HOPE
Behind Bars
AFRICA

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



A YEAR OF BOLD ACTION

2025 In Numbers

51,600+
Pro-bono legal hours

557
detainees released through rapid legal response

2938
direct beneficiaries

13,000+
citizens reached through grassroots civic education

160
court representations across multiple jurisdictions

120
people directly supported via the Toll-free line

3 Million+
online engagement

30+
stakeholders engaged

6
Vocational Skills Facilities

2
Tech products

97
Visits made to correctional faciities

213
female beneficiaries of access to justice and reformatory programs

Executive Director's Notes



Funke Adeoye
Executive Director

2025 reaffirmed the urgency and relevance of Hope Behind Bars Africa's mission.

Across Nigeria, structural challenges in the justice system persisted, including arbitrary arrests, unlawful incarceration, prolonged pre-trial detention, constrained civic space, uneven accountability by state actors, and the spread of technology-facilitated violence alongside limited pathways for reformation.

In response, HBBA intervened at critical points of the justice system to defend civic freedoms, provide rapid legal support to indigent detainees, challenge the misuse of legal processes through strategic litigation, and expand reformation and reintegration pathways grounded in dignity and opportunity.

In 2025, more than 500 individuals secured release through our legal interventions. We filed 3 strategic litigation suits to counter state repression.

We also released the first comprehensive continental research on gender and the death penalty, amplifying the intersectional experiences of women on death row and strengthening evidence-based advocacy for reform.

Through the Farming Justice Project, we advanced an innovative reformation model that would change how corrections is viewed in Nigeria.

Institutionally, we strengthened governance, systems, and internal capacity to ensure long-term sustainability and accountability.

This work was made possible by our team's commitment, our partners' trust, and the resilience of the individuals and communities we serve.

As we move into the next phase of our work, we invite continued partnership and support to expand access to justice, strengthen protections for civic space, and advance reform models that centre dignity and rights. Together, we can build a justice system that is faster, fairer, and more humane.

Geographical Reach

HBBA's programmes span multiple states across Nigeria, with strategic engagements extending to regional and international platforms. Our interventions are concentrated in areas of highest need, including states with significant pre-trial detention challenges, active civic space risks, and limited access to legal representation.

The map below highlights our key states of operation across Nigeria in 2025:

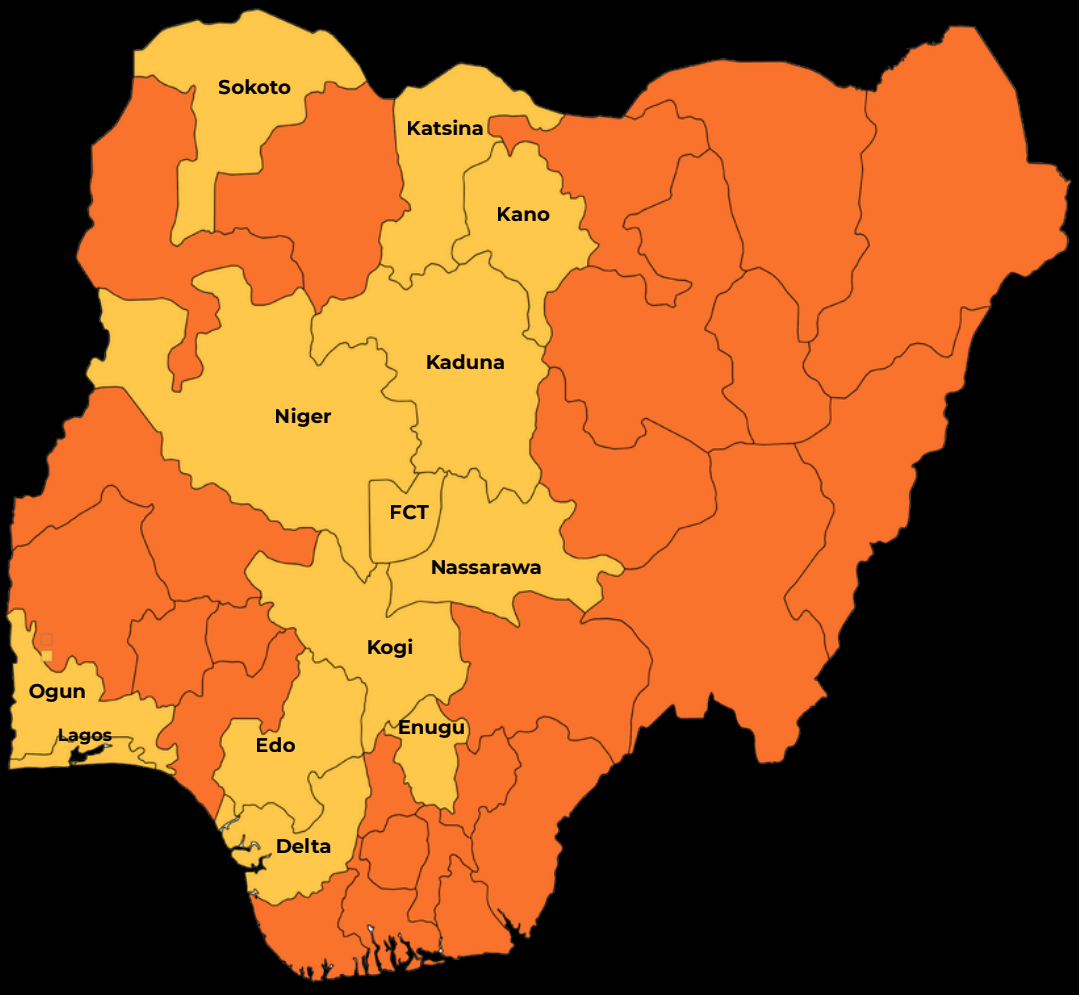


Table of Content

1. 2025 in Numbers 01
2. Executive Director Notes 02
3. Geographical Reach 03
4. Table of content 04
5. Vision, Mission and Core Values 05
6. Activities 06
7. Access to Justice 07
8. Justice and Rights in Digital Spaces 13
9. Gender and the Criminal Justice System 17
10. Reformation, Reintegration and Community Resilience 22
11. Civic Space Strengthening 26
12. Stakeholders Engagement 29
13. Partnerships & Global Positioning 32
14. HBBA in the Media 35
15. Financial Stewardship 36
16. Partners 38
17. Individual Donors 39
18. Volunteers 39
19. People Management 40
20. Board of Trustee 41
21. Humans of HBBA 42

Mission, Vision & Core Values

Vision

A world where the justice gap is closed, and societies are safer and fairer for all.

Mission

We are closing the justice and inequality gap using preventive actions, diversionary measures, legal support, evidence-based advocacy and technology.

Core Values:

Human rights for all: We believe in the advancement of a just, peaceful and equitable society that puts humanity first based on the universal fundamental principles of the international humanitarian law and the human rights conventions.

Openness: We are open and accountable to the people and partners we serve, transparently sharing our results, stories and lessons. Integrity is embedded at the core of what we do. Open data and Open Justice are at the premise of our work.

Professionalism: We are committed to maintaining the highest professional standards in our service delivery, consistently transforming ordinary tasks into extraordinary outcomes.

Empowerment: We equip justice-impacted individuals, communities, and partners with knowledge, tools, and support to claim their rights and drive sustainable change.

Excellence: We pursue excellence in all we do, setting high standards of quality, rigor, and impact, and continuously improving our methods to ensure effective and sustainable justice outcomes.

In 2025, Hope Behind Bars Africa's programmatic work was organised around five interconnected strategic areas, each addressing a distinct dimension of Nigeria's criminal justice and civic space landscape.

STRATEGIC AREAS

Access to Justice

Justice and Rights in Digital Spaces

Reformation, Reintegration and Community Resilience

Civic Space Strengthening

Gender and the Criminal Justice System



Access to Justice

The Nigerian Criminal Justice System does not always announce its failures loudly. Sometimes it is simply the absence of a lawyer in a courtroom, a case file that has not moved in two years, a man in a cell who does not know what he is charged with. These quiet failures accumulate into lives derailed. This is the terrain Hope Behind Bars Africa works in.

Across several states including FCT, Nasarawa, Edo, Kaduna, Kano, Ogun, Lagos, Niger, Katsina, and Zamfara, Hope Behind Bars Africa maintained frontline legal response for persons facing prolonged pre-trial detention or unlawful detention without representation. Through custodial visits, case documentation, and coordinated legal representation, HBBA delivered rapid, rights-based legal support to those most excluded from the justice system.

600
legal representations

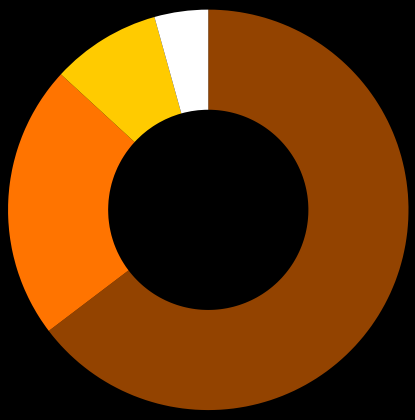
₦1,865,000
paid in fines on behalf of indigent detainees

527
Men Represented

73
Women Represented

93
correctional facility visits contributing to decongestion efforts

80
Lawyers Engaged



Samuel was unjustly detained for 10 Months over items that got missing while he was on leave at work

When Samuel packed his bag for his annual leave, his freedom was the last thing he thought he would lose. The 25-year-old security guard was accused of in connection with items that went missing at the school where he worked while he was away on leave. He was arrested and was detained for 10 months without legal representation, until Hope Behind Bars Africa took up his case.

His bail conditions were set at ₦700,000, with a Level 14 civil servant required as surety — an impossible standard for someone in Samuel's position.



Samuel pictured with the Programs Associate (Access to Justice)

Hope Behind Bars Africa applied to the court to vary the conditions. The court granted the request, reducing bail to ₦100,000 and accepting any civil servant within the court's jurisdiction as surety. It still took Samuel three months to meet even those reduced conditions.

He is now out on bail, trying to get back on his feet and support his sick father, while his trial continues.

Okenwa spent a year behind bars, fighting a murder charge until he was acquitted and freed.

Okenwa was at work when a man was killed in his neighbourhood. He was wrongfully accused of conspiracy and murder. The police arrested him on the basis of a witness who mentioned that a "Junior" was present at the scene. He informed them that another young man who shared the same name lived in their compound and had fled after the incident and that he was at work. The police did not investigate, instead they charged Okenwa Junior to court and sent him to Oko Correctional Centre, Benin City.



Okenwa pictured with a HBBA Volunteer Lawyer

Hope Behind Bars Africa represented him throughout a two-year trial. In court, every prosecution witness confirmed under cross-examination that they had never seen Okenwa Junior at the scene and that he had no involvement in the alleged crime. His counsel demonstrated that the prosecution had failed to establish any case of conspiracy or murder against him. The court agreed. Okenwa Junior was discharged and acquitted.

Amaka had her baby behind bars, because she could not afford her fine

Amaka Pascal was several months pregnant when she was arrested and detained on charges of conspiracy and theft. She had been working as a Point of Sale operator for her employer, who accused her of conspiring with others to divert money from the business



Arraigned on two counts, Amaka pleaded guilty to the conspiracy charge and was sentenced to one year and six months, with an option of a ₦100,000 fine. Unable to pay, she remained in custody at Oko Correctional Centre, and eventually gave birth to her son, Joel, behind bars..



When Hope Behind Bars Africa learned of her case, we paid the fine, as supported by a generous donation.

We also welcomed Amaka and baby Joel to our Edo State office, where an anonymous donor, moved by her story, provided additional support for her and her child.

Payment of fines

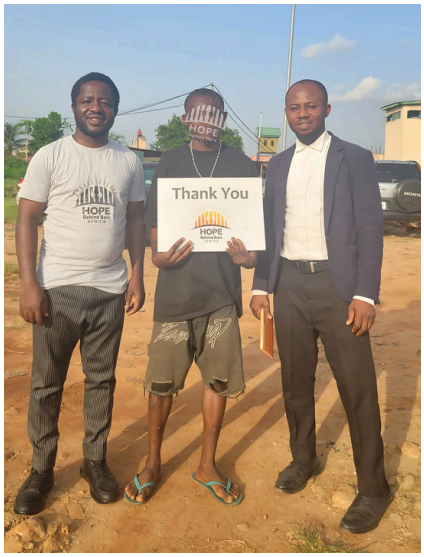


The payment of fines as a condition for release is often presented as a humane alternative to custodial sentencing. In practice, it disproportionately punishes the poor. Across Nigeria's correctional facilities, people languish for fines attached to trivial offences - amounts as low as ₦20,000, unable to pay sums that would barely register as significant to anyone with a stable income. This justice system penalises poverty while the underlying causes of crime go unaddressed.

In 2025, Hope Behind Bars Africa paid a cumulative total of **₦1,865,000** in fines across its states of operation, through multiple interventions throughout the year. Among those reached is a man who remained behind bars even after getting a reduced bail of ₦25,000 as he could not afford even the subsidised one, and a technician who travelled to Niger State on a job and ended up spending months in custody over a disputed repair job, needing only ₦30,000 to walk free. The fines paid are not the solution. They are a response to an immediate need while the deeper work of systemic reform continues. Poverty is not a crime, and Hope Behind Bars Africa will continue to advocate for its decriminalisation within the Criminal Justice System.







Jail Delivery with the Chief Judge of the FCT



Hope Behind Bars Africa participated in multiple jail delivery exercises led by the Chief Judge of the FCT, Hon. Justice Husseini Baba-Yusuf, across custodial facilities in Kuje, Keffi, and Suleja. This represented a significant expansion from the previous year, reflecting both the growing urgency of decongestion and our deepening role in the process. Cases reviewed included an elder imprisoned for eleven years without a verdict, a man detained for stealing spinach leaves, and a group of unarmed women held following a peaceful religious protest.

Hope Behind Bars Africa provided legal representation, paid fines to secure the release of indigent detainees, advocated against unjust detentions, and raised concerns about conditions inside the facilities, including malnourishment, illness, and a transport system so strained that detainees regularly arrive at court after sessions have ended.

Adoption of Non-Custodial Sentencing

Nigeria's correctional facilities are congested. Particularly those in urban areas. Cells built for dozens hold hundreds. For minor, non-violent offences, custodial sentences deepen the crisis — separating people from families, exposing them to hardened criminal networks, and returning them to their communities worse off.

Peter Johnson's case shows what a different approach. A security guard who stole from his employer, he pleaded guilty without minimising his actions, showing remorse and a willingness to make things right. Hope Behind Bars Africa identified the case and represented him. The court sentenced him to two months of community service cleaning court premises. He would not be added to an already overcrowded facility.



Peter Johnson pictured with Dorcas Anaja, Programs Associate (Access to Justice)

Rapid Response to Justice Emergencies

When people or their loved ones make their first contact with the criminal justice system, the law offers little support to someone who does not know how to reach it.

The toll-free line bridges that gap. By providing a direct, cost-free channel for legal assistance, it ensures that individuals in remote or underserved areas can access support without financial or geographical barriers.

In 2025, Hope Behind Bars Africa's Toll-free line received over 100 calls from individuals and families navigating urgent justice situations across Nigeria. Each call was met with direct legal advice and support - a first response to people who, in many cases, had nowhere else to turn.

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Justice & Rights in Digital Spaces



The world is a global village, and digitalisation has opened new possibilities for connection, expression, and access to information. It has also created new vulnerabilities, and for many young Nigerians, those vulnerabilities are poorly understood and even more poorly protected.

From unlawful device searches and wrongful arrests based on social media activity, to online gender-based violence and the criminalisation of digital expression, the intersection of technology and justice presents urgent and largely unresolved challenges for young Nigerians.

Law Day 2025

With the support of the Embassy of France in Nigeria, Hope Behind Bars Africa partnered with Nile University of Nigeria and the University of Benin to deliver the "Know the Law, Know Your Digital Rights & Obligations" programme - a targeted initiative responding to the growing misuse of digital laws and the rise of technology-facilitated gender-based violence among young Nigerians.
Over a four-week period across Abuja and Edo State, the programme reached over 500 students through campus awareness sessions, the distribution of 500 simplified legal pamphlets, and a youth-led social media campaign.

Students gained practical knowledge of their rights and obligations under the Cybercrimes Act, the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act, and the Data Protection Act, laws that directly govern their digital lives but remain largely unknown to those they are meant to protect.

Female students, in particular, reported greater awareness of how to identify and respond to technology-facilitated gender-based violence, and greater confidence in knowing where to seek redress.

The **#MyImageMyRight** social media challenge amplified the programme's reach beyond campuses, generating over 5,000 engagements across TikTok and Instagram, elevating youth voices against non-consensual image sharing, cyberbullying, and online abuse. The top three participants were awarded cash prizes and internship opportunities at Hope Behind Bars Africa.



The programme left behind an active network of youth advocates, strengthened partnerships with university law clinics, and expanded visibility for HBBA's toll-free hotline as a rapid-response mechanism for digital rights violations.

100,000+
engagement of Social Media

500+
Students reached directly

500
Digital Rights Passports Distributed

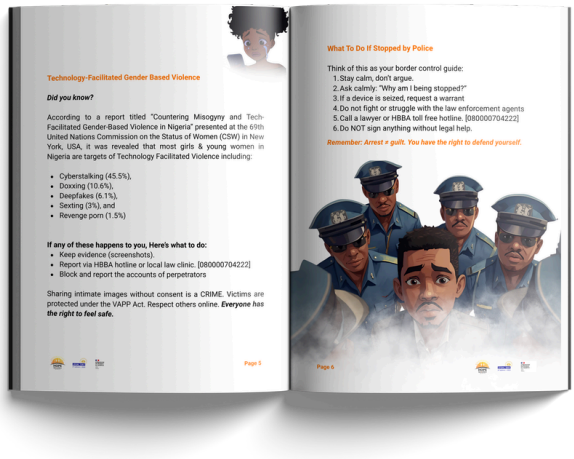


Digital Rights Passport



For many young Nigerians, the gap between having rights and knowing how to exercise them is wide. Laws exist to protect them online, against unlawful device searches, cyberstalking, wrongful arrest, and technology-facilitated gender-based violence, but awareness of those protections remains dangerously low. The Digital Rights Passport was created to close that gap.





Designed as a practical, easy-to-use guide, the passport puts the law in plain language, translating complex legal provisions into clear, actionable information that any young person can understand and apply. It covers digital rights under Nigerian law, the behaviours that put young people at risk of arrest, and dedicated guidance on technology-facilitated gender-based violence, equipping young women in particular with the knowledge to identify violations, preserve evidence, and seek redress. It also tells readers what to do if stopped by police and where to find help when things go wrong.

Hope Behind Bars Africa will continue to build on this foundation, ensuring that no young Nigerian navigates the digital world without knowing their rights.

Scan to access your Digital Rights Passport















Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Community Resilience



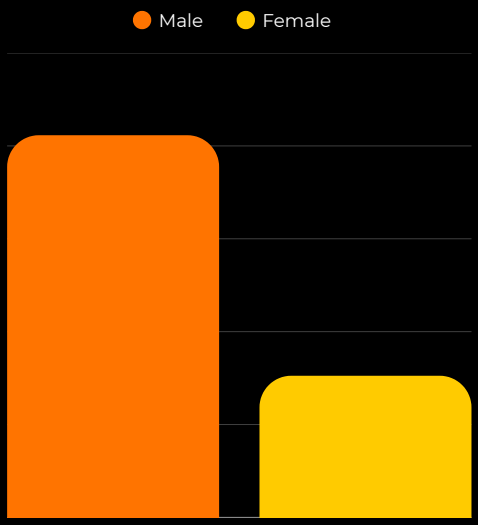
Rehabilitation, reintegration, and community resilience are not afterthoughts to justice; they are its completion. Crime does not exist in isolation. It is shaped by poverty, inequality, and the absence of support structures that allow people to make different choices. Addressing it meaningfully requires going beyond the courtroom and the correctional facility, into communities, families, and the lives of individuals who, with the right intervention, can rebuild and contribute.

For justice-impacted individuals in Nigeria, release from detention is rarely the end of the struggle. It is often the beginning of a different one. Without deliberate support, that transition fails. And when it fails, everyone bears the cost.



1128

incarcerated lives improved through rehabilitation and reintegration programs



Civic Accord: Enabling Voice, Justice & Opportunity

In Northern Nigeria, many people leave detention with no skills and no clear path forward. Through Civic Accord, supported by the Royal Norwegian Embassy, we set up vocational hubs inside the Kuje and Keffi New correctional facilities, equipping inmates with practical skills.
Beyond skills, the programme incorporates mental health support and leadership development, recognising that reintegration is not only about finding work, but about rebuilding confidence and a sense of direction.

Over 200 incarcerated individuals benefited, gaining the tools they need for life after release.









Farming Justice: Cultivating Restoration and Economic Inclusion

Through the Farming Justice Project, supported by the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC II) Programme, we worked across the FCT, Lagos, and Edo states to integrate modern agribusiness and climate smart agriculture with psychological reform inside correctional facilities.





We trained over 1000 inmates and officers using the Mind Reformation Training Model, bridging agricultural skill-building with personal accountability across multiple farming activities.

Beyond the facilities, we provided post-release farming kits to support individuals returning to society with economic opportunity.







Nelson Mandela Day 2025



On Nelson Mandela International Day, in partnership with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), we took the spirit of the day to Suleja Custodial Centre, not just with relief materials, but with legal action.

Led by the Executive Secretary of the NHRC, Dr Anthony Ojukwu SAN, mni, our team documented cases for pro bono lawyers and facilitated the release of four inmates through fine payments totalling ₦500,000.

Hundreds of incarcerated individuals also received toiletries and food supplies, addressing immediate needs and restoring a measure of dignity.

Beyond relief, we ran sensitisation sessions for over 50 correctional officers and delegates on the Nelson Mandela Rules and the Bangkok Rules, equipping those who manage detention with a clearer understanding of rights-based practice.

The day strengthened our working relationship with the NHRC and correctional leadership, and reinforced what we believe: that the principles Mandela stood for must be practised every day, not only celebrated once a year.

Menstrual Hygiene Day 2025

Behind bars, menstrual health is rarely given the attention it deserves. Access to hygiene products can be limited, and accurate health information is not always available to incarcerated women. For many, this gap compounds an already difficult experience.

In partnership with the Nigerian Correctional Service, we marked World Menstrual Hygiene Day at the Suleja Custodial Centre with a health session led by the facility's medical officer. The session covered proper use and disposal of menstrual products, personal hygiene during menstruation, pain management, warning signs of infection, and menopause.

This was followed by an open question and answer session that gave incarcerated women the opportunity to address longstanding concerns about their menstrual health.
The engagement made clear how much the session was needed.

The session closed with the distribution of menstrual hygiene products donated by Hope Behind Bars Africa, ensuring that the day left the women not just better informed, but better equipped.





Civic Space Strengthening

A functioning democracy depends on people who are informed, engaged, and free to speak. But across Nigeria, that freedom is under pressure.

Civic space is shrinking. Journalists face restriction, activists are silenced through SLAPPs, and many communities lack the basic civic education needed to understand or assert their rights.

Addressing this requires more than legal defence.

It requires building a culture where rights are known, claimed, and protected, where individuals and communities have the knowledge and confidence to participate in the decisions that affect their lives.

For those working on the frontlines of accountability in Nigeria, the risks are real. And without deliberate support, the voices that hold power to account grow quieter. That cost is borne by everyone.



Daniel Akande and the 11

On 24th August 2024, Nigerians took to the streets to protest against bad governance. Of the 119 people arrested, 11 were singled out as alleged ringleaders, among them Daniel Akande, who was picked up during a church service. He and the others were held for over 45 days without charge, before facing accusations of treason, simply for demanding a better government.



Hope Behind Bars Africa showed up. We sustained online advocacy throughout the case and were present at every court hearing, standing with the defendants through months of legal exhaustion and stringent bail conditions. The prosecution could not produce a single witness or piece of evidence. By December 2025, the court struck out all charges. All 11 walked free.

This was a win, not just for Daniel and his co-defendants, but for democracy.



Isah Mokwa spent 34 days in custody over a social media post

Isah Mokwa, a 29-year-old postgraduate student at Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, was arrested late at night on 23rd October 2025, hours after warning on Facebook that police had been asking for him. His offence was criticising the Niger State Governor over delayed flood relief, unpaid pensions, and neglect of his university.

He was charged with cyberbullying, cyberstalking, criminal defamation, and inciting disturbance, among others. Despite the Chief Magistrate Court ruling it lacked jurisdiction, Mokwa remained in custody.

Hope Behind Bars Africa, alongside his lawyer Ibrahim Usman Wali Esq., filed bail applications at the Niger State High Court and the Federal High Court in Minna. Bail was granted. The charges remain, and so does our commitment to his legal representation.

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly (FOPA)

Young Nigerians are increasingly stepping up for change, but for many, civic action comes with real risks. Unlawful arrest, intimidation, and legal uncertainty have made the simple act of standing up a daunting one. The right to peaceful assembly exists on paper, but without legal literacy, it offers little protection in practice.



With support from the CIVICUS Alliance, we launched the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly (FOPA) programme; a nationwide initiative to equip young people with the legal knowledge to protect themselves when they speak out.

Over five weeks, we delivered an online curriculum covering constitutional rights, de-escalation strategies, and how to document violations. Of over 350 applicants, 236 completed the course. Outstanding participants received sub-grants and mentorship to run community sessions, bringing legal education to over 3,000 citizens across the country.





The results were clear. Participants reported stronger understanding of their rights and greater confidence in dealing with law enforcement. Today, FOPA's alumni form an active network of civic advocates - informed, resilient, and ready to lead.

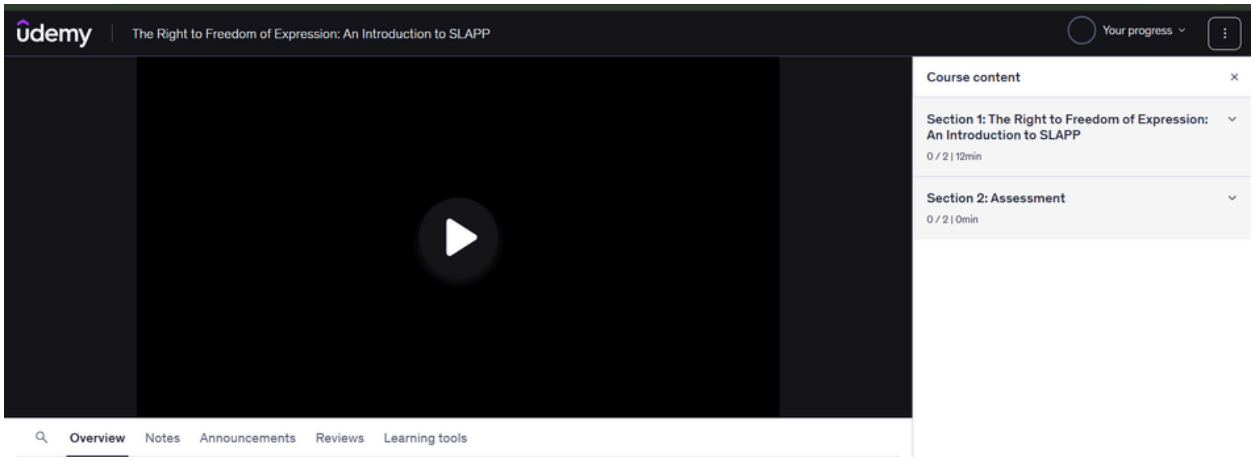
Defend Defenders: Enhancing Action Against Suppressive Laws and Lawsuits in Nigeria

Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) are increasingly used to silence activists, journalists, and civil society actors in Nigeria. The threat of legal harassment alone is enough to discourage people from speaking out.

Through Defend Defenders: Enhancing Action Against Suppressive Laws and Lawsuits in Nigeria, supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), we worked to push back against this growing threat to civic freedoms.



We produced a policy brief outlining the social and economic impact of legal harassment, launched an online explainer course to help civil society organisations and lawyers identify and respond to SLAPPs, and amplified public awareness through digital campaigns and The Freedom Mic podcast series.



By the end of the year, policy dialogue around the Human Rights Defenders Bill had gained traction, and cross-sector collaboration on defensive legal strategies had strengthened.

Gender and Death Penalty



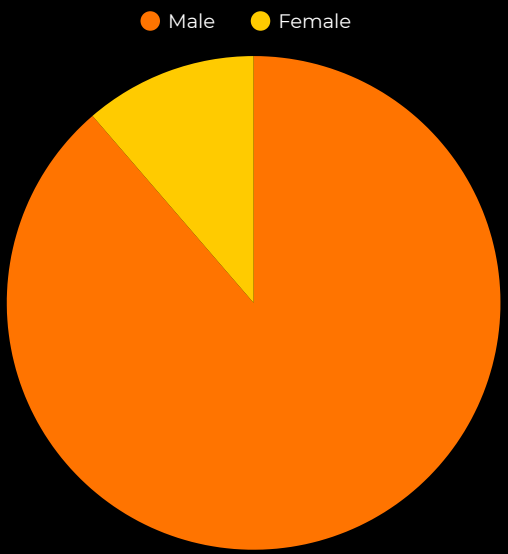
The death penalty is irreversible. In a justice system shaped by poor investigations, coerced confessions, and systemic bias, that finality is deeply troubling. For women, the risks are compounded.

Many on death row have histories of gender-based violence and economic hardship that are rarely considered in sentencing.

Many facing capital charges have histories of gender-based violence and economic hardship that are rarely acknowledged in court.

Sentencing is often shaped by bias rather than circumstance, and the legal system frequently fails to account for the realities that brought them there.

Addressing this requires more than representation in individual cases. It requires challenging the structures that allow these outcomes — advocating for gender-sensitive legal reforms, engaging local and international accountability mechanisms, and ensuring that the lived experiences of women are not invisible in capital punishment proceedings.



Capital Punishment Cases handled by Hope Behind Bars Africa in 2025

Beyond her Sentence: A Technical Analysis of Gender and Capital Punishment in Nigeria

Women on death row in Nigeria remain largely invisible in public discourse. Limited data and minimal documentation of their lived experiences have long weakened the case for reform.

To address this, supported by the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty and the Agence Française de Développement, we conducted qualitative and desk-based research across selected custodial centres, interviewing 60 of the 82 women currently on death row in Nigeria. We documented legal patterns, socio-economic backgrounds, and the systemic vulnerabilities shaping their sentences.





Stakeholders Validation Meeting with the National Human Rights Commission



Formal Launch of the Research on Gender and the Death Penalty

In October, in partnership with the National Human Rights Commission, we convened a national validation meeting bringing together government agencies, civil society, diplomatic missions, and media actors to review the findings and strengthen their policy relevance.

The report was formally launched on 9 December 2025, in partnership with the Nigerian Correctional Service.

Journalist Briefing on Capital Punishment and Broader Criminal Justice Matters in Nigeria

In partnership with the Australian High Commission in Nigeria, we hosted a briefing for 21 journalists from across the country on capital punishment and broader criminal justice issues.

The session addressed the legal and human rights dimensions of the death penalty under Nigerian and international law, the variation in capital laws across Nigeria's 36 states, and the gendered realities of women on death row, many of whom are survivors of domestic violence whose histories are rarely investigated or reflected in sentencing.

Participants also engaged with the broader question of whether capital punishment serves as a deterrent, in a country where over 3,400 people remain on death row — one of the highest figures in Africa.

The briefing aimed to sharpen how journalists report on these issues, recognising that media narratives play a significant role in shaping public understanding of justice and accountability.



Stakeholders Engagement

3rd Public Hearing of the Independent Investigative Panel on the Nigerian Correctional Service



Hope Behind Bars Africa appeared before the 3rd Public Hearing of the Independent Investigative Panel on the Nigerian Correctional Service, calling for improved borstal homes, stronger oversight, and better collaboration between the Nigerian Correctional Service, remand homes, and state institutions in the treatment of children and young persons in custody.

Lagos State Correctional Bill Hearing

Hope Behind Bars Africa participated in a public hearing on the Lagos State Correctional Bill 2025, organised by the Lagos State House of Assembly.

The 68-clause Bill seeks to decongest correctional facilities, strengthen monitoring mechanisms, and expand rehabilitation and skill acquisition opportunities for inmates - objectives closely aligned with our mission to promote human rights within the correctional system.



Stakeholders Engagement

Joint Monitoring and Legal Aid for children in detention



Hope Behind Bars Africa joined the Legal Aid Council, UNICEF Nigeria, and the European Union for a project orientation on legal aid and monitoring for children and young adults in detention at Kuje, Suleja, and Keffi custodial centres - an initiative aimed at locating, representing, and reuniting minors with their families.

Nigeria Drug Law and Policy Reform Summit - NHRC

Hope Behind Bars Africa participated in a roundtable convened by the National Human Rights Commission to mark World Drug Day 2025.

We advocated for the decriminalisation and destigmatisation of people who use drugs, an end to the death penalty for drug offences, and reform of the NDLEA Act.



Stakeholders Engagement

Legal Aid Council and International IDEA Stakeholder Meeting



Hope Behind Bars Africa participated in a stakeholder meeting convened by the Legal Aid Council of Nigeria and International IDEA to strengthen access to justice, sharing updates from our work supporting over 1,000 individuals during the EndBadGovernance protests and ongoing legal interventions across custodial centres.

Nigerian Bar Association SPIDEL Conference

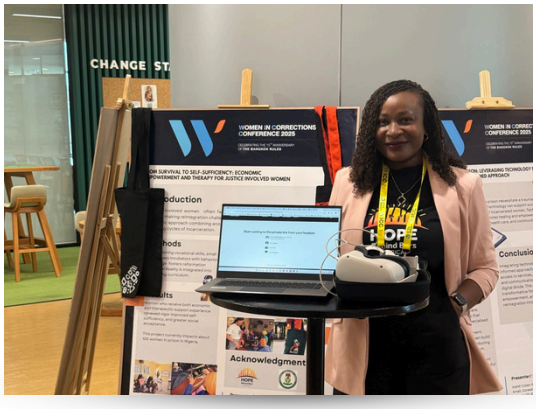
Hope Behind Bars Africa participated in the Nigerian Bar Association SPIDEL Conference, and held discussions with the Director General of the Legal Aid Council of Nigeria and zonal representatives from Northern Nigeria on collaboration under the Civic Accord Project. We also sponsored delegates to the conference, strengthening our institutional relationship with a key partner in expanding access to justice across the region.



Partnerships & Global Positioning

Women in Corrections Conference 2025, Bangkok, Thailand

Our founder represented Hope Behind Bars Africa at the Women in Corrections Conference 2025 in Bangkok, Thailand, showcasing our work with justice-impacted women through the Inside Out Hub and introducing our Virtual Reality training module, which uses immersive simulations to enhance reformation and prepare individuals for life after release.



WeRise! Implementing Partners Meeting, Kampala, Uganda

Our Programs Manager represented Hope Behind Bars Africa at a WeRise! implementing partners meeting in Kampala, Uganda, sharing insights and outcomes from the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly project. The engagement also opened conversations with the Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network, African Defenders, on potential collaboration to strengthen the protection of human rights defenders across Nigeria and the region.



Partnerships & Global Positioning

AfricanDefenders Leadership Summit, Maputo, Mozambique

Our Executive Director represented Hope Behind Bars Africa at the AfricanDefenders Leadership Summit in Maputo, Mozambique, contributing to discussions on strengthening advocacy and protection mechanisms for human rights defenders across the continent.



Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum 2025, Lusaka, Zambia

Our Programs Manager represented Hope Behind Bars Africa at the 2025 Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum in Lusaka, Zambia, moderating a session titled "From Hashtag to Handcuffs", exploring how online activism across Africa is increasingly met with repression and incarceration. The session brought together development experts working in advocacy, research, and direct support for at-risk digital activists, reinforcing our commitment to a world where no one is criminalised for exercising their rights.



Partnerships & Global Positioning

International Bar Association - Outstanding Young Lawyer Award 2025, Toronto, Canada

Our Founder and Executive Director, Funke Adeoye, was named the 2025 Outstanding Young Lawyer by the International Bar Association - one of the most prestigious recognitions in the global legal community. Selected from a global pool of nominees, she was honoured for her work at the intersection of access to justice, human rights, and legal technology.



CIVICUS WeRise!
CIVICUS WeRise! Cohort 2 Onboarding, Abuja, Nigeria

Hope Behind Bars Africa served as the international organising partner for the CIVICUS WeRise! Cohort 2 onboarding week in Abuja, hosting 16 changemakers from movements across Asia, Latin America, MENA, and Africa for a series of strategy sessions focused on protecting civic freedoms.



HBBA in the Media

In 2025, Hope Behind Bars Africa continued to amplify the conversation around criminal justice reform across Africa, featuring in 115 print media publications, 14 television programmes, 2 radio appearances, 5 podcasts, and 4 X Spaces focused on human rights, access to justice, and civic freedoms.

115
News Mentions

2.1m
Impressions across social media platforms

92,478
Social Engagements

1590
Informational Posts shared

138
Media Appearances

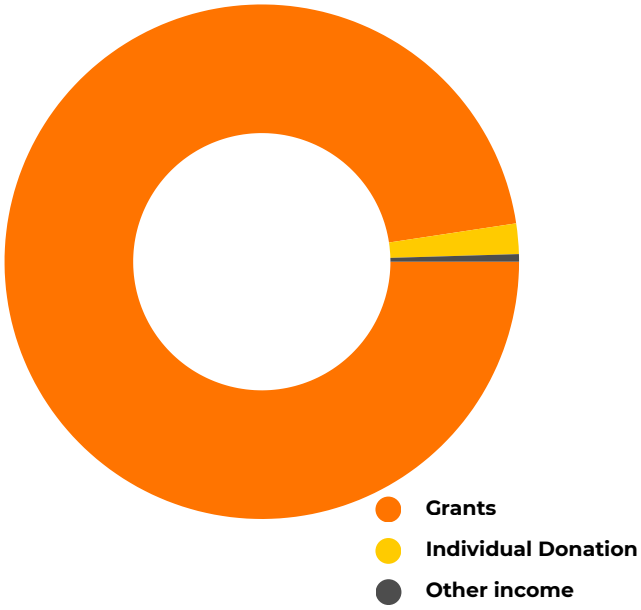
32%
Percentage Follower Increase across all Social platforms

Media Mentions

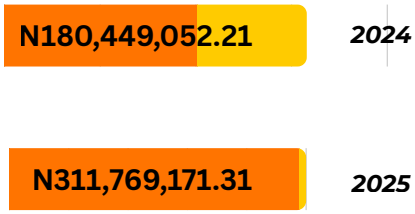
Premium Times · The Nation · Vanguard · ThisDay · Business Day · Punch · Discoverer Nigeria · Foundation for Investigative Journalism · Daily Trust · Sahara Reporters · New Telegraph · TheCable · Sn · Channels · TV360 Nigeria · ait · NAN

Our Finance

2025 Inflow



2024 vs 2025 Inflow



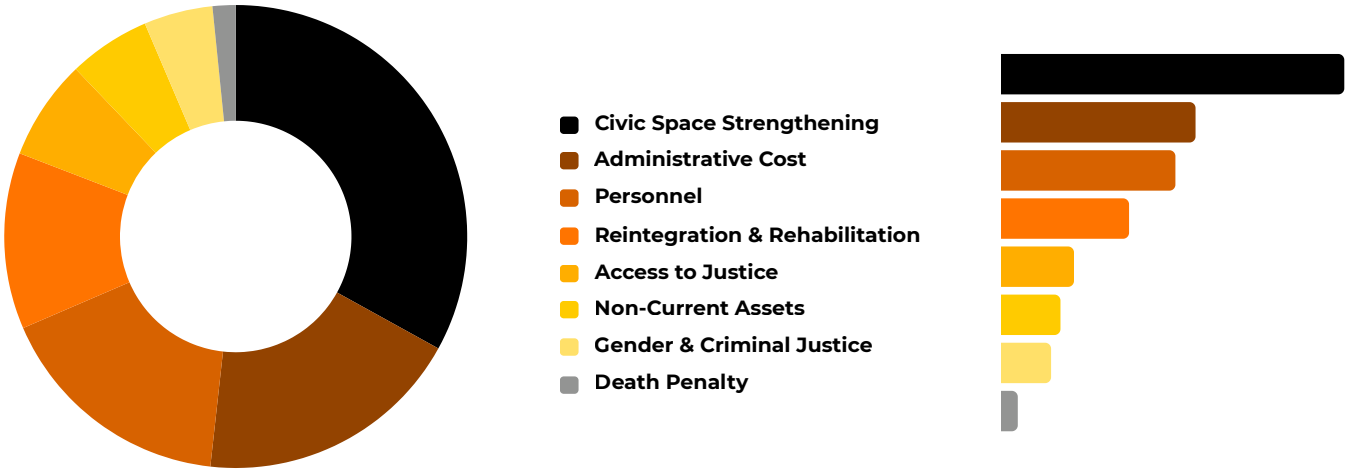
Summary

	Naira
Grants	304,337,014.61
Individual Donations	5,960,923.82
Other Income	1,471,232.88
Total	**311,769,171.31**



Grants *This includes funds contributed by corporate partners, with some initially received in USD and later converted to Naira.*
Individual Donations: *This represents the total contributions from individuals.*
Other Income: *This represents revenue generated from the sale of items and other income-generating activities.*

2025 Outflow



Summary

	Naira
Access to Justice	15,458,616.00
Civic Space Strengthening	72,769,307.46
Rehabilitation and ReIntegration	27,134,947.07
Gender and Criminal Justice	10,601,516.00
Death Penalty	3,540,600.00
Personnel	36,960,397.37
Administrative Cost	41,230,245.06
Non-Current Assets	12,590,696.00
Total	**220,286,324.96**

Our Partners

Financial Partners:

Norwegian Embassy

NED NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY
SUPPORTING FREEDOM AROUND THE WORLD

WORLD COALITION AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

p·d

Funded by the European Union

AMBASSADE DE FRANCE AU NIGÉRIA
Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité

International IDEA
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY AND ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

CIVICUS

Australian High Commission
Nigeria

AFD
AGENCE FRANÇAISE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT

Yar'Adua FOUNDATION

Corporate Partners:

CJID

Foundation for Investigative Journalism

ASHOKA

JSO
J.S. OKUTEPA, SAN & CO

Ashurst

DEJI ADEYANJU & PARTNERS

KENNA PARTNERS

Institutional Partners:

MINISTRY OF INTERIOR

NIGERIAN CORRECTIONAL SERVICE

NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION
PROMOTING THE RULE OF LAW

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

ADMINISTRATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE MONITORING COMMITTEE

LEGAL AID COUNCIL OF NIGERIA

FMYD
FEDERAL MINISTRY OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Individual Donors



Volunteers



People Management



As our work and impact continued to grow in 2025, so did our commitment to building a people-centered organization where teamwork, learning, and staff well-being remain a priority. We began the year with a three-day retreat that provided an opportunity for reflection, strategic planning, learning, and team bonding. The retreat set the tone for the year ahead and reinforced our shared commitment to advancing justice and dignity for vulnerable communities.

2025 marked our 7th year, and we celebrated this milestone with an Anniversary dinner that brought together staff, partners, and supporters to reflect on our journey and collective impact over the years.

Throughout the year, our team continued to grow, with an increase in staff strength across our offices and the onboarding of new talent to support our expanding work. We also celebrated the promotion of several team members in recognition of their dedication, growth, and contributions to the organization.

In addition, we recognized outstanding performance through our internal awards, including Staff of the Year, Team Player, and Most Improved, honouring individuals who demonstrated excellence, collaboration, and significant growth over the year

Like every evolving organization, we experienced transitions within the team, including the departure of two staff members whose contributions we deeply appreciated. At the same time, we remained committed to staff welfare by implementing salary adjustments in response to prevailing economic realities and continuing efforts to create a more supportive work environment for our team.

Beyond the work itself, we intentionally created moments for connection and celebration. We wrapped up the year with a lively end-of-year party filled with laughter, reflection, and appreciation for the resilience and hard work of the entire team throughout 2025.





Board of Trustee



Nguemo Uja



Stanley Ibe



Funke Adeoye



Gabriel Okeowo



Winnie Ishaku

Humans of HBBA



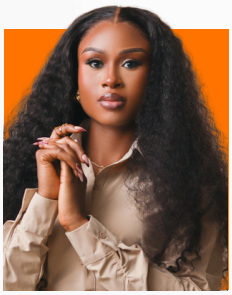
Funke Adeoye
Executive Director



Hassan Nurudeen
Program Manager



Sarah Dantsoho
Monitoring and Evaluation Lead



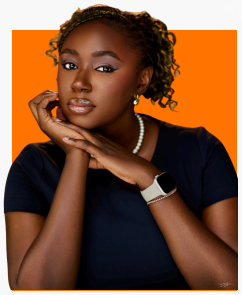
Caroline Iyiola
Finance Lead



Omokuwa Yamah
Operations Lead



Ogechi Ogwuma
Communications Associate



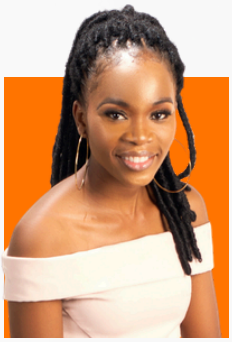
Dorcas Anaja
Programs Associate



Pauline Olorunyomi
Programs Associate



Onaopemipo Adegbenga
Communications Associate



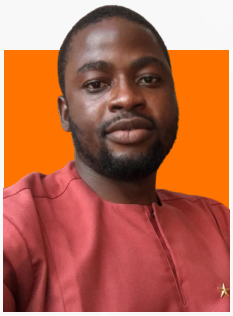
Amen Osagie
Programs Associate



Ibrahim Rasheed
Programs Intern



Theophilus Okedokun
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ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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