Early history

Recent archaeological research has shown that people were already living in southwestern Nigeria (specifically Iwo-Eleru) as early as 9000 BC and perhaps earlier at Ugwuelle-Uturu ([Okigwe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Okigwe" \o "Okigwe)) in southeastern Nigeria. Smelting furnaces at Taruga dating from the 4th century BC provide the oldest evidence of metalworking in Archaeology. Microlithic and ceramic industries were developed by savanna pastoralists from at least the [4th millennium BC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4th_millennium_BC) and were continued by subsequent agricultural communities. In the south, hunting and gathering gave way to subsistence farming in the first millennium BC and the cultivation of staple foods.

[Kainji Dam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kainji_Dam) excavations revealed ironworking by the 2nd century BC. The transition from [Neolithic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neolithic) times to the [Iron Age](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron_Age) apparently was achieved without intermediate bronze production. Some scholars speculate that the smelting process was transmitted from the [Mediterranean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean) by [Berbers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berbers). Others suggest the technology moved west from the [Nile Valley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nile_Valley), although the Iron Age in the [Niger River](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niger_River) valley and the forest region appears to predate the introduction of metallurgy in the upper savanna by more than 800 years. The earliest identified Nigerian culture is that of the [Nok](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nok) people who thrived between 500 BC and 200 AD on the [Jos Plateau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jos_Plateau) in northeastern Nigeria. Information is lacking from the first millennium AD following the Nok ascendancy, but by the [2nd millennium AD](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2nd_millennium_AD) there was active trade from North Africa through the Sahara to the forest, with the people of the savanna acting as intermediaries in exchanges of various goods.

**Early states before 1500**

Long before 1500, much of modern Nigeria was divided into states identified with contemporary [ethnic groups](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_groups). These early states included the [Yoruba kingdoms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoruba_people), the [Igbo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Igbo_people) [kingdom of Nri](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Nri), the [Edo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edo) [kingdom of Benin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Benin), the [Efik](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Efik) kingdom, the [Ibibio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibibio) kingdom, the [Annang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annang) [kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarchy), the [Hausa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hausa) cities, and [Nupe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nupe). Numerous small states to the west and south of [Lake Chad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Chad) were absorbed or displaced in the course of the expansion of Kanem, which was centered to the northeast of Lake Chad. [Borno](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borno), initially the western province of Kanem, became independent in the late 14th century. Other states probably existed but the absences of archaeological data do not permit accurate dating.

In the southeast, the earliest Igbo state and the oldest kingdom in Nigeria was the [Kingdom of Nri](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Nri), which emerged in 900 AD and lasted for over a thousand years. Despite its relatively small size geographically it is considered the cradle of Igbo culture.

**Yoruba kingdoms and Benin**

Historically the [Yoruba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoruba_people) have been the dominant group on the west bank of the Niger. Of mixed origin, they were the product of periodic waves of migrants. The Yoruba were organized in patrilineal groups that occupied village communities and subsisted on agriculture. From approximately the 11th century, adjacent village compounds called *ile* coalesced into numerous territorial city-states in which clan loyalties became subordinate to dynastic chieftains. Urbanization was accompanied by high levels of artistic achievement, particularly in [terracotta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terracotta) and [ivory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ivory) sculpture and in the sophisticated metal casting produced at [Ife](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ife).

The Yoruba paid tribute to a pantheon headed by an impersonal deity, [Olorun](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olorun), as well as lesser deities who performed various tasks. [Oduduwa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oduduwa) was regarded as the creator of the earth and the ancestor of the Yoruba kings. According to myth Oduduwa founded Ife and dispatched his sons to establish it.

Yoruban tradition, which has been backed by some historians and scholars, suggests that some of the Yorubans' ancestors may have migrated from the [Arabian peninsula](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabian_peninsula).[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria#cite_note-maz-1) This theory cites numerous linguistic commonalities as evidence of Arabian origin,[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria" \l "cite_note-maz-1) such as the word for *prayer*, *Adua*, and the word for *blessings*, *Al-Barikah*.

The Yorubas are believed to have followed their leader Odua, the great father of the Yoruba, down to Ife, where they settled, today known as Ile-ife, a large city, in the heart of the western part of Nigeria.

**The Igbo States**

With the decline of Nri kingdom in the 1400-1600 AD, several states once under their influence, became powerful economic Oracular oligarchies and large commercial states that dominated Igboland. The neighboring [Awka](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Awka) city-state rose in power in the result of their powerful Agbara oracle and blacksmith expertise. The [Onitsha Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onitsha), which was originally inhabited by [Igbos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Igbo_people) of from East of the Niger, was founded in the 16th century by migrants from [Anioma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anioma) (Western Igboland) and [Benin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benin_Empire). Later groups like the [Igala](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Igala) traders from the hinterland settled in Onitsha in the 18nth century. Western Igbo kingdoms like [Aboh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aboh), dominated trade in the lower Niger area from the 17th century until European penetration. The Umunoha state in the [Owerri](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Owerri) area used the *Igwe ka Ala* oracle at their advantage. However, the Cross River Igbo states like the [Aro](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aro) and [Abiriba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abiriba) had the greatest influence in Igboland and adjacent areas after the decline of Nri.

The [Arochukwu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arochukwu) kingdom which emerged after the [Aro-Ibibio wars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aro-Ibibio_wars) from 1630-1720, and went on to form the [Aro Confederacy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aro_Confederacy) which dominated parts of midwestern and eastern Nigeria with pockets of influence in [Equatorial Guinea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equatorial_Guinea) and [Cameroon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cameroon). The source of the Aro Confederacy's dominance was based on the judicial oracle of [Ibini Ukpabi](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ibini_Ukpabi&action=edit&redlink=1) ("[Long Juju](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Long_Juju&action=edit&redlink=1)") and the military forces of [Ohafia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ohafia), [Abam](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Abam&action=edit&redlink=1), [Ezza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezza), [Akpa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akpa), and other neighboring allies. The related Abiriba people also cooperated with the Aro to become a powerful economic force.

Igbo gods, like those of the [Yoruba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoruba_mythology), were numerous, but their relationship to one another and human beings was essentially egalitarian, reflecting Igbo society as a whole. A number of [oracles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oracles) and local cults attracted devotees while the central deity, the [earth mother](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother_Earth) and [fertility](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fertility) figure [Ala](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ala_(mythology)), was venerated at shrines throughout Igboland.

The weakness of a popular theory that Igbos were stateless rests on the paucity of historical evidence of pre-colonial Igbo society. There is a huge gap between the archaeological finds of Igbo Ukwu, which reveal a rich material culture in the heart of the Igbo region in the 8th century, and the oral traditions of the 20th century. Benin exercised considerable influence on the western Igbo who adopted many of the political structures familiar to the Yoruba-Benin region. Ofega was the queen.

**Nri Kingdom**

The city of Nri is considered to be the foundation of [Igbo culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Igbo_culture) Nri and Aguleri, where the Igbo creation myth originates, are in the territory of the Umueri clan, who trace their lineages back to the patriarchal king-figure, [Eri](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eri_(divine_king)). Eri's origins are unclear, though he has been described as a "sky being" sent by [Chukwu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chukwu) (God). He has been characterized as having first given societal order to the people of [Anambra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anambra). Archaeological evidence suggests that Nri [hegemony](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hegemony) in Igboland may go back as far as the 9th century, and royal burials have been unearthed dating to at least the 10th century. Eri, the god-like founder of Nri, is believed to have settled the region around 948 with other related Igbo cultures following after in the 13th century. The first Eze Nri (King of Nri), Ìfikuánim, followed directly after him. According to Igbo oral tradition, his reign started in 1043. At least one historian puts Ìfikuánim's reign much later, around 1225 AD.

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The Kingdom of Nri was a religio-polity, a sort of [theocratic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theocratic) state, that developed in the central heartland of the Igbo region.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria#cite_note-lovejoy62-6) The Nri had a [taboo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taboo) symbolic code with six types. These included human (such as the birth of [twins](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Igbo_culture#Twin_killing)), animal (such as killing or eating of pythons),[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria" \l "cite_note-11) object, temporal, behavioral, speech and place taboos.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria#cite_note-Nritaboo-12) The rules regarding these taboos were used to educate and govern Nri's subjects. This meant that, while certain Igbo may have lived under different formal administration, all followers of the [Igbo religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Odinani) had to abide by the rules of the faith and obey its representative on earth, the Eze Nri.[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria#cite_note-13)[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria#cite_note-Nritaboo-12)

**Oyo and Benin**

During the 15th century [Oyo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oyo) and [Benin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benin_Empire) surpassed Ife as political and economic powers, although Ife preserved its status as a religious center. Respect for the priestly functions of the *oni* of Ife was a crucial factor in the evolution of Yoruban culture. The Ife model of government was adapted at Oyo, where a member of its ruling dynasty controlled several smaller city-states. A state council (the *Oyo Mesi*) named the *alafin* (king) and acted as a check on his authority. Their *capital city* was situated about 100 km north of present-day Oyo. Unlike the forest-bound Yoruba kingdoms, Oyo was in the savanna and drew its military strength from its cavalry forces, which established hegemony over the adjacent [Nupe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nupe) and the [Borgu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borgu) kingdoms and thereby developed trade routes farther to the north.

Yorubaland established a community in the Edo-speaking area east of Ife before becoming a dependency of Ife at the beginning of the 14th century. By the 15th century it became an independent trading power, blocking Ife's access to the coastal ports as Oyo had cut off the mother city from the savanna. Political and religious authority resided in the *oba* (king) who according to tradition was descended from the Ife dynasty. Benin, which may have housed 100,000 inhabitants at its height, spread over twenty-five square km that were enclosed by three concentric rings of earthworks. By the late 15th century Benin was in contact with [Portugal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portugal) (see [Atlantic slave trade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlantic_slave_trade)). At its apogee in the 16th and 17th centuries, Benin encompassed parts of southeastern Yorubaland and the western [Igbo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Igbo)..

**Northern kingdoms of the Savanna**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:SONGHAI_empire_map.PNG)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/skins-1.5/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:SONGHAI_empire_map.PNG)

The Songhai Empire, c. 1500

Trade is the key to the emergence of organized communities in the [savanna](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Savanna) portions of Nigeria. Prehistoric inhabitants adjusting to the encroaching [desert](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desert) were widely scattered by the third millennium BC, when the desiccation of the [Sahara](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahara) began. [Trans-Saharan trade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trans-Saharan_trade) routes linked western [Sudan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sudan) with the [Mediterranean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean) since the time of [Carthage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carthage) and with the [Upper Nile](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upper_Nile,_Sudan) from a much earlier date, establishing avenues of communication and cultural influence that remained open until the end of the 19th century. By these same routes, [Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam) made its way south into [West Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Africa) after the 9th century AD.

By then a string of dynastic states, including the earliest [Hausa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hausa) states, stretched across western and central Sudan. The most powerful of these states were [Ghana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghana), [Gao](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gao), and [Kanem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanem), which were not within the boundaries of modern Nigeria but which influenced the history of the Nigerian savanna. Ghana declined in the 11th century but was succeeded by the [Mali Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mali_Empire) which consolidated much of western Sudan in the 13th century.

Following the breakup of Mali a local leader named [Sonni Ali](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sonni_Ali) (1464 -1492) founded the [Songhai Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Songhai_Empire) in the region of middle Niger and the western Sudan and took control of the trans-Saharan trade. Sonni Ali seized [Timbuktu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timbuktu) in 1468 and [Jenne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jenne) in 1473, building his regime on trade revenues and the cooperation of Muslim merchants. His successor [Askia Muhammad Ture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Askia_Muhammad) (1493 - 1528) made [Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam) the official religion, built mosques, and brought [Muslim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim) scholars, including **al-Maghili** (d.1504), the founder of an important tradition of Sudanic African Muslim scholarship, to [Gao](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gao)

Although these western empires had little political influence on the Nigerian savanna before 1500, they had a strong cultural and economic impact that became more pronounced in the 16th century, especially because these states became associated with the spread of Islam and trade. Throughout the 16th century much of northern Nigeria paid homage to Songhai in the west or to [Borno](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bornu_Empire), a rival empire in the east.

**Kanem-Bornu Empire**

[Borno's](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borno) history is closely associated with Kanem, which had achieved imperial status in the [Lake Chad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Chad) basin by the 13th century. [Kanem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanem) expanded westward to include the area that became Borno. The [mai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mai) (king) of Kanem and his court accepted Islam in the 11th century, as the western empires also had done. Islam was used to reinforce the political and social structures of the state although many established customs were maintained. Women, for example, continued to exercise considerable political influence.

The *mai* employed his mounted bodyguard and an inchoate army of nobles to extend Kanem's authority into Borno. By tradition the territory was conferred on the heir to the throne to govern during his apprenticeship. In the 14th century, however, dynastic conflict forced the then-ruling group and its followers to relocate in Borno, where as a result the Kanuri emerged as an ethnic group in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The civil war that disrupted Kanem in the second half of the 14th century resulted in the independence of Borno.

Borno's prosperity depended on the trans-Sudanic slave trade and the desert trade in salt and livestock. The need to protect its commercial interests compelled Borno to intervene in Kanem, which continued to be a theater of war throughout the fifteenth and into the sixteenth centuries. Despite its relative political weakness in this period, Borno's court and mosques under the patronage of a line of scholarly kings earned fame as centers of [Islamic culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_culture) and learning.

**Hausa states**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Nigeria_sm02.gif)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/skins-1.5/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Nigeria_sm02.gif)

Map of Nigeria (source: [CIA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CIA)'s [*The World Factbook*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_World_Factbook))

*Main article:* [*Hausa Kingdoms*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hausa_Kingdoms)

By the 11th century some [Hausa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hausa) states - such as [Kano](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kano), [jigawa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jigawa),[Katsina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katsina), and [Gobir](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gobir) - had developed into walled towns engaging in trade, servicing [caravans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camel_train), and the manufacture of various goods. Until the 15th century these small states were on the periphery of the major Sudanic empires of the era. They were constantly pressured by Songhai to the west and Kanem-Borno to the east, to which they paid tribute. Armed conflict was usually motivated by economic concerns, as coalitions of Hausa states mounted wars against the Jukun and [Nupe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nupe) in the middle belt to collect slaves or against one another for control of trade.

Islam arrived to Hausaland along the caravan routes. The famous [Kano Chronicle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kano_Chronicle) records the conversion of Kano's ruling dynasty by clerics from Mali, demonstrating that the imperial influence of Mali extended far to the east. Acceptance of Islam was gradual and was often nominal in the countryside where folk religion continued to exert a strong influence. Nonetheless, Kano and Katsina, with their famous mosques and schools, came to participate fully in the cultural and intellectual life of the Islamic world. The [Fulani](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fulani) began to enter the Hausa country in the 13th century and by the 15th century they were tending cattle, sheep, and goats in Borno as well. The Fulani came from the [Senegal River](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Senegal_River) valley, where their ancestors had developed a method of livestock management based on transhumance. Gradually they moved eastward, first into the centers of the Mali and Songhai empires and eventually into Hausaland and Borno. Some Fulbe converted to Islam as early as the 11th century and settled among the Hausa, from whom they became racially indistinguishable. There they constituted a devoutly religious, educated elite who made themselves indispensable to the Hausa kings as government advisers, Islamic judges, and teachers.

**Calabar Kingdom**

[Calabar Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calabar_Kingdom) also known as Efik Kingdom is an Ancient Kingdom that existed thousands of years before Christ. The City of [Calabar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calabar) was the seat of power of the Calabar Kingdom. According to Obong of Calabar, Edidem (DR./Professor Nta Elijah Henshaw), Calabar Kingdom covered the entire [Akwa Ibom State](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akwa_Ibom_State), [Cross River State](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross_River_State), Western Cameroon, the offshore island of Fernando Po (now Equatorial Guinea), and extended into parts of present Abia State and Imo State (Vanguard, Monday, August 2, 2004, reported by George Onah). The indigenes of the old Calabar Kingdom were referred to as Calabar people (even at present day, some Nigerians still call indigenes of Akwa Ibom State and Cross River State as Calabar people).

The old Calabar Kingdom was composed of loosely governed states. The states included: [Annang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annang), [Akamkpa](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Akamkpa&action=edit&redlink=1), [Efik](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Efik), [Eket](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eket), [Ibibio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibibio), [Ikom](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ikom&action=edit&redlink=1), [Ogoja](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ogoja), ([Opobo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opobo" \o "Opobo), now [Ikot Abasi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ikot_Abasi)), [Oron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oron), Western Camaroon and the offshore island of Fernando Po (now Equatorial Guinea). Calabar was (and still is) the capital city of the Efik State of the old Calabar Kingdom. As such, the Kingdom has been known as either Calabar Kingdom or Efik Kingdom.

Calabar Kingdom was an active ancient trading kingdom. Recorded history shows that the Calabar Kingdom was the first Kingdom to use a money system in trading in West Africa. The ancient money of Calabar Kingdom was called "Okpoho", a Calabar word for money. This money become known as the [Manillas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manillas).

The Kingdom was ruled by Kings with the King of Calabar as the High King. Several years after the Kingdom became a British colony, there was an agreement between the British and the Kings in 1908 abrogating the title of King, and replacing it with the title - Obong (Edem, 2008). Thus, as Calabar Kingdom became a British colony, the British saw it necessary to not duplicate the title of the monarch (the King or Queen - of England) in their colony.

The High King (King of Calabar later known as Obong of [Calabar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calabar) till this present time), had a strong power in the capital City of Calabar in the Efik State with weak power over the other states in the Kingdom.

Leadership power in the [Calabar Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calabar_Kingdom) was derived from a major secret society, the [Ekpe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ekpe) Secrete Society. The Ekpe secret society was instrumental in keeping outsiders (other ethnic groups) outside of the Kingdom and in protecting the sovereignty of the Kingdom. The [Ekpe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ekpe) secret society of the Old Calabar Kingdom developed one of the major ancient African script, the [Nsibidi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nsibidi) written script.

The coastal ports of the [Calabar Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calabar_Kingdom), especially the Calabar port made indigenes of the Kingdom to be the first group in southeastern parts of Nigeria to have contact with European traders and missionaries.

The Obong of Calabar signed a treaty with the British government in the 17th century that resulted in the Southern Protectorate of Nigeria with headquarter at Calabar, thus making [Calabar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calabar) the first Nigerian Capital City. After Nigerian independence in 1960, Western Cameroon opted to become a part of Cameroon because of the weakness and poor political leadership and relationship of people of the then Eastern Nigeria. Hence, parts of the Calabar people got divided into Cameroon.

The [Calabar Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calabar_Kingdom) produced the first Nigerian Professor, Professor Eyo Ita, who was the pioneer champion of youth movement in Nigeria for independence. He later became the first Premier of the former Eastern Region of Nigeria, and a member of the Nigerian team that negotiated Nigerian independence in Britain. The Kingdom also produced Sir/Dr. Egbert Udo Udoma, the first Nigerian to earn a Ph.D. in Political Science and Law from Ikot Abasi and Mr. J. A. Eka of Uyo, the father of Nigerian Cooperative movement (old name for Chamber of Commerce).

During the Nigerian Civil War, the [Calabar Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calabar_Kingdom) became one of the original Nigerian twelve states, the South-eastern State of Nigeria which was later split into two states, the Cross River State and Akwa Ibom State.

**Pre-colonial states, 1500-1800**

**Savanna states**

During the 16th century the [Songhai Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Songhai_Empire) reached its peak, stretching from the Senegal and Gambia rivers and incorporating part of Hausaland in the east. Concurrently the [Saifawa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saifawa) Dynasty of [Borno](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borno) conquered [Kanem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanem) and extended control west to Hausa cities not under Songhai authority. Largely because of Songhai's influence, there was a blossoming of Islamic learning and culture. Songhai collapsed in 1591 when a Moroccan army conquered Gao and Timbuktu. Morocco was unable to control the empire and the various provinces, including the Hausa states, became independent. The collapse undermined Songhai's hegemony over the Hausa states and abruptly altered the course of regional history.

Borno reached its apogee under *mai* Idris Aloma (ca. 1569-1600) during whose reign [Kanem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanem) was reconquered. The destruction of Songhai left Borno uncontested and until the 18th century Borno dominated northern Nigeria. Despite Borno's hegemony the Hausa states continued to wrestle for ascendancy. Gradually Borno's position weakened; its inability to check political rivalries between competing Hausa cities was one example of this decline. Another factor was the military threat of the [Tuareg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuareg) centered at Agades who penetrated the northern districts of Borno. The major cause of Borno's decline was a severe drought that struck the [Sahel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahel) and savanna from in the middle of the 18th century. As a consequence Borno lost many northern territories to the Tuareg whose mobility allowed them to endure the famine more effectively. Borno regained some of its former might in the succeeding decades, but another drought occurred in the 1790s, again weakening the state.

Ecological and political instability provided the background for the [jihad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihad) of [Usman dan Fodio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Usman_dan_Fodio). The military rivalries of the Hausa states strained the regions economic resources at a time when drought and famine undermined farmers and herders. Many Fulani moved into Hausaland and Borno, and their arrival increased tensions because they had no loyalty to the political authorities, who saw them as a source of increased taxation. By the end of the 18th century, some Muslim [ulema](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulema) began articulating the grievances of the common people. Efforts to eliminate or control these religious leaders only heightened the tensions, setting the stage for jihad.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria#cite_note-multiple-14)

**A British sphere of influence**

*Main article:* [*Colonial Nigeria*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonial_Nigeria)

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[http://en.wikipedia.org/skins-1.5/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Stamp_Southern_Nigeria_1901_1sh.jpg)

Stamp of Southern Nigeria, 1901

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Flag_of_British_Colonial_Nigeria.svg)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/skins-1.5/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Flag_of_British_Colonial_Nigeria.svg)

Colonial Flag of Nigeria

Following the [Napoleonic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon) wars, the British expanded trade with the Nigerian interior. In 1885 British claims to a West African sphere of influence received international recognition and in the following year the [Royal Niger Company](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Niger_Company) was chartered under the leadership of Sir [George Taubman Goldie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Taubman_Goldie). In 1900 the company's territory came under the control of the British Government, which moved to consolidate its hold over the area of modern Nigeria. On [January 1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/January_1), [1901](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1901) [Nigeria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigeria) became a [British](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom) protectorate, part of the [British Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Empire), the foremost world power at the time.

In 1914 the area was formally united as the *Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria*. Administratively Nigeria remained divided into the northern and southern provinces and Lagos colony. Western education and the development of a modern economy proceeded more rapidly in the south than in the north, with consequences felt in Nigeria's political life ever since. Following [World War II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II), in response to the growth of Nigerian nationalism and demands for independence, successive constitutions legislated by the British Government moved Nigeria toward self-government on a representative and increasingly federal basis. By the middle of the 20th century, the great wave for independence was sweeping across Africa.

**Independence**

*Main article:* [*History of Nigeria (1960-1979)*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria_(1960-1979))

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:JajaWachuku1.jpg)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/skins-1.5/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:JajaWachuku1.jpg)

Jaja Wachuku, First Nigerian Speaker of the House: 1959 - 1960

Nigeria was granted full independence in October 1960 under a constitution that provided for a [parliamentary government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliamentary_government) and a substantial measure of self-government for the country's three regions. From 1959 to 1960, [Jaja Wachuku](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jaja_Wachuku) was the First black [Speaker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speaker_(politics)) of the Nigerian [Parliament](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Assembly_of_Nigeria) - also called the *House of Representatives*. [Wachuku](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jaja_Wachuku) replaced Sir Frederick Metcalfe of [Great Britain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Britain). Notably, as First Speaker of the House, [Jaja Wachuku](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jaja_Wachuku) received [Nigeria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigeria)'s Instrument of Independence - also known as [Freedom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_(political)) [Charter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charter) - on October 1, [1960](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1960), from [Princess Alexandra of Kent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princess_Alexandra_of_Kent), [the Queen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_II_of_the_United_Kingdom)'s representative at the [Nigerian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigerian) independence ceremonies.

The federal government was given exclusive powers in defense, foreign relations, and commercial and fiscal policy. The monarch of Nigeria was still head of state but legislative power was vested in a bicameral parliament, executive power in a prime minister and cabinet, and judicial authority in a Federal Supreme Court. Political parties, however, tended to reflect the make up of the three main ethnic groups. The **NPC** (Nigerian people's Congress) represented conservative, Muslim, largely [Hausa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hausa_people) interests, and dominated the Northern Region. The **NCNC** (National Convention of Nigerian Citizens), was [Igbo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Igbo_people)- and Christian-dominated, ruling in the Eastern Region, and the **AG** (Action Group) was a left-leaning party that controlled the Yoruba west. The first post-independence National Government was formed by a conservative alliance of the NCNC and the NPC, with Sir [Abubakar Tafawa Balewa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abubakar_Tafawa_Balewa), a Hausa, becoming Nigeria's first Prime Minister. The Yoruba-dominated AG became the opposition under its charismatic leader Chief [Obafemi Awolowo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obafemi_Awolowo).

**First Republic**

In October 1963 Nigeria proclaimed itself a Federal Republic, and former Governor General [Nnamdi Azikiwe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nnamdi_Azikiwe) became the country's first [President](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_Nigeria). From the outset Nigeria's ethnic and religious tensions were magnified by the disparities in economic and educational development between the south and the north. The AG was maneuvered out of control of the Western Region by the Federal Government and a new pro-government Yoruba party, the **NNDP**, took over. Shortly afterward the AG opposition leader, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, was imprisoned on treason charges that were later admitted to be without foundation. The 1965 National Election produced a major realignment of politics and a disputed result that set the country on the path to civil war. The dominant northern NPC went into a conservative alliance with the new Yoruba NNDP, leaving the Igbo NCNC to coalesce with the remnants of the AG (Action Group) in a progressive alliance. In the vote, widespread electoral fraud was alleged and riots erupted in the Yoruba West where heartlands of the AG discovered they had apparently elected pro-government NNDP representatives.

**First period of military rule**

On [January 15](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/January_15), 1966 a group of army officers, mostly southeastern Igbos, overthrew the NPC-NNDP government and assassinated the prime minister and the premiers of the northern and western regions. The federal military government that assumed power under General [Aguiyi-Ironsi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aguiyi-Ironsi) was unable to quiet ethnic tensions or produce a constitution acceptable to all sections of the country.[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria#cite_note-15) Its efforts to abolish the federal structure raised tensions and led to another coup by largely northern officers in July 1966, which established the leadership of Major General [Yakubu Gowon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yakubu_Gowon). The subsequent massacre of thousands of Igbo in the north prompted hundreds of thousands of them to return to the southeast where increasingly strong Igbo secessionist sentiment emerged.

In a move towards greater autonomy to minority ethnic groups the military divided the four regions into 12 states. However the Igbo rejected attempts at constitutional revisions and insisted on full autonomy for the east. On May 29, 1967 Lt. Col. [Emeka Ojukwu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emeka_Ojukwu), the military governor of the eastern region who emerged as the leader of increasing Igbo secessionist sentiment, declared the independence of the eastern region as the [Republic of Biafra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Biafra). The ensuing [Nigerian Civil War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigerian_Civil_War) resulted in an estimated one million deaths before ending in the defeat of Biafra in 1970.

Following the civil war the country turned to the task of economic development. Foreign exchange earnings and government revenues increased spectacularly with the oil price rises of 1973-74. On [July 29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/July_29), 1975 Gen. [Murtala Mohammed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murtala_Mohammed) and a group of officers staged a bloodless coup, accusing Gen. Yakubu Gowon of corruption and delaying the promised return to civilian rule. General Mohammed replaced thousands of civil servants and announced a timetable for the resumption of civilian rule by October 1, 1979. He was assassinated on February 13, 1976 in an [abortive coup](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buka_Suka_Dimka) and his chief of staff Lt. Gen. [Olusegun Obasanjo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olusegun_Obasanjo) became head of state.

**Second Republic**

A [constituent assembly](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constituent_Assembly) was elected in 1977 to draft a new constitution, which was published on September 21, 1978, when the ban on political activity was lifted. In 1979, five political parties competed in a series of elections in which Alhaji [Shehu Shagari](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shehu_Shagari) of the [National Party of Nigeria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Party_of_Nigeria) (NPN) was elected president. All five parties won representation in the National Assembly. In August 1983 Shagari and the NPN were returned to power in a landslide victory, with a majority of seats in the National Assembly and control of 12 state governments. But the elections were marred by violence and allegations of widespread vote rigging and electoral malfeasance led to legal battles over the results.

On December 31, 1983 the military overthrew the Second Republic. Major General [Muhammadu Buhari](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammadu_Buhari) emerged as the leader of the Supreme Military Council (SMC), the country's new ruling body. The Buhari government was peacefully overthrown by the SMC's third-ranking member General [Ibrahim Babangida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibrahim_Babangida) in August 1985. Babangida cited the misuse of power, violations of human rights by key officers of the SMC, and the government's failure to deal with the country's deepening economic crisis as justifications for the takeover. During his first days in office President Babangida moved to restore freedom of the press and to release political detainees being held without charge. As part of a 15-month economic emergency plan he announced pay cuts for the military, police, civil servants and the private sector. President Babangida demonstrated his intent to encourage public participation in decision making by opening a national debate on proposed economic reform and recovery measures. The public response convinced Babangida of intense opposition to an economic recovery package dependent on an [International Monetary Fund](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Monetary_Fund) (IMF) loan.

**The abortive Third Republic**

President Babangida promised to return the country to civilian rule by 1990 which was later extended until January 1993. In early 1989 a constituent assembly completed a constitution and in the spring of 1989 political activity was again permitted. In October 1989 the government established two parties, the [National Republican Convention](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Republican_Convention) (NRC) and the [Social Democratic party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_democracy) (SDP) - other parties were not allowed to register.

In April 1990 mid-level officers attempted unsuccessfully to overthrow the government and 69 accused plotters were executed after [secret trials](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secret_trial) before military tribunals. In December 1990 the first stage of partisan elections was held at the local government level. Despite low turnout there was no violence and both parties demonstrated strength in all regions of the country, with the SDP winning control of a majority of local government councils.

In December 1991 state legislative elections were held and Babangida decreed that previously banned politicians could contest in primaries scheduled for August. These were canceled due to fraud and subsequent primaries scheduled for September also were canceled. All announced candidates were disqualified from standing for president once a new election format was selected. The presidential election was finally held on [June 12](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/June_12), 1993 with the inauguration of the new president scheduled to take place [August 27](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/August_27), 1993, the eighth anniversary of President Babangida's coming to power.

In the historic June 12, 1993 presidential elections, which most observers deemed to be Nigeria's fairest, early returns indicated that wealthy Yoruba businessman [M.K.O. Abiola](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M.K.O._Abiola) won a decisive victory. However, on June 23, Babangida, using several pending lawsuits as a pretense, annulled the election, throwing Nigeria into turmoil. More than 100 were killed in riots before Babangida agreed to hand power to an interim government on August 27, 1993. He later attempted to renege this decision, but without popular and military support, he was forced to hand over to [Ernest Shonekan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernest_Shonekan), a prominent nonpartisan businessman. Shonekan was to rule until elections scheduled for February 1994. Although he had led Babangida's Transitional Council since 1993, Shonekan was unable to reverse Nigeria's economic problems or to defuse lingering political tension.

**Sani Abacha**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Sabacha.jpg)

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Sani Abacha, military dictator of Nigeria from 1993 to 1998

With the country sliding into chaos Defense Minister [Sani Abacha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sani_Abacha) assumed power and forced Shonekan's resignation on [November 17](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/November_17), 1993. Abacha dissolved all democratic institutions and replaced elected governors with military officers. Although promising restoration of civilian rule he refused to announce a transitional timetable until 1995. Following the annulment of the June 12 election the United States and others imposed sanctions on Nigeria including travel restrictions on government officials and suspension of arms sales and military assistance. Additional sanctions were imposed as a result of Nigeria's failure to gain full certification for its counter-[narcotics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narcotics) efforts.

Although Abacha was initially welcomed by many Nigerians, disenchantment grew rapidly. Opposition leaders formed the [National Democratic Coalition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Democratic_Coalition) (NADECO), which campaigned to reconvene the Senate and other disbanded democratic institutions. On June 11, 1994 [Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moshood_Kashimawo_Olawale_Abiola) declared himself president and went into hiding until his arrest on June 23. In response petroleum workers called a strike demanding that Abacha release Abiola and hand over power to him. Other unions joined the strike, bringing economic life around Lagos and the southwest to a standstill. After calling off a threatened strike in July the [Nigeria Labour Congress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigeria_Labour_Congress) (NLC) reconsidered a general strike in August after the government imposed conditions on Abiola's release. On August 17, 1994 the government dismissed the leadership of the NLC and the petroleum unions, placed the unions under appointed administrators, and arrested Frank Kokori and other labor leaders.

The government alleged in early 1995 that military officers and civilians were engaged in a coup plot. Security officers rounded up the accused, including former Head of State Obasanjo and his deputy, retired General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua. After a secret tribunal most of the accused were convicted and several death sentences were handed down. In 1994 the government set up the Ogoni Civil Disturbances Special Tribunal to try Ogoni activist [Ken Saro-Wiwa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ken_Saro-Wiwa) and others for their alleged roles in the killings of four Ogoni politicians. The tribunal sentenced Saro-Wiwa and eight others to death and they were executed on November 10, 1995.

On October 1, 1995 Abacha announced the timetable for a 3-year transition to civilian rule. Only five political parties were approved by the regime and voter turnout for local elections in December 1997 was under 10%. On December 21, 1997 the government arrested General [Oladipo Diya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oladipo_Diya), ten officers, and eight civilians on charges of coup plotting. The accused were tried before a [military tribunal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_tribunal) in which Diya and eight others were sentenced to death. Abacha enforced authority through the federal security system which is accused of numerous human rights abuses, including infringements on freedom of speech, assembly, association, travel, and violence against women. After assuming power in June 1998 the Abubakar government took steps toward restoring worker rights and freedom of association for trade unions, which had deteriorated seriously under Abacha.

**Abubakar's transition to civilian rule**

Abacha died of heart failure on June 8, 1998 and was replaced by General Abdulsalami Abubakar. The military Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) under Abubakar commuted the sentences of those accused in the alleged coup during the Abacha regime and released almost all known civilian political detainees. Pending the promulgation of the constitution written in 1995, the government observed some provisions of the 1979 and 1989 constitutions. Neither Abacha nor Abubakar lifted the decree suspending the 1979 constitution, and the 1989 constitution was not implemented. The judiciary system continued to be hampered by corruption and lack of resources after Abacha's death. In an attempt to alleviate such problems Abubakar's government implemented a civil service pay raise and other reforms.

In August 1998 Abubakar appointed the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to conduct elections for local government councils, state legislatures and governors, the national assembly, and president. The NEC successfully held elections on December 5, 1998, January 9, 1999, February 20, and February 27, 1999, respectively. For local elections nine parties were granted provisional registration with three fulfilling the requirements to contest the following elections. These parties were the [People's Democratic Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Democratic_Party_(Nigeria)) (PDP), the [All People's Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_People%27s_Party) (APP), and the predominantly [Yoruba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoruba_people) [Alliance for Democracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alliance_for_Democracy_(Nigeria)) (AD). Former military head of state [Olusegun Obasanjo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olusegun_Obasanjo), freed from prison by Abubakar, ran as a civilian candidate and won the presidential election. The PRC promulgated a new constitution based largely on the suspended 1979 constitution, before the May 29, 1999 inauguration of the new civilian president. The constitution includes provisions for a bicameral legislature, the National Assembly consisting of a 360-member House of Representatives and a 109-member Senate.

**Fourth Republic**

The emergence of democracy in Nigeria on May 1999 ended 16 years of consecutive military rule. [Olusegun Obasanjo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olusegun_Obasanjo) inherited a country suffering economic stagnation and the deterioration of most democratic institutions. Obasanjo, a former general, was admired for his stand against the Abacha dictatorship, his record of returning the federal government to civilian rule in 1979, and his claim to represent all Nigerians regardless of religion.

The new President took over a country that faced many problems, including a dysfunctional bureaucracy, collapsed [infrastructure](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infrastructure), and a military that wanted a reward for returning quietly to the barracks. The President moved quickly and retired hundreds of military officers holding political positions, established a blue-ribbon panel to investigate human rights violations, released scores of persons held without charge, and rescinded numerous questionable licenses and contracts left by the previous regimes. The government also moved to recover millions of dollars in funds secreted to overseas accounts.

Most civil society leaders and Nigerians witnessed marked improvements in human rights and freedom of the press under Obasanjo. As Nigeria works out representational democracy, conflicts persist between the Executive and Legislative branches over appropriations and other proposed legislation. A sign of federalism has been the growing visibility of state governors and the inherent friction between Abuja and the state capitals over resource allocation.

Communal violence has plagued the Obasanjo government since its inception. In May 1999 violence erupted in Kaduna State over the succession of an Emir resulting in more than 100 deaths. In November 1999, the army [destroyed the town of Odi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Odi_massacre), [Bayelsa State](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bayelsa_State) and killed scores of civilians in retaliation for the murder of 12 policemen by a local gang. In Kaduna in February-May 2000 over 1,000 people died in rioting over the introduction of criminal Shar'ia in the State. Hundreds of ethnic Hausa were killed in reprisal attacks in southeastern Nigeria. In September 2001, over 2,000 people were killed in inter-religious rioting in Jos. In October 2001, hundreds were killed and thousands displaced in communal violence that spread across the states of Benue, Taraba, and Nasarawa. On October 1, 2001 Obasanjo announced the formation of a [National Security Commission](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=National_Security_Commission&action=edit&redlink=1) to address the issue of communal violence. Obasanjo was reelected in 2003.

The new president faces the daunting task of rebuilding a petroleum-based economy, whose revenues have been squandered through corruption and mismanagement. Additionally, the Obasanjo administration must defuse longstanding ethnic and religious tensions if it hopes to build a foundation for economic growth and political stability. Currently there is [unrest](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Movement_for_the_Emancipation_of_the_Niger_Delta) in the [Niger delta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niger_delta) over the environmental destruction caused by oil drilling and the ongoing poverty in the oil-rich region.

A further major problem created by the oil industry is the drilling of pipelines by the local population in an attempt to drain off the petroleum for personal use or as a source of income. This often leads to major explosions and high death tolls. Particularly notable disasters in this area have been: 1) October 1998, Jesse, 1100 deaths, 2) July 2000, Jesse, 250 deaths, 3) September 2004, near Lagos, 60 deaths, 4) May 2006, Ilado, approx. 150-200 deaths (current estimate).

Two militants of an unknown faction shot and killed Ustaz Ja'afar Adam, a northern Muslim religious leader and Kano State official, along with one of his disciples in a [mosque](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mosque) in [Kano](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kano) during dawn prayers on [13 April](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/April_13) 2007. Obasanjo had recently stated on national radio that he would "deal firmly" with election fraud and violence advocated by "highly placed individuals." His comments were interpreted by some analysts as a warning to his Vice President and 2007 presidential candidate [Atiku Abubakar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atiku_Abubakar).

In the [2007 general election](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigerian_general_election,_2007), [Umaru Yar'Adua](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umaru_Yar%27Adua) and [Goodluck Jonathan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goodluck_Jonathan), both of the [People's Democratic Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Democratic_Party_(Nigeria)), were elected President and Vice President, respectively. The election was marred by electoral fraud, and denounced by other candidates and international observers.