

# [***Prince Harry and Meghan arrive in Nigeria for three-day visit***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C0J-JXC1-DY7V-G018-00000-00&context=1516831)

CNN Wire

May 10, 2024 Friday 11:14 AM GMT

Copyright 2024 Cable News Network All Rights Reserved

**Length:** 1177 words

**Byline:** By Stephanie Busari, Max Foster and Lauren Said-Moorhouse, CNN

**Dateline:** (CNN)

**Body**

Abuja, Nigeria (CNN) &#8212; The [*Duke and Duchess of Sussex*](https://cnn.com/2024/05/08/uk/prince-harry-king-charles-invictus-intl-scli-gbr/index.html) landed in [*Nigeria*](https://cnn.com/2024/03/27/africa/nigerian-woman-faces-jail-over-online-review-of-tomato-puree-intl-scli/index.html) on Friday, launching a three-day private visit to the West African nation, where they will meet with wounded soldiers and visit local charities, officials said.

The Sussexes are visiting the country as it's now a [*"part of the Invictus community,"*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/02/09/africa/nigeria-invictus-games-intl/index.html) Air Vice-Marshal Abidemi Marquis, director of sports for the Nigerian Defence Headquarters, said during a media briefing Thursday.

Their first engagement was an event hosted at a school in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, where Meghan told students: "I see myself in all of you."

Outside the Lightway Academy, students lined up patiently to welcome the royal couple, alongside a troupe of dancers. They were there to kick off a two-day mental health summit run by the GEANCO Foundation, which supports girls and young women across the country with menstrual health products and education.

"We're so honored to be with you. We have got to acknowledge those amazing dance moves! My husband was excited to jump up!" Meghan told cheering students in the school's hall.

Harry then jumped into the conversation, asking the children about their knowledge of mental health and reminding them to look after themselves and each other.

"Will you promise to us that after today, no more being scared, no more being unsure of mental health. If you are unsure, then ask. Ask your teachers. Ask your friends. Be there for one another," he said.

"If you see your friend in your class not smiling, what are you gonna do? You gonna check in with them? Are you gonna ask him if they're okay? 'cause it's okay not to be okay."

As they were leaving, the couple were given a traditional wooden mask and a set of books about Nigerian heritage. "I need to read these now," the duchess added.

Prince Harry and Meghan were invited to Nigeria by the chief of defense staff, Christopher Musa, the country's highest-ranking military official. He formally welcomed them to Nigeria at a meeting Friday lunchtime at the defense headquarters in the heart of Abuja.

The duke expressed gratitude to their hosts, commending Nigeria for recognizing the power of sport in the rehabilitation process for the injured or wounded.

"You're not the first country to notice that it not only transforms lives but saves lives. I'm eternally grateful to you all of you for joining the Invictus movement for Nigeria and for every single soul who's been injured protecting the freedoms of Nigeria," he said.

Marquis said the duchess was keen to accompany her husband on the visit "as part of her lineage and heritage." Meghan revealed in 2022 that she discovered she was 43% Nigerian from a genealogy test.

The trip to Nigeria sparked a wave of excitement among the public when it was announced two weeks ago.

Oyeyemi Aderibigbe, 38, a Lagos-based lawyer, told CNN, "I have watched Harry's evolution and quest for personal expression... and I love how bold he is about living authentically. Meghan was my favorite character in the 'Suits' series. I love how she has spent so much time using her voice for good, openly sharing her experiences."

"Together, they are using their influence to democratize opportunity and push causes for the advantage of underrepresented groups. I would love to see them at an event with young people in ***politics*** in Nigeria," she added.

Entrepreneur Ife Durosinmi-Etti spoke of her joy that Meghan was "coming to a place that she's absolutely loved and welcomed."

"It got me all giddy when I found out about her Nigerian heritage because Nigerian women are smart, resilient, multitalented, they go after what they want and that's exactly how I see her, so when I heard; I was like, 'Yup, that's it, it's the Nigerian Spirit in her,'" the 35-year-old said.

A packed itinerary

This is the Sussexes' first trip as a couple to Nigeria, where they will be heavily promoting Invictus as well as the themes of mental health and female empowerment.

Harry flew to Abuja after [*a quick visit to London*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/08/uk/prince-harry-king-charles-invictus-intl-scli-gbr/index.html), where he attended events marking the 10th anniversary of his Invictus Games, a Paralympics-style event for wounded, injured and sick military personnel and veterans.

Meghan flew in from Los Angeles, and together, they are following a busy schedule, which includes visiting a military rehabilitation center and local organizations dedicated to supporting veterans' welfare.

On Saturday, the duke is also scheduled to join wounded veterans during a sitting volleyball game and later, his wife is expected to co-host a women's leadership event with Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the director-general of the World Trade Organization.

As it has been described as a private visit, the royal couple will not be meeting with Nigeria's president, Bola Tinubu. However, they will meet with the governors of Lagos and Kaduna State.

The UK's high commissioner to Nigeria, Richard Montgomery, told local media that there wouldn't be a meeting with the Nigerian leader because "they are visiting in a private capacity, not an official one."

Profound challenges

Nigeria's military personnel face profound challenges, particularly as the country has been combating the [*Boko Haram insurgency since 2009.*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/13/africa/chibok-girls-ten-years-as-equals-intl-cmd/index.html) On Friday, Musa told the couple more about some of the issues - like terrorism and criminality - that the armed forces contend with, adding that IEDs present "the greatest challenge" for them.

In response, the duke shared that he was looking forward to visiting a hospital supporting military personnel in Kaduna, a city in the north of the country.

The couple's hosts, the Nigerian Defence Headquarters, are eager to be involved further in the Invictus Games and to be part of the wider Invictus community.

Recalling how the most recent games, which were held in Germany last year, saw Nigeria become the first African country to participate, Harry reminisced: "The team that turned up in Dusseldorf was small but mighty. They danced their way into the stage. They won medals and danced off the stage. They were the life and soul of those games. Our goal now is to help you grow that team and provide as much opportunity and resource here in Nigeria and for the games that are coming at the beginning of next year."

Marquis said taking part in the Invictus Games recovery program has boosted the morale of Nigerian soldiers and Nigeria has expressed interest in hosting the games, which take place every two years.

He added: "Eighty percent of our soldiers involved in these recovery programs have a better outlook in life and say it has given them the opportunity to improve their self-esteem and mental health."

Cpl. Effiom Antigha, captain of Team Nigeria, told CNN last year that the games gave him a new lease on life. "Before now, I didn't think I could engage myself in any of these sporting activities. The Invictus Foundation has helped develop me physically and mentally."

CNN's Stephanie Busari reported from Abuja, Nigeria while Max Foster and Lauren Said-Moorhouse contributed from London.

TM & © 2024 Cable News Network, Inc., a Time Warner Company. All rights reserved.

**Load-Date:** May 10, 2024

**End of Document**