

Evaluation of Emerging Trends in Nigerian Criminal Law Jurisprudence

Victor Nonso Enebeli, PhD*

* LLB(Hons) (London Met), LLM (Coventry), B.L., (Abuja), PhD (Coventry). Director of Studies, Justice Mary Odili Judicial Institute, Port Harcourt, Rivers State of Nigeria. Lecturer, Faculty of Law, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Rivers State of Nigeria. Email Address: victor.enebeli@yahoo.co.uk. Phone No: 09020176657

Abstract

Nigeria's criminal law system has seen enormous change in recent years as a consequence of new trends that have had a significant influence on both societies and legal advancements. Nigeria is not immune to these global occurrences, since the digital era has opened up new criminal frontiers. The rise of cybercrime in the country is studied in this article, as are the challenges it poses to law enforcement and the legal frameworks put in place to combat it. It also considers how cybercrime impacts people, businesses, and national security.¹ Nigeria has been dealing with terrorism for some years, owing in large part to the operations of Boko Haram and other extremist organisations. This article examines how these organisations' methods have evolved over time, how the government has responded, and the legal defences put in place to combat terrorism. It underscores the delicate line that must be established between national security needs and human rights protection. Moreover, Nigeria has seen continuous changes aimed at resolving concerns including crowded prisons, protracted pretrial detentions, and access to legal counsel amid calls for a more equitable and effective criminal justice system. Lastly, International collaboration is more important than ever in a time of transnational crime.²

Keywords: Nigerian Criminal Law, National Security, Terrorism, and Emerging Trends

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Introduction

Nigerian criminal law is a key component of the country's legal system and is used to define and prosecute crimes. Its growth has been diverse, affected by colonial legacies, current legal changes, and indigenous customary rules.³ Legal professionals, academics, and politicians must have a solid understanding of the fundamental ideas and doctrines underlying Nigerian criminal law in order to properly navigate this complex legal environment.⁴ Maintaining up with new developments is crucial in the fast-paced field of Nigerian criminal law. These patterns not only show how criminal activity is changing, but they also have a big impact on the development of the law and society dynamics. Being ignorant of these changes might make it more difficult to uphold citizens' rights and apply the law fairly. As a result, this article is devoted to exploring the constantly changing patterns in Nigerian criminal law and illuminating their profound relevance and effects.⁵

Moreover, Indigenous legal customs, colonial legacies, and post-independence legal changes have all contributed to Nigeria's criminal law history. Its origins may be seen in pre-colonial customary rules, and it continues through the colonial era's influence on the legal system. Its current shape has been influenced by significant turning points in legal history and legislative initiatives, offering insightful perspectives on the path that led to the present day. There is collection of guiding ideas and theories that forms the basis of Nigerian criminal law. These include the burden of proof, the presumption of innocence, and the notion of guilty mentality. In addition, the Penal Code Act and the Criminal Code Act are important pillars in the codification of substantive criminal laws, establishing the foundation for defining and prosecuting criminal offences. It is important to note the Administration of Criminal Justice Act 2015 which is a significant milestone in the administration of criminal justice in Nigeria has been domesticated by a good number of states to redefine the landscape of the Nigerian criminal justice system.

New developments in Nigerian criminal law pose particular difficulties, frequently highlighting the precarious balance between security needs and the defence of human rights. Given the importance of safeguarding human rights in all facets of law enforcement and criminal justice, finding this balance is a crucial matter. Furthermore, International collaboration is essential in combating transnational crime and terrorism in a world that is becoming more linked.³ A crucial aspect of Nigeria's strategy is its involvement in international treaties and accords. This article emphasizes on the importance of staying updated on emerging trends in Nigerian criminal law for legal practitioners, scholars, and policymakers.

¹ Akande, J. O. (2018). *Nigerian Criminal Law: A Comparative Approach*. Oxford University Press.

² Okonkwo, R. (2020). Emerging Trends in Nigerian Cybercrime Law. *Journal of Nigerian Law*.

³ Odoemelam, C. (2019). *Counterterrorism Measures and Human Rights in Nigeria*. *International Journal of Human Rights*.

⁴ Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies. (2021). *Annual Report on Criminal Justice Reforms in Nigeria*.

⁵ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2017). *Handbook on International Cooperation in Criminal Matters*.

Cybercrime and Digital Law

In recent years, the increase in cybercrime in Nigeria has become a serious worry, echoing a global trend in the digital era. Increased internet usage, the spread of smartphones, and the explosive expansion of online financial transactions are some of the factors that have contributed to this uptick in cybercriminal activity. In response to this growing threat, Nigeria approved the Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention, Etc.) Act in 2015 as an essential regulatory framework for dealing with many areas of cybercriminal behaviour.¹

The Nigerian Cybercrime Act, introduced in 2015, contains a slew of legislation designed to address various sorts of cybercrime. It criminalises a wide range of cybercrimes, including cyberstalking, unauthorised access to computer systems, data manipulation, identity theft, and online fraud.² These crimes have legal consequences that are specifically stated in the law. The Act specifies penalties for cybercrime, which vary based on the gravity of the violation. A conviction for a common cybercrime, such as unauthorised access to computer systems, might result in a fine and/or jail time. Another common cybercrime, identity theft, may result in harsher punishments including lengthier jail terms. The Act offers a framework for the courts to evaluate the seriousness of the offence and impose suitable punishments in accordance. The Act also specifies procedures for the storage of digital evidence. Law enforcement authorities have the authority to take and safeguard electronic evidence during investigations thanks to Section 15 of the Nigerian Cybercrime Act. The protection of digital evidence from manipulation or destruction is ensured by this clause, which is essential for a successful prosecution.³ Finally, The Act recognises the value of enhancing cybersecurity measures in addition to combatting cybercrimes. In order to do this, it creates the National Cybersecurity Fund, which is intended to assist programmes that attempt to improve cybersecurity throughout the nation. The initiatives, studies, and training that strengthen Nigeria's overall cyber resilience can be funded with the help of this fund.

Even with these regulations, it is still very difficult to prosecute cybercrimes in Nigeria. It is impossible to overstate how technically complicated cybercrimes are. Criminals that operate online frequently use sophisticated techniques to hide their identities and actions, making it challenging for law enforcement to find and capture them. Due to budget limitations, these agencies' and the judiciary's ability to efficiently investigate and prosecute cybercrimes is regularly tested. In addition, resources and training tailored specifically to combating cybercrimes are required. Although the Nigerian Cybercrime Act provides the necessary legislative framework, its successful execution depends on the ability of the judiciary, law enforcement, and digital forensics professionals.⁴ This emphasizes how crucial it is to continue making investments in technology advancements as well as training programmes in order to provide professionals the tools they need to effectively tackle cybercrime.

Given the transnational nature of cybercrime and the capacity of cybercriminals to operate from various jurisdictions, international collaboration is undoubtedly crucial in tackling the global difficulties it poses. For the purpose of facilitating such collaboration in successfully combating cybercrime, a number of international regulations and agreements have been formed. The Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, commonly known as the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime, is an important international law.⁵ The first international agreement addressing cybercrime expressly was this 2001 pact. It offers a framework for the collecting of electronic evidence, the harmonisation of national legislation, and reciprocal legal aid between member nations. Nigeria is not a party to this convention, although it has previously expressed interest in joining, which would improve its capacity to work with other nations on international cybercrime issues. Through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the UN has also contributed to the fight against cybercrime. In order to help nations improve their legal systems and law enforcement capacity to combat cybercrime, UNODC has created a number of tools and services. These resources offer direction and best practises to promote international collaboration.⁶

Another noteworthy instance of an international group devoted to fighting cybercrime is INTERPOL's Cybercrime Directorate.¹¹ A Global Complex for Innovation (IGCI) run by INTERPOL focuses on digital forensics and cybercrime. It acts as a focal point for global cooperation, intelligence exchange, and capacity development in the struggle against cyberthreats. The shutdown of the Gameover Zeus in 2014 botnet serves as a compelling example of worldwide collaboration in the fight against cybercrime.⁷ The infamous Cryptolocker

¹ Adibe R, Ike CC, and Udeogu CU, "Press freedom and Nigeria's Cybercrime Act of 2015: An assessment" (2017) 52(2) *Africa Spectrum* 117.

² Eboibi FE, "A review of the legal and regulatory frameworks of Nigerian Cybercrimes Act 2015" (2017) 33(5) *Computer Law & Security Review* 700.

³ Awhefeada UV and Bernice OO, "Appraising the Laws Governing the Control of Cybercrime in Nigeria" (2020) 8(1) *Journal of Law and Criminal Justice* 30.

⁴ Ajayi EFG, "Challenges to enforcement of cyber-crimes laws and policy" (2016) 6(1) *Journal of Internet and Information Systems* 1.

⁵ Menon S and Guan Siew T, "Key challenges in tackling economic and cyber crimes: Creating a multilateral platform for international co-operation" (2012) 15(3) *Journal of Money Laundering Control* 243.

⁶ Vincent NA, "Victims of cybercrime: Definitions and challenges" in *Cybercrime and its victims* (Routledge 2017) 27-42.

⁷ Cieřla R, "International co-operation in combating cybercrime. Selected issues" (2018) 47 *Nowa Kodyfikacja Prawa Karnego* 91.

ransomware, which extorted money from victims by encrypting their data, was disseminated by this botnet.¹ Law enforcement from the United States and more than ten other nations worked together to successfully dismantle the botnet and apprehend Evgeniy Bogachev, who was running it.² The success of coordinated multinational action against cybercriminal networks was proved by this operation. Additionally, the 2017 "WannaCry" ransomware outbreak, which impacted organisations all across the world, sparked collaboration amongst nations to find the offenders.³ Following the assault, cybersecurity experts, law enforcement officials, and international organisations worked together to trace the malware's sources and prosecute those involved.

Terrorism and National Security

Nigeria's protracted conflict with terrorism, especially the insurgency headed by Boko Haram, is a complex and entrenched situation that needs serious analysis. While the government of Nigeria and its foreign allies have taken attempts to tackle this threat. The Nigerian government has frequently utilised a military-first strategy to combat terrorism while ignoring the socioeconomic and political underpinnings of extremism.⁴ In the northeastern area, problems including poverty, unemployment, corruption, and poor governance have not been appropriately addressed. Extremist ideologies have been able to survive and spread because of this failure to address their underlying roots.

Allegations of security force violations of human rights have occasionally harmed counter-terrorism operations. Significant concerns have been raised by reports of extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrests, and forced disappearances. Such misuse can unintentionally increase recruitment to terrorist organisations while also undermining faith in governmental institutions. The Nigerian security system has frequently battled with deficiencies in personnel, tools, and intelligence capabilities. The efficacy of counterterrorism operations has been hampered by these flaws. Security flaws have been taken advantage of by Boko Haram to launch attacks and increase its power.⁵

Beyond Nigeria's boundaries, Boko Haram's activity may be found in close-by nations including Chad, Niger, and Cameroon. Effectively addressing cross-border dangers necessitates a regional response that is coordinated. However, historical rivalries and varied interests among these nations have made regional collaboration difficult. The capacity of Boko Haram to radicalise and attract people, notably young people, continues to be a major source of worry. In order to expand, the gang has taken advantage of community complaints and weaknesses. Comprehensive efforts in education, community involvement, and deradicalization programmes are required to combat radicalization.⁶

The efficiency and openness of aid and assistance programmes have come under fire, despite Nigeria receiving foreign help in its war against terrorism. Concerns concerning accountability have been raised in relation to the distribution of resources and its practical effects. As a result of the factionalization of Boko Haram, other breakaway organisations have emerged. It is difficult to discuss or come to a complete peace deal because of its intricacy.⁷ The group's lack of united leadership makes it more difficult to have a meaningful conversation. The protracted conflict with Boko Haram has resulted in a severe humanitarian crisis, with millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees in need of assistance. The humanitarian response has struggled to keep up with rising requirements, resulting in deplorable living conditions and vulnerability among impacted communities.

The Terrorism (Prevention) Act, passed into law by Nigeria in 2011, establishes a legal framework for dealing with terrorism-related acts. This statute defines terrorism as assaults against the state, persons, or property with the intent of threatening or coercing the government. Individuals found guilty of terrorism-related offences face harsh penalties, including the possibility of life in prison. The Terrorism (Prevention) Act has been amended throughout time to better Nigeria's counterterrorism activities.⁸ These modifications have widened the scope of the statute to cover activities such as money laundering and recruitment to help or support terrorists. They have also given law enforcement agencies increased authority to investigate and prosecute terrorism-related acts.⁹

Nigeria has prioritized counter-terrorism activities, both military and non-military. The Nigerian military has conducted enormous operations against Boko Haram in an effort to diminish its authority and territorial

¹ Tsybulenko E and Suarez S, "INTERPOL" in *International Conflict and Security Law: A Research Handbook* (TMC Asser Press 2022) 673-691.

² Kyurkchiev NIKOLAY, Iliev ANTON, Rahnev ASEN, and Terzieva TODORKA, "A new analysis of cryptolocker ransomware and welchia worm propagation behavior. some applications. iii" (2019) 23(2) *Communications in Applied Analysis* 359.

³ Ibid, note 14

⁴ Iyekekpola W.O., "Boko Haram: understanding the context" (2016) 37(12) *Third World Quarterly* 2211.

⁵ Ibid, note 16

⁶ Smith M, *Boko Haram: inside Nigeria's unholy war* (Bloomsbury Publishing 2015).

⁷ Forest JJ, *Confronting the terrorism of Boko Haram in Nigeria* (JSOU Press 2012).

⁸ "Terrorism (Prevention) Act, 2011" (2011) 5(1) *International Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies* 77.

⁹ Omolaye-Ajileye A, "Legal framework for the prevention of terrorism in Nigeria" (2015) 11 *National Judicial Institute Law Journal* 19.

control. The administration has also worked to address the underlying causes of extremism through programmes to fight radicalization and rehabilitate former troops.¹ Nigeria's counter-terrorism tactics have not gone ignored, particularly when it comes to human rights issues. Concerns regarding the preservation of human rights in counter-terrorism operations have been raised as a result of reports of extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrests, and the eviction of people. It continues to be very difficult to strike a balance between the necessity of security and the requirement to uphold human rights.

In order to combat terrorism, international law is essential, and Nigeria has actively participated in these efforts on a global scale. Nigeria is a party to several international agreements and treaties pertaining to anti-terrorism, including resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council.² To successfully combat terrorism, these international agreements offer a framework for international collaboration, extradition, and information sharing. Additionally, regional organisations like the African Union and international organisations like INTERPOL have contributed to the success of Nigeria's counterterrorism activities. In order to combat the cross-border terrorist threats presented by Boko Haram, cooperation with neighbouring nations including Chad, Niger, and Cameroon has been crucial.

Threats from terrorism are dynamic and ever-changing. Eventually, Boko Haram has modified its methods, which now include suicide bombings, kidnappings of schoolgirls, and attacks on civilian targets. The danger environment has become more complicated as a result of the group's connections to other international terrorist groups like ISIS.³ Nigeria's reaction must also change as a result of these shifting dangers. In addition to boosting security measures, this entails tackling socioeconomic issues, enhancing intelligence-sharing procedures, and guaranteeing that counterterrorism actions adhere to global human rights norms.

Criminal Justice Reforms

The criminal justice system in Nigeria has to deal with a number of difficult problems that combined undermine its efficiency and jeopardise the protection of human rights. Overcrowding in correction centres, where inmates endure appalling living circumstances, has emerged as one of these significant problems. The issue of overcrowding in correction centres is a result of a complex interplay of elements, including the large number of people being held without charge before trial, drawn-out legal processes, and inadequate correctional facilities.⁴ Moreover, the incidence of protracted pretrial detention is one of the system's most obvious signs of failure. Interestingly, a sizable majority of those incarcerated in Nigeria are those who have been detained for a long time, frequently longer than the terms they would have received if found guilty. The excessively long trial processes highlight the court system's inadequacies and constitute a clear breach of the dictum that justice delayed is justice denied.

The persistent case backlog afflicting Nigeria's legal system aggravates these problems. The backlog prolongs the administration of justice, putting both victims and suspects in an uncertain situation. Under the weight of this bureaucratic lethargy, access to justice as a fundamental human right remains elusive. One more obstacle for Nigeria's criminal justice system is the lack of resources, both in terms of money and human capital. Law enforcement organisations struggle with ongoing underfunding, a lack of skilled workers, and a lack of the resources required for efficient investigation and prosecution.⁵ This lack of resources exacerbates structural inefficiencies and jeopardises the impartiality and integrity of the criminal justice system. Lastly, the ongoing complaints of violations of human rights are a worrisome part of Nigeria's criminal justice system. The system's credibility and integrity are questioned by claims of torture, arbitrary arrests, and extrajudicial deaths. These severe transgressions not only undermine public confidence in the legal system but also amount to flagrant abuses of citizens' fundamental rights, which is of grave concern to the larger human rights community.⁶

In recent years, Nigeria has initiated various reforms and measures aimed at addressing the challenges within its criminal justice system. The Nigerian government has implemented decongestion programmes in prisons, which has resulted in the release of several prisoners. Non-custodial sentence implementation and parole systems are two of these approaches. There have been initiatives to provide access to legal counsel, particularly for the poor. Pro bono services and legal aid programmes work to guarantee that those accused have access to legal representation. Nigeria has adopted ADR processes like arbitration and mediation more and more as a substitute for protracted judicial trials. These procedures aid in expediting case resolutions and reducing case

¹ Fidler DP, "Cyberspace, terrorism and international law" (2016) 21(3) *Journal of Conflict and Security Law* 475.

² Schrijver N and Van Den Herik L, "Leiden Policy Recommendations on Counter-terrorism and International Law" (2010) 57(3) *Netherlands International Law Review* 531.

³ N Schrijver and L Van Den Herik, "Leiden Policy Recommendations on Counter-terrorism and International Law" (2010) 57(3) *Netherlands International Law Review* 531.

⁴ Nwosu K.N., "Criminal Justice Reforms in Nigeria: The Imperative of Fast Track Trials; Plea Bargains; Non-Custodial Options and Restorative Justice" (2018).

⁵ Nwosu KN, "Criminal Justice Reforms in Nigeria: The Imperative of Fast Track Trials; Plea Bargains; Non-Custodial Options and Restorative Justice" (2018).

⁶ Ogunode S, "Criminal justice system in Nigeria: For the rich or the poor" (2015) 4(1) *Humanities and Social Sciences Review* 27.

backlogs.¹ Practises of restorative justice are becoming more popular in Nigeria. These initiatives emphasise reparation and reconciliation while incorporating both victims and offenders in the resolution procedure. They encourage civic engagement and criminal offender rehabilitation. Nigeria has also started extensive criminal justice reforms, including changes to pertinent laws and rules. These changes are intended to speed up court proceedings, safeguard human rights, and boost system effectiveness.

A crucial milestone in criminal justice reform came with the 2019 passage of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act. This Act established the novel idea of non-custodial penalties, providing an alternative to imprisonment for some types of criminals. People who are found guilty of minor offences may instead be sentenced to non-custodial punishments including community service, probation, parole, or fines.² With regard to those who commit non-violent or less serious offences, this progressive legislative measure strives to lessen the burden on prisons. Nigerian legislation has made tremendous progress in establishing diversion practises within the juvenile justice system, although not fully addressing diversion programmes for adults. These initiatives aim to keep juvenile offenders out of the traditional criminal justice system by offering them community-based treatments, counselling, and rehabilitation instead of imprisonment. Although the use of adult diversion may not be as formally established, some jurisdictions are investigating its potential advantages as a way to lessen the number of people kept in pretrial custody. Furthermore, Plea agreements are covered by the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) of 2015. Plea bargaining has the ability to speed up case resolution even if it is not specifically intended to decrease pretrial detention or congestion.³ In return for lighter penalties, defendants may choose to collaborate with police or admit guilt to less serious offences. This strategy helps to decrease the number of people imprisoned in pretrial custody by expediting case resolution.

Initiatives to overhaul the criminal justice system in Nigeria are starting to have a beneficial effect on access to justice and human rights. These changes assist in safeguarding the rights of those accused and improving their access to a just and prompt judicial process by addressing problems like protracted pretrial detention and overcrowded prisons. However, obstacles still exist, and consistent efforts are required to guarantee that all Nigerians' access to justice is enhanced and that all human rights are completely upheld within the criminal justice system.

Human Rights and Criminal Law

Significant obstacles exist at the point where criminal law and human rights collide in Nigeria, notably in relation to police brutality, torture, and extrajudicial murders. Both nationally and globally, these difficulties have sparked serious worries:

1. Nigeria has struggled with widespread instances of police brutality, which are frequently characterised by the use of excessive force, wrongful arrests, and torture. The rights to life, freedom from torture, and liberty have all frequently been violated.⁴
2. The use of torture by law enforcement and, in certain instances, criminal gangs is a problem that plagues Nigeria's criminal justice system. International human rights treaties routinely breach the right to be free from torture and cruel or degrading treatment.
3. Security forces' extrajudicial deaths have been a major source of worry. These murders frequently take place unlawfully and violate people's right to life. Such acts go against the basic justice values that criminal law is supposed to defend.⁵

The current legal regime in Nigeria has made efforts to remedy these abuses of human rights and encourage accountability. The Anti-Torture Act, which makes torture a crime and imposes harsh punishments on perpetrators, was approved by Nigeria in 2017.⁶ This legal framework is an important step in tackling the problem of torture in the nation. Additionally, the Nigerian government promised to overhaul the police force in response to the #EndSARS demonstrations in 2020. While still in progress, these improvements show a dedication to stopping police violence and making officers responsible for their actions.⁷

The fact that Nigeria is a member to several of these agreements, international human rights treaties play a significant role in Nigerian law. The primacy of international human rights treaties and accords is acknowledged

¹ Ajah BO, Nnam MU, Ajah IA, Idemili-Aronu N, Chukwuemeka OD, and Agboti CI, "Investigating the awareness of virtual and augmented realities as a criminal justice response to the plight of awaiting-trial inmates in Ebonyi State, Nigeria" (2022) 77(2) *Crime, Law and Social Change* 111.

² Ladapo OA, "Effective investigations, a pivot to efficient criminal justice administration: Challenges in Nigeria" (2011) 5 *African Journal of Criminology & Justice Studies*.

³ Ugbe RO, Agi AU, and Ugbe JB, "A critique of the Nigerian Administration of Criminal Justice Act 2015 and challenges in the implementation of the Act" (2019) 4 *AFJCLJ* 69.

⁴ Madubuike-Ekwe NJ and Obayemi OK, "Assessment of the role of the Nigerian Police Force in the promotion and protection of human rights in Nigeria" (2018) 23 *Ann. Surv. Int'l & Comp. L.* 19.

⁵ Nnadi I, "An insight into violence against women as human rights violation in Nigeria: A critique" (2012) 5 *J. Pol. & L.* 48.

⁶ Uwazuruike AR, "#EndSARS: the movement against police brutality in Nigeria" *Harvard Human Rights Journal* (2020).

⁷ Babatunde E, "Torture by the Nigerian police force: International obligations, national responses and the way forward" (2017) 2 *Strathmore L. Rev.* 169.

by the Nigerian Constitution. Important treaties have been domesticated and are upheld by Nigerian courts, including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).¹

Nigerian efforts to establish responsibility for violations of human rights entail a number of crucial steps. Civil society organisations and victims of human rights violations frequently seek redress in the courts. Holding offenders accountable requires legal actions, investigations, and trials. Advocates for human rights and those who demand accountability have benefited greatly from the work of civil society organisations and activists. Police violence and extrajudicial executions have received international attention because to campaigns like #EndSARS. Nigeria has come under pressure from the international community, especially foreign governments and human rights organisations, to address violations of human rights. The degree to which the government is prepared to solve these problems can be significantly impacted by this external criticism.

Nigeria presents major difficulties when it comes to balancing criminal justice with human rights, notably in regards to police brutality, torture, and extrajudicial murders. There is hope for correcting these serious crimes and advancing a judicial system that supports and respects human rights values thanks to recent legal advances, the influence of international human rights treaties, and continued efforts to establish accountability.

International Cooperation in Criminal Matters

In order to combat transnational crimes and preserve international security, international cooperation is of utmost importance. Criminal activity that crosses national borders frequently includes terrorism, cybercrime, drug trafficking, and human trafficking. Effective international collaboration is required to tackle these crimes. If international processes are not in place, criminals who abandon their home nations may be able to avoid prosecution.² Cooperation makes it possible to extradite perpetrators and bring them to justice, ensuring that they are held accountable for their deeds. For the purpose of preventing, identifying, and pursuing criminal activity, international information exchange is essential. Collaboration makes it possible to share information and proof. Cooperation might be advantageous for nations with different resources and experience. Sharing information and resources helps law enforcement organisations better battle complex crimes. International collaboration is essential to the success of multilateral accords and conventions, such as those addressing cybercrime and counterterrorism.³

To strengthen its attempts at international criminal law cooperation, Nigeria has entered into extradition treaties and accords governing mutual legal aid. Nigeria can ask for the return of fugitives who have committed crimes in the nation but escaped abroad according to extradition treaties. These accords outline the requirements and legal process for extradition.⁴ Through agreements on mutual legal aid, Nigeria can work with other nations to exchange information about criminal cases, acquire evidence, and interview witnesses. Investigative work and legal actions are aided by this.

INTERPOL offers member nations a forum for exchanging vital information on criminal activity, offenders, and criminal trends. INTERPOL manages databases that help law enforcement authorities throughout the world track down criminals, recover stolen goods, and locate missing people. In order to combat many types of crime, such as terrorism, drug trafficking, and cybercrime, INTERPOL organises worldwide police operations.⁵ Through agreements, initiatives, and cooperative efforts, other international organisations, like the United Nations and regional groups like the African Union, also contribute to developing international cooperation in criminal law.

Mutual legal aid and extradition procedures may become more challenging due to various national legal systems and norms. Moreover, political considerations may have an impact on extradition decisions, causing delays or refusals to extradite people. There are resources and skill gaps between nations can make collaboration difficult. It is difficult to strike a balance between the necessity for information exchange and worries about privacy and data protection.⁶

¹ Joshua IA, Dangata YY, Audu O, and Nmadu AG, "Human rights and Nigerian prisoners-are prisoners not humans" (2014) 33 *Med. & L.* 11.

² Vermeulen G and De Bondt W, "Rethinking international cooperation in criminal matters in the EU: moving beyond actors, bringing logic back, footed in reality" (2012).

³ Babatunde EO and Adbulsalam MM, "Towards Attaining Sustainable Development Goals in a 'Fantastically Corrupt' World: Issues in international Legal Framework on Mutual Legal Assistance for Recovery of Proceeds of Corruption and the Nigerian Act" (2021) 12 *Beijing L. Rev.* 691.

⁴ NGARA CO, "Nigerian National Assembly and domestication of treaties in Nigeria's Fourth and fifth Assembly" (2017) 2(2) *Socalscientia: Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities.*

⁵ Cherniavskiy SS, Holovkin BM, Chornous YM, Bodnar VY, and Zhuk IV, "International cooperation in the field of fighting crime: Directions, levels and forms of realization" (2019) 22 *J. Legal Ethical & Regul. Issues* 1.

⁶ Rahman MH, "Practical Challenges in Cross-border Cybercrimes: Prosecutors and Investigators Perspectives" (2021) *Bangladesh Journal of Legal Studies (BJLS)*, (ISSN: 2415-136X)(Online).

Conclusion

In the end, Nigeria's criminal law system has undergone a substantial modification in reaction to recent developments. The Nigerian legal system has evolved to confront new and complicated dangers, from the advent of cybercrime to the ongoing difficulties posed by terrorism. Important legislative proposals and reforms have been put out, emphasizing how crucial it is to keep up with these changes. It is impossible to emphasize the value of the legal system's flexibility and constant change. The laws governing illegal behaviour must change as the nature of such behaviours does. Because to its flexibility, the law is able to protect citizens' rights, promote justice, and preserve social order.

In order to solve new difficulties, policymakers, lawyers, and civil society have a crucial role to play. Collaboration is essential, and this includes resource distribution, complete legislative changes, and the advancement of human rights. Together, these parties should strike a balance between security and civil freedoms, advancing a strong and fair judicial system. Subsequently, the dynamic character of Nigerian criminal law reflects the larger global setting, where developing criminal practises and technology breakthroughs continuously alter the legal environment. Nigeria may overcome these obstacles and create a criminal justice system that successfully serves its population in the future by embracing adaptation, pursuing legal changes, and placing a priority on the preservation of human rights.