IJAAR PUBLISHING®

International Journal of Advanced Academic Research | ISSN: 2488-9849
Vol. 11, Issue 7 (2025) | www.ijaar.org

EVALUATING THE COVID 19 LOCKDOWN IN NIGERIA, FROM A HUMAN RIGHT PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The outbreak of COVID-19 resulted in the implementation of various measures by governments across the world to curb the spread of the virus. In Nigeria, one of the measures implemented was a lockdown, which aimed to restrict movement and enforce social distancing. While the lockdown may have been necessary to prevent the spread of the virus, it also had significant impacts on the human rights of Nigerians. This paper evaluates the COVID-19 lockdown in Nigeria from a human rights perspective. Specifically, it examines the impact of the lockdown on the rights to life, health, education, freedom of movement, and livelihoods. The paper also considers the measures put in place by the Nigerian government to mitigate the negative impacts of the lockdown on its citizens. The study employs the use of primary and secondary sources, using interviews with key stakeholders, as well as a review of existing literature on the topic. The findings of the study highlight the significant challenges faced by Nigerians during the lockdown, particularly the vulnerable populations. The study concludes by emphasizing the need for a human rights-based approach in the implementation of measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

KEYWORDS: COVID-19, Lockdown, Human Rights, Nigeria, Impact Assessment, Public Health Measures.

Mordi, K. M. & Abenabe, G. K. (2025). Evaluating the Covid 19 Lockdown in Nigeria, from a Human Right Perspective. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Research. 11*(7), 125-139. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17078115

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented disruptions worldwide, leading to significant human and economic losses. Globally, millions have lost their lives, and the crisis has threatened public health, food systems, and employment (World Health Organization, 2020). Economically, the pandemic has been disastrous, with tens of millions at risk of falling into extreme poverty, while the number of undernourished people, estimated at 690 million, could increase by up to 132 million before the year's end. Enterprises worldwide face existential threats, with nearly half of the 3.3 billion global workforce confronting the harsh reality of job loss, especially informal workers who lack social protection and quality healthcare.

In Nigeria, the situation mirrored the global crisis. The country's first reported case was on February 25, 2020, when an Italian national arrived in Lagos from Milan, Italy. At the peak of the pandemic, Nigeria recorded 4,399 cases of coronavirus, 143 deaths, and 778 recoveries. In response, the Nigerian government implemented drastic measures to curb the spread, including a nationwide lockdown, restrictions on social gatherings, and stringent penalties for violators. The lockdown, which particularly affected Lagos, Abuja, and Ogun states, emphasized border screenings, mandatory self-isolation, social distancing, frequent handwashing, and the use of hand sanitizers. These measures were akin to those adopted in severely affected countries like the United States, Spain, and Italy, where the virus spread rapidly (World Health Organization, 2020).

While these measures were necessary from a public health perspective, they posed significant human rights concerns. Restricting movement and shutting down economic activities meant millions of Nigerians, particularly in the informal sector, lost their livelihoods. For many, no income meant no food, worsening their socioeconomic plight. The global disruption of events, such as the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, symbolized the broader effects of the pandemic. The cancellation of major events, along with public backlash, highlighted a growing debate about individual rights versus collective safety. An emblematic case involved tennis star Novak Djokovic, who refused the COVID-19 vaccine on the grounds of personal freedom. His visa revocation and detention sparked global discussions on bodily autonomy and the scope of human rights during a pandemic.

Against this backdrop, this paper seeks to evaluate the COVID-19 lockdown in Nigeria from a human rights perspective. While the government's "safety-first" approach was designed to halt the virus's spread, it also conflicted with the human rights enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution. This research will examine the extent to which the lockdown measures impinged upon key human rights, including the rights to life, health, education, freedom of movement, and economic stability. Through this analysis, the paper will assess whether the Nigerian government's approach struck an appropriate balance between public safety and the protection of fundamental rights. Ultimately, the study aims to contribute to ongoing debates on human rights in the context of public health emergencies, with a focus on how future crises can be managed without compromising the rights of citizens.

Literature Review

The COVID-19 pandemic prompted nations around the world to implement unprecedented public health measures, including lockdowns, travel restrictions, and curfews. In Nigeria, these restrictions sparked significant debate regarding their impact on fundamental human rights. As

scholars have explored the tension between protecting public health and safeguarding civil liberties, the lockdown measures in Nigeria revealed stark inequalities and raised questions about state accountability. This literature review examines the human rights implications of Nigeria's lockdown, focusing on the rights to freedom of movement, livelihood, health, education, and protection from state enforcement.

Globally, public health emergencies have often led to restrictions that disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, including the poor and marginalized communities. Parmet and Sinha (2020) argue that while such restrictions are sometimes necessary, they often exacerbate existing inequalities. In Nigeria, where over 40% of the population lives below the poverty line (*National Bureau of Statistics*, 2020), lockdown measures had particularly harsh economic consequences. Oyewole (2021) explains that the Nigerian government's lockdown strategy, aimed at curbing viral transmission, did not adequately account for the country's heavy reliance on the informal economy. For millions of Nigerians who depend on daily wages, the lockdown meant the loss of income and food insecurity. Scholars argue that the lack of social protection measures for informal workers further deepened the economic crisis and exposed a critical gap in Nigeria's response to the pandemic (Ekundayo, 2020).

The right to freedom of movement, as guaranteed by Section 41 of Nigeria's Constitution, was one of the most visibly impacted rights during the lockdown. According to Ajayi (2021), while governments are permitted to restrict movement during public health crises, such restrictions must be proportional and applied equitably. In Nigeria, the lockdown measures were unevenly enforced, with urban centers such as Lagos, Abuja, and Ogun subjected to stricter enforcement than rural areas. This uneven application of restrictions disproportionately affected lower-income individuals, many of whom were forced to navigate a complex web of restrictions to access essential services. Oquaye (2020) contends that the government's failure to provide adequate financial and food support for affected populations rendered the restrictions not only oppressive but also detrimental to their basic survival needs.

The impact of the lockdown on access to health services presents another dimension of the human rights discussion. The right to health, as enshrined in international human rights instruments such as the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR), was significantly compromised during the pandemic. Eboh (2021) highlights how healthcare systems in Nigeria became overwhelmed, with shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE) for frontline workers and limited access to care for non-COVID-19 patients. The pandemic also laid bare inequalities in healthcare access, with wealthier citizens receiving better treatment, while the poor struggled to access even basic medical services. This imbalance in access further violated the principle of non-discrimination in healthcare, which is a core tenet of human rights law.

In addition to healthcare, the lockdown had severe repercussions for the right to education. The closure of schools in March 2020 affected over 46 million students, with the majority of these students unable to transition to online learning due to infrastructural deficits, particularly in rural and low-income areas (UNICEF, 2020). Akande (2020) notes that the educational divide widened during the pandemic, as wealthier families were able to provide their children with digital learning tools, while children from poorer backgrounds fell behind. The inability to ensure equitable access to education during the pandemic points to broader systemic issues in

Nigeria's educational sector and underscores the long-term impact of the lockdown on educational rights.

One of the most concerning aspects of the lockdown was the rise in police brutality and the excessive use of force by security agencies tasked with enforcing the restrictions. Amnesty International (2020) documented numerous cases of extrajudicial killings and unlawful detentions during the lockdown, particularly in urban centers. In some instances, security forces killed more people than the virus itself. Human Rights Watch (2020) emphasized that these violations constituted a clear breach of the right to life, as guaranteed by Section 33 of the Nigerian Constitution. The militarized enforcement of the lockdown measures, coupled with the lack of accountability for abuses by security personnel, led to widespread public disillusionment and undermined trust in the government's commitment to upholding human rights.

From a legal perspective, the Nigerian government's reliance on the *Quarantine Act of 1926* to justify its lockdown measures was widely criticized for being outdated and inadequate for addressing the complexities of a modern public health crisis (Ukiri, 2021). While the Act provided the legal basis for restricting movement and enforcing quarantine, scholars argue that it did not include sufficient safeguards to protect citizens' rights. This has led to calls for the reform of Nigeria's public health laws to ensure that future emergency measures are better aligned with international human rights standards, particularly regarding proportionality, necessity, and accountability.

In the wake of these challenges, civil society organizations played a crucial role in advocating for a human rights-based approach to the pandemic response. Groups like SERAP (2020) consistently highlighted the disproportionate impact of the lockdown on marginalized populations and called for greater transparency in the government's decision-making processes. Akande (2021) notes that the advocacy efforts of civil society groups were instrumental in shaping the public discourse around human rights during the pandemic, pushing the government to adopt more inclusive measures in its pandemic response.

In summary, the literature on the COVID-19 lockdown in Nigeria underscores the tension between public health imperatives and the protection of human rights. While the lockdown was necessary to curb the spread of the virus, its implementation revealed deep inequalities and exposed the limitations of Nigeria's legal and institutional frameworks for safeguarding rights during emergencies. Future research should continue to examine how Nigeria can balance public health with human rights in future crises, with a particular focus on ensuring that emergency measures are equitable, transparent, and respectful of the dignity of all citizens.

COVID 19 AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Essentially, Human rights are inherent entitlements to which every individual is entitled, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, religion, or socio-economic status. These rights, enshrined in international human rights law, aim to promote dignity, equality, and fairness (*Human Rights Watch*, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic, however, presented numerous challenges to upholding these fundamental rights, as governments worldwide, including Nigeria, had to implement restrictive measures to control the virus spread. This paper analyzes the implications of such measures on specific human rights, focusing on freedom of movement, freedom of choice, and the right to pursue happiness, with an emphasis on balancing these rights with public health priorities.

RIGHT OF MOVEMENT

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Nigeria's Federal Government imposed significant restrictions on the right to freedom of movement. In March 2020, a national lockdown was declared, prohibiting all but essential travel and restricting public gatherings. This measure was part of the government's effort to curb the spread of the virus. According to *Nigeria Centre for Disease Control* (NCDC) reports, the lockdown affected 36 states, with Lagos, Ogun, and the Federal Capital Territory being the epicenters of the pandemic. These states were the first to experience stringent movement restrictions, which remained in place until June 2020 when the lockdown was lifted (*NCDC*, 2020).

The restrictions disproportionately impacted Nigeria's poor and marginalized populations. Data from the *National Bureau of Statistics* (2020) indicated that nearly 40% of Nigerians live below the poverty line, with many depending on daily wage labor or informal markets for survival. These individuals were hardest hit by the lockdown, as the inability to work meant they could not earn a living or access essential goods and services like food, water, and healthcare.

Legally, the Nigerian Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of movement under Section 41(1). However, the government justified the lockdown under the *Quarantine Act of 1926*, which allows the President to impose restrictions to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. The Act provided a legal framework for the government's public health interventions during the pandemic.

Nevertheless, critics argued that the lockdown was excessive and disproportionately affected vulnerable groups (*Human Rights Watch*, 2020). Some civil society organizations and legal experts questioned whether the lockdown measures were constitutionally valid, as they were implemented without the approval of the National Assembly, raising concerns about executive overreach (*Seri-Hewitt*, 2020).

The legal challenges to the restrictions highlighted the delicate balance between protecting public health and upholding fundamental rights. While the government's primary argument was that the lockdown was necessary to prevent a public health catastrophe, opponents contended that less restrictive measures could have been implemented to mitigate the socio-economic impact on the poorest Nigerians.

Ultimately, the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that the right to freedom of movement is not absolute. In times of public health emergencies, governments can justifiably restrict movement, but such restrictions must be proportionate, necessary, and implemented with sensitivity to the needs of the most vulnerable.

FREEDOM OF CHOICE

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the world, and Nigeria is no exception. The pandemic has led to a number of restrictions on freedom of choice, including restrictions on movement, gatherings, and access to goods and services. These restrictions have been necessary to slow the spread of the virus, but they have also had a negative impact on people's lives.

One of the most significant impacts of the pandemic on freedom of choice in Nigeria has been the imposition of travel restrictions. In March 2020, the Nigerian government imposed a nationwide lockdown in an effort to contain the spread of the virus. The lockdown prohibited

people from leaving their homes except for essential reasons, such as going to work or buying food. The lockdown was lifted in June 2020, but travel restrictions remain in place for some countries.

The pandemic has also led to restrictions on gatherings. In April 2020, the Nigerian government imposed a ban on public gatherings of more than 20 people. This ban was lifted in June 2020, but gatherings of more than 50 people are still prohibited. These restrictions have made it difficult for people to attend religious services, social events, and other gatherings.

The pandemic has also had an impact on access to goods and services. In April 2020, the Nigerian government imposed a curfew in some parts of the country. The curfew was lifted in June 2020, but some businesses are still closed due to the pandemic. This has made it difficult for people to access essential goods and services, such as food, medicine, and transportation.

The pandemic has also led to a decline in economic activity, which has had a negative impact on people's incomes. This has made it difficult for people to afford basic necessities, such as food, housing, and healthcare. As a result, the pandemic has made it more difficult for people to exercise their freedom of choice.

The restrictions on freedom of choice imposed by the pandemic have been necessary to slow the spread of the virus. However, these restrictions have also had a negative impact on people's lives. It is important to balance the need to protect public health with the need to protect people's freedom of choice. As the pandemic continues, it is important to find ways to reduce the impact of the restrictions on people's lives while still protecting public health.

PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

The COVID-19 lockdown in Nigeria had significant impacts on mental health and well-being, exacerbating feelings of isolation, anxiety, and uncertainty. One major contributor to mental health challenges was the restriction on social interactions. Socializing is a fundamental part of human happiness, and the pandemic's limitations led to widespread loneliness. A report by *The Guardian* (2020) highlights the experience of Aisha Bello, a single mother from Lagos, who said, "I hadn't seen my close family in over six months. The isolation was unbearable. I spent most nights awake, worrying about the virus and the future." Her experience mirrors that of millions who found themselves cut off from their usual support networks, leading to increased mental distress.

In addition, the lockdown disrupted work and education, leading to increased stress, uncertainty, and depression. The National Bureau of Statistics reported that 20% of Nigeria's full-time workforce lost their jobs during the pandemic, leaving many in financial distress (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). For instance, a small business owner, John Adewale, shared his story in an interview with *Premium Times* (2020). He said, "I had to shut down my printing shop. With no income for over five months, I was depressed, wondering how I would pay rent and feed my family." Adewale's case represents the broader struggles faced by informal sector workers, many of whom had no social safety nets to rely on during the pandemic. Furthermore, Obi Okolie Favor argues that the government could have handled the situation more effectively during the lockdown. "You can't instruct citizens to remain indoors without making adequate provisions for their needs. The government should have managed it better."

From first-hand experience from a public health analyst, Ngozi observed that despite the government's good intentions, the early socio-medical response to COVID-19 in Nigeria was met with resistance and dissatisfaction from the public. "People were unwilling to cooperate due to their frustration with the sudden lockdown order," she noted. The closure of airports, indefinite postponement of social events like sports and festivals, along with the "stay-at-home" campaign and ban on large gatherings, severely restricted social interaction. The government's inability to manage the situation effectively led to a rise in street crime, with hoodlums searching for warehouses to loot for food. This development significantly hindered efforts to control the spread of the virus. Additionally, mental health challenges were further aggravated by the physical effects of the virus. Individuals who contracted COVID-19 often reported long-term health issues, such as fatigue and brain fog, which significantly hindered their quality of life. One study from *Frontiers in Public Health* (2021) found that survivors of COVID-19 in Nigeria experienced prolonged physical symptoms, which contributed to feelings of despair and a loss of hope about recovery.

Beyond personal testimonies, data supports the conclusion that the pandemic took a toll on the collective mental health of Nigerians.

According to a study by Odanolu and Ogu (2020), the imposition of movement restrictions not only harmed social interactions but also led to a sharp decline in daily economic activities, particularly in the informal sector. The inability to earn a daily income resulted in heightened anxiety and stress among workers, who suddenly found themselves without the means to support their families.

New Zealand provides a contrasting case study. Rossouw et al. (2020) studied the evolution of happiness before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, finding that pandemic-related disruptions severely affected the well-being of citizens. Factors such as job security, freedom of movement, and a stable mental state were identified as key to improving post-pandemic recovery. While New Zealand implemented jobseeker support payments and other financial aid, Nigeria’s response was less robust, with minimal support for the most vulnerable populations, leaving many feeling abandoned by the government.

In summary, the COVID-19 lockdown severely impacted mental health and well-being in Nigeria. Social isolation, job losses, and long-term physical health problems compounded stress and anxiety, leading to widespread emotional distress. Personal stories like those of Aisha Bello and John Adewale, coupled with statistical data, paint a human face to the mental health crisis caused by the pandemic. The lack of robust mental health support systems further deepened the crisis, highlighting the urgent need for mental health interventions in post-pandemic recovery efforts.

IS DEMOCRACY FAILING?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Nigeria experienced several protests as a direct response to the government’s lockdown measures, which many citizens viewed as harsh and neglectful of the country’s socio-economic realities. One prominent instance occurred when warehouses containing government palliatives were looted by citizens in major cities like Abuja, Lagos, and Jos. These palliatives, which were meant to alleviate hunger during the lockdown, had been hoarded, sparking anger among the population. Hunger and food insecurity, aggravated by the

pandemic, drove desperate people to take extreme measures, with nearly 83 million Nigerians living below the poverty line at the time (*National Bureau of Statistics*, 2020; *Al Jazeera*, 2020).

The government's response to these protests was often heavy-handed. Security forces were deployed to suppress the unrest, which led to accusations of human rights violations. Amnesty International reported that police used excessive force during the enforcement of lockdowns, leading to the deaths of several protesters. The government justified these actions by framing the protests as violations of lockdown restrictions, further deepening public dissatisfaction (*Amnesty International*, 2020).

Misinformation played a significant role in shaping public perception and undermining trust in the government during the pandemic. With limited communication from official channels, social media and other unverified sources filled the information vacuum. Misleading information about the virus, vaccines, and government measures spread rapidly. According to Ferreira (2022), the spread of misinformation contributed to vaccine hesitancy and refusal to follow safety protocols, such as mask-wearing. This undermined public health efforts, as misinformation fueled doubts about the seriousness of COVID-19, the efficacy of vaccines, and government credibility.

Additionally, public trust in the government was eroded by apparent contradictions in the enforcement of COVID-19 rules. For example, while the government cracked down on peaceful protests citing violations of lockdown rules, large gatherings were allowed for political campaigns in states like Edo and Ondo, where elections were held during the pandemic (*Eko-Akingbesote*, 2021). These double standards created further distrust, with citizens feeling that the government selectively applied restrictions to serve its interests rather than public health.

FAILURE OF GLOBALIZATION?

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the vulnerabilities of global supply chains, which had been a cornerstone of globalization for decades. Nigeria, like many other countries, felt the brunt of these disruptions. The country struggled to access essential medical supplies, such as personal protective equipment (PPE) and vaccines, due to global supply chain breakdowns (World Health Organization, 2020). The dependence on external sources for critical goods left Nigeria vulnerable when borders closed, and the global competition for limited resources intensified. This situation worsened the healthcare crisis in Nigeria, contributing to increased COVID-19 cases and fatalities, especially among healthcare workers, who were already under-resourced and under-protected.

From an economic standpoint, Nigeria’s reliance on international trade and the importation of raw materials severely impacted small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) during the pandemic. Many SMEs found it difficult to procure raw materials due to the disruption of global supply chains, leading to a decline in productivity and revenue (Oyewole, 2013). The pandemic-induced economic slowdown exposed the fragility of Nigeria’s manufacturing and trade sectors, which are heavily dependent on external markets for both supply and demand.

The failure of globalization during the pandemic also raised significant human rights concerns in Nigeria. The inequities in access to healthcare became glaringly obvious, as wealthier individuals could afford better medical care while the poor struggled to access even basic services. This disparity violated the right to health, as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (WHO, 2020). The pandemic further exacerbated Nigeria’s human rights issues, with the

government's response, including lockdown measures, leading to allegations of police brutality and excessive force (Amnesty International, 2020). These measures violated fundamental rights such as the right to life, freedom of movement, and assembly.

However, to mitigate the effects of global supply chain disruptions, Nigeria could have implemented several alternative strategies. Firstly, strengthening local manufacturing capacity would have been a crucial step toward reducing dependency on global supply chains. By investing in domestic production of essential goods, including medical supplies and raw materials, Nigeria could have been better equipped to handle the crisis. This approach would have involved encouraging public-private partnerships and providing incentives for local industries to innovate and expand production (Binagwaho, 2020).

Another solution would have been the diversification of trade partners. Relying too heavily on a few countries or regions made Nigeria susceptible to supply chain disruptions when those areas faced their own crises. By establishing trade agreements with a broader range of countries and regions, Nigeria could have ensured more consistent access to critical supplies during the pandemic.

Additionally, a focus on developing a robust healthcare infrastructure would have helped mitigate the pandemic's human rights impacts. If Nigeria had better healthcare systems and social safety nets in place, the disparities in access to medical care could have been reduced, minimizing the human rights violations that occurred (Smith, 2021). Furthermore, improving the accountability of security forces during the enforcement of lockdown measures could have prevented the human rights abuses that marred the government's response.

In summary, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the limitations of Nigeria's reliance on globalization, particularly in terms of supply chains and human rights. However, by strengthening local industries, diversifying trade relationships, and improving healthcare infrastructure, Nigeria could position itself more resiliently for future crises.

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined and evaluated the COVID-19 lockdown in Nigeria from a human rights perspective. The pandemic had a far-reaching impact on the country's socio-economic and political structure, disrupting all sectors and raising concerns about the protection of fundamental rights. One of the primary features of a functioning democracy is the protection of human rights, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Nigerian Constitution. However, during the lockdown, these rights were frequently undermined under the guise of protecting citizens from the spread of the virus. In particular, there was a resurgence of authoritarian practices, where state apparatuses were used to suppress freedom of speech and peaceful protests. A notable example was the crackdown on peaceful protesters during the pandemic, reflecting an erosion of democratic values.

Additionally, essential human rights such as freedom of choice, movement, and the pursuit of happiness were severely restricted. The lockdown prohibited all but essential travel, forcing many people to stay home from work, school, and other activities. This disproportionately affected daily wage earners, who were unable to work and sustain their livelihoods. These restrictions not only worsened the economic situation but also negatively impacted the mental health of citizens, the very people the government sought to protect through these measures.

In summary, the COVID-19 lockdown in Nigeria posed a complex challenge, revealing the tension between necessary public health measures and the protection of individual freedoms. Although the government's actions were aimed at controlling the virus, they disproportionately affected vulnerable populations, particularly in terms of economic, social, and civil rights. International human rights frameworks, such as the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)* and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)*, provide guidance on ensuring that emergency measures remain proportionate, necessary, and sensitive to the needs of the most vulnerable (United Nations, 2020).

The pandemic also exposed the failures of globalization from a human rights standpoint in Nigeria. Reliance on global trade, compounded by supply chain disruptions, led to the decline of local industries, widespread job losses, and increased poverty and inequality. Inequities in access to healthcare and education became even more pronounced, contributing to the violation of human rights during the crisis. It is crucial for policymakers to reassess the impact of globalization on human rights and to address the challenges that developing countries like Nigeria face in safeguarding these rights during times of crisis.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the analysis of the COVID-19 lockdown in Nigeria from a human rights perspective, several recommendations emerge for improving the protection of fundamental rights during public health emergencies.

First, there is a need for the Nigerian government to strike a better balance between public health measures and the protection of human rights. While it is crucial to take decisive actions to control the spread of infectious diseases, such actions must be proportional and targeted, ensuring that the rights to freedom of movement, choice, and expression are not unnecessarily restricted. Future responses should include legal safeguards that guarantee the protection of civil liberties even during emergencies. The government must ensure that these measures are subject to legislative oversight, preventing executive overreach.

Second, the protection of vulnerable populations should be prioritized. The lockdown disproportionately affected poor and marginalized communities, who rely on daily wages and informal markets for survival. To avoid similar outcomes in future emergencies, the government should establish social safety nets, such as direct financial aid, food distribution programs, and access to essential services like healthcare and education. This would mitigate the socio-economic impact of restrictions and prevent further violations of economic and social rights.

Third, there is a need to improve access to mental health services. The lockdown exacerbated mental health challenges due to isolation, job losses, and economic uncertainty. Expanding mental health support through public health campaigns, increasing funding for mental health services, and offering psychological support during emergencies would help alleviate these challenges and safeguard the well-being of citizens.

The government must integrate human rights frameworks, such as those established under the ICCPR and ICESCR, into national policy responses. This should include creating transparent mechanisms to assess the human rights implications of any emergency measures. Establishing independent oversight bodies to monitor government actions during crises would further help ensure that restrictions on rights remain necessary and proportionate.

In addition, Nigeria should invest in strengthening local production capacities to reduce its reliance on global supply chains. The pandemic exposed the vulnerabilities of globalization, as disruptions to international trade left Nigeria without essential medical supplies and resources. By fostering local industries and diversifying trade partners, the country can reduce its dependence on external markets and better safeguard economic rights during future global crises.

In conclusion, these recommendations highlight the need to balance public health measures with the protection of human rights, particularly for the most vulnerable. Expanding mental health support, upholding international human rights frameworks, and promoting economic resilience are crucial. Policymakers must take these steps to better prepare for future emergencies while ensuring the rights and well-being of Nigerian citizens.

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