



Integrated Country Strategy

NIGERIA

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Nigeria is arguably the single most important strategic partner for the United States in sub-Saharan Africa. About one out of every six Africans resides in Nigeria, and its extensive diaspora spans the globe. With an estimated nearly 220 million people—more than half of whom are under 20 years old—in 2022, it is the most populous and one of the youngest countries in Africa; at its current growth rate, Nigeria’s population should double by 2050. Over 90 million Muslims and as many Christians—and over 250 ethnic groups—live together in Nigeria, many in the same families and under common roofs. With a GDP upwards of \$480 billion, the nation’s economy eclipses all others on the continent, and Nigeria is the home of vibrant film, banking, and information technology industries. Its talented human capital and other resources including oil, a strong agricultural sector, and a shrewd business culture compare favorably with the rest of Africa. However, rampant insecurity in the forms of terrorism, armed criminal activity, and intercommunal violence plagues Nigeria, which faces compounded challenges from widespread disease, rampant unemployment, poverty, a significant disaffected youth population, and pervasive corruption.

The U.S. Mission in Nigeria is comprised of U.S. Embassy Abuja and U.S. Consulate General Lagos, with both promoting our interests with the national and state-level governments, private sector, and civil society. The Mission’s priorities are to see Nigeria have stronger democratic institutions, governance, and respect for human rights, for it to engage in mutually beneficial trade and investment with the United States, and for the country to strengthen its human capital to facilitate economic growth, human development, and public health response capacity for all Nigerians. Moreover, the Mission seeks a united, peaceful, and stable Nigeria, with government institutions and a robust civil society that act in concert to promote a stable social fabric. The Mission also aims to protect U.S. citizens, our homeland, and interests against criminal, health, and security threats. These priorities reflect the realities of the insecurity and other trends affecting the country and the opportunities that elections in 2023 represent to changing the country’s trajectory and its future.

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The Mission and our like-minded diplomatic partners are committed to assisting the Nigerian people to conduct credible national elections in 2023 to build on Nigeria's track record of constitutional transfers of power over the past two decades. Deepening inclusive political participation is an important objective to further consolidate democracy in Africa's most populous nation. Beyond the elections, the Mission is preparing to capitalize on the election of a new government in 2023 through empowering civil society and building government capacity to ensure stronger democratic institutions that are responsive to Nigeria's citizenry, respect human rights, and address the scourge of gender-based violence.

Long-standing people-to-people and economic ties between Nigeria and the United States underscore the need to support Nigeria's vibrant, diverse, and entrepreneurial business culture to bolster a dependable partner for trade and investment. The Mission will concentrate its efforts to boost U.S.-Nigerian economic ties through investments in training and technical assistance to improve Nigeria's energy and agricultural sectors, and by creating opportunities to bolster entrepreneurship, especially for women, youth, and those with disabilities. The Mission will work to improve the capacity and quality of Nigeria's federal service, particularly in its ability to combat cyber threats, financial crime, and money laundering; to harmonize its trade and customs regimes to facilitate commerce; and to address Nigeria's environmental challenges.

The Mission's instrumental role in tackling HIV/AIDS has put Nigeria on the verge of achieving epidemic control by 2024 through a data-driven, targeted approach. It also has played a pivotal part in eradicating wild polio virus from the country. Our efforts now are focused on consolidating gains in treatment coverage and to increase Nigerian government funding to maintain the program's gains. At the same time, the Mission will work to increase Nigeria's capacity for fighting polio, malaria, and other diseases that threaten the health security and economic well-being of the country. The Mission will partner with the Nigerian government and civil society to address air and water pollution and to bolster hygiene and sanitation to ensure Nigeria has a healthier population, while working to increase the resiliency of Nigeria's health care system. The Mission's education initiatives will help Nigeria to provide higher quality education to more of its people.

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An overarching Mission aim is to save lives and alleviate the suffering of the most vulnerable while helping the Nigerian people to secure their country's prosperous future. To this end, increasing policing capacity and military professionalism to combat the country's rampant insecurity are critical priorities in our efforts to stabilize and bring peace to parts of Nigeria. The sustained efforts of Nigeria's security forces and terrorist in-fighting have led to the degradation of Boko Haram and significant mass surrenders. However, ISIS-West Africa continues to control wide swaths of Borno State. The Borno State government continues to move forward with returns of some of the more than two million internally displaced persons to their homes in their devastated villages—some for the first time in years. The Mission and our development partners are taking a comprehensive approach to ensuring humanitarian assistance reaches these people in need. The Mission's activities will work to stabilize and bolster the government's ability to provide services to these newly liberated villages and to boost their economic resiliency. At the same time, spurred by a lack of jobs and the lure of easy money, organized criminal gangs have taken advantage of Nigeria's overstretched police and military to attack villages, ambush vehicles on highways, and kidnap people for ransom, and carry out maritime crime off the country's coastline. Additionally, sporadic but relentless intercommunal violence over resources or ethnic or religious differences continue to impede the lives and livelihoods of many Nigerians. The Mission is committed to reinforcing police capacity to solve crimes and to supporting government, civil society, and grassroots efforts to promote intercommunal dialogue to diffuse conflicts, reduce violence, and build social trust.

Mission Nigeria's consular sections are among the highest-volume visa processing operations in the world and help protect more than 130,000 U.S. citizens who reside in Nigeria, as well as tens of thousands of U.S. citizens who visit the country annually. The consular sections work closely with Nigerian counterparts, the Regional Security Office, and other U.S. government agencies to protect U.S. borders and citizens. Our heavy consular workload reflects our close economic relationship. More than 13,000 Nigerian students study in the United States, and they contribute an estimated \$500 million to our economy.

To sustain the Mission, its Management Sections seek to attract more U.S. Direct Hire bidders, improve upon already-high morale and quality of life, and enhance the local compensation

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package for Locally Employed Staff given rising inflation and currency devaluation. To do this, the Mission aims to improve and expand its housing pool, increase the number of positions for Eligible Family Members, and broaden our outreach effort to promote service in Nigeria, including through recruitment videos and targeted marketing. It also will undertake a redesign of Embassy Abuja's consular section to facilitate increased volume and more efficient operations while conforming to the latest regulations. By the end of this strategy's timeline, the Mission will have completed the building and commissioning of a new Consul General compound in Lagos, allowing us to expand our diplomatic impact.

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2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Stronger Democratic Institutions, Governance, and Respect for Human Rights

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Nigeria's Governance Becomes More Accountable, Inclusive, and Responsive (Incorporates CDCS DO 3)
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Nigeria has Stronger Democratic Institutions, including Rule of Law, Respect for Human Rights, Decreased Corruption, and Transparency and Accountability in Government
- **Mission Objective 1.3:** Nigeria Reduces Endemic Corruption at All Levels of Government

Mission Goal 2: Mutually Beneficial Trade and Investment, and Strengthened Human Capital for Inclusive Nigerian Economic Growth and Human Development

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Nigeria Promotes Broadened and Inclusive Economic Growth (Incorporates CDCS DO 1)
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** Nigeria has an Empowered and Well-Equipped Professional Federal Service Aligned with U.S. Regulations and Enforcement Standards
- **Mission Objective 2.3:** Nigeria has a Healthier Population and Provides Higher Quality Education to More of its People (Incorporates CDCS DO 2)

Mission Goal 3: A United, Peaceful, and Stable Nigeria and U.S. Borders and Interests Protected Against Security Threats

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Nigeria's capacity to combat instability and criminality improves, while setting the Conditions for the Safe, Voluntary Return of Displaced Persons to their Communities
- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Nigeria Encourages Peaceful Dialogue amongst its People and Facilitates Conflict Prevention and Mediation Across Nigeria

- **Mission Objective 3.3:** Selected States Demonstrate Greater Stability and Early Recovery from Rampant Insecurity (CDCS special objective)
- **Mission Objective 3.4:** Nigeria Works with the United States to Improve Protection of U.S. Borders and U.S. Citizens

Management Objective 1: Improve the Mission's Recruitment Process to Attract a Greater Number of Highly Qualified USDH Bidders

Management Objective 2: Improve the Local Compensation Plan to Offset Inflation, Currency Depreciation, and Competition from Other Employers

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1: Stronger Democratic Institutions, Governance, and Respect for Human Rights

Description: Poor governance and weak, unresponsive government institutions severely constrain the provision of basic social services and erode citizen's trust in government. Citizens lack the capacity to hold their governments accountable and public perception of government corruption has not changed. The USG will support the national elections in 2023 to enhance their credibility and inclusivity and to help minimize the threats of voter fraud and political violence. Our support is aimed at improving law enforcement capacity and bolstering administrative and financial management at state and local levels, as well as strengthening civil society watchdogs to combat corruption more effectively. Furthermore, the USG plans to take advantage of this historic inflection point and the inauguration of a new government in 2023 to strengthen the Nigerian government's capacity to protect human rights, foster greater societal inclusion of marginalized groups, and combat the scourge of gender-based violence.

Objective 1.1: Nigeria's Governance Becomes More Accountable, Inclusive, and Responsive (Incorporates CDCS DO 3)

- **Justification:** For Nigeria's governance to become more accountable, the USG will engage with the government and assist Nigerian election officials and other entities involved in the electoral process to facilitate peaceful, transparent, and credible elections in February. To make Nigeria's institutions more inclusive, the USG will work with the Nigerian government and civil society to increase overall voter turnout in the 2023 elections with emphasis on encouraging the political participation of marginalized groups including youth, women, persons with disabilities, and internally displaced people. To improve Nigerian responsiveness, the USG will work to empower civic voices to establish an open and inclusive civil space for greater accountability for government officials and institutions in Nigeria during the 2023 election cycle.

- **Linkages:** This objective links directly to the NSC’s comprehensive U.S. Bilateral Policy Framework for Nigeria; Development Objective 3, Accountable, inclusive, and responsive governance strengthened, in USAID’s Country Development Strategy (2020-2025); as well as U.S. National Security Strategy and Department’s policy guidance on “Promoting Gender Equality and Advancing the Status of Women and Girls” and E.O. 13985 Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities.
- **Risks:** The credible presidential election in 2015 was Nigeria’s first democratic handover of power from a ruling party to an opposition candidate. When President Muhammadu Buhari won again in 2019, the opposition challenged the election for voting irregularities in northern states. Despite Buhari running on a platform of increasing security, growing the economy, and tackling corruption, these priorities have not been met, and have measurably worsened, leading to growing public disillusionment and a widening trust deficit with the government.

Ruling party court challenges to gubernatorial elections in 2019 exposed undue government influence on the judiciary and resulted in the overturning of some results. The most glaring example of Imo State, where the Supreme Court put the fourth-place finisher in office, exemplifies a deficiency of democracy through a pattern of resorting to the courts to gain office when politicians fail to win through the ballot box. Likewise, irregularities have marred political party primaries, and violence and vote-buying have marked subsequent state gubernatorial races.

While it has the capacity, in conjunction with international assistance and monitoring, to manage the national elections in 2023 in a credible fashion, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has exhibited vulnerabilities to facilitating free, fair, credible elections in the face of deliberate attempts by politicians to subvert voting processes.

Objective 1.2: Nigeria has Stronger Democratic Institutions, including Rule of Law, Respect for Human Rights, and Transparency and Accountability in Government

- **Justification:** The USG will position public institutions to begin to provide services in a more accountable, effective, transparent, and equitable manner, with increased capacity to protect human rights soon after a new Nigerian president takes office. The USG will engage with Nigerian security services to assist them to be effective at holding accountable their personnel who commit crimes or abuses against civilians. The USG will actively engage in advocacy to foster greater societal inclusion of marginalized groups, increased gender equality, and reduced incidences of gender-based violence. Moreover, USG support will encourage Nigerian government and independent media institutions to feature a more inclusive array of citizen perspectives and accurately report electoral process developments.
- **Linkages:** This objective links directly to the NSC’s comprehensive U.S. Bilateral Policy Framework for Nigeria; the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance; the State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan; as well as U.S. National Security Strategy and Department’s policy guidance on “Promoting Gender Equality and Advancing the Status of Women and Girls” and E.O. 13985 Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities.
- **Risks:** Nigeria’s fundamental problem is patronage-based political and economic decision making, with little to no coordination between relevant ministries, and a disempowered civil service that does not sufficiently advise the federal government or sustain policy objectives over multiple administrations. Political and economic elites lobby for policy decisions that favor their short-term personal interests rather than the longer-term stability and unity of the state. Patronage drives elite identity politics with an overlay of ethnic, regional, and religious distinctions. Political competition—through elections—is typically pursued to gain financial access to state resources to feed patronage networks. This elite behavior is creating greater income inequality in the country and disillusioning Nigerians, who do not view their elected leaders as serving the public’s interest.

The national government lacks the strategic planning capability, resources, and operational capacity to deal with the underlying drivers of conflict in Nigeria over the long term or to defeat terrorist groups, which are threats to U.S. interests. ISIS-West Africa's expansion, including the addition of some former Boko Haram fighters, and links to terrorist groups in the Sahel are growing concerns. Militancy in the Niger Delta, continuing rural violence, and South East secession movements continue to pose challenges to Nigerian peace and stability, as the Nigerian military and police are stretched too thin to deal effectively with rapidly evolving security challenges in all states and regions.

Objective 1.3: Nigeria Reduces Endemic Corruption at All Levels of Government

- **Justification:** The USG will continue to help Nigerians fight corruption, with the aim of improving the environment for civil society, citizens, and other entities working to combat corruption to operate more freely, with reduced government interference. The USG will engage with and assist public institutions to combat corruption more effectively. It will work with civil society organizations involved in the reintegration of looted assets recovered from the U.S. banking system to affirm those funds already repatriated have been channeled into appropriate end-uses that bolster the Nigerian economy.
- **Linkages:** This objective links directly to the NSC's comprehensive U.S. Bilateral Policy Framework for Nigeria; Development Objective 3, Accountable, inclusive, and responsive governance strengthened, in USAID's Country Development Strategy (2020-2025); as well as the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, National Security Memoranda, the State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan.
- **Risks:** Unemployment, especially among youth, continues to out-pace job growth and creates the conditions to drive young people towards corruption or to join criminal or extremist groups.

Accelerating population growth will worsen high youth unemployment absent fundamental changes to service delivery and economic policies, especially in the energy,

agriculture, and information and communication technology sectors that would accelerate job creation.

Poverty indicators remain dire, increasing the challenges for economic growth and development and tendencies towards corruption. Almost half the population lives in extreme poverty. This has caused a rise in Nigerians turning towards criminal activities, such as kidnapping for ransom (which is endemic and has altered Nigeria's way of life, including basic movement), piracy, and oil bunkering.

Mission Goal 2: Mutually Beneficial Trade and Investment, and Strengthened Human Capital for Inclusive Nigerian Economic Growth and Human Development

Description: Supporting Nigeria's vibrant, diverse, and entrepreneurial business culture to bolster a dependable partner for trade and investment will build on shared deep and long-standing ties between the two countries. The USG will concentrate its efforts to boost U.S.-Nigerian economic ties through investments in training and technical assistance to improve Nigeria's energy and agricultural sectors, as well as creating opportunities to bolster entrepreneurship, especially for women, youth, and those with disabilities. The USG will work to improve the capacity and quality of Nigeria's federal service, particularly in its ability to combat cyber threats, financial crime, and money laundering; to harmonize its trade and customs regimes to facilitate commerce; and to address Nigeria's environmental challenges. Building on the profound role the USG has played in fighting HIV/AIDS in Nigeria, it will work to achieve HIV epidemic control and to increase Nigeria's capacity for fighting polio, malaria, and other diseases that threaten the health of the country. Moreover, the USG will collaborate with the Nigerian government and civil society to ensure Nigeria has a healthier population by addressing the environmental issues of pollution, hygiene and sanitation, and the resiliency of Nigeria's health care system. The USG will further help Nigeria to provide higher quality education to more of its people to ensure the human development of all Nigerians, including youth, women, people with disabilities, and ethnic and sexual minorities.

Objective 2.1: Nigeria Promotes Broadened and Inclusive Economic Growth (Incorporates CDCS DO 1)

- **Justification:** Broad based and inclusive economic growth will reduce poverty and create new opportunities for U.S. and Nigerian businesses to positively contribute to and benefit from mutual economic growth. The USG will work to deepen the U.S.-Nigerian trade relationship and to make it more robust, as sustainable poverty reduction and economic growth in Nigeria will only be achieved through private sector-led growth. Stabilizing Nigeria's business environment will lead to increases in U.S. investment in the country. The oil price shock at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for Nigeria to diversify its economy. The country continues to struggle in developing its agriculture value chain after years of neglect, largely attributed to over-reliance on petroleum for government revenue and foreign exchange earnings. If agricultural competitiveness and access to electricity are increased more broadly across Nigeria, and simultaneously the business environment is reformed, then the sources of growth will expand more evenly across the country, there will be greater private sector investment, and the share of the labor force included in this growth process will likely increase. U.S. support for youth and women's entrepreneurship will increase entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and the economic participation of marginalized groups.
- **Linkages:** This objective links directly to the NSC's comprehensive U.S. Bilateral Policy Framework for Nigeria; Development Objective 1, Broadened and Inclusive Economic Growth, in USAID's Country Development Strategy (2020-2025); as well as the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, and the State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan.
- **Risks:** Nigeria's economic growth is hampered by one of the lowest per capita rates of power availability in the world: about 50% of the population has access to power. Sanitation covers only 30% of the population in northern areas of the country. Bottlenecks to inclusive growth, such as poor access to inputs and markets, coupled with an unfriendly business environment have prevented most Nigerians from benefitting from the country's robust economic growth. Although Nigeria's agricultural

sector employs nearly 70 percent of the population and contributes close to 22 percent of GDP, the sector is underperforming.

Trade policy is largely protectionist. A small number of politically connected businesspeople manipulate the system to their advantage, limiting the opportunity to expand U.S. exports to Nigeria. President Buhari is perceived as generally distrustful of free market principles. Price controls of certain items persist. Private and public sector infrastructure investments remain seriously inadequate for what is necessary to support sustained economic growth. Meanwhile, China offers sub-prime financing for a range of infrastructure projects, with the potential to add unnecessarily to Nigeria's debt burden and increase Chinese influence over the Nigerian government.

Objective 2.2: Nigeria has an Empowered and Well-Equipped Professional Federal Service Aligned with U.S. Regulations and Enforcement Standards

- **Justification:** A professional federal service whose work and goals are aligned with U.S. regulations and enforcement standards will enable Nigeria to better realize the goal of inclusive economic growth and human development, poverty reduction, greater economic opportunities, and new opportunities for U.S. businesses to positively contribute to and benefit from Nigerian economic growth. Nigeria is particularly susceptible to cyber threats, which can hamper the ability of the government and private sector to provide benefits and jobs to its citizens. Nigeria is similarly vulnerable to the malignant effects of money laundering and threat of terrorist finance. These threats can damage Nigeria's embryonic leadership in e-money and financial technology, fields that hold promise for economic growth and job creation. Nigeria also urgently needs to increase and diversify its trading regime, and to broaden its network of economic relationships. A key weak area in this area of international trade is its customs procedures, and the need for Nigeria to comply with international trade and shipping standards. Finally, Nigeria faces a range of environmental challenges, from threats to its biodiversity, wildlife trafficking, illegal fishing, oil spills and climate change. In all these areas, and in close coordination and collaboration with the USG and

international bodies, Nigeria has potential to support this goal of inclusive economic growth and human development.

- **Linkages:** This objective links directly to the NSC's comprehensive U.S. Bilateral Policy Framework for Nigeria; Development Objective 3, Accountable, inclusive, and responsive governance strengthened, in USAID's Country Development Strategy (2020-2025); as well as the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, the State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan, and various Executive Orders on Climate Change.
- **Risks:** Despite President Buhari's stated commitment to tackling corruption on all levels and progress in that effort, there is still widespread grand corruption by persons in business, government, and the security services, and petty corruption at all levels. Uneven enforcement of the anti-corruption campaign is viewed by detractors as politically motivated. Present levels of corruption continue to pose legal risks, deter U.S. investment, and affect the capacity of governments at all levels to implement laws, directives, and regulations. The active and growing domestic and international civil society community, essential to strengthening Nigeria's democratic institutions and the country's long-term stability, presently has little influence on key players in this area. A culture of petty corruption affects everyday activities, such as interactions with the police, health care providers, and schools. The courts and judicial authorities are not immune to allegations of corruption. Absent a change in this culture, the long-term prospects for significant improvements in service delivery, governance, and the climate for U.S. investment are poor.

Objective 2.3: Nigeria has a Healthier, More Educated Population (incorporates CDCS DO 2)

- **Justification:** Productivity in Nigeria is greatly reduced by the high burden of preventable and/or treatable diseases including measles, polio, malaria, and HIV. Improved public health and education increases economic activity and opportunity for U.S. business. To that end, the USG will work with the Nigerian government and its other partners to see Nigeria reach epidemic control goals for HIV/AIDS and to interrupt new variants of polio and other communicable disease outbreaks. In addition,

improving the overall health care system for emergencies and chronic diseases and strengthening of the universal health care system will also be key to achieving a healthier nation. The USG also will support Nigeria as it implements select national health guidelines and standards of practice to increase utilization of quality health services, disease prevention programs, and access to clean water. The USG also will promote Nigerian health by supporting the implementation of programs that raise awareness and reduce the impact of air pollution and waste production on human health and economic development. To increase the number of Nigerians who receive quality education, the USG will provide resources to strengthen education delivery and learning outcomes and Nigerians' access to post-secondary, adult, enrichment, and job training programs. USG-sponsored skill building, knowledge-based exchange, scholarship, and grant programs will expose more future Nigerian leaders to U.S. standards, encouraging their positive disposition to the United States.

- **Linkages:** This objective links directly to the NSC's comprehensive U.S. Bilateral Policy Framework for Nigeria; Development Objective 2, A healthier, better educated population, in USAID's Country Development Strategy (2020-2025); as well as the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, the State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan, the U.S. National Security Strategy and Department's policy guidance on "Promoting Gender Equality and Advancing the Status of Women and Girls," and E.O. 13985 Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities.
- **Risks:** Nigeria's health situation is characterized by a high population growth rate; high total fertility rate; predominance of infectious diseases; disease outbreaks including Lassa fever, cholera, measles, yellow fever, meningitis, and global health threats such as COVID-19; weak health infrastructure and systems; climate change; and civil conflict and political instability.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted in detail the weaknesses in Nigeria's bio-preparedness and health security and has been a forcing function to strengthen these systems to better prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease outbreaks.

Education outcomes are low and attrition at the basic education level is notably high, particularly in northern Nigeria. For youth fortunate to reach and graduate from secondary school, a lack of employable skills for productive work and an unreliable job market result in high unemployment and brain drain. The high number of Nigeria's undereducated children translates into a generation of people projected to have poor social and economic outcomes. Moreover, insecurity and violence threaten access to education. In 2021 alone, there were 25 incidents involving the kidnapping of 1,440 school children. States have undertaken drastic efforts to thwart the risks of insurgent attacks on schools, including the complete closure of schools statewide.

Mission Goal 3: A United, Peaceful, and Stable Nigeria and U.S. Borders and Interests Protected Against Security Threats

Description: Mission Nigeria aims to save lives and alleviate the suffering of the most vulnerable while helping the Nigerian people to secure their country's prosperous future. USG support will promote a peaceful and stable Nigeria by increasing policing capacity and military professionalism to combat the country's rampant insecurity. Working with Nigerian leaders, civil society organizations, and the international community, the USG will seek to prevent, mitigate, and resolve violent insecurity and its humanitarian consequences. Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa continue to terrorize the North East, attacking people and institutions they believe support the Nigerian state. At the same time, spurred by a lack of jobs and the lure of easy money, organized criminal gangs have taken advantage of Nigeria's overstretched police and military to attack villages, ambush vehicles on highways, and kidnap people for ransom. Similarly, separatist groups have become emboldened to threaten Nigeria's government and people, as have violent gangs, Niger Delta militants, and pirates. Additionally, sporadic but relentless intercommunal violence over resources or ethnic or religious differences continue to impede the lives and livelihoods of many Nigerians. The Mission is committed to reinforcing police capacity to solve crimes and to supporting government, civil society, and grassroots efforts to promote intercommunal dialogue to diffuse conflicts, reduce violence, and build social trust.

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The sustained efforts of Nigeria's security forces have seen relative success in degrading enough of the virulence of ISIS-West Africa and the remnants of Boko Haram to enable some of the more than two million internally displaced persons to return to their homes and lives in their devastated villages—some for the first time in years. The USG will work with its partners to take a comprehensive approach to ensuring humanitarian assistance reaches these people in need. The USG will support efforts to stabilize and fortify the government's ability to provide services to these newly liberated villages and to boost their economic resiliency.

The USG will continue to help more than 130,000 U.S. citizens who reside in Nigeria, as well as tens of thousands of U.S. citizens who visit the country annually. The USG will work closely with Nigerian counterparts to protect U.S. borders and citizens.

Objective 3.1: Nigeria's capacity to combat instability and criminality improves, while setting the Conditions for the Safe, Voluntary Return of Displaced Persons to their Communities

- **Justification:** Nigeria's security forces, federal and state governments remain ill-prepared to address the host of security and social crises caused by multiple actors across the country. The USG will support Nigeria's security services and defense institutions to be more professional and to have greater institutional capacity to combat insecurity. The sustained efforts of Nigeria's security forces and infighting between terrorist groups have degraded and contained enough of the virulence of ISIS-West Africa and the remnants of Boko Haram to enable some of the more than two million internally displaced persons to return to their homes and lives in their devastated villages—some for the first time in years. The USG will support the Nigerian government to secure and stabilize liberated areas and return displaced persons permanently. Moreover, the USG will aim to provide training and technical assistance to Nigerian authorities to improve their investigative practices to meet international forensics standards and to hold accountable perpetrators of major crimes. The USG also will support the Nigerian government's capacity to conduct counterterrorism investigations, operations, and prosecutions to international standards and to publish results transparently.

- **Linkages:** This objective links directly to the NSC's comprehensive U.S. Bilateral Policy Framework for Nigeria and the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance.
- **Risks:** Violent crime and kidnapping for ransom are a threat to U.S. citizens and businesses throughout Nigeria. Furthermore, ISIS-West Africa continues to pose threats to U.S. interests. They attack security forces and communities in the North East, making the return of over 1.8 million people displaced to their homes in the region dangerous. Future peace and stability in the Lake Chad Basin depend on neutralizing the threats from these groups, followed by stabilization, reconstruction, development, and reconciliation. Long term prospects for peace are bleak unless Nigeria can defeat—not just contain—ISIS-West Africa.

Objective 3.2: Nigeria Encourages Peaceful Dialogue among its People and Facilitates Conflict Prevention and Mediation Across Nigeria

- **Justification:** Nigeria's ongoing crises span the entirety of the country, from terrorism in the North East, banditry, and rampant kidnapping for ransom in the North West, intercommunal violence in the North Central and South West regions, militancy and piracy in the South South region, and often violent, disruptive separatist groups in the South East. The USG will support programs that encourage civil society to promote dialogue, conflict prevention, and mediation. It will also support expanding the capabilities of the country's national, state, and local early warning and response systems to improve inter-group social cohesion and trust among its citizens.
- **Linkages:** This objective links directly to the NSC's comprehensive U.S. Bilateral Policy Framework for Nigeria; Development Objective 3, Accountable, inclusive, and responsive governance strengthened, in USAID's Country Development Strategy (2020-2025); as well as the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, and the State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan.
- **Risks:** Growing rural violence, particularly in the North West, is undermining confidence in Nigerian federal and state government institutions, which threatens the foundations

of democratic governance and is increasing societal tensions, especially between North and South. Both factors could threaten political stability.

Objective 3.3 | Selected States Demonstrate Greater Stability and Early Recovery from Rampant Insecurity

- **Justification:** The USG will support Nigerian government efforts to facilitate the international community's humanitarian assistance where needed as internally displaced persons begin to return to their homes. It will further support these communities as the Nigerian government begins to reestablish basic public services in newly stabilized areas through efforts to increase economic resilience while bolstering these areas' peace-building abilities.
- **Linkages:** This objective links directly to the NSC's comprehensive U.S. Bilateral Policy Framework for Nigeria; Special Objective, Greater stability and early recovery advanced in selected states, in USAID's Country Development Strategy (2020-2025); as well as the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, and the State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan.
- **Risks:** Nigerians suffer from the government's inability to provide basic public services like health care, access to clean water and power supply because of corruption, poor project execution, and political will. The rapidly expanding population is putting a strain on existing resources. This has pushed many Nigerians further into poverty and is worsening the existing insecurity. Food prices have risen exponentially, and businesses are struggling to keep afloat.

Objective 3.4: Nigeria Works with the United States to Improve Protection of U.S. Borders and U.S. Citizens.

- **Justification:** To facilitate a more productive mutual relationship with the Nigerian government to protect U.S. borders and citizens, the USG will support Nigeria's capability to secure all major ports of entry against communicable health threats and transnational criminal activity that affect U.S. citizens or interests. The USG will promote

increased information sharing with the Nigerian Government and diplomatic community to increase fraud detection and investigative programs to increase border security.

- **Linkages:** This objective links directly to the NSC's comprehensive U.S. Bilateral Policy Framework for Nigeria as well as the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance.
- **Risks:** U.S. consular facilities and staffing are insufficient for projected demand for visa services (non-immigrant visas are projected to increase by 10-25 percent per year), which will drive up appointment wait times. Long wait times and higher refusal rates are significant irritants in the bilateral relationship and could impede increased trade. They also impinge on Mission officers' ability to focus on key issues because of significant pressure to write referrals and priority appointment requests, a valuable "currency" in this transactional political and economic environment.

Transnational organized crime, cybercrime, maritime piracy, and a poor regulatory and enforcement environment undermine U.S. security and economic interests, and contribute to a host of growing threats, including counterfeit products and intellectual property rights infringement.

Nigerian advance fee ("419") scams harm thousands of Americans, and Mission consular personnel handle over 50 complaints from victims or potential victims each week.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1: Improve the Mission's Recruitment Process to Attract a Greater Number of Highly Qualified USDH Bidders

- **Justification:** Nigeria is arguably the single most important strategic partner for the United States in Africa. Since our people are our most valuable resource, the ability of the Mission to carry out its objectives—across all agencies and sections—fundamentally depends on attracting sufficient and qualified bidders, who are often scarce. Working and living in Nigeria is rewarding and satisfying, a story which needs to be better communicated to prospective bidders. These promotion efforts will significantly facilitate the recruitment of highly qualified officers to Mission Nigeria. The Consulate General in Lagos and the Embassy in Abuja have 257 direct U.S. hires and approximately 915 LE Staff. The management platform provides direct support to 12 U.S. agencies that collectively are Mission Nigeria.
- **Linkages:** This objective links directly to the NSC's comprehensive U.S. Bilateral Policy Framework for Nigeria and the other goals and objectives in this Integrated Country Strategy.
- **Risks:** Nigeria's security challenges limit many traditional options for the Mission.

Management Objective 2: Improve the Local Compensation Plan to Offset Inflation, Currency Depreciation, and Competition from Other Employers

- **Justification:** The LE Staff has consistently seen an erosion of its purchasing power through a combination of inflation (18% annually) and currency devaluation (about 25% over the last five years) and is expected to continue. Post has made appeals to GTM/OE to address and compensate for these disturbing trends. To rectify the Local Compensation Plan in a lasting and permanent way, Post is making a compelling case for paying LE Staff salaries pegged to a U.S. dollar figure. Doing so would improve the morale of the LE Staff while ensuring, over the long run, that employees are appropriately and adequately compensated for their service to the Mission.
- **Linkages:** This objective links directly to the NSC's comprehensive U.S. Bilateral Policy Framework for Nigeria and the other goals and objectives in this Integrated Country Strategy.
- **Risks:** Mission Nigeria does not exist in a vacuum and is not the only Mission dealing with rampant inflation. As salaries continue to decline in real value, the Mission may well lose or have trouble hiring new LE Staff.