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# CONFLICT SCAN

May 2022

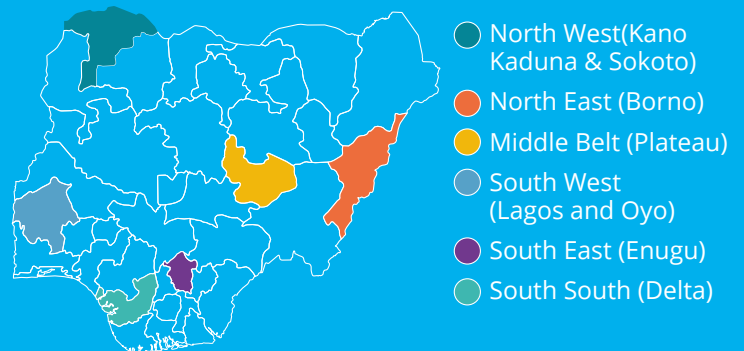
# Nigeria

## Introduction

The ongoing conflict in northeastern Nigeria and the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to exacerbate food insecurity, malnutrition and general living conditions of people in the region. At the same time, Nigeria's north-central and north-west zones are afflicted with a multidimensional crisis that is rooted in long-standing tensions between ethnic and religious groups and involves attacks by criminal groups and banditry/hirabah (such as kidnapping and grand larceny along major highways).<sup>1</sup> All these are in addition to a variety of complex conflict issues ranging from political, ethnic, religious, resource-based, and economic related issues that is plaguing the country.

## Data collection and analysis

Data for the fourth conflict scan report for Nigeria was gathered from 19 August to 15 September 2021 in the following target zones: Middle Belt (Plateau), North East (Borno), South East (Enugu), South South (Delta), South West (Lagos and Oyo) and North West (Kano, Kaduna & Sokoto). This report was prepared by the Search for Common Ground (Search) Nigeria team, with support from Search's COVID-19 Response Programming Team and Institutional Learning Team. For more information on the data collection methodology and tools used by Search for Common Ground for this research, click [here](#). This report is part of a series of regular conflict snapshots aimed at providing quick and actionable answers to a set of specific questions. The previous reports for Nigeria can be found [here](#), [here](#) & [here](#).



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1. The official Facebook page of [National Primary Health Care Development Agency](#), November 2021.



## Update: COVID-19 Measures and Impact on Conflict

The chairman of the Presidential Steering Committee (PSC) on COVID-19 announced on 13 October that with effect from 1 December 2021, Federal Government employees shall be required to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination or present a negative PCR test to access their offices, in all locations within Nigeria and its Missions.<sup>2</sup> On 11 January 2022, a total of 249,154 cases have been confirmed, 220,195 cases have been discharged and 3,086 deaths have been recorded across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.<sup>3</sup> The vaccination process remains slow, with only 2.5% of the overall population (approximately 5.2 million people) being fully vaccinated.<sup>4</sup> On 19 November, the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) flagged off the national mass vaccination campaign at the country's capital Abuja, and commenced a nationwide operation to verify COVID-19 vaccination records and validate vaccination cards. The exercise is to allow vaccinated individuals to correct damaged QR codes and confirm personal information and to identify those acquired fraudulently.<sup>5</sup>

	<b>Schools open</b>
	<b>Teleworking not mandatory</b>
	<b>Borders/airports open</b>
	<b>All services/sectors open</b>
	<b>Mask wearing mandatory</b>

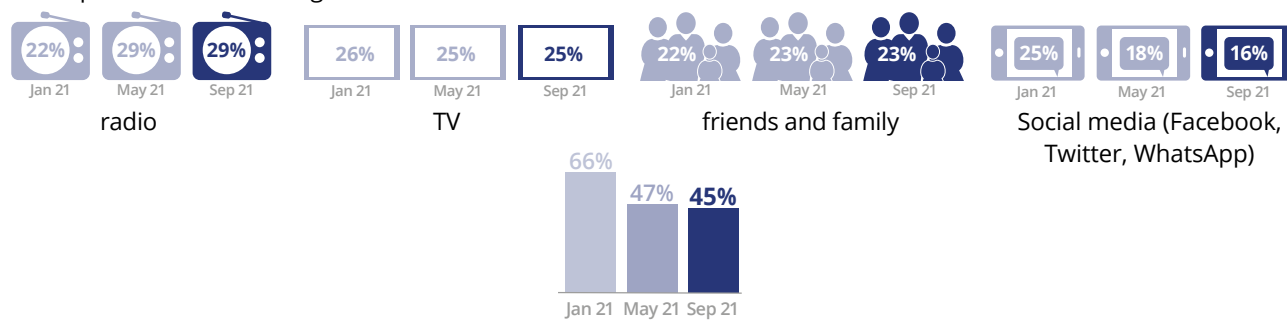
Since the start of the vaccination process in March 2021, some Nigerians have voiced concerns about accessing the vaccine, while others expressed fear, doubt, or hesitancy about taking the vaccine despite assurances from authorities and experts.<sup>6</sup> To this end, Lagos state end October launched a massive vaccination campaign tagged 'Count Me In', to ensure 4 million people are vaccinated by end December 2021. However, the Lagos state government has complicated the situation by extending the administration of the vaccine to private health facilities, thereby allowing them to charge 6,000 Naira (13€) as administrative charge<sup>7</sup> which makes it difficult for the poor to access the vaccine, since the public facilities that administer for free are either congested or may be hurding the vaccines.

The country continues to face dire socio-economic challenges and rising insecurity as the pandemic has placed Nigeria at a critical juncture. Across the country and amid armed conflicts, food insecurity is compounded by the pandemic's effects on the food value chain in the country. The pandemic has significantly disrupted already fragile value chains across the country, including people's ability to produce, process, and distribute food. The disruption to agricultural productivity and markets has a negative knock-on impact on livelihoods, especially among the most vulnerable households.<sup>8</sup>

## COVID-19's Impact on Social Cohesion & Trust

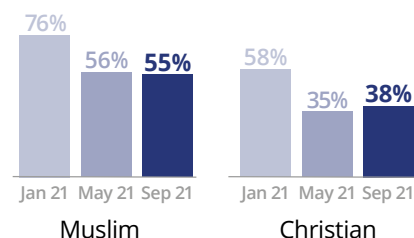
Over the past year, trust in COVID-19 information on the radio increased and so has informal information sharing

The top trusted sources to get information about COVID-19 are:



listened to our radio programmes<sup>9,10</sup>

On average, more Muslims listen to our radio programmes than Christians. Many people believe that radio stations provide mostly information by/about government and the low levels of trust in government and the information they provide actually make people wary of local radio and television outlets. Moreover, as observed in our previous reports, Christians usually have lower levels of trust in the government than Muslims.



2. Premium Times, "COVID-19: Nigerian govt makes vaccination mandatory for civil servants", October 2021.

3. NCDC, "COVID-19 NIGERIA", January 2022.

4. WHO, "COVID-19 Dashboard- Nigeria", January 2022.

5. The official Facebook page of National Primary Health Care Development Agency, November 2021.

6. Africa News, "Covid 19: Nigerians hesitant to get vaccinated", April 2021.

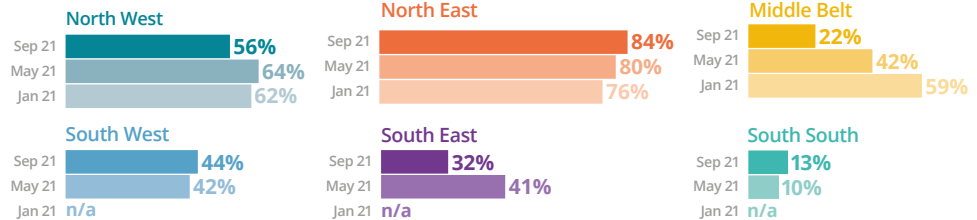
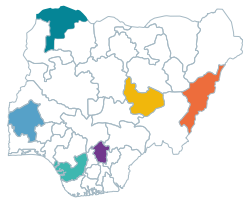
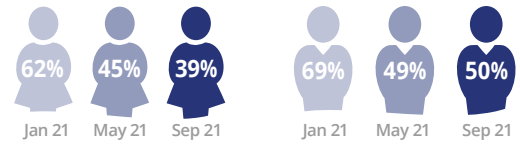
7. The official Facebook page of The National Primary Health Care Development Agency, October 2021.

8. USAID, "USAID/NIGERIA COVID-19 FOOD SECURITY CHALLENGE", October 2021.

9. Search for Common Ground, together with its local radio partners, produced (i) "Working together against Corona" aired on our radio partners: Jay FM (Plateau), Vision FM (Sokoto), Freedom FM (Kano), Dream FM (Enugu) Kpoko FM (Delta), BRTV (Borno), Bond FM (Lagos), and (ii) "We are together" aired on our radio partners: Dream FM (Enugu) Kpoko FM (Delta), BRTV (Borno), Splash FM, Ibadan (Oyo), Bond FM (Lagos).

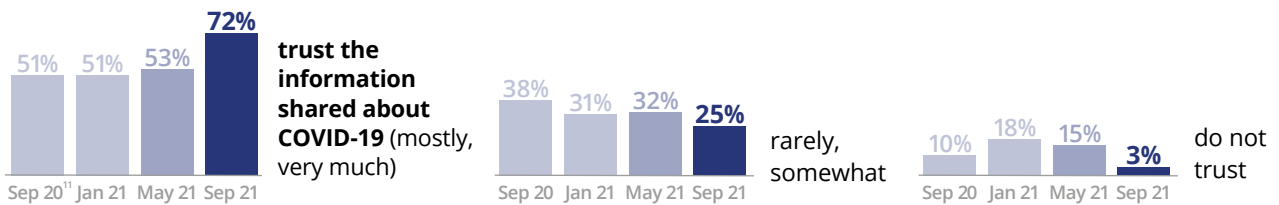
10. This question was not asked during the first round of data collection in September 2020, as broadcasting had not started yet.

Comparing the recent rates of listenership to the rates in Jan '21, we see both gender groups rates decreased, but more significantly for women. Actually, Nigerian women watch more TV programmes rather than listen to the radio, especially in the urban centres. Another issue is that most female respondents in Northern Nigeria needed to seek permissions from their husbands before responding to the media interviews. This is one of the limitations recorded as this can influence their responses and sometimes they are completely not allowed to participate.



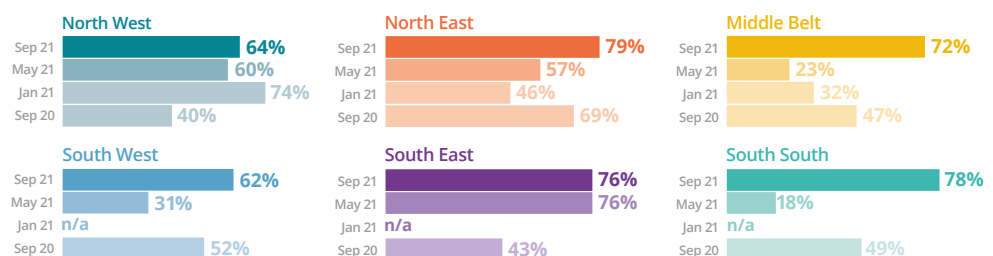
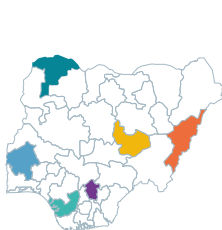
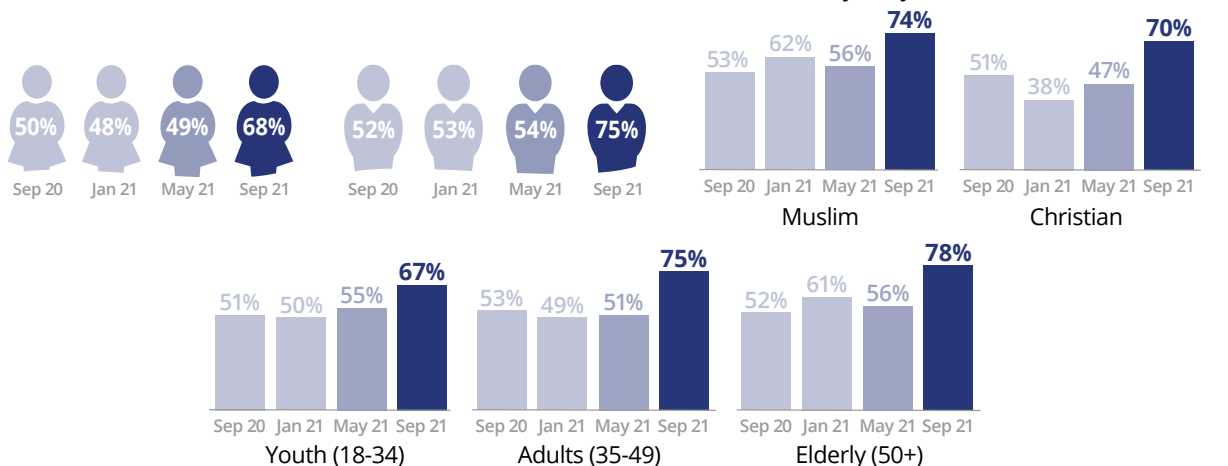
The area with the highest listenership rate is Northeast. South East and Middle Belt regions (areas with majority Christian population) recorded decreases in listenership.

Out of those who listen to our media programmes:

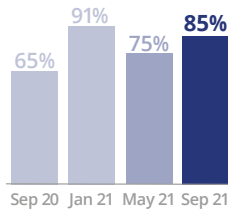


Compared to the previous rounds, trust levels have increased significantly across all demographic groups and in all states, with a particularly noteworthy increase in the South South/Niger Delta area. Sensitization and information sharing on COVID-19 has been ongoing for several months now through media programmes across the different states, and this contributes to a large extent to the increased levels of trust. A visually impaired respondent from Lagos disclosed that she trusts the information shared on the radio and that it has done a great deal in sensitising her and people around her on COVID-19. Another male respondent in Lagos reported that the information has improved their knowledge and helped identify rumours spreading around them.

**Trust the information shared about COVID-19 (mostly, very much)**

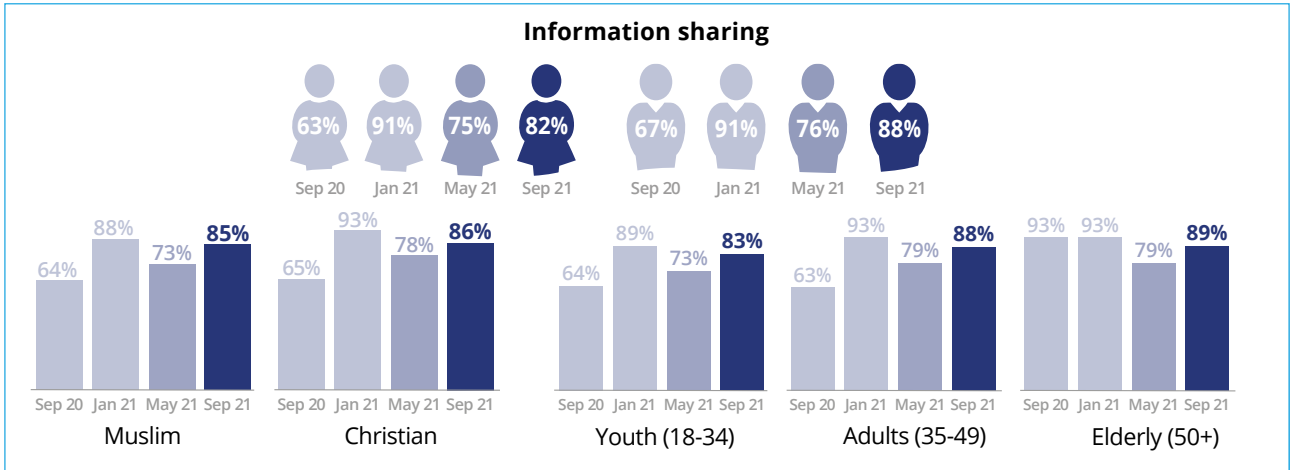


11. In September 2020, respondents were asked about their trust levels in radio programming in general and not specifically about Search's radio programming, as we had not started airing in all states yet.

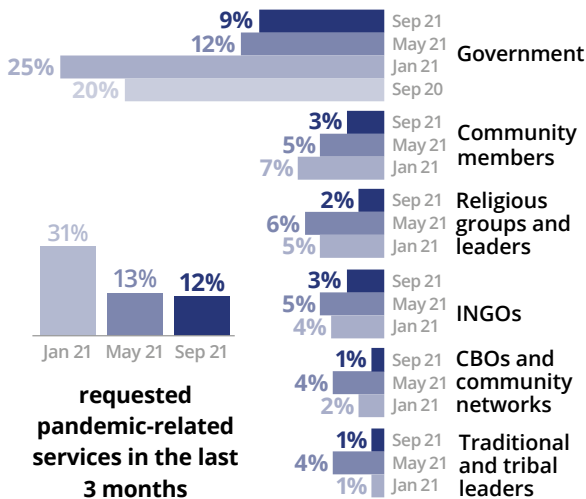


There also was an increase in the number of respondents who share information about COVID-19 with family and friends.

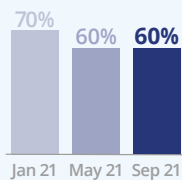
Information sharing



### Satisfaction and trust in the government’s and non-governmental actors’ pandemic response declined significantly in recent months

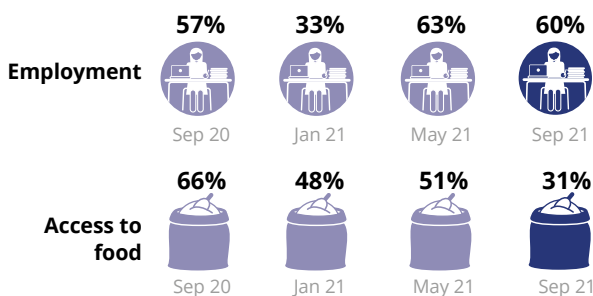


This round recorded a decline in people requesting services from all service providers, including the government. This is in sharp contrast with the high level of people (60%) who say they have lost their main source of income during the pandemic. The high level of dissatisfaction with the government lately could be a reason for this. There has been an astronomical rise in prices of essential goods, including food items, basic commodities, electricity tariff, transportation and others. People feel the government is not sensitive to the plight of its citizens and this has a direct effect on the level of response sought from the government. This perception leads people to believe that their service requests will not be considered and it doesn't matter whether they request any service or not.



% of respondents (or a member of their household) have fully or partially lost their main source of income during the pandemic.

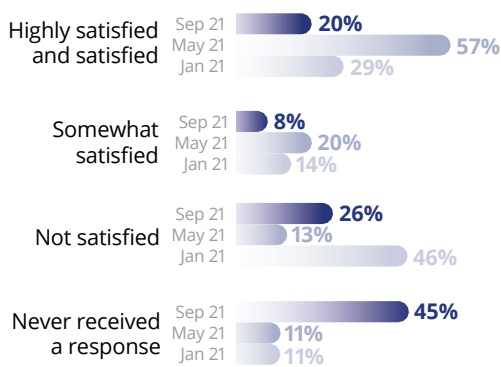
### Top requested services from the government



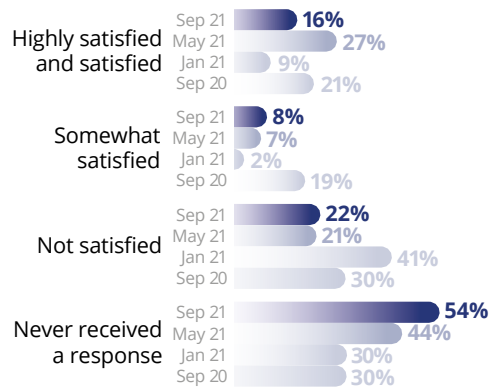
Both employment and access to food remain the top requested services from the government. Requesting access to food has declined during the last round and reached its lowest level in the past year. Given the removal of movement restrictions, people can go out and fend for themselves. Interestingly, 15% of those requested services from any provider, have reported "other COVID-19 related services", and all of them have applied for loans, grants or any financial support.<sup>12</sup>

12. These financial services were defined by the respondents as "other services".

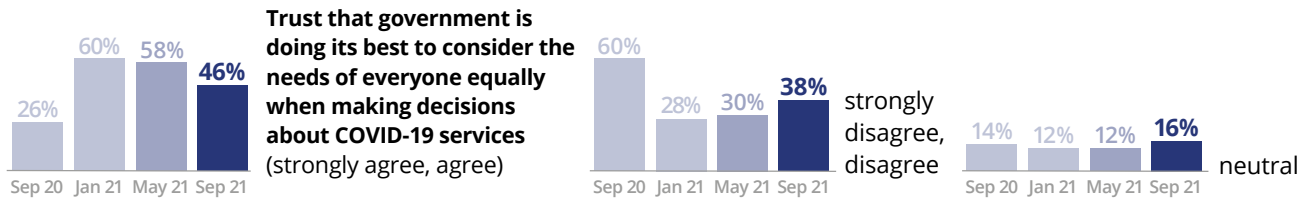
### Satisfaction with Services from all providers



### Satisfaction with Government Services

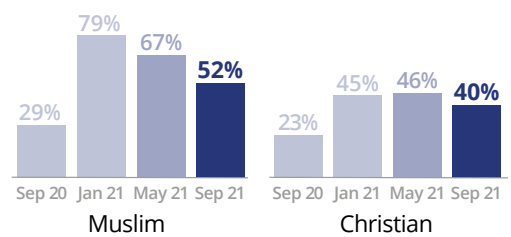


Out of those who sought COVID-19 related services from any service provider, only 20% are satisfied. This decline in the overall satisfaction is driven mainly by the dramatic increase in the amount of people not receiving any response. The existing Social Safety Net Programs target a specific category of the poor based on predefined criteria which were set prior to the pandemic. Considering the pandemic secondary impacts on the socioeconomic situation, these social safety net criteria are not sufficient and not reflecting the new changes in the households economic status. This coincides with serious concerns many Nigerians have about corruption in the overall social assistance management by either the government or politicians. **Satisfaction with services provided by the government is even lower, despite remaining the main-requested service provider, with a staggering 54% not receiving any response.**

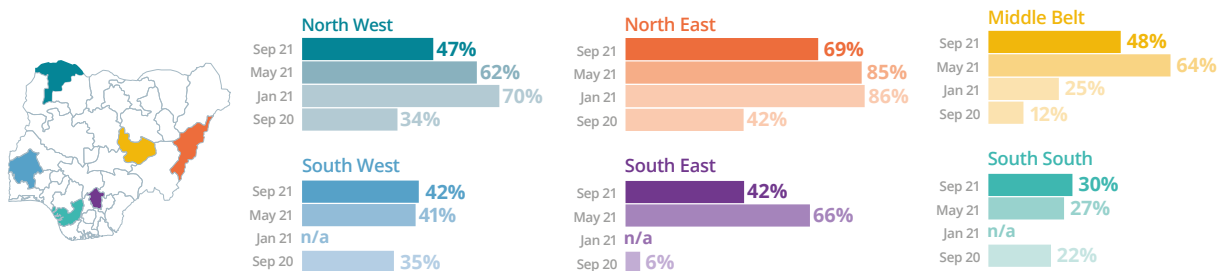


In parallel to declining satisfaction levels, we've also observed **a significant decline in the trust levels in the government for the first time over one year.** This decline is attributed to the way the government is perceived as not being sensitive to the plight of the masses. The rising insecurity across different regions is also a contributory factor. Banditry and kidnapping has ravaged more cities in the Northcentral, Northwest and southern regions, and many feel the government is not doing enough to end criminality and insurgency. Religious leaders have advised the Nigerian President to seek foreign help to end the insecurity in the country.<sup>13</sup>

**Though both religious groups recorded declines in their trust levels, the religious divide in trust in the government's pandemic response remains salient:** Besides the overall factors explained above, as explained in our previous reports, there are prevailing perceptions among Christians that the government prioritises Muslims for service provision.

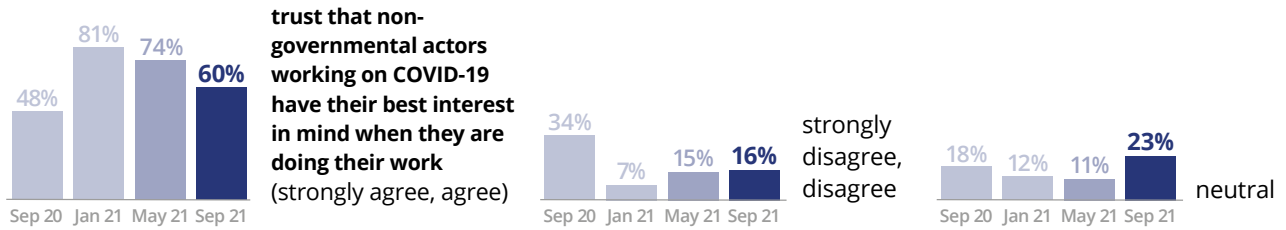


**Almost all regions recorded decreases in their trust levels in the government,** and the South West and South South maintained their relatively low scores. In the South East and by extension the Niger Delta, people feel neglected by the federal government among lingering agitation of secessionist groups. This has led to attacks against government facilities and personnel, and a spike in criminality.

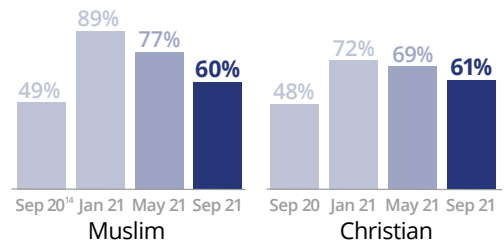


13. Vanguard, "Seek foreign help to end insecurity, Northern Christian Elders tell Buhari", August 2021.

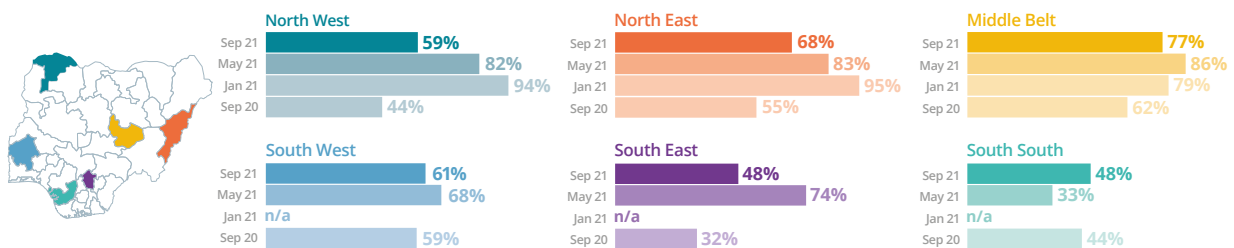
**Trust in non-governmental actors also continued to decline.** This could be a result of poor accountability on the parts of some NGOs, "one-off" style of programming that may not produce enduring impacts, poor funding that may make some NGOs unable to intervene when there is need to do so, and also intervention in areas that may not be the priority area for the communities etc. Some of the NGOs could also be erroneously regarded as the regents of governments both home and abroad.



For the first time since 1 year, there is no gap between the two religious groups, this is mostly because Muslims' trust in non-governmental actors declined dramatically. It might be that NGOs are trying to ensure a better balance between the two major religions in terms of their interventions, which may be perceived by Muslims as diverting assistance away from them.

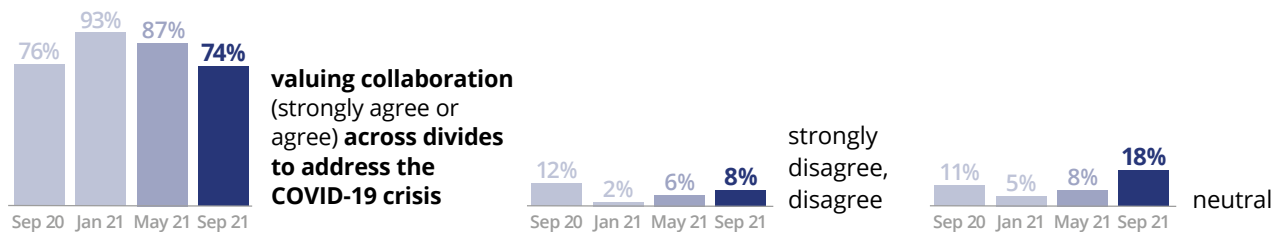


**Only the South South region recorded an increase in trusting non-governmental actors, while the other regions reported dramatic declines.** This region is dominated by a Christian population, the above mentioned explanation could contribute to this increase.



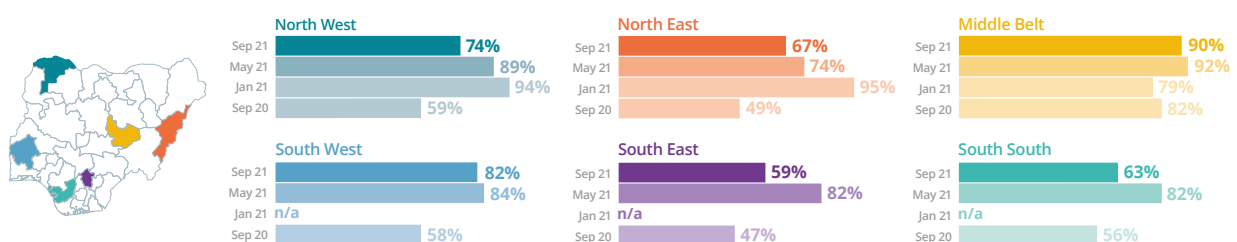
### Levels of horizontal cohesion continue to decline, and are back at pre-pandemic levels

Valuing collaboration across divides (religious and ethnic) declined further during this round, and is now back at the same level as at the onset of the pandemic. So while it seems the pandemic created an incentive for increased empathy and intergroup solidarity during the initial peak of infections, this effect seems to not have been sustained in the longer run. The secondary impacts of the pandemic and the deteriorated security situation in several regions could be straining feelings of inter-group solidarity. Given a fluid situation with a lot of conflicting information and mis-/disinformation on the vaccines and its long term implications, horizontal cohesion remains at risk.



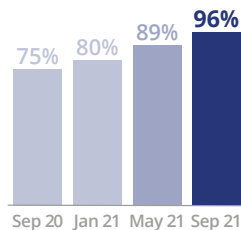
**Value for collaboration across divides decreased in all regions, except the South West and Middle belt.**

Lowest rates are recorded in the South East, South South, and North East. In the South East this could be a result of the ongoing religious and ethnic conflict in Enugu state that started in May 2021 which has exacerbated the level of trust across ethno-religious divides within the period of this report.



14. Though both groups had the same level in September 2020 in terms of trusting these actors, more Muslims (39%) did not trust these actors, compared to 32% for Christians.

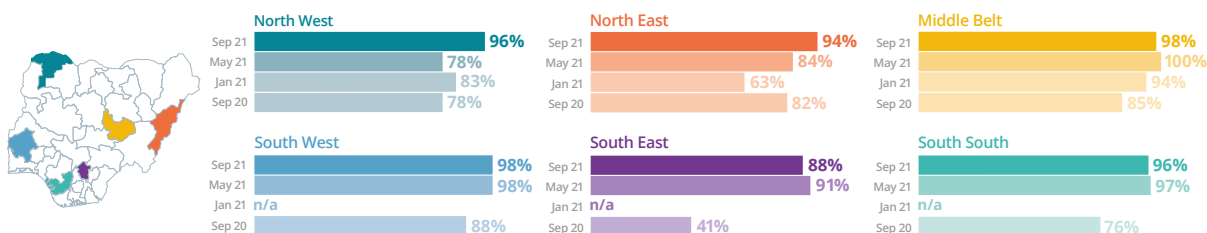
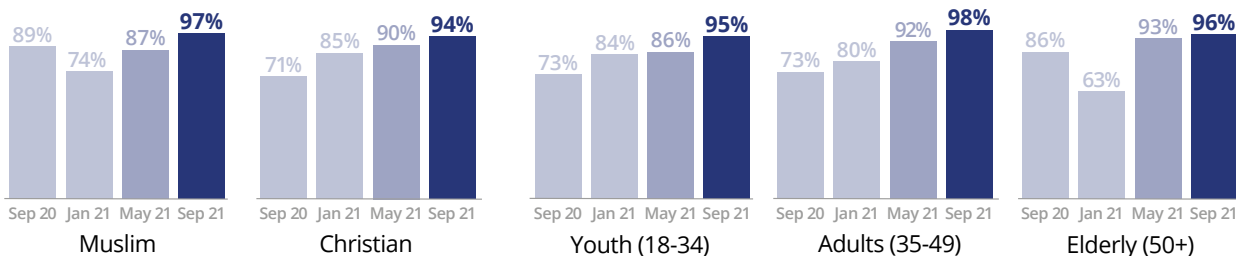
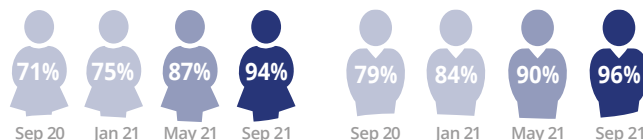




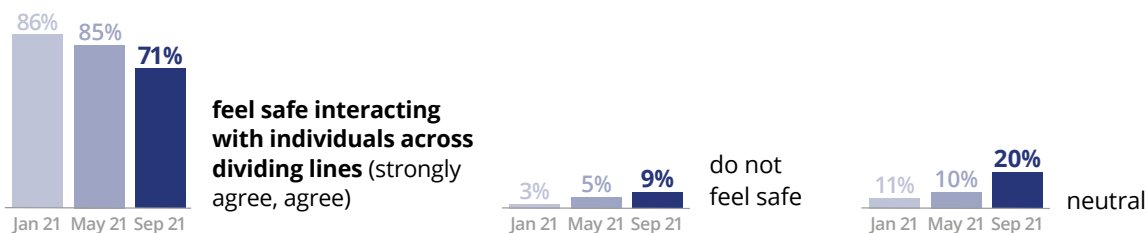
Actual interaction between groups continues to increase over time. With the recent relaxation of COVID-19 measures, particularly movement restrictions, people in Nigeria are interacting more across divides at work spaces, markets and community gatherings. This increase appears in all demographic and dividing groups and in all regions (except the South East, most likely reflecting the deterring conflict situation there).

**Interacted (remotely or in-person) over the past 3 months with someone from another group** (religious or ethnic).

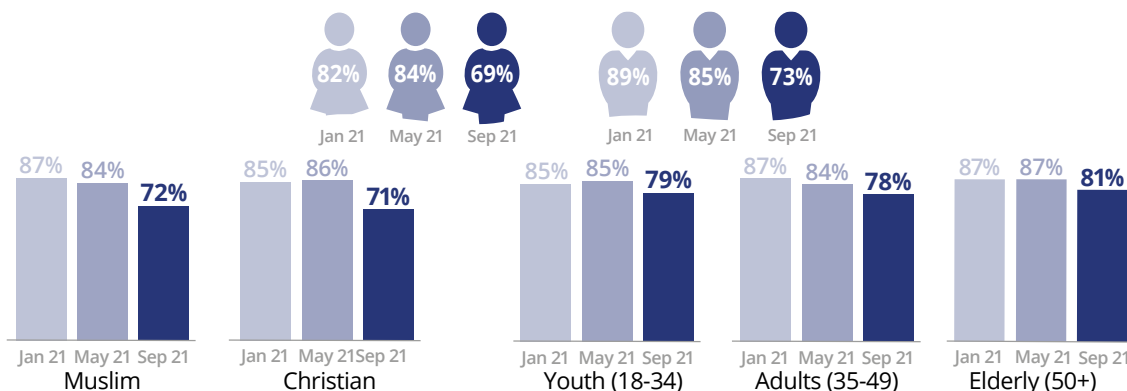
**Women's level of interaction increased during this round and is now almost at the same level as men.** When there were restrictions on movement and strict enforcement of COVID-19 protocols, most women were not able to interact with others outside of the household or community because of cultural norms, lack of access to/knowledge of digital technologies, and the fact of being the primary caregiver so women were very careful to ensure their families are not exposed to the virus. But with the relaxing of COVID-19 measures, women's opportunities for interaction increased, which also enabled them to fill their information gaps on COVID-19.

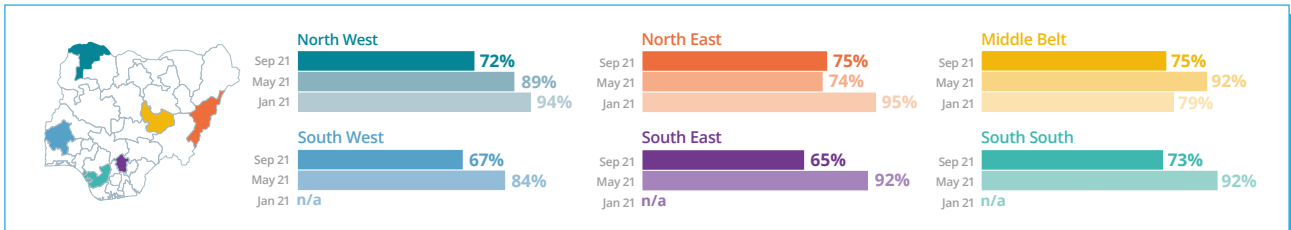


But even though actual interactions across divides have gone up, **feelings of safety during these interactions are declining, most notably among men.** This again may be a reflection of the pandemic's secondary impacts and the deterioration of the security situation in several regions, which are affecting men more directly than women. Again, the sharpest drop in feelings of safety is in the South East.

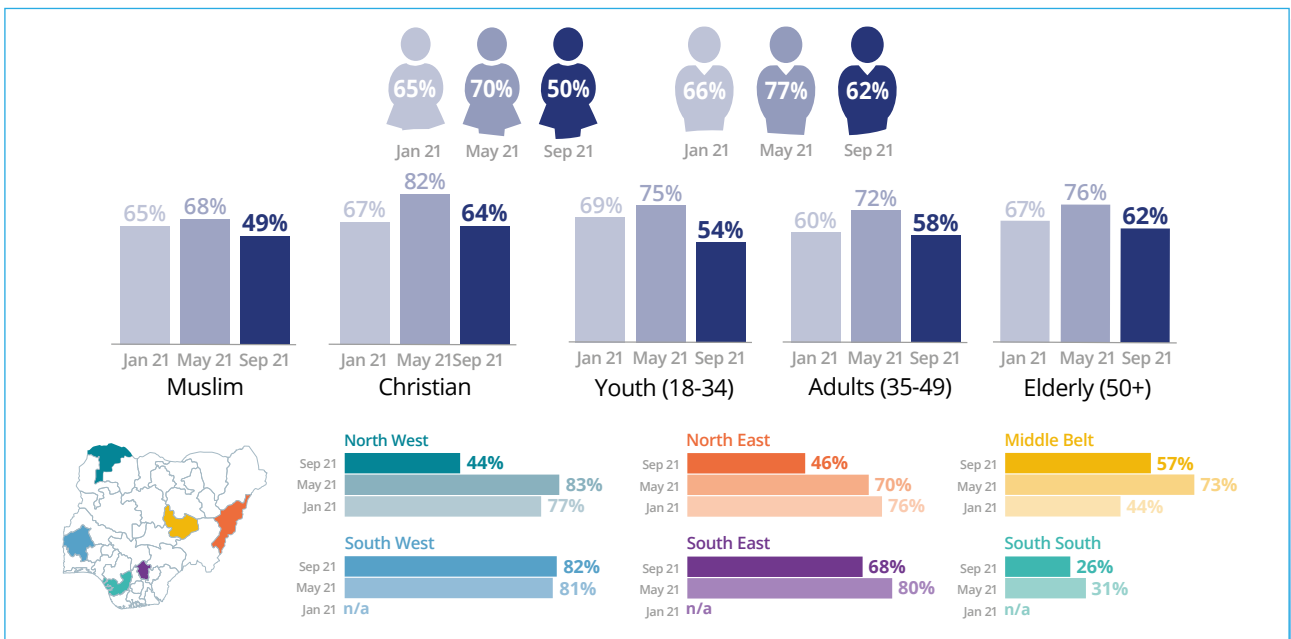
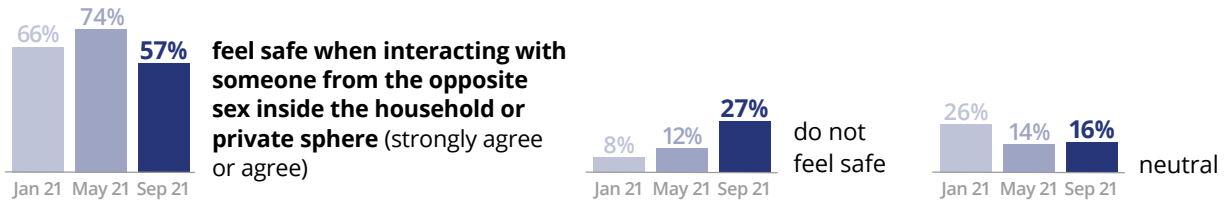


**Feeling safe interacting with people from other groups (religious or ethnic)**





**Feelings of safety when interacting with someone from the opposite sex inside the household or private sphere also dropped dramatically** since we started measuring this indicator, and is now at 57%, and is lowest among women, youth, and Muslims. People in the South South feel much less safe when interacting with someone from the opposite sex. Low levels of perceived safety in the South South could be a result of the barriers and backlash women often face when reporting GBV.



## Next Steps For COVID-19 Response Efforts

**Response efforts should consider the recent changes in households' socio-economic status resulting from the secondary impacts of the pandemic**

- Despite the dire economic situation, with 60% of our respondents reporting a full or partial loss of their main source of household income, only 12% of respondents requested COVID-19 related services in this round (from any service provider), down from 31% at the beginning of this year. People feel that requesting services is no longer useful, as 45% of our respondents report not receiving any responses on their service requests, explaining the decrease in trust in the government and non governmental actors. The existing Social Safety Net Programs (SSNP) are based on predefined criteria which were set prior to this pandemic. There is a serious need to adapt these criteria to target all households impacted negatively by the recent situation.
- Growing needs associated with limited support services are contributing to a deterioration in horizontal cohesion, particularly among men. Though interaction with people from other groups is on the rise, we see a sharp drop among men in feelings of safety when interacting. Being the main breadwinners in Nigeria, men are more vulnerable to the secondary impacts of the pandemic due to increasing competition over limited resources. But horizontal cohesion is on a downward spiral overall in Nigeria, and all demographic groups in all states are reporting reduced feelings of safety.



**Media outlets and non-governmental actors should establish an effective and inclusive strategy to disseminate accurate information**

- Though the overall rates of listening to our media programs and trusting the information heard on these programmes remain relatively high, there are clear vulnerabilities for some groups (i.e women and Christians). Tailoring media products to women's concerns would attract more women to radio programmes, and thereby increase their access to credible information. We also see a significant difference in listenership between religious groups; 55% for Muslims, 38% for Christians, driven by a perception among Christians that the government controls all media sources and that therefore these sources only publish information that the government wants to share. This could make both women and Christians less resilient to misinformation due to their limitations in accessing credible sources of information.
- Nigeria is being hit hard by the secondary impacts of the pandemic, and since the beginning of this year the security situation in several states has deteriorated. More media interventions are needed to support dialogue across divides and to mitigate the increasing trends of violence, including GBV, with the aim of promoting social cohesion and increasing resilience during a particularly volatile period in the country.