

IN THIS ISSUE
NHRC DEFENDS 2024 BUDGET, PROPOSES INCREASED ALLOCATION FOR 2025 TO TACKLE EMERGING HUMAN RIGHTS CHALLENGES [Page 1-2](#)

NHRC REPORTS OVER 2 MILLION COMPLAINTS ANNUALLY FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION SUFFERS THE MOST [Page 1-3](#)

NHRC RESCUES TWO MINORS FROM ABUSE, WARNS AGAINST SENDING CHILDREN AS DOMESTIC HELPS [Page 2](#)

NHRC EBONYI OFFICE STEPS IN AS MAN KILLS WIFE IN BRUTAL BEATING [Page 3](#)

NHRC AND NBA-HRI UNITE TO PROTECT VULNERABLE POPULATIONS [Page 3](#)

NHRC GOES THE EXTRA MILE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS, AS WOGRAM SEEKS ITS PARTNERSHIP [Page 4](#)

NHRC DEFENDS 2024 BUDGET, PROPOSES INCREASED ALLOCATION FOR 2025 TO TACKLE EMERGING HUMAN RIGHTS CHALLENGES

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has presented its 2024 budget performance and defended its proposed 2025 budget before the Joint Committees on Human Rights of the Senate and House of Representatives. The budget presentation



Executive Secretary NHRC Dr. Tony Ojukwu, OFR, SAN and Management during 2025 budget defence at the National Assembly

which held at the National Assembly Complex, highlighted the Commission's efforts to address pressing human rights issues amidst growing economic challenges and human rights concerns in the country

Speaking during the session Chaired and on Judiciary, Human Rights and Legal Co-Chaired by Senator Adegbonmire Matters and Hon Peter Makinde, Chair Adeniyi SAN Chairman Senate Committee

[Continued on Page 2](#) →

NHRC REPORTS OVER 2 MILLION COMPLAINTS ANNUALLY FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION SUFFERS THE MOST

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has released a report detailing the alarming scale of human rights violations across the country. This was made known at the presentation of the December 2024 Human Rights Dashboard in Abuja Tuesday.

According to the report which was presented by the Senior Human Rights Adviser to the Executive Secretary Mr, Hillary Ogonna, as at December 2024, the Commission has received over two million complaints, underscoring the persistent challenges to human rights protection in Nigeria.

Meanwhile, there was a noticeable 10% decrease in the number of complaints from November to December, 2024.

The report paints a disturbing picture of the diverse range of human rights abuses plaguing the nation. The violations include infringements on freedom of expression, assembly, and association. Violation of the right to freedom from discrimination was recorded as the highest, followed by violation of the rights to human dignity.

Highlight of the report also include: Child abandonment; attacks on law

enforcement personnel; discrimination; sexual and gender-based violence; suppression of civic space; and the escalating violence stemming from banditry. The report further highlights a range of violations, including mass casualties during food distribution events, a disturbing trend of killings and abductions in the North West and North Central regions and pervasive sexual violence against children.

Adding to the complexity of the situation, the NHRC flagged the emergence of a new terrorist group, Lakawura, operating in the North West, posing further threats to already vulnerable communities.

"The emergence of new threats, such as the Lakawura terrorist group, highlights



National Human Rights Commission Headquarters, Abuja

the evolving landscape of human rights challenges in the country. We must remain vigilant and proactive in our efforts to protect the rights of all Nigerians." Mr. Ogonna said.

While the NHRC recorded 355,726 complaints in December, a 10% decrease from November, the sheer volume of complaints received throughout the year paints a worrying picture.

In a significant shift, the December data

[Continued on Page 3](#) →

NHRC RESCUES TWO MINORS FROM ABUSE, WARNS AGAINST SENDING CHILDREN AS DOMESTIC HELPS

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has rescued two female minors who fled from their guardians after suffering alleged abuse, torture, and degrading treatment. These incidents, which took place between January 13 and 15, 2025, underscore the urgent need for parents to reconsider sending their children away as domestic workers, a practice fraught with risks of exploitation and severe mistreatment of already vulnerable minors.

The first victim, an 11-year-old girl, endured abuse while living with her guardian in Kubwa, a suburban area in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. Just three days after being brought into her new home, she was found fleeing from Kubwa to Gwagwalada, where her biological parents reside. A good Samaritan alerted NHRC staff member Jenny Torhee to the distressing situation. After hearing the girl's ordeal, the case was promptly reported to the Kubwa Police Station. The Divisional Police Officer (DPO) invited both the girl's father and guardian for questioning, and following an amicable resolution, she was reunited with her father.

The second victim, a 15-year-old girl, managed to escape with her belongings to a kiosk after suffering severe maltreatment



at the hands of her guardian, whom she referred to as her "uncle." She recounted enduring relentless beatings, flogging, and other forms of abuse over the three years she lived with him. Once again, Mrs. Torhee was alerted to the case by the kiosk owner, and the girl was swiftly taken to a shelter while the NHRC launched an investigation.

Shockingly, the girl's mother, who had sent her alone from the eastern region of the country to Abuja when she was just 12 years old, was unaware of the suffering her daughter had endured. The Commission summoned the guardian and his wife for questioning. While he expressed regret and pledged to change, the NHRC insisted that the girl be reunited with her mother to

ensure her safety and well-being.

The NHRC stresses the imperative need to protect children from all forms of abuse, drawing on the provisions of the Child Rights Act (CRA) of 2003 and other human rights frameworks. The Act explicitly prohibits physical and emotional violence against minors, with Section 14 banning the use of violence and Section 21 forbidding abusive language and intimidation. The Commission urges parents to prioritize their children's welfare and avoid placing them in situations where their fundamental rights may be violated. The NHRC remains steadfast in its commitment to safeguarding children's rights and ensuring justice for victims of abuse. ●

▶ **Continued from Page 1**

NHRC DEFENDS 2024 BUDGET, PROPOSES INCREASED ALLOCATION FOR 2025 TO TACKLE EMERGING HUMAN RIGHTS CHALLENGES

House of Representative Committee on Human Rights, the Executive Secretary of the Commission, Dr. Tony Ojukwu, OFR, SAN, provided a comprehensive breakdown of the Commission's ₦5 billion allocation for 2024. He revealed that the budget achieved an unprecedented 99.999% implementation rate, which included the construction and completion of eight state offices across the country. This achievement, he emphasized, was remarkable given the Commission's limited resources.

The Executive Secretary further outlined the Commission's proposal for a ₦8 billion budget for 2025, representing an increase from the previous year. The proposed budget aims to address emerging human rights challenges such as terrorism, communal conflicts, insurgency, natural disasters like floods, and the rising cost of operations due to inflation and an increased payroll.

"The proposed budget will strengthen the

Commission's capacity to address pressing human rights issues in Nigeria," Dr. Ojukwu stated.

Additionally, the proposal includes funding for the establishment of more human rights offices across the country to improve access to the services of the Commission, especially in states where our services are not adequate. These efforts, according to the Executive Secretary, are essential for enhancing the Commission's independence and effectiveness.

"This proposed budget reflects our determination to create a more inclusive and just society," Dr. Ojukwu said. "It will enable us to expand our reach, respond swiftly to human rights violations, and engage effectively with communities to promote awareness and accountability."

Before ending his presentation, Dr. Ojukwu appealed to lawmakers to consider increasing the proposed budget from ₦8 billion to ₦19.55 billion. He explained that

the growing volume of complaints, over 2 million annually and the cost of investigating each case is straining the Commission's resources.

"For instance, investigating a single case costs approximately ₦8,000. To investigate 2 million cases effectively, the Commission would require ₦16 billion. The current allocation of ₦8 billion is grossly inadequate to meet this demand," Dr. Ojukwu argued.

Members of the Joint Committees commended the NHRC for its strategic focus and commitment to its mandate. While some lawmakers sought clarifications on specific aspects of the proposal, which the Executive Secretary addressed, some consequently raised their concerns.

If approved, the proposed allocation would represent a critical step towards addressing persistent human rights challenges in Nigeria, including gender-based violence, child rights violations, and police brutality, public inquiries on various investigative panels, etc. ●

NHRC EBONYI OFFICE STEPS IN AS MAN KILLS WIFE IN BRUTAL BEATING

The Ebonyi State Office of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has taken decisive action in the case of a woman allegedly killed by her husband, referring the matter to the State Command of the Nigeria Police Force for a comprehensive investigation and legal proceedings to ensure justice is served.

The NHRC State Coordinator, Onyekachi Okorie who reported the alleged beating to death of the woman by her husband to the Police also attended the burial ceremony of the deceased woman.

Prior to the burial, the coordinator collaborated with relevant stakeholders in the State to ensure the arrest of the suspect who is currently remanded in own father. prison custody from where he attends his trial for wilful homicide.

According to the Coordinator, the burial was marked with emotional moments as the little children of the deceased wept uncontrollably as they witnessed the sad event confirming that they have been



violations.

The burial presented a veritable opportunity to sensitise the mourning community on the need to jettison all forms of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), which has severally resulted in the untimely deaths of many citizens.

The Commission calls on all citizens to take a stand against violence and uphold the laws that protect our society. The government has taken significant steps to combat violence, including the enactment of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act, 2015, which serves as a crucial legal framework to safeguard individuals from all forms of violence.

The Commission also urges everyone to be aware of their rights, report violations its toll-free line 6472, and support efforts to ensure a safer and more just society for all. ●

NHRC AND NBA-HRI UNITE TO PROTECT VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

In a move to strengthen human rights protection in Nigeria, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is set to collaborate with the Nigerian Bar Association-Human Rights Institute (NBA-HRI) to address pressing human rights concerns, particularly affecting vulnerable population like children in conflict with the law and women affected by violence.

The NBA-HRI delegation, led by its Secretary the 3rd Vice President of the NBA, Zainab Aminu Garba, said the purpose of the visit was to discuss alternative care options for children in detention, emphasizing the need for children's homes, especially in Northern Nigeria.

The delegation also advocated for the



creation of family courts to ensure swift justice for victims of Sexual and Gender Based Violence and other form of violence against women.

"This initiative aligns with the NBA-HRI's mission to promote, protect, and enforce human rights within the rule of law. By working together, the NHRC and NBA-HRI aim to create a safer and more just environment for all Nigerians". Garba added.

The Executive Secretary of the Commission Dr. Tony Ojukwu OFR, SAN pledged the Commitment of the NHRC to collaborate with the NBA-HRI, recognizing the importance of providing alternative care for children in detention and supporting victims of violence against women.

Dr. Ojukwu who was represented by the Overseeing Officer of the

NHRC Human Rights Institute Prof. Osongorua Udombana said the partnership marks a significant step towards strengthening human rights protection in Nigeria.

He emphasised the need for stakeholders to implement the existing laws laid down for the protection of women and children in Nigeria to enable them perform better in the society. ●

► Continued from Page 1

NHRC REPORTS OVER 2 MILLION COMPLAINTS ANNUALLY FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION SUFFERS THE MOST

reveals that the South-South region reported a higher number of human rights violations than the traditionally more volatile Northern states.

This change signals a potential shift in the patterns of human rights abuses, requiring closer scrutiny and targeted interventions. Earlier in his opening remark the Executive Secretary of the Commission, Dr Tony Ojukwu OFR, SAN stated that the data collected by the NHRC is crucial for

understanding the scope of human rights violations and informing government and security responses.

"This surge in complaints is not just a number; it represents real people, real lives, and real violations of fundamental human right,".

"It underscores the urgent need for a collective and concerted effort to address these systemic injustices and strengthen

accountability mechanisms." He added.

According to a representative from the office of the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria Esther Sama the NHRC's data provides vital information for policymakers, security agencies, and civil society organizations working to address the root causes of human rights violations and ensure accountability for perpetrators. ●

NHRC GOES THE EXTRA MILE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS, AS WOGRAM SEEKS ITS PARTNERSHIP

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has stated its readiness to go the extra mile in their close advocating for the realisation of the rights of women in Nigeria, recognising their critical role in well-being of individual spouses. citizens and national development.

He described The Executive Secretary of the as heart-Commission, Dr. Tony Ojukwu OFR, SAN, stated this in Abuja when a delegation alleged from Women of Great Minds Initiative harvesting of (WOGRAM) paid a courtesy visit to the vital organs of Commission. He noted that the NHRC women by realises the human rights challenges often people they faced by women and girls in every society trust, the including Nigeria and has strategically put murder of mechanisms in place to tackle them.

Dr. Ojukwu who was represented by the Director Public Affairs in the NHRC, Fatimah Agwai Mohammed told the visiting delegation that the Commission is making deliberate efforts to deal with the increasing human rights violations across the nation.

He said the Commission operates a toll-free number, 6472 to enable people reach out seamlessly to report any form of human right violation, this will enable the Commission to intervene immediately.

The Chief Human Rights Officer of Nigeria used the opportunity to condemn the recent surge in cases of femicide and other human right abuses perpetrated against

Salome Adaidu by Timilehin AJayi a Gospel singer alleged to be her boyfriend, the setting ablaze of Mrs Chioma Nwanna by her husband Mr. Nwanna over alleged infidelity by the victim, the list is unending and this ugly trend must be addressed urgently he emphasised.

On the human rights situation in the country the learned Silk disclosed that the Commission receives an average of two million (2 million) complaints of human rights violations on annual basis, and of this number approximately 70% borders on violation of the rights of women and children.

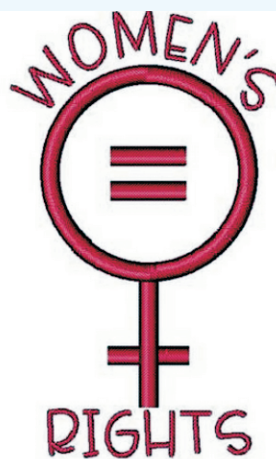
He said the Commission is ever willing to partner with relevant organisations to

tackle issues of human rights pointing that the Commission cannot do it alone.

In the same vein, a Deputy Director in the department of Women and Children, Mrs. Rosemary Igboyi said that the Commission does not take the issue of women and children for granted. According to her, the Commission created a specialised department to deal with the issues of SGBV and had also appointed a focal officer on women.

Mrs Igboyi said that the Commission maintains an open-door policy with regard to collaborations with Civil Society Organisations and Non-governmental Organisations including other key stakeholders to towards realising its mandate.

Earlier, the leader of the delegation and Founder of WOGRAM, Mrs. Margaret Udoh said the purpose of the visit was to seek partnership with the NHRC to create more human rights awareness for women and further protect their rights in all facets of the society. ●



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