have to wait until after an actual violation of the right to freedom of expression, freedom of assembly or the right to political participation. If there is a threat to violate or likelihood of violating the right is enough reason to go to court. It is advisable to begin enforcement processes as soon as possible.

### Who can start a Fundamental Rights claim?

Based on the provisions in the Fundamental Rights Enforcement Rules, Section 3(e), the followings persons or organizations can take legal action:

- Anyone acting in his own interest.
- Anyone acting on behalf of another.
- Anyone acting as a member of, or in the interest of a group or class of persons.
- Anyone acting in the public interest.
- Association acting in the interests of its members or other individuals or groups. This includes human rights activists, advocates, or groups as well as any non-governmental organisations, acting on behalf of a potential applicant.





## Who can I take legal action against?

It is important to identify who you can take legal action against because suing the wrong party (person) could make you lose your case.

It is only the government and its agents that can be taken to court on human rights violations. Individuals and private companies cannot be taken to court under this procedure.

If your rights are violated by private individuals and companies, you report these violations to the relevant government authorities. Where the government fails to do its work, they have failed in their duty to enforce human rights protection and you can take legal action against these authorities for their failure.

*For example, legal action can be taken against the Nigerian Communications Commission, the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, or the Federal government for violating the right to freedom of expression resulting from the Twitter ban on 5th June 2021, but not the organizations such as internet providers and networks.*

## Where can I take legal action?

Only at the Federal High Court or State High Court. However, in a matter in which the Federal Government or any of its agencies is involved, the Federal High Court will be the right court at which to start your action.

## How do I take legal action?

- Get a lawyer first.
- Your lawyer will file an application. The application shall be supported by a statement setting out the:

1. Name, description of the applicant, the relief(s) sought, in other words, what you are asking the court to give you, and
2. the grounds upon which the reliefs are sought, in other words what are the rights that have been violated and the laws that allow you to seek the court's help.

- The application must be supported by an affidavit or statement setting out the facts upon which the application is made. This means explaining what the facts were that lead to your human rights being violated.
- The application should be accompanied by a written address which shall contain a brief argument in support of the grounds, or reasons as to how the facts amount to the violation of your rights and which rights.
- The other party will be served with your application, which means the other party will be made aware of the application. They will be given 5 days from receiving your application to oppose and submit a written address and a counter affidavit stating his facts and grounds to oppose your application.
- You will then be served or informed by the court about the other party's response and will be given 5 days to respond to their arguments by submitting another written address and affidavit.

## What happens if my legal action is not successful in court?

You can appeal to the Court of Appeal against the decision of the High Court. Bear in mind that appeals are complex and subject to specific rules. This will require you to discuss this with a lawyer to determine together if to appeal or not.

## Other Courts Available to seek justice on Human Rights Violation

### ECOWAS Community Court of Justice

The ECOWAS Court is a viable option for any person who wants to complain of any violation of his right to freedom of expression, freedom of assembly or right to political participation for the following reasons:

- It is located in Abuja, Nigeria.





- You don't need to have gone through National courts before going to the ECOWAS Court.
- The procedure for application is not overly complex.
- The ECOWAS court can attend to issues of human right violations. This is provided in section 9 (4) of the 2005 Supplementary Protocol of the Court.

### **Things to know about going to the ECOWAS Court of Justice**

The application must not be anonymous; nor be made whilst the same matter has been started before another international court. This means that such an application must be signed and should not be pending before any other international court at the time of submission.

*TIP: It is worthy to note that you can go directly to ECOWAS court. Even if the human rights violation case is still ongoing at a Nigerian court.*

Individuals, corporations and associations can submit applications detailing alleged human rights violations suffered by them within their home countries and local communities.

### **The African Court on Human and People's Rights**

The African Court on Human and People's Rights will require you to exhaust local remedies (this means you must have gone through all available courts and any other avenues to seek justice in Nigerian) before your case can be accepted.

### **National Industrial Court**

If the rights to freedom of assembly, or freedom of expression were violated during employment relations or trade union action, consider taking legal action before the National Industrial Court. This is regulated in Section 254C of the Constitution.

This means that, if, for example, an individual, or a trade union is already involved in an employment dispute or any dispute related to employment, labour, industrial relations, trade unionism, employer's association before the National Industrial Court, and there is a violation of human rights by the employer, then these violations can be raised at the trial before the National Industrial Court.

### **Lagos State Arbitration Centre**

As a means of settling out of court, Lagos State has the multi-door court which is an arbitration centre where people can decide to settle their matters out of court, including matters of defamation.

### **How to challenge the denial of registration of a political party, challenge election outcomes and protect the right to political participation in court?**

If you are denied the right to participate in an election as a candidate, you can seek justice through an election petition in court.

### **What is an election petition and how does it operate here?**

This simply refers to a written application which sets out the claims of an aggrieved person challenging the outcome and conduct of an election and other related matters.

### **Who can present an election petition?**

The following are the persons who can present an election petition when the need arises at the conclusion of an election:

- A candidate that participates in the election.
- A political party which participated in the election.

The person who brings the claims to Court or Tribunal after the conduct of an election is mostly referred to as "Petitioner".





## Who can I bring an election petition against?

- The other candidates and their parties that participated at the election.
- INEC.

The petitioner must state his right in presenting the election petition, clearly state the fact of the election petition and include the basis or grounds upon which the election petition is based.

## On what grounds can my petition make claims?

- That the candidate declared to be the winner of an election is not qualified to contest.
- That the candidate did not have a majority of lawful votes cast at the elections.
- That the election was marred by corrupt practices or non-compliance with the provisions of the Electoral Act.
- That the petitioner or its candidate was unlawfully excluded from the election even when he was lawfully nominated.
- That the person whose election is questioned has submitted to the commission affidavit containing false information of a fundamental nature in aid of his qualification for the election.

## Courts for Election Participation Issues:

If you are challenging the outcome of elections, you are required to approach these courts:

In the case of a Presidential election (President and Vice president), the Court of Appeal is the appropriate court, and you can appeal to the Supreme Court of Nigeria.

In the case of National Assembly elections (Senatorial seats and House of Representatives), the National Assembly Election Tribunal is the appropriate court empowered to entertain the petition. However, you are entitled to approach the Court of Appeal.

In the case of Governorship elections (Governor and Deputy Governor), the Governorship Election Tribunal is the appropriate court empowered to entertain the petition. However, if the decision is not in your favour, you can still approach the Court of Appeal and up to the Supreme Court of Nigeria.

In the case of State House of Assembly elections, the State House of Assembly Election Tribunals is the appropriate court empowered to entertain the petition. However, you are allowed to approach the Court of Appeal.

In the case of the Chairmanship (Chairman and Vice chairman) or Councillorship elections held in Abuja or other local governments in Nigeria, the Area Council of Election Tribunal, Federal Capital Territory, Abuja is the appropriate court empowered to entertain the petition. However, if the decision is not in your favour, then you have the right to approach the Area Council of Election Appeal Tribunal, Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Note importantly that the decision in this Tribunal is final with respect to such cases.

## Evidence and remedies

**How do I prove that my rights have been violated when taking legal action, or making a complaint?** In order for your action to stand a chance at being successful, you need to ensure that you are able to provide evidence in support of your allegations.

*Without evidence, it would be difficult to win a case. Therefore, to prove that your rights have been violated, you as the victim could provide different forms of evidence, such as:*

- Oral evidence (e.g. the narration of your own side of the story)
- Electronic evidence (e.g. video records from CCTV cameras or phone cameras)
- Real/physical evidence (e.g. clothing or scratch on your body)





- *Documentary evidence (e.g. photographs, receipts or records of documents such as statements of the witnesses to the incident)*
- *Other evidence could be objects, documents, and witnesses involved in the incident. For instance, evidence such as:*
  - *Police records*
  - *Your police statements*
  - *Video records capturing the scene of the violation*
  - *Witnesses and their respective statements*
  - *Various other official documentation such as letters from public bodies*

You should be quick in narrating your story. It is advisable that you do not add any unnecessary things to the story while making a statement of claim.

Try to approach any Non-Governmental Organization working on related issues within your area for proper information that would help in making and establishing your claims in court.

### **What are the challenges I may face in enforcing my rights by going to court?**

There are practical aspects which are relevant to think about when deciding if to take legal action in court:

- You may not get justice on time. Sometimes, litigation processes usually take longer than expected.
- Your case may be struck out by the court if in the court's discretion you do not allege serious human rights violation.
- Monetary challenges may also hinder you from seeking redress in the court because you will need a lawyer and need to pay legal fees.

### **What can I ask for in court?**

Where one's right to freedom of expression, freedom of assembly or right to political participation has been violated or infringed upon, the individual has the right to seek remedies through the court.

## **Examples of remedies**

### **Monetary Compensation**

This refers to material compensation given to a party once the court has found that the fundamental rights of an applicant have been violated by the conduct of the respondent, and if the person has suffered injury, depending on the circumstances.

For instance, where you are able to prove to the court that he or she has suffered physical injury as a result of the actions of another party (government or its agencies), during the disruption of a peaceful protest, the court will declare that monies be paid to the victim as compensation.

It is important to state that the injury suffered must be physical such as harm from tear-gassing, use of physical force and use of firearm and not emotional.

### **Injunctions**

An injunction is a court order requiring a party to do or cease from doing a specific action. For instance, where the police illegally ban protests from holding, the court may grant a perpetual injunction restraining the police and its agents from preventing citizens from convening peacefully.

By implication, this order by the court will enable citizens to go ahead with their planned peaceful protest/rally without further hindrance by state actors.

### **Declaratory reliefs**

This is a declaration by the court stating out the rights of the individual/group. They serve to state the existence of certain rights when these rights have been infringed by the government or other state actors.





For instance, where the police deny a group of people access to a meeting place, in order to assemble peacefully for a rally, meeting or procession without justification, it will amount to a breach of the constitutional right of assembly/association. In seeking redress, the victim(s) may apply to the court to declare that it is their constitutional right to assemble peacefully while also requesting that an injunction be granted to stop the police from similar acts in future.

### **Apologies**

In certain situations, the court may order an erring party (usually the government) to make a public apology to the victim in conjunction with other remedies.





## Types of Evidence that can Prove Your Case



Oral testimony (e.g., the recollection or even recollection of the story or experiences from witnesses)



Electronic evidence (e.g., video recordings from CCTV cameras or photos captured)



Real/physical evidence (e.g., clothing or scratch on your body)



Documentary evidence (e.g., photographs, receipts or records of documents such as statements of the witnesses to the incident)



Other types of evidence (e.g., objects, documents, and witnesses involved in the incident)

## How to get justice if your rights are violated

01

Submit a complaint on the National Human Rights Commission website ([www.nigeriahumanrights.gov.ng/](http://www.nigeriahumanrights.gov.ng/)) or visit any NHRC office close to you to lodge a complaint.

02

Write a letter to the Public Complaints Commission office in your state or visit the office to lodge a complaint.

03

Submit an application through a lawyer to a competent court.

04

If you can't afford a lawyer, contact the Legal Aid Council of Nigeria for legal representation.

## Who can be sued for a human rights violation?

01

Security agencies



02

Government Hospitals



03

Government organizations







## CHAPTER 5 AVAILABLE SUPPORT



**How can I obtain support to enforce my right to freedom of assembly, freedom of expression or political participation?**

### **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)**

NHRC assists victims of human rights abuse by investigating their claims and seeking redress and remedies in court.

To obtain such assistance, the victim is required to make a complaint at the office of the NHRC located at:

No 19 Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama PMB 444, Garki, Abuja – Nigeria. Or contact NHRC on Phone: 08006472428 (Toll Free), 092903746, 092908829, 09032192577, 07041678566, 07053529460. Email: info@nhrc.gov.ng

### **The Legal Aid Council**

The Legal Aid Council is an institution charged with the responsibility of providing legal advice, representation to people of low income in Nigeria i.e., people who cannot afford to pay lawyers for the enforcement of their rights.

Address: No 22 Port Harcourt, Crescent, Area 11, Garki Abuja.  
Contact: 09030436616  
Website: www.legalaidcouncil.gov.ng  
Twitter.com: @LegalAidCouncil

### **Human Rights Advocates**

This refers to a group of people who are interested in human rights enforcement and public interest litigation. They include lawyers involved in pro bono (free) services. A complaint of breach can be made to any human rights activists in your locality.

### **Network of University Legal Aid Institute (NULAI)**

NULAI promotes clinical legal education, legal aid reform, community enlightenment and providing access to justice.

Address: It has branches (law clinics) all over Nigeria and has its headquarters at A111W Brains and Hammers City Estate, Life Camp. Abuja

Contact: nulainigeria@nulai.org and 092900609

Website: www.nulai.org

Twitter: @NULAINigeria

### **The Public Complaints Commission (PCC)**

PCC inquires into complaints by members of the public and ensure effective protection of human rights and the prevention of injustice in Nigeria.

Address: No 25, Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama Abuja.

Contact: 08131297487

Website: www.pcc.gov.ng Twitter:

@officialpccng

### **Socio-Economic Right and Accountability Project (SERAP)**

SERAP is a non-profit organization charged with the responsibility of promoting socio-economic rights in Nigeria.

Address: No 4 Akintoye Shogunle Street, Ikeja Lagos, Nigeria

Website: www.serap-nigeria.org

Contact: info@serap and +234-8026888407

Twitter.com: serapnigeria





### **The Nigeria Bar Association (NBA)**

The NBA is a non-profit umbrella professional association of all lawyers in Nigeria. It is engaged in the promotion and protection of human rights, rule of law and good governance.

Contact: [info@nigeianbar.org.ng](mailto:info@nigeianbar.org.ng) and  
09-7804107

Website: [www.nba.com](http://www.nba.com)

Twitter.com: @NBA.Com

### **Public Defenders Office** Implementing Office: **Rule of Law and Empowerment Initiative also known as Partners West Africa Nigeria.**

Address: No 46 Mike Akhigbe Way Jabi,  
Abuja, Nigeria.

Contact: [admin@partnersnigeriapdo.org](mailto:admin@partnersnigeriapdo.org),  
+2349098090976

Website: <https://www.publicdefendersoffice.org/>

### **Citizen's Gavel**

Citizen's Gavel is a not for profit/non-governmental organization with the aim of increasing the pace of justice delivery through access to justice, digital technology and citizens' engagement.

Address: No.5, Atiba, Soun Ajagungbade  
Estate, Aare, Bodija, Ibadan, Oyo State

2nd Floor, 42 Montgomery road, Yaba, Lagos.

Contact: [hello@gavel.ng](mailto:hello@gavel.ng), 0810 284 2542

Website: <https://www.gavel.ng/>

### **Women's Aid Collective (WACOL)**

WACOL is a non-governmental and non-profit organization established to promote human rights of women and young people, increase legal protection and fight for better choices for abused women and children.

Address: "Ulo Umunwanyi" (The Women House) No. 9 Dr. Mathaias Iloh Avenue, New Haven Extension by Flyover & Behind New Haven Secondary School Emene Express, Enugu P. O. Box 2718, Enugu, Enugu State.

Contact: (234)9060002128,

[wacolnig@gmail.com](mailto:wacolnig@gmail.com)

[wacolnig@yahoo.com](mailto:wacolnig@yahoo.com)

Website: <https://wacolnigeria.org/>

### **Human Rights Law Service (HURILAWS)**

HURILAWS is an independent, non-profit service, dedicated to providing public interest and human rights law services to advance the legal protection of human rights.

Address: LAGOS OFFICE: Left Wing, 1st Floor, Maritime Complex 34, Creek Road, P.O.Box 3169 Apapa. Lagos. Nigeria.

ONITSHA OFFICE: Suite 3, 2nd Floor, Pacific Complex 9, Awka Road, Onitsha Anambra State. Nigeria.

Contact: +234 1 342 6522(Lagos) +234 8034283010(Onitsha) [hurilaws@hurilaws.org](mailto:hurilaws@hurilaws.org)

Website: [www.hurilaws.org](http://www.hurilaws.org)

### **CLEEN Foundation**

CLEEN Foundation is non governmental organization with the mission of promoting public safety, security and accessible justice through the strategies of empirical research, legislative advocacy, demonstration programmes and publications, in partnership with government, civil society and the private sector.

Address: Lagos: 21, Akinsanya Street, 100281, Taiwo Bus Stop, Ojodu, Ikeja.

Abuja: 26, Bamenda Street, off Abidjan Street, Wuse Zone 3,

Contact: 08133051024(Lagos)

234-09-7817025, 07067899368 (Abuja),

[cleen@cleen.org](mailto:cleen@cleen.org)

Website: <https://cleen.org/>





### Legal Defence and Assistance Project (LEDAP)

LEDAP is a non-governmental organization of lawyers and Law professionals, engaged in the promotion and protection of human rights, the rule of law and good governance in Nigeria.

Address: Lagos: 11b, Christ Avenue, Off Admiralty Road, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos.

Abuja: 4 Manzini Street, Wuse Zone 4, Abuja, Nigeria

Contact: 01-2914123(Lagos) +234 9 290

1589, 0813 846 0703(Abuja),

info@ledapnigeria.org

Website: <https://ledapnigeria.org/>

Address: No 2 Tunde Gafar Close, Off Adeniji Jone, Ikeja

Lagos, Nigeria

Contact: +2348125152683,

partners@pjnigeria.org

Website:[www.pjnigeria.org](http://www.pjnigeria.org)

### Socio-Economic Rights Initiative (SERI)

SERI is committed to the advancement of economic and social rights through promotion of the universal rights of every one to health, housing, living environment, education, food, adequate standard of living, equality, security and the rule of law.

Address: Block 4, Onwa Housing Estate, Amechi Awkunanaw, Enugu South LGA, Enugu State.

Contact:234-1-8030731190,234-1-70855140

63, info@serifoundation.org

Website: <https://serifoundation.org/>

### Partnership for Justice

Partnership for Justice is a non-profit organization of professionals who share a commitment to equality, justice and globalization of human rights standards. PJ works at all levels to offer services to victims of human rights violations and create linkages for the promotion and protection of human rights in Nigeria.







[nigeria.action4justice.org](http://nigeria.action4justice.org)

   @justiceedung

Published by NULAI Nigeria with support from Heinrich Böll Foundation