

### NHRC MONTHLY DASHBOARD PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS HUMAN RIGHT CHALLENGES-OJUKWU

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**... commission records 19, 470 right violations in April**



**Executive Secretary Addressing participants at the April Dashboard in Abuja.**

opportunity of gaining insights into the human rights landscape in Nigeria, this will ensure collaborative efforts for addressing emerging challenges

In an address at the presentation of the April human rights assessment dashboard which took place in Abuja, the Executive Secretary noted that "The monthly dashboard on the state of human rights is borne out of the necessity by the Commission to monitor, investigate and report on human rights in real time on a national scale in line with its mandate." He said "Beyond providing a graphical presentation of the human rights situation, the dashboard also serves as a guide and a measurement of our progress in realizing the human rights situation in Nigeria" adding that "It provides information that will trigger a chain of multi-faceted actions from every arm of

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### NHRC ADVOCATES FOR ENHANCED ACCESS TO HOUSING AND SHELTER FOR OLDER PERSONS AT THE 14TH UN-OEWGA IN NEW YORK

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has again reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to protect and promote the rights of older persons, with particular focus on accessibility, infrastructure, and habitat, including transport and housing.

This statement was made by the Executive Secretary of the Commission Dr. Tony Ojukwu OFR, SAN at the 14th session of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA) at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Representatives from all countries, alongside about 35 National Human



Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and 70 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from around the globe, participated in this crucial meeting.

The NHRC has recommended taking further steps towards an internationally binding document for the protection of the rights of older persons, urging that this recommendation be forwarded to the UN General Assembly for prompt consideration.

DR. Ojukwu told the gathering that Nigeria has established robust mechanisms for addressing and remedying violations of older persons' rights. According to him, Under Section

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## GLOBAL DAY OF PARENTS: CHERISH THE VALUE OF PARENTS AND PARENTHOOD-OJUKWU

As Nigeria joins the global community to commemorate the 2024 Global Day of Parents, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) calls on Nigerians to recognize the vital importance of parenthood and its role in providing protection, nurturing, and guidance for children.

In a statement to mark the occasion, the Executive Secretary of the Commission Dr Tony Ojukwu OFR SAN acknowledged the selfless commitment and lifelong sacrifices of parents towards ensuring the well-being and development of their children.

He emphasized that parents play a crucial role in shaping the future of our nation, and their contributions should be valued and supported.

According to the Executive Secretary "Parents are the primary caregivers and role models for children, and their influence has a lasting impact on their children's physical, emotional, and psychological development. It is essential for parents to fulfill their responsibilities as stipulated by law, and for society to provide them with the necessary support and resources to do so."

The theme of this year's Global Day of Parents, "The Promise of Playful Parenting," highlights the importance



of creating a supportive environment for children to thrive.

The Chief Human Rights Officer of Nigeria emphasized that parents are the cornerstone of social life in the family, ensuring its well-being, education, and care for all members.

The Global Day of Parents, designated by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012, to be commemorated every 1st of June. It provides an opportunity to appreciate parents' selfless commitment and lifelong sacrifices. He said family-oriented policies can contribute

significantly to achieving sustainable development goals, including ; Eliminating poverty and hunger; Promoting healthy lives and well-being for all ages; Ensuring inclusive and equitable educational opportunities; Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls

Dr. Ojukwu urged governments, civil society organizations, and individuals to prioritize the support and empowerment of parents, especially those in the rural communities and the less privilege. "They play a critical role in shaping the future of our nation" he concluded. ●

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### NHRC MONTHLY DASHBOARD PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS HUMAN RIGHT CHALLENGES-OJUKWU

government in tackling insecurity, poverty and inequalities in our country."

Ojukwu expressed hopes that the dashboard would assist the Nigerian government in keeping track of its obligations to national, regional and international human rights instruments and mechanisms.

Earlier at the event, the Senior Human Rights Adviser to the Executive Secretary Mr. Hilary Ogbonna disclosed that the Commission recorded a total number of 19,470 complaints of human right abuses in April 2024, with most of the reports brought against state actors.

In his analysis Mr. Ogbonna said 5,259 complaints of rights abuse were filed against state actors – government

agents – including the police, the military and other security agencies. He also revealed that the Commission recorded 4,317 complaints of domestic violence in April, as well as 1,457 complaints relating to violation of children's rights. In the same vein, a total of 2,877 complaints were received against non-state actors, while 1,063 reports were brought against private sector actors. Also, there were 110 complaints of violation of the right to life, and 136 complaints made by persons with disabilities.

A further breakdown of the complaints received by the Commission in April shows that the highest number of cases of abuse were recorded in the North-Central, with the South-South recording the least number of complaints.

Ogbonna observed a disturbing continuous rise in violation of children's rights, with 491 complaints of child abandonment and 21 reports of child marriage recorded. He also highlighted the impact of cultism on human rights, noting that "Over 20 deaths were recorded in April relating to the activities of cultists in three states".

The Senior Human Rights Adviser equally expressed concern over attacks on journalists and press freedom in the country. According to him, "Over the last 3 months, 5 journalists have been arrested and detained beyond constitutional limits,"

He lamented that economic reforms introduced by the government are seriously impacting on the enjoyment of human rights. ●



## CHILD'S RIGHTS PROTECTION A PRIORITY AT NHRC

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has stated that child's rights protection is critical to the realization of the mandate of the Commission, promising to intensify every effort to upscale the protection of this vulnerable group in Nigeria.

The Executive Secretary of the Commission, Dr. Tony Ojukwu OFR, SAN who made this statement in Abuja when a delegation from Children of Africa Leadership and Values Development Initiative (CALDEV) paid a courtesy visit to the Commission observed that child rights violations ranks very high among other forms of human rights violations in the Country, thus receives priority attention at the Commission.

The Director Social, Economic and Cultural Rights Department, Mr. Harry Obe who represented the Executive Secretary during the visit commended the President and Founder of CALDEV, Hon. Bamidele Salam for taking the bold initiative to build the future of Nigerian children by assisting them to realize their potential in life.

According to the Executive Secretary, there is need for value reorientation to

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ensure that the world is preserved and children assisted to work towards achieving their dreams.

He used the opportunity to appraise African Convention on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Child's Rights Act 2003, saying that the Act is one of the most ratified International Human Rights Instruments.

The Chief Human Rights Officer promised to collaborate with CALDEV after setting up a committee to frame up

the terms of partnership and Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

Earlier, the President and Founder of CALDEV, Hon. Bamidele Salam said the sole purpose of establishing his Organization is to cater for children in view of the fact that children tend to get less attention from the Society despite their vulnerable nature.

According to Hon. Salam, children cannot speak for themselves, somebody has to step in and advocate for their rights and welfare, which is what CALDEV is doing.

Some of the areas the Organization is focusing attention, he noted, include mentoring, interventions in the area of health, education and overall development of children.

The highlight of the visit was human rights talks and presentations by some of the children who were among the delegation.

The courtesy visit was in commemoration of the Children's Day which is marked in Nigeria on the 27th of May annually. ◉

### NHRC ADVOCATES FOR ENHANCED ACCESS TO HOUSING AND SHELTER FOR OLDER PERSONS AT THE 14TH UN-OEWGA IN NEW YORK

6 of its mandate, the NHRC is empowered to handle all matters related to the promotion and protection of human rights, as guaranteed by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and various international and regional human rights instruments to which Nigeria is a party. Specifically, he said subsection 6(j) authorizes the Commission to receive and investigate complaints regarding human rights violations and make necessary determinations.

To support older persons in seeking redress, the Chief Human Rights Officer in Nigeria further told participants at the OEWGA that the NHRC has created a dedicated department for vulnerable groups, which includes older persons. He said the department which is staffed by specially trained personnel, is tasked with receiving, investigating, and resolving complaints from older persons

and other vulnerable populations.

The Senior Advocate of Nigeria further stated that Nigeria's judicial system, with courts across all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, is equipped to hear civil, criminal, and human rights cases, including those related to the rights of older persons.

He said significant progress has been made in gathering data and statistics at the national level on the rights of older persons to accessibility, infrastructure, and habitat. "While the Nigeria Living Standards Survey (NLSS) 2019, conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), included general indicators on accessibility and infrastructure, the National Senior Citizens Centre (established by the National Senior Citizens Centre Act, 2017) is working towards a more focused approach" he revealed.

He stressed the plan to implement a

multi-indicator survey specifically for older persons to better address their needs in collaboration with the NBS and National Population Commission.

The Executive Secretary concluded his statement by strongly urging for the immediate commencement of drafting a UN Convention dedicated to the rights of older persons.

"We urge the Open-Ended Working Group to recommend that the General Assembly request the Human Rights Council to act on the recommendations contained in decision 14/1" he stressed.

"These recommendations should be presented to the General Assembly as a matter of urgency. Any further actions must ensure the full, effective, and meaningful participation of older persons, their representative organizations, Civil Society Organizations, and National Human Rights Institutions" he added. ◉

## CHILDREN'S DAY: NHRC EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER THE INCREASING CASES OF VIOLATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

The Executive Secretary of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Dr. Tony Ojukwu OFR, SAN. has expressed concern over the alarming and continuous rise in cases of violations of the rights of children across the country.

In a statement to commemorate the 2024 Children's Day, Dr. Ojukwu said the disturbing trend which is captured in the Commission's monthly dashboard (on report of human right violations across the country) underscore an urgent need for a renewed commitment from all facets of the society to protect and guarantee the fundamental rights of our children.

The Executive Secretary said Children represent the most vulnerable population and the consistent increase in reported violations of their right is a stark reminder of the challenges they face daily. "These violations not only threaten their immediate well-being but also compromise their future potentials and the overall health and security of our society. It is therefore imperative that we act decisively and with urgency to address this menace".

He said though the Child Right Act has been passed by several states in



services, helplines, and shelters, that will alleviate the suffering of the victims, he said.

He noted that it is imperative to train professionals in children centered education, social welfare, healthcare, and law enforcement to enable them identify and respond to child right violations and other social problems effectively.

He emphasised that education is key to raise awareness about

Nigeria, there is a need for the various state governments to strengthen its implementation in order to protect children from all forms of abuse, exploitation, and neglect.

The Chief Human Rights Officer in Nigeria also used the opportunity of the Children's Day to call on the government to develop a comprehensive support system for children in distress, create accessible and well-resourced child protection

children's rights among parents, caregivers, educators, and children themselves, this will empower children to understand and assert their rights.

The Learned Senior Advocate also harped on the need to establish a robust mechanism for monitoring, reporting, and addressing violations of children's rights. "This will ensure that there is accountability at all levels, and that perpetrators of violations are brought to justice".

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