



PRISON CONGESTION IN NIGERIA

Almost 70% of inmates in Nigeria are awaiting trial. Most of this delay in the administration of justice is caused by the negligence of stakeholders who are government agencies including the **Ministry of Justice, Nigeria Correctional Service** and **Nigeria Police Force**. According to Justice for All Programme (British Council), the passage of the **Administration of Criminal Justice Act in 2015** was expected to stop this "tide," but it hasn't.

Quick Facts



253
custodial
centres



78,159
inmates
(as of February 26, 2024)



69%
of inmates are
awaiting trial

Feeding Allowance *



Inmates
₦750 daily



Security dog
₦800 daily

* The Nigeria Correctional Service (NCS) reportedly wrote to the Minister of Interior requesting a review of the feeding allowance of inmates from ₦750 to ₦3,000 per day. The approval status is unknown.

Why are so many inmates awaiting trial?

- Arbitrary arrests and detention of citizens by security agencies.
- Delays in trial due to negligence of lawyers (Prosecution & Defence).
- Failure to reform the bail system.

Consequences of Prison Congestion

- Inadequate "correctional" programmes.
- Inmates are prone to diseases.
- Poor welfare of inmates.
- Inmates are exposed to environmental hazards.
- Strain on prison facilities.

Recommendations

- 1 The stakeholders in the justice sector (Ministry of Justice, Nigeria Police Force and other prosecuting agencies) should expedite action on cases before them.
- 2 People who are accused of committing lesser crimes and misdemeanors can be punished in other ways such as participation in community service, payment of fines, etc.
- 3 Plea bargain options should be used more often to reduce prison congestion. This will save the prosecutors and courts time and resources.
- 4 A rehabilitation program should be holistic to enable inmates return as productive members of society.