

Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; the Special Rapporteur on the right to food; the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context; the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences

Ref.: AL NGA 1/2026

(Please use this reference in your reply)

10 March 2026

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacities as Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Special Rapporteur on the right to food; Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context; Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons and Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 53/4, 58/10, 52/10, 59/12 and 59/20.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning alleged patterns of human rights violations and abuses in the context of violence involving certain herder and farming communities in the "Middle Belt" region of Nigeria. The allegations concern incidents reportedly occurring between 1 January 2022 and 31 March 2025 and involving civilian fatalities; damage to and destruction of housing and property; damage to and destruction of other civilian objects, including churches, clinics and schools; and incidents affecting food security, including damage to or destruction of agricultural land, crops, food reserves and food storage structures.

According to the information received:

Background

Nomadic herders, approximately 90 per cent of whom are Muslim Fulani pastoralists, and sedentary crop farmers, predominantly Christian from various ethnic groups, coexisted in many parts of Nigeria in relationships of economic interdependence, including through arrangements that supported both agricultural production and livestock grazing. In the last two decades, however, there have been growing tensions and violence between certain herder and farming communities in Nigeria's 'Middle Belt' region. Since 2017, this inter-communal violence has escalated and increasingly taken on religious and ethnic dimensions.

It is acknowledged that the violence in this region is driven by multiple, interrelated factors, including, *inter alia*, weaknesses in the security apparatus, climate-related pressures, poor governance and corruption, ethnic, religious and communal tensions and discrimination, impunity for crimes, and the increased circulation of arms. Reports also point to the disenfranchisement of younger factions within sections of the Fulani population as an important contributing factor. Their growing sense of marginalization, and in some cases attraction to

extremist ideologies, has been linked to socio-political neglect and broader struggles over identity and belonging. In sum, the root causes of the violence are complex and multifaceted, and reducing it to a single cause would risk obscuring the drivers of harm and delaying meaningful solutions.

The exact number of casualties resulting from this violence remains unclear. According to available information, at least 2,347 casualties were recorded in 359 incidents involving farmers and herders in Nigeria between 2020 and 2024, although this is likely a conservative estimate. More recent consolidated data is reportedly not available, and no comprehensive official casualty data appears to have been released by the Government.

Recent months have witnessed a considerable escalation in violence in Nigeria's 'Middle Belt' region. For example, on 16 December 2025, armed assailants attacked a mining site in Atoso village, Plateau State, and reportedly killed at least 12 people. A similarly grave attack was recorded on 13-14 June 2025, when armed assailants reportedly linked to herder communities attacked the community of Yelewata, Benue State, and killed at least 59 people.

Attacks and killings of civilians

Villages in the "Middle Belt" region have reportedly been, and continue to be, subjected to repeated attacks resulting in significant civilian casualties.

On the evening of 20 March 2022, alleged Fulani militia reportedly attacked four locations in Kagoro Chiefdom, Kaduna State, namely Agban, Tsonje, Katanga, and Kadarko. According to eyewitness accounts, the assailants, reportedly numbering more than 30, were armed with firearms, machetes and petrol. Multiple sources reported that the attackers fired indiscriminately at residents. As a result of the attacks, up to 34 people were reportedly killed across the four villages, including 32 residents and two military personnel. These figures were confirmed by the Governor of Kaduna State and the Kaduna State Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs. In addition, seven persons were reportedly injured. The attacks also caused extensive material destruction, with more than 200 houses and 32 shops reportedly burned, and three vehicles and 17 motorcycles damaged.

On 18 December 2022, Fulani militia allegedly attacked the community of Mallagum, in the Kaduna State. Witnesses reportedly heard gunfire after 11 p.m., and the assault was said to have lasted for more than an hour. Up to 40 individuals were reportedly killed, and more than 100 houses and grain stores were destroyed, displacing a significant number of residents. It is further alleged that the attackers stole mobile phones from victims and used them to threaten family members after the attack. One survivor reportedly received a call the following morning during which the attackers stated that "they were not done with them yet."

Despite the presence of Nigerian military personnel stationed in the vicinity, reports indicate that they did not intervene to protect villagers during the attack. One victim suggested possible complicity. In response, the Kaduna State

Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs stated that an “urgent security intervention” was being conducted by Defence Headquarters Operation Safe Haven and that further information would be released following official feedback from the security forces.

On 11 February 2024, Fulani militia reportedly attacked Nkienza village, Bassa Local Government Area (LGA) of Plateau State. The village was attacked around 11 p.m. when most of the inhabitants were asleep. The assailants reportedly fired gunshots into the air to announce their presence before launching the attack. During the attack, three people were killed, including one woman, and two were injured. Many houses were set ablaze and other properties destroyed. Security forces from ‘Operation Safe Haven’ reportedly intervened and managed to repel the attackers.

The incident took place only one day after another young Rigwe villager had allegedly been killed by attackers.

It is further alleged that attacks have frequently occurred on or around Christian religious holidays. For example, on the night of 22 December 2024, during curfew hours, alleged Fulani militia reportedly attacked the community of Dowchai (also known as Gidan Ado), in Danwal village, Plateau State. The assailants reportedly killed up to 15 people, including women and children, and injured up to two others. Among the deceased were reportedly a one-year-old child, a 13-year-old child and a pregnant woman. All victims were reportedly members of the Irigwe ethnic group. Dozens of houses were also reportedly set ablaze.

According to reports, the attack occurred two days after police officers had been deployed to five LGAs, including Riyom, ahead of Christmas celebrations. Operation Safe Haven reportedly responded to the attack.

Moreover, in the early hours of 14 April 2025, after Palm Sunday celebrations, at least 51 people were reportedly killed in Zikke village, Bassa LGA, Plateau State. Assailants reportedly razed parts of the village and looted homes. Although the President of Nigeria reportedly ordered an investigation into the attack, no information appears to be publicly available on the status of such an investigation, including whether formal charges have been brought against alleged perpetrators or whether prosecutions have commenced.

Damage to and destruction of housing and civilian property

It is alleged that armed attackers operating in the “Middle Belt” region have repeatedly damaged and destroyed villages, in particular housing, significantly undermining the ability of affected communities to live securely in their homes.

In Adamawa State, more than 100 houses and food barns were reportedly burned in a single attack in April 2019. In Plateau State, at least 12 villages were reportedly set on fire between May 2019 and January 2022. During these attacks, assailants also reportedly burned several churches, at least one clinic, and one school. Similarly, in Karamai, Kajuru LGA, Kaduna State, more than

100 houses were reportedly razed in an attack that also killed 40 people. In 2020, 63 houses, food barns and water-pumping machines used for irrigation were reportedly set on fire in Ntiriku village (also known as Ungwan Magaji), Kauru LGA, Kaduna State. In Ariri, Bassa LGA, Plateau State, 25 houses, 40 barns, 28 kitchens and one church were reportedly burned to the ground in April 2022.

During the night of 8 February 2022, assailants reportedly attacked the communities of Zaman Dabo, Chibob and Sabon Kaura in Zangon Kataf LGA, Kaduna State. According to reports, the attackers arrived in large numbers, opened sporadic gunfire and destroyed property. More than half of the houses were reportedly burned. It is alleged that seven people were killed in the attack, including six in Chibob and Sabon Kaura and one in Zaman Dabo.

An attack on 15 or 16 April 2023 in Runji village, Zangon Kataf LGA, Kaduna State, reportedly resulted in at least 40 homes being burned, with severe consequences for residents' livelihoods. According to credible reports, this attack, together with attacks on other villages in Kaduna State around the same period, resulted in the displacement of 1,539 persons.

Food-related incidents and impacts on food security

Violence in Nigeria's "Middle Belt" region has also reportedly had a serious impact on food security, including through repeated attacks resulting in the destruction of farmland and food storage facilities, as well as disruption of agricultural activities.

According to reports, farmers in affected areas have faced recurring destruction of crops, including through cattle grazing on cultivated land and the destruction of harvested produce. Communities reportedly attribute increasing food scarcity in part to frequent incursions into farms by herders and the resulting destruction of crops and agricultural assets. Farmers have reportedly stated that, whereas many families previously maintained sufficient food stocks for household use and sold only what was needed to meet other expenses, many now face severe hardship after losing both their homes and their means of livelihood as a result of attacks and related insecurity.

The attack of 8 February 2022 on Zaman Dabo, Chibob and Sabon Kaura reportedly also resulted in damage to food-related infrastructure. On or around 14 October 2022, cattle reportedly belonging to alleged Fulani herders destroyed farmlands near Kangwaza village, Kaduna State. On or around Saturday, 20 January 2024, alleged Fulani herders reportedly deliberately grazed livestock on private farmlands and destroyed crops near Matagami, Kaduna State.

Impact on the civilian population, including displacement

The attacks described above have reportedly had a profound impact on the civilian population in Nigeria's "Middle Belt," including through repeated

displacement, destruction of homes, loss of livelihoods and prolonged insecurity.

A large number of persons have reportedly become internally displaced because their homes were destroyed or because of the insecurity resulting from repeated attacks on their communities. Allegations indicate that in certain instances such displacement may be linked to indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks against civilian areas and the destruction of civilian objects, in violation of international humanitarian law. Where displacement is not justified by imperative military reasons or the security of civilians, it may amount to arbitrary or unlawful forced displacement under applicable IHL.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), as of May 2025 there were approximately 1.25 million displaced persons in 216,288 households across Nigeria’s north-central and north-west zones, including Benue, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kogi, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, Sokoto and Zamfara States. The report reportedly emphasizes that conflict remains a dominant driver of displacement, including violence involving herder and farming communities, as described in this communication.¹

In June 2024, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) reportedly indicated that 15,313 individuals had been displaced to at least seven IDP camps and host communities, including in Bokkos LGA, Plateau State, following heightened tensions and attacks against civilians in Plateau State in December 2023 and February 2024. UNICEF further reported, in July 2025, that approximately 400,000 internally displaced persons had been recorded in Benue State alone, dispersed across 15 formal IDP camps in four LGAs and in host communities, following recurrent farmer-herder violence and armed attacks.² Reports also indicate that IDP camps were active in Mangu, Bokkos and Barkin Ladi LGAs of Plateau State, and that an estimated 18,275 people were forced to flee their homes following attacks in December 2023.³

Reports further indicate that vulnerable groups, including women and children, have been disproportionately affected by these attacks and often bear the heaviest consequences of the violence. For example, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reportedly stated on 18 July 2025 that the substantial majority of persons displaced as a result of devastating attacks by suspected herdsmen in Benue State were women and girls.⁴

Alleged impunity, failures to protect, and lack of accountability

It is alleged that non-State armed groups and assailants operate with impunity in the “Middle Belt” region, killing unarmed civilians, setting villages ablaze, and destroying food reserves and farms. On several occasions, the alleged

¹ International Organization for Migration (IOM), DTM – [Nigeria Displacement Report 17](#), p. 4

² UNICEF, Nigeria Response Report, Reporting Period January – March 2024 (June 2024).

³ WHO, [Restoring hope to displaced Plateau State communities through coordinated humanitarian response](#) (27 January 2024).

⁴ UNFPA Nigeria, [Situation Report](#), 18 July 2025

perpetrators have reportedly been identified as members of Fulani militia groups or as individuals linked to herder communities.

There are further reports that Nigerian security forces were informed of impending or ongoing attacks, or were present in the vicinity of villages under attack, but failed to intervene in a timely manner to protect civilians. In certain cases, allegations are more serious, including claims of active complicity by security personnel with attackers and allegations that soldiers may themselves have shot civilians.

Only a limited number of attacks appear to have resulted in investigations, and the findings of such investigations are reportedly not publicly available. There is also little publicly available information indicating that prosecutions have been pursued in relation to many of the incidents described above.

Without prejudging the accuracy of the information received, we are seriously alarmed by the above-mentioned allegations, which appear to signal a longstanding, widespread and recurring pattern of serious human rights violations and abuses in the “Middle Belt” region of Nigeria, including unlawful killings of civilians, destruction of homes and other civilian objects, attacks affecting livelihoods and food security, forced displacement, and an apparent climate of impunity.

If confirmed, these allegations would constitute violations of Nigeria’s obligations under, *inter alia*, articles 2(1) (non-discrimination), 2(3) (effective remedy), 6 (right to life), 7 (prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment), 12 (freedom of movement and freedom to choose residence), 18 (freedom of thought, conscience and religion), and 27 (rights of minorities) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The allegations may also implicate obligations under article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which recognizes the right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. Nigeria is a State party to both Covenants.

We are particularly concerned by allegations suggesting that, in a number of incidents, attacks followed recurring and identifiable patterns (including timing, *modus operandi*, and targeting of villages and civilian objects), and that in some cases security forces were allegedly informed in advance of imminent attacks, or were reportedly present in the vicinity while attacks were ongoing, yet failed to take timely and effective measures to protect civilians. If confirmed, such allegations raise serious concerns regarding the State’s compliance with its positive obligations to exercise due diligence to prevent foreseeable threats to life and physical integrity, to protect individuals within its jurisdiction, and to respond effectively to indications of imminent harm.

We are further concerned by allegations that, in certain cases, members of the security forces may have failed to intervene despite the capacity to do so, and by more serious allegations of possible collusion, acquiescence, or direct participation in abuses. If substantiated, such conduct would engage the international responsibility of the State, not only for failures of prevention and protection, but potentially for direct violations by State agents and/or for acts carried out with State tolerance or acquiescence.

We recall that the right to life under article 6 of the ICCPR is the supreme right from which no derogation is permitted, and that States have both negative and positive obligations: to refrain from arbitrary deprivation of life and to take appropriate measures to protect life, including through effective prevention, protection and accountability measures. We further recall the State's obligation to ensure prompt, effective, independent, impartial and transparent investigations into all potentially unlawful deaths, including where there are credible allegations of prior warnings, security force inaction, or involvement of State agents.

In this regard, we underscore the importance of investigating all suspected unlawful deaths in line with applicable international standards, including the Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions and the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of a Potentially Unlawful Death (2016).

We are additionally concerned by allegations of repeated destruction of residential homes, community infrastructure and objects indispensable to livelihoods and subsistence, including agricultural land, crops, food reserves and storage facilities, resulting in displacement and severe humanitarian consequences. If confirmed, such acts may amount to serious violations of the rights to adequate housing, food and an adequate standard of living, and may also indicate discriminatory patterns of harm affecting particular ethnic and/or religious communities.

It is particularly troubling that similar allegations have reportedly persisted over several years, notwithstanding prior warnings by international and regional human rights mechanisms. In this regard, we recall the report of the former Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions (A/HRC/47/33/Add.2), which noted that expanding farmer-herder conflicts in the Middle Belt were emerging as a grave security challenge and highlighted the significant levels of killings and displacement associated with this violence. The persistence, recurrence and apparent escalation of these allegations may indicate entrenched failures of prevention, protection, investigation and accountability, thereby increasing the foreseeability of further attacks and the risk of repetition.

We recall that States must exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate, punish and provide remedies for human rights violations and abuses by non-State actors, and must ensure that competent authorities responsible for investigations and prosecutions are independent in law and in practice. This includes identifying and prosecuting those responsible before ordinary civilian courts, ensuring effective remedies and reparations for victims and survivors, and adopting concrete guarantees of non-recurrence.

We reiterate that we stand ready to support efforts by your Excellency's Government to strengthen compliance with international human rights obligations, including through technical engagement, as appropriate, on the effective investigation of potentially unlawful deaths and accountability processes.

In connection with the above alleged facts and concerns, please refer to the **Annex on Reference to international human rights law** attached to this letter which cites international human rights instruments and standards relevant to these allegations.

As it is our responsibility, under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention, we would be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and/or comment(s) you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please provide detailed information on the measures taken, at the federal and state levels, to prevent, investigate, prosecute and ensure accountability for the alleged violations and abuses described above, including unlawful killings, destruction of homes and civilian property, and acts affecting food security and livelihoods.
3. Please provide details of any investigations, inquiries and judicial or other proceedings initiated in relation to the incidents described above, including their current status and any outcomes, and indicate the measures taken to ensure that investigations into alleged unlawful killings are conducted promptly, effectively, independently, impartially and transparently, in accordance with the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of a Potentially Unlawful Death (2016). Please also indicate whether relevant medico-legal examinations, including autopsies, were carried out.
4. Please provide information on the measures taken to examine and investigate allegations that security forces failed to intervene in a timely and effective manner to protect civilians, and indicate the status and outcomes of any such investigations, including any accountability measures adopted.
5. Please provide information on the measures taken to provide effective remedies and reparation to victims, survivors and affected communities, including compensation, rehabilitation, psychosocial support, temporary shelter or resettlement, livelihood support (including for loss of agricultural land, crops, livestock, food stores and other productive assets), restitution where applicable, and guarantees of non-recurrence.
6. Please provide information on measures taken to protect and assist internally displaced persons (IDPs) affected by the violence, including access to essential services and durable solutions (return, local integration or relocation), and indicate whether your Excellency's Government has designated a competent coordination authority and maintains a register or consolidated database of IDPs, including the most recent available, disaggregated data (where available) relevant to the incidents described above. Please also clarify the current living conditions of the IDPs, including whether the destruction of housing has resulted in homelessness.
7. Please provide information on steps undertaken to investigate allegations of coercion, intimidation, or forced returns of IDPs, including accountability mechanisms for violations.

8. Please provide information on the measures undertaken or envisaged to prevent further arbitrary displacement, provide protection and assistance to IDPs.
9. Please provide information on measures taken to address the root causes and consequences of the violence in the “Middle Belt” region, including measures aimed at prevention, early warning, civilian protection, access to justice, inter-communal reconciliation, and any peace or local security arrangements, and please provide updates on their implementation and effectiveness.
10. Please provide information on measures specifically taken to address the heightened and differentiated impact of the violence on women, children, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups, including protection, assistance, access to services, and accountability measures in cases involving gender-based or child-specific harms.

This communication, and any response received from your Excellency’s Government, will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#) at the 60 days mark. Should Your Excellency’s Government respond within 60 days, both the communication and the response, may be published before the 60 days mark. The communications and responses will also be made available in the subsequent periodic report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

While awaiting a reply, we urge your Excellency’s Government to take all necessary interim measures to stop the alleged violence and destruction against minorities in the Middle-Belt region, to immediately initiate investigations, and where allegations are proved, to ensure the accountability of any person responsible and reparations to victims and families.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

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Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions

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Annex

Reference to international human rights law

In connection with above alleged facts and we wish to draw Your Excellency's Government's attention to article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 6(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by Nigeria on 29 July 1993 which respectively guarantee the right of every individual to life and security and provide that these rights shall be protected by law and that no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.

The Human Rights Committee in its general comment No. 6 notes that it considers article 6(1) of the ICCPR to include that States parties should take measures to prevent and punish deprivation of life by criminal acts, and to prevent arbitrary killing by their own security forces. In its general comment No. 31, the Human Rights Committee has observed that there is a positive obligation on States Parties to ensure protection of Covenant rights of individuals against violations by its agents and by private persons or entities. A failure to investigate violations of the Covenant and bring perpetrators of such violations to justice could in and of itself give rise to a separate breach of the ICCPR (CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13, paras. 15).

These obligations arise notably in respect of criminal acts under international law, such as torture and similar cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, summary and arbitrary killing and enforced disappearance. When committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack on a civilian population, these violations of the Covenant are crimes against humanity (CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13, paras. 8 and 18).

The previous Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions in a report on armed non-State actors to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/38/44) noted that "the State may be held responsible for the conduct of non-State actors when it can be shown that it has failed to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and respond to such conduct". This said, the Special Rapporteur reaffirms the centrality of States and their obligations under international law, including human rights law. This, however, does not mean that States are the only duty bearers. Whether derived naturally or from international legal sources, human rights are the entitlements of all humans. They are "inalienable" and thus sanctions ought to be applied against any State, group or person seeking to violate those rights.

In addition to this, the report A/HRC/38/44 provides that States should "fully implement their obligation to protect against killings by armed non-State actors and evaluate current due diligence mechanisms in light of these actors' activities and strengthen their implementation, in full respect of international human rights law", as well as "Hold individual members of armed non-State actors to account under international human rights law and international criminal law, when applicable".

We would like to refer Your Excellency's Government to paragraph 4 of the Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions, adopted by the Economic and Social Council resolution 1989/65 according to which it is incumbent upon States to provide "effective protection through judicial or other means to individuals and groups who are in danger of extra-legal,

arbitrary or summary executions, including those who receive death threats”. We would like to refer to Human Rights Committee general comment No. 36, wherein the Committee stated that the obligation upon State parties to respect and ensure the right to life extends to reasonably foreseeable threats, including those emanating from private persons and entities. The duty to protect the right to life requires State parties to take special protective measures for persons in situations of vulnerability who have been placed at particular risk because of specific threats.

We urge Your Excellency’s Government in line with the Principles on Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions, in particular principle 9, that there must be thorough, prompt and impartial investigations of all suspected cases of extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions. In its general comment No. 36, the Human Rights Committee stated that investigations and prosecutions of potentially unlawful deprivations of life should be undertaken in accordance with relevant international standards, including the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death, and must be aimed at ensuring that those responsible are brought to justice, at promoting accountability and preventing impunity, at avoiding denial of justice and at drawing necessary lessons for revising practices and policies with a view to avoiding repeated violations.

We further wish to recall article 5 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (hereafter ICERD), which guarantees the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equal treatment before tribunals and all other organs administering justice. It also guarantees equality before the law, the security of the person and protection by the State against violence or bodily harm, whether inflicted by government officials or by any individual group or institution. It is noted that any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life constitute racial discrimination (article 1). In this sense, article 2 of the Convention requires States to implement affirmative measures to ensure the adequate development and protection of certain racial groups or individuals belonging to them, such as indigenous communities and individuals, with a view to guaranteeing them the full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We further refer to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), ratified by Nigeria on 29 July 1993. Article 11(1) ICESCR guarantees the right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions.

In its general comment No. 4 on the right to adequate housing, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) has clarified that the right to housing should not be interpreted in a narrow or restrictive sense, such as merely having a roof over one’s head; rather, it should be seen as the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity. It includes, among others, the availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure essential for health, security, comfort and nutrition, including sustainable access to natural and common resources, safe drinking water, energy for cooking, heating and lighting, sanitation and washing facilities, means of

food storage, refuse disposal, site drainage and emergency services. It has also clarified that characteristics of housing adequacy include also security of tenure, affordability, habitability, accessibility, location and cultural adequacy. Housing is not adequate if it does not respect and take into account the expression of cultural identity. The Committee has indicated that States must allocate sufficient resources to the realization of the right to adequate housing and prioritize the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized individuals or groups.

We wish to recall that, as clarified by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in its general comment No. 7, forced evictions are a gross violation of the right to adequate housing and may also result in violations of other human rights, such as the right to life, the right to security of the person, the right to non-interference with privacy, family and home and the right to the peaceful enjoyment of possessions.

We further wish to draw your attention to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. All authorities and international actors shall respect and ensure respect for their obligations under international law, including human rights and humanitarian law, in all circumstances, so as to prevent and avoid conditions that might lead to displacement of persons (principle 5). Every human being shall have the right to be protected against being arbitrarily displaced from his or her home or place of habitual residence, including in cases of large-scale development projects, which are not justified by compelling or overriding public interests. (principle 6). Prior to any decision requiring the displacement of persons, the authorities concerned shall ensure that all feasible alternatives are explored in order to avoid displacement altogether. Where no alternatives exist, all measures shall be taken to minimize displacement and its adverse effects (principle 7(1)). The authorities undertaking such displacement shall ensure, to the greatest practicable extent, that proper accommodation is provided to the displaced persons, that such displacements are effected in satisfactory conditions of safety, nutrition, health and hygiene, and that members of the same family are not separated (principle 7(2)).

If displacement occurs in situations other than during the emergency stages of armed conflicts and disasters, the following guarantees shall be complied with: (a) a specific decision shall be taken by a State authority empowered by law to order such measures; (b) adequate measures shall be taken to guarantee to those to be displaced full information on the reasons and procedures for their displacement and, where applicable, on compensation and relocation; (c) the free and informed consent of those to be displaced shall be sought; (d) the authorities concerned shall endeavour to involve those affected, particularly women, in the planning and management of their relocation; (e) law enforcement measures, where required, shall be carried out by competent legal authorities; and (f) the right to an effective remedy, including the review of such decisions by appropriate judicial authorities, shall be respected (principle 7(3)).

Displacement shall not be carried out in a manner that violates the rights to life, dignity, liberty, and security of those affected (principle 8). States are under a particular obligation to protect against the displacement of indigenous peoples, minorities, peasants, pastoralists and other groups with a special dependency on and attachment to their lands (principle 8). Every human being has the right to dignity and physical, mental, and moral integrity, and shall be protected in particular against inter alia rape, mutilation, torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and other

outrages upon personal dignity, such as acts of gender-specific violence, forced prostitution, and any form of indecent violence, acts of violence intended to spread terror among internally displaced persons, and threats and incitement to commit any of the foregoing acts shall be prohibited (principle 11). All internally displaced persons have the right to an adequate standard of living, which at a minimum should include essential food and potable water, basic shelter and housing, appropriate clothing, and essential medical services and sanitation (principle 18).

The Guiding Principles on Resettlement (A/HRC/61/43) establish that where desired, possible and safe, all displaced persons have the right to voluntarily return to their homes or places of habitual residence (Guiding Principles on Resettlement, A/HRC/61/43, principle III(5)). All evicted or displaced persons are entitled to fair, adequate and timely compensation. Loss of access to land and rights attached thereto shall also be compensated by alternative land of a similar productive capacity, quality and size (principle III(7)). All evicted or displaced persons have the right to full reparation, including restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, guarantees of non-repetition and recognition of responsibility, for harms suffered, including non-material and intangible sociocultural losses where appropriate. Reparation shall fully consider and include the impacts on the rights of future generations (principle III(8)). All persons subjected to eviction, displacement or resettlement shall have prompt access to effective judicial, administrative or other remedies, including through legal aid (principle III(13)).

We further wish to bring to your Excellency's Government attention the 2022 report (A/77/190) of the Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing which delves into the concept of "domicide" defined as "the deliberate destruction of homes, the rendering of homes uninhabitable or any other systematic denial of housing when such acts are carried out in violation of international law and committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack against any civilian population". While stressing that the systematic and widespread destruction of housing and civilian infrastructure in conflict may already be prosecuted as a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute (art. 7), the Special Rapporteur has called for the recognition of domicile as a standalone crime under international criminal law.

Article 11(2) of ICESCR provides "the fundamental right to freedom from hunger and malnutrition", which is of immediate application. Article 11(1) of the ICESCR further requires States to "take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right". The CESCR stressed in its general comment No. 12 that the core content of the right to adequate food refers to the possibilities either for feeding oneself directly from productive land or other natural resources, or for well-functioning distribution, processing and market systems (para. 12). According to the Committee, the obligation to respect existing access to adequate food requires State parties to refrain from taking any pressures that result in preventing such access. The obligation to protect requires the State to take measures to ensure that enterprises or individuals do not deprive other individuals of their access to adequate food. The obligation to fulfil (facilitate) means the State must pro-actively engage in activities intended to strengthen people's access to and utilization of resources and means to ensure their livelihood, including their access to land to ensure their food security (para. 15). The right to be free from hunger and malnutrition is not subjected to progressive realization as it must be fulfilled in a more urgent manner (para. 1).

As stated by the Committee in its general comment No. 12, States are required to respect existing access to adequate food and to take no action to prevent such access. The Committee also recalled that the formal repeal or suspension of legislation necessary for the continued enjoyment of the right to food may constitute a violation of this right. The formulation and implementation of national strategies, mandatory for the progressive realization of the right to food, require full compliance with the principles of transparency, accountability and participation of the people. Paragraph 54 of general comment No. 12 also emphasizes that “[t]he denial of access to food to particular individuals or groups” constitutes a violation of the right to food.

We also wish to draw the attention of your Excellency’s Government to CESCR’s general comment No. 26 on land and economic, social and cultural rights, which emphasizes the essential role of land in the realization of a range of rights under ICESCR. In fact, the secure and equitable access to, use of and control over land for individuals and communities can be essential to eradicate hunger and poverty and to guarantee the right to an adequate standard of living, including the right to food and to adequate housing, as housing is often built on land used for the purpose of food production. Without such access, people could be subject to displacement and forced eviction, which could violate their right to adequate housing. Therefore, States parties shall put in place laws and policies that allow for the recognition of informal tenure through participatory, gender-sensitive processes, paying particular attention to tenant farmers, peasants and other small-scale food producers (para. 39).

We would also like to bring to the attention of your Excellency’s Government article 4(c & d) of the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, which notes the responsibility of States to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and, in accordance with national legislation, punish acts of violence against women, whether those acts are perpetrated by the State or by private persons. We would also like to refer to S/RES/2427 (2018), raising concern on “the human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law committed by all non-state armed groups, including those who commit acts of terrorism, including abuses and violations such as mass abductions and sexual and gender-based violence (...)”, and S/RES/2467 (2019), noting that sexual violence in armed conflict and post conflicts situations disproportionately affect women and girls but can target men and boys too.

We also wish to draw your attention to the Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls on violence against indigenous women and girls, in which she points out that “situations of armed conflict, which often are related to lands, territories and natural resources, have a heavy impact on the rights of indigenous peoples and indigenous women and girls. In nearly every region of the world, indigenous peoples are being displaced and severely affected by violence on their lands and territories” (para. 27 of A/HRC/56/26). In her report she also emphasized that “gender discrimination puts indigenous women in vulnerable situations, particularly during migration. Indigenous women and girls who have been displaced, because of armed conflict, mostly related to their lands, territories or natural resources, suffer heightened vulnerability to gender-based violence” (para. 34 of A/HRC/56/26). In this regard the Special Rapporteur recommends that States must ensure that their domestic legislation on gender-based violence against women is fully applicable to indigenous women and girls and sensitive to their experiences, and that States prevent, investigate,

and punish perpetrators committing violence against women and girls, provide reparations, and ensure non-repetition (paras. 75 and 76 of A/HRC/56/26).

Finally, we would like to draw the attention of Your Excellency's Government to States' obligations to provide victims of human rights violations with effective remedies. Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law, adopted by the General Assembly in 2006, provide that victims of a gross violation of international human rights law or of a serious violation of international humanitarian law must be guaranteed, equal and effective access to justice; adequate, effective and prompt reparation for harm suffered; and access to relevant information concerning violations and reparation mechanisms.