

SUMMARY: Nigeria's last century history involves *multiple ferocious struggles for independence*. The British colonial domination lasted for a better part of Nigeria's history and *vicious civil wars* between Nigeria's Federal government and a rebellious Republic of Biafra continued challenging the confines of their political structure. *Nigeria is home to one of the most gruesome military conflicts in modern history lasting three years and claimed more than one million civilian lives. Successive Nigerian Military governments, in conjunction with corrupt African leaders, continue the endless political strife* while trying to control the country's extremely diverse population and recreate a modern political structure. These leaders' process of nation building has received *immense backlash and criticism* despite peoples renewed optimism and sediments of national solidarity following their emancipation in 1960. Nigeria's *turbulent history* consequently has made *physical and economic reconstruction, along with social rehabilitation, very difficult tasks*.

1861-1914 - Britain consolidates its hold over what it calls the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria, governs by "indirect rule" through local leaders.

1922 - Part of former German colony Kamerun is added to Nigeria under League of Nations mandate.

1951: The British decided to grant Nigeria internal self-rule.

1958: Nigerian Armed Forces were transferred to Federal control and the Nigerian Navy was born. Quickly following was then the introduction of their new currency, the Pound. Fight against poverty has been a central plank of development planning since independence in 1960. So far, about 15 ministries, 14 specialized agencies, and 19 donor agencies and NGOs have been involved in the decades of this crusade.

1960 - Independence, with Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa leading a coalition government. Three years later, it becomes a republic. (Hausa H.O.S)

1962-63 - Controversial census fuels regional and ethnic tensions.

1965 - *Violence erupted* in the western region and criticism of the political ruling class transpired feelings of agitation within the new republic.

1966 - Middle-ranking members of the Nigerian military stage an attempted coup in January that is suppressed by federal troops, but results in the installation of a military government. January - Balewa killed in coup. Major-General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi heads up military administration. (May): *Massive rioting* started seeking to avenge and *murder members of the coup*. July - Ironsi killed in counter-coup, replaced by Lieutenant-Colonel Yakubu Gowon. (Ibo coup). (Counter-coup, Gowon H.O.S.). Both *head of state and governor are killed*.

1967 - The Eastern Region of Nigeria secedes in May, proclaiming itse
If the Republic of Biafra. Country plunges into a civil war that kills an estimated one million. Beginning of the *30 month war* between



Pres. Azikiwe



Obafemi Awolowo

BIAFRA WAR



Attacks, food blockade killed more than one million people

Federal Government and the Republic of Biafra. (more - Three eastern states secede as the Republic of Biafra, sparking bloody civil war.)

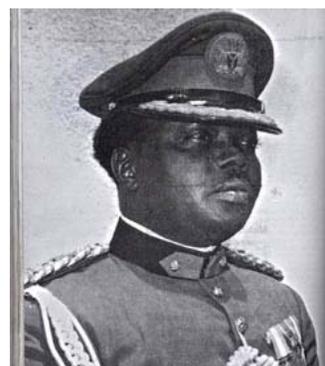
1970 - Biafran leaders surrender, former Biafran regions reintegrated into country. (more - The Biafra secessionists capitulate in January. Successive governments promise elections but military rule continues.)

1974 - General Gowon states that his earlier *promise of returning power to a democratically elected government in 1976 cannot be kept*. He also announces an *infinite postponement* of transferring the government to *civil rule*.

1975 - Gowon overthrown, flees to Britain, replaced by Brigadier Murtala Ramat Mohammed, who begins process of moving federal capital to Abuja.

1976 - Mohammed assassinated in coup attempt. Replaced by Lieutenant-General Olusegun Obasanjo, who helps introduce American-style presidential constitution.

1979 - Elections bring Alhaji Shehu Shagari to power. (More - Nigeria returns to civilian government rule in October, electing Sheu Shagari as President of the Second Republic). (Military, (H.O.S. Obasanjo, Yoruba) yields to elections; Hausa elected). General Obasanjo was followed by the first elected President and first politician to govern Nigeria since 1966, Alhaji Shehu Shangari



Pres. Murtala Muhammed

1983 January - The government expels more than one million foreigners, mostly Ghanaians, saying they had overstayed their visas and were taking jobs from Nigerians. The move is condemned abroad but proves popular in Nigeria. August, September - Shagari re-elected amid accusations of irregularities. (more - Shagari regime is deposed in December, as a military coup ousts the democratically elected government.) December - Major-General Muhammad Buhari seizes power in bloodless coup. (83/84 Civilian regime overthrown; Hausa Military H.O.S.)

1985 - Ibrahim Babangida seizes power in bloodless coup, curtails political activity. (more - A second coup ushers in a regime headed by Gen. Ibrahim Babangida. Babangida later promises new elections.)

1993 June - Military annuls elections when preliminary results show victory by Chief Moshood Abiola.

1993 August - Power transferred to Interim National Government.

1993 November - General Sani Abacha seizes power, suppresses opposition. Nigerians go to the polls in June, elect Social Democratic Party candidate Moshood Abiola as the new president of the country with 58 percent of the vote. On the eve of election results, General Babangida [annuls the election](#). The United States suspends aid as a

GENERAL ABACHA



Late military ruler, accused of stealing some \$3bn from state
[Horrors of the Abacha regime](#)
[Obituary: Leader with an iron grip](#)

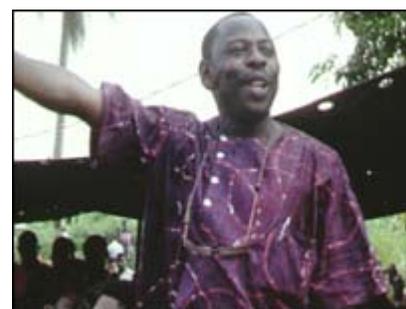
political crisis ensues. [Eleven die](#) in riots protesting military rule. Babangida [steps down](#) in August and chooses interim government. Gen. Sani Abacha [seizes power](#) in November.

1994 - Abiola arrested after proclaiming himself president. Nigerian police [arrest](#) Abiola in June after he declares himself president of the country. In July, a federal high court [charges Abiola](#) with treason for declaring himself president. The 50,000-member Nigerian Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers [declares a strike](#) as the government sends in soldiers to replace workers in July. The strike increases the price of crude oil worldwide. Most of Nigeria's oil workers [return to their jobs](#) in September. [Wole Soyinka](#), winner of 1986 Nobel Prize for literature, flees Nigeria in November.



1995 - Ken Saro-Wiwa, writer and campaigner against oil industry damage to his Ogoni homeland, is executed following a hasty trial. In protest, European Union imposes sanctions until 1998, Commonwealth suspends Nigeria's membership until 1998. In October, General Abacha vows he will [step down](#) in three years after reforms are complete. Nigeria's military government hangs nine political activists in November, including well-known playwright [Ken Saro-Wiwa](#), who was accused of involvement in the killings of four pro-government traditional chiefs in 1994. Nigeria is [suspended from the Commonwealth](#), the 52-member organization grouping Britain and its former colonies, after the hangings.

KEN SARO-WIWA



Ogoni anti-pollution campaigner, executed by military tribunal

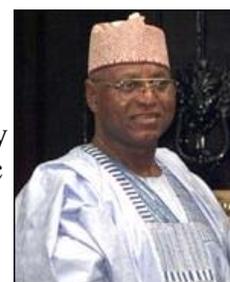
1996 - [Kudirat Abiola](#), the outspoken wife of detained Nigerian presidential claimant Moshood Abiola, is shot and killed while being driven along a Lagos street in June.

[No end to Saro-Wiwa's struggle](#)

1997 - [Exiled writer Wole Soyinka](#) is charged in absentia with treason in March by the country's military government.

1998 - Abacha dies, succeeded by Major-General Abdulsalami Abubakar. Chief Abiola dies in custody a month later. **May 7:** Nigeria announces that it has [freed 142 prisoners](#) on orders of General Abacha.

June 8: [Abacha](#) dies at his villa in the Nigerian capital. He is quickly replaced by a close ally, Maj. Gen. Abdulsalam Abubakar. **9:** The Clinton administration offers [improved ties](#) with Nigeria's new military government if it frees political prisoners and moves toward democratic reform. **12:** Hundreds of Nigerians hold [scattered protests](#) in Lagos to demand an end to military rule. They are dispersed by troops and police. **July 3:** Nigeria's new military government confirms that they intend to [release the country's political prisoners](#), including Moshood Abiola. **7:** Nigeria's imprisoned political leader, [Moshood Abiola](#), dies of an apparent heart attack as he talks with Nigerian officials and senior U.S. diplomats about how to resolve the



General Abdulsalam Abubakar

country's five-year-old political crisis. **20:** In a major television address, Maj. Gen. Abubakar [promises](#) that free elections will be held in early 1999 and a civilian sworn in as president of Nigeria on May 29.

1999 - Parliamentary and presidential elections. Olusegun Obasanjo sworn in as president. **January 20:** Nigerian and international election monitors declared that local elections in December and state elections Jan. 9 were fair. The country enters high campaign season for the election of its first national [civilian leadership](#) in 15 years. **February 27:** Nigerians [vote](#) for a civilian president in an election marred by claims of voter fraud and irregularities. Two days later, Nigeria's election commission [confirms](#) the winner: former military ruler Olusegun Obasanjo.

2000 - Adoption of Islamic, or Sharia, law by several northern states in the face of opposition from Christians. Tension over the issue results in hundreds of deaths in clashes between Christians and Muslims.

2001 - Tribal war in Benue state, in eastern-central Nigeria, displaces thousands of people. In October, army soldiers sent to quash the fighting kill more than 200 unarmed civilians, apparently in retaliation for the abduction and murder of 19 soldiers.

2001 October - Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, South African President Thabo Mbeki and Algerian President Bouteflika launch New Partnership for African Development, or Nepad, which aims to boost development, encourage open government and end wars in return for aid, foreign investment and a lifting of trade barriers which impede African exports.

2002 January - Blast at munitions dump in Lagos kills more than 1,000.

2002 February - Some 100 people are killed in Lagos during bloody clashes between Hausas from the mainly-Islamic north and ethnic Yorubas from the predominantly-Christian southwest. Thousands flee their homes. The city's governor suggests retired army officials stoked the violence in an attempt to restore military rule.

2002 March - An appeals court reverses a death sentence handed down to a woman found guilty of adultery. An Islamic court in the north had ordered that the woman be stoned to death, but the sentence provoked an international outcry including a plea for clemency from the EU.

2002 October - International Court of Justice awards the disputed Bakassi peninsula to Cameroon, but Nigeria is adamant that it will defend its right to the valuable land mass.

2002 November - More than 200 people die in four days of rioting stoked by Muslim fury over controversy surrounding the planned Miss World beauty pageant in Kaduna in December. The event is relocated to Britain.

2003 12 April - First legislative elections since end of military rule in 1999. Polling marked by delays, allegations of ballot-rigging. President Obasanjo's People's Democratic Party wins parliamentary majority.

SHARIA LAW



Safiya Husseini, acquitted after death sentence for adultery

[Debate rages over women and Sharia](#)
[Analysis: Nigeria's Sharia split](#)

2003 19 April - First civilian-run presidential elections since end of military rule. Olusegun Obasanjo elected for second term with more than 60% of vote. Opposition parties reject result. EU observers say polling marred by "serious irregularities".

2003 July - Nationwide general strike called off after nine days after government agrees to lower recently-increased fuel prices.

2003 August - Nigeria says it will not hand over Bakassi peninsula - awarded to Cameroon in 2002 - for at least three years. Violence between Ijaw and Itsekiri people in Delta town of Warri kills about 100 people, injures 1,000

ETHNIC CLASHES



Hausa-Yoruba tension spills out onto the streets of Lagos



Pres. Olusegun Obasanjo

[Nigeria: More divided than united?](#)

√ You can get more pictures at www.dawodu.com/leaders.htm

√ More information about Nigeria past and present from www.nigeriaembassysa.org/nppf.shtml

THE THREE MAJOR TRIBES IN NIGERIA

