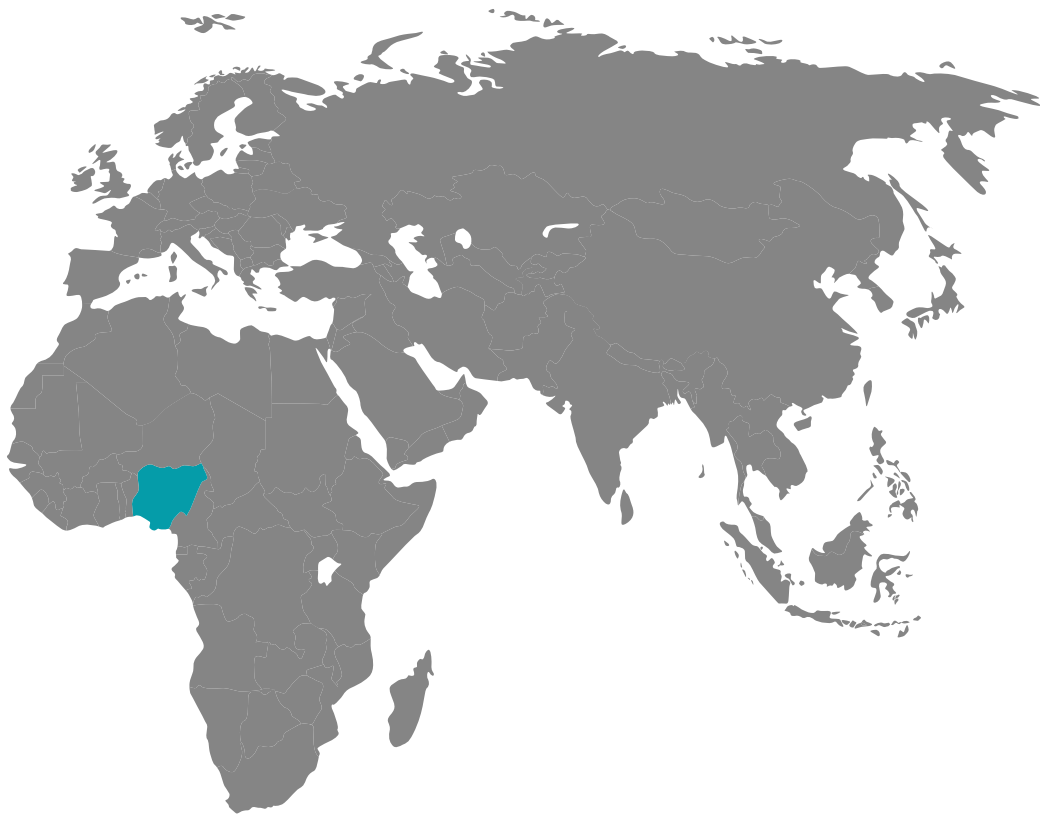




Gulf Research Center
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Nigeria - GCC Relations



Updated March 2025



Key Domestic Developments

Nigeria, officially known as the Federal Republic of Nigeria, operates as a federal presidential system with three tiers of government: federal, state, and local. The president serves as both the head of state and government, elected for a four-year term, with a maximum of two terms. The National Assembly, comprising the Senate and House of Representatives, is responsible for legislative functions. Nigeria has a multi-party system with the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) as the most significant parties.

Since its independence, Nigeria's domestic politics has experienced both military and democratic rule. President Bola Tinubu of the APC won the recent election in 2023 amid high voter turnout; however, it remained a contested election as opposition candidates Atiku Abubakar (PDP) and Peter Obi (Labour Party) cited irregularities in the results.

Economic growth has been uneven, and the country grapples with high rates of poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Inflation has been a persistent problem, impacting the cost of living for many Nigerians. The naira's devaluation in 2023, prompted by the central bank's shift toward market-driven exchange rates, led to inflationary pressures but also attracted foreign investment.

The country is Africa's largest economy, driven primarily by the oil sector, yet structural issues hinder the sector. Oil production has fluctuated due to pipeline vandalism, crude oil theft, and regulatory hurdles. The government aims to diversify the economy in hopes of job creation by investing in the non-oil sector, including technology, agriculture, and manufacturing. However, exchange rate volatility, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and corruption continue to stymie these efforts.

Nigeria's infrastructure development remains a critical challenge, particularly in power, transportation, and healthcare. The country continues to experience inadequate electricity supply, despite investments in power generation

and distribution reforms. Poor road networks, congested ports, and inefficient rail transport hinder economic activities and trade. In healthcare, disparities in access and quality persist, with rural areas facing shortages of medical professionals and facilities.

Security remains a pressing concern, with multiple insurgencies and criminal activities affecting different regions. The northeastern states continue to grapple with Boko Haram and ISWAP insurgencies, while banditry and kidnappings plague the northwest and central regions. Separatist movements in the southeast and oil-related conflicts in the Niger Delta further contribute to instability. The government has increased military operations and regional security collaborations to combat these threats, but progress remains uneven.

Despite these challenges, Nigeria's demographic advantage, with a youthful and growing population, presents opportunities for economic growth and innovation. The rise of fintech, digital startups, and creative industries in film and music has positioned Nigeria as a key player in Africa's cultural and economic landscape. Translating this potential into sustained economic development will require addressing structural inefficiencies, improving governance, and ensuring political stability.

Key Economic and Social Data

GDP: 363.85 billion USD (2023)

GDP Per Capita: 1,596.64 USD (2023)

Inflation: 24.48% (2024)

Unemployment rate: 5.2% (2023)

Annual Growth Rate: 3.46% (2023)

Population: 227.9 million (2023)

Credit ratings

Fitch: B- (2024) stable outlook

Standard & Poor's: B- stable outlook

Moody's: Caa1 positive outlook



Nigeria's Foreign Policy

Nigeria's foreign policy focuses on regional leadership, economic diplomacy, and non-alignment. As the largest population and economy in Africa, Nigeria plays a central role in West African stability and maintains diplomatic relations with Western governments, China, Russia, and the Middle East. The country has played pivotal roles in mediating regional conflicts, including in the aftermath of military coups in Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso. It has demonstrated its commitment to constitutional order across West African governments, especially within ECOWAS.

As a founding member of ECOWAS and a major player in the African Union, Nigeria has promoted policies that further economic integration and collective security. It has advocated for a permanent African seat in the United Nations Security Council, emphasizing the need for equitable partnerships in global governance. It actively participates in enforcing the African Continental Free Trade Agreement to position itself as a regional trade hub.

President Tinubu has prioritized economic diplomacy, strengthening ties with global partners, and attracting investments to bolster industrialisation. Tinubu's administration has sought deeper cooperation with China for infrastructure projects while maintaining strong trade relations with the United States and the European Union. It has expanded its diplomatic engagements with Asian and Eurasian countries, including India and Kazakhstan, by promoting bilateral cooperation.

Terrorism from the Lake Chad Basin continues to threaten Nigeria; as such, it has stressed the importance of regional cooperation to deter insurgents. Its membership in the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), alongside Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, is crucial to promoting security and stability in the region. Nigeria has also taken a leading role in fostering international and regional cooperation in counterterrorism efforts.

In April 2024, Nigeria hosted a high-level summit in Abuja in partnership with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), bringing together African leaders and security experts to enhance collaborative security responses. President Tinubu underscored the importance of intelligence sharing among African nations as part of his campaign to promote regional integration.

With the appointment of Yusuf Tuggar as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nigeria's foreign policy is increasingly focused on pragmatic diplomacy to enhance economic growth, improve regional security, and assert its influence on the global stage. As Nigeria continues to position itself as a leading voice in Africa, it remains committed to multilateralism and strategic alliances to address regional and global challenges

Nigeria Trade in Goods with GCC Countries in 2023 (USD)

Balance of Trade (USD millions)	Import Value (USD millions)	Export Value (USD millions)	Country
-9.265	9.27	0.005	Bahrain
230.74	1.35	232.09	Kuwait
-489.73	489.90	0.17	Oman
-106.11	106.90	0.79	Qatar
-1,434.68	1,510.97	76.29	Saudi Arabia
-845.26	902.73	57.47	United Arab Emirates

Source: ComtradeEstablishment of Diplomatic Ties

Bahrain 2025

Kuwait 1970

Oman 1981

Qatar 2010

Saudi Arabia 1961

United Arab Emirates 1982



Current Diplomatic Representation:

Kuwait:

Nigerian Ambassador to Kuwait –

H.E. Jazuli Imam Galadanci

Kuwaiti Ambassador to Nigeria –

H.E. Salem Al-Muzain

Oman:

Nigerian Ambassador to Oman –

H. E. Yahaya Lawal

Qatar:

Nigerian Ambassador to Qatar –

H.E. Yakubu Abdullahi Ahmed

Qatari Ambassador to Nigeria –

H.E. Dr. Ali bin Ghanem Al-Hajiri

Saudi Arabia:

Nigerian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia – H.E. Yahaya Lawal

Saudi Ambassador to Nigeria

H.E. Faial Al Ghamdi

United Arab Emirates:

Nigerian Ambassador to UAE –

H. E. Dansanta Rimi

Emirati Ambassador to Nigeria-

H.E. Salem Saeed Al Shamsi

Key Experts

Damilola Sunday Olawuyi

Dr. Al Khader Abdul Baqi Mohammed

Dr. Nasiruddeen Muhammad

Key Research Centers and Think Tanks

Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)

Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG)

African Centre for Development and Strategic Studies (ACDESS)

Key Nigerian Officials with Responsibility for the Gulf

Minister of Foreign Affairs Yusuf Tuggar

Permanent Representative to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Ambassador Hameed Opeloyeru

Key Developments in Nigeria-GCC Relations

- Nigeria maintains strong economic and political ties with the Gulf states. As one of Africa's largest trading partners with the GCC, its trade with the UAE alone exceeded \$3 billion in 2022. The Joint Business Councils with Saudi Arabia and Qatar highlight the deepening connection between the two regions. Furthermore, Nigeria collaborates with GCC states in aviation, defense, mining, energy, and tourism initiatives. As an oil-rich OPEC member, Nigeria energy policies often align with those of the Gulf States.
- On the political front, Nigeria has actively engaged with GCC countries through various diplomatic channels. In November 2024, President Bola Tinubu attended the Arab-Islamic summit in Riyadh, advocating for an immediate ceasefire and a peaceful resolution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Additionally, with an estimated 50% Muslim population and membership in the OIC, Nigeria shares several cultural and strategic interests with the region. This participation highlights Nigeria's commitment to collaborating with GCC nations on pressing regional issues.



Nigeria – Bahrain

- February 2025: Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs, met with Yusuf Maitama Tuggar, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, to strengthen diplomatic and economic relations. The two countries formally established diplomatic relations.

Nigeria – Kuwait

- February 2025: Nigerian Foreign Minister Yusuf Tuggar led a delegation to Kuwait meeting with HH Sheikh Mushal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, the Amir of Kuwait, HH Sheikh Ahmed Al Abdullah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, the Prime Minister and Abdullah Ali Al Yahya, the Foreign Minister to strengthen trade, economic relations, agricultural cooperation and diplomatic engagements between the two countries.

Nigeria – Oman

- June 2023: HM Sultan Haitham bin Tarik Al Said met with Nigeria's Ambassador to Oman Yahaya Lawal to bolster bilateral relations.

Nigeria – Qatar

- March 2024: Nigerian President Bola Tinubu met with HH Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar, to sign agreements targeting mutual cooperation in education, enterprise development, investment, mining, tourism, and sports.
- March 2024: President Bola Tinubu attended the Qatari-Nigerian Business Forum hosted by the Chairman of the Qatar Chamber, Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim Al Thani, alongside HE Sheik Mohamed bin Hamad bin Qassim Al Thani, Minister of Commerce and Industry.

Nigeria – Saudi Arabia

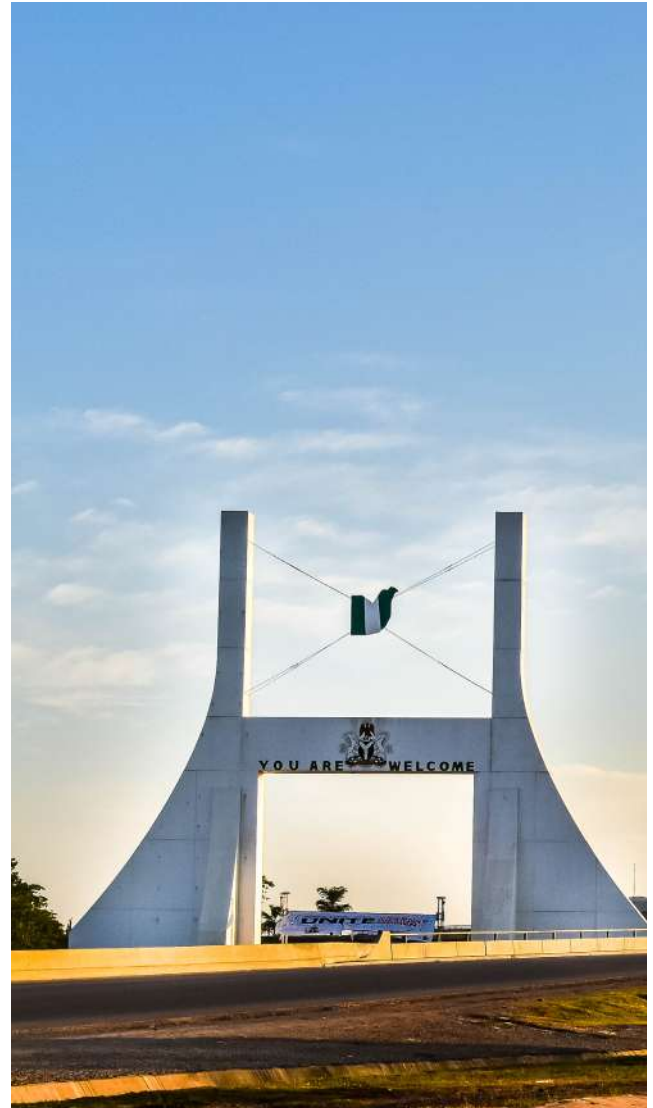
- January 2025: President of the Federation of Saudi Chambers Hassan bin Moejeb Al-Huwaizi met with Nigeria's Minister of Solid Minerals Dele Alake and Minister of State Finance Doris Uzoka to discuss Saudi investments in mining, agriculture, and financial services.
- January 2025: IMCTC Secretary General Major Gen. Mohammed Al-Moghedi met with Nigeria's Chief of Defense Intelligence Major Gen. EPA Undiandeye to discuss counterterrorism efforts and Nigeria's role in the coalition.
- December 2024: Saudi Economy Minister Faisal Alibrahim met with Nigeria's Finance Minister Wale Edun and Budget Minister Abubakar Atiku Bagudu to discuss economic and trade cooperation.
- November 2024: Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met with Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on the sidelines of the Extraordinary Arab and Islamic Summit to discuss bilateral cooperation
- November 2024: Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan met with Nigerian Foreign Minister Yusuf Maitama Tuggar to discuss regional and international issues.

Nigeria – UAE

- January 2025: President Tinubu met with President HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to strengthen bilateral cooperation, and Sheikh Al Nahyan accepted President Tinubu's invitation to visit Nigeria later in 2025.
- July 2024: HE Sheikh Maktoum bin Butti Al Maktoum, Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dubai Office, met with HE Zayan Ibrahim, Consul General of Nigeria in Dubai, to discuss political, economic and commercial relations.

Supporting Documents

- Conflict Resolution Efforts by GCC States in Africa, October 2024
- GCC & Sub-Saharan African Countries Relations and Opportunities, August 2024
- From Ports to Pipelines: The Gulf Cooperation Council's Influence on Africa's Oil and Gas Landscape November 2024
- Africa and the Gulf Region: Blurred Boundaries and Shifting Ties, September 2015
- GRM Workshop 2009: The Gulf and Africa: Developing a New Strategic Partnership





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**Gulf Research Center
Jeddah
(Main office)**

19 Rayat Alitihad Street
P.O. Box 2134
Jeddah 21451
Saudi Arabia
Tel: +966 12 6511999
Fax: +966 12 6531375
Email: info@grc.net



**Gulf Research Center
Riyadh**

Unit FN11A
King Faisal Foundation
North Tower
King Fahd Branch Rd
Al Olaya Riyadh 12212
Saudi Arabia
Tel: +966 112112567
Email: info@grc.net



**Gulf Research Center
Foundation Geneva**

Avenue de France 23
1202 Geneva
Switzerland
Tel: +41227162730
Email: info@grc.net



**Gulf Research Centre
Cambridge**

University of Cambridge
Sidgwick Avenue,
Cambridge CB3 9DA
United Kingdom
Tel: +44-1223-760758
Fax: +44-1223-335110



**Gulf Research Center
Foundation Brussels**

Avenue de
Cortenbergh 89
4th floor, 1000
Brussels
Belgium

