

CSOs call for responsible leadership, collective action to save Nigeria from the brinks of collapse

Nigeria is on the brink of collapse. We, the undersigned Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), acting as non-partisan advocates for democracy, human rights, and good governance, issue this urgent plea for responsible leadership and collective action to save our nation from escalating insecurity, rising poverty, and moral decay in public life. Across the country, citizens count losses while politicians trade rhetoric. In Zamfara, displaced farmers now live on crumbs in squalid camps. In Abuja, a teacher spends half her income on transportation. In Lagos, families skip meals to pay rent. Yet, federal, state, and local governments continue to enjoy record revenues and allocations. Politics has become Nigeria's biggest business, even as the country suffers. Removing subsidies, floating the naira, and increasing public debt have significantly boosted government revenue. In just the last two years, federal budgets have surpassed ₦100 trillion, exceeding the total of all budgets from 1999 to 2017. Nigerians see the numbers, but nothing has improved. Public services falter, inequality grows, and ordinary citizens become poorer while politicians get richer from larger allocations.

KEY AREAS OF CONCERN

1. INSECURITY AND VIOLENCE.

Killings, abductions, and displacement have become commonplace. Entire communities across the North and Middle Belt are deserted. Security cooperation remains weak, and political will appears absent.

2. BANDITRY AND FOOD COLLAPSE.

Rural banditry has devastated livelihoods, disrupted food supplies, and caused inflation to rise above 15%. Hunger looms over millions of homes while farms lie abandoned in fear.

3. KIDNAPPING EPIDEMIC.

From schoolchildren in Sokoto to commuters in Abuja, kidnapping has become a nationwide industry. Paying ransom has replaced access to safety.

4. SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE.

Journalists face harassment, activists face threats, and peaceful protesters are silenced. A democracy that fears its citizens is already in decline.

5. CORRUPTION AND GOVERNANCE BREAKDOWN.

Entrenched graft continues to drain public resources. Citizens hear about trillion-naira budgets, yet roads stay impassable, hospitals are empty, and schools are in disrepair. Accountability has been replaced by excuses.

6. ECONOMIC HARDSHIP AND INEQUALITY. Despite increasing government revenue, the economy still harms the poor. Inflation, unemployment, and currency instability have worsened inequality. Poverty has become Nigeria's most noticeable institution.

7. THREATS TO DEMOCRACY AND 2027 ELECTIONS

Politicians focus on succession battles while citizens struggle for survival. The manipulation of political systems and the erosion of trust threaten Nigeria's multiparty democracy and future stability. The inability to curb the influx of illicit funds into the political space.

8. ERODED JUDICIAL CREDIBILITY.

Justice delayed or influenced is justice denied. Political interference in courts has eroded the judiciary's former trust.

OUR DEMANDS.

Nigerians deserve relief, justice, and dignity, not just slogans. We call for urgent action from the government and its institutions. 1. Deliver economic justice: convert record revenues into tangible improvements: social protection, job creation, accessible healthcare, and affordable food. 2. Restore security and humanity: coordinate national security efforts, enhance intelligence capabilities, and make community protection a clear, measurable priority. 3. End corruption without exception: prosecute offenders swiftly, disclose public spending transparently, and restore ethics in governance. 4. Defend democracy from being hijacked: end the politicization of institutions, establish political finance integrity mechanisms, ensure electoral reforms before 2027, and maintain internal party democracy. 5. Uphold rights and freedoms: respect dissent, protect journalists and activists, and defend civic space from intimidation. 6. Urgently rebuild trust in the judiciary: guarantee independence, deliver timely judgments, and make justice accessible to all citizens. A Final Word. Nigerians are paying the price of political excesses. Leadership cannot continue politicking while the nation bleeds. Every Naira of public money must be felt in the life of the ordinary citizen; anything less is betrayal. We stand with every Nigerian facing hunger, insecurity, and hopelessness. We stand for justice, equity, and good governance. The time for excuses is over; Nigeria must choose humanity over politics.