



“Between Hunger and the Virus”

The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on People Living in Poverty in Lagos, Nigeria

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community legal support initiative



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**The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on People Living
in Poverty in Lagos, Nigeria**

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Printed in the United States of America

ISBN: 978-1-62313-928-5

Cover design by Rafael Jimenez

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Justice & Empowerment Initiatives (JEI) is a Nigerian human rights organization that works in close partnership with grassroots movements, including the Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlement Federation, to empower poor and marginalized individuals and communities to demand greater access to justice and pro-poor urban governance and policies.

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Map



Glossary

Coalition Against Covid (CACOVID): Coalition of over 90 private sector actors working with the federal government, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, and the World Health Organization (WHO) to combat Covid-19 in Nigeria through funding and technical and operational resources.

Eba: Staple food in Nigeria made from dried, grated cassava, commonly known as garri, mixed with hot water to form a dough and eaten with soups or sauces.

Garri: Dried grated cassava, also known as cassava flakes, which can be mixed with hot water to make a staple meal known as eba or soaked in water and eaten as a cereal with sugar and/or milk.

Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC): Federal institution established to investigate and prosecute corrupt practices and educate the public on the need to combat corruption.

Informal settlements: Defined in this report as housing, shelter, or settlement in an urban area where inhabitants have no or limited security of tenure vis-à-vis the land or dwellings they inhabit; where their neighborhoods usually lack, or are cut off from, formal basic services (e.g., water, sanitation, electricity, roads, drainage) and city infrastructure; and where housing may not comply with current planning and building regulations. Informal settlements are often referred to as slum communities or slums, but despite their high poverty levels and lack of basic infrastructure, people living in slums in some cases have security of tenure and recognition in the formal housing sector.

Lagos State Residents Registration Agency (LASRRA): An agency established by the Lagos State government to register and capture data of Lagos state residents in a statewide database for purposes of planning, resource allocation, and service provision.

Lagos State's Covid-19 Emergency Operations Centre: A body that coordinates the health response to Covid-19 in Lagos State, whose members include the leadership of the

Ministry of Health, Health Service Commission, Primary Health Care Board, and representatives of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, the World Health Organization, and other international development partners.

Local Government Areas (LGA): Administrative subdivisions of states across Nigeria which are administered by the third and lowest tier of government, Local Government Councils. Each LGA is further subdivided into a minimum of 10 and maximum of 15 areas referred to as Wards. Representatives are elected from each Ward to make up the Local Government Council, which is led by a Chairperson who is the Chief Executive of the LGA. The federal and state are the other tiers of government.

Naira: Nigeria's national currency. Official exchange rate to US\$1 on July 22, 2021 was approximately 409 Naira.

National Social Register of Poor and Vulnerable Households: Federal government database of impoverished households across Nigeria that is used to determine eligibility for, and distribution of, governments services, including cash transfers.

National Social Safety Nets Coordinating Office (NASSCO): Office in the federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development that is responsible for compiling the National Social Register and coordinating livelihood support to poor and vulnerable households in Nigeria.

National Social Safety Nets Project (NASSP): A World Bank and federal government-funded project which aims at establishing a national social safety net system, including the National Social Register, and that provides cash transfers to poor households.

Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC): Nigeria's national public health institute, with a mandate to lead the preparedness, detection, and response to infectious disease outbreaks and public health emergencies.

Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics Covid-19 National Longitudinal Phone Surveys: A nationwide study on the economic and social implications of the Covid-19 pandemic on households and individuals conducted by the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics. The

surveys began in April 2020 and as of April 2021 the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) had conducted nine different surveys, each with overlapping but non-identical questions.

Urban Areas: A built up geographical area constituting a city or town with a high concentration of people whose lives are organized around nonagricultural activities.

Urban Poor: Individuals living in urban areas who face a sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living, such as access to adequate food, water, housing, and sanitation.

Summary

Margaret Okuomo lives with her seven children in Ago Egun Bariga, a waterside slum community in Lagos, Nigeria's most populous state and the epicenter of the country's fight against Covid-19. Lagos, although Nigeria's wealthiest state, has high levels of urban poverty, with more than two-thirds of the state's population living in informal housing, many in the more than 380 slum communities spread throughout the state.

Prior to the pandemic, Okuomo worked for 13 years cleaning dormitories at the nearby University of Lagos, earning 18,000 Naira (US\$44) a month. But the university was shut down in March 2020 to prevent the spread of the virus, and Okuomo, as a casual worker, lost her income. Nigeria's social security system does not guarantee benefits to people who lose their jobs. Within a few months, Okuomo had exhausted her meagre savings and was unable to put enough food on the table for her children. "We don't eat like we used to. People who used to eat three meals are now eating one," she said in August 2020. "We [have] our fill in the morning, and sometimes at night we just soak two handfuls of *garri* [a staple made from cassava] and sleep."

During the first year of the pandemic, the rates of confirmed Covid-19 cases and related deaths in Lagos, and Nigeria as a whole, did not come close to what many feared when the virus first emerged in February 2020. But the Covid-19 crisis has had a devastating economic impact, with the World Bank forecasting in January 2021 that the pandemic will result in an additional 10.9 million Nigerians entering poverty by 2022. Okuomo finally found a new job sweeping roads in November 2020, but the price of food, water, and other essentials – which have risen sharply during the pandemic – forced her to take a second job. Even by March 2021, she was still struggling to pay back 12,000 Naira (\$29) she had borrowed to buy food for her family while she was unemployed.

Nigeria was particularly vulnerable to the economic impacts of Covid-19 due to the absence of a functioning social security system capable of providing support to households that lost jobs and income during the crisis. Although the pandemic has brought into sharp focus the importance of the right to social security, Michelle Bachelet, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, noted in January 2021 that over

70 percent people worldwide have no or only partial social security coverage. Nigeria's constitution does not provide a legal right to social security and, as Okoumo discovered, Nigerian laws create no entitlement to unemployment or child benefits. Nigeria does have a pension scheme open to employees in the formal and informal sectors, but enrolment is only about 40 percent nationally, according to the World Bank. Long-term underinvestment in social protection meant that, prior to the pandemic, only 4 percent of the poorest 40 percent of households had access to any form of social safety net program, according to the World Bank.

When Covid-19 hit, the federal and Lagos State governments sought to scale up existing social protection programs, distributing food and expanding a pre-existing cash transfer program targeted at vulnerable households. But in the absence of a more developed social security system, these crisis-driven and often ad hoc measures only reached a fraction of the people who have gone hungry during the Covid-19 crisis. "We keep hearing rumors about the government sharing money and food, but I haven't seen any in my area," Okuomo said.

This report, a collaborative effort between Human Rights Watch, an international human rights group, and Justice & Empowerment Initiatives (JEI), a Lagos-based nongovernmental organization, demonstrates that, by failing to fulfill the minimum requirements of the right to social security, Nigeria's federal and Lagos state governments are denying urban poor communities their right to food and other elements of the right to an adequate standard of living. The report describes the devastating impact of the pandemic on communities' livelihoods and access to food and then shows how, in the absence of an effective social security system, federal and state government responses struggled to fill the gap.

The report is based on research conducted between May 2020 and March 2021, including analysis of quantitative data and interviews with over 60 people living or working in 13 communities across Lagos. The report's quantitative data analysis draws on representative nationwide surveys on the socioeconomic impact of Covid-19 by Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), including analysis of the surveys' microdata, as well as an additional non-representative survey conducted by JEI and its partners in Lagos. In February 2021, Human Rights Watch wrote to the Federal and Lagos State governments to share the findings of the report and ask for more information about government efforts to respond to the economic impact of Covid-19 on urban poor communities. Responses from Nigeria's

federal government are included in the annexes to this report. At time of writing, the Lagos State government has not responded.

The report defines “urban” as an area with a high concentration of people whose lives are organized around nonagricultural activities. The report defines the urban poor as individuals living in urban areas who face a sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources necessary for the enjoyment of their right to an adequate standard of living, such as access to adequate food, water, housing, and sanitation.

Lost Livelihoods, Rising Hunger

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the livelihoods and access to food of urban communities in Lagos State, as a five-week lockdown, an economic downturn, and rising food prices have left many households struggling to feed their families.

As Nigeria saw its first confirmed cases of Covid-19, the federal government on March 30 imposed a lockdown in Lagos, neighboring Ogun state, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja – the areas with the most confirmed cases at that time. The five-week lockdown, which restricted movement and required all except essential services to close, had a devastating economic impact. “We have many people who work today to eat tomorrow,” said Adeleke Adekunle, a volunteer with the Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlements Federation, in May 2020. “The lockdown came quickly, and everyone said, ‘How are we going to survive?’ In two or three days, people were out of cash and food items.” An NBS nationwide survey conducted between April 20 and May 11, 2020 found that 42 percent of people – and 53 percent in the poorest quintile of households – had stopped working due to the Covid-19 crisis. In Lagos, JEI’s April 1 to May 31, 2020 survey found that 78 percent of respondents from urban poor communities had been unable to meet basic needs.

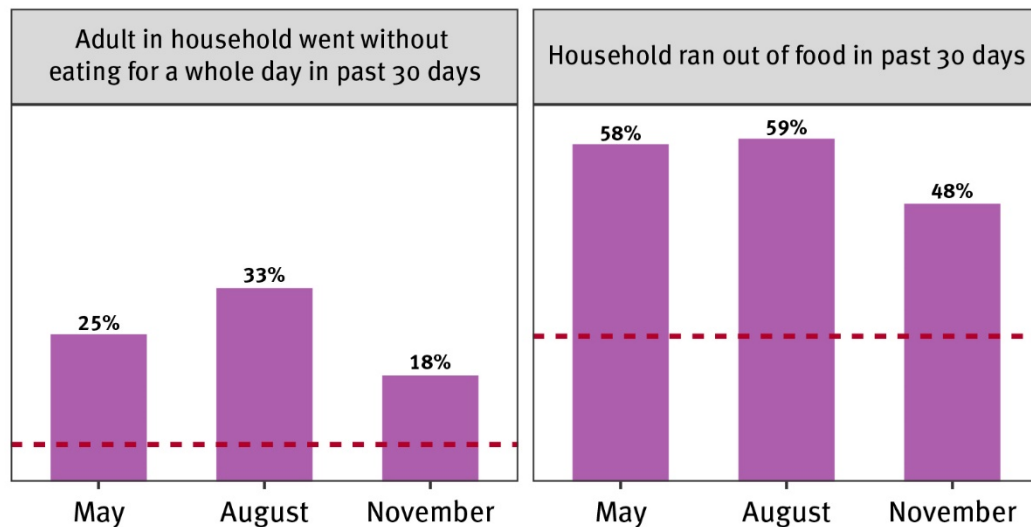
Although most people were able to resume economic activity once the lockdown ended, many saw their overall incomes fall. NBS surveys in August 2020 found that the total income of over 67 percent of households nationwide had decreased compared to the same period a year earlier. “Everyone is just trying to find one way or another to survive,” said Mohammed Yunus, a volunteer with the Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlements Federation, in

October 2020. “People have started working again, but not fully. Then there’s inflation, the increasing price of food and commodities. People tell us that they only have enough income to make food once a day.” Even by January 2021, the NBS found that 38 percent of households surveyed – and 44 percent in urban areas – had reduced income for the period August 2020 to January 2021 compared to the same period a year earlier.

Falling incomes, rising food prices, and the absence of government support combined to leave many people going hungry. “Before the lockdown a [50 kilograms] bag of rice was 18,000 Naira (\$44), during the lockdown it was 22,500 (\$55), and after the lockdown it’s 25,000 (\$61),” said Amudat Bekolari, a seamstress from Ajegunle in Ajeromi-Ifelodun Local Government Area (LGA), in June 2020. “My husband and I are just focusing on feeding our five children with the little money we have.” In November 2020, an NBS nationwide survey found that almost half of all households had run out of food in the last 30 days because of lack of money or other resources, and in 18 percent of households at least one member of the household went without eating for a whole day. These levels of hunger are almost double what Nigerians experienced prior to Covid-19.

Hunger in Nigeria Persistent Through Pandemic

Red line indicates 2018–19 baseline value



Source: Human Rights Watch analysis of Covid-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020, National Bureau of Statistics. Baseline data from National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria General Household Survey-Panel, Wave 4 2018/2019

Inadequate Government Support

President Muhammadu Buhari warned in July 2020 that the economic impact of Covid-19 risked pushing Nigerians further into poverty and promised that his government would strive “to combat and reverse the trend.”

In June 2020, the federal government passed an Economic Sustainability Plan that it told Human Rights Watch and JEI had, “shielded a proportion of the populace from negative economic impacts.” The 2.3 trillion Naira (\$5.6 billion) plan set out a number of measures designed to respond to the economic impact of the Covid-19 crisis, to be implemented over 12 to 18 months. The federal government said that it had disbursed 500 billion Naira (\$1.2 billion) of spending under the plan by May 2021.

In the absence of a more developed social security system capable of channeling support to vulnerable families, the Economic Sustainability Plan sought to expand the social assistance measures that did exist prior to the pandemic, including a nationwide cash transfer program that was reaching more than 835,00 households before Covid-19 hit. Cash transfers expanded early in the crisis – reaching 921,445 households for the period March to April 2020 – but their coverage reduced as the pandemic wore on, with 400,734 households receiving payments for November to December 2020.

The Economic Sustainability Plan also included support for a new “rapid response” cash transfer program, which began in January 2021 and is intended to reach 1 million people nationwide, primarily in urban poor communities. The plan also included other measures to preserve jobs and income, such as payroll support and loans to micro and small businesses, although some of these programs focused on the formal sector and excluded informal workers. Federal and state governments also implemented food assistance programs, with the federal government providing states with enough food to support more than 8.8 million households and the Lagos State government feeding around 500,000 households, according to a state official.

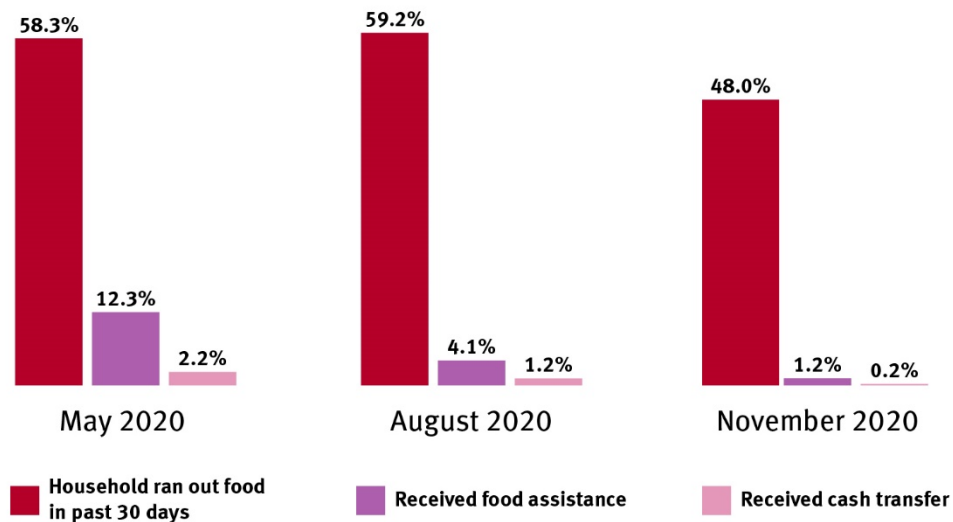
Overall, however, the weaknesses of Nigeria’s social security system prior to the Covid-19 crisis left an inevitable gap between the government’s pandemic response and rising hunger. NBS surveys administered from April 20 to May 11, 2020 found that 2.2 percent of households had received cash transfers since mid-March and 12 percent had received

food assistance, whereas 58 percent of households surveyed had run out of food in the previous 30 days. By November 2020, just 0.6 percent of households had received cash transfers and 3.5 percent food assistance since October, whereas 48 percent of all households had run out of food in the previous 30 days.

In Lagos State, the vast majority of people interviewed for this report had received no government assistance during the pandemic. “They announced on social media that people would get 5,000 Naira (\$12) [from government cash transfers],” said Godwin Paul, a former Tarkwa Bay resident who was evicted from his home in January 2020 and who spent much of 2020 living in temporary accommodation. “But it was just a fake promise.”

The Lagos State government’s delay in subscribing to the federal cash transfer program, combined with Lagos’s relative wealth compared to other states, meant that the state received a small share of federal cash transfers. Lagos residents, despite making up more than 10 percent of Nigeria’s population, received less than 1 percent of the cash transfers paid nationwide between March and December 2020.

Safety Nets Fell Short of Need in Nigeria



Source: Human Rights Watch analysis of Covid-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020, National Bureau of Statistics

The 5,000 Naira (\$12) paid to beneficiaries of cash transfers per month, which was set before the program was first launched in 2016, is also less than the current national poverty line of 11,450 Naira (\$28) per month and is not enough to guarantee an adequate standard of living in Lagos State. The Lagos State government has not used its own resources to implement its own cash transfer program.

The limited amounts of assistance that people have received during the pandemic has led to questions about how the federal and state governments have used the funds dedicated to the Covid-19 response. “We heard about all the money the government was supposed to be getting for Covid-19 – billions of Naira – and the government talked about the food they were distributing, but most of the communities never got any,” said Anthony Sylvanus, a community health educator from Lagos Mainland LGA. In August 2020, a joint report by three Nigerian NGOs on the distribution of food assistance in Lagos during the pandemic, found that “politicians hijacked the packages at the local level,” and that there was “no objective criteria for identifying vulnerable persons.”

Building a Social Security System in Nigeria

The Covid-19 crisis, by demonstrating the huge gaps in Nigeria’s social security system and the difficulties of rapidly expanding coverage during a crisis, has created a window of opportunity to expand social protection and fulfill the right to social security in Nigeria.

As a first step, the federal government should draft and support legislation that recognizes Nigerians’ right to social security and sets the legal foundations of an effective social security system, for example, by creating entitlements to financial support for unemployed workers, including in the informal sector, and an entitlement to child benefits.

To implement the legislation, the federal and Lagos State governments should formulate national and state-level strategies to develop an effective social security system. These strategies should build on existing national and state-level social protection policies and programs, but also create new initiatives, such as a form of income support, unemployment insurance, or benefit for informal workers, or maternity and child benefits, to build out the key elements of an effective social security system.

To meet immediate needs while a more complete system is created, the federal and Lagos State governments should extend and expand the social assistance programs used to respond to Covid-19, including cash transfers and food assistance. In Lagos State, the state government should not only push for an expansion of federally-backed cash transfers, but also mobilize its own resources to expand social assistance in the state, including through funding for cash transfers, grants or low-interest credit for informal workers and businesses, and investments in public infrastructure in urban poor communities, including water, sanitation, and electricity.

Federal and state agencies should work with community-based organizations to establish rights-based eligibility criteria for social assistance measures, including an assessment of households' access to food, water, basic shelter and housing, sanitation, and essential education. The federal and state government should also break down any potential barriers to access to social assistance for urban poor communities, such as a requirement that beneficiaries have access to a bank account, telephone credit, or proof of residency. The amount paid as cash transfers should be determined according to the amount needed for the recipient household to achieve an adequate standard of living, with adjustments made for the cost of living in Lagos State and other high-cost areas.

The development of a social security system at the federal and Lagos State levels will require financial resources at a time when government revenues are already constrained. The federal and Lagos State governments should increase the budget allocated to social protection while also developing proposals for mobilizing more revenue for social protection through progressive tax measures that do not make it more difficult for urban poor communities to achieve an adequate standard of living.

International donors should also provide financial support and technical assistance to help the federal and Lagos State government construct a functioning social security system. Increased domestic and international spending on social security should come with measures to hold government institutions accountable for how that money is spent.

Okuomo, the Ago Egun Bariga resident, said that her struggle to feed her seven children during the pandemic, and the lack of government support she received, underscored the need for the federal and Lagos State governments to provide families like hers with the

resources they need to survive. “Let them know it’s the poor people that are the ones suffering the most,” she said. “They should add the poor people to their agenda.”

Recommendations

To President Buhari and the Federal Government of Nigeria

- **Draft and support legislation that recognizes Nigerians' right to social security.**
 - Ensure the legislation spells out Nigerians' immediate right to the minimum core elements of the right to social security, as well as a commitment to progressively realize universal coverage and adequate levels of benefits over time.
 - Ensure the strategy addresses existing gaps in Nigeria's social security system, for example, by providing entitlements to benefits for unemployed workers, including in the informal sector, to enable them to achieve an adequate standard of living.
- **Develop a national strategy to fulfill the right to social security, building on the federal government's existing social protection policy.**
 - Combine contributory schemes – based on contributions from beneficiaries and their employers, such as unemployment insurance – with non-contributory or social assistance measures, like cash transfers, open to everyone in need, including the lowest-income and most vulnerable members of society.
 - In the short term, prioritize social assistance measures to meet immediate needs, like the cash transfers deployed to respond to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, while building towards a wider social security system that combines contributory and non-contributory measures.
- **Extend and expand social assistance programs used to respond to the Covid-19 crisis, including the federal cash transfer program.**
 - Continue to promote and expand enrollment in the National Social Register of Poor and Vulnerable Households.
 - Expand the scale and coverage of social assistance programs at the federal and state level, including the federal cash transfer program, to ensure that social assistance enables all Nigerians to realize the minimum core elements of the right to social security and achieve an adequate standard of living.

- Regularly review and adjust the 5,000 Naira (\$12) per month payment for cash transfers to meaningfully reflect the cost of living in Lagos State and other high-cost areas.
- Work with community-based organizations and civil society groups to define rights-based criteria for eligibility for cash transfers and social assistance programs. Relevant criteria would include households' current access to food, water, basic shelter and housing, sanitation, and essential education. The process used to determine eligibility should also use state or even Local Government Area (LGA) level indicators that take account of the high cost of living in Lagos State and other urban areas, as well as factors like number of dependents, gender, age, and needs of people with disabilities.
- Make public the rights-based criteria used to identify beneficiaries of cash transfers and work with community-based organizations and civil society groups to disseminate information to urban poor communities about how to enroll.
- Remove barriers to enrollment for urban poor communities in federal and state-level social assistance measures, such as any requirement to show proof of residency or to have a bank account or smartphone.
- **Mobilize the domestic revenue needed to realize the right to social security.**
 - In both annual budgets and in any future economic stimulus, increase the budget allocated to social protection in order to guarantee everyone's right to social security and an adequate standard of living.
 - Establish a forum, or direct existing forums such as the National Economic Council, to research and publish, by the middle of 2022, a white paper advising on ways to mobilize increased government revenue for social protection measures, including consideration of increased progressive taxation, a larger social security contribution base, reduced illicit financial flows, and reallocation of public expenditure. Prioritize progressive tax measures that do not make it more difficult for Nigerians to realize the right to an adequate standard of living.
- **Ensure accountability and transparency for spending on social security.**
 - Publish monthly data on the number of people receiving cash transfers, food, and other assistance, disaggregated by State, LGA and Ward, as well as by gender, age, and income levels.

- Publish a full breakdown of federal spending in response to Covid-19, including the amounts spent on cash transfers and food assistance programs.
- Publish the contracts awarded to agencies or companies implementing government programs in response to Covid-19.
- Conduct and publish regular annual audits of cash transfers, food assistance, and other social assistance programs.
- **Consider the specific needs and requirements of urban poor communities in developing policy responses to Covid-19, as well as other possible future health crises, and consult regularly with members of these communities.**
 - Invite groups with strong urban poor representation, and that are reflective of communities in terms of gender, age, and disability, to brief the Presidential Task Force for Covid-19.
 - In determining restrictions on movement or other limitations of individual freedoms to fight Covid-19 or other health crises, consider not only the public health dimensions of the decisions but also their full impact on the rights of the urban poor, including safety and access to food, water, healthcare, and livelihood.

To the Lagos State Government

- **Develop a state-level strategy to fulfill the right to social security, building on the state government’s existing social protection policy.** Ensure the strategy addresses existing gaps in Lagos State’s social protection system, for example, by providing support for unemployed workers, including in the informal sector, to enable them to achieve an adequate standard of living.
- **Extend and expand social assistance programs used to respond to the Covid-19 crisis, including the federal cash transfer program.**
 - Continue to promote and expand enrollment in the Lagos State component of the National Social Register of Poor and Vulnerable Households.
 - Advocate for expanded federal-backed cash transfers and other social assistance measures in Lagos State.
 - Develop a Lagos State-led and financed suite of social assistance measures, including cash transfers, food assistance, grants or low-interest credit for

informal workers and businesses, and investments in public infrastructure in urban poor communities, including water, sanitation, and electricity.

- Remove barriers to enrollment for urban poor communities in state-level social assistance measures, such as any requirement to show proof of residency to access the state-level social register.
- **Mobilize the state revenue needed to realize the right to social security.**
 - In annual budgets, increase the amount allocated to social protection in order to guarantee Lagos State residents' right to social security and an adequate standard of living.
 - Develop and publish a Lagos State-level stimulus plan to respond to the economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, with a strong focus on expanded social protection.
 - Issue public guidance describing how Lagos State residents can benefit from policies launched by the federal government in response to the economic impact of Covid-19, such as the interest free loans for daily-paid workers and artisans in the June 2020 2.3 trillion Naira (\$5.6 billion) stimulus plan. Update this guidance if and when the federal government announces a new stimulus package or other pro-poor policies to respond to Covid-19.
 - Establish and publish targets for the number of residents of Lagos benefitting from the federal government's June 2020 stimulus plan and any future stimulus package.
 - Establish a forum to research and publish, by the middle of 2022, a white paper advising on ways to mobilize increased government revenue for social protection measures, including consideration of increased progressive taxation, a larger social security contribution base, reduced illicit financial flows, and reallocation of public expenditure. Prioritize progressive tax measures that do not make it more difficult for Nigerians to realize the right to an adequate standard of living.
- **Ensure accountability and transparency for spending on social security.**
 - Publish monthly data on the number of people receiving cash transfers, food, and other assistance, disaggregated by LGA and Ward, as well as by gender, age, and income levels.
 - Publish a full breakdown of state spending in response to Covid-19, including the amounts spent on cash transfers and food assistance programs.

- Publish the contracts awarded to agencies or companies implementing government programs in response to Covid-19.
- Conduct and publish regular annual audits of cash transfers, food assistance, and other social assistance programs.
- **Consider the specific needs and requirements of urban poor communities in developing policy responses to Covid-19, as well as other possible future health crises, and consult regularly with members of these communities.**
 - Invite groups with strong urban poor representation, and that are reflective of communities in terms of gender, age, and disability, to brief the Lagos State government on the impact of Covid-19, including through briefings for the Covid-19 Lagos State Emergency Operations Centre on a quarterly basis.
 - In determining restrictions on movement or other limitations of individual freedoms to fight Covid-19 or other health crises, consider not only the public health dimensions of the decisions but also their full impact on the rights of the urban poor, including safety and access to food, water, healthcare, and livelihood.

To International Financial Institutions including the African Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank

- Increase financial resources and technical expertise available to the federal and Lagos State government to help develop a functioning social security system that protects Nigerians' right to an adequate standard of living.
- Verify that the Nigerian government fully and credibly implements the governance measures it committed to undertake when receiving loans or grants, such as creating and publishing specific budget lines for Covid-19-related spending and publishing independent audits of emergency response expenditures.

Methodology

Research for this report was conducted by Human Rights Watch, an international human rights organization, and Justice & Empowerment Initiatives (JEI), a Lagos-based nongovernmental organization that provides legal, advocacy, and other support to urban poor communities. Human Rights Watch and JEI worked with the Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlements Federation, a network of residents of urban poor communities, to identify interviewees for this report. Researchers also interviewed Federation leaders about their response to, and experience of, the pandemic.

This report documents the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on urban poor communities in Lagos State, from the lockdown initially imposed to stop the spread of the disease to the continued economic downturn that has accompanied the pandemic. The report examines the federal and Lagos State governments' efforts to respond to the economic impacts of Covid-19, including through cash transfers and food assistance, and the success of these measures in providing support to the urban poor in Lagos.

Although Nigerians across the economic spectrum have been impacted by Covid-19, our report focuses on the urban poor because they are particularly vulnerable to the economic impacts of the pandemic due to their reliance on the informal economy and on income sources that are easily disrupted both by measures to limit the spread of the disease and a more general economic downturn.

The report defines “urban” as an area with a high concentration of people whose lives are organized around nonagricultural activities. We define the urban poor as individuals living in urban areas who face a sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living, such as access to adequate food, water, housing, and sanitation. This definition of urban poverty is similar to internationally accepted definitions of “slum dwellers.” UN Habitat, for example, defines a “slum household” as one in which the inhabitants suffer one or more of the following “household deprivations”: lack of access to an improved water source; lack of access to improved sanitation facilities; lack of sufficient living area; lack of housing durability; and lack of security of tenure.

Our definition of the urban poor covers millions of people in Lagos State, with a 2016 Poverty Profile by the Lagos State Bureau of Statistics, a government agency, finding that over 80 percent of households in Lagos – about 20 million people, based on the population estimate in the 2016 Poverty Profile – earned less than \$1.90 a day, the international poverty line used by the World Bank. However, we do not aim to generalize across the entire urban poor population in the state, nor to assume that such a large population experienced the Covid-19 pandemic in a uniform manner. Instead, we have documented and described specific people’s experiences to illustrate how the pandemic has affected individuals, and then analyzed how government institutions have responded to the problems that interviewees raised.

We present interviewees’ experiences of the pandemic both through quotations in the main body of the report and through more detailed first-person narratives, described as “Corona Diaries,” which provide a deeper look into how a single individual experienced the pandemic. These diaries were inspired by JEI’s microblog documenting the experience of urban poor communities throughout the pandemic.

Researchers in total conducted over 60 telephone interviews for this report between March and December 2020, including with residents and community leaders, community health workers, and activists and representatives of civil society groups. Interviews were conducted in urban communities across Lagos, including in the following 13 areas: Ago Egun Bariga, Shomolu LGA; Ago Egun Oreta, Ikorodu LGA; Ajegunle, Ajeromi-Ifelodun LGA; Ebute Iga, Ikorodu LGA; Igbalogun, Snake Island, Amuwo Odofin LGA; Ijesha Tedo, Surelere LGA; Isale Akoka, Shomolu LGA; Okerube, Alimosho LGA; Oregun, Epe LGA; Tarkwa Bay, Eti-Osa LGA; Tomaro, Amuwo Odofin LGA; Sogunro, Lagos Mainland LGA; and Pelewura Market, Lagos Island LGA.

The report also integrates some quantitative data, including findings from nine Nigeria NBS National Longitudinal Phone Surveys on the socioeconomic impact of Covid-19, which the World Bank has said were based on a “representative sample” of approximately 1,800 households across Nigeria. These surveys provide an insight into national experiences during Covid-19, but do not provide data specific to Lagos State. The report also utilizes a survey conducted jointly by JEI, the Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlements Federation, and the Physically Challenged Empowerment Initiative, a grassroots network of people living with disabilities, between April 1 and May 31, 2020. The survey used a purposive sampling

methodology to reach 383 respondents across 144 communities in 20 LGAs in Lagos State. The data is not necessarily representative of the experience of all urban poor communities across the state, but represents only the experiences of the respondents, and is used only to illustrate and complement the individual accounts in the report.

Researchers also interviewed Lagos State and federal government officials, including officials of the federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development and the federal Ministry of Finance, Budget, and National Planning. We also interviewed World Bank staff and public health experts with experience in urban poor communities, including in Lagos, other parts of Nigeria, and other countries.

Human Rights Watch and JEI wrote letters in February 2021 requesting information from federal and state-level officials. The federal officials contacted included: Professor Yemi Osinbajo, Vice President, Federal Republic of Nigeria; Zainab Shamsuna Ahmed, Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning; Sadiya Umar Farouk, Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Protection; and Mustapha Boss, Chairperson, Presidential Task Force for Covid-19. The Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation sent a response on behalf of the federal government on May 11, 2021, which is included in Annex I of this report. The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development sent a reply on June 21, 2021, which is included in Annex II. We had also, in June 2020, sent a letter about the government's Covid-19 response to the federal Ministry of Health, and the Ministry's response is included in Annex III of this report.

At the Lagos State level, we wrote to Babajide Sanwo-Olu, Governor of Lagos State, as well as Commissioner Samuel Egube, Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget and Commissioner Akin Abayomi, Ministry of Health. We also sent copies of the letter we wrote to the governor to Commissioner Yetunde Arobieke, Ministry of Work Creation and Employment, and Commissioner Abisola Olusanya, Ministry of Agriculture. At time of writing, we had not received a written response from the Lagos State government, although we did meet with Commissioner of Health Professor Abayomi.

Due to restrictions on movement during the Covid-19 pandemic, interviews were conducted remotely through phone and secure messenger applications by two Human

Rights Watch researchers. JEI staff participated in some of the interviews. Interviews were generally in English, but researchers used Pidgin or other local languages where necessary.

Interviewees in urban poor communities were typically identified by JEI and the Federation, although some interviewees referred researchers to other community members. Using Federation leaders and volunteers as an entry point was essential during remote research, given that it was not possible to identify interviewees during community visits. This may, however, have skewed the categories of respondents in favor of those with more resources, including phone credit, and those individuals, for example, Federation members, who as active members of a prominent civil society group might have been more willing and comfortable criticizing the government's response to the pandemic.

Respondents consented to be interviewed and were informed of the purpose of the interview, its voluntary nature, and the ways in which the data would be used. Interviewees were informed that they could decline to answer questions or could end the interview at any time. Researchers did not offer interviewees material compensation. Although most interviewees agreed to be named in this report, some names and other identifying information have been removed at an interviewee's request to protect their privacy.

Although this report does argue for increased spending on social protection programs in response to Covid-19, including in Nigeria's federal fiscal stimulus, it does not provide a detailed analysis of the Nigerian government's allocation of resources in response to the pandemic, an issue that Nigerian organizations, including the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), have explored in detail. The report also argues for increased transparency in government spending on Covid-19, but does not investigate allegations of corruption, which require further research and are beyond the scope of this report.

Background

Covid-19 in Nigeria

As of July 7, 2021, Nigeria had 168,110 confirmed cases of Covid-19 and 2,122 fatalities, out of an estimated population in 2020 of 206 million people.¹ Lagos, Nigeria's most populous state with an estimated 26 million residents in 2019, on July 7 had 59,987 confirmed cases and 456 fatalities – more by far than any of Nigeria's other 35 states or the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.²

Lack of access to testing means the number of actual cases in Nigeria, and Lagos specifically, is likely much higher.³ Many Lagos residents have faced obstacles accessing testing at government testing centers and cannot afford the high cost of commercial testing centers, where tests cost between 36,000 to 50,000 Naira (\$87-\$121).⁴

¹ "Covid-19 Nigeria," Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, <https://covid19.ncdc.gov.ng/report/> (accessed July 7, 2021); "World Population Dashboard, Nigeria," World Population Fund, <https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population/NG> (accessed January 11, 2021).

² "Covid-19 Nigeria," Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, <https://covid19.ncdc.gov.ng/report/> (accessed July 7, 2021). State authorities in 2019 projected the population to reach over 26 million by the end of the year. "Lagos Socio-Economic Profile," Lagos State Government Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget, <http://mepb.lagosstate.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/sites/29/2019/11/11.0-LAGOS-SOCIO-ECONOMIC-PROFILE.pdf> (accessed September 14, 2020); "Lagos State Government Citizen's Guide to Y2019 Budget," Lagos State Government Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget, <http://mepb.lagosstate.gov.ng/storage/sites/29/2019/11/CITIZENS-GUIDE-TO-Y2019-BUDGET.pdf> (accessed September 14, 2020).

³ Public health experts have warned that the lack of access to testing risks hiding the prevalence of Covid-19 across Africa. See, for example, Katharine Houreld and David Lewis, "In Africa, a lack of data raises fears of 'silent epidemic'," *Reuters*, July 7, 2020, <https://graphics.reuters.com/HEALTH-CORONAVIRUS/AFRICADATA/dgkplxkmlpb/> (accessed July 3, 2021). There are also significant disparities in access to testing within Africa. South Africa, which has a population of approximately 60 million people, had by September 7, 2020, conducted 3.8 million tests and confirmed 639,362 cases, with 15,004 fatalities. See "Latest Confirmed Cases of Covid-19 in South Africa (7 Sept 2020)," National Institute for Communicable Diseases, September 7, 2020, <https://www.nicd.ac.za/latest-confirmed-cases-of-covid-19-in-south-africa-7-sept-2020/> (accessed September 14, 2021). Nigeria, whose population is more than three times larger than South Africa's, had by September 8 conducted 426,803 tests.

⁴ "Frequently Asked Questions," Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, <https://nitp.ncdc.gov.ng/onboarding/help/faq>, accessed July 23, 2021. Njide Ndili, Country Director for PharmAccess, an international organization assisting the Lagos State government in its Covid-19 response, described the challenges that ordinary Lagosians face in accessing Covid-19 testing: "How are the people at the bottom of society going to get tested? There are some private labs who are now doing testing, but you have to pay there. If you're of a lower education level, you have to be aware of the symptoms, know where to get tested, be motivated to get tested. Then you have to have confidence that, once you get there, there will be testing capacity available in order to even give you a sample." Human Rights Watch interview with Njide Ndili, Country Director, PharmAccess, Lagos, July 8, 2020.



A bus driver in Lagos State on May 6, 2020. Lagos, Nigeria's most populous state with an estimated 26 million residents in 2019, has had more confirmed Covid-19 cases by far than any of Nigeria's other states. © 2020 Olukayode Jaiyeola/NurPhoto via AP

Even with the likelihood of unreported cases, however, Nigeria, as elsewhere in Africa, did not see the numbers of fatalities during the first year of the pandemic that many feared would accompany the arrival of the virus. The World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Director for Africa, Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, said on September 24, 2020 that the WHO's "preliminary analysis suggests that over 80% of cases in African countries are asymptomatic," a conclusion "reinforced by the fact that we have not seen health facilities and health systems overwhelmed by very large numbers of cases."⁵

Chikwe Ihekweazu, the Director of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, similarly said on July 14, 2020 that despite "sustained community spread, particularly in Lagos," Nigeria had not seen "the severity observed in other countries...There could be underreporting of

⁵ Remarks by WHO Regional Director for Africa, Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, Opening statement, COVID-19 Press Conference, September 24, 2020, <https://www.afro.who.int/regional-director/speeches-messages/opening-statement-covid-19-press-conference-24-september-2020> (accessed November 1, 2020).

deaths and severe disease, but at least we would see a part of it in the hospitals. It is a tricky thing because it could become very dramatic but so far it has not been.”⁶

The emergence of further variants of Covid-19 in 2021, however, has led to fears of a spike in cases across Nigeria and in Lagos State specifically.⁷ Babajide Sanwo-Olu, Lagos State governor, warned in a July 12, 2021 statement that the state faces a potential new wave of Covid-19 cases, noting a “steep increase in the number of daily confirmed cases” in July 2021.⁸

Economic Impact of the Pandemic

The economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria, a lower-middle income country, has been significant, with plunging oil prices in particular affecting Nigeria’s heavily oil dependent economy.⁹ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated that Nigeria’s gross domestic product contracted by 3.2 percent in 2020, a stark contrast to the 2 percent economic growth predicted prior to Covid-19.¹⁰ The government’s revenues also fell – by over 3 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), or \$15 billion according to one estimate – at a time when the government urgently needed funds to address the health impacts of

⁶ Jop de Vrieze, “‘It’s a tricky thing.’ COVID-19 cases haven’t soared in Nigeria, but that could change,” *Science*, July 14, 2020, <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/07/it-s-tricky-thing-covid-19-cases-haven-t-soared-nigeria-could-change> (accessed November 1, 2020).

⁷ Samuel Oyekanmi, “Third wave: Lagos bears the brunt as Nigeria records 1,249 new covid-19 cases in July,” *Nairametrics*, July 14, 2021, <https://nairametrics.com/2021/07/14/third-wave-lagos-bears-the-brunt-as-nigeria-records-1249-new-covid-19-cases-in-july/> (accessed July 23, 2021).

⁸ Libby George, “Nigeria’s Lagos state faces ‘potential third wave’ of COVID-19,” *Reuters*, July 12, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/nigerias-lagos-state-faces-potential-third-wave-covid-19-2021-07-12/> (accessed July 23, 2021).

⁹ International Monetary Fund, “Nigeria : 2020 Article IV Consultation-Press Release; Staff Report; and Statement by the Alternate Executive Director for Nigeria,” February 8, 2020, <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2021/02/05/Nigeria-2020-Article-IV-Consultation-Press-Release-Staff-Report-and-Statement-by-the-50064> (accessed February 15, 2021), pp. 4, 6. For the 2021 fiscal year, the World Bank defines low-income economies as those with a gross national income (GNI) per capita of \$1,035 or less in 2019. Lower middle-income economies are those with a GNI per capita between \$1,036 and \$4,045. Upper middle-income economies are those with a GNI per capita between \$4,046 and \$12,535. See World Bank, “World Bank Country and Lending Groups,” <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups> (accessed February 23, 2021).

¹⁰ See International Monetary Fund, “Nigeria: 2020 Article IV Consultation-Press Release; Staff Report; and Statement by the Alternate Executive Director for Nigeria,” February 8, 2020. On 2020 predicted growth figures prior to Covid-19, see World Bank, “Nigeria - COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus Program Project,” project appraisal document, November 13, 2020, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/142411608260520935/pdf/Nigeria-COVID-19-Action-Recovery-and-Economic-Stimulus-Program-Project.pdf> (accessed December 31, 2020), p. 10.

Covid-19, stimulate the economy, and protect livelihoods.¹¹ Nigeria's government revenue and spending – 8 and 12 percent of GDP respectively in 2019 – were already among the lowest in the world when compared to the size of its economy.¹²

The economic impact of Covid-19 has worsened poverty levels in Nigeria, which even prior to the pandemic hosted more than ten percent of the world's extreme poor, defined by the World Bank as people living on less than \$1.90 per day.¹³ The World Bank stated in January 2021 that the crisis will push an additional 10.9 million Nigerians into poverty, with the number of people below the national poverty line – defined as people living on less than 137,430 Naira (\$334) per year, or less than \$1 per day – expected to reach more than 100 million by 2022.¹⁴

As was the case in most parts of the world, women in Nigeria have been disproportionately harmed by the economic impact of the pandemic.¹⁵ Nationwide household surveys on the socioeconomic impact of Covid-19, conducted by the NBS, a federal government agency, found that among people surveyed in September 2020 who were working before the crisis, women were almost twice as likely to have become economically inactive than men (13 percent versus 7 percent).¹⁶

¹¹ Ibid, p. 7.

¹² Ibid, p. 7.

¹³ "Map," World Poverty Clock by World Data Lab, 2019 data, <https://worldpoverty.io/map> (accessed April 19, 2021); "Methodology," World Poverty Clock by World Data Lab, <https://worldpoverty.io/methodology> (accessed April 19, 2021); "Ending Extreme Poverty," World Bank, June 8, 2016, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/06/08/ending-extreme-poverty> (accessed April 19, 2021). See also World Bank, "Advancing Social Protection in a Dynamic Nigeria," August 7, 2019, <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/612461580272758131/advancing-social-protection-in-a-dynamic-nigeria> (accessed April 19, 2021), p. 5.

¹⁴ Alexander Irwin, Jonathan Lain, and Tara Vishwanath, "Using data to combat the ongoing crisis, and the next, in Nigeria" (blog), World Bank, January 28, 2021, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/using-data-combat-ongoing-crisis-and-next-nigeria> (accessed July 3, 2021). Nigeria's new poverty line was calculated by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the World Bank prior to the launch of the 2018/19 Nigerian Living Standards Survey (NLSS) in May 2020.

¹⁵ Women are concentrated in insecure and lower paid jobs, leaving them at greater risk of losing their income and less able to absorb this loss. Increased care giving responsibilities, due to school closures and the need to care for people who were sick or isolating fell disproportionately on women, harming their ability to engage in paid work. "Gender and the Covid-19 National Response in Nigeria," UN Women, <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/brief-gender-and-the-covid-19-national-response-in-nigeria> (accessed July 3, 2021).

¹⁶ NBS, "COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020," Covid-19 Impact Monitoring, Round 5, September 2020, Summary Report, <https://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/3712/download/49281> (accessed July 4, 2021), p. 5.

The federal government has received billions of dollars from international financial institutions and the private sector to help it respond to Covid-19, including the pandemic's impact on poverty levels. The IMF, for example, provided Nigeria with a \$3.4 billion emergency assistance loan in April 2020.¹⁷ The IMF stated that one objective of the assistance was to “shield jobs and businesses from the shock of the COVID-19 crisis,” while the Nigerian government asked for an expedited approval of the loan, citing the importance of the funds to “sustain our fight against poverty.”¹⁸ IMF guidance has highlighted the need for government assistance to reach informal workers.¹⁹ Nigeria's \$288.5 million loan from the African Development Bank, approved in June 2020, also aimed to “ease the [pandemic's] impact on workers and businesses and strengthen the social protection system.”²⁰

Urban Poverty in Lagos State

Lagos, although Nigeria's richest state, has high levels of inequality. The Lagos State government said in 2019 that the state's 2018 GDP (29 trillion Naira, or \$70 billion) would make it Africa's seventh largest economy, and yet a 2016 Poverty Profile by the Lagos State Bureau of Statistics, a government agency, found that over 80 percent of households

¹⁷ “Nigeria's IMF Financial Assistance to Support Health Care Sector, Protect Jobs and Businesses,” International Monetary Fund, IMF Country Focus, April 30, 2020, <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2020/04/29/nao42920-nigerias-imf-financial-assistance-to-support-health-care-sector-protect> (accessed September 15, 2020).

¹⁸ Ibid. See also Letter from Zainab Shamsuna Ahmed, Minister of Finance, Budget, and National Planning, and Godwin Emezie, Governor, Central Bank of Nigeria, to Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director, International Monetary Fund (IMF), “Letter of Intent,” April 21, 2020, <https://www.imf.org/external/np/loi/2020/nga/042120.pdf> (accessed September 15, 2020). In securing the IMF funds, the Nigerian authorities committed to “create specific budget lines to facilitate the tracking and reporting of emergency response expenditures and report funds released and expenditures incurred monthly on the transparency portal, <http://opentreasury.gov.ng>.”

¹⁹ Federico Díez, Romain Duval, Chiara Maggi, Yi Ji, Ippei Shibata, and Marina Medes Tavares, “Options to Support the Incomes of Informal Workers During COVID-19,” International Monetary Fund, May 20, 2020, <https://www.imf.org/-/media/Files/Publications/covid19-special-notes/en-special-series-on-covid-options-to-support-the-incomes-of-informal-workers-during-covid-19.ashx> (accessed September 15, 2020), p. 1; “Reaching Households in Emerging and Developing Economies: Citizen ID, Socioeconomic Data, and Digital Delivery,” International Monetary Fund, <https://www.imf.org/-/media/Files/Publications/covid19-special-notes/en-special-series-on-covid-19-reaching-households-in-emerging-and-developing-economies.ashx?la=en> (accessed September 15, 2020).

²⁰ “African Development Bank approves \$288.5 million for Nigeria COVID-19 Response Support Program,” African Development Bank, press release, June 5, 2020, <https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/press-releases/african-development-bank-approves-2885-million-nigeria-covid-19-response-support-program-35993> (accessed July 3, 2021).

earned less than \$1.90 a day, the international poverty line used by the World Bank.²¹ Poverty levels in Lagos are, however, significantly lower than in other states, with 4.5 percent of households in 2018-2019 below the national poverty line (approximately \$1 per day), compared to the national average of 40 percent.²² The national poverty line does not, however, reflect the high cost of housing, food, water, and other essentials in Lagos, and research prior to the Covid-19 pandemic has found high levels of hunger and food insecurity in Lagos State.²³



Makoko slum, Lagos State, Nigeria. High levels of urban poverty, dependence on the informal economy, and lack of social safety nets left many Lagos State residents extremely vulnerable to the economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. © Peeter Viisimaa/Getty Images

²¹ “Poverty Profile for Lagos State,” Lagos State government, 2016, <https://mepb.lagosstate.gov.ng/storage/sites/29/2019/08/POVERTY-REPORT-Y2016.pdf> (accessed September 14, 2020), p. 15; “Lagos Socio-Economic Profile,” Lagos State Government Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget, p. 3.

²² NBS, “2019 Poverty and Inequality in Nigeria: Executive Summary,” May 2020, <http://nigerianstat.gov.ng/download/1092> (accessed July 3, 2021), p. 5.

²³ See, for example, I. R. Aliu, “Nutritional Insecurity in Ojo-Lagos Nigeria: Redefining Food security in the Context of Social Deprivation,” *Journal of Poverty*, 20 (2016): 417-440, accessed July 3, 2021, doi: 10.1080/10875549.2015.1112868; Roberts, A. A., Osadare, J. O., & Inem, V. A., “Hunger in the midst of plenty: A survey of household food security among urban families in Lagos State, Nigeria,” *Journal of public health in Africa*, 10 (2019): 885, accessed July 3, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.4081/jphia.2019.885>.

Most residents of Lagos State – 85 percent according to the state government – live in urban areas in and around the megacity of Lagos.²⁴ Despite the city’s growing number of high-end apartment buildings, the majority of the state’s residents live in informal housing, many in the hundreds of slums or informal settlements spread throughout the city, and which often lack security of tenure, access to water, education, healthcare, transportation, and sanitation.²⁵ The majority of Lagos residents also work in the informal sector – 65 percent according to the Lagos State Bureau of Statistics – in jobs ranging from street traders, taxi drivers, and tradespeople, to food vendors and hairdressers.²⁶

The combination of poverty, reliance on the informal economy, and the relatively high cost of living made urban poor communities in Lagos State extremely vulnerable to the economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Guidance from the WHO and other humanitarian organizations on Covid-19 responses states that, “Slums are concentrations of urban poverty and consequently, slum dwellers have very limited capacity to manage socio-economic shocks. Staying home for the urban poor is often not a feasible option, as they live day-to-day, both for their work and access to food.”²⁷

In May 2020, the IMF warned of the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on informal workers who are “daily wage earners and self-employed in urban areas, in jobs vulnerable to social distancing, and cannot rely on sufficient personal savings to weather a long-lasting

²⁴ “About Lagos,” Lagos State government, <https://lagosstate.gov.ng/about-lagos/> (accessed January 13, 2021).

²⁵ As of August 2020, the Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlements Federation had identified 381 slum communities in Lagos. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, Leilani Farha, said in 2019 that an estimated 70 percent of Lagos State’s population live in informal housing. See Leilani Farha, “End of Mission Statement on Visit to the Republic of Nigeria,” UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, September 23, 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25033&LangID=E> (accessed July 3, 2021); See also Heinrich Böll Stiftung and Fabulous Urban, “Urban Planning Processes in Lagos,” 2018, <https://ng.boell.org/en/2018/09/25/urban-planning-processes-lagos> (accessed October 30, 2020), p. 15; “Lagos Building Luxury Homes in Face of Affordable Housing Crisis,” *Bloomberg*, December 20, 2019, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-12-20/lagos-building-luxury-homes-in-face-of-affordable-housing-crisis> (accessed September 14, 2020).

²⁶ “Poverty Profile for Lagos State,” Lagos State government, 2016, p. 2; “Lagos’ informal Sector; Taxation and Contribution to the Economy,” Heinrich Böll Stiftung and BudgetIT, 2017, https://ng.boell.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2017/02/budget_final_report_30.1.17.pdf (accessed July 26, 2021), p. 4.

²⁷ Inter-Agency Standing Committee (which includes The World Health Organization), “Public Health and Social Measures for Covid-19 Preparedness and Response in Low Capacity and Humanitarian Settings,” May 2020, <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/public-health-and-social-measures-for-covid-19-preparedness-and-response-in-low-capacity-and-humanitarian-settings> (accessed July 3, 2021), Annex 1, “Special Considerations for COVID-19 Outbreak Readiness and Response to support those who reside in Urban Informal Settlements and Slums,” p. 22.

crisis.”²⁸ In Nigeria, declines in non-agriculture-based incomes have led the World Bank to warn that, “while only 15.9 percent of Nigeria’s current poor are urban dwellers, more than one-third of the people entering poverty in 2020 are predicted to be in urban areas.”²⁹ Another World Bank study found in October 2020 that a disproportionate share of those pushed into poverty by the Covid-19 crisis were likely to live in urban households in southern Nigeria, which would include Lagos State, even while overall poverty is projected to remain concentrated in rural households in northern Nigeria.³⁰

Corona Diaries: The Community Health Worker

Early in the Covid-19 pandemic, Osho Tosin, a member of a network of around 18 community health educators affiliated with the Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlements Federation, and supported by JEI, worried about the impact of the disease in the state’s overcrowded and underserved informal settlements and slums.³¹ In April 2020, she visited a man with symptoms consistent with Covid-19 in Ebute Iga, a riverside informal settlement in Ikorodu LGA.³² “He was coughing and had a fever and shortness of breath,” she said. “I was worried about Covid-19 infections because Ebute Iga is a densely packed community, and he lived in a building with 10 or 12 rooms, with different families in each room.”³³

Tosin tried to help the man access a Covid-19 test but couldn’t find a way to transport him safely to a government testing center. Two days later, when she returned to visit

²⁸ “Options to Support the Incomes of Informal Workers During COVID-19,” International Monetary Fund, May 20, 2020, <https://www.imf.org/~media/Files/Publications/covid19-special-notes/en-special-series-on-covid-options-to-support-the-incomes-of-informal-workers-during-covid-19.ashx#:~:text=Social%20assistance%20programs%20encompass%20cash,other%20programs%20such%20as%20scholarships> (accessed July 3, 2021), p. 1.

²⁹ World Bank, “Nigeria - COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus Program Project,” project appraisal document, p. 10.

³⁰ Jonathan Lain and Tara Vishwanath, “COVID-19 and Welfare in Nigeria: New Evidence for Policy,” World Bank Poverty Team, October 2020, <https://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/961791611161231868/pdf/COVID-19-and-Welfare-in-Nigeria-New-Evidence-for-Policy-October-2020.pdf> (accessed July 3, 2021), p. 12.

³¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Osho Tosin, community health network coordinator, Lagos State, June 7, 2020.

³² Human Rights Watch interview with Osho Tosin, community health worker, Lagos State, May 1, 2020.

³³ Ibid.

the man, she found him dead. “I’m not saying he was infected [with coronavirus],” she said. “But we needed to know what was wrong with him, and we didn’t find out.”³⁴

As the pandemic progressed, Tosin said she had not seen evidence of widespread and severe Covid-19-related illnesses or fatalities in the urban poor communities in Ikorodu that she serves.³⁵ Tosin has helped a handful of people obtain testing for Covid-19, but she hasn’t observed symptoms suggesting widespread or severe Covid-19 cases. “At present there is only the government noise about Covid-19, but for the people the noise of Covid-19 has gone down,” she said in August 2020.³⁶ “People go out every day, use public transport, and nobody is falling sick. Our markets are over congested, even our buses, and nothing is happening. When I talk to people about it, they say, ‘please go away with your Covid-19 issue.’”

Even in December 2020, when Covid-19 cases in Lagos began rising again, Tosin said she still didn’t find Covid-19 cases in the communities where she works.³⁷ Instead, she said that the pandemic has been experienced primarily as an economic crisis for many urban poor households, adding an additional obstacle to the challenges facing families in poverty. “There are so many things that are happening in communities that aren’t Covid-19,” she said. “A child who has not eaten for two days, a mother with children who doesn’t even have 1,000 Naira (\$2.43) – these are the things that are giving people problems.”³⁸

Tosin said she hoped that the Covid-19 pandemic would trigger more investment in Lagos State’s health care system – which she said could not cope if the state sees more pervasive and more severe Covid-19 cases – and increased investment in providing basic services, including drinking water and electricity, to slums and

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ See, for example, Human Rights Watch interview with Prince Saheed Onisiwo, Amuwo-Odofin LGA, August 10, 2020; Human Rights Watch interview with Osho Tosin, community health network coordinator, Lagos State, August 7, 2020; Human Rights Watch interview with Anthony Sylvanus, community health worker, Mainland LGA, August 9, 2020; Human Rights Watch interview with community health worker, Ikorodu LGA, August 10, 2020; Human Rights Watch interview with Femi Joshua, community health worker, Amuwo-Odofin LGA, August 7, 2020.

³⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with Osho Tosin, community health network coordinator, Lagos State, August 7, 2020.

³⁷ Human Rights Watch interview with Osho Tosin, community health worker, Lagos State, March 18, 2021.

³⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with Osho Tosin, community health worker, Lagos State, August 7, 2020.

informal settlements. “We’ve so far been lucky that Covid-19 itself wasn’t worse – there was nothing in place to fight it,” she said. “But people have lost their jobs, and they are just looking to survive. We need to help people pick up the pieces.”³⁹

³⁹ Human Rights Watch interview with Osho Tosin, community health worker, Lagos State, October 21, 2020.

The Right to Social Security and the Covid-19 Crisis

Key Elements of The Right to Social Security

The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) recognizes the right of everyone to social security.⁴⁰ The right requires states to implement a system, established under domestic law, to ensure people can access benefits covering nine key areas: access to health care; support for loss of earnings due to sickness or ill-health; old age benefits; unemployment benefits; coverage for employment-related injuries; family and child support; maternity benefits; disability support; and support to survivors and orphans following the death of a breadwinner.⁴¹

Although the right to social security is not explicitly protected in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, which is responsible for interpreting the Charter, has said that the right is “derived” from the joint reading of a number of other rights, including the right to food and healthcare.⁴² In addition to the nine areas of support discussed above, the Commission has said that the right requires states to “establish social safety nets to ensure that members of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups are able to survive even in times of severe resource constraints, including in periods of economic recession.”⁴³ States should also take steps, “to ensure that the social security systems cover those persons working in the informal economy.”⁴⁴

⁴⁰ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), adopted December 16, 1966, G.A. Res. 2200A (XXI), 21 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 16) at 49, U.N. Doc. A/6316 (1966), 993 U.N.T.S. 3, entered into force January 3, 1976, art. 9. Nigeria ratified the ICESCR on July 29, 1993. The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UNCESCR) has defined social security as encompassing the right to: access and maintain benefits, whether in cash or in kind, without discrimination in order to secure protection, inter alia, from (a) lack of work-related income caused by sickness, disability, maternity, employment injury, unemployment, old age, or death of a family member; (b) unaffordable access to health care; and (c) insufficient family support, particularly for children and adult dependents. See UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), General Comment No. 19, “The right to social security (art. 9),” Thirty-Ninth Session, 2007, UN Doc. E/C.12/GC/19, para. 2.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, para. 12-21. The right to benefits during periods of unemployment includes support to “cover periods of loss of earnings by persons who are requested not to report for work during a public health or other emergency.”

⁴² African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, “Principles and Guidelines on the Implementation of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,” November 2010, https://www.achpr.org/public/Document/file/English/achpr_instr_guide_draft_esc_rights_eng.pdf (accessed June 4, 2021), para. 81.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, para. 82(h).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, para. 82(i).

To fulfill the right to social security, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UNCESCR), which monitors states' implementation of the ICESCR, has said that states are required to meet a minimum level of protection for those who need it and then progressively realize universal coverage and adequate levels of benefits over time.⁴⁵ The immediate obligation to provide a minimum essential level of benefits means providing assistance to individuals and families to enable them to acquire at least essential health care and an adequate standard of living, including basic shelter and housing, water and sanitation, foodstuffs, and the most basic forms of education.⁴⁶ States must also ensure that women at least enjoy equal social protection coverage as men, requiring them to eliminate barriers that prevent women accessing equal benefits.⁴⁷

States with limited financial resources should still endeavor to meet these minimum obligations. The UNCESCR has acknowledged that, “realization of the right to social security carries significant financial implications,” but “that the fundamental importance of social security for human dignity and the legal recognition of this right...mean that the right should be given appropriate priority in law and policy. States parties should develop a national strategy for the full implementation of the right to social security and should allocate adequate fiscal and other resources at the national level. If necessary, they should avail themselves of international cooperation and technical assistance.”⁴⁸ If a government cannot meet at least its minimum core obligations, it must demonstrate that every effort has been made to use all resources that are at its disposal to satisfy, as a matter of priority, these minimum obligations.⁴⁹

The UNCESCR has said that to realize the right to social security states should give the right, “sufficient recognition...within the national political and legal systems, preferably by way of legislative implementation,” and develop a national strategy for the full

⁴⁵ Ibid., para. 59. See also Magdalena Sepúlveda and Carly Nyst, “The Human Rights Approach to Social Protection,” Finland, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2012, <https://www.ohchr.org/documents/issues/epoverty/humanrightsapproachtosocialprotection.pdf> (accessed February 5, 2021), p. 22.

⁴⁶ CESCR, General Comment No. 19, “The right to social security (art.9),” para. 22, 59(a).

⁴⁷ CESCR, General Comment No. 19, “The right to social security (art.9),” para. 32.

⁴⁸ Ibid., para. 41.

⁴⁹ Ibid., para. 60.

implementation of the right to social security.⁵⁰ The Committee has also established several criteria that are used in this report to assess the effectiveness of government measures to respond to Covid-19. These include the requirement that social security systems achieve adequate *coverage*, reaching everyone in need of support, especially individuals belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups.⁵¹ Benefits, whether cash or in-kind, must also be *adequate* in amount and duration to ensure that people can realize their right to an adequate standard of living, including the right to food.⁵² The qualifying conditions for *eligibility* also need to be reasonable, proportionate, and transparent, and not provide barriers to access to disadvantaged or marginalized groups.⁵³ Finally, the UNCESCR has underscored the right of right of individuals and organizations to seek, receive, and impart information on all social security entitlements in a clear and transparent manner.⁵⁴

The Right to Social Security and Social Protection

The right to social security has a close relationship with social protection, which is defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as, “the set of policies and programs designed to reduce and prevent poverty and vulnerability throughout the life cycle.”⁵⁵ Social protection encompasses a range of programs, including “contributory” or “social insurance” schemes like health insurance or unemployment insurance, which are typically funded by a mix of beneficiaries, employers, and the state, and “non-contributory” or “social assistance” schemes like cash transfers, school feeding programs, or free or subsidized healthcare, which are funded by a government’s tax revenues.⁵⁶ Social protection measures can also include labor

⁵⁰ Ibid., paras. 41, 48, 59(d), 68.

⁵¹ Ibid., para. 23.

⁵² Ibid., para. 22.

⁵³ Ibid., para. 24.

⁵⁴ Ibid., para. 26.

⁵⁵ International Labour Organization (ILO), “World Social Protection Report 2017-2019,” first published in 2017, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_604882.pdf (accessed June 4, 2021), p. 2.

⁵⁶ Ibid.; CESCR, General Comment No. 19, “The right to social security (art.9),” para. 4. See also “Protecting Economic and Social Rights During and Post-Covid-19, Questions and Answers on Economic and Social Assistance,” Human Rights watch news release, June 29, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/06/29/protecting-economic-and-social-rights-during-and-post-covid-19>.

market policies and interventions, such as minimum wage legislation or job training and apprenticeship schemes.⁵⁷

Strong social protection policies are one of the most powerful tools for governments to reduce poverty and inequality and realize the right to social security and other economic rights, including the right to food, housing, and other elements of an adequate standard of living. To effectively realize the right to social security, however, individual social protection measures must form part of a wider system, institutionalized in law, that provides at a minimum the benefits needed for people to access essential health care and an adequate standard of living.⁵⁸ The ILO, which has provided detailed guidance on implementation of the right to social security, has set out a list of “social protection floors” – such as access to health care, child benefits, unemployment benefits, and pensions – which can be considered as reflecting the minimum core contents of the right to social security.⁵⁹

Calls for Expanded Social Security During the Pandemic

The health and economic impacts of the Covid-19 crisis have led to calls for expanded social protection to realize the right to social security and ensure people can access adequate food, health care, and other essential services during the pandemic. António Guterres, the United Nations Secretary-General, has said:

The pandemic brings new awareness of the social and economic risks that arise from inadequate social protection systems, unequal access to healthcare and other public services and high levels of inequality, including gender, race inequality...and can therefore open the door to the

⁵⁷ Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, “Types of Social Protection,” October 2019, <https://gsdrc.org/topic-guides/social-protection/types-of-social-protection/> (accessed June 4, 2021).

⁵⁸ See, for example, Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona, UN Human Rights Council, “Promotion and Protection of all Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural rights, Including the Right to Development,” March 27, 2009, A/HRC/11/9, <http://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?Open&DS=A/HRC/11/9&Lang=E> (accessed July 4, 2021), para. 24.

⁵⁹ International Labour Organization, “R202 - Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202),” https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:3065524 (accessed July 4, 2021).

transformational changes needed to build a New Social Contract at the national level that is fit for the challenges of the 21st century.⁶⁰

Michelle Bachelet, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, said in a January 2021 report on the human rights impact of Covid-19 that the pandemic “has brought into sharp focus the importance of social protections in times of crisis,” noting that some 71 per cent of people worldwide have no or only partial social security coverage.⁶¹ She stated that, “social protection floors are an essential element in creating greater resilience to future shocks and ensuring a more effective recovery.”⁶² She also underscored the importance of social protection schemes reaching women, who she said, “are particularly vulnerable during this crisis. They are more likely to live below the international poverty line and are overrepresented in high-risk sectors given their higher numbers in the informal economy.”⁶³

The African Commission has also called on states to expand social security in response to the pandemic. The Commission urged governments to address, “the worst impact of the restrictions on jobs, livelihoods, and access to basic services,” by:

Putting in place fiscal and economic relief measures to ensure that households are kept afloat and people who lost their jobs have means of sustenance, to expand social security to those whose livelihoods have been disrupted as a result of Covid-19 response measures, to distribute, or establish safe arrangements for the distribution by members of the public of food parcels and other consumables for people in need of such support and to support medium and small businesses with tax breaks, subsidies, and other support measures.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ “COVID-19 can spark new generation of social protection measures: UN chief,” *UN News*, December 1, 2021, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/12/1078932> (accessed July 4, 2021).

⁶¹ UN Human Rights Council, “Impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the enjoyment of human rights around the world, including good practices and areas of concern,” Michelle Bachelet, January 18, 2021, <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/46/19> (accessed July 4, 2021), para. 14.

⁶² *Ibid.*, para. 84.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, para. 39.

⁶⁴ African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, “Resolution on Human and Peoples’ Rights as central pillar of successful response to COVID-19 and recovery from its socio-political impacts,” ACHPR/Res. 449 (LXVI) 2020, <https://www.achpr.org/sessions/resolutions?id=480> (accessed July 4, 2021), para. 6. The African Commission on Human

In calling for more focus on the right to social security, Olivier de Schutter, the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, has acknowledged that many governments have already expanded social protection measures to help households navigate the economic impact of the pandemic.⁶⁵ De Schutter has warned, however, against comparing the “ad hoc” social protection measures developed in response to the Covid-19 crisis with the development of a more comprehensive social security system over the longer term, calling short-term measures, mobilized through temporary support from the international community, “unsustainable.”⁶⁶

De Schutter has instead called for states to define social protection, “neither as an emergency response to a situation of crisis, nor as charity – but rather as a set of permanent entitlements prescribed by domestic legislation, defining individuals as rights-holders and public authorities as duty-bearers.”⁶⁷ Whereas crisis-driven, ad hoc social assistance measures meet the needs of a limited number of beneficiaries for a limited period of time, a social security system, if properly constructed, provides benefits to everyone at all times, and is able to adapt and expand during periods of crises.

and Peoples’ Rights had in March 2020 acknowledged that prevention and containment measures for Covid-19 have “serious consequences to the social and economic wellbeing of the most vulnerable members of society and all those whose survival depends on day-to-day engagement in economic activities.” It recommended that states “should adopt measures that mitigate the severe and disproportionate consequences of the COVID19 prevention and containment measures, including through the collection and distribution of relief household supplies and direct financial grant to persons living in poverty.” See also “Press Statement on human rights based effective response to the novel COVID-19 virus in Africa,” African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights press release, March 24, 2020, <https://www.achpr.org/pressrelease/detail?id=510> (accessed September 16, 2020). The African Commission’s Working Group on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights said in June 2020 that states should: “Provide assistance to individuals, families and communities including vulnerable groups and at-risk groups, through at least a minimum essential level of food distribution, social welfare and other social security measures, in order to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on their economic, social and cultural rights.” The Working Group also said that states should “provide stimulus packages, loans, grants and other incentives to the business sector including the informal sector whilst ensuring that such packages are not abused.” “Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on economic, social and cultural rights in Africa,” Working Group on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights press release, June 4, 2020, <https://www.achpr.org/pressrelease/detail?id=510> (accessed September 16, 2020). See also Presentation of Commissioner Solomon Ayele Dersso, (PhD), Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights at the Dialogue between Regional Human Rights Protection Commissions in the Context of the Pandemic, hosted by the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, August 12, 2020, <https://www.achpr.org/pressrelease/detail?id=529> (accessed July 4, 2021).

⁶⁵ UN Human Rights Council, “Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery,” Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Olivier de Schutter, September 11, 2020, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Poverty/Covid19.pdf> (accessed July 4, 2021), paras. 11-12.

⁶⁶ UN Human Rights Council, “Global fund for social protection: international solidarity in the service of poverty eradication,” Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Olivier de Schutter, April 22, 2021, <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/47/36> (accessed July 4, 2021), para. 16.

⁶⁷ UN Human Rights Council, “Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery,” Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Olivier de Schutter, para. 75.

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, in calling on states to “adopt human rights-centered economic recovery plans,” has urged states to focus on “the administrative and economic infrastructure for delivery of access to rights,” including an improved standard of living and reduced inequalities.⁶⁸ The Commission also called on states to “increase their budget allocation to ensuring access to water, sanitation, social protection, education and sustainable livelihood particularly for those without access to these basic necessities.”⁶⁹

⁶⁸ African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, “Resolution on Human and Peoples' Rights as central pillar of successful response to COVID-19 and recovery from its socio-political impacts,” paras. 11, 14.

⁶⁹ Ibid, para. 11.

Nigeria's Social Security System Pre-Covid 19

The Nigerian constitution does not provide a legal right to social security.⁷⁰ However, the constitution sets out “fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy” that the government is required to apply, and which include the principle that, “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government.”⁷¹ The state is also required to direct its policy towards ensuring, “that suitable and adequate shelter, suitable and adequate food, reasonable national minimum living wage, old age care and pensions, and unemployment, sick benefits and welfare of the disabled are provided for all citizens.”⁷²

Nigeria's 2017 National Social Protection Policy recognized the importance of establishing social protection floors that, consistent with the right to social security, provide a minimum level of protection to all Nigerians. The policy's overarching goal is to establish “a gender-sensitive and age-appropriate framework to ensure a minimum social protection for all Nigerian citizens for a life of dignity.”⁷³ The policy also “affirms the right of every Nigerian to the satisfaction of their basic needs, especially in the areas of education, health, food security, and employment.”⁷⁴ Lagos State's Social Protection Policy, drafted in 2017, similarly sets an overarching goal of establishing “a minimum social floor for all Lagos residents for a life of dignity.”⁷⁵

Nigeria's social security system, however, lacks many of the core elements of the right to social security. Nigeria does have a contributory pension scheme – open to employees in

⁷⁰ Section 6(6)(c) of the constitution states that the judicial oversight of government action does not “extend to any issue or question as to whether any act of omission by any authority or person or as to whether any law or any judicial decision is in conformity with the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy set out in Chapter II of this Constitution.” As discussed above, Chapter II of the constitution includes sections requiring the government to direct its policy towards social welfare and security an adequate standard of living. See also Kehinde Anifalaje, “Implementation of the right to social security in Nigeria,” *African Human Rights Law Journal* 17 (2017): 413-435, <http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/1996-2096/2017/v17n2a4> (accessed July 4, 2021), p. 417.

⁷¹ 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, section 14(2)(b).

⁷² 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, section 16(2)(d).

⁷³ Ministry of Budget and National Planning, “National Social Protection Policy,” Abuja, 2017, p. 29 (Copy on file with Human Rights Watch).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁷⁵ Lagos State Government, “Lagos State Social Protection Policy,” May 2017, p. 7 (Copy on file with Human Rights Watch).

the formal and informal sectors – but enrolment is only about 40 percent nationally, according to the World Bank.⁷⁶ Nigeria’s federal and Lagos State governments have their own contributory health insurance schemes, but the vast majority of Nigerians do not have insurance and finance their health care through out-of-pocket expenses.⁷⁷ Nigeria has no system of unemployment insurance or benefits to provide support to Nigerians out of work, nor any system of child benefits to supplement families’ income.

In 2016, the federal government launched a suite of social assistance measures, known collectively as the National Social Investment Program (NISIP), “to tackle poverty and hunger across the country.”⁷⁸ The NISP includes a conditional cash transfer program designed to support the poorest Nigerians, as well as a program to deliver food to school-age children in public primary schools.⁷⁹ The federal government also set up a national agency, the National Social Safety Nets Coordinating Office (NASSCO), to coordinate the country’s social safety net programs and build a register of persons in need of social assistance, called the National Social Register of Poor and Vulnerable Households.⁸⁰

Unlike a fully developed social security system, however, NISP programs do not provide Nigerians with a legal right to access cash or other forms of support if they are unable to reach an adequate standard of living. They are rather a set of government anti-poverty programs whose scale is determined by government priorities and the resources available to fulfill them. The NISP’s cash transfer program, for example, known as the National Social Safety Nets Project and launched in 2017 with World Bank support, was initially intended to make cash payments to one million households on the National Social Register per year

⁷⁶ Pension Reform Act, 2014; Kehinde Anifalaje, “Implementation of the right to social security in Nigeria,” p. 422; World Bank, “Advancing Social Protection in a Dynamic Nigeria,” p. 30.

⁷⁷ “About Us,” National Health Insurance Scheme, <https://www.nhis.gov.ng/about-us/> (accessed June 4, 2021); Gbadegesin O. Alawode, David A. Adewole, “Assessment of the design and implementation challenges of the National Health Insurance Scheme in Nigeria: a qualitative study among sub-national level actors, healthcare and insurance providers,” *BMC Public Health* 21, 124 (2021), <https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/track/pdf/10.1186/s12889-020-10133-5.pdf> (accessed July 4, 2021). Lagos State launched a mandatory health insurance scheme in 2018, but enrolment remains very low. Dr. Ade Alakija, chairman of Lagos State Health Management Agency (LASHMA), said in April 2020 that there were 300,000 people enrolled in Lagos State’s mandatory health insurance scheme, but that “only about 15,000 are actually benefiting from it.” Tofe Ayeni, “Nigeria Lagos states healthcare ‘mission impossible,’” *The Africa Report*, April 6, 2020, <https://www.theafricareport.com/25632/nigeria-lagos-states-healthcare-mission-impossible/> (accessed July 4, 2021).

⁷⁸ “National Social Investment Programme,” The State House, Abuja, <https://statehouse.gov.ng/policy/economy/national-social-investment-programme/> (accessed July 4, 2021).

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ “Who We Are,” National Social Safety-Net Coordinating Office (NASSCO), <https://nassp.gov.ng/about-us/> (accessed July 4, 2021). NASSCO was originally overseen by the National Social Investment Office (NSIO) in the Office of the Vice President, but is now housed within the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development.

by 2021.⁸¹ Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the register had enrolled 2.6 million households⁸² and the cash transfer program was making payments to 835,634 households nationwide in November to December 2019.⁸³

The scale of the government's social assistance programs prior to the Covid-19 pandemic fell far short of that needed to ensure all Nigerians could realize the right to an adequate standard of living. The World Bank stated in a 2019 report that coverage of safety net programs was "alarmingly low," noting that "just over 4 percent of households in the bottom 40 percent of Nigeria's consumption quintile have access to any form of social safety net programs."⁸⁴ A December 2020 IMF report also stated that, "Nigeria's social safety net suffers from limited coverage, poor targeting, and inadequate monitoring."⁸⁵ Lagos State's Social Protection Policy, drafted in 2017, similarly stated that:

[Social protection] programs which run essentially as social assistance projects are limited in scope, implemented on an ad-hoc basis and lack... coordination and continuity... While current social protection interventions have targeted and benefited the 'active poor' or the 'working poor', it has made little impact on a large number of poor population... these groups will forever be trapped in the inter-generational cycle of poverty.⁸⁶

Chronic underinvestment was a key reason for Nigeria's social protection programs' limited coverage. The World Bank stated in a 2019 report that Nigeria "spends less on social protection than every other lower-middle income country and most of its regional peers," citing data showing that Nigeria spent 0.3 percent of gross domestic product on

⁸¹ World Bank, "Nigeria – National Social Safety Nets Project," project appraisal document, May 16, 2016, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/813221467989481643/pdf/PAD1687-PAD-P151488-IDA-R2016-0107-1-Box394887B-OUO-9.pdf> (accessed July 4, 2021), p. 7.

⁸² Rasheed Sobowale, "COVID-19: NASSCO releases register of poor, vulnerable households in Nigeria," *Vanguard*, April 10, 2020, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/04/covid-19-nassco-release-register-of-poor-vulnerable-households-in-nigeria/> (accessed July 4, 2021).

⁸³ Letter from Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development to Human Rights Watch and JEI, June 21, 2021.

⁸⁴ World Bank, "Advancing Social Protection in a Dynamic Nigeria," pp. 26, 28

⁸⁵ International Monetary Fund, "Nigeria: 2020 Article IV Consultation-Press Release; Staff Report; and Statement by the Alternate Executive Director for Nigeria," p. 15.

⁸⁶ Lagos State Government, "Lagos State Social Protection Policy," pp. 3, 24.

social assistance programs in 2016.⁸⁷ Countries in sub-Saharan Africa on average spend 1.5 percent of GDP on social safety nets, according to a 2018 World Bank report.⁸⁸ South Africa, Africa's second largest economy behind Nigeria, spent 3.4 percent of GDP on social protection in 2016.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ World Bank, "Advancing Social Protection in a Dynamic Nigeria," p. 25.

⁸⁸ World Bank, "The State of Social Safety Nets 2018," 2018, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/29115/9781464812545.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y> (accessed July 4, 2021), pp.18, 20.

⁸⁹ "World Bank ASPIRE Database for Government Expenditure on Social Assistance," World Bank, Nigeria country page, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/data/datatopics/aspire/country/nigeria> (accessed April 7, 2021). The World Bank's 2019 report also noted that, instead of investing in social protection, Nigerian governments have relied on subsidized fuel "to provide benefits to the population," which, the World Bank said, "are inherently regressive, allowing larger and richer consumers to capture most of the benefits." See also World Bank, "Advancing Social Protection in a Dynamic Nigeria," p. 26. Nigeria's federal government scrapped fuel price subsidies in May 2020, taking advantage of low oil prices that were keeping consumer prices low, before reintroducing them when oil prices rose. In March 2021, the government said it was negotiating with labor groups to again end the subsidies. "Oil Crash Spurs Nigeria to End Fuel Subsidies, Risk Backlash," *Bloomberg*, May 9, 2020, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-05-09/oil-crash-spurs-nigeria-to-end-fuel-subsidies-risk-backlash> (accessed July 4, 2021); Ruth Olurounbi and William Clowes, "Nigeria Fuel Subsidies Near \$300 Million a Month, NNPC Says," *Bloomberg*, March 25, 2021, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-03-25/nigeria-fuel-subsidy-hits-nearly-300-million-a-month-nnpc-says> (accessed July 4, 2021).

Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic: Lost Livelihoods, Rising Hunger

The Covid-19 pandemic had a devastating impact on the livelihoods and access to food of urban communities in Lagos State, as a five-week lockdown, the prolonged economic downturn that has accompanied the pandemic, and rising food prices left many households struggling to feed their families.

Impact of the Lockdown

As Nigeria saw its first confirmed cases of Covid-19, the federal government on March 30, 2020 imposed a lockdown on Lagos, neighboring Ogun state, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja – the areas with the most confirmed cases at the time.⁹⁰ The lockdown, which lasted until May 3, 2020, required residents to stay at home and all businesses to close, with the exception of certain essential services, including healthcare establishments, food processing distribution centers, and retail companies.⁹¹

Public health researchers have suggested that Nigeria's lockdown may have had some impact in slowing the spread of Covid-19.⁹² The lockdown, however, had a devastating impact on the livelihoods of urban poor households across Lagos, many of whom rely on daily wages for subsistence. “We have many people who work today to eat tomorrow,” said Adeleke Adekunle, a volunteer with the Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlements

⁹⁰ Abiola Odutola, “President Muhammadu Buhari’s full speech on COVID-19 pandemic,” *Nairametrics*, March 30, 2020, <https://nairametrics.com/2020/03/29/president-muhammadu-buharis-full-speech-on-covid-19-pandemic/> (accessed September 14, 2020).

⁹¹ Ibid., paras. 34-43. See also “Implementation Guidance for Lockdown Policy,” Presidential Task on Covid-19, <https://covid19.ncdc.gov.ng/media/archives/PTF-COVID-19-Guidance-on-implementation-of-lockdown-policy-FINAL.docx-2.pdf> (accessed September 14, 2020).

⁹² Oluwakemi O Odukoya, Ismaila A Adeleke, Chris S Jim, Brenda C Isikekpei, Chiamaka M Obiodunukwe, Folusho E Lesi, Akin O Osibogun and Folasade T Ogunsola, “Evolutionary trends of the COVID-19 epidemic and effectiveness of government interventions in Nigeria: A data-driven analysis,” *National Institutes of Health*, June 2, 2020, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7302292/> (accessed September 14, 2020). The number of confirmed cases in Lagos grew from 81 on March 30 to 1,170 on May 3, but it is hard to know how many cases there would have been without the lockdown. “Covid-19 Nigeria - Progression,” Nigeria Center for Disease Control, <https://covid19.ncdc.gov.ng/progression/> (accessed September 14, 2020).



A man reads about the lockdown imposed to stop the spread of Covid-19 at a newsstand in Lagos State, Nigeria, on April 12, 2020. The lockdown had a devastating impact on the livelihoods of urban poor households across Lagos, many of whom rely on daily wages for subsistence. © 2020 AP Photo/Sunday Alamba

Federation, in May 2020. “The lockdown came quickly, and everyone said, ‘How are we going to survive?’ In two or three days, people were out of cash and food items.”⁹³

NBS nationwide surveys on the socioeconomic impact of Covid-19 found that 42 percent of people contacted between April 20 and May 11 had stopped working due to the Covid-19 crisis.⁹⁴ The poorest Nigerians experienced an even higher level of job losses, with the survey finding that 53 percent of the poorest quintile of households had stopped working since March 2020.⁹⁵

⁹³ Human Rights Watch interview with Adeleke Adekunle, Alimosho LGA, May 8, 2020.

⁹⁴ NBS, “COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020,” Covid-19 Impact Monitoring, Baseline – May 2020, Baseline Summary Tables, p. 33.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

In Lagos State specifically, a survey conducted by JEI, the Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlements Federation, and the Physically Challenged Empowerment Initiative sampled 383 people across 144 urban poor communities in 20 LGAs between April 1 and May 31, 2020, a period that included the second half of the lockdown. The survey found that 91 percent of respondents reported most or all residents in their communities had their livelihoods disrupted during the period of the survey, and 78 percent of respondents had been unable to meet basic needs.⁹⁶ Amudat Bekolari, a seamstress from Ajegunle (Ajeromi-Ifelodun LGA), said she had to shut down her tailoring shop during the lockdown, where she made about 30,000 Naira monthly (\$73) to support her family. “We, [the] masses, are in between hunger and the virus,” she said in June 2020. “My husband and I are just focusing on feeding our five children with the little money we have. But we have to explain to them to eat smaller portions.”⁹⁷

Corona Diaries: A Maruwa Taxi Driver’s Lockdown

Umar Abubakar’s family is divided between Lagos Island and Ifo, a town in Ogun State about 65 kilometers from Lagos island.⁹⁸ He lives with three of his seven children on Lagos Island, while his wife looks after the other four in Ifo. Although the family can afford a two-room house with its own bathroom in Ifo, where housing is cheaper, on Lagos Island Abubakar, who Human Rights Watch interviewed in August 2020, lives in one half of a converted market shop, which he shares with his children and his brother. The market has a communal toilet and bathroom which Abubakar and other residents use for washing and sanitation, but it costs 50 Naira (\$0.12) each time to use the facilities.

Abubakar has a disability, having had a leg amputated after a 2002 motorcycle crash in Borno State. After the accident, and with his employment options limited, he began

⁹⁶ “Impact of Covid-19 on Lagos Informal Settlements and Vulnerable Urban Poor Populations,” Justice & Empowerment Initiatives, the Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlement Federation and the Physically Challenged Empowerment Initiative, June 2020, p. 3. The percentages provided only describe the survey respondents and cannot be generalized to the wider population.

⁹⁷ Human Rights Watch interview with Amudat Bekolari, Ajeromi-Ifelodun LGA, June 23, 2020.

⁹⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with Umar Abubakar, Lagos Island LGA, August 5, 2020.

to beg for money to meet his basic needs. He was too ashamed to do so in his own community, so he moved to Lagos State, where he eventually bought a *Maruwa*, a commercial motorized tricycle that seats about three or four people. Because he didn't have the money to buy the vehicle outright, he bought it under a hire purchase agreement that valued the *Maruwa* at 1,100,000 Naira (\$2,900), twice its market price. He agreed to pay the seller 20,000 Naira (\$49) each week and was usually left with about 10,000 to 20,000 Naira (\$24-\$49) a week for his family's expenses.

Abubakar had already suffered a devastating loss of income in 2020 even before Covid-19 struck. In late January, the Lagos State government banned the operation of *Maruwa* and other forms of commercial motorcycles and tricycles in six of the state's busiest and most frequented LGAs.⁹⁹ Abubakar's income vanished. Without any savings to fall back on, and with the Covid-19 lockdown stopping people – many of whom have a disability – from begging in the streets for money, he depended on handouts from neighbors. "Some neighbors gave me 150 or 200 Naira (\$0.36-0.49) and told me to manage," he said. As the lockdown wore on, Abubakar and his brother struggled to even find the money to pay for use of the communal toilet. "They allowed us to use the toilet and bathroom on credit and pay when we have money," he said. "For water to wash our hands, we begged someone to fetch it from a public tap and keep it in a keg, and they were kind enough not to collect money."

Abubakar sent all his children to live with their mother in Ifo during the lockdown. His wife, now with seven children to feed, looked to her family for help. They initially sent 7,000 Naira (\$17) and then 10,000 Naira (\$24). "That's what she managed with," said Abubakar. When Abubakar got a two-kilogram bag of rice from an NGO, he drove his *Maruwa* more than three hours to Ifo to give the rice to his wife and children. "The police stopped me, but I told them I wanted to give my children the small amount of rice," he said.

When interviewed in August 2020, Abubakar hadn't received any food or cash assistance from the federal or Lagos State governments. "We don't have a problem

⁹⁹ Dennis Ezezi, "Lagos bans okada, keke in Ikeja, Apapa, four other LGs," *The Guardian Nigeria*, January 27, 2020, <https://guardian.ng/news/lagos-bans-okada-keke-in-ikeja-apapa-four-other-lgs/> (accessed September 16, 2020).

with the lockdown if there is food, but the government failed to help us,” he said. “Before, we cooked and ate three times a day. But [during the lockdown] we just ate *eba* [a staple made from cassava] in the morning and night and drank salt and water in the afternoon.”



Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, Umar Abubakar drove a Maruwa (a commercial motorized tricycle) in Lagos State, Nigeria. The state government banned Maruwa in certain areas of the state in January 2020, depriving Abubakar of income even before Covid-19 hit. During the March to May 2020 lockdown, Abubakar struggled desperately to provide food for his wife and seven children, sometimes just drinking salt and water for meals. © 2020 Justice & Empowerment Initiatives

Livelihoods Beyond Lockdown

The federal government on May 4, 2020 replaced the five-week lockdown with other measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19, such as the mandatory use of face masks in public.¹⁰⁰ The Lagos State government also enforced its own rules to prevent the spread of the virus, for example requiring that market vendors operate on alternate days and that commercial transporters operate vehicles at 60 percent capacity.¹⁰¹

The relaxation of the lockdown came as a relief to many, as people gradually returned to their work or trades. “People have been shouting [complaining] about hunger for weeks. They were happy that they could go to work,” said Mustapha Emmanuel, a Federation member and resident of Tomaro community (Amuwo-Odofin LGA), on the day the lockdown ended.¹⁰²

The Covid-19 pandemic has, however, had a lasting impact on livelihoods. NBS surveys have shown that, although many people have been able to resume work or other economic activities, many Nigerians are still earning less than before the pandemic.¹⁰³ Over 67 percent of households interviewed nationwide between August 9 and 24, 2020 reported that their total income had decreased compared to August 2019.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ “Implementation Guidelines for Containment of Covid-19,” Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, April 30, 2020, https://covid19.ncdc.gov.ng/media/files/IMPLEMENTATION_GUIDELINES_FOR__EASING_LOCKDOWN_-_F1.pdf (accessed September 14, 2020).

¹⁰¹ Johsua Bassey, “Update: Lagos streamlines guidelines on easing of COVID-19 lockdown,” *Business Day*, May 3, 2020, <https://businessday.ng/coronavirus/article/lagos-streamlines-guidelines-on-easing-of-covid-19-lockdown-2/> (accessed September 14, 2020).

¹⁰² Human Rights Watch interview with Mustapha Emmanuel, Amuwo-Odofin LGA, May 4, 2020.

¹⁰³ By September 2020, the NBS surveys found that 66 percent of working age respondents in urban areas were working, compared to 68 percent in a survey conducted prior to the pandemic, in July/August 2018. See NBS, “COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020,” Covid-19 Impact Monitoring, Round 5, September 2020, Summary Report, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ Data from the NBS, COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020 suggests that the number of people working had, by August 2020, largely returned to pre-lockdown levels. 77 percent of respondents to the NBS’s household survey in August 2020 had worked in the last 7 days before being interviewed, compared to 85% prior to the pandemic. NBS, “COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020,” Covid-19 Impact Monitoring, Round 4, August 2020, Summary Report, pp. 3, 7.

Even by January 2021, 38 percent of households surveyed between January 9 and January 25 – and 44 percent in urban areas – had reduced income for the period August 2020 to January 2021 compared to the same period a year earlier.¹⁰⁵ “Everyone is just trying to find one way or another to survive,” said Mohammed Yunus, a Federation member in Ajegunle (Ajeromi-Ifelodun LGA), in October 2020. “People have started working again, but not fully. Then there’s inflation, the increasing price of food and commodities. People tell us that they only have enough income to make food once a day.”¹⁰⁶

Increase in Prices of Food, Water

Community leaders, residents of urban poor communities, and NGO representatives described increases in the price of food and water during the pandemic.¹⁰⁷ “A tuber of yam going for 400 Naira (\$0.97) before [the lockdown] is now 900 Naira (\$2.19),” said Godwill Ikpimi, the secretary of an Ajegunle community development association, a citizen-led organization promoting local development, in early July 2020.¹⁰⁸ “Cassava flour that was formerly 600 Naira (\$1.46) is now 1,100 Naira (\$2.67), and a staple food like *garri*, which was sold at 600 Naira (\$1.46) for a 4 liter bucket, is now 1,200 Naira (\$2.92).”

Interviewees said that the price of water sachets, which many urban poor households rely on for drinking water in the absence of potable public water sources, had increased during the crisis. “A pack of 12 water sachets that was 350 Naira (\$0.85) is now 470 Naira (\$1.14),” Ikpimi said in July 2020.¹⁰⁹ “How can we cope?” Akinrolabu, a Federation leader, said that the price of a bag of water sachets in his community increased from 120 to 200 Naira (\$0.29 to 0.49) during the lockdown.¹¹⁰ Given poverty levels in Lagos State – as

¹⁰⁵ NBS, “COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020,” Covid-19 Impact Monitoring, Round 9, January 2021, Summary Report, p. 6; Human Rights Watch analysis of NBS, “COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey” 2020-21 microdata.

¹⁰⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with Mohammed Yunus, Ajeromi-Ifelodun LGA, October 21, 2020. For details on the Lagos State guidance for markets and other retail settings, see Johsua Bassey, “Update: Lagos streamlines guidelines on easing of COVID-19 lockdown,” *Business Day*.

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, Human Rights Watch interview with Godwill Ikpimi, Secretary of Holychild Community Development Association, Ajeromi-Ifelodun LGA, July 6, 2020; Human Rights Watch interview with Mustapha Emmanuel, Amuwo-Odofin LGA, October 22, 2020; Human Rights Watch interview with Mohammed Yunus, Ajeromi-Ifelodun LGA, October 21, 2020.

¹⁰⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with Godwill Ikpimi, Secretary of Holychild Community Development Association, Ajeromi-Ifelodun LGA, July 6, 2020; Human Rights Watch interview with Amudat Bekolari, Ajeromi-Ifelodun LGA, June 23, 2020.

¹⁰⁹ Human Rights Watch interview with Godwill Ikpimi, Secretary of Holychild Community Development Association, Ajeromi-Ifelodun LGA, July 6, 2020.

¹¹⁰ Human Rights Watch interview with Samuel Akinrolabu, Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlement Federation, May 1, 2020.

discussed above, the Lagos State Bureau of Statistics found in 2016 that over 80 percent of households in the state earned less than \$1.90 a day – these price changes are hugely significant for many urban poor families.¹¹¹

The NBS nationwide surveys confirm that food prices began rising sharply during the lockdown period. 85 percent of households surveyed nationwide between April 20 and May 11, 2020 reported an increase in the prices of major food items since mid-March 2020, compared to only 19 percent between January 2017 and January 2019.¹¹² The Lagos-specific survey conducted by JEI and its partners between April 1 and May 31, 2020 found that “limitations imposed on business and movement led to price-hikes on foodstuffs in informal markets.”¹¹³

Even after the lockdown ended, food prices continued rising, with a July 2020 NBS survey finding that 90 percent of households had experienced an increase in food prices since April or May 2020.¹¹⁴ “Before the lockdown a bag of rice [50 kilograms] was 18,000 Naira (\$44), during the lockdown it was 22,500 (\$55), and after the lockdown it’s 25,000 (\$61),” Bekolari, from Ajegunle (Ajeromi-Ifelodun LGA), said in July 2020. “Transportation is also more expensive to and from the markets.”¹¹⁵ A December 2020 NBS survey later found that between July and December 2020, 83 percent of households had experienced an increase in the price of major food items, which the NBS said demonstrated “a widespread deterioration in purchasing power.”¹¹⁶

A November 2020 World Bank document said food price increases were caused by factors like social distancing and restrictions on movement that reduced the supply of agricultural

¹¹¹ “2016 Poverty Profile for Lagos State,” Lagos State government, p. 15; “Lagos Socio-Economic Profile,” Lagos State Government Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget, p. 3.

¹¹² NBS, “COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020,” Covid-19 Impact Monitoring, Baseline – May 2020, Summary Report, p. 3.

¹¹³ “Impact of Covid-19 on Lagos Informal Settlements and Vulnerable Urban Poor Populations,” Justice & Empowerment Initiatives, the Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlement Federation and the Physically Challenged Empowerment Initiative, June 2020, p. 5.

¹¹⁴ NBS, “COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020: Covid-19 Impact Monitoring, Round 3,” July 2020, Summary Report, p. 6.

¹¹⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with Amudat Bekolari, Ajeromi-Ifelodun LGA, June 23, 2020.

¹¹⁶ NBS, “COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020,” Covid-19 Impact Monitoring, Round 7, November 2020, Round 8, December 2020, Summary Report, p. 6.

labor and made it harder for farmers to obtain seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and services.¹¹⁷ Traders and community members have also blamed a hike in transportation prices and restricted access to markets.¹¹⁸

Corona Diaries: The Working Mother

Margaret Okuomo is a mother of seven from the Isale Akoka community in the Ago Egun Bariga waterside slum in Shomulu LGA.¹¹⁹ In 2017, Ago Egun Bariga had an estimated population of close to 7,000 people, made up of over 500 households.¹²⁰ Okuomo's neighbors' homes are an improvised combination of brick, wood, plastic, and corrugated iron, with the array of materials, colors, and textures reflecting both her community's poverty and resilience.

Okuomo herself lives with her children, who are between 1 and 15 years old, in a two-bedroom house on land belonging to a local church, which doesn't charge her any rent. Her husband is in Delta State to look for work, although he is sometimes able to send money back to the family. Prior to Covid-19, Okuomo cleaned dormitories at the University of Lagos, where she had worked for 13 years. She earned a salary of 18,000 Naira (\$46) and was usually able to save 5,000 Naira (\$12) a month.

When the university was shut down in March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Okuomo couldn't go to work. She and her children initially survived on her savings,

¹¹⁷ World Bank, "Nigeria - COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus Program Project," project appraisal document, p. 12.

¹¹⁸ "Prices of food items jump across Lagos markets, as traders lament transport fare hike," *Nairametrics*, June 3, 2020, <https://nairametrics.com/2020/06/03/prices-of-food-items-jump-across-lagos-markets-as-traders-lament-transport-hike/> (accessed September 14, 2020). Mass transport in Lagos is largely owned and managed by the private sector, with individuals typically owning one or two second-hand vehicles that they rent out to drivers. "About Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority," Lagos State government, <https://lamata.lagosstate.gov.ng/> (accessed September 17, 2020). The cost of travel within the city has gone up as social distancing requirements limit the number of people allowed to travel in vehicles. Human Rights Watch interview with Hauwa Muhammed, Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlements Federation, Apapa LGA, June 11, 2020; Human Rights Watch interview with Azeez Nasu, Ikorodu LGA, June 3, 2020.

¹¹⁹ Human Rights Watch interview with Margaret Okuomo, Shomolu LGA, August 20, 2010; Justice and Empowerment Initiatives video interview with Margaret Okuomo, August 31, 2020.

¹²⁰ Rebecca Enobong Roberts and Ogochukwu Okanya, "Measuring the Socioeconomic Impact of Forced Evictions and Illegal Demolition; A Comparative Study between Displaced and Existing Informal Settlements," *The Social Science Journal*, 2020, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1016/j.soscij.2018.12.003> (accessed July 4, 2021), p. 9.

but that money was used up during the March to May 2020 lockdown. She then borrowed money from a bank, but, by August 2020, when she first spoke to Human Rights Watch, that money was exhausted. “As there is Corona these days, everybody is just here, there is no work,” she said. “We don't eat like the way we used to eat before. We [have] our fill in the morning, and sometimes at night we just soak two handfuls of *garri* for dinner and sleep.”

Okuomo remained unemployed until November 2020, when she told Human Rights Watch that she had found a job sweeping roads at the university.¹²¹ It's backbreaking work – she works from 4am until 10 or 11am each morning – and although it pays the same as her cleaning job, rising food prices forced her in March 2021 to take a second job cleaning another university building. Her second job pays her 12,000 Naira (\$29) per month, but she still owes 12,000 Naira (\$29) to the bank and is struggling to pay it back.

Okuomo said she has heard about the government providing money and food to people during the pandemic, but that she only got assistance from NGOs. “We keep hearing rumors about the government sharing money and food, but I haven't seen any in my area,” she said. She said that the government should do more to mitigate the economic impact of Covid-19 on poor communities. “Let them know it's the poor people that are the ones suffering the most,” she said. “We are not the ones that brought Corona to Nigeria. Let them look for a solution to it, so we don't die of hunger.”

¹²¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Margaret Okuomo, Shomolu LGA, March 24, 2021.



Margaret Okuomo, a mother of seven from Ago Egun Bariga, Lagos State, Nigeria. Okuomo lost her job as a cleaner in March 2020 and was unemployed until November 2020. She received no financial or in-kind assistance from the federal or Lagos State governments and, although she has found a new job sweeping roads, she is struggling to pay off debts she incurred during the Covid-19 crisis. © 2020 Justice & Empowerment Initiatives

Persistent Hunger

The lost livelihoods, reduced income, and rising food prices caused by the Covid-19 pandemic have devastated many Nigerians' ability to feed their families.

The NBS found that 58 percent of households interviewed nationwide between April 20 and May 11 had run out of food in the past 30 days, a period that included the March 30 to May 3, 2020 lockdown.¹²² More than one quarter of respondents – and 35 percent of households in the poorest quintile – said that they or a member of their household had not eaten for a whole day during the last 30 days due to lack of money or other resources.¹²³ “People have been surviving by showing love to each other,” said Mustapha Emmanuel, on the day after the lockdown ended. “You can’t watch your neighbor starve, but then you can only give food if you have it yourself.”¹²⁴

¹²² NBS, “COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020,” Covid-19 Impact Monitoring, Baseline – May 2020, Baseline Summary Tables, p. 26.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with Mustapha Emmanuel, Amuwo-Odofin LGA, May 4, 2020.

Even after the lockdown ended in May, Nigerians continued to experience hunger at levels higher than before the pandemic. An NBS survey administered in August 2020 found that 59 percent of households – 61 percent in the poorest quintile – had run out of food in the past 30 days.¹²⁵ One third of households said that they or a member of their household had not eaten for a whole day during the last 30 days due to lack of money or other resources.¹²⁶

By November 2020, six months after the lockdown ended, an NBS survey found that almost half (48 percent) of all households had run out of food because of lack of money or other resources in the past 30 days, and in 18 percent of households at least one member of the household went without eating for a whole day.¹²⁷ These levels of hunger far exceed those that Nigerians experienced prior to Covid-19. An NBS survey administered in 2018 and 2019 found that 25 percent of households had run out of food in the past 30 days, and in 6 percent of households one member of the household had gone without eating for a whole day.¹²⁸

These numbers equate to millions of Nigerian households – and tens of millions of individuals – who have gone hungry during the pandemic. “When I was working, I wasn’t feeling hungry, and we had some money for food. It’s not like that now,” said a resident of Ajegunle (Ajeromi-Ifelodun LGA), interviewed in June 2020, who lost his job as a photographer during the pandemic.¹²⁹ Like several other interviewees, he said he had taken on debt to pay for food and afford basic necessities.¹³⁰ “I was saving before the virus came; we had a little bit back then. But now if I gave you my [bank] account number, it’s all in red.” NBS household surveys found that nearly one third of respondents interviewed

¹²⁵ Human Rights Watch analysis of NBS, COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020-21 microdata, <https://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/3712/study-description> (accessed July 4, 2021).

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ NBS, “Nigeria General Household Survey, Panel 2018-2019, Wave 4,” <https://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/3557/related-materials> (accessed July 4, 2021), p. 47.

¹²⁹ Human Rights Watch interview with resident of Ajegunle, Ajeromi-Ifelodun LGA, June 4, 2020.

¹³⁰ Ibid. See also Human Rights Watch interview with Margaret Okuono, Shomolu LGA, August 20, 2020; Human Rights Watch interview with resident of Ajegunle, Ajeromi-Ifelodun LGA, June 4, 2020; Human Rights Watch interview with Ismalia Salam, Surulere LGA, May 1, 2020.

between August 9 and 24, 2020 had taken on new loans since the onset of the pandemic.¹³¹ More than half of households used these loans to purchase food.¹³²

¹³¹ NBS, “COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020,” Covid-19 Impact Monitoring, Round 4, August 2020, Summary Report, p. 2.

¹³² Ibid.

Government Response to the Economic Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

Overview of Expanded Social Assistance Programs

The federal and Lagos State governments have acknowledged that the Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the livelihoods of the poorest Nigerians.¹³³ President Buhari warned in July 2020 that the pandemic risked pushing more Nigerians further into poverty as “livelihoods across almost all economic sectors have been adversely affected,” while promising that the “government was also striving to combat and reverse the trend.”¹³⁴

The weaknesses of Nigeria’s social security system prior to the Covid-19 crisis, including the absence of unemployment benefits, limited the avenues open to the federal government to channel support to vulnerable families. In June 2020, however, the federal government passed an Economic Sustainability Plan that it told Human Rights Watch and JEI had “shielded a proportion of the populace from negative economic impacts.”¹³⁵ The plan set out 2.3 trillion Naira (\$5.6 billion) of measures designed to respond to the economic impact of the Covid-19 crisis, to be implemented over 12 to 18 months.¹³⁶ The

¹³³ Bola Badmus, “COVID-19: Lagos To Feed 200,000 Households For 14 Days” *Nigerian Tribune*, March 28, 2020, <https://tribuneonline.ng/covid-19-lagos-to-feed-200000-households-for-14-days/> <https://tribuneonline.ng/covid-19-lagos-to-feed-200000-households-for-14-days/> (accessed April 1, 2021).

¹³⁴ “We’re Determined to do More to Protect Poor, Vulnerable Nigerians – President Buhari,” Statement, Special Adviser Media and Publicity to President Muhammadu Buhari, July 1, 2020, https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2320444444917351&id=1452287068399764 (accessed July 26, 2021).

¹³⁵ Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Letter and Memorandum to Human Rights Watch and JEI, May 11, 2021, p. 4.

¹³⁶ “Bouncing Back: Nigeria Economic Sustainability Plan,” Budget Office of the Federation, June 2020, <https://www.budgetoffice.gov.ng/index.php/nigeria-economic-sustainability-plan> (accessed September 15, 2020). As well as an effort to stimulate the economy, create jobs, and enhance infrastructure, the plan’s objectives include to “extend protection to the very poor and other vulnerable groups – including women and persons living with disabilities – through pro-poor spending.” Ibid., p. 11. The 2.3 trillion Naira (\$5.6 billion) plan was funded by 500 billion Naira (\$1.3 billion) in special funding from the government’s own budget, 1.11 billion Naira (\$2.9 billion) in lending by the Central Bank of Nigeria, 334 billion Naira (\$875 million) from bilateral and multilateral donors, and 302.9 billion Naira (\$795 billion) from other sources. Ibid., p. 20. The IMF said in a December 2020 report that the 500 billion Naira in additional spending “is small when compared to peer countries but reflects Nigeria’s constrained policy space.” International Monetary Fund, “Nigeria: 2020 Article IV Consultation-Press Release; Staff Report; and Statement by the Alternate Executive Director for Nigeria,” p. 7.

federal government said that it had disbursed 500 billion Naira (\$1.2 billion) of spending under the plan by May 2021.¹³⁷

The Economic Sustainability Plan sought to expand existing social assistance measures, budgeting 87 billion Naira (\$211 million) for increased spending on social investment programs over 12 months. The plan included support for cash transfers to households on the National Social Register of Poor and Vulnerable Households and funding to expand cash transfers to an additional 1 million households nationwide through a rapid response program targeting the urban poor specifically.¹³⁸ The plan also provided funding to expand the federal school feeding program to all states.¹³⁹

In addition to cash transfers and food assistance, the Economic Sustainability Plan also included several other measures that the federal government said would address the economic impact of the pandemic on the urban poor.¹⁴⁰ These included efforts to support small businesses, known as micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), such as a 15 billion Naira (\$36 million) program to sustain 300,000 jobs in 100,000 MSMEs by guaranteeing the purchase of priority products.¹⁴¹ The plan also committed 260 billion Naira (\$632 million) to preserve 500,000 jobs in 50,000 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) by providing payroll support to preserve jobs and through loans to artisans, informal workers, and the transport sector.¹⁴² The plan also allocated 50 billion Naira (\$122 million) to create jobs for youth and women through training in digital skills, direct labor in national public infrastructure projects, and the provision of start-up capital and entrepreneurship skills for young Nigerians and women.¹⁴³

¹³⁷ Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Letter and Memorandum to Human Rights Watch and JEI, May 11, 2021, p. 4.

¹³⁸ Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Letter and Memorandum to Human Rights Watch and JEI, May 11, 2021, pp. 4, 6, 7; “Bouncing Back: Nigeria Economic Sustainability Plan,” Budget Office of the Federation, pp. 41-46.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁴⁰ Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Letter and Memorandum to Human Rights Watch and JEI, May 11, 2021, pp. 6-7.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*; “Bouncing Back: Nigeria Economic Sustainability Plan,” Budget Office of the Federation, p. 54.

¹⁴² “Bouncing Back: Nigeria Economic Sustainability Plan,” Budget Office of the Federation, p. 55.

¹⁴³ Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Letter and Memorandum to Human Rights Watch and JEI, May 11, 2021, pp. 6-7; “Bouncing Back: Nigeria Economic Sustainability Plan,” Budget Office of the Federation, pp. 45-46.

The federal government said that these measures were enacted as a complement to social assistance measures to try to preserve jobs and income during the pandemic and stop people from sliding into poverty.¹⁴⁴ In a May 2021 letter to Human Rights Watch and JEI, the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation stated that, “Poverty is multidimensional and if you tackle only income and consumption support without providing for consistent job creation, people will fall back into poverty.”¹⁴⁵

These job creation and retentions programs, however, have been limited in their ability to address the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the urban poor. All or part of some programs were targeted at the formal sector, thereby excluding the informal workers who make up the majority of the urban poor in Lagos State. The plan’s payroll support, for example, targeted small and medium enterprises employing 10 to 50 employees, excluding many informal businesses.¹⁴⁶ The scale of the programs, when distributed across Nigeria’s 36 states, as well as delays in implementation, have also meant that so far there are relatively few beneficiaries in Lagos. By May 5, 2021, for example, only 5,778 people in Lagos State had received the loans or grant support intended for artisans and informal or transport workers.¹⁴⁷ No one in Lagos had benefitted from the federal program to preserve jobs in MSMEs by guaranteeing the purchase of certain priority products.¹⁴⁸

Cash Transfers

When announcing the first lockdown to limit the spread of Covid-19 on March 29, 2020, President Buhari said cash transfers would be used to mitigate its impact on vulnerable households.¹⁴⁹ Cash transfers ultimately became a key pillar of the government’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic, with President Buhari listing them on December 22, 2020 as among the government’s responses to “the havoc wreaked by Covid-19 on lives,

¹⁴⁴ Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Letter and Memorandum to Human Rights Watch and JEI, May 11, 2021, p. 8.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ “Bouncing Back: Nigeria Economic Sustainability Plan,” Budget Office of the Federation, p. 52.

¹⁴⁷ Human Rights Watch meeting with Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning and other federal ministries, May 5, 2021.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Abiola Odutola, “President Muhammadu Buhari’s full speech on COVID-19 pandemic,” *Nairametrics*.

livelihoods, global and national economies, governance structures, health, social welfare, and other systems.”¹⁵⁰

The cash transfers were paid through the preexisting National Social Safety Nets Project to people who were registered in the National Social Register and who were deemed eligible to receive payments.¹⁵¹ The Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development, in a June 2021 letter to Human Rights Watch and JEL, said that cash transfers were paid to 848,045 households for the period January to February 2020 and to 921,445 households for March to April 2020.¹⁵² Most beneficiaries initially received a payment of 20,000 Naira (\$49) to cover January to April 2020, but payments then reverted to 10,000 Naira (\$24) every two months.¹⁵³

The humanitarian affairs ministry said in June 2021 that since the start of the Covid-19 crisis cash transfers through the National Social Safety Nets Project had reached more than one million households on the National Social Register.¹⁵⁴ The number of households receiving cash transfers, however, has gradually decreased throughout the pandemic. The humanitarian affairs ministry said 985,233 households received payments for the period May to June 2020, 622,929 households for July to August, 428,688 for September to October, and 400,734 for November to December.¹⁵⁵

The number of beneficiaries of cash transfers under the National Social Safety Nets Project reflected a target, set by Nigeria’s federal government, based on the resources available for the program. “The federal government couldn’t take care of everyone, so we had to

¹⁵⁰ “Buhari’s speech at presentation of Report by PTF on COVID-19,” *Vanguard Nigeria*, December 23, 2020, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/12/buharis-speech-at-presentation-of-report-by-ptf-on-covid-19/> (accessed December 23, 2020).

¹⁵¹ Ruth Okwumbu, “COVID-19: Nigerians in diaspora have not asked to be evacuated – FG,” *Nairametrics*, April 1, 2020, <https://nairametrics.com/2020/04/01/covid-19-nigerians-in-diaspora-have-not-asked-to-be-evacuated-fg/> (accessed September 14, 2020); “Implementation Status & Results Report – National Social Safety Nets Project,” World Bank, June 25, 2020, <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/694981593133408730/pdf/Disclosable-Version-of-the-ISR-National-Social-Safety-Nets-Project-P151488-Sequence-No-08.pdf> (accessed September 15, 2020), p. 1.

¹⁵² Letter from Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development to Human Rights Watch and JEL, June 21, 2021.

¹⁵³ Human Rights Watch and JEL interview with Apera Iorwa, head of National Social Safety Nets Coordinating Office, Abuja, September 8, 2020.

¹⁵⁴ Letter from Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development to Human Rights Watch and JEL, June 21, 2021.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

figure out how to support the most vulnerable households,” a federal Ministry of Finance, Budget, and National Planning official told Human Rights Watch in April 2021.¹⁵⁶ Iorwa said the federal government considered providing cash transfers to more people during the pandemic but had concluded that it would be too expensive.¹⁵⁷

In January 2021, the federal government did launch the new rapid response cash transfer program, known as the Covid-19 Rapid Response Register Cash Transfer Project, aimed at urban poor communities and targeting one million households.¹⁵⁸ The federal government initially piloted the rapid response program in Ikorodu LGA, in Lagos, and Karshi Village in Abuja, making 5,000 Naira monthly payments to over 3,100 households.¹⁵⁹ The federal government plans to spend 30 billion Naira (\$73 million) on the rapid response program in 2021.¹⁶⁰

Coverage of Cash Transfer Program

In the absence of other measures to provide Nigerians impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic with an adequate standard of living, the coverage of federal cash transfers fell far short of the scale needed to reach the tens of millions of Nigerians who went hungry during the crisis. NBS surveys administered from April 20 to May 11, 2020 found that just over 2.2 percent of households had received cash transfers since mid-March 2020, the period that included the initial lockdown, and less than half (49 percent) of these transfers came from government sources.¹⁶¹ The same survey found that 58 percent of households interviewed – and 60 percent in the poorest quintile – had run out of food in the past 30 days.¹⁶²

Later in the pandemic, NBS surveys administered in August 2020 found that just over 1.1 percent of households had received cash transfers since July 2020, 36 percent from

¹⁵⁶ Human Rights Watch meeting with Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, April 26, 2021.

¹⁵⁷ Human Rights Watch interview with Apera Iorwa, head of National Social Safety Nets Coordinating Office, March 30, 2021.

¹⁵⁸ Human Rights Watch and JEl interview with Apera Iorwa, head of National Social Safety Nets Coordinating Office, Abuja, February 10, 2021.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Letter and Memorandum to Human Rights Watch and JEl, May 11, 2021, p. 4.

¹⁶¹ NBS, “COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020,” Covid-19 Impact Monitoring, Baseline – May 2020, Baseline Summary Tables, p. 50; Human Rights Watch analysis of NBS, COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020-21 microdata.

¹⁶² NBS, “COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020,” Covid-19 Impact Monitoring, Baseline – May 2020, Baseline Summary Tables, p. 26.

government sources, whereas 59 percent of households had run out of food in the past 30 days.¹⁶³ By November 2020, NBS surveys found that just 0.6 percent of households had received cash transfers in the previous month, 28 percent of which came from government sources, whereas 48 percent of all households had run out of food in the past 30 days.¹⁶⁴

Federal government officials, in an April 2021 meeting with Human Rights Watch, underscored that cash transfers were just one of the policy measures used to respond to the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on poverty levels.¹⁶⁵ However, by publicly referring to cash transfers as a key pillar of the response to Covid-19, including at the beginning of the March 2020 lockdown, President Buhari raised expectations among urban poor communities in Lagos that they would receive assistance.¹⁶⁶ “When the government announced the cash transfers, we charged our phones to see if we will get bank alerts, but this didn’t happen,” said Temitope Ogunbamila, a resident of Isale Akoka community (Shomolu LGA), whose family of eight survived by eating and selling fish her father was able to catch during the lockdown.¹⁶⁷

The limited coverage of cash transfers nationwide also highlighted the difficulty of using ad hoc social assistance measures to respond to gaps in social security systems during times of crisis. Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona, the then Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, said in 2009 that “implementing temporary cash transfer initiatives alone” is not sufficient to realize the right to social security, and underscored the need for cash transfer programs to be accompanied by long-term social security systems.¹⁶⁸

Outside of Nigeria, upper middle-income countries who had more developed social security systems prior to the pandemic have had more success in expanding cash transfers

¹⁶³ NBS, “COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020,” Covid-19 Impact Monitoring, Round 3, July 2020, Summary Tables, p. 71; Human Rights Watch analysis of NBS, COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020-21 microdata.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Human Rights Watch meeting with Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, April 26, 2021.

¹⁶⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with Godwin Paul, February 12, 2021; Human Rights Watch interview with Temitope Ogunbamila, Shomolu LGA, May 10, 2020.

¹⁶⁷ Human Rights Watch interview with Temitope Ogunbamila, Shomolu LGA, May 10, 2020.

¹⁶⁸ Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona, UN Human Rights Council, “Promotion and Protection of all Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural rights, Including the Right to Development,” para. 65.

and other forms of financial assistance during the Covid-19 crisis.¹⁶⁹ In South Africa, where the social security system was already providing social grants to 18 million people prior to Covid-19,¹⁷⁰ social scientists calculated that the grants and increased benefits payments begun in April 2020 in response to Covid-19 could reach “about 36 million individuals, or 63 percent of the South African population.”¹⁷¹ The South African government ultimately paid out 3.4 million Covid-19 grants per month between May and October 2020, and increased benefits payments to more than 20 million people.¹⁷² South Africa still saw a dramatic rise in hunger during the course of the pandemic, particularly in low income urban and rural communities.¹⁷³

In Brazil, another upper middle income country with a social security system that reached tens of millions of people prior to Covid-19, the legislature enacted a package of

¹⁶⁹ See, for example, WIEGO, “COVID 19: Social Protection Innovative Practice Responses,” <https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/resources/file/01%20Social%20Protection%20Responses%20to%20Covid-19%20ENG.pdf> (accessed December 23, 2020). See also WIEGO, “Social Protection Responses to Covid-19,” <https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/resources/file/04%20Social%20Protection%20Responses%20to%20Covid-19%20ENG.pdf> (accessed December 23, 2020). For a discussion of cash transfer programs across sub-Saharan Africa, see Ugo Gentilini, Saksham Khosla, and Mohamed Almenfi, “Cash in the City: Emerging Lessons from Implementing Cash Transfers in Urban Africa,” World Bank Social Protection & Jobs Discussion Paper, January 2021, <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/424421610013456565/pdf/Cash-in-the-City-Emerging-Lessons-from-Implementing-Cash-Transfers-in-Urban-Africa.pdf> (accessed February 23, 2021), p. 29.

¹⁷⁰ South African Social Security Agency, “Annual Report 2018-2019,” <https://www.sassa.gov.za/annual%20reports/Documents/SASSA%20Annual%20Report%202018-2019.pdf> (accessed July 4, 2021).

¹⁷¹ Gracelin Baskaran, Haroon Bhorat and Tim Köhler, “South Africa’s Special COVID-19 Grant: A Brief Assessment of Coverage and Expenditure Dynamics,” Development Policy Research Unit, University of Cape Town, November 2020, <http://www.dpru.uct.ac.za/policy-briefs> (accessed July 4, 2021), p. 1. To address the economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the South African government increased all existing social grants for six months (from May to October 2020) and introduced a special Covid-19 Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant of 350 Rand (\$24) per month targeted at individuals above the age of 18, unemployed, and neither receiving any income nor any other social grant. The Covid-19 Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant expired in October 2020 but has been extended to April 2021. Social scientists estimated that up to 10 million people could be eligible for the SRD grant, together with 26 million people who could receive increases in other social grants, such as the Child Support Grant. See also Haroon Bhorat, Morné Oosthuizen and Ben Stanwix, “Social Assistance Amidst the Covid-19 Epidemic in South Africa: An Impact Assessment,” Development Policy Research Unit, University of Cape Town, July 2020, https://media.africaportal.org/documents/Social_assistance_amidst_the_covid_19_epidemic.pdf (accessed December 23, 2020), p. 4.

¹⁷² Gracelin Baskaran, Haroon Bhorat and Tim Köhler, “South Africa’s Special COVID-19 Grant: A Brief Assessment of Coverage and Expenditure Dynamics,” p. 3.

¹⁷³ “COVID-19 holds lessons for the future of social protection,” The Conversation, February 24, 2021, <https://theconversation.com/covid-19-holds-lessons-for-the-future-of-social-protection-155787> (accessed July 4, 2021); Servaas van der Berg, Leila Patel, and Grace Bridgman, “Hunger in South Africa during 2020: Results from Wave 3 of NIDS-CRAM,” National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS) and Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey 2020, February 17, 2021, <https://cramsurvey.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/10.-Van-der-Berg-S.-Patel-L.-Bridgman-G.-2021-Hunger-in-South-Africa-during-2020-Results-from-Wave-3-of-NIDS-CRAM-1.pdf> (accessed July 4, 2021); See also Ivan Turok and Justin Visagie, “The Covid-19 Crisis has Amplified Spatial Inequalities”, *Econ3x3*, October 1, 2020, <https://www.econ3x3.org/article/covid-19-crisis-has-amplified-spatial-inequalities> (accessed July 4, 2021).

emergency financial aid, targeting informal, self-employed, and unemployed workers, that from April 2020 entitled households to 600 reais (\$116) per month (or 1,200 reais (\$232) for single-parent households headed by women).¹⁷⁴ The program ran through September 2020, when the federal government extended the benefit to December 2020 but reduced it to 300 reais (\$58) per month (or 600 reais (\$116) for single-parent households headed by women).¹⁷⁵ The program identified beneficiaries through a pre-existing social assistance database.¹⁷⁶ The Brazilian government said that 68 million Brazilians had received emergency aid payments in 2020.¹⁷⁷ The payments were paused from January to March 2021, but in April the federal government committed to four additional monthly installments of 250 reais (\$48) per household (or 375 reais (\$72) for single-parent households headed by women).¹⁷⁸ The government did, however, reduce the number of beneficiaries to 46 million.¹⁷⁹

Limited Impact in Lagos State

The coverage of cash transfer programs in response to Covid-19 has been even more limited in Lagos State. For the period from May to June 2020, when 985,233 households received cash transfers under the National Social Safety Nets Project nationwide, 6,681 households in Lagos received payments.¹⁸⁰ In total, 27,027 cash transfers were paid in Lagos State between March 2020 and December 2020 and 3,359,029 payments were made nationwide.¹⁸¹ Lagos, despite making up more than 10 percent of Nigeria's

¹⁷⁴ WIEGO, "Social Protection Responses to Covid-19," p. 2; "Coronavírus: Senado aprova auxílio emergencial de R\$ 600," Press Release, Senado notícias, March 30, 2020, <https://www12.senado.leg.br/noticias/materias/2020/03/30/coronavirus-senado-aprova-auxilio-emergencial-de-r-600> (accessed April 23, 2021).

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., "Presidente Bolsonaro anuncia prorrogação do Auxílio Emergencial," Press Release, Presidência da República, September 9, 2020, <https://www.gov.br/planalto/pt-br/acompanhe-o-planalto/noticias/2020/09/presidente-bolsonaro-anuncia-prorrogacao-do-auxilio-emergencial> (accessed April 23, 2021).

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. See also WIEGO, "COVID 19: Social Protection Innovative Practice Responses."

¹⁷⁷ "World Bank approves loan supporting the expansion of the Bolsa Familia Program," Press Release, World Bank, October 29, 2020, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/10/29/world-bank-approves-loan-supporting-expansion-of-bolsa-familia-program> (accessed December 31, 2020); "Auxílio Emergencial 2021 começa a ser pago a 2,36 milhões de famílias nesta terça (06.04)," Press Release, Ministério da Cidadania, April 5, 2021, <https://www.gov.br/cidadania/pt-br/noticias-e-conteudos/desenvolvimento-social/noticias-desenvolvimento-social/auxilio-emergencial-2021-comeca-a-ser-pago-a-2-36-milhoes-nesta-terca-06-04> (accessed April 23, 2021).

¹⁷⁸ "Presidente Jair Bolsonaro assina MP que cria Auxílio Emergencial 2021," Press release, Ministério da Cidadania, March 18, 2021, <https://www.gov.br/cidadania/pt-br/noticias-e-conteudos/desenvolvimento-social/noticias-desenvolvimento-social/presidente-jair-bolsonaro-assina-mp-que-cria-auxilio-emergencial-2021> (accessed April 23, 2021).

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Letter from Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development to Human Rights Watch and JEL, June 21, 2021.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

population, therefore received less than 1 percent of the cash transfers paid nationwide. Officials from the World Bank and NASSCO said that the majority of enrollees in the National Social Register, and those benefitting from the National Social Safety Nets Project, were in rural areas, which they said reflected the higher levels of poverty in rural communities.¹⁸²

The limited roll out of cash transfers in Lagos State, however, is also due in part to the state government's delay in subscribing to and implementing the federal cash transfer program. Although a federal-level initiative, the cash transfer program relies on State Operation Coordinating Units (SOCU) to establish a state-level social register that in turn provides information to the National Social Register.¹⁸³ SOCUs also identify individuals eligible for cash transfers on their state's portion of the National Social Register and set up a system for making payments.¹⁸⁴ States sign a memorandum of understanding with NASSCO describing how the cash transfer program will be rolled out in their state.¹⁸⁵

Although the National Social Safety Nets Project began in 2017, Lagos State only began implementing it in 2019.¹⁸⁶ The Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation told Human Rights Watch and JEI in a May 2021 letter that, "some states committed to the program instantly while others started late...This clearly placed some states ahead of others in the generation of State Social Register of the Poor and Vulnerable Households."¹⁸⁷ Delays in Lagos' implementation meant that in March 2020, of the 2.6 million households on the National Social Register nationwide, just 14,434 were from Lagos State.¹⁸⁸ None of these people received cash transfers during the first post-Covid-19 disbursements in April 2020 as Lagos State had not yet developed the infrastructure

¹⁸² Human Rights Watch and JEI interview with Apera Iorwa, Head of National Social Safety Nets Coordinating Office, Abuja, June 19, 2020.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Human Rights Watch and JEI interview with Apera Iorwa, head of National Social Safety Nets Coordinating Office, Abuja, September 8, 2020.

¹⁸⁵ "How the National Social Register is Built," NASSCO, <https://aneej.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NSR-Infographics-Dark.pdf> (accessed July 4, 2021).

¹⁸⁶ Human Rights Watch and JEI interview with Apera Iorwa, head of National Social Safety Nets Coordinating Office, Abuja, September 8, 2020.

¹⁸⁷ Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Letter and Memorandum to Human Rights Watch and JEI, May 11, 2021, p. 10-11.

¹⁸⁸ Rasheed Sobowale, "COVID-19: NASSCO releases register of poor, vulnerable households in Nigeria," *Vanguard*.

necessary to make payments.¹⁸⁹ The federal government, in a May 2021 letter, said that Lagos began making cash transfer payments in the May to June 2020 payment cycle.¹⁹⁰

The limited number of beneficiaries of federal cash transfer programs in Lagos State is also linked to the federal government's allocation of resources for the program based on states' poverty levels. The Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation said in May 2021 that, "Lagos State has the lowest poverty rate in the country...Poverty rate is used to equitably distribute the cash transfer beneficiaries. The cash transfer is structured to be proportionate to size, based on poverty headcount, an equitable system has been instituted against the available funds such that no state would take more than its fair share for the size of its poor vis-à-vis other states."¹⁹¹

The federal government told Human Rights Watch and JEI that, recognizing Lagos' status as the epicenter for Covid-19, it was deploying "other schemes" to hotspot areas, such as the Covid-19 Rapid Response Register Cash Transfer Project.¹⁹² The federal government said 229,360 beneficiaries in Lagos State are earmarked for cash transfers under the rapid response project, from 9 wards of Ojo, Epe, Badagry, and Ikorodu LGAs.¹⁹³

When asked about the so far limited coverage of cash transfers in Lagos State, Iorwa, the NASSCO head, noted that other organizations were also mining the National Social Register to identify beneficiaries in Lagos State for their own cash transfer programs.¹⁹⁴ These programs, however, have limited coverage, with one United Nations Development Program initiative, for example, providing cash to 22,600 families at a cost of 885.5 million Naira (\$2.15 million dollars).¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁹ Human Rights Watch and JEI interview with Apera Iorwa, Head of National Social Safety Nets Coordinating Office, Abuja, September 8, 2020.

¹⁹⁰ Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Letter and Memorandum to Human Rights Watch and JEI, May 11, 2021, p. 10.

¹⁹¹ Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Letter and Memorandum to Human Rights Watch and JEI, May 11, 2021, p. 11.

¹⁹² Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Letter and Memorandum to Human Rights Watch and JEI, May 11, 2021, p. 11.

¹⁹³ Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ At the launch of the program, which costs 885.5 million Naira (\$2.3 million dollars), the head of the EU Delegation to Nigeria, Ambassador Ketil Karlsen, said that the Covid-19 crisis means that, "We are at the tipping point that requires cohesive, collective and immediate action, including harnessing social safety nets for the most vulnerable people, such as cash transfers and temporary basic income, particularly for women who are falling faster into poverty than men." "COVID-19:

Despite its relative wealth when compared to other states, the Lagos State government has not used its own resources to provide cash transfers to urban poor families during the Covid-19 pandemic. Lagos State Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu announced on April 15, 2020 that in response to the pandemic, “250,000 vulnerable residents and economically challenged persons who registered with Lagos State Residents Registration Agency (LASRRA) would receive unconditional cash transfers.”¹⁹⁶ Residents of Lagos are encouraged to register with LASRRA, which maintains a database of Lagos residents, and obtain a resident card from the agency.¹⁹⁷

Urban poor residents and NGO representatives said, however, that they were not aware of anyone who had received cash transfers from the Lagos State government through this program, and the government has given no further updates on the program since it was announced.¹⁹⁸ Activists also said that many urban poor households are not registered with LASRRA, a problem that Lagos State government officials have also acknowledged.¹⁹⁹ Registration with LASRRA also requires proof of residency – such as a utility bill – that

EU, UNDP, Humanitarian Affairs Ministry and Lagos State Government target 22,600 vulnerable families, 5,000 SMEs in New Unconditional Cash Transfer Project,” UNDP press release, September 29, 2020, <https://www.ng.undp.org/content/nigeria/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2020/covid-19-eu-undp-humanitarian-affairs-ministry-and-lagos-stat.html> (accessed January 1, 2021). In December 2020, the World Bank announced a \$750 million assistance program for Nigeria to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on “the livelihoods of poor and vulnerable households and microenterprises.” “World Bank Group to Boost Nigeria’s Efforts to Reduce Poverty,” World Bank press release, December 15, 2020, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/12/15/world-bank-group-to-boost-nigerias-efforts-to-reduce-poverty> (accessed January 1, 2020); World Bank, “Nigeria - COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus Program Project,” project appraisal document, p. 6. The program includes almost \$57 million to provide cash transfers to 55,400 people nationwide in vulnerable groups, including older persons, persons with disabilities, the chronically ill, and urban poor households. Ibid., p. 28 and p. 80. World Bank documents suggest that these cash payments will benefit 2,145 households in Lagos. The program also provides almost \$48 million nationwide for livelihood grants, such as vocational training or seed funds targeting household enterprises in the informal sector. These grants aim to benefit almost 47,000 people, including 2,215 in Lagos. Ibid., Table 3.7: Individual Targets for each DLLs for participating States.

¹⁹⁶ Tweet, Lagos State Government, April 15, 2020, <https://twitter.com/followlasg/status/1250621840105635841?lang=en> (accessed September 15, 2020).

¹⁹⁷ “About the Lagos State Residents Registration Agency,” Lagos State Residents Registration Agency, <https://www.lagosresidents.gov.ng/faqs/#1594748723332-999c2242-740e> (accessed September 15, 2020).

¹⁹⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with Mohammed Zanna, Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlements Federation, September 14, 2020; Human Rights Watch interview with Dede Kadiri, Executive Secretary, Lagos Civil Society Participation for Development, September 14, 2020.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. See also Adejumo Kabir, “Tarkwa Bay: Tales of anguish, suffering in ‘forgotten’ Lagos community,” *Premium Times*, July 25, 2020, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/405012-tarkwa-bay- Tales-of-anguish-suffering-in-forgotten-lagos-community.html> (accessed September 15, 2020).

many people living in informal settlements, which lack these basic services, struggle to obtain.²⁰⁰

Corona Diaries: The Evictee

Godwin Paul, 21, was born and bred in Tarkwa Bay, a beach community on the Lagos Lagoon. Paul's father left when he was 8 or 9 years old, leaving his mother to raise him and his older brother on her own. She sold hot meals from a small stand on the beach, serving local residents and tourists that would take the short boat ride across from mainland Lagos. When he was old enough, Paul himself operated a boat to take people back and forth.²⁰¹

On January 21, 2020, the Nigerian navy forcibly evicted Paul and his family from their home as part of a spate of evictions targeting as many as 4,500 residents in Tarkwa Bay and neighboring Okun Ayo community. Military personnel reportedly gave residents just one hour to pack up and leave their homes.²⁰² Paul said that he, his mother, and his brother had scrambled to save their essential belongings, but his mother lost the cooking equipment she used for her business. Unable to return to their home, Paul and his family slept on the beach on the night of the eviction.

Just over two months later, when the federal government imposed a lockdown to stop the spread of Covid-19, Paul still did not have permanent accommodation. A few days after the eviction, Paul and his family had found shelter in a church in nearby Ogogoro community, sharing the one-room church hall with three other evictees. Paul's mother had to ask the other residents to turn their backs while she changed her clothes.

Already struggling with the consequences of the eviction, the lockdown made it even harder for Paul to find enough food to survive. "It came at the worst possible time," he

²⁰⁰ Human Rights Watch interview with Mohammed Zanna, Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlements Federation, September 14, 2020.

²⁰¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Godwin Paul, February 12, 2021.

²⁰² Nigerian Slum / Informal Settlement Federation and Justice & Empowerment Initiatives (JEI), "Nigerian Navy Forcibly Evicts Thousands from Okun Ayo & Tarkwa Bay Communities in Lagos," Press Release, January 22, 2020, <https://sdinet.org/2020/01/nigerian-navy-forcibly-evicts-thousands-okun-ayo-tarkwa-bay-communities-lagos/> (accessed July 7, 2021).

said. Paul and his brother would sometimes defy the lockdown and sneak back to the beach at Tarkwa Bay to collect firewood or coconuts, selling them for 500 or 700 Naira (\$1.22 to \$1.70) to find money for food. “We just had to find a way to manage,” Paul said. “We couldn’t move around, and food was getting more expensive – we often only had enough to eat once a day.”

Once the lockdown ended, Paul was able to return to work as a boat driver. His mother, however, didn’t have enough money to buy new cooking equipment, and in any case Paul said the Nigerian navy hasn’t permitted evicted residents to reestablish shops and stalls on Tarkwa Bay beach. In November 2020, Paul and his family relocated to an apartment in Ikorodu. Paul’s mother hasn’t found a new job, but his brother is working for a wealthy family in the neighborhood. Paul is volunteering with the Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlements Federation, from whom he receives a small stipend.

Since his eviction, and despite the additional difficulties of the Covid-19 pandemic, Paul has not received any financial or food assistance from government sources, although his family did get food handouts from privately funded NGOs and the church where his family was staying. Paul said that the Nigerian government hasn’t lived up to its promises to help people financially during the Covid-19 crisis. “They announced on social media that people would get 5,000 Naira,” he said. “But it was just a fake promise. So many people don’t have the means to survive, and the government only looked after themselves.”

Identifying Beneficiaries of Cash Transfers

Given the limited coverage of federal cash transfers, NASSCO and the state-level agencies implementing the programs have developed targeting mechanisms for identifying households eligible for cash transfers, with the National Social Safety Nets Project and the Covid-19 Rapid Response Register Cash Transfer Project employing two different methods.

For the National Social Safety Nets Project, NASSCO and state-level implementing agencies used poverty data to identify the poorest Local Government Areas (LGAs) to participate

from each state.²⁰³ Within the participating LGAs, NASSCO and the relevant state agency then used community-based targeting to identify households to be registered in the state's social register, working with community leaders to formulate criteria for identifying poor and vulnerable households and then selecting households that meet these criteria.²⁰⁴ NASSCO then validated the data contained in the state-level register for acceptance into the National Social Register.²⁰⁵ Once on the National Social Register, households' poverty levels were ranked through a proxy means test that is, according to NASSCO, "a scientifically proven process used to rank households based on different economic, educational, asset, and social parameters."²⁰⁶ Households falling within or above the sixth decile of this ranking were eligible to receive cash transfers.²⁰⁷

The Covid-19 Rapid Response Register Cash Transfer Project, in an effort to disburse cash transfers quickly, has utilized a different approach. Because the project focuses on urban areas, NASSCO worked with the NBS, the National Population Commission, and state planning commissions to identify urban (as opposed to rural) wards in Nigeria.²⁰⁸ NASSCO then used satellite imagery and statistical data on poverty levels and living standards to identify those urban wards with high poverty levels, referring to indicators like population density, availability of infrastructure (e.g. roads), and the type of construction of houses in the area. Using this data, wards' poverty levels were ranked, and NASSCO identified 1,110 urban political wards that the rapid response program will target.²⁰⁹ Beneficiaries in the chosen wards are contacted via a mass SMS broadcast, and then invited to register for the program via their phone.²¹⁰ The mobile phone numbers of applicants are then validated, and those deemed eligible for assistance are linked to digitized bank accounts able to receive 5,000 Naira monthly stipends.²¹¹

²⁰³ Powerpoint Presentation, "Delivering Palliatives Transparently: Cash Transfer in Focus May 2020," Iorwa Apera, National Social Safety Nets Coordinating Office head, <https://icpc.gov.ng/download/13381/> (accessed July 4, 2021).

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Human Rights Watch and JEI interview with Apera Iorwa, Head of National Social Safety Nets Coordinating Office, Abuja, February 10, 2021.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Tweet, NASSCO Nigeria, January 25, 2021, <https://twitter.com/NasscoNigeria/status/1353679038896877575/photo/1> (accessed July 4, 2021).

²¹¹ Ibid.

The so far limited rollout in Lagos State of both the National Social Safety Nets Project and the Covid-19 Rapid Response Register Cash Transfer Project means that community leaders and NGOs interviewed for this report could not assess whether the methods the programs use to identify beneficiaries were successful in reaching households in need of financial assistance. The targeting methods used for both programs, however, make it very likely that they have excluded or will exclude large numbers of people in need of assistance.

For example, both programs, by operating only in LGAs or wards that meet federal and state agencies' criteria for participation, have excluded households from other locations that might also have needed support during the Covid-19 pandemic. The poorest residents of LGAs or wards not included in the program, regardless of their needs, have no opportunity to obtain financial support.

The National Social Safety Nets Project, by using a proxy means test to rank households according to poverty levels, also risks excluding many households that, although not high enough in the poverty ranking to be eligible for assistance, still experienced hunger and other deprivations during the pandemic. The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has expressed concern over the use of proxy means-testing for cash transfer programs and other social assistance programs, noting that, "it is not only administratively demanding, but also often fails to reach standards of appropriate objectivity or transparency, particularly in developing countries with large informal sectors, weak administrative capacity, and low fiscal space."²¹²

Adequacy of Payments

The 5,000 Naira (\$12) paid per month through the federal cash transfer program, which applied nationwide, did not provide the money needed in Lagos State to obtain adequate food, water, and other basic essentials during the pandemic.

Members of the Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlements Federation and community leaders said that, given Lagos' high cost of living, 5,000 Naira (\$12) was far too little to support a

²¹² Magdalena Sepúlveda and Carly Nyst, "The Human Rights Approach to Social Protection," Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Finland, 2012, <https://www.ohchr.org/documents/issues/epoverty/humanrightsapproachtosocialprotection.pdf> (accessed July 4, 2021), p. 39.

household for a month in the state.²¹³ “You’d struggle to feed a family of four for a week in Lagos with 5,000 Naira, let alone for a month,” said Zanna, a leader in the Federation.²¹⁴ “And then you have to account for the cost of other essentials like water, electricity, and school fees.”

The Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, in a May 2021 letter, said that the amount paid through cash transfers, “was based on an existing understanding of poverty and vulnerability in the country...[and] was calculated with the aim of protecting the household economy, complementing other income sources, reducing social risks, and preventing already vulnerable people from slipping further into poverty.”²¹⁵ The NBS, in its 2019 Poverty and Inequality Report on Nigeria, used a national poverty line of 137,430 Naira (\$334) per year, which equates to 11,450 Naira (\$28) per month, suggesting that, in addition to adjusting the payment level for high-cost areas, the amount paid for cash transfers needs to reflect both inflation and food price rises during the pandemic.²¹⁶ The UNCESCR has said that the adequacy of social security benefits, “should be monitored regularly to ensure that beneficiaries are able to afford the goods and services they require to realize their rights.”²¹⁷

Food Handouts

The federal government provided food assistance to millions of vulnerable households during the Covid-19 pandemic, with President Buhari on December 22, 2020 stating that his government has provided support to more than 8.8 million households from 70,000 tons of food grains released from the strategic grain reserve.²¹⁸ The federal government said in May 2021 that it had given the Lagos State government 6,888 metric tons of garri, maize, and sorghum for distribution to 612,130 households.²¹⁹ Between May and July 2020, the federal government also distributed “Take Home Rations” to 127,589

²¹³ Human Rights Watch interview with Mohammed Zanna, Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlements Federation, September 14, 2020; Human Rights Watch interview with Samuel Akinrolabu, Nigerian Slum / Informal Settlement Federation, May 1, 2020.

²¹⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with Mohammed Zanna, Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlements Federation, April 9, 2021.

²¹⁵ Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Letter and Memorandum to Human Rights Watch and JEI, May 11, 2021, p. 12.

²¹⁶ NBS, “2019 Poverty and Inequality in Nigeria: Executive Summary,” p. 5.

²¹⁷ CESCR, General Comment No. 19, “The right to social security (art.9),” para. 22.

²¹⁸ “Buhari’s speech at presentation of Report by PTF on COVID-19,” *Vanguard Nigeria*.

²¹⁹ Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Letter and Memorandum to Human Rights Watch and JEI, May 11, 2021, p. 14.

households enrolled in a preexisting school feeding program, reaching 37,589 households in Lagos.²²⁰ According to the government, 95 percent of recipients of the rations said it was the only support they received during the Covid-19 pandemic.²²¹

At the Lagos State level, Governor Sanwo-Olu said on April 14 that 200,000 households had received food assistance in the two weeks after the lockdown began on March 30.²²² Abisola Olusanya, then Acting Commissioner for Agriculture, told a journalist in July 2020 that the government had in total distributed food to “about 500,000 households.”²²³ A report of the state auditor-general, dated November 30, 2020, stated that the Lagos State government’s Covid-19 emergency food response had cost 1.49 billion Naira (\$3.6 million) between the beginning of the pandemic and September 30, 2020.²²⁴ Private sector and nongovernmental organizations also implemented their own food assistance programs.²²⁵

Many Still Went Hungry

The food assistance distributed by both the federal and Lagos State governments, although significant, did not reach many households who went hungry during the Covid-19 pandemic. NBS surveys administered nationwide from April 20 to May 11, 2020 (which included the end of the lockdown) found that just 12 percent of households had received

²²⁰ Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Letter and Memorandum to Human Rights Watch and JEI, May 11, 2021, p. 15. The food items include 5 kilograms of rice, 5 kilograms of beans, 15 eggs, 140 grams of tomato paste, 500 milliliters of vegetable oil, 750 milliliters of palm oil and 500 grams of salt.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² “Covid-19: Gov Sanwo-Olu roles out new palliatives,” *The News*, April 15, 2020, <https://www.thenewsnigeria.com.ng/2020/04/15/covid-19-gov-sanwo-olu-roles-out-new-palliatives> (accessed September 15, 2020). According to NGOs that observed food distribution in Lagos State, each food package provided by the state government was intended to feed a household of two parents and four children for a minimum of 14 days, and consisted of 5 kilograms each of rice, beans, and *garri* and 2 sachets of tomato paste. “Assessing COVID-19 Pandemic Palliatives in Lagos State,” Lagos Civil Society Participation for Development (LACSOP), The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) and the Budget Foundation, August 2020, http://www.lacsop.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Assessing-COVID-19-Pandemic-Palliatives-in-Lagos-State_LACSOP_DK1.pdf (accessed September 15, 2020), p. 10.

²²³ Afeez Hanafi, “COVID-19 lockdown: How ‘diversion’ denied many poor, vulnerable persons govt’s food,” *Punch*, July 5, 2020, <https://punchng.com/covid-19-lockdown-how-diversion-denied-many-poor-vulnerable-persons-govts-food/> (accessed September 15, 2020).

²²⁴ Lagos State Government, “Covid-19 Statement of Income and Expenditure for the Period Ended September 30, 2020,” November 30, 2020, <https://lagosstate.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Covid-19-Statement-of-Income-and-Expenditure-for-the-period-ended-30th-september-2020.pdf> (accessed December 30, 2020), p. 13.

²²⁵ One report found that government assistance made up 29.2 percent of food assistance distributed. “Assessing COVID-19 Pandemic Palliatives in Lagos State,” Lagos Civil Society Participation for Development (LACSOP), The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) and the Budget Foundation, p. 7.

food assistance since mid-March 2020 and only 4.5 percent of the poorest quintile of households.²²⁶ Only 50 percent of those who received food assistance obtained it from the federal, state, or local governments.²²⁷ During the same period, 58 percent of households interviewed had run out of food in the past 30 days.²²⁸

NBS surveys administered in August 2020 found that just over 4.1 percent of households had received food assistance since July, 68 percent from government sources, whereas 59 percent of households had run out of food in the past 30 days.²²⁹ By November 2020, NBS surveys administered between November 7 to 23, 2020 found that 3.5 percent of households had received food assistance since October – 54 percent from government sources – whereas 48 percent of all households had run out of food in the past 30 days.²³⁰

In Lagos State, NGO representatives and community leaders in urban poor neighborhoods said that the food assistance provided by the state government was only enough for a small fraction of the households in their community. “The Ward Chairman initially came with food for 30 households in the community,” Prince Saheed Onisiwo, a traditional leader from Onisiwo Island, Amuwo-Odofin LGA, said in May 2020, describing the food assistance his community received from the government during the lockdown.²³¹ “We have hundreds of households here. Then we got another delivery from the local government a couple of weeks ago, but it was only one sack, with seven or so bags of rice and beans inside.”²³²

²²⁶ NBS, “COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020,” Covid-19 Impact Monitoring, Baseline – May 2020, Baseline Summary Tables, p. 50.

²²⁷ Ibid., p. 51.

²²⁸ Ibid., p. 26.

²²⁹ NBS, “COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020,” Covid-19 Impact Monitoring, Round 3, July 2020, Summary Tables, p. 71; Human Rights Watch analysis of NBS, COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020-21 microdata.

²³⁰ Human Rights Watch analysis of NBS, COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020-21 microdata.

²³¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Prince Saheed Onisiwo, Amuwo-Odofin LGA, May 7, 2020.

²³² Ibid.



People wait in line on April 18, 2020 to collect food distributed by the Lagos State government. The levels of hunger in Nigeria doubled during the pandemic, and federal and state government efforts to provide food and financial assistance failed to reach many people in need of support. © 2020 Olukayode Jaiyeola/NurPhoto/Getty Images

Moses Sangoloke, the chairman of Ago Egun Community Development Association, said in June 2020 that LGA officials brought 50 tickets for food rations for his community. “We complained that there are over 4,000 people [here] and they [the local government officials] said they will give more after the initial round, but this didn’t happen,” he said. “We gave the 50 tickets to the elderly people in the community.”²³³

Ikpimi, the Ajegunle community development association secretary, said in July 2020 that government assistance had fallen far short of what was needed:

Our area is about 200 hundred houses, with many houses made up of a dozen or more one-room apartments, with entire families living in each one. Most of our people are into petty trading and [during the lockdown] could not go to their various places of business. People are undernourished,

²³³ Human Rights Watch interview with Moses Sangoloke, Ikorodu LGA, June 3, 2020.

malnutrition is imminent in this community, and [with food prices up] people are getting less for what they used to pay for. We were given just a few palliatives and we found a way to distribute this to the most vulnerable. A nongovernmental organization gave 100 packages which was shared across the community, with rice and *garri*. What they brought is more substantial than what the Lagos state government did.²³⁴

NGOs and community leaders also said that the limited food assistance available had not even reached the most food insecure members of communities. Government officials have said that beneficiaries were identified using existing government databases, including LASRRA, and information from community development associations across the state.²³⁵ But, as discussed above, the registration requirements for databases like LASRRA, such as a requirement to prove residency through utility bills, often exclude people living in informal settlements from being identified as a recipient in the first place.²³⁶

Allegations of Political Interference

The limited amounts of food assistance that urban communities in Lagos State received led to questions about how the federal and state governments had used the funds dedicated to the Covid-19 response. “We heard about all the money the government was supposed to be getting for Covid-19 – billions of Naira – and the government talked about the food they were distributing, but most of the communities never got any,” said Anthony Sylvanus, a community health educator from Lagos Mainland LGA.²³⁷

Some community leaders and civil society groups have also alleged that, instead of reaching the families most in need, food assistance was distributed according to local political affiliations and networks. A joint report by three NGOs, LACSOP, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), and the BudgIT Foundation, based on

²³⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with Godwill Ikpimi, Secretary of Holychild Community Development Association, Ajeromi-Ifeldon LGA, July 6, 2020.

²³⁵ Afeez Hanafi, “COVID-19 lockdown: How ‘diversion’ denied many poor, vulnerable persons govt’s food,” *Punch*; “Assessing COVID-19 Pandemic Palliatives in Lagos State,” Lagos Civil Society Participation for Development (LACSOP), The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) and the BudgIT Foundation, p. 16.

²³⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with Mohammed Zanna, Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlements Federation, September 14, 2020.

²³⁷ Human Rights Watch Interview with Anthony Sylvanus, Mainland LGA, May 5, 2020.

interviews with dozens of people who had observed the distribution of food palliatives by the Lagos State government, found that “politicians hijacked the packages at the local level,” and that there was “no objective criteria for identifying vulnerable persons.”²³⁸

Some community leaders and urban poor residents Human Rights Watch interviewed expressed similar concerns. “The government didn’t go through grassroots organizations but went with political people at the local level, so if you’re not a member of the right party, you don’t get anything,” said Mohammed Zanna, a leader in the Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlements Federation.²³⁹ Azeez Nasu, a resident of Ago Egun Oreta community, said: “The government needs to work more closely with grassroots groups to reach the most vulnerable rather than going through community development associations and LGAs which can be manipulated or highjacked by politicians. They need to change their way of distribution to reach more people.”²⁴⁰

Stocked Warehouses, Hungry People

On October 22, 2020, as Nigeria was roiled by riots following the EndSARS protests against police brutality, people broke into a warehouse in Amuwo, Lagos State, where food intended to be distributed to vulnerable and impoverished households during the Covid-19 pandemic was stored.²⁴¹ Social media videos showed the warehouse stocked full of food supplies, with crowds of people carrying out bags and cartons of

²³⁸ “Assessing COVID-19 Pandemic Palliatives in Lagos State,” p. 16; Human Rights Watch interview with Dede Kadiri, Executive Secretary, Lagos Civil Society Participation for Development, September 14, 2020.

²³⁹ Human Rights Watch interview with Mohammed Zanna, Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlements Federation, September 14, 2020.

²⁴⁰ Human Rights Watch interview with Azeez Nasu, Ikorodu LGA, June 3, 2020.

²⁴¹ Rejoice Ewodage, “Scores Break Into Warehouse In Lagos, Loot COVID-19 Palliatives,” *Channels TV*, last updated October 22, 2020, <https://www.channelstv.com/2020/10/22/scores-break-into-warehouse-in-lagos-loot-covid-19-palliatives/> (accessed October 27, 2020). The ENDSARS protests began on October 8, 2020, with demonstrators nationwide calling on the authorities to abolish an abusive police unit called the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). The hashtag #EndSARS began trending globally and led to protests across Nigeria and in other cities around the world. Although the government on October 11 announced that the SARS unit would be abolished, participants in protests were harassed and attacked by security forces and armed thugs in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, and some states. On October 20, social media footage showing men identified as military officers shooting at peaceful protesters in Lagos sparked global outrage. See Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2021* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2021), Nigeria chapter, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/nigeria#>.

food.²⁴² The food bags were marked with the labels, “Lagos State Government,” and “CACOVID,” the shortened form of the Coalition against Covid, a private sector taskforce formed to support the federal government’s response to Covid-19.²⁴³ Protesters reportedly broke into other warehouses containing Covid-19 food supplies in several other states.²⁴⁴

Civil society activists told Human Rights Watch that the availability of large amounts of undistributed food, in contrast to the limited assistance people had received during the pandemic, further undermined trust in the government’s response to Covid-19.²⁴⁵ “Given the rate of poverty, heightened by the pandemic, it’s hard to understand why the palliatives (food assistance) were still being stored,” Kolawole Oluwadare, Deputy Director of SERAP, a Nigerian anti-corruption NGO, told Human Rights Watch.²⁴⁶ On October 25, SERAP asked Nigeria’s Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) to “promptly, thoroughly, transparently, and effectively investigate the circumstances surrounding the alleged hoarding of COVID-19 palliatives in warehouses in several states, which ought to have been distributed to the poorest and most vulnerable people during the lockdown, and to publish the outcome of any such investigation.”²⁴⁷

²⁴² Ibid. More Covid-19 palliatives were allegedly found in the palace of Rilwan Akiolu, the Oba (traditional leader) of Lagos. “Angry Citizens Loot COVID-19 Palliatives Warehouses,” *This Day*, October 26, 2020, <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/10/26/angry-citizens-loot-covid-19-palliatives-warehouses/> (accessed November 5, 2020).

²⁴³ “Coalition against Covid-19,” *Devex*, <https://www.devex.com/organizations/coalition-against-covid-19-cacovid-150517> (accessed October 27, 2020).

²⁴⁴ “Angry Citizens Loot COVID-19 Palliatives Warehouses,” *This Day*; Timothy Obiezu, Nigerians Justify Massive Looting of COVID-19 Supplies,” *Voice of America*, last updated October 27, 2020, <https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/nigerians-justify-massive-looting-covid-19-supplies> (accessed October 27, 2020).

²⁴⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with Dede Kadiri, Executive Secretary, Lagos Civil Society Participation for Development, October 26, 2020; Human Rights Watch interview with Kóláwolé Olúwádàrè, Deputy Director, Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project, October 26, 2020.

²⁴⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with Kóláwolé Olúwádàrè, Deputy Director, Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project, October 26, 2020.

²⁴⁷ “SERAP asks ICPC to probe ‘alleged hoarding of COVID-19 palliatives in several states,’” Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), October 25, 2020, <https://serap-nigeria.org/2020/10/25/serap-asks-icpc-to-probe-alleged-hoarding-of-covid-19-palliatives-in-several-states/> (accessed October 27, 2020).

CACOVID said on October 27 that the food stored in the warehouses across Nigeria was intended for two million of the most vulnerable families nationwide.²⁴⁸ CACOVID said that although it had begun an effort to provide food assistance in response to Covid-19 in April 2020, the production cycle required to fulfill such a large order had resulted in a delay in the delivery of food items to states.²⁴⁹ The Lagos State government said that it had only “officially” received 107,546 food packs from CACOVID on September 22, 2020 and that when the warehouse break-ins occurred the food was being repackaged before distribution.²⁵⁰

The Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, in a May 2021 letter, said that, “according to CACOVID, the large scale of this nationwide food program and the timing of the orders, which coincided with the lockdowns and limited movement across the country, delayed the procurement and distribution exercise.”²⁵¹ The federal government also said that Lagos State had received the food packages on September 22, 2020, was repacking them, and that distribution was ongoing when the warehouses were broken into.²⁵²

²⁴⁸ “CACOVID Appeals for Calm Over Looting of COVID-19 Palliatives,” CACOVID, October 27, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/cacovidng/> (accessed October 27, 2020).

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁰ “Govt condemns raid as residents loot COVID-19 palliatives in warehouse,” *Bioreports*, October 27, 2020, <https://bioreports.net/govt-condemns-raid-as-residents-loot-covid-19-palliatives-in-warehouse/> (accessed October 27, 2020).

²⁵¹ Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Letter and Memorandum to Human Rights Watch and JEL, May 11, 2021, p. 16.

²⁵² *Ibid.*

A Framework for Fulfilling the Right to Social Security in Nigeria

The Covid-19 crisis, in demonstrating the huge gaps in social security systems and the difficulties of rapidly expanding coverage during a crisis, has created a window of opportunity to expand social protection and fulfill the right to social security in Nigeria.²⁵³ The federal Ministry of Finance, Budget, and National Planning began consultations in December 2020 on revisions to its 2017 National Social Protection Policy to strengthen delivery of social protection policies across the government.²⁵⁴ As they intensify efforts to address the lasting economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the federal and Lagos State governments should take at least the following six key steps towards realizing the right to social security for all.

First, the federal and Lagos State governments should **draft and support legislation that recognizes Nigerians' right to social security** and sets the legal foundations of an effective social system, for example, by creating entitlements to financial support for unemployed workers, including in the informal sector, and an entitlement to child, maternity, disability, and old-age benefits.

Second, the federal and Lagos State governments should **develop national and state-level strategies to fulfill the right to social security**, building on their existing social protection policies.

Third, the federal and Lagos State government should meet urban poor communities' immediate needs pending the development of a fully functional social security system by

²⁵³ Olivier De Schutter, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, has argued that the pandemic, by exposing deficiencies in existing social safety nets, has created an opportunity to build permanent social protection systems, on the basis of human rights, to help eradicate poverty and reduce inequality, "thus making for societies that shall be more resilient in the face of shocks." UN Human Rights Council, "Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery," Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, paras. 75-76.

²⁵⁴ Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Letter and Memorandum to Human Rights Watch and JEL, May 11, 2021, p. 5-6. Emmanuel Elebeke, "FC kicks-off engagement with southwest states, CSOs on review of National Social Protection Policy," *Vanguard Nigeria*, December 8, 2020, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/12/fg-kicks-off-engagement-with-southwest-states-csos-on-review-of-national-social-protection-policy/> (accessed December 23, 2020).

extending and expanding the social assistance programs used to respond to the Covid-19 crisis. They should build on the investments in social protection infrastructure they made during crisis, such as the expansion in the National Social Register, while also integrating lessons learned about how to ensure urban poor and other vulnerable communities can access cash transfers and other social protection measures.

Fourth, the federal and Lagos State governments should explore ways to **mobilize more domestic revenue for social security**, focusing on **progressive taxation measures that limit financial burdens on the urban poor.**

Fifth, the federal and Lagos governments should ensure that increased spending on social security comes with **measures to hold government institutions accountable for how funds are spent**, including by increasing access to information about government expenditure.

Finally, and having demonstrated their commitment both to increased spending on social protection and increased accountability for those funds, the federal and Lagos State governments should consider **seeking support from international finance institutions and other international partners to build a strong social security system in Nigeria.**

Draft and then Support Legislation Providing for a Right to Social Security

The federal government should draft and support legislation that recognizes Nigerians' right to social security and sets the legal foundations of an effective social security system. Legislation recognizing the right to social security would give a clear indication that, in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, the federal and state governments are committed to ensuring that all Nigerians can access healthcare and realize the right to an adequate standard of living. The legislation should set out all Nigerians' immediate right to the minimum core elements of the right to social security, as well as a commitment to progressively realize universal coverage and adequate levels of benefits over time.

Develop National and Lagos-State Level Strategies to Fulfill the Right to Social Security

In drafting national and state-level strategies to fulfill the right to social security, the federal and Lagos State governments could build on and adapt their existing social protection policies. They should, however, avoid characterizing social protection policies

as discretionary programs open to a limited number of beneficiaries, depending on the government resources available at the time, and rather set out – both in law and in the strategy to implement it – entitlements open to everyone who needs them. This would include efforts to address current gaps in Nigeria’s social system, for example, by creating a child benefit entitlement and financial support for unemployed workers, including in the informal sector.

Any national and state-level strategy should also combine contributory schemes, such as unemployment insurance, with non-contributory or social assistance measures, like cash transfers, open to the poorest and more vulnerable members of society. Nigeria’s federal government, in its May 2021 letter to Human Rights Watch and JEI, rightly underscored that cash transfers are not the only response to growing poverty, and that there are “plans in place to address the rising poverty level in the country and this transcends cash transfers alone,” including support for skills acquisitions, support for micro and small businesses and agricultural development.²⁵⁵ Efforts to address poverty through job creation and support, however, although vital, are not a substitute for a social security system that ensures that, even when Nigerians don’t benefit from federal employment programs, they still have the resources to realize their right to an adequate standard of living.

Extend and Expand Social Assistance Programs Used to Respond to the Covid-19 Crisis

Although only one part of a functioning social security system, cash transfers and social assistance are likely to remain a key element of Nigeria’s social security system even beyond the life of the Covid-19 pandemic. The sheer scale of poverty in Nigeria, and Lagos State specifically, and the time and resources needed for job creation measures and contributory social security schemes, means that cash transfers and social assistance will be desperately needed for years to come.

The importance of cash transfers means that Nigeria’s federal and Lagos State governments should use the programs and infrastructure resulting from the Covid-19 crisis to expand social assistance beyond the life of the pandemic. NASSCO, for example, has grown the National Social Register from 2.6 million households in March 2020 to 6.3 million households in February 2021, creating a database that Iorwa, the NASSCO head,

²⁵⁵ Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Letter and Memorandum to Human Rights Watch and JEI, May 11, 2021, p. 14.

said the Nigerian government and international donors can use to identify beneficiaries of future social assistance measures.²⁵⁶ Although the federal government’s rapid response cash transfer program will initially target one million beneficiaries, the federal government told Human Rights Watch and JEI that urban poor households enrolled in the rapid response register “have the potential to be admitted into any targeted initiative aimed at providing relief, resilience, and recovery, not only in the current pandemic but against any future shocks.”²⁵⁷

Moving forward, the scale and coverage of cash transfers and other social assistance schemes should not be determined by the resources the government decides to allocate to them, but rather should be designed to reach all households who need support to achieve an adequate standard of living. In Lagos State, this will require the state government to not only push for an expansion of federally backed cash transfers and other social assistance measures in Lagos State but also to mobilize its own resources to expand social assistance in the state, including through funding for cash transfers, grants or low-interest credit for informal workers and businesses, and investments in public infrastructure in urban poor communities, including water, sanitation, and electricity.

In expanding the reach of cash transfers, federal and state agencies should work with community organizations and civil society groups to define rights-based eligibility criteria. Relevant criteria would include households’ current access to food, water, basic shelter and housing, sanitation, and primary and secondary education. The process used to determine eligibility should also use state or even LGA-level indicators that take account of the high cost of living in Lagos State and other urban areas, as well as factors like number of dependents, gender, age, and needs of people with disabilities.

Lagos State’s 2017 Social Protection Policy envisaged a single state register for the identification of beneficiaries of social protection measures, and references LASRRA as one source of data for the register.²⁵⁸ In view of the current exclusion of many urban poor

²⁵⁶ Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Letter and Memorandum to Human Rights Watch and JEI, May 11, 2021, p. 10. Human Rights Watch and JEI interview with Apera Iorwa, Head of National Social Safety Nets Coordinating Office, Abuja, February 10, 2021.

²⁵⁷ Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Letter and Memorandum to Human Rights Watch and JEI, May 11, 2021, p. 5.

²⁵⁸ Lagos State Government, “Lagos State Social Protection Policy,” May 2017, p. 23. (Copy on file with Human Rights Watch).

households from LASRRA, the state government should consult with community-based organizations about existing barriers to access to LASRRA, such as proof of residency, and address them when developing a single state register. Social assistance measures should also be accessible to people without bank accounts, phones, or phone credit, or those who lack the technological requirements to receive electronic payments. The criteria used to identify beneficiaries of cash transfers should be made public.

The federal and Lagos State governments should also recognize that 5,000 Naira per month (\$12) is not an adequate amount to meaningfully improve living standards in Lagos State and significantly increase payments to reflect the cost of living in Lagos and ensure beneficiaries can obtain an adequate standard of living.

The Lagos State government should also rapidly expand food relief, school feeding programs, and other in-kind humanitarian assistance during the Covid-19 pandemic for urban poor communities. The Lagos State Ministry of Agriculture, which led the food distribution effort, should partner with community-based organizations and civil society groups both to mobilize resources and to ensure supplies are distributed equitably, regardless of recipients' political affiliation.

Mobilize the Domestic Revenue Needed to Realize the Right to Social Security

In both annual budgets and in any future economic stimulus effort to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, the federal and Lagos State governments should increase the budget allocated to social protection to a level necessary to build an effective social security system. Nigeria's Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation told Human Rights Watch and JEI in May 2021 that the federal government plans to spend 1.1 trillion Naira (\$2.6 billion) on social protection in 2021, or about 1 percent of gross domestic product.²⁵⁹ In addition to short-term funding increases, however, the federal government and the Lagos State Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget should also establish processes for researching and publishing, by the middle of 2022, white papers setting out

²⁵⁹ Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Letter and Memorandum to Human Rights Watch and JEI, May 11, 2021, p. 4.

ways to mobilize increased government revenue for social protection measures in the long term.²⁶⁰

Any effort to raise revenue for social protection should use progressive tax measures that do not make it more difficult for Nigerians to realize the right to an adequate standard of living. De Schutter said in September 2020 that, “the economic recovery should be financed through progressive taxation schemes and social programs with a strong redistributive component,” recommending “direct taxes with progressive economic incidence and distributional effects.”²⁶¹ Nigeria’s 2017 National Social Protection Policy states that a “Guiding Principle” of social protection is “the principle of redistribution,” which requires “the redistribution of resources to progressively reduce the gaps in inequality using important means of resource redistribution.”²⁶²

Ensure Accountability and Transparency for Spending on Social Security

Any effort to increase spending on social security, both from domestic revenue and international assistance, should come with measures to hold government institutions accountable for how that money is spent.

In the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, several Nigerian NGOs have underscored the need for transparency in the use of funds to respond to Covid-19, emphasizing the lack of trust in government accounting that preceded the pandemic.²⁶³ SERAP, the Nigerian anti-

²⁶⁰ Michelle Bachelet, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in a January 2021 report, urged states to pursue “new forms of progressive taxation to maximize investment in economic and social rights, including by ring-fencing social spending during economic downturns,” and “measures to combat tax evasion and tax avoidance.” UN Human Rights Council, “Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery,” Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, January 18, 2021, para. 83. The International Labour Organization has also urged developing countries to respond to Covid-19 by expanding social protection by increasing resource mobilization, noting that “options to increase fiscal space for social protection exist even in low-income countries, including increased taxation; a larger social security contribution base; reduced illicit financial flows; reallocation of public expenditure; or a more accommodating macroeconomic framework.” International Labour Organization, “Financing gaps in social protection: Global estimates and strategies for developing countries in light of the COVID-19 crisis and beyond,” September 17, 2020, <https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/RessourcePDF.action?id=56836> (accessed December 30, 2020), p. 1.

²⁶¹ UN Human Rights Council, “Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery,” Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Olivier de Schutter, para. 68.

²⁶² Ministry of Budget and National Planning, “National Social Protection Policy,” Abuja, 2017, p. 23.

²⁶³ Human Rights Watch interview with Dede Kadiri, Executive Secretary, Lagos Civil Society Participation for Development, October 26, 2020; Human Rights Watch interview with Kóláwolé Olúwádàre, Deputy Director, Socio-Economic Rights and

corruption NGO, has filed several freedom of information requests seeking information on the federal and Lagos State government's spending of Covid-19 funds, including details of the cost of cash transfer programs and other pro-poor economic measures implemented by the federal and state government.²⁶⁴

SERAP in August 2020 released a report describing ten actions that the federal government could take to improve transparency and accountability in the response to Covid-19, including investigating allegations of corruption and improving transparency in public procurement processes.²⁶⁵ The report stated that, "corruption remains systemic at all levels of government," and that, "the huge public funds and private donations that have been committed to stop the spread of the virus and address its consequences have prompted questions by Nigerians about the ability and commitments of governments at all levels to ensure transparency and accountability in the use of funds and donations."²⁶⁶

Human Rights Watch and Transparency International in March 2021 released a report that found that the Nigerian federal government had not implemented several transparency commitments made when applying for and obtaining \$3.4 billion in Covid-19 emergency

Accountability Project, October 26, 2020. See also Gabriel Okeowo, Vahyala Kwaga, Iyanuoluwa Bolarinwa, Oluseun Onigbinde, and Uadamen Ilevbaoje, "COVID-19 Fund: Introductory Report on Fiscal Support, Palliative Analysis & Institutional Response," BudgIT Foundation, 2021, <https://yourbudgit.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Pattern-of-Palliative-Distribution-Web.pdf> (accessed July 4, 2021). Nigeria ranked 146 out of 180 countries in Transparency International's 2019 Corruption Perceptions Index, with a score of 26 out of 100. Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index," Nigeria Data, <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2019/results/nga> (accessed December 31, 2020).

²⁶⁴ SERAP noted on April 5, 2020 that, "We are seriously concerned that millions of the country's poorest and most vulnerable people have not benefited from the announced palliatives, donations, reported cash payments, cash transfers and other benefits," and requested that the government provide details on the cost of the cash transfer and food assistance program and who benefited from it. "SERAP asks FG, CBN to provide spending details on COVID-19 relief funds, school feeding," Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), April 5, 2020, <http://serap-nigeria.org/2020/04/05/serap-asks-fg-cbn-to-provide-spending-details-on-covid-19-relief-funds-school-feeding/> (accessed October 27, 2020). SERAP subsequently filed lawsuits in Abuja's Federal High Court requesting that the judiciary compel the government to produce the information requested in the freedom of information requests. Sodiq Oyeleke, "SERAP Drags FG to Court over COVID-19 Palliatives," *Punch*, June 28, 2020, <https://punchng.com/serap-drags-fg-to-court-over-covid-19-palliatives/> (accessed October 27, 2020); Adebayo Folorunsho-Francis, "SERAP sues NCDC, health ministry over COVID-19 donations," *Punch Healthwise*, June 21, 2020, <https://healthwise.punchng.com/serap-sues-ncdc-health-ministry-over-covid-19-donations/> (accessed October 27, 2020).

²⁶⁵ Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), "10-Point Programme of Action on Transparency and Accountability in Covid-19 Responses in Nigeria," August 2020, p. 3, [https://www.dropbox.com/s/myf1m1qt3jplofa/10%20point%20programme%20\(1\).pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/myf1m1qt3jplofa/10%20point%20programme%20(1).pdf?dl=0) (accessed July 7, 2021). The report also noted that the federal government had introduced some measures to improve transparency in the use of Covid-19 funding, such as requiring all ministries to publish expenditures related to Covid-19, but stated that, "far more needs to be done to ensure the effective implementation of these frameworks." *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

funding from the IMF in April 2020.²⁶⁷ The government has so far failed, for example, to disclose beneficial ownership information for companies receiving government funds for Covid-19 response, and has not adequately published data on how Covid-19 funds have been spent.²⁶⁸ The federal government has also not published an audit report on its Covid-19 spending.²⁶⁹

In developing proposals for increased spending on social protection, the federal and Lagos State governments should consult with Nigerian anti-corruption and transparency organizations on the safeguards that federal and state institutions can put in place to improve transparency and reduce opportunities for corruption.

Increased International Support for Expanding the Right to Social Security in Nigeria

Although national governments have the responsibility for finding the resources necessary to fulfill the right to social security, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on countries' finances, including in Nigeria, has reduced the fiscal space open to governments to respond to the economic impacts of the pandemic.²⁷⁰

In September 2020, Olivier De Schutter, the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, cautioned that, “with exports and tax revenue quickly declining,” countries face “an impossible choice” between “increasing their external debt or reducing social protection levels, thus further impoverishing their population.”²⁷¹ He urged countries “to avoid the looming spectre of austerity,” and explore ways to mobilize domestic and international resources to fund social protection.²⁷²

International human rights law requires states to provide financial and technical assistance to other governments seeking to realize the right to social security, provided

²⁶⁷ “IMF: Scant Transparency for Covid-19 Emergency Loans,” Human Rights Watch news release, March 30, 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/30/imf-scant-transparency-covid-19-emergency-loans>.

²⁶⁸ Ibid. See also International Monetary Fund, “Nigeria: 2020 Article IV Consultation-Press Release; Staff Report; and Statement by the Alternate Executive Director for Nigeria,” p. 9.

²⁶⁹ “IMF: Scant Transparency for Covid-19 Emergency Loans,” Human Rights Watch news release.

²⁷⁰ World Bank, “Nigeria - COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus Program Project,” project appraisal document, p. 7.

²⁷¹ UN Human Rights Council, “Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery,” Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Olivier de Schutter, para. 68.

²⁷² Ibid., paras. 5 and 65-68.

they have the resources to do so.²⁷³ The UNCESCR has said that developed countries “have a special responsibility for and interest in assisting the developing countries” to realize the right to social security.²⁷⁴

So far, however, developed countries’ responses to the Covid-19 crisis, despite the enormous sums they have spent on Covid-19 domestically, have failed to reflect the urgent need to support the response to the economic impact of Covid-19 in lower income and lower-middle-income countries. ILO researchers in October 2020 found that high-income countries, despite constituting only 16 percent of the world’s population in 2019, were as of September 2020 responsible for approximately 85 percent of total domestic spending on Covid-19 fiscal response measures, or \$9 trillion.²⁷⁵ Lower-middle-income countries like Nigeria, with 40 percent of the global population in 2019, were, according to the ILO, responsible for 5 percent of domestic Covid-19 response spending (\$530 billion).²⁷⁶

²⁷³ CESCR, General Comment No. 19, “The right to social security (art.9),” para. 55.

²⁷⁴ Researchers at the International Labour Organization concluded in October 2020 that the gap between spending on social protection in Nigeria and the world’s other lower-middle-income countries and the amount needed to achieve universal social protection was \$362.9 billion dollars in 2020, or 5.1 percent of lower-middle-income countries’ GDP. Fabio Durán-Valverde, José F. Pacheco-Jiménez, Taneem Muzaffar, and Hazel Elizondo-Barboza, “Financing gaps in social protection Global estimates and strategies for developing countries in light of the COVID-19 crisis and beyond,” International Labour Organization, October 2020, p. 31. For all countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the estimated gap between government spending in 2020 and universal social protection was \$136.9 billion, or 8.2 percent of countries’ GDP. *Ibid.* These calculations, however, exclude the cost of unemployment insurance or other forms of income security and is only based on the spending needed to achieve universal child, maternity, disability and old-age benefits and access to healthcare. Including in this calculation cash transfers or other forms of income security to families living in poverty in lower-middle-income countries would only increase the current gap between government spending and need. International assistance is therefore, at least for the next decade, essential to help low and lower-middle-income countries achieve social protection coverage. Olivier De Schutter, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, argued in an April 2021 report that low-income countries can progressively close the gap between government spending and social protection needs through “a combination of international support, capacity-building and domestic resources mobilization.” Global Fund for Social Protection: International Solidarity in the Service of Poverty Eradication, April 2021, para. 32. The report cites ILO projections to illustrate how, were increased support for social protection in low-income countries to have begun in 2020, “domestic resource mobilization should gradually grow, with the support of international assistance and cooperation, so as to allow international financing to be phased out by 2030.” *Ibid.*, para. 31.

²⁷⁵ Fabio Durán-Valverde, José F. Pacheco-Jiménez, Taneem Muzaffar, and Hazel Elizondo-Barboza, “Financing gaps in social protection Global estimates and strategies for developing countries in light of the COVID-19 crisis and beyond,” International Labour Organization, p. 37. For data on population numbers in high-income countries, see Espen Beer and Prydz Divyanshi Wadhwa, World Bank, “Classifying countries by income,” September 9, 2019, <https://datatopics.worldbank.org/world-development-indicators/stories/the-classification-of-countries-by-income.html> (accessed July 7, 2021).

²⁷⁶ Upper-middle income countries, whose share of the global population in 2019 was 35 percent, were responsible for 10 percent of domestic spending on Covid-19 responses (\$1.06 trillion). Lower income countries, despite representing 9 percent of the world’s population, were responsible for only 0.06 percent of domestic spending on Covid-19. Spending in Africa on Covid-19 response has also dwarfed spending in developing countries from other regions. Fabio Durán-Valverde, José F. Pacheco-Jiménez, Taneem Muzaffar, and Hazel Elizondo-Barboza, “Financing gaps in social protection Global estimates and strategies for developing countries in light of the COVID-19 crisis and beyond,” International Labour Organization, p. 37.

When compared to their domestic spending, high-income countries' support for Covid-19 responses abroad has been relatively limited. The ILO found that, as of September 2020, international financial institutions and development agencies had pledged about \$1.3 trillion to help governments tackle the Covid-19 crisis, with \$1 trillion pledged by the IMF and \$160 billion by the World Bank.²⁷⁷ Most of the funds have been committed in the form of concessional or regular loans, which risks adding to the already crippling debt burden of many developing countries.²⁷⁸

Spending on social protection only represents a fraction of high-income countries' support for Covid-19 response in developing countries. The ILO found that, as of September 2020, international financial institutions and development agencies have committed just \$127 billion to support social protection and healthcare during the Covid-19 crisis.²⁷⁹ This has led to renewed calls from the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights and the ILO for the establishment of a Global Fund for Social Protection to support expanded social security in the wake of the pandemic.²⁸⁰ The Global Fund could present an alternative to loans that may impose austerity measures that could harm human rights and increase poverty and inequality in the coming years.

Nigeria has, as discussed above, already received relatively large amounts of international financing for Covid-19 response, including \$3.4 billion emergency assistance from the IMF. Nigeria's federal government may therefore wish to consider whether requesting additional support would add to its existing debt burden, and also ensure that loans do not recommend or impose new austerity measures harmful to human rights.²⁸¹

²⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 38.

²⁷⁸ Ibid. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development estimated in April 2020 that in 2020 and 2021 developing countries will have to spend up to US\$3.4 trillion on repayments on their public external debt. "COVID-19 is a matter of life and debt, global deal needed," UNCTAD news release, April 23, 2020, <https://unctad.org/news/covid-19-matter-life-and-debt-global-deal-needed> (accessed July 4, 2021).

²⁷⁹ Fabio Durán-Valverde, José F. Pacheco-Jiménez, Taneem Muzaffar, and Hazel Elizondo-Barboza, "Financing gaps in social protection Global estimates and strategies for developing countries in light of the COVID-19 crisis and beyond," International Labour Organization, p. 38.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.; "What's next for Social Protection: A Global Fund for Social Protection," Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, <http://www.socialprotectionfloorscoalition.org/2020/12/whats-next-for-social-protection-a-global-fund-for-social-protection/> (accessed July 4, 2021); UN Human Rights Council, "Global fund for social protection: international solidarity in the service of poverty eradication," Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Olivier de Schutter, April 22, 2021, <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/47/36> (accessed July 4, 2021).

²⁸¹ Research by Oxfam shows that since the pandemic started in March 2020, 76 out of 91 IMF loans, that is 84 percent, could result in cuts to healthcare and social protection. "IMF paves way for new era of austerity post-COVID-19," Oxfam press release, October 12, 2020, <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/imf-paves-way-new-era-austerity-post-covid-19> (accessed July 4, 2021).

If it does seek international support, however, the federal government should include details of how the Nigerian government plans to raise domestic revenue for social security, as well as measures to improve transparency and accountability for spending involving both domestic and international funds. By setting out a plan for increased national funding and committing to adequate scrutiny over how that money is spent, the Nigerian federal government will have a strong case with which to request increased international funding and technical assistance to help build a social security system and tackle the devastating economic impacts of the Covid-19 crisis.

Acknowledgments

This report was researched and written by Anietie Ewang, Nigeria researcher at Human Rights Watch, and Jim Wormington, senior researcher on environmental and natural resource rights in the Africa division at Human Rights Watch. Andrew Maki, Co-Director of Justice & Empowerment Initiatives (JEI), also participated in research for this report, along with several other JEI staff members. Maki also reviewed the report.

Members of the Nigerian Informal Settlements/Slum Federation, particularly Samuel Akinrolabu and Mohammed Zanna, assisted in identifying interviewees and also provided insight into the impact of Covid-19 in urban poor communities.

Ida Sawyer, deputy director, and Laetitia Bader, Horn of Africa director, both in the Africa division, edited the report for Human Rights Watch. Clive Baldwin, senior legal advisor, provided legal review, and Babatunde Olugboji, deputy program director, provided programmatic review for Human Rights Watch. Brian Root, quantitative analyst at Human Rights Watch, provided quantitative data analysis. The report was also reviewed by Lena Simet and Sarah Saadoun, senior researchers in the Business and Human Rights division; Komala Ramachandra, associate director in the Business and Human Rights division; Margaret Wurth, senior researcher in the Children's Rights division; and Kyle Knight, senior researcher in the LGBT Rights division. Aoife Croucher, associate in the Africa division, at Human Rights Watch, and Birgit Schwarz, communications manager in the media department of Human Rights Watch provided additional editorial review for Human Rights Watch.

Janna Kyllastinen, senior producer at Human Rights Watch, and Ifé Fatunase, multimedia director at Human Rights Watch, produced and edited the video accompanying the report. Samuel Okechukwu, Temitope Ogunbamila, Mathew Cerf and other JEI staff members filmed the videos.

Travis Carr, publications/photography coordinator, provided support for the selection and layout of the photographs in the report. The report was prepared for publication by Fitzroy Hepkins, administrative manager.

Annex I: Letter and Memorandum from Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation to Human Rights Watch and JEI, May 11, 2021



THE PRESIDENCY

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FEDERATION
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POL.09/S.18/I/175

11th May, 2021

Mausi Segun,
Human Rights Watch/Justice & Empowerment
Initiative,
310 Herbert Macauley Way, 3rd Floor,
Sabo-Yaba,
Lagos State.

**RE: ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON URBAN POOR
COMMUNITIES IN LAGOS STATE**

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 26th February, 2021 on the above subject and to apologise for the delay in responding to your inquiries.

2. Please find attached our response to your questions and you may wish to revert for any further clarification and the need for a virtual meeting with the Secretary to the Government of the Federation.
3. Please, accept the assurances of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation's warm regards.

Bada Oluwaseyi

Technical Assistant - PS
for: Permanent Secretary, Political and Economic Affairs Office

**RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH TO NIGERIA'S
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

S/N	Questions	Answers
Public Health Responses to Covid-19		
1	What steps has the federal government taken to consult with non-governmental organisations, including those representing urban poor communities, in designing its public health response to Covid-19, including in relation to the design of any future lockdowns or restrictions of movement in response to the disease?	<p>Nigeria's National Response was anchored on and is still being implemented through broad stakeholder consultation involving both National and International Partners. Thus, decisions on lockdown and restrictions are taken by the PTF after consultations with stakeholders such as Traditional Rulers, Nigeria Governors Forum, World Health Organisation, Government Agencies, Civil Society Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations, Associations etc. The NCDC also undertakes periodic pooling of opinions from Nigerians, including urban dwellers in strengthening the National Response.</p> <p>The NCDC has continued to lead the public health response through a National Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) comprised of development partners within the health sector and organisations across other relevant sectors including NGOs.</p> <p>Over 50 guidelines have been developed in collaborations with development and Non-Government Organisations, across key response areas of laboratory services, case management, IPC, risk communication and several others. As the science around the response evolved, NCDC developed and updated guidelines within the shortest possible time.</p> <p>The FGoN through National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) has designed a robust strategy that is inclusive. When the first case of COVID-19 was notified, the Agency developed a comprehensive</p>

		<p>COVID-19 outbreak preparedness and response plan for Primary Health Care (PHC) workers at PHC facilities and Community levels.</p> <p>We also developed training manuals for PHC workers and community volunteers and this in order to ensure continuum of PHC services in all the over 9000 PHCs in all the states in the country in the midst of the lockdowns due to COVID-19 pandemic which has effect in terms of access to these services by all Nigerian especially the most vulnerable urban poor communities. In order to ensure participation of the CBOS which are the representatives of the communities we have and existing structure of inclusivity thru the Ward Development Committees (WDCs) which were involved and some activities as outlined below were carried out:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The existing structure which already has an NGO's and CBOS participation was optimized to include all the strategic NGO coordinating bodies at the national level. 2. The NPHCDA developed a comprehensive Covid-19 risk communication plan with jointly with our partners and other NGOs in order to achieve COVID-19 IPC in all our communities. 3. The Agency established COVID-19 Crisis Management Committee comprising of technical experts from the technical department, established the COVID-19 Command Centre trained over 95600 community resource people and NGOS were among the beneficiaries the IPC and other basic package of response to COVID-19 infection in all the wards across the 36 states and FCT.
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		<p>4. Community resource manuals and Flips. charts were printed and shared across the wards in the country.</p> <p>5. Frequently Ask Questions (FAQS) and other relevant risk communication documents were developed, printed, and distributed across the 774 LGAS.</p> <p>6. In relation to future plans, lessons learnt will be factored in the design of future plans and intervention.</p>
2	What steps is the federal government taking to ensure that testing for Covid-19 is accessible and affordable for residents of urban poor communities?	<p>COVID-19 testing has remained free in all public health laboratories. NCDC has also established more than 70 public health laboratories and supported the activation of 36 private laboratories. Every state in Nigeria now has at least one public health laboratory for COVID-19 diagnosis. All residents including those in urban poor communities have access to these facilities.</p> <p>Furthermore, over 52 Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) comprised of up to 352 trained personnel were deployed from NCDC to the states to support the response, especially to unreached areas. This represents the highest number of deployments for an outbreak response the agency has ever done.</p>
3	What steps is the federal government taking to ensure that vaccinations for Covid-19 are accessible for the residents of urban poor communities?	<p>The Federal Government through NPHCDA with the guidance of the PTF on COVID-19 has developed a robust strategy for ensuring all eligible population are reached with the COVID-19 vaccines. To ensure that this is achieved the NPHCDA being the agency saddled with the responsibility for all vaccination in the country, developed a strategy called TEACH (Traditional, Electronic Assisted Concomitant and House to House) for the COVID-19 AstraZeneca Vaccine rollout.</p> <p>This strategy entails all eligible persons are registered on the electronic platform</p>

		<p>using the DHIS2 application through a robust server domiciled at NPHCDA. The TEACH strategy was launched in early March through the Electronic Management of Immunization Data (EMID) system that seeks to capture all immunization data in the country.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The country identified four phases for the vaccination and all eligible candidates were prioritized in line with National COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment Plan. 2. To country has commenced phase of the vaccination and to date over 1.6 million people were vaccinated with first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine. 3. The second phase targeting other vulnerable groups is commencing in August 2021 when we received the second batch of the AstraZeneca vaccines sometimes in August. The first batch of the vaccines were received on the 3rd of March 2021 and the country launched the first phase to vaccinate the health workers, frontline responders, and other at-risk groups on the 5th of March 2021.
Building Back Better		
4	What steps is the federal government taking to address the economic impact of Covid-19 on the urban poor?	<p>The Economic Sustainability Plan (ESP) was designed to address the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the present disbursement of over N500billion it has shielded a proportion of the populace from negative economic impacts.</p> <p>Other complementary initiatives include (i) the Rapid Response ~Register for COVID – 19 paying 5,000 Naira to 1 million Urban Poor. (ii) COVID-19 survival fund targeted at small businesses; (iii) CACOVID Palliatives to 1.37million Nigerians; (iv) CBN grants,</p>

		NIRSAL Microfinance Bank Targeted Credit Facility (TCF) for COVID-19 (iv) National Youth Investment Funds and (v) Scaled-up Cash Transfers and Hombé Grown School Feeding Programme..
5	What steps is the federal government taking to strengthen Nigeria's social protection system, drawing on the lessons learned during the Covid-19 pandemic?	<p>The Federal Government through the Rapid Response Register is developing a shock responsive social protection framework that would target 20 million urban poor as a gateway for potential urban poor beneficiaries to be admitted into any targeted initiative aimed at providing relief, resilience and recovery, not only in the current pandemic but against any future shocks.</p> <p>Key initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horizontal and vertical expansion of the National Social Register as a reliable, accurate and transparent database on the poor and vulnerable households in Nigeria: (a) the horizontal expansion is aimed at fast-tracking geographic coverage; (b) the vertical expansion aims to target specific categories of vulnerable groups such as the urban poor, informal workers impacted by the pandemic, and other vulnerable groups such as PWDS, older people, etc. • Review of the National Social Protection Policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strengthen inter-governmental relations across all tiers of government (Federal, State and Local Government), and to facilitate specific targeting of special groups such as: PWDs, Older people and Children experiencing Child Poverty. ○ Strengthen coordination across Ministries, Departments, and Agencies; with donor partners, and in tandem with ERGP, SDG, and Nigeria Poverty Reduction

		<p>Strategy, emergency preparedness, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Realign coordination mechanisms and structure for Social Protection system in Nigeria in view of the clear delineation of the roles of the Ministries of Finance, Budget and National Planning (which focuses on Policy Mandate) and the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development (which has mandate to implement all non-contributory Social Assistance Programmes), while providing support to other MDAs to more appropriately target vulnerable populations across Nigeria. ● Multi-Dimensional Poverty study to generate and improve evidence for effective poverty reduction strategy development.
6	How much did the federal government spend on social protection programs in 2019 and 2020, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of gross domestic product or total government spending?	Through the payment of Cash Transfer to 1,032,324 the FGN spent 61 Billion Naira on CCT alone.
7	Does the federal government plan on increasing spending on social protection in 2021 and in future years? If so, to how much, both in absolute terms and as a percentage of gross domestic product?	<p>I Yes, the FGN plans to spend N1.1trn (N1,191,114,015,388) in the year 2021 and this represents about 1% of annual GDP at current levels.</p> <p>This includes the CCT that will pay 2 million Households equivalent to 120 Billion Naira, the Rapid Response Register for COVID 19 Cash Transfer for the urban Poor will pay 30 billion Naira more. The total for Cash Transfer will be 150 Billion Naira.</p>
Nigeria Economic Sustainability Plan in Response to Covid-19		
8	What parts of the 2.3 trillion Naira (US \$6 billion) June 2020 Nigeria Economic Sustainability Plan are intended to help urban poor communities mitigate the economic impact of the Covid-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jobs for Youths and Women Post Covid-19: Develop an enabling environment for the proactive engagement of the country's youth in priority sectors of the economy to

	<p>pandemic? Please describe programme and associated costs, if possible.</p>	<p>promote the creation of a productive and inclusive society. (₦50 Billion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food for All: Agriculture and Food Security: Create 5 million jobs in the agricultural sector while boosting agricultural production and guaranteeing food security. (₦634billion); • Jobs Through Homes: Mass Housing Strategy: Utilise the job creation potential of the housing sector to create a lot of jobs at professional and artisanal levels using local materials. (₦317 Billion); • Energy for All: Solar Power Strategy: Create 250,000 jobs in the energy sector while providing solar power to 5 million households by 2023. (₦240 Billion); • Supporting Small Businesses: Guaranteed Offtake Scheme for MSMEs; SME Survival Fund; SME Intervention Funds; MSME Regulatory Support.
9	<p>The June 2020 plan includes 87 billion Naira (\$226 million, less than four percent of the \$6 billion plan), for increased spending on social investment programs over 12 months. What is the money being used for? How much of the money dedicated for social investment programs comes from the Nigerian federal government's budget and how much from international donors?</p>	<p>The money will be used for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrol one caregiver (and one alternate) per household and start disbursement of Cash Transfers to about 2,644,495 households captured on the National Social Register of Poor and Vulnerable Households. • Expand social register, enrol and disburse cash transfers to an additional 1 million households. • Expand the school feeding programmes to all States of the Federation. <p>Based on the budget of the Humanitarian Ministries and agencies under it, about 53.3 billion is captured for social intervention programmes.</p>
10	<p>Why was such a small percentage of the plan devoted to social investment and social protection programs, when</p>	<p>In the bid to lift the poor out of poverty through social investment, government is also conscious of not allowing people</p>

	<p>compared, for example to 350 billion Naira (\$918 million, 15 percent of the total plan) given to national development banks to provide credit loans to private sector industries?</p>	<p>slide into poverty as a result of the pandemic. This is the reason why government has put in place plans to support already existing businesses such as MSMEs, Industries, Healthcare sector, Export sectors etc. who are also large employers of labour, to respond to the shocks of the pandemic. This support will prevent this business from laying off workers. Furthermore, Poverty is multidimensional and if you tackle only income and consumption support without providing for consistent job creation, people will fall back into poverty. Principle of teaching people how to fish and not just giving them fish.</p>
11	<p>Has the federal government established, and can it disclose, the state-level targets (including for Lagos State) for the number of people who benefit from key measures in the June 2020 Nigeria Economic Sustainability Plan, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash transfer (p. 63); • Interest free microcredit loans for daily paid and self-employed workers and artisans (p. 51 to 55); • Support to private transport companies and workers (p. 55); • Home construction measures (p 41 to 46) 	<p>The beneficiaries of the Federal Government interventions through the ESP will cut across the 36 states of the Federation and FCT. Some of the plan involves expansion of already existing interventions to involve states that have not been captured.</p> <p>Specific States level targets are determined by the States on the basis of their priority and is based on submitted verifiable potential beneficiaries</p>
12	<p>Is the federal government planning another stimulus package upon expiration of the 2020 Nigeria Economic Sustainability Plan? What measures will any future plan take to address the economic impact of Covid-19 on urban poor communities?</p>	<p>There are plans in place to put actions to Mr. President's goal of listing 100 million Nigerians out of poverty in short term (2021-2023) and long term (2021 – 2030) through the National Poverty Reduction with Growth Strategy (NPRGS) which has been approved by the Federal Executive Council (FEC).</p> <p>The NPRGS is anchored on four pillars namely:</p> <p>i. Macroeconomic Stabilization Policies to improve the capacity of the economy to absorb shocks and avoid disruptive adjustments;</p>

		<p>ii. Industrialization for Economic Growth and Transformation of the economy from commodity dependent growth path to a diversified, industrialized, knowledge intensive and job creating economy;</p> <p>iii. Structural Policies and Institutional Reforms to engender efficiency in service delivery, promote transparency and accountability in the management of fiscal resources, bridge the infrastructure gap, improve private sector development, and mainstream gender; and</p> <p>iv. Redistributive Policies and Programmes to reduce levels of risk, vulnerability, shocks and deprivation. It includes programmes aimed at enhancing incomes, job opportunities and wealth creation through vocational skills training, micro-credit and micro-enterprise development and livelihood diversification in the agricultural sector.</p> <p>Over the 10-year programme period (2021-2031) of the Policy, the total cost of the implementation of the policies and programmes underpinning the Strategy is estimated at USD1.6 Trillion, giving an annual average of about USD161 Billion. This estimated cost covers the dual objective of lifting 100 million Nigerians out of poverty as well as achieving all the country's development objectives in line with the Sustainable Development Goals 2030.</p> <p>Similarly, the Rapid Response Register of Urban Poor would provide the basis of shock responsive support for the urban poor now, and for future socio-economic shocks.</p> <p>Also, Government is discussing with development partners e.g. Nigeria Covid-19 Action Recovery and</p>
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		<p>Economic Stimulus (N-CARES), a World Bank loan of \$750 million on behalf of the states to stimulate the local economy and support vulnerable household's consumption, UN Plus Offer by the United Nations (UN) Nigeria in partnership with Nigeria Development Partners Group (NDPG) and the international donor community, contributing \$250m for socio-economic recovery support to the Government of Nigeria to address challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>
Cash Transfers Programs		
<i>National Social Safety Nets Project</i>		
13	<p>How many households, both nationally and in Lagos State specifically, have received cash transfers since March 2020 through the National Social Register of Poor and Vulnerable Households and Conditional Cash Transfer program? (Please describe, if possible, the number of households benefitting, when payments began, how much was paid to a household for each disbursement, and the frequency of payments.)</p>	<p>26.8 million individuals, 6.3 million Households, 7,320 Wards, 601 LGAs across 36 States and FCT have been captured in the National Social Register. The State Social Register of Lagos State comprises 403,856 households with 1,596,187 individuals as of 23rd March, 2021.</p> <p>A total of 1,032,324 Households in the National Beneficiary Register (NBR) across 29 States and FCT have received Cash Transfers since March 2020, with 6,810 Households (with an average of five persons per household) benefitting from Lagos State.</p> <p>Payment to CCT beneficiaries in Lagos commenced in May-June 2020 cycle. Beneficiaries receive ₦10,000 every Two (2) months.</p> <p>CCT beneficiaries in Lagos have received Payment for three cycles (6 months).</p>
14	<p>What explains the limited number of recipients of cash transfers in Lagos State? What is being done to address this?</p>	<p>At the commencement of the programme in September 2016, Memoranda of Understanding were signed between the FGN and all States. Some States committed to the programme instantly while others started late. This clearly</p>

		<p>placed some states ahead of others in the generation of State Social Register of the Poor and Vulnerable Households.</p> <p>Secondly, the Conditional Cash Transfer programme is designed to target the poorest of the poor with the aim of smoothening household consumption through regular and accessible base cash transfers in the first instance. It also has the second goal of addressing disparities in human capital development through additional top-up to households that meet laid down conditionalities.</p> <p>The programme has a target of two million beneficiaries; hence a quota system was established for States based on population and poverty index.</p> <p>Lagos State has the lowest poverty rate in the country (4.5%). Poverty rate is used to equitably distribute the cash transfer beneficiaries. The cash transfer is structured to be proportionate to size, based on poverty headcount, an equitable system has been instituted against the available funds such that no State would take more than its fair share for the size of its poor vis-à-vis other states. Lagos State has a quota of 13,843 poor and vulnerable households to be enrolled into the National Beneficiary Register (NBR).</p> <p>Nonetheless, the Federal Government has many other schemes which were specifically deployed to identified hot spots in Nigeria, with Lagos being prioritised as the epi-centre for COVID-19.</p> <p>The Rapid Response Register of Urban Poor is designed to capture and provide support to the urban poor, and Lagos and other hotspots have been prioritised.</p>
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15	<p>How did the government arrive at the sum of 5,000 Naira per month as the payment to households under the cash transfer program? Has your government considered increasing the amount paid per month under the cash transfer program to reflect the cost of living in high-cost areas, including urban areas in Lagos State?</p>	<p>The considerations for setting the transfer values for cash transfer programmes – at either individual or household level – was based on an existing understanding of poverty and vulnerability in the country, which also took into account gender inequalities and intersecting risks. The value of the transfer was calculated with the aim of protecting the household economy, complementing other income sources, reducing social risks and preventing already vulnerable people from slipping further into poverty.</p> <p>In setting the transfer value the following were considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minimum income standards, the national poverty line, or minimum wage, and the gap between household income and such values among different groups of the eligible population. The fundamental aim of the transfer is to attenuate this gap. The calculation was based on the National Living standard Survey. • The NASSP project duration of support. The project aimed to address chronic and persistent poverty. • Market prices - to maintain purchasing power and adjust to inflation. • Household size and composition (e.g. additional needs of people with disabilities, number of children, number of working-age adults etc.). • The capacity of the programmes' administrative systems to manage the complexities of accurate needs assessment and transfer value calculation. For example, varying transfer levels was based on individual or household characteristics and a set of conditionalities to be met by the poorest households in order to be
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		eligible. The capacity to deal with the extra complexity this entailed was critical – estimating co-responsibility issues and steps.
16	For how long will beneficiaries of cash transfers paid to households on the National Social Register of Poor and Vulnerable Households receive monthly payments? Does the federal government already have the funding secured and/or set-aside to make payments for this period? If so, from what sources?	<p>Except additional funding agreement is signed, the project will close by June 2022.</p> <p>The major source of funding is the World Bank Facility taken by the FGN and Abacha Repatriated Funds (ARF).</p>
<i>Covid-19 Rapid Response Registration Cash Transfer Project</i>		
17	How many households in Lagos State stand to benefit from payments under the Covid-19 Rapid Response Registration Cash Transfer Project? How did the government determine how payments would be distributed across states?	<p>229,360 Beneficiaries are earmarked for cash transfer under the Rapid Response Register in 9 wards of the following LGAs Ojo, Epe, Badagry, Ikorodu according to the poverty ranking using Machine Learning Algorithm processing tools with Satellite images and Big Data analysis (Validated with Nigerian Living Standards Survey (NLSS) 2018/2019 datasets)</p> <p>The payment distribution will be made using the NLSS 2018/2019 poverty index generated across the States by NBS. States across the Nation have different level of poverty indices, which is used to determine the estimates of poor and vulnerable people in various states.</p>
18	Will the rapid response cash transfers continue beyond the initial six-month period developed for the program? What support will beneficiaries have at the end of the initial six months?	The Register is an innovative framework that facilitates rapid aggregation of beneficiaries for interventions using a large pool of Telecommunication facilities. It is expected that the framework can be used even beyond the six months design and within the availability of the resources for interventions and targeting.
<i>General</i>		
19	Do you consider the distribution among Nigerian states of the cash transfers under	Yes, the distributions are considered fair given answers in question 14, 15 and 17

	the National Social Safety Nets project and the Covid-19 Rapid Response Registration Cash Transfer Project to be fair? How did the programs account for the impact of the pandemic in states, like Lagos, that have reported high numbers of Covid-19 cases and whose high levels of urban poverty left them vulnerable to the economic impacts of the pandemic?	
20	The World Bank said in November 2020 that forecasts predict that by 2022 almost 100 million of Nigeria's 206 million population will be below the poverty line, an additional 16 million people compared to 2020 levels. ¹ Why weren't the federal-backed cash transfer programs administered in response to Covid-19 expanded to reach a greater number of Nigerians living in poverty? What plans does the federal government now have to further expand cash transfers?	<p>The Federal Cash Transfer program is continuous and is adopting a systematic way of identifying the poor and vulnerable to avoid leakages and double-dipping. Thus, as more people are captured in the NSR and resources available assistance would be provided not only in response to the hardship the Covid-19 pandemic brought about but also to address the growing level of poverty.</p> <p>There are plans in place to address the rising poverty level in the country and this transcends cash transfers alone. The plans will cut across Income Support, Skill Acquisitions, MSMEs support, Agricultural development etc.</p>
<i>Food Assistance</i>		
21	How many people have received food assistance from the federal government, both nationally and in Lagos State, during the Covid-19 pandemic? (Please describe, if possible, the number of households benefitting and the amount of food provided to each household; if possible, please disaggregate data by gender and age, and urban and rural.)	<p>Following Mr President's directive to continue the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme even though schools were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic; The following process was adopted for the distribution;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> State- Federal Pre-Planning, Planning Meetings with NGOs, Partners and CSOs, Sensitization of Voucher Management Teams, General Public Sensitization, Household Identification, Voucher Distribution,

¹ "Project Appraisal Document, Nigeria - COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus Program Project," World Bank, November 13, 2020, accessed December 31, 2020, <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/142411608260520935/nigeria-covid-19-action-recovery-and-economic-stimulus-program-project>, p. 10.

		<p>vii. Pick- up of food rations.</p> <p>The Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development distributed Take Home Rations under the platform of the NHGSFP to households of pupils in public primary 1-3 already benefitting from the NHGSFP in Lagos, Ogun and FCT between May and July 2020.</p> <p>Lagos -37,589(21st May-3rd June 2020) Ogun - 60,391 (17th June- 6th July) FCT - 29,609 (14th May-21st May) Nationally a total of 127,589 households were targeted. The food items include 5kg rice, 5kg beans, 15 eggs, 140g tomato paste 500ml vegetable oil, 750ml palm oil and 500g salt.</p> <p>The Ministry received 70,000 metric tonnes of grains in April 2020 from the Ministry of Agriculture, for handover to State Governments for onward distribution. The Lagos Government was handed over 6,888 metric tonnes of garri, maize and sorghum for onward distribution to 612,130 household beneficiaries.</p>
22	Has the federal government conducted, or does it plan to conduct and publish, an audit of the food assistance provided in response to Covid-19, including to assess the extent to which the food disbursed reached vulnerable members of society and the extent to which it meaningfully addressed food insecurity during the pandemic?	<p>The Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development in collaboration with the UN World Food Programme carried out an assessment to determine the success of the Take Home Ration Intervention distribution. The monitoring team collected data by random sampling through face-to-face interview and phone calls. Some of the findings were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 95% of Households surveyed said the Take Home Rations was the only support they receive during the COVID-19 Pandemic. • Over 75% of Households were satisfied with the quality and selection of

		food commodities provided in the Take Home Ration.
23	What explains why food supplies from CACOVID, a private sector taskforce formed to support the federal government's response to Covid-19, were being stored in one or more warehouses in Lagos State in October 2020 and had not yet been distributed?	<p>According to CA-COVID, the large scale of this nationwide food programme and the timing of the orders, which coincided with the lockdowns and limited movement across the country, delayed the procurement and distribution exercise.</p> <p>The Lagos State Government had on 22nd September, 2020, formally taken receipt of the food palliatives from the CA-COVID team meant for distribution to indigent persons. The State then began re-bagging to account for each beneficiary receipt, as was required and monitored by the CA-COVID team. Distribution was ongoing but had to be halted due to protests, before the invasion of the warehouse</p>
<i>Transparency for Covid-19 Funding</i>		
24	Has the federal government disclosed the amount spent on the response to Covid-19 since March 2020, including the funding received from federal and private sector sources? How much of that money was spent on food assistance, cash transfers and other programs designed to help vulnerable households survive the economic impact of the pandemic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office of the Accountant General of the Federation publishes a monthly account of monies received and spent via www.opentreasury.gov.ng. • Private sector funds are managed by CA-COVID. • Newspaper publications of list of donors (both public and private). • Letters of Appreciation were written to Major Donors. • Issuance of Treasury Receipt to all the Donors. • Comprehensive Record keeping and Management Reports. • Visibility of record to Auditor-General for the Federation.

Annex II: Letter from Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development to Human Rights Watch and JEI, June 21, 2021

Office of the Permanent Secretary,
**FEDERAL MINISTRY OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS,
DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Email: humanitarianaffairs@fmhds.gov.ng

Telephone:



ADM/HA/COR/EBNP/1159/XOL.1.....

4th June, 2021


20.....

The Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Finance, Budget and
National Planning,
C31010, Adekunle Fajuyi Street,
Central Business District,
Abuja.

**RE: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON URBAN POOR
COMMUNITIES.**

Please refer to your letter Ref No. **MBNP/AB/SEC/1297/I** dated 11th May, 2021 on the above subject and forward herewith submission from the Ministry as requested.

2. Please accept the assurances of the Honourable Minister.


Bashir Nura Alkali, FCA, FCTI
Permanent Secretary
for: Honourable Minister

(C) *Adm (SI)*
plse let the
Desk officer or
yourself find
out the origin of
this request or
test if you can
transmit it already
2. meet as per
22/6/21

(A)
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MINISTRY'S INFORMATION/RESPONSE ON URBAN POOR COMMUNITIES.

1. **What are the programs your Ministry is implementing to address the economic impact of Covid-19 on urban poor communities?**

Answer: Covid-19 Rapid Response Register for Cash Transfer to 1 million Beneficiaries, Social Intervention by distributing food and non-food items to various States of the federation, Cash grant to rural women across 36 States and FCT.

2. **How much has been disbursed to your ministry on social protection programs in 2019 and 2020; if any?**

Answer: A total of N299,369,878,577.71 was disbursed in the Year 2019 and N325,010,764,595.10 in the Year 2020.

3. **Provide the list of communities and number of people who benefited from key measures in the June 2020 NESP projects implemented under your Ministry;**

Answer: Data showed that over one Million households benefited from the National Social Investment Programmes within the period. See **Annex II** for Beneficiary Distribution.

4. **How many people benefited from the cash transfer in 2019/2020 to alleviate the Covid-19 impact;**

Answer: A total of 3,359,029 people benefited from the cash transfer within the period.

5. **What are the criteria for selecting beneficiaries to get the payment;**

Answer: The beneficiaries were mined from the National Social Register that was developed by National Social Safety Net Coordinating Office (NASSCO) using a combination of three methods: Geographical Base Targeting, Community Base Targeting, Proxy Means Testing (PMT)

6. What is the number of households per States that received Cash Transfer since March 2020 through the National Social Register of poor and vulnerable households;

Answer: The number of households per state that have received the Cash Transfer are given in the Table below.

S/N	State	Mar-Apr	May-Jun	Jul-Aug	Sep-Oct	Nov-Dec
1	ABIA	9,324	9,324	9,322	-	-
2	ADAMAWA	16,876	16,709	16,904	16,876	16,876
3	AKWA IBOM	24,896	24,896	24,898	-	-
4	ANAMBRA	7,952	7,974	-	-	-
5	BAUCHI	23,272	23,253	54,515	54,630	54,630
6	BAYELSA	9,552	9,552	9,466	-	-
7	BENUE	58,675	58,823	-	-	-
8	CROSS RIVER	11,824	11,829	11,865	11,891	11,891
9	DELTA	-	-	8,059	8,143	8,143
10	EKITI	4,663	4,624	-	-	-
11	FCT	20,021	20,112	20,092	20,075	20,075
12	GOMBE	26,251	26,209	26,158	26,486	26,486
13	IMO	7,048	7,073	11,539	-	-
14	JIGAWA	98,613	132,426	133,469	133,576	133,576
15	KADUNA	22,331	34,777	-	-	-
16	KANO	84,045	84,101	-	-	-
17	KATSINA	132,569	141,651	-	-	-
18	KOGI	34,047	34,013	34,131	34,281	34,281
19	KWARA	24,819	24,860	24,899	24,944	24,944
20	LAGOS	-	6,681	6,775	6,787	6,787
21	NASARAWA	48,224	48,182	-	-	-
22	NIGER	19,583	19,582	19,459	19,462	19,462
23	OSUN	15,327	15,298	-	-	-
24	OYO	13,532	13,653	-	-	-
25	PLATEAU	24,300	25,727	25,849	25,866	25,866
26	RIVERS	9,110	9,313	9,311	-	-
27	SOKOTO	3,158	3,162	3,159	3,157	3,157
28	TARABA	17,636	17,630	17,648	17,700	17,700
29	YOBE	24,809	24,810	24,802	24,814	24,814
30	ZAMFARA	128,988	128,989	130,609	-	-

7. What is the amount paid to a household for each disbursement;

Answer: The amount paid to a household for each disbursement is N10,000

8. What is the frequency of payment;

Answer: The frequency of payment is every two months.

9. What plan does your Ministry have to further expand Cash Transfer;

Answer: The Ministry is targeting to enrol extra **1 Million** urban poor households into the Rapid Response Register, RRR, (using the Economic Sustainability Plan, ESP) so that they can benefit from the Cash Transfers. Furthermore, the National Social Safety Nets Programme (NASSNP) is discussing with the World Bank to expand the RRR to accommodate additional **2 Million** urban poor i.e. that will make the total **3 million** urban poor households.

10. How many people received food assistance from your Ministry through the food assistance program;

Answer: Eight Million Eight Hundred and Twenty-seven Thousand One Hundred and Twenty-nine (8,827,129) People received food assistance during the period under review. See **Annex I** for ease of reference.

11. How many households benefited from your Ministry through the food assistance program;

Answer: The food relief were given to State Governments based on the directive of Mr. President and so the FMHADMSD does not have specific numbers. This could however be obtained from the States.

12. What value of food provided to each households (Disaggregate data by gender, age, urban and rural);

Answer: The food relief were given to State Governments based on the directive of Mr. President and so the FMHADMSD does not have specific numbers but could be obtained from the States.

13. Did the food assistance meaningfully address food insecurity during the pandemic;

Answer: The food reliefs were given to State Governments based on the directive of Mr. President and so the FMHADMSD believes this would have addressed to a certain extent, the issue of food insecurity during the pandemic. Additional information could be obtained from States.

ANNEX 38 38

DISTRIBUTION OF RELIEF ITEMS RECEIVED

S/N	SOURCE	DESCRIPTION OF ITEMS	QUANTITY	DISTRIBUTION (Beneficiaries of items)
1	Nigeria Customs Service (NCS)	Rice	172 trucks, 360 bags (15.3 trucks are still in ONNE, not collected yet)	i. 128 trucks were distributed to 35 states and FCT (except River State), ii. 1 truck to Fed. Min. of Women Affairs, iii. 6.8 trucks were re-bagged and shared during intervention exercises in FCT, iv. 20.9 trucks to vulnerable groups in various states, v. 360 bags looted during the #EndSars protests.
2	NCS	Tomato Paste	27 trucks and 1,150 cartons	i. 18 trucks distributed to 18 states excluding FCT, ii. 9 trucks were expired, iii. 489 cartons were distributed to NGOs and iv. 661 cartons were looted during the #EndSars protests.
3	NCS	Vegetable Oil	34 trucks, 196 kegs	i. 33 trucks were distributed to 32 states and FCT, ii. 1 truck & 196 kegs were shared to vulnerable persons during intervention in 4 POC events
4	NCS	Wrapper	828 bales (82,800 pcs)	i. 193 bales (10,272 pcs) were distributed to Vulnerable groups, ii. 725 bales (72,528 pcs) looted during the #EndSars protests.
5	NCS	Sugar	1,130 bags	i. 50 bags to Ministry of Women's Affairs, ii. 730 bags were re-bagged and distributed to vulnerable groups, iii. 350 were looted by #EndSars protesters.

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S/N	SOURCE	DESCRIPTION OF ITEMS	QUANTITY	DISTRIBUTION (Beneficiaries of items)
6	NCS	Spaghetti/ Macaroni	2,611 Cartons	i. 200 cartons of Macaroni were given to Ministry of Women Affairs, ii. 1,186 cartons were distributed to Persons with Disability, Orphanage Homes and Older Persons iii. 1,225 were looted by #EndSars hoodlums
7	NCS	Lining Fabrics	2,300 Rolls	i. 50 rolls were distributed to Older Persons and ii. The rest were looted by #EndSars hoodlums
8	NCS	Soap	6,308 cartons (3,217 yet to be collected in ONNE)	1,743 cartons were distributed: i. Orphanage homes, ii. Elderly Persons, iii. Persons with Disability, iv. IDPs and NGO network, v. 4,565 were looted by #EndSars hoodlums
9	NCS	Palm Oil	3,419 kegs	
10	NCS	Beans	319 bags	249 bags distributed to: i. IDPs in FCT ii. Borno state iii. Orphanage homes iv. 70 bags were looted by #EndSars hoodlums
11	NCS	Basmati Rice	639 cartons of 5kg	Distributed to vulnerable groups and looted by #EndSars hoodlums
12	NCS	Basmati Rice (40kg)	27 cartons	27 cartons were distributed to: i. IDPs in (Maiduguri and Kano), ii. Xpakpando foundation, iii. Older Peoples' Home

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S/N	SOURCE	DESCRIPTION OF ITEMS	QUANTITY	DISTRIBUTION (Beneficiaries of items)
13	NCS	Maize and Guinea corn	149 bags	Distributed to vulnerable groups in Adamawa
14	NCS	Sweet Chocolate Candy(expired)	2,147 bags	Looted #EndSars hoodlums.
15	NCS	Biscuits(expired)	21 cartons	Looted #EndSars hoodlums.
16	NCS	Food seasoning	35 cartons	Looted #EndSars hoodlums.
17	NCS	Butter(expired)	151 buckets	Looted #EndSars hoodlums.
18	NCS	Used Shoes	1,682 sacks	i. 2 sacks were given to Ministry of Women Affairs, ii. 47 were given distributed to Vulnerable groups, IDPs Camps in Waza FCT, IDPs Camps in Borno and Adamawa, iii. The remaining sacks were looted by #EndSars hoodlums.
19	NCS	New Shoes	10 sacks	All sacks were looted by #EndSars hoodlums.
20	NCS	Stock fish head	30 bags	Distributed to the vulnerable groups in FCT (PWD, Older Peoples home)
21	NCS	Flour (50kg)	16 bags	Looted #EndSars hoodlums.
22	NCS	Couscous	60 cartons	Looted #EndSars hoodlums.
23	NCS	Milk Cartons	410 cartons	50 cartons were given to Ministry of Women Affairs and the rest were re-bagged and used for intervention for vulnerable groups.
24	Friesland Nig. Ltd	Milk	7,917 cartons	i. 4,255 cartons were distributed to Persons with Disability, Orphanage Homes and Old Peoples Home in FCT, ii. The remaining was looted by #EndSars hoodlums.
25	Petroleum Equalization Fund (PEF)	Relief Packs	2,300 Packs	i. 1,967 cartons were distributed to Orphanage Homes, NGOs, Elderly Home Kado, Persons with Disability/Leprosy

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OT

S/N	SOURCE	DESCRIPTION OF ITEMS	QUANTITY	DISTRIBUTION (Beneficiaries of items)
				Colony in Yangoje FCT/Kweli and IDPs in Maiduguri, Borno State, ii. 333 cartons were looted by #EndSars hoodlums.
26	ECOWAS	Grains	150 Metric Tons	Distributed to 22 States Governments
27	United Arab Emirate	Sugar	97 bags	Looted by #EndSars hoodlums
28	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Dates	2,000 cartons	i. 1,600 cartons each distributed between NEMA, NAPITP, NEDC and NCFRMI, ii. 400 cartons were looted by #EndSars hoodlums.
29	Guinness Nig. PLC	Malt Drink (12 bottles in a case)	10,164 cases	Looted #EndSars protesters
30	Guinness Nig. PLC	Hand sanitizer	5,000 units	Distributed during intervention and sensitization exercises
31	NYSC	Facemask	200 pcs	Distributed during intervention and sensitization exercises
32	The Fashion Academy	Facemask	97 pcs	Distributed during intervention and sensitization exercises
33	FMHADMSD Storage at NAF, Base, Abuja	Rice	1,200 Bags 600 Bags 10 bags 30 Bags 50 Bags 100 Bags 200 Bags 100 Bags 100 Bags 305 Bags 50 Bags	Bauchi State Zamfara State FCT Displaced Fanali Community Kano Orphanage FCT Orphanage IDP Camp in Calabar IDP Camp IDP Camp in Abuja Federal Ministry of Women Affairs Staff Welfare Orphanage and Old People's Homes
34			600 Bags of Rice	Marte, Borno State

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S/N	SOURCE	DESCRIPTION OF ITEMS	QUANTITY	DISTRIBUTION (Beneficiaries of items)
	NCS Warehouse, FOU, Ikeja	Rice, Vegetable Oil, Used Cloth and Tomato Paste	720 Kegs of Oil 325 Bales of Used Cloth 1000 Cartons of Tomato	
35	NAF, Base, Abuja	Vegetable Oil	300 Kegs	Bauchi State
36	NAF, Base, Abuja	Tomato Paste	200 Cartons	Bauchi State
			360 Bags	Borno State
			320 Bags	Yobe State
37	NAF, Base, Abuja	Maize	260 Bags	Katsina State
			260 Bags	Zamfara State
			10 Bags	FCT Displaced Fulani Community
			320 Bags	Borno State
38	NAF, Base, Abuja	Sorghum	320 Bags	Yobe State
			280 Bags	Katsina State
			280 Bags	Zamfara State
			300 Bales	Borno State
			300 Bales	Yobe State
			200 Bales	Katsina State
39	NAF, Base, Abuja	Used Cloth	200 Bales	Zamfara State
			1 Bale	FCT Displaced Fulani Community
			5 Bales	Kano Orphanage
			40 Bales	Federal Ministry of Women Affairs
			50 Bales	Orphanage and Old People's Homes
40	NAF, Base, Abuja	Wrappers, Fabrics and Textiles	5 Bales	IDP Camp in Calabar
			1	FCT Orphanage
			2 Bales	Federal Ministry of Women Affairs
			900 Cartons	Borno State
41	NAF, Base, Abuja	Power Milk	800 Cartons	Yobe State
			600 Cartons	Katsina State
			300 Cartons	Zamfara State

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UPDATE ON THE EMERGENCY FOOD SUPPLY FROM THE NATIONAL STRATEGIC RESERVE TO VULNERABLE NIGERIANS IN STATES UNDER LOCKDOWN AS A RESULT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

First phase

S/N	State	Total Household of 6 persons	Commodities	Quantity Delivered		
				MT	Trucks	Bags (50kg)
1	Lagos	612,130	Maize	3,759	125.3	75,180
			Sorghum	1,050	35	21,000
			Garri	1,879	62.6	37,560
2	Ogun	360,109	Maize	2,211	73.7	44,220
			Sorghum	1,106	36.87	22,122
			Garri	1,106	36.87	22,122
3	FCT	144,478	Maize	887	29.57	17,742
			Sorghum	444	14.8	8,880
			Millet	444	14.8	8,880

Second phase:

S/N	State	Total Household of 6 persons	Commodities	Quantity Delivered		
				MT	Trucks	Bags (50kg)
1	Kano	1,103,084	Maize	2,910	97	58,200
			Sorghum	1,710	57	34,200
			Millet	1,380	46	27,600
2	Zamfara	404,285	Maize	1,464.3	48.81	29,286
			Sorghum	1,390.2	46.34	27,804
			Millet	222.3	7.41	4,446
3	Katsina	545,542	Maize	1,878.8	65.96	39,576
			Sorghum	1,876.2	62.54	37,524
			Millet	300	10	6,000
4	Borno	625,666	Maize	2,265.9	75.53	45,318
			Sorghum	2,151.6	71.72	43,032
			Millet	344	11.46	6,876

Stores at
Airforce in
Bill Clinton Road
Airforce also to
input this losses
Airforce Base at
Airport Road

Third Phase

State	Total Household	Commodities	Approved Quantities	Quantity Delivered			Present Status	Status
				MT	Trucks	Bags (50kg)		
Ekiti	112,111	Maize	560.95	560.95	18.70	11,220	Complete	Delivered, yet to be handed over
		Garri	271.57	271.57	9	5,400	Complete	
Ondo	72,217	Maize	351.34	351.34	12.04	7,224	Complete	Delivered, yet to be handed over
		Garri	174.93	174.93	5.83	3,498	Complete	
Oyo	91,434	Maize	457.49	457.49	16	9,600	Complete	Delivered, yet to be handed over
		Garri	221.48	221.48	8	4,800	Complete	
Enugu	316,599	Maize	1,584.09	1,584.09	58	34,800	Complete	Delivered and handed over
		Garri	766.9	766.9	25.56	15,336	Complete	
Cross River	174,978	Maize	875.50	875.50	29.18	17,508	Complete	Delivered, yet to be handed over
		Garri	432.84	432.84	14.13	8,478	Complete	
Edo	64,513	Maize	323.30	323.30	10.77	6,462	Complete	Delivered and handed over
		Garri	156.51	156.51	6	3,600	Complete	
Bauchi	477,172	Maize	1,632.03	1,632.03	54.40	32,640	Complete	Delivered and handed over
		Sorghum	1,705.67	1,705.67	56.85	34,116	Complete	
		Millet	205.66	205.66	6.86	4,116	Complete	
Adamawa	399,541	Maize	1,366.52	1,140	38	22,800	Complete	Delivered and handed over (7 trucks not available in Sios)
		Sorghum	1,428.17	1,428.17	48	28,800	Complete	
		Millet	172.19	172.19	5.74	3,444	Complete	
Sokoto	541,393	Maize	1,851.69	1,851.69	61.72	37,032	Complete	Delivered and handed over
		Sorghum	1,935.22	1,935.22	64.51	38,705	Complete	
		Millet	233.34	233.34	7.78	4,668	Complete	
Kebbi	272,301	Maize	931.33	931.33	31	18,600	Complete	Delivered and handed over
		Sorghum	973.35	973.35	32.45	19,473	Complete	
		Millet	117.36	117.36	3.91	2,346	Complete	
Yobe	279,876	Maize	957.24	957.24	31.9	19,140	Complete	Delivered and handed over
		Sorghum	1,000.42	1,000.42	33.35	20,010	Complete	
		Millet	120.62	120.62	4.02	2,412	Complete	
Gombe	245,609	Maize	840.04	840.04	28	16,800	Complete	Delivered and handed over
		Sorghum	877.94	877.94	29.26	17,556	Complete	
		Millet	105.86	105.86	3.53	2,118	Complete	

Jigawa	632,491	Maize	163.26	2,103.26	84	1,700	Complete	Delivered and handed over
		Sorghum	350.00	1,560.00	52	21,200	Complete	
		Millet	272.50	272.60	9.09	3,451	Complete	
Kaduna	443,025	Maize	1,515.25	1,515.25	50.51	30,306	Complete	Delivered and handed over
		Sorghum	1,583.61	1,583.61	53	21,800	Complete	
		Millet	190.94	190.94	6.36	3,816	Complete	
Plateau	294,139	Maize	1,006.23	1,006.23	33.54	20,124	Complete	Delivered and handed over
		Sorghum	1,051.63	1,051.63	30	18,000	Complete	
		Millet	126.80	126.80	4.23	2,538	Complete	
Niger	435,750	Maize	1,490.36	1,490.36	49.68	29,808	Complete	Delivered and handed over
		Sorghum	1,557.60	1,557.60	51.92	31,152	Complete	
		Millet	187.80	187.80	6.26	3,756	Complete	
Nasarawa	178,526	Maize	610.60	610.50	20.35	12,210	Complete	Delivered, yet to be handed over handed over on Saturday, 24 th October
		Sorghum	638.15	638.16	21.27	12,762	Complete	
		Millet	76.94	76.94	2.56	1,536	Complete	

Dr. Onimode A. Bandele CEM®
Ag. Director, Relief & Rehabilitation
19th October, 2020

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3 (ii) FUNDS DISBURSED TO NSIP AS SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAM				
	YEAR		AMOUNT	
1	2020		325,010,764,595.10	
	(SEE APPENDIX I)			
2	2019		299,369,878,577.71	
	(SEE APPENDIX II)			

APPENDIX I

2020 BUDGET ANALYSIS

S/N	CLUSTER
1	JCU
2	GEPP
3	NHGSFP
4	CCT
5	M & E
6	MIS
7	JCU
8	HGSFP
9	COMMUNICATIONS
10	NSIO
11	MIS
12	COMMUNICATIONS
13	INSPECTORATE (COMMUNICATION)
14	NSIO
15	WELFARE PACKAGE (CCT)
16	M & E (MONITORING ACTIVITIES)
17	TRAINING/LOCAL TRAVELS
	TOTAL

RELEASE AS AT 31 DEC 2020
152,451,259,170.00
24,050,732,393.00
96,730,344,244.85
346,602,000.00
1,687,075,995.33
335,000,000.00
18,224,830,080.00
3,000,096,500.00
2,000,000,000.00
355,663,032.00
610,399,936.58
1,000,655,634.85
298,594,249.89
1,232,262,218.03
832,413,401.64
637,631,112.60
21,217,204,626.33
325,010,764,595.10

APPENDIX II 48

YEAR 2019 RELEASES			
S/No	CLUSTER	AMOUNT	REMARKS
1	GEEP	15,000,000,000.00	
2	CCT	800,829,638.36	
3	NHGSFP	95,852,051,832.98	
4	JCU (N-POWER)	186,368,114,128.69	
5	NSIO OFFICE	1,348,882,977.73	
		299,369,878,577.76	

RE: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON URBAN POOR COMMUNITIES

III. Provide the list of communities and number of people who benefitted from key measures in June 2020 NESP projects implemented under your ministry.

Please find the list of communities and number of households who benefitted in the Flash Drive.

iv. How many people benefitted from the cash transfer in 2019/2020 to alleviate the Covid-19 Impact;

Beneficiaries have been receiving payment since 2018 from Cash Transfer Program. During the heat of the Covid, Mr. President directed that all outstanding payment of Four (4) months (January-April 2020) be paid to beneficiaries. However below is the number of beneficiaries of Cash Transfer in 2019/2020

Table 1: Number of beneficiaries that benefitted from the cash transfer in 2019

S/N	Period	No of Households that benefitted from cash transfer in 2019
1	Jan2019-Feb2019	290,708
2	Mar2019-Apr2019	297,037
3	May2019-Jun2019	347,702
4	Jul-19	356,158
5	Aug-19	408,682
6	Sep2019-Oct2019	587,426
7	Nov2019-Dec2019	835,634

Table 2: Below is the number of beneficiaries that benefitted from the cash transfer in 2020

S/N	Period	No of Households that benefitted from cash transfer in 2020
1	Jan2020-Feb2020	848,045
2	Mar2020-Apr2020	921,445
3	May2020-Jun2020	985,233
4	Jul2020-Aug2020	622,929
5	Sep2020-Oct2020	428,688
6	Nov2020-Dec2020	400,734

v. What are the criteria for selecting beneficiaries to get the payment;

The National Social Register is developed by NASSCO using a combination of three methods:

1. Geographical Base Targeting

The process starts with the poorest LGAs in terms of income, resources, amenities, infrastructure and more. The poverty map for each state provides a basis for the classification, ranking, and selection of participating Local Government Areas.

The process

The entire process starts with signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with participating states and agreeing on LGAs based on rollout plan of 30%, 50% and 20% scale (of total LGAs).

2. Community Base Targeting

During the community-based targeting, community members identify, select, and validate specific members of community concerned to be registered in the NSR.

The process

a. Pre-sensitization visits by Community Base Targeting Team (CBTT) to community leaders to brief them on the government's project to document poor and vulnerable households. This is followed by community sensitization, mobilization and engagement.

b. during the engagement, the community breaks into a homogeneous group of men, women, youths (and where applicable, minority groups such as people living with disability) for focus group discussions. Each group comes up with a list of households they consider extremely poor and vulnerable using criteria based on their local context. After the identification of the households, the community reaches a consensus on a harmonized list of households which is signed-off by the community.

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- c. Each household on the community's harmonized and signed-off list is visited by a team of enumerators for data capture.
- d. The data collated includes fields such as the household size, age of household members, gender, persons living with disability (if they exist), assets vocation of head of household, educational status, household dwelling conditions etc.
- e. The data so captured during the enumeration is uploaded into the State Social Register (SSR) -from which a replica/copy is then sent to NASSCO, where it is validated and approved for acceptance into the National Social Register (NSR)

3. Proxy Means Testing (PMT)

This is a written algorithm that scientifically ranks households from the first to the tenth decile based on different economic, educational, asset and social parameters to list households from the poor to the poorest for targeted intervention.

Beneficiaries of the HUP-CCT are mined from the NSR. The eligibility criteria for HUP-CCT is the absolute poverty line (those living below two dollars a day) which corresponds to the first to sixth deciles of the NSR. The Poor and Vulnerable Households found below the absolute poverty line are considered eligible and enrolled into the HUP-CCT.

vi. What is the number of households per state that received Cash Transfer since March 2020 through the National Social Register of poor and vulnerable households;

S/N	State	Mar-Apr	May-Jun	Jul-Aug	Sep-Oct	Nov-Dec
1	ABIA	9,324	9,324	9,322	-	-
2	ADAMAWA	16,876	16,709	16,904	16,876	16,876
3	AKWA IBOM	24,896	24,896	24,898	-	-
4	ANAMBRA	7,952	7,974	-	-	-
5	BAUCHI	23,272	23,253	54,515	54,630	54,630

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6	BAYELSA	9,552	9,552	9,466	-	-
7	BENUE	58,675	58,823	-	-	-
8	CROSS RIVER	11,824	11,829	11,865	11,891	11,891
9	DELTA	-	-	8,059	8,143	8,143
10	EKITI	4,663	4,624	-	-	-
11	FCT	20,021	20,112	20,092	20,075	20,075
12	GOMBE	26,251	26,209	26,158	26,486	26,486
13	IMO	7,048	7,073	11,539	-	-
14	JIGAWA	98,613	132,426	133,469	133,576	133,576
15	KADUNA	22,331	34,777	-	-	-
16	KANO	84,045	84,101	-	-	-
17	KATSINA	132,569	141,651	-	-	-
18	KOGI	34,047	34,013	34,131	34,281	34,281
19	KWARA	24,819	24,860	24,899	24,944	24,944
20	LAGOS	-	6,681	6,775	6,787	6,787
21	NASARAWA	48,224	48,182	-	-	-
22	NIGER	19,583	19,582	19,459	19,462	19,462
23	OSUN	15,327	15,298	-	-	-
24	OYO	13,532	13,653	-	-	-
25	PLATEAU	24,300	25,727	25,849	25,866	25,866
26	RIVERS	9,110	9,313	9,311	-	-
27	SOKOTO	3,158	3,162	3,159	3,157	3,157
28	TARABA	17,636	17,630	17,648	17,700	17,700
29	YOBE	24,809	24,810	24,802	24,814	24,814
30	ZAMFARA	128,988	128,989	130,609	-	-

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vii. What is the amount paid to a household for each disbursement;

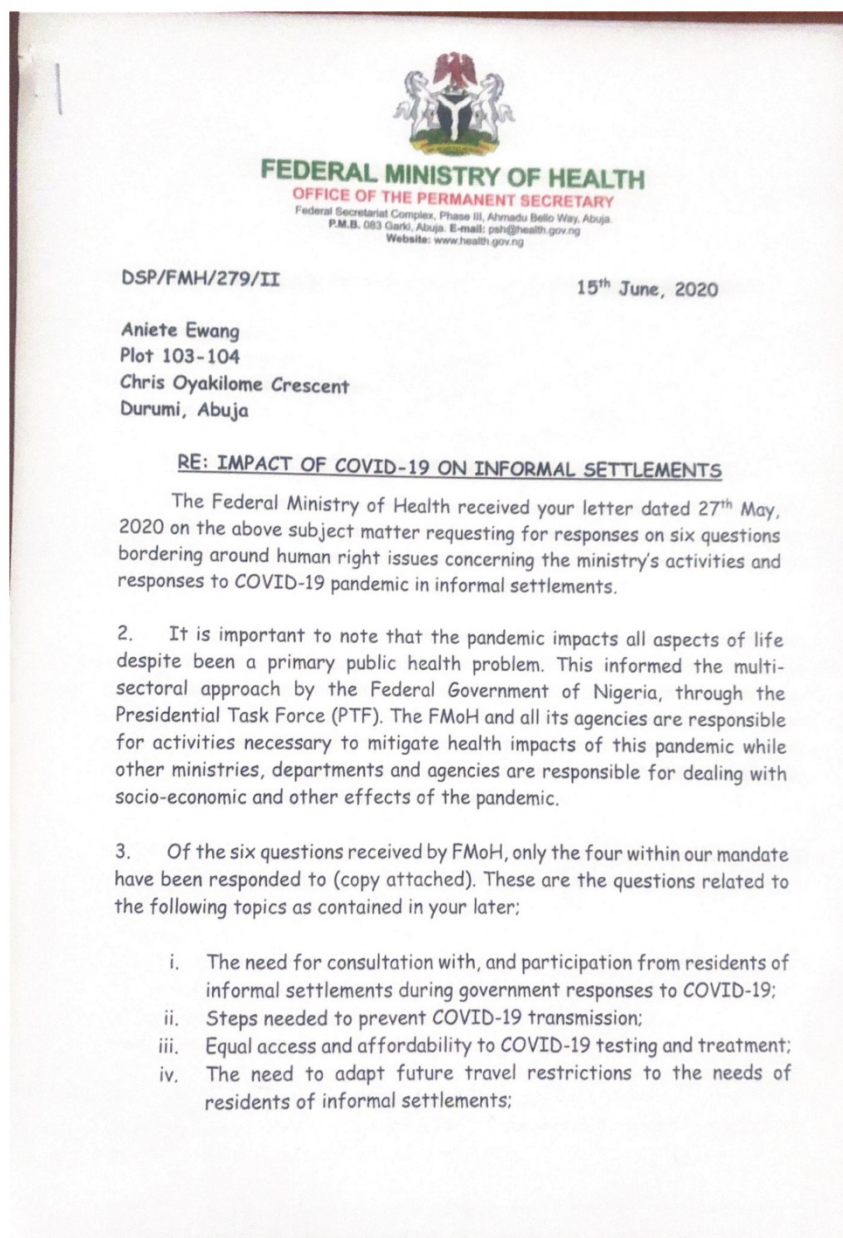
The amount paid to a household for each disbursement is N10,000

viii. What is the frequency of payment;

The frequency of Payment is every two months

S/N	State	Mar-Apr 2020	May-Jun 2020	Jul-Aug 2020	Sep-Oct 2020	Nov-Dec 2020	Total
1	ABIA	9,324	9,324	9,322	-	-	27,970
2	ADAMAWA	16,876	16,709	16,904	16,876	16,876	84,241
3	AKWA IBOM	24,896	24,896	24,898	-	-	74,690
4	ANAMBRA	7,952	7,974	-	-	-	15,926
5	BAUCHI	23,272	23,253	54,515	54,630	54,630	210,300
6	BAYELSA	9,552	9,552	9,466	-	-	28,570
7	BENUE	58,675	58,823	-	-	-	117,498
8	CROSS RIVER	11,824	11,829	11,865	11,891	11,891	59,300
9	DELTA	-	-	8,059	8,143	8,132	24,334
10	EKITI	4,663	4,624	-	-	-	9,287
11	FCT	20,021	20,112	20,092	20,075	20,077	100,377
12	GOMBE	26,251	26,209	26,158	26,486	26,486	131,590
13	IMO	7,048	7,073	11,539	-	-	25,660
14	JIGAWA	98,613	132,426	133,469	133,576	133,605	631,689
15	KADUNA	22,331	34,777	-	-	-	57,108
16	KANO	84,045	84,101	-	-	-	168,146
17	KATSINA	132,559	141,651	-	-	-	274,220
18	KOGI	34,047	34,013	34,131	34,281	34,281	170,753
19	KWARA	24,819	24,860	24,899	24,944	24,944	124,466
20	LAGOS	-	6,681	6,775	6,787	6,784	27,027
21	NASARAWA	48,224	48,182	-	-	-	96,406
22	NIGER	19,583	19,582	19,459	19,462	19,462	97,548
23	OSUN	15,327	15,298	-	-	-	30,625
24	OYO	13,532	13,653	-	-	-	27,185
25	PLATEAU	24,300	25,727	25,849	25,866	25,866	127,608
26	RIVERS	9,110	9,313	9,311	-	-	27,734
27	SOKOTO	3,158	3,162	3,159	3,157	-	12,636
28	TARABA	17,636	17,630	17,648	17,700	17,700	88,314
29	YOBE	24,809	24,810	24,802	24,814	-	99,235
30	ZAMFARA	128,988	128,989	130,609	-	-	388,586
	Totals	921,445	985,233	622,929	428,688.00	400,734.00	3,359,029

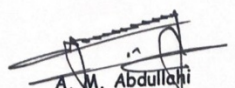
Annex III: Letter from Federal Ministry of Health, June 15, 2020



4. The FMOH did not respond to the other two questions as they are not within our mandate; these are:

- i. Economic assistance to residents of informal settlements;
- ii. An end to forced evictions.

5. Please accept the assurances and warm regards of the Honourable Minister.


A. M. Abdullahi
Permanent Secretary
For: Honourable Minister

KEY TOPICS AND QUESTIONS ON THE RESPONSE TO THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

Response to COVID-19 pandemic is a whole country intervention due to the magnitude and multisectoral nature of its impact. Therefore, the Federal Ministry of Health is mobilizing all its departments, agencies, programmes and partners to leverage on complementarities and galvanise a whole sector response that is well coordinated. In Nigeria, we are in community transmission phase and all efforts and interventions put in place to break transmission are non-discriminatory irrespective of the place of residence within the country. The following are summarized responses to some of the questions raised and they are by no means exhaustive of our enormous interventions.

TOPIC 1. CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION

Please could you describe what steps your institution is taking to consult with community leaders and residents of informal settlements in developing responses to COVID-19 crisis?

Consultation and Participation of Community Leaders

Some of the current steps are drawn from our previous interventions such as lessons learnt from polio eradication initiative in Nigeria which shows that engaging communities through their leaders and gatekeepers play a critical role in ensuring high rate of compliance with interventions and enhance community ownership of the process of communication interventions. Community leaders help to reduce resistance, deal with rumours, and mobilization of resources to support activities. They also monitor activities and enhance community trust. Also, community volunteers play a pivotal role in disseminating accurate and credible information in the communities. Engaging community leaders and volunteers during the COVID-19 outbreak control will build

trust and ensure compliance with prevention measures, thereby reducing harm and spread of the virus.

Goal of the engagement

The overarching of traditional and religious leaders and community volunteers during the COVID-19 outbreak control is to reduce community transmission of COVID-19 through a people-centred approach to awareness creation and behavioural change.

Objectives of the engagement

- To ensure appropriate, accurate and credible information with regards to the infection, prevention and control of COVID-19 is available to community members
- To increase community participation in awareness creation on the risk of COVID-19
- To improve compliance with COVID-19 prevention measures at the community level
- To mobilize community resources to support awareness creation, infection, prevention and control of the new coronavirus

Target

- Traditional leaders & Religious Leaders: These include Northern Traditional Leaders Committee on Primary health care delivery (NTLC), Da'awah Coordination Council of Nigeria (DCCN), Federation of Muslim Women Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN), Nigeria Interfaith Action Association (NIFAA), Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), Catholic Women Organization (CWO) and other prominent traditional and religious leaders in the State. • Ward Development Committees (WDCs) and similar structures where they don't exist.

- Community Volunteers such as Community Health Influencers Promoters and Services (CHIPS), Volunteer Community Mobilizers (VCMS), Community Oriented Resource Persons (CORPS), and Proprietary and Patent Medicine Vendors (PPMVs).

TOPIC 2. PREVENTING COVID-19 TRANSMISSION

What steps are you taking to provide residents of informal settlements with information about corona virus transmission and prevention and also the basic services (e.g water and sanitation facilities) urgently needed to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in informal settlements

Steps to Provide information about COVID-19 transmission and prevention in Informal Settlements

The FMOH and its agencies ensures that the right information gets to the communities whether formal or informal settlements. This is because information empowers individuals and communities to take responsibility. It is likely that hygiene, water and social distancing may be challenging in informal settlements the people are still advised to practice them as much as possible while ensuring other preventing measures such as use of masks, hand sanitizers and respiratory hygiene.

Specific interventions include

- a. Spread key messages in the community about measures people can take to prevent the infection.
- b. Create awareness about signs and symptoms of suspected cases (**case definition**) leading to early detection and referral of suspected COVID-19 cases.
- c. Ensure appropriate and accurate information with regards to the prevention and control COVID-19 as community spread expands to our most disadvantaged populations
- d. Mobilize communities and provide guidance on taking precautionary measures and quick linkages to available care and support

e. Take appropriate steps to limit the spread of the infection through the services they provide.

Information dissemination and communication is targeted at the following:

1. Traditional, Community and Religious leaders
2. Civil Society Organisations (NGOs, FBOs & CBOs)
3. Trade & Professional Unions & Associations
4. Market, Transport Ethnic Unions & Associations
5. Traditional health providers
6. Local theatre groups
7. Rural community dwellers
8. Urban and semi-urban dwellers
9. Children
10. Young persons and Adolescents
11. High Risk Persons such as Elderly, Persons with compromised immune system, chronic medical conditions
12. Persons that are variously challenged (Persons with Disabilities)
13. Media: local, and Telecommunication Institutions
14. Managers and service providers across the health sector (public and private)
15. Health Promotion Forum and Coordination structures at National, state, LGA and Ward levels

TOPIC 3 EQUAL ACCESS TO COVID-19 TESTING AND TREATMENT

Please could you describe what efforts your institution is taking to ensure that access to testing and treatment is equally available, accessible and affordable to residents in informal settlements as it is in other areas of the Lagos metropolitan area?

Diagnostic testing is an essential response strategy to interrupt the transmission of COVID-19 pandemic by informing patient management and identifying positive cases, which can then be isolated. The Federal Ministry of Health through the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) has prioritised testing as one of the key strategies to the COVID-19 response in Nigeria. In order to contain the outbreak, the Government of Nigeria is continuously scaling up diagnostic testing to cover all 36 States plus the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). There were about four functional molecular laboratories with the capacity to test COVID-19 at the beginning of the pandemic but these has been increased to 33 as at today.

As global shortages of diagnostic kits and laboratory consumables increasingly impacts the optimal functionality of the laboratory system in Nigeria and across the world, an adaptive testing strategy is been adopted to ensure the most vulnerable persons, those at elevated risk, and those with super spreading potential have access to testing. It is true that testing strategies may continue to change based on stage of spread of disease and available resources; social status or place of abode has never been and will not be a reason for anyone to be denied or given access to testing. The government takes responsibility for the cost of the test, it is free for all Nigerians hence providing equal access to all. The following are our testing strategies currently at different level of implementation:

Prong 1: Expand Existing NCDC Laboratory Network with Molecular RT-PCR

Prong 2: Leverage Capacity within the High-Throughput HIV Molecular Testing Laboratories

Prong 3: Repurpose Point of Care Tuberculosis Testing GeneXpert Machines for Covid-19 Testing

Prong 4: Private Sector Engagement

Prong 5: Future Use of Antigen and Antibody Tests to Learn More about the Disease

As the transition from sporadic cases to community transmission can be extremely rapid, the testing strategies outlined are being pursued nationally, while implementation of the testing modalities will be implemented in phases as the resources become available. It is possible that these scenarios may be occurring at the state level and various states will be at various stages of the pandemic. While some states are testing based on presence of symptoms or history of contact others are doing house to house testing. The success of this strategy is dependent on the ability to leverage existing molecular diagnostics resources in the country to support the COVID-19 response.

Current protocol for treatment is management in isolation facilities and designated hospitals irrespective of social status or settlement. All aspects of treatment are at no cost to the patients therefore providing equal access to all. As the number of cases continue to increase there may be need for home management of carefully selected cases based on clinical reasoning. This may be challenging in informal settlements due to overcrowding and high population density. If home treatment becomes necessary, decisions will be based on medical eligibility.

TOPIC 4. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR RESIDENTS OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

Please could you describe what efforts that you are taking to ensure that all residents of informal settlements in need of support receive adequate food, money and other essentials during the COVID-19 crisis? Do these efforts build on prior poverty reduction programs, and if so how?



“Between Hunger and the Virus”

The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on People Living in Poverty in Lagos, Nigeria

The Covid-19 crisis has had a devastating economic impact in Nigeria, with the World Bank forecasting in January 2021 that the pandemic will result in an additional 10.9 million Nigerians entering poverty by 2022. In Lagos State, despite its relative wealth compared to other states, high levels of inequality and urban poverty meant that many families went hungry when the Covid-19 crisis hit.

“*Between Hunger and the Virus*,” a joint report by Human Rights Watch and Justice & Empowerment Initiatives, documents the impact of a five-week lockdown, rising food prices, and a prolonged economic downturn on informal workers, slum dwellers, and other urban poor families in Lagos. The report is based on 60 interviews conducted between May 2020 and March 2021 with people living or working in urban poor communities in Lagos State, as well as analysis of survey data on the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic.

The report finds that, despite cash transfers and food handouts by the federal and Lagos State governments, the absence of a functioning social security system meant many people received no government support, contributing to widespread hunger.

The report calls on Nigerian authorities to expand social security in the aftermath of the Covid-19 crisis. With many people still battling every day for survival, the federal and state governments, as well as Nigeria’s international partners, should ensure Nigerians can realize their right to an adequate standard of living and navigate the pandemic’s devastating economic impact with dignity.

(above) People walk past closed street stalls and shops in Lagos, Nigeria on March 26, 2020 during a government-imposed lockdown to halt the spread of Covid-19.

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(front cover) Women queue for food parcels during distribution by volunteers of the Lagos Food Bank Initiative, a nongovernmental organization, in a community in Oworoshoki, Lagos, Nigeria.

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