

## **Ten Steps the Yar'Adua Administration Can Immediately Take to Improve Nigeria's Poor Human Rights Record**

**June 2009**

### **1. Empower Nigerians to Hold Their Government Accountable**

- Call on the National Assembly to pass the Freedom of Information Bill, which would give Nigerians the legal right to compel government institutions to release important information such as government budgets, expenditure reports, and financial audits.
- Enact a law requiring the president, all members of the National Assembly, and all ministers in the federal cabinet to follow the president's example by issuing and publicizing annual declarations of the total value of all personal assets. Require all state governors and senior state and local government officials to do the same.

### **2. Make Nigeria's State and Local Governments More Transparent**

- Subject state and local government expenditures to greater oversight and transparent audits. This should include requiring all state and local governments to compile and regularly publish funding sources, budgets, expenditure reports, and contracts awarded, and requiring that funds allocated to discretionary budget lines be reported in detail.

### **3. Prosecute State Governors Who Embezzled Public Funds**

- Investigate, arrest, and prosecute according to international fair trial standards, or publicly explain the reasons for not prosecuting, the 31 former state governors identified in 2006 as "corrupt" by then-Executive Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission Nuhu Ribadu.
- Propose an amendment to the Nigerian Constitution that would rescind the immunity from all criminal prosecution currently enjoyed by sitting governors.

### **4. Hold Accountable Those Responsible for the Election Violence and Fraud Committed During and Since the April 2007 Elections**

- Launch a transparent, comprehensive, and impartial investigation into allegations of corruption, vote-rigging, and sponsorship of political violence committed during and since the 2007 elections by elected officials, members of the police force, and electoral commission personnel. Prosecute in accordance with international fair trial standards those found implicated in election violence and fraud.
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## 5. Reform the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

- Dismiss the current INEC chairman Maurice Iwu and appoint, for approval by the Senate, a new chair who has broad civil society support and the confidence of Nigeria’s political parties.

## 6. Address the Immediate Crisis and Root Causes of Violence in the Niger Delta

- Ensure that civilian life and property are respected during military operations in the Niger Delta and allow humanitarian agencies full access to the affected areas.
- Investigate, arrest, and prosecute according to international fair trial standards state and local government officials in the Niger Delta who are responsible for embezzling public funds.
- Launch an independent inquiry to establish the links between government officials—including former Rivers State governor Peter Odili—and criminal activities in the Niger Delta such as oil “bunkering” and the sponsorship of criminal gangs. Prosecute in accordance with international fair trial standards those found implicated in arming and sponsoring criminal gangs.

## 7. Hold Accountable Those Responsible for Inter-Communal Violence

- Investigate, arrest, and prosecute according to international fair trial standards the individuals responsible for organizing or carrying out the inter-communal violence that left hundreds dead in Plateau State (2001, 2004, and 2008), Kano (2004), and Kaduna (2000 and 2002).

## 8. End Discriminatory Policies Against “Non-Indigenes”

- Sponsor legislation to end a root cause of inter-communal violence by expressly barring all federal, state, and local government institutions from discriminating against “non-indigenes” with respect to any matter not directly related to traditional leadership institutions or other purely cultural matters.

## 9. Bring to Justice Members of the Security Forces Responsible for Extrajudicial Killings and Other Serious Abuses

- Launch transparent, comprehensive, and impartial investigations into members of the security forces allegedly responsible for the extrajudicial killing of hundreds of people in Jos, Plateau State (2008), and Benue State (2001), and for the razing of the town of Odi in Bayelsa State (1999). Prosecute in accordance with international fair trial standards those found implicated in abuses.

## 10. Reform the Nigeria Police Force

- Appoint a new inspector general of police who is demonstrably committed to rooting out endemic corruption and widespread abuses, including extrajudicial killings, torture, and extortion; and hold the inspector general accountable for carrying out these reforms.