

Nigeria was ranked 105<sup>th</sup> of 178 countries sampled in 2021 Index of Economic Freedom by The Heritage Foundation with an overall score of 58.7 which fall under 'mostly unfree' category.

This ranking was done using 12 Economic Freedoms parameters which was sub-categorized into four.

1. Rule of Law: under this category we have property right, judicial effectiveness and government integrity.
  - a. Property right: citizens don't truly have a total right on the property as Land Use Act of 1978 give the Governors power of eminent domain to override public interest. This has made property right in Nigeria weak, couple with poor property registration system.
  - b. Judicial effectiveness: the dependency of the Judicial arm of the government on the Executive arm of the government for finance don't give them an autonomy to stand as a system.
  - c. Government integrity: The current Federal administration came into power with the promise of fighting corruption, reverse is the case and there are increase in corrupt practices under the watch of the regime that promised sanity in every system. This corruption cut across both public and private sector.
2. Government size: under this category we have Tax burden, government spending, fiscal health.
  - a. Tax burden: Multiple taxation kills business and this affect both corporate bodies and individuals in Nigeria. Young businesses cannot thrive under this regulation and affect their productivity
  - b. Government spending: Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is not commensurate with government spending which have led to budget deficit over years.
  - c. Fiscal health: Foreign loan to service infrastructural deficit is the order of the day in Nigeria and foreign reserve continues to depreciate.
3. Regulatory efficiency: under this category we have business freedom, labor freedom, monetary freedom.
  - a. Business freedom: corporate organization can now register without itch, this registration gives them a legal backup to operate. The registration in the past is filled with a lot of itches which has now been surmounted.
  - b. Labor freedom: there is a lot of agitation from different labor groups claiming that government is tramping on their rights. Nigerian Association of Resident Doctors (NARD) recently called-off their 2months strike; other pressure groups are also sounding warning of embarking on strike soon.
  - c. Monetary freedom: no liberty was given to citizen to operate; policies in place are tight with too much bureaucracy for transactions.
4. Open market: under this category we have trade freedom, investment freedom, financial freedom.

- a. Trade freedom: free trade doesn't exist under this current Federal Government, all ports (land, sea and air) have strict policy that discourages foreign products into the country, this was put in place with intention to encourage and increase local production. Reverse is the case as there is upraise the price of commodities.
- b. Investment freedom: Insecurity across every region as maimed investment opportunities.
- c. Financial freedom: Because government track or gain from cryptocurrency market has led to it ban, this led to introduction of e-naira, a digital currency that allows government to track transactions.

Also, among 190 economies sampled by World Bank Group in their 2020 Doing Business Report, Nigeria was ranked 131<sup>st</sup> with an overall score of 56.9. The score was arrived considering variables like: starting a business, dealing with construction permits, getting electricity, registering property, getting credit, protecting minority investors, paying taxes, trading across borders, enforcing contracts, and resolving insolvency.

To correct these lapses, I will like to come in through advocacy for a free market through implementation and domestication of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), this will help the local producers to prosper. Recommend relax or abolish difficult policies that don't encourage businesses to grow despite their huge inputs through concern bodies like lawmakers.