

History of Nigeria Timeline

- 1500s: height of Songhai Empire
- 1650s – 1860s: slave trade results in forced migration of millions
- Early 1800s: spread of Islam in the region, especially in the north
- 1903: British conquest of the region is complete
- 1914: northern and southern protectorates are merged and the British Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria is formed
- 1960: Nigeria gains independence from Great Britain
- 1965-66: Charges of voting irregularities and riots followed elections in these years
- 1966-1970: Civil War
- 1970-1975: Gowon Regime
- 1975-1976: Murtala Muhammad Regime (assassinated in February 1976)
- 1970s: oil boom
- 1976 - 1979: Rule of General Olusegun Obasanjo; he voluntarily gives up power to a civilian government
- 1979-1983: Second Republic under President Shehu Shagari
- Dec. 1983: The military seizes power in a coup led by Major General Muhammadu Buhari
- 1993: Moshood Abiola reportedly wins presidential election yet the military annuls the election and imprisons him; he dies in prison nearly 4 years later
- November 1995: Nine government critics, including Nobel Prize winning author Ken Saro-Wiwa, are publicly hanged; other nations denounce this action
- June 1998: General Abdulsalami Abubakar is sworn in as Nigeria's president after the unexpected death of General Abacha, who had ruled for the previous five years
- Summer 1998: Military leaders agree to an election
- February/March 1999: General Olusegun Obasanjo wins presidential election with a reported 63% of the vote. Former President Jimmy Carter, who observed the elections, states: "There was a wide disparity between the number of voters observed at the polling stations and the final result that has been reported from several states."
- 2000: Muslim-Christian violence sparked by the introduction of Sharia (Islamic law) in several Northern states – its use in criminal cases may be considered a violation of the constitution.
- Aug. 2000: President Clinton visits Nigeria
- Nov. 2002: Muslims riot in response to a newspaper article about a planned beauty pageant to which they object being held on a Muslim holy holiday.

Note that Nigeria has been ruled by military leaders for much of the past 40 years. What might account for this? Consider and analyze the following statement by General Abdulsalami Abubakar:

"All along – as far back as 1979, '72 – the military have been wanting to hand over, but because of one thing or another, the politicians, the civilians, fail to do things correctly and the military thought they should intervene to correct these anomalies."