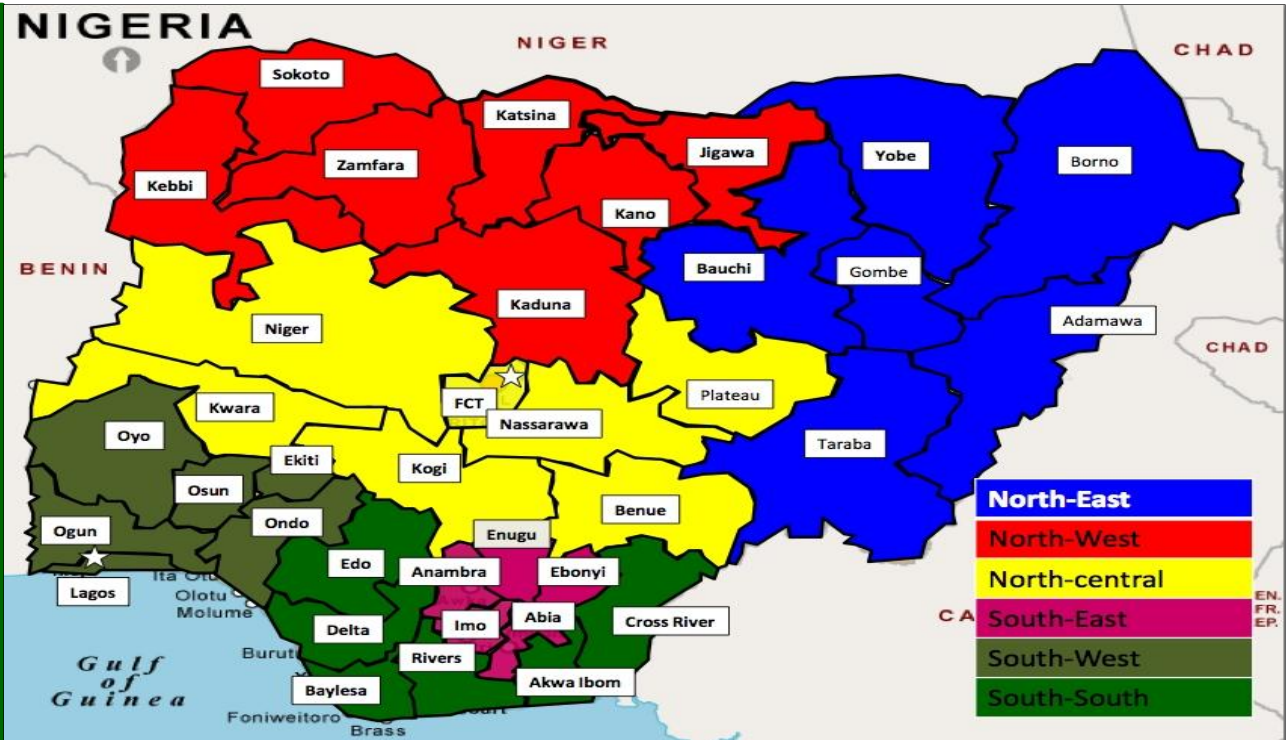


Nigeria Fact Sheet

United States Embassy in Nigeria

NIGERIA FACT SHEET



INDEPENDENCE

Nigeria gained full independence in October 1960, as a federation of three regions (northern, western, and eastern) under a constitution that provided for a parliamentary form of government. Under the constitution, each of the three regions retained a substantial measure of self-government. The federal government was given exclusive powers in defense and security, foreign relations, and commercial and fiscal policies. In October 1963, Nigeria altered its relationship with the United Kingdom by proclaiming itself a federal republic and promulgating a new constitution.

GEOGRAPHY

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and accounts for over half of West Africa's population. It borders the Gulf of Guinea, and is located between Benin and Cameroon.

Capital City: Abuja (pop. est. 1.6 million)

Natural Resources: petroleum, natural gas, tin, iron ore, coal, limestone, niobium, lead, zinc, arable land.

Natural Hazards: periodic droughts; flooding

SOCIETY

Population: 168 million

Ethnic Groups: Nigeria has 250 ethnic groups. The most populous and politically influential include: Hausa and Fulani 29%, Yoruba 21%, Igbo (Ibo) 18%, Ijaw 10%, Kanuri 4%, Ibibio 3.5%, Tiv 2.5%.

Languages: English (official), Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo (Ibo), Fulani, and over 500 additional indigenous languages. The dominant ethnic group in the northern two-thirds of the country is the Hausa-Fulani, most of whom are Muslim. Other major ethnic groups of the north are the Nupe, Tiv, and Kanuri. The Yoruba people are predominant in the southwest. The Igbo (Ibo) are predominant in the southeast.

Religion: The population is roughly balanced between Muslims and Christians with a small minority of those who practice indigenous beliefs.

January 2012

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