



NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION



SPEECH BY DR. TONY OJUKWU, OFR, SAN, FICMC – EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, AT THE APRIL 2026 DASHBOARD PRESENTATION AND SIGNING OF ADVISORY ON PROTECTING CIVIC SPACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Date: 18th May, 2026

Distinguished representatives of government institutions, members of the diplomatic community, development partners, civil society organizations, members of the media, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to the presentation of the April 2026 Human Rights Situation Dashboard and the signing of the Advisory on Protecting Civic Space and Human Rights.

Today's event reflects two important dimensions of the mandate of the National Human Rights Commission. First, our responsibility to monitor and report on the state of human rights in Nigeria, while also promoting an enabling civic space grounded in accountability, participation and respect for fundamental freedoms.

Since the introduction of the Human Rights Situation Dashboard in 2024, the Commission has continued to strengthen transparent and evidence-based human rights monitoring in Nigeria. The Dashboard remains an important accountability tool for identifying trends, emerging risks, and areas requiring urgent intervention.

For the month of April 2026, the Commission recorded a total of Two Hundred and Sixty Six Thousand, Seven Hundred and Eighty Seven (266,787) complaints from across our offices nationwide. These complaints reflect the everyday realities faced by Nigerians and underscore the persistence of challenges relating to discrimination, insecurity, abuse of authority, economic hardship, and access to justice.

Beyond complaints formally received by the Commission, the Human Rights Observatory continues to monitor broader patterns of violations across the country. In April 2026, the human rights situation remained shaped by insecurity, communal tensions, economic hardship, and concerns around civic freedoms. Violent attacks, kidnappings, communal clashes, and displacement, gender-based violence, mob actions, and alleged abuses linked to law enforcement activities remained major concerns during the period under review.

The Commission is particularly concerned about the recent air strike incident in Borno State which reportedly resulted in civilian casualties. As a Commission, we had earlier called for a thorough, transparent, and independent investigation into the incident in line with national and international human rights obligations. We note that several stakeholders and concerned Nigerians have also supported this call for accountability and investigation.

While recognizing the difficult security environment within which security agencies operate, the protection of civilian lives must remain paramount at all times. Respect for human rights and

adherence to international humanitarian principles are essential components of effective security operations and democratic governance.

Also of similar concern is the rise in extra-judicial killings by law enforcement and security agencies. In the month of April, NHRC observatory recorded over 5 of such cases. Human life is sacred and cannot be taken away by trigger happy officers of our law enforcement and security agencies. We welcome actions taken by the Inspector General of Police and call for swift prosecution of all cases and compensation paid to the victims' families.

Distinguished participants,

Today's signing of the Advisory on Protecting Civic Space and Human Rights is both timely and significant. Across the world, civic space continues to face increasing pressure, with growing concerns relating to restrictions on freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, association, media freedom, and civic participation.

The Advisory, developed through broad stakeholder consultations provides practical guidance for protecting freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, association, media freedom, and civic participation in line with constitutional and international human rights standards. A vibrant civic space remains essential to democracy, accountability, peace-building, and national development. We want to acknowledge the collaboration of the Nigerian Network of Non-Governmental Organizations (NNGO) and their partners, the Heinrich Boell Foundation.

Ladies and gentlemen, every complaint received by the Commission represents an individual seeking dignity, protection and justice.

As we continue to strengthen the Human Rights Situation Dashboard and the Observatory, we remain committed to strengthening accountability, expanding access to justice, deepening civic engagement, and advancing evidence based human rights interventions through sustained collaboration with stakeholders.

We call on all stakeholders to continue supporting efforts aimed at protecting human dignity and strengthening democratic values in Nigeria.

I thank you all for your continued support and commitment to advancing human rights in our country.

Thank you and God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.



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National Human Rights Commission