

MEASURING THE PACE OF

# JUSTICE DELIVERY

THROUGH DATA;

2020 Edition

An Evaluation Of The Speed Of Justice  
Delivery Of States' High Courts In Nigeria  
Before And During The Covid-19 Pandemic.





# Executive **Summary**

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The analysis of State High Courts according to their speed of delivery justice became necessary in the absence of data to benchmark the performance of High Courts of States. It is difficult to change what cannot be measured. Hence, to improve justice delivery in Nigeria, stakeholders need adequate data to make informed decisions.

The research is an evaluation of the speed of justice in Nigeria in the year 2020. Incidentally, the year 2020 saw the advent of Covid-19 which ushered in worldwide changes in societal activities. The lockdowns and widespread limitations on day-to-day life hugely impacted the justice delivery sector, the research is thus a way to evaluate through data, how Covid-19 has affected the dispensation of Justice in Nigeria. It also gives the estimated number of legal problems per State, how long a case stays in Court's docket from filing to judgment, and the rank of each State's high courts vis-a-vis other states in Nigeria. The data samples randomly chosen per state were 50 cases from filing date to judgment date.

In total, 1,627 cases were analyzed from 33 States and the Federal Capital Territory in Nigeria. It was observed that there were more cases in the Southern States than in the Northern States. This document is not aimed at ridiculing any State, however, we hope that this will stimulate the activities of States' judiciary towards seeking more creative pathways to increasing the speed of justice delivery and also provide a basis for evidence-based advocacy by the judicial arm for more resource allocation in areas of man-power and tech-for-justice tools to the judiciary.

This research paper also seeks to help both government and development partners know how to improve the pace of justice delivery in Nigeria and to stimulate the "can do better spirit" among States. However, the challenges identified in this research paper should inform tailored and better solutions to help the Nigerian justice sector overcome its snail-paced justice delivery process.



## Methodology

The methods used in this research paper are by reviewing the timeline of 50 randomly selected cases in 33 states and the Federal capital territory (FCT); from commencement to judgment stage and finding the average per state. The data on said cases were duly provided by the National Judicial Council; the regulatory body for the judiciary in Nigeria.

One million legal problems are estimated to arise from a population of eight million people, according to the Hague Institute for Innovation of Law(HiiL), and this formula was applied to the population per state to determine estimated legal problems. The ranking was based on the average number of time spent on each case in comparison to the other states.



## Sources of data

- National Population Commission.
- National Judicial Council.
- Website of State High Courts.

# About **CITIZEN'S GAVEL**

Citizens' Gavel aims to create a world where justice delivery is fast and efficient regardless of economic or political demographics.

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## **Research Lead:**

Nelson Olanipekun

## **Research Team:**

Mosebolatan Oyedeji

Love Ikhine

Ibukun Adetoro

Taiwo Makanjuola

Seyi Arowosebe

Femi Ajibade

Oluwadamilare Ayankoya

Oluwatosin Ariyo

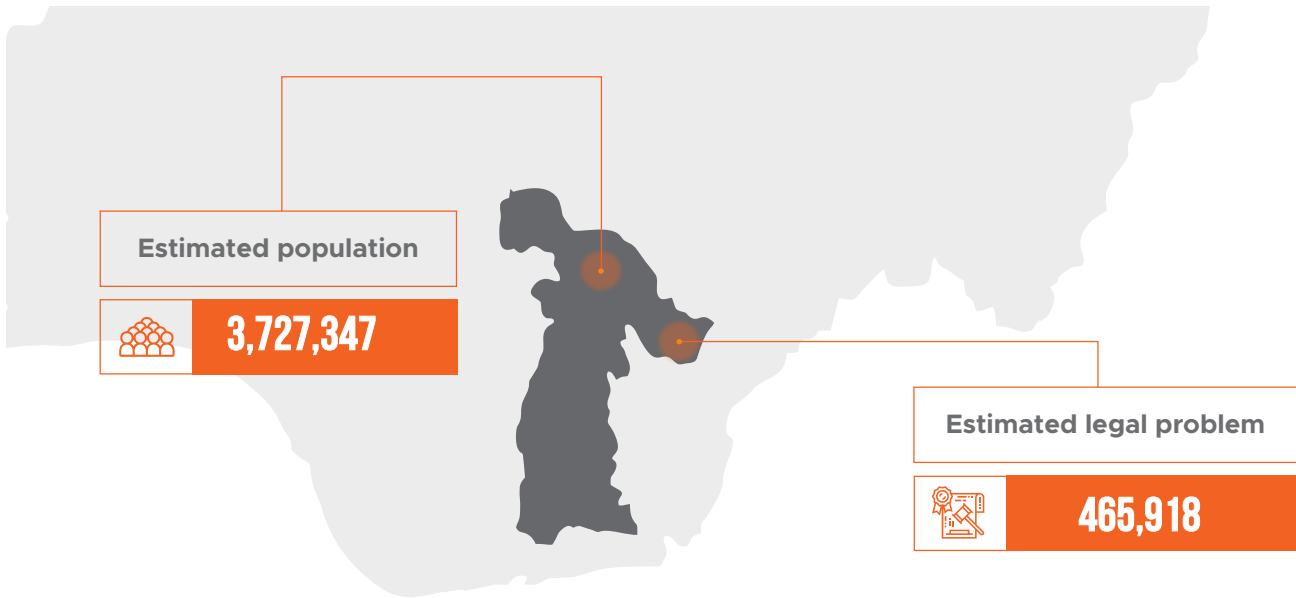
2nd Floor, Civic Hive,  
42 Montgomery road,  
Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria.

No.5, Atiba Street  
Soun Ajagungbade Estate,  
Bodija, Ibadan, Nigeria.

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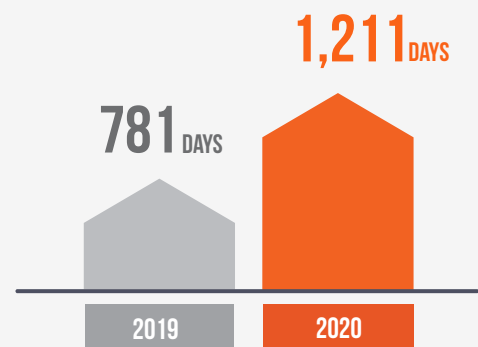
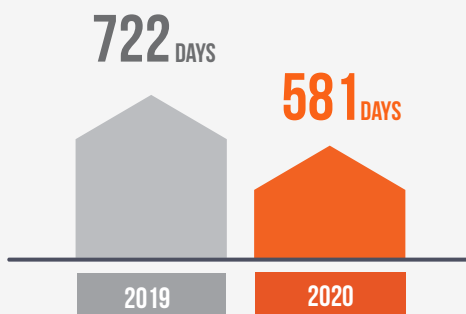
# Abia



## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



**2,111**

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



**24**

Number of Judges



**669**

Average number of days to finish a case

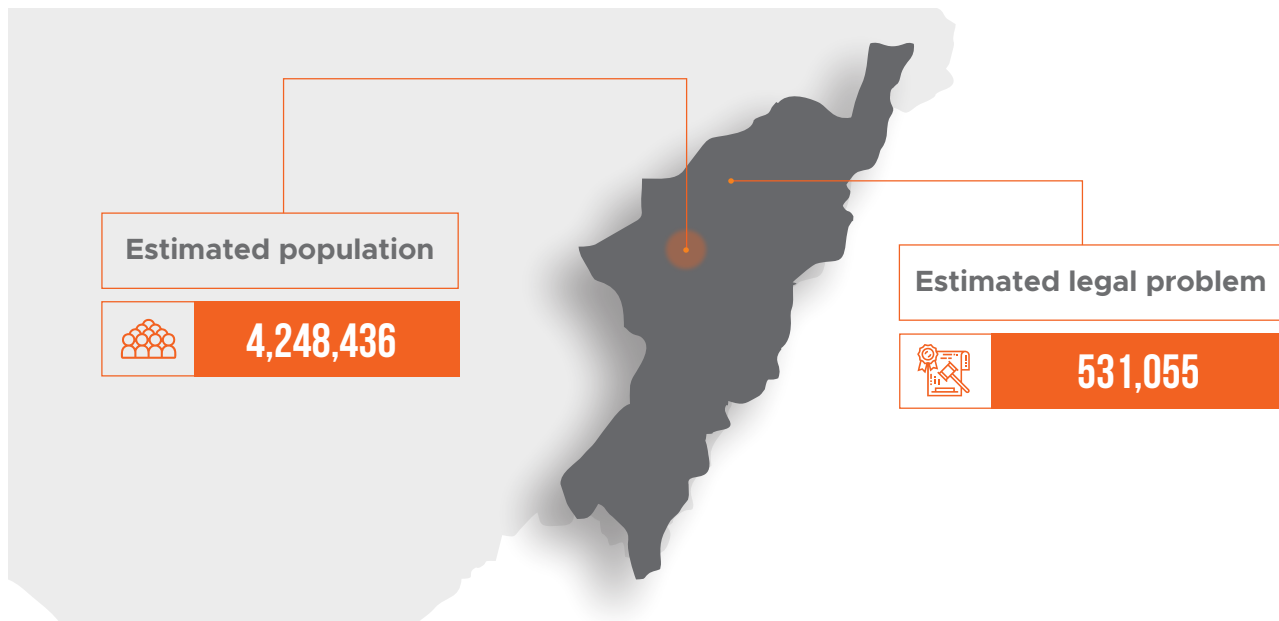
From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 87 new cases per annum. A quick evaluation of the Abia State Judiciary between the years 2019 and 2020 reveals a “seeming” sharp decline in the number of days a judge presides over a criminal matter. With 1,211 completion days for criminal matters in 2020 as compared to the initial commendable 781 days achieved in rounding off a criminal matter in 2019, it begs the question- what factors contributed to the decline in the speed of criminal justice delivery in Abia State.

With the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, the year 2020 tested the capacity and ability of Nigeria and almost brought

the nations’ judiciary to its knees. Human movements were restricted in all parts of the country and travel bans were enforced. There was strict compliance with these directives in Abia State compared to some states. Indeed, Covid-19 greatly hindered the effective function of the Abia State judiciary.

One factor which greatly contributed to the slow pace of justice delivery in Abia State was the ineffective implementation of virtual hearing technology in the Courts by the State Government.

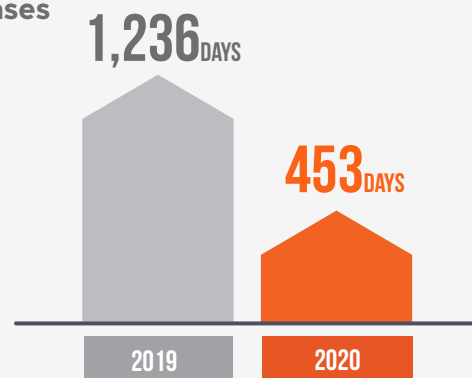
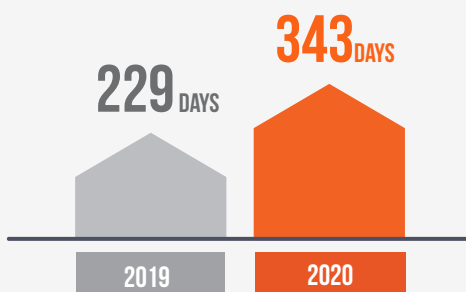
# Adamawa



## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



242

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



8

Number of Judges



359

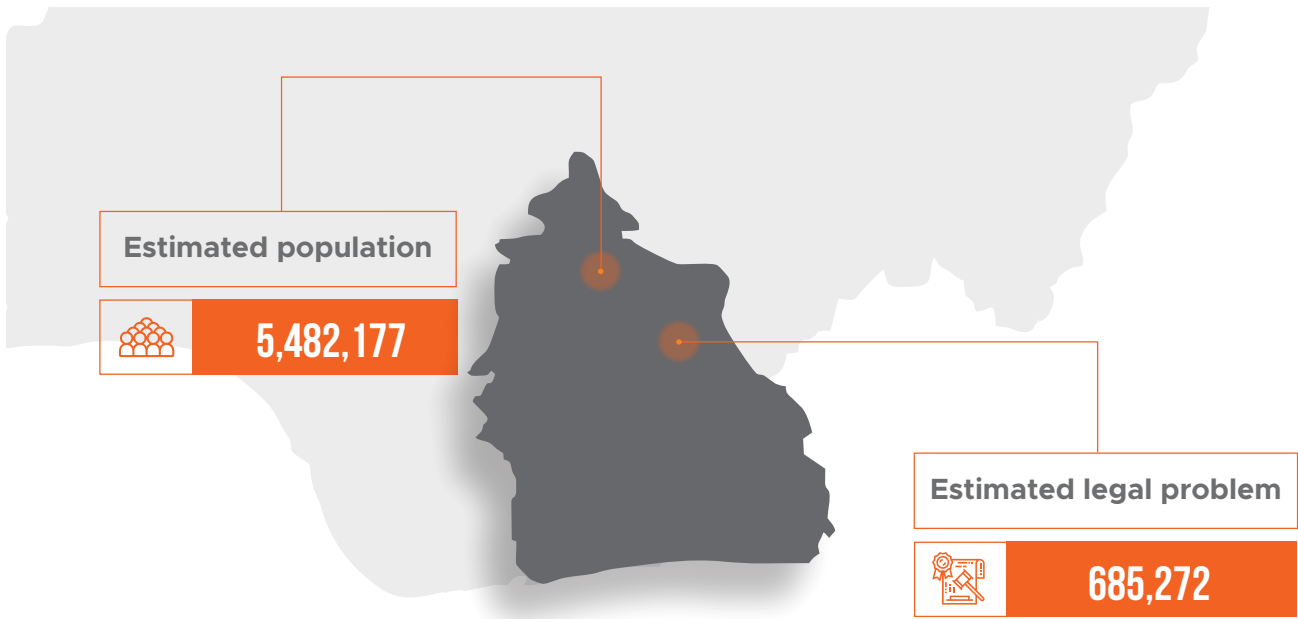
Average number of days to finish a case

From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 30 new cases per annum. Popularly known as the land of beauty, hospitality & sunshine, Adamawa State ranked as one of the States with the lowest number of High court judges.

Despite the pandemic, the justice sector thrived in Adamawa sojourning from a record of 1,236 days in handling a criminal matter in 2019 to a record of 453 days completion and justice delivery in 2020.

The emergence of the pandemic caused a sharp decline in the number of criminal matters filed by lawyers in the Adamawa State High Courts automatically creating the leeway for judges to focus fully on a less reduced number of Criminal matters before them.

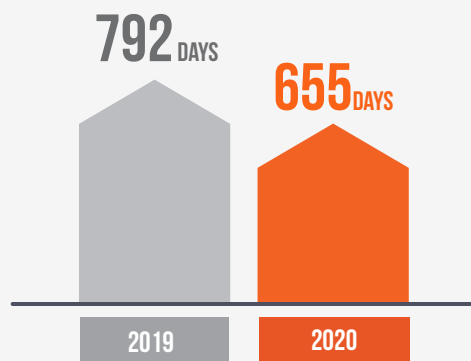
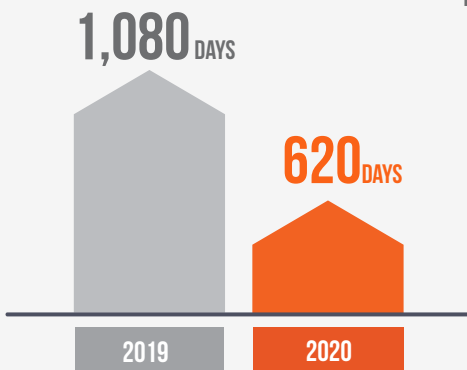
# Akwa Ibom



## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



**2,445**

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



**28**

Number of Judges



**648**

Average number of days to finish a case

From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 87 new cases per annum. Akwa Ibom State Judiciary came into existence at State creation on the 23rd of September, 1987, consisting of seven (7) Judicial Divisions at inception, ten (10) Magisterial Districts, and ninety-four (94) District Courts. Presently, Akwa Ibom State Judiciary comprises twelve (12) Judicial Divisions and nineteen (19) Magisterial Districts, with a total of twenty-two (22) high court judges and twenty-seven (27) magistrates.

In 2020, Akwa- Ibom recorded an increase in the speed of criminal justice delivery with the start-to-completion of a criminal matter taking 655 days as compared to the data for the speed of criminal justice delivery in 2019 which took 792 days.



# Anambra



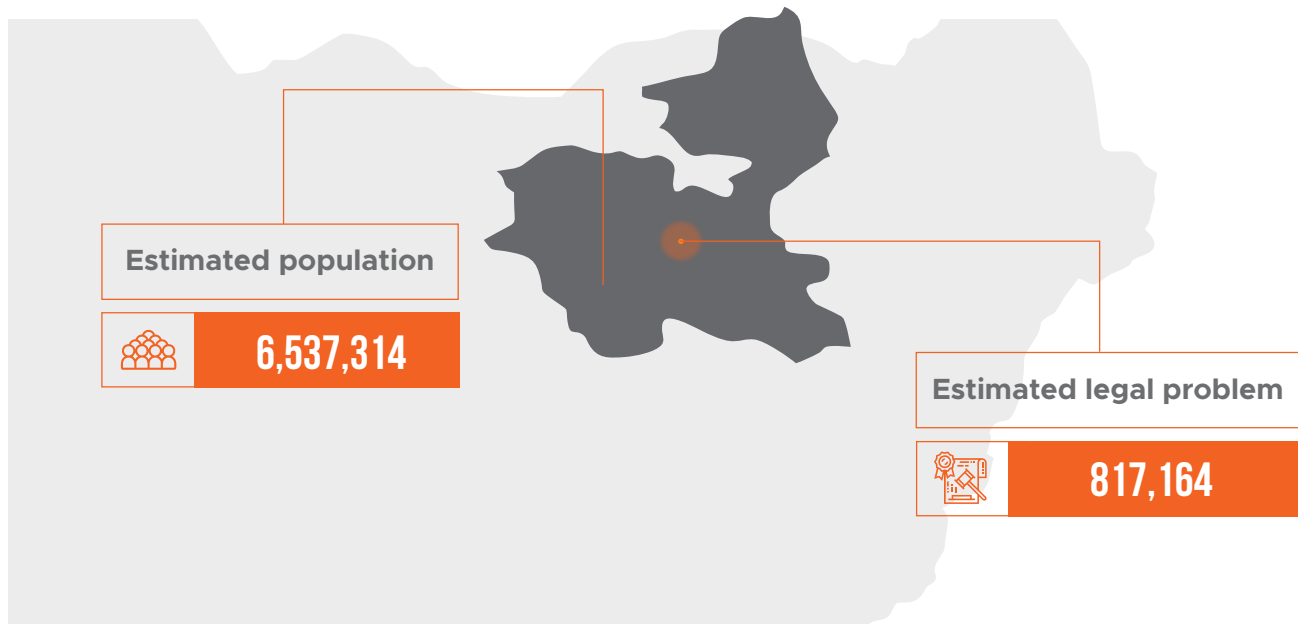
CIVIL CASES

CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



# Bauchi



CIVIL CASES

CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



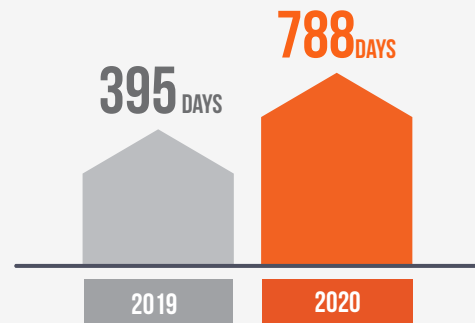
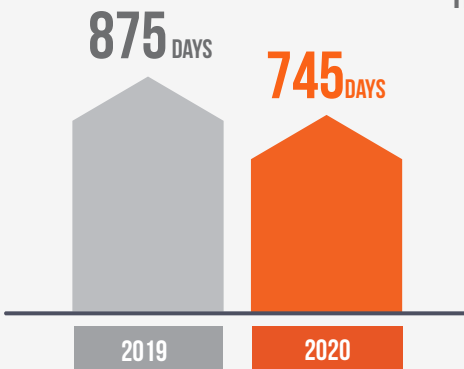
# Bayelsa



## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



616

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



12

Number of Judges



769

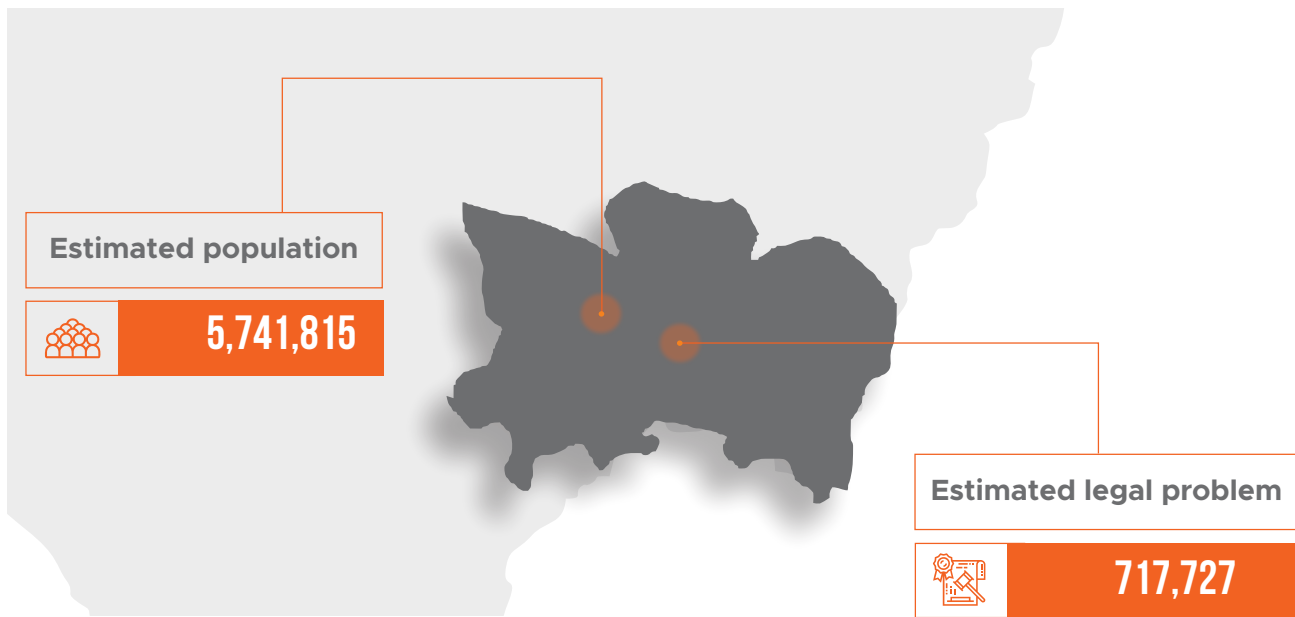
Average number of days to finish a case

From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 51 new cases per annum. As opposed to the year 2019 where the completion of one criminal matter spanned barely over a year - 395 days, the data represented above reveals it took a judge over 2 years to round off a criminal matter from start to finish in 2020- a total of 788 days.

significant role in the delayed process of justice delivery in Bayelsa State due to the resultant effects of restriction of movement and lockdown in most parts of the State to prevent the spread of the virus.

The Covid-19 pandemic in the year 2020 sure played a

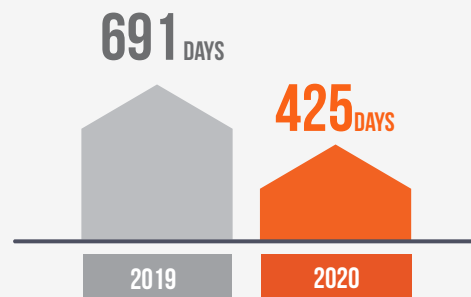
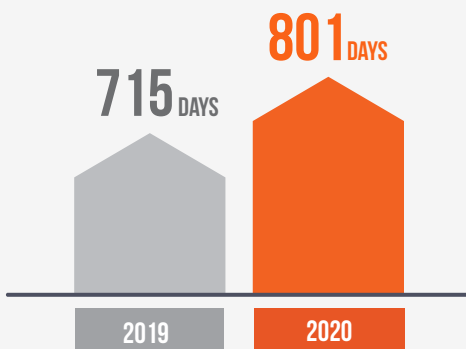
# Benue



## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



**1,138**

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



**18**

Number of Judges



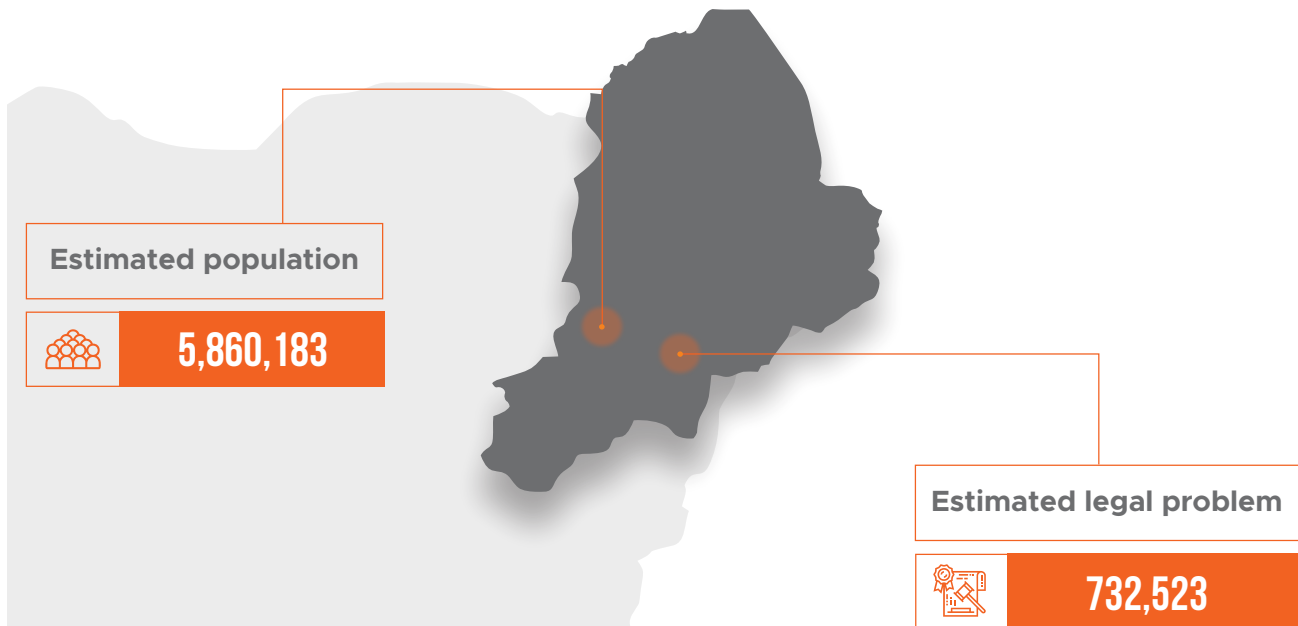
**755**

Average number of days to finish a case

From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 63 new cases per annum. The data represented above shows that Benue State was still yet to meet up with the 180 days timeline for the conclusion of criminal trials as provided for in the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJL), 2015.

The 691 days to round off a criminal matter in 2019 took some steps backward in 2020, as a criminal trial was rounded off in 788 days.

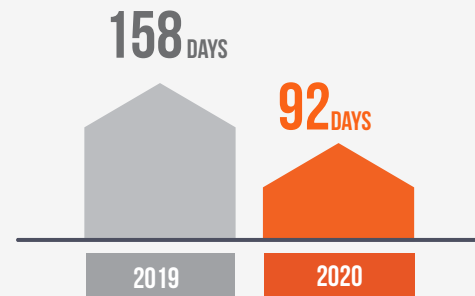
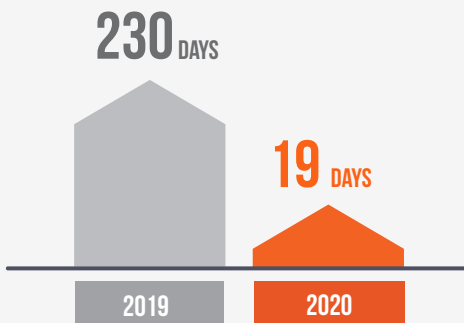
# Borno



## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



421

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



15

Number of Judges



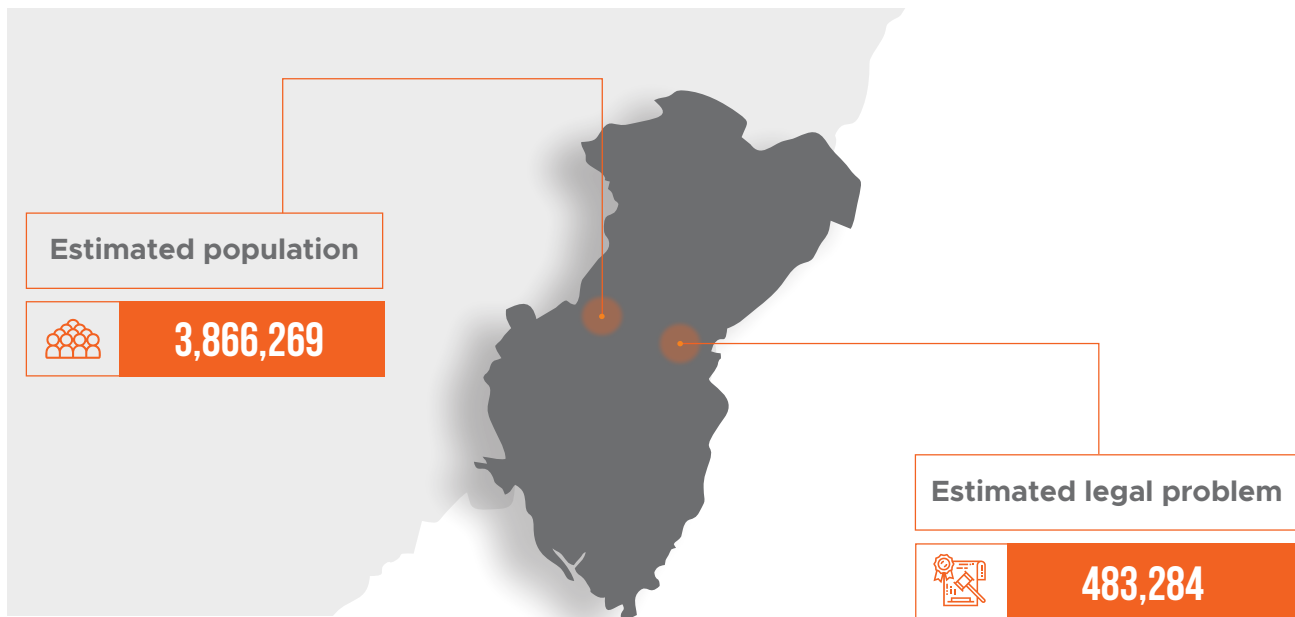
67

Average number of days to finish a case

From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 28 new cases per annum. In 2019, a criminal matter was completed in 158 days. The reason for the increased pace of justice delivery in Borno State may not be far-fetched as Borno has a low case per state ratio and a low-case per judge ratio compared to other States High Courts. This may be connected to the present insurgency operation ongoing in the State.

The dispensation of justice was commendable as the data shows that a criminal matter was resolved on average within 92 days in 2020.

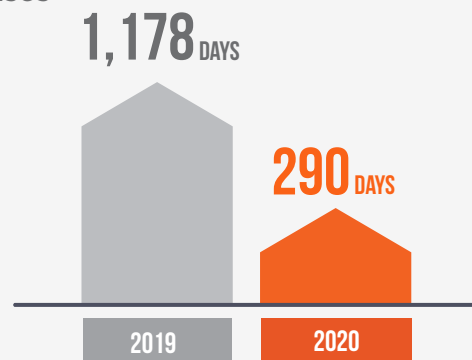
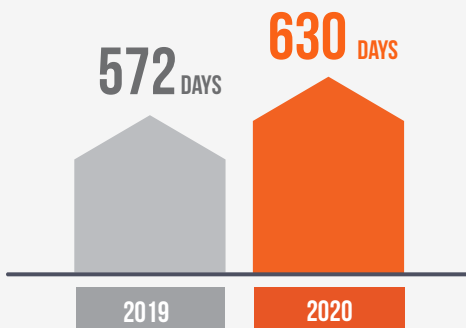
# Cross River



## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



**1,015**

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



**19**

Number of Judges



**596**

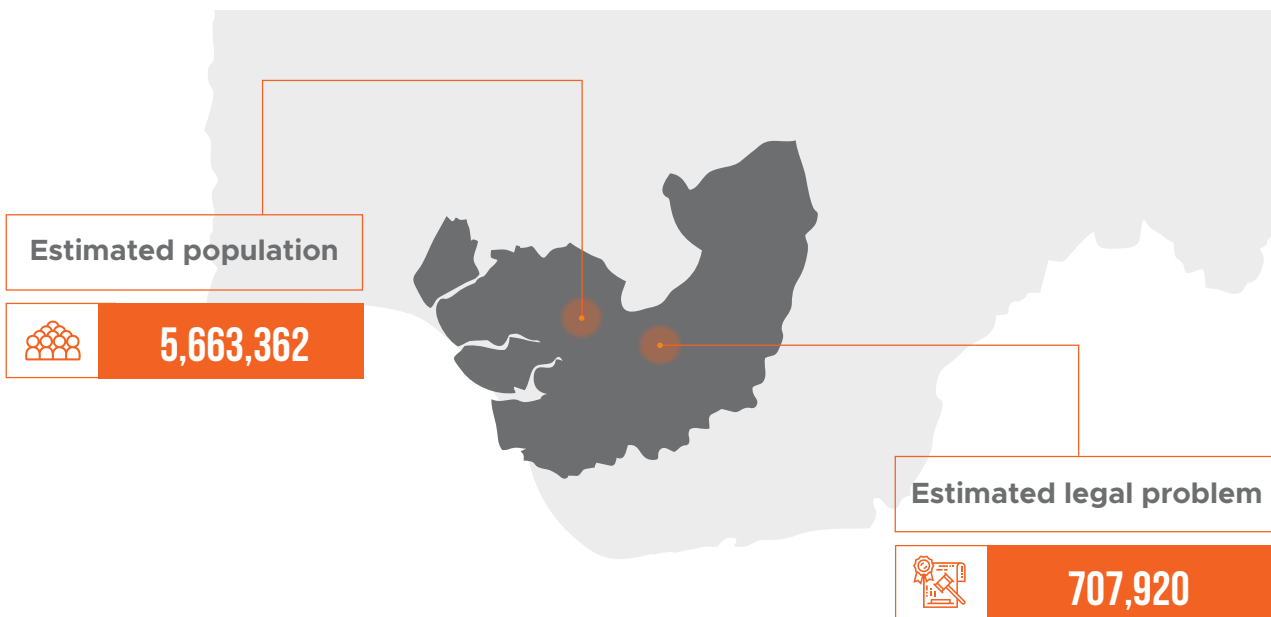
Average number of days to finish a case

From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 53 new cases per annum. The Cross Rivers State went from 1,178 days completion of a criminal matter in 2019 to a Criminal matter completion record of 290 days.

The exponential increase in the pace of justice delivery in Cross River State despite the pandemic was quite

commendable. More judicial officers of the State embraced the technology of virtual hearings, also, the reduced number of cases filed by the State in 2020 gave rise to a more proficient and effective delivery of justice by the Judges.

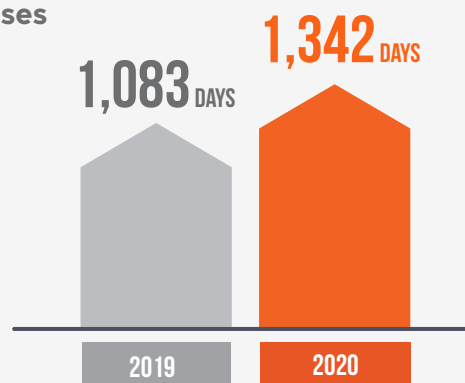
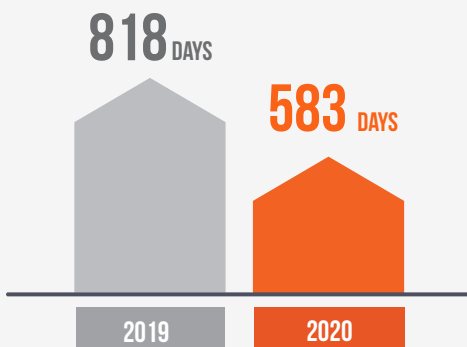
# Delta



## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



**3,008**

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



**29**

Number of Judges



**705**

Average number of days to finish a case

From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 103 new cases per annum. Situated in the region known as the South-south geopolitical zone, with an area of 16,842 square kilometres and the twenty-third largest state in Nigeria.

Delta State has a high case per judge ratio vis-a-vis other States' High Courts with judges adjudicating approximately 3,008 problems annually.

It has 25 Local Government Areas and 29 high court

judges spread across the state, the estimated period of three years and 7 months (1,342) from the commencement of a criminal trial to judgment stage in 2020 depicts a snail-paced justice system.

# Ebonyi



CIVIL CASES

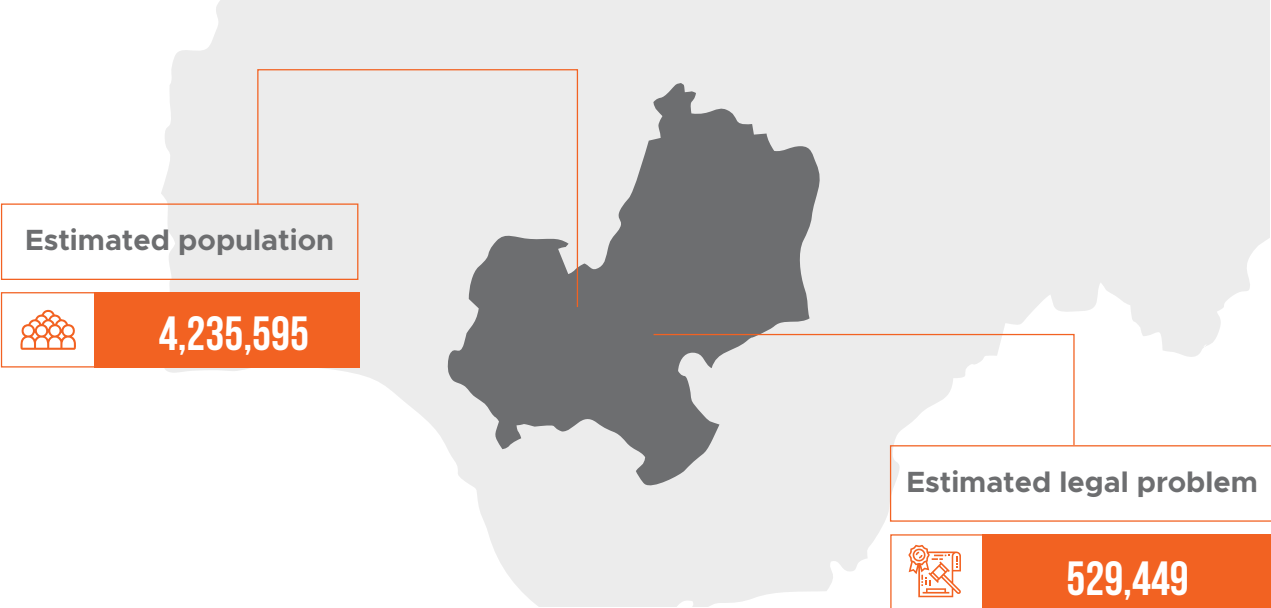
CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases





# Edo



CIVIL CASES

CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



# Ekiti



## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases

N/A    N/A



N/A    N/A

2019

2020

2019

2020



**356**

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



**11**

Number of Judges

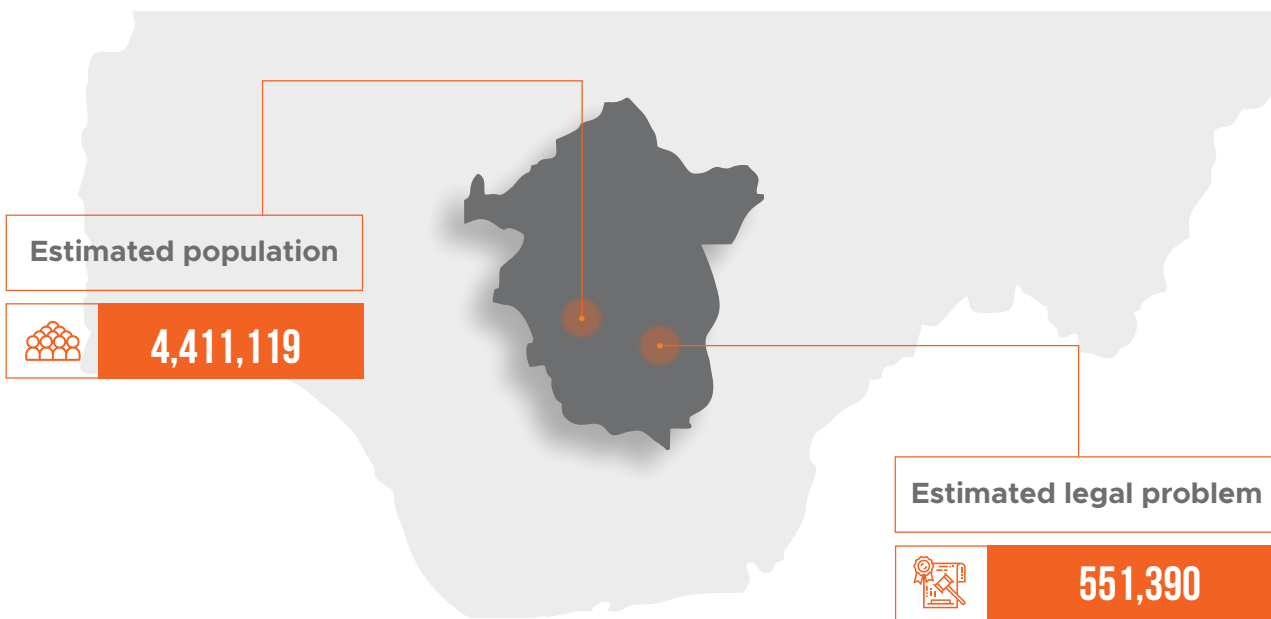


**451**

Average number of days to finish a case

From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 32 new cases per annum. The conventional criminal matter spans approximately 2 years from start to completion in Ekiti State.

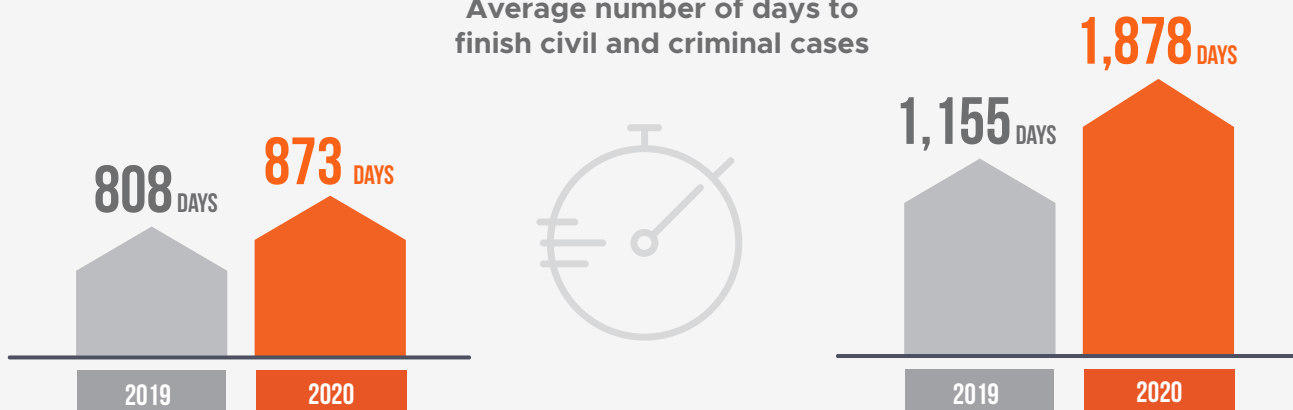
# Enugu



## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



**2,298**

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



**22**

Number of Judges



**1,107**

Average number of days to finish a case

From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 104 new cases per annum. Enugu is one of the States in the southeastern part of Nigeria, created in 1991 from the part of Anambra state. With an area of 7,161 Km<sup>2</sup>, It has a high case per judge ratio vis-a-vis other State High Courts. Enugu State High court judges adjudicate approximately 2,298 legal problems annually.

It has 17 Local Government Areas and 22 high court judges spread across the state. The State's judicial sector added an extra year to its pace of justice delivery in 2020 from 2019, thus having an estimated period of over 5 years from the commencement of a criminal trial to judgment stage- 1,115 days in 2019 as compared to its present 1,878 days in 2020.

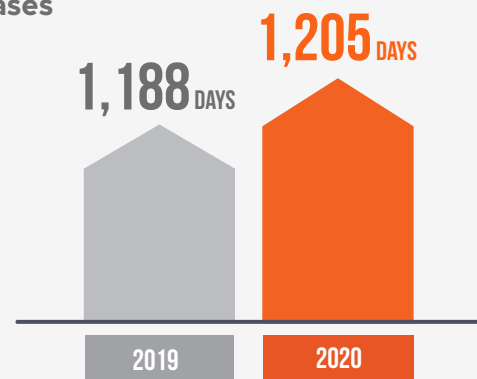
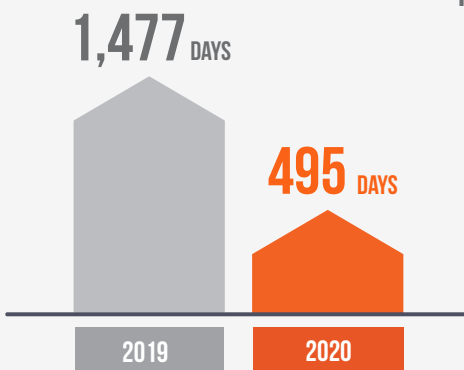
# FCT Abuja



## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



**2,235**

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



**35**

Number of Judges



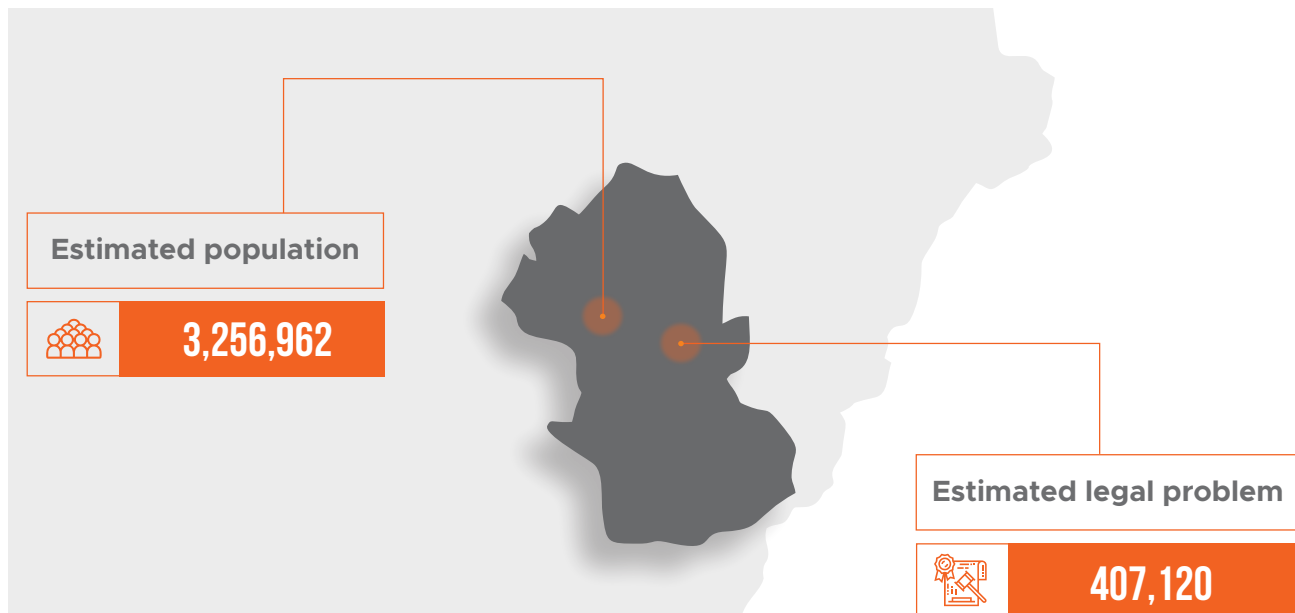
**1,107**

Average number of days to finish a case

From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 83 new cases per annum. It also slightly increased its pace of criminal justice delivery in 2020 as compared to the previous year.

This development is commendable, however, the justice sector must strive to comply with the specified timeline for a criminal trial.

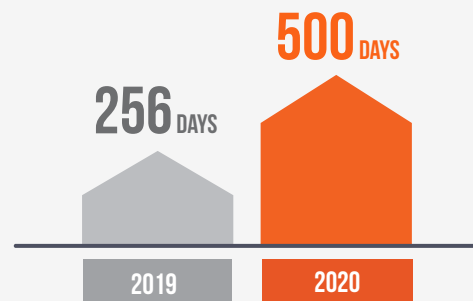
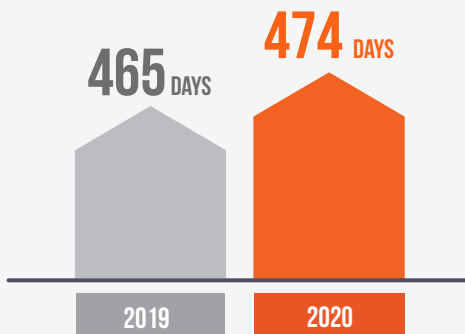
# Gombe



## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



293

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



23

Number of Judges



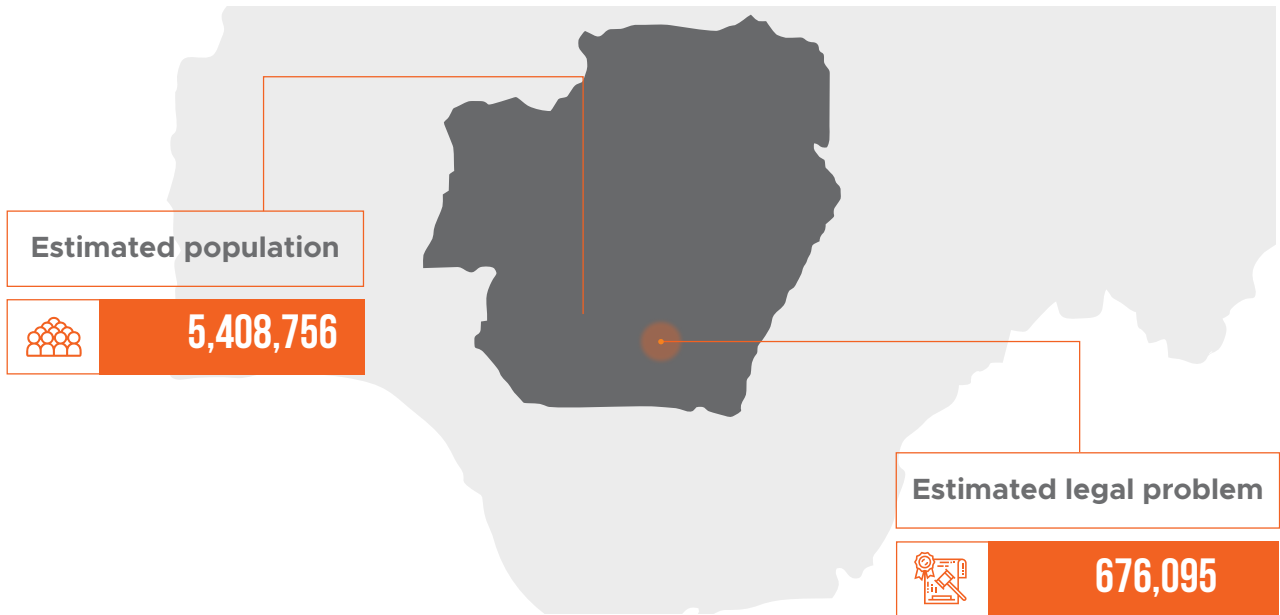
485

Average number of days to finish a case

From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 12 new cases per annum. Despite the numerous difficulties posed by the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, the State thrived.

However, it must be stated that observation of 2019 data for resolution of criminal matters which spanned less than a year grew to over 1 year and 4 months in 2020.

# Imo



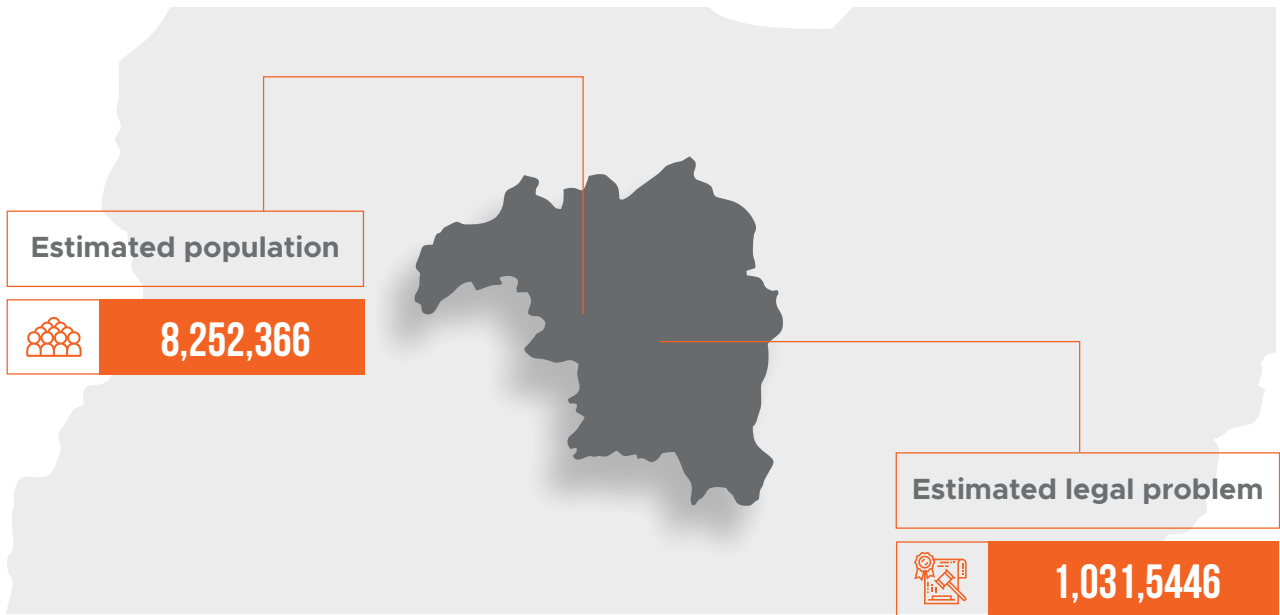
CIVIL CASES

CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



# Kaduna



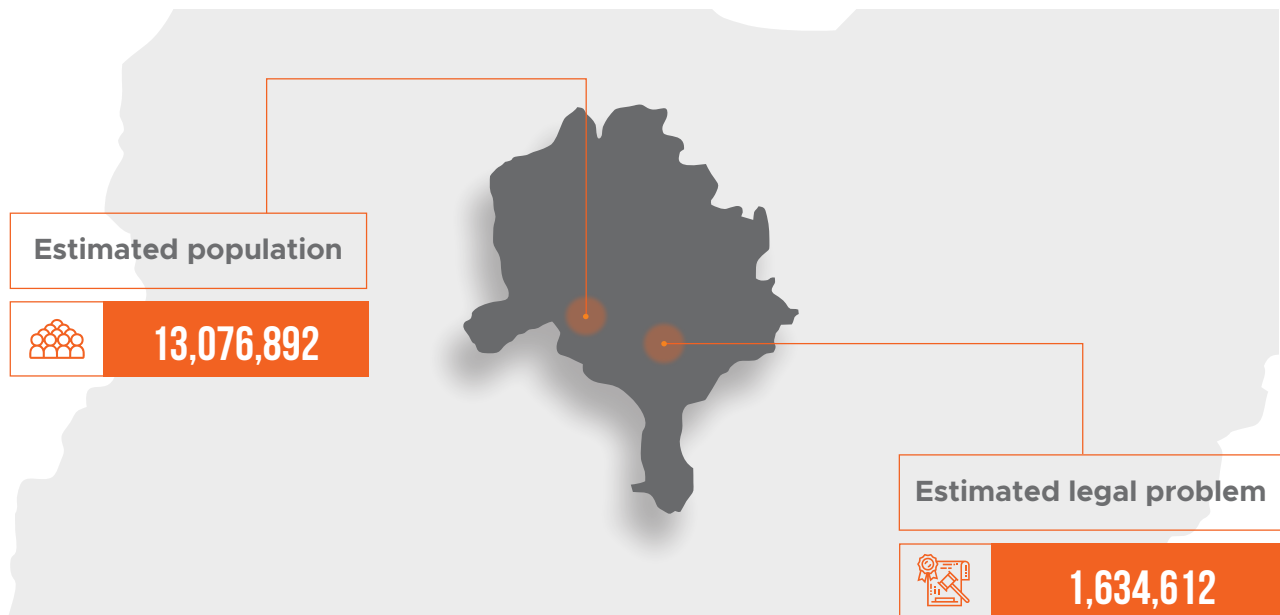
CIVIL CASES

CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



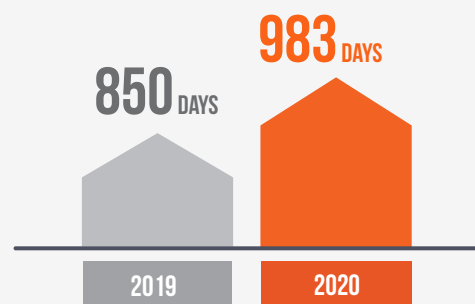
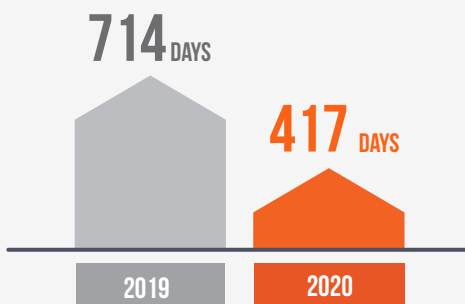
# Kano



## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



**2,260**

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



**17**

Number of Judges



**530**

Average number of days to finish a case

From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 133 new cases per annum. The pace of criminal justice delivery slowed down in Kano State and the Covid-19 pandemic may be one reoccurring reason why effective administration of justice in most states experienced a decline and Kano State was no exception.

From 850 days to fully administer criminal justice in 2019, the State took several steps backward and administered criminal justice in 983 days in 2020.



# Katsina

Estimated population

 **7,831,319**

Estimated legal problem

 **978,915**

**CIVIL CASES**

**CRIMINAL CASE**

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



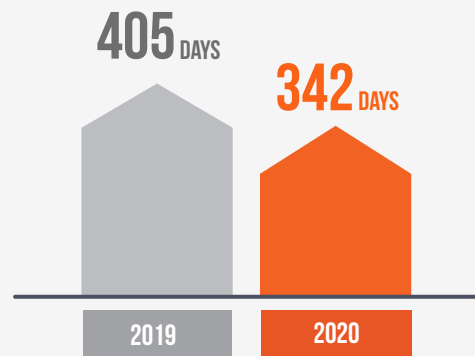
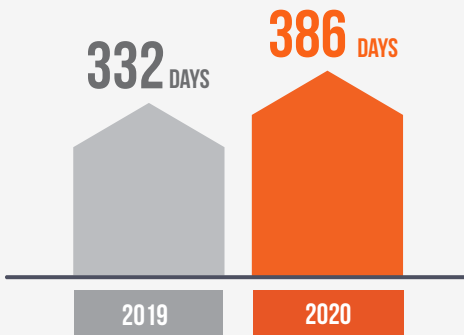
# Kebbi



## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



206

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



8

Number of Judges



366

Average number of days to finish a case

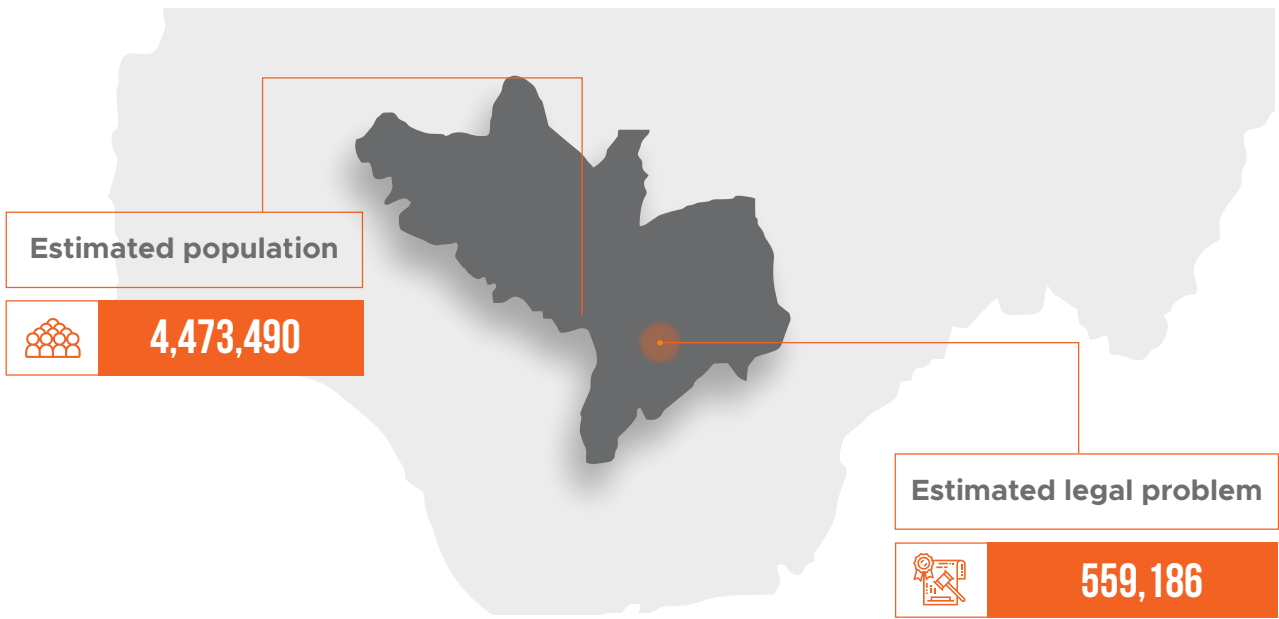
From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 25 new cases per annum. The Kebbi State judiciary was undaunted in ensuring that justice runs its course despite the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The State improved in its pace of criminal justice delivery in 2020. The completion of a criminal trial in

less than a year in 2020 was 342 days, in comparison to the 405 days in 2019.

This increase in the pace of justice delivery may be as a result of a reduced number of criminal matters filed in 2020.

# Kogi



**CIVIL CASES**

**CRIMINAL CASE**

**Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases**



# Kwara



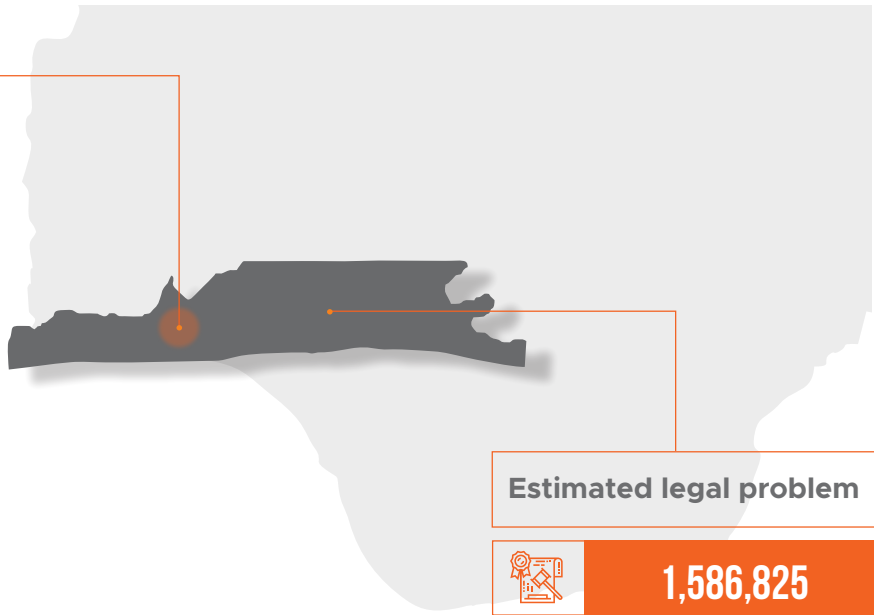
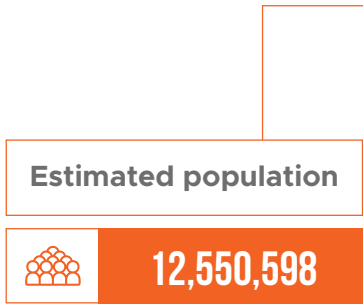
CIVIL CASES

CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



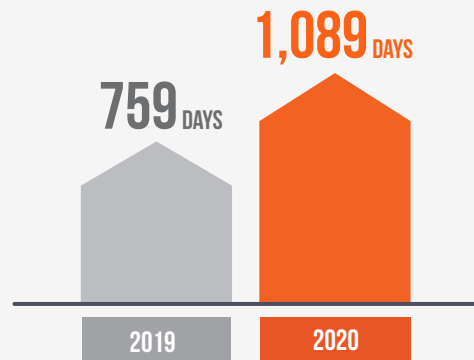
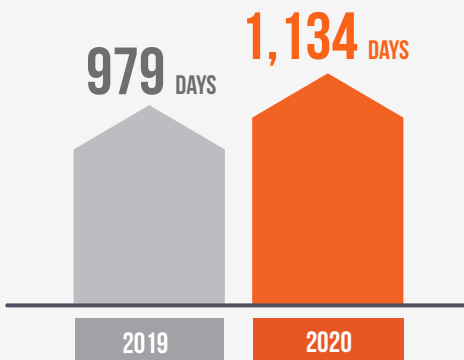
# Lagos



## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



**2,475**

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



**55**

Number of Judges



**1,118**

Average number of days to finish a case

From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 45 new cases per annum. Lagos being the commercial hub of Nigeria and the State which churned out the most numbers of Covid-19 infected persons, it, therefore, follows that one of the Justice sectors to be most likely affected by the pandemic was Lagos State.

In 2019, Lagos State achieved a timeline of 759 from the start to completion of a criminal trial while in 2020, the pace of Justice slowed down to a total of 1,089 days completion for a criminal trial.

# Nassarawa



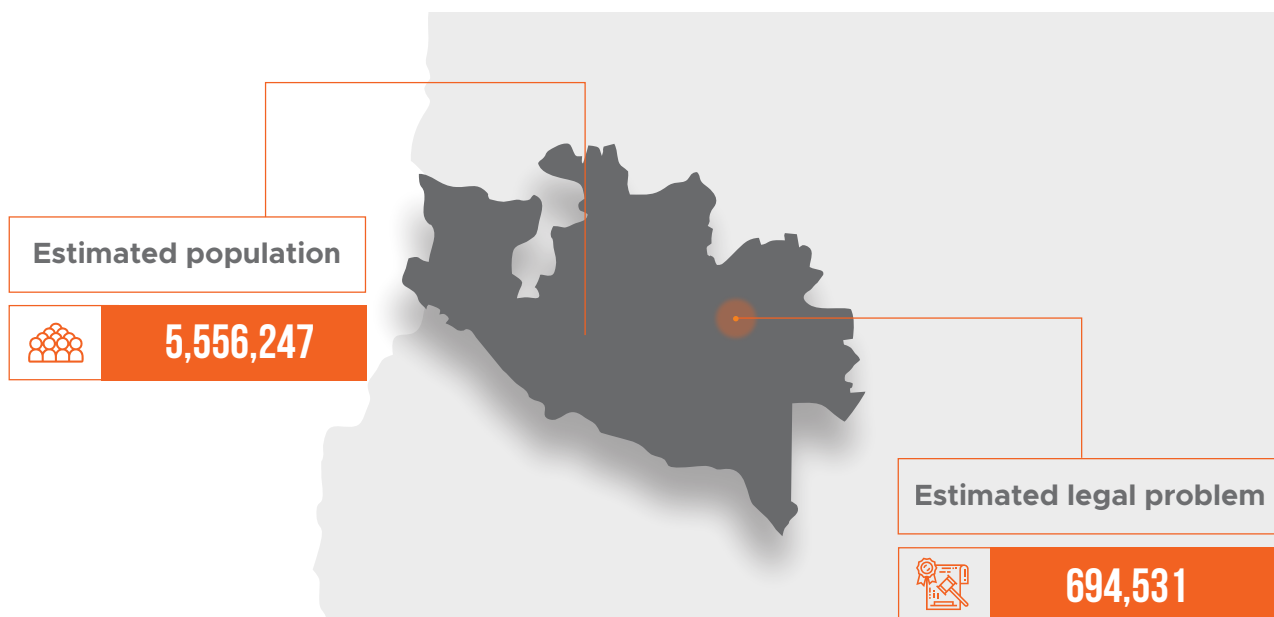
CIVIL CASES

CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



# Niger



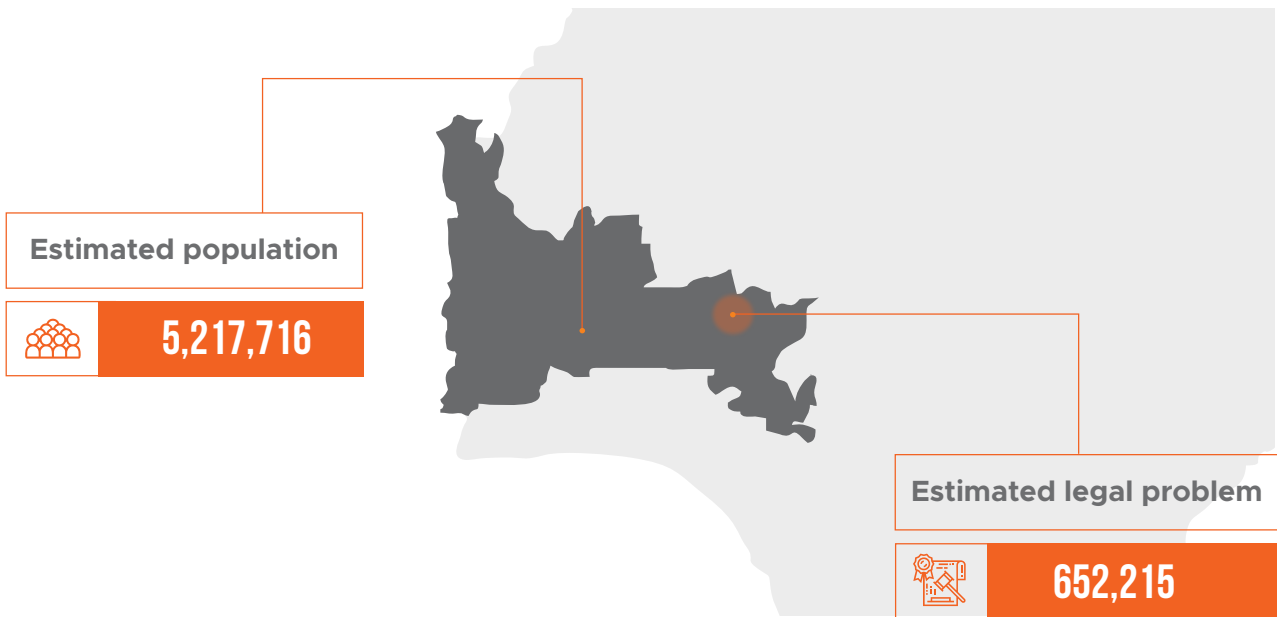
CIVIL CASES

CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



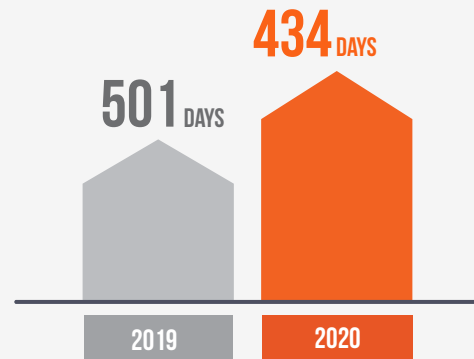
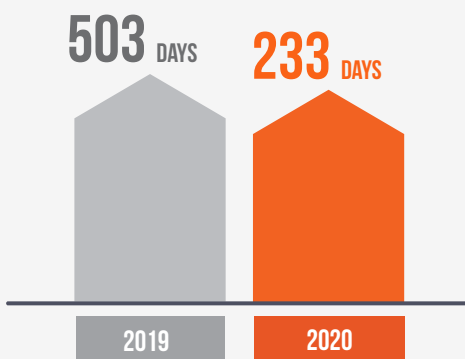
# Ogun



## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



4,832

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



29

Number of Judges



266

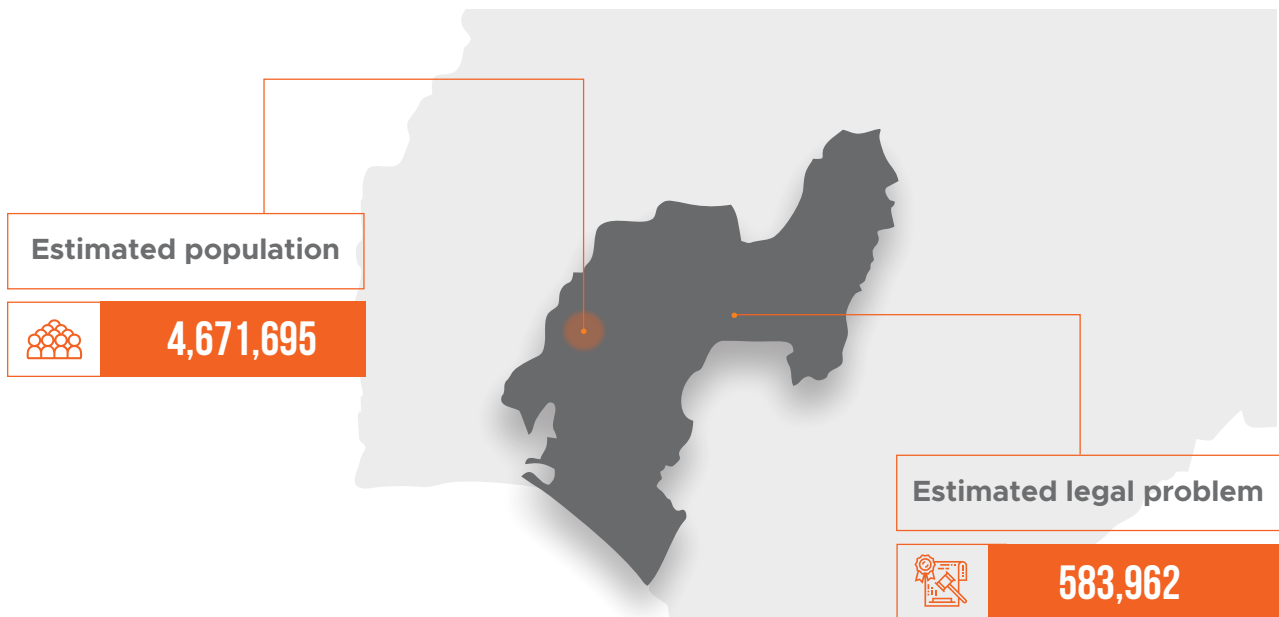
Average number of days to finish a case

From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 167 new cases per annum. Despite the pandemic, justice delivery was sped up in comparison to the previous year. The timeline completion for criminal matters was 501 days in 2019 and reduced to 434 days despite the emergence of the pandemic.

One reason for the slightly increased pace of Justice delivery in Ondo State was the highly efficient technological infrastructure deployed in the State for virtual hearings and the tracking of the timeline of criminal matters by the State Government



# Ondo



## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



663

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



20

Number of Judges



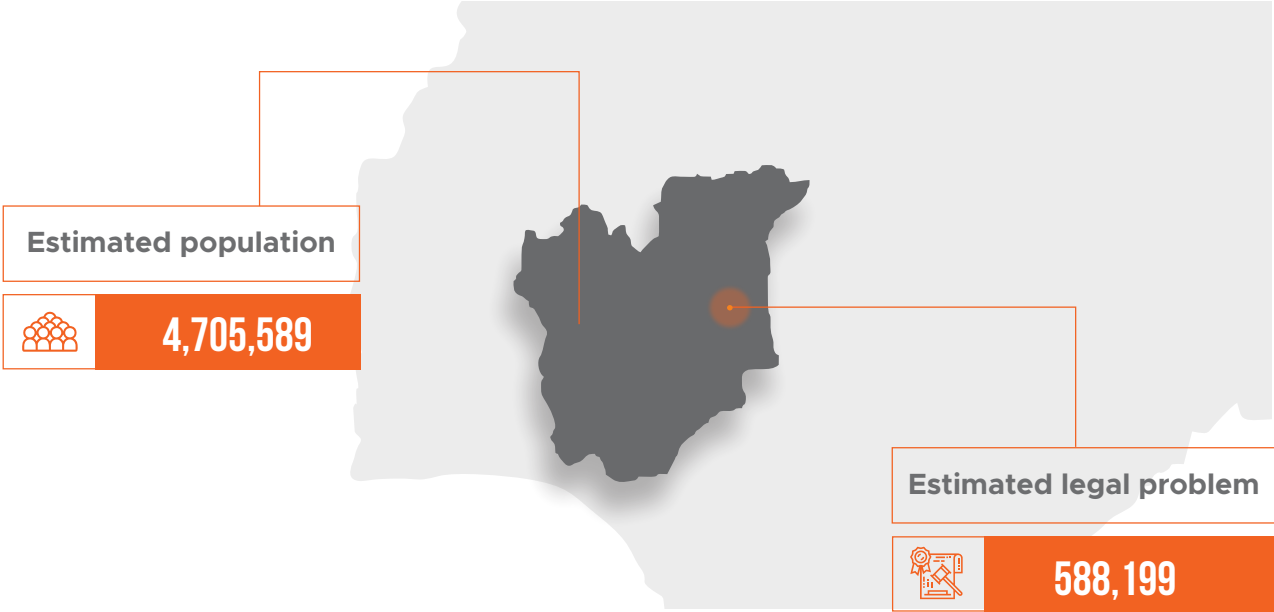
408

Average number of days to finish a case

From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 33 new cases per annum. Though the pandemic may be one reoccurring reason why effective administration of justice in most states experienced a decline, Ondo State can be said to have risen above the travails inflicted on all sectors by the pandemic.

Coming from a 652 days criminal justice delivery timeline in 2019 to 508 days completion timeline in 2020 is commendable.

# Osun

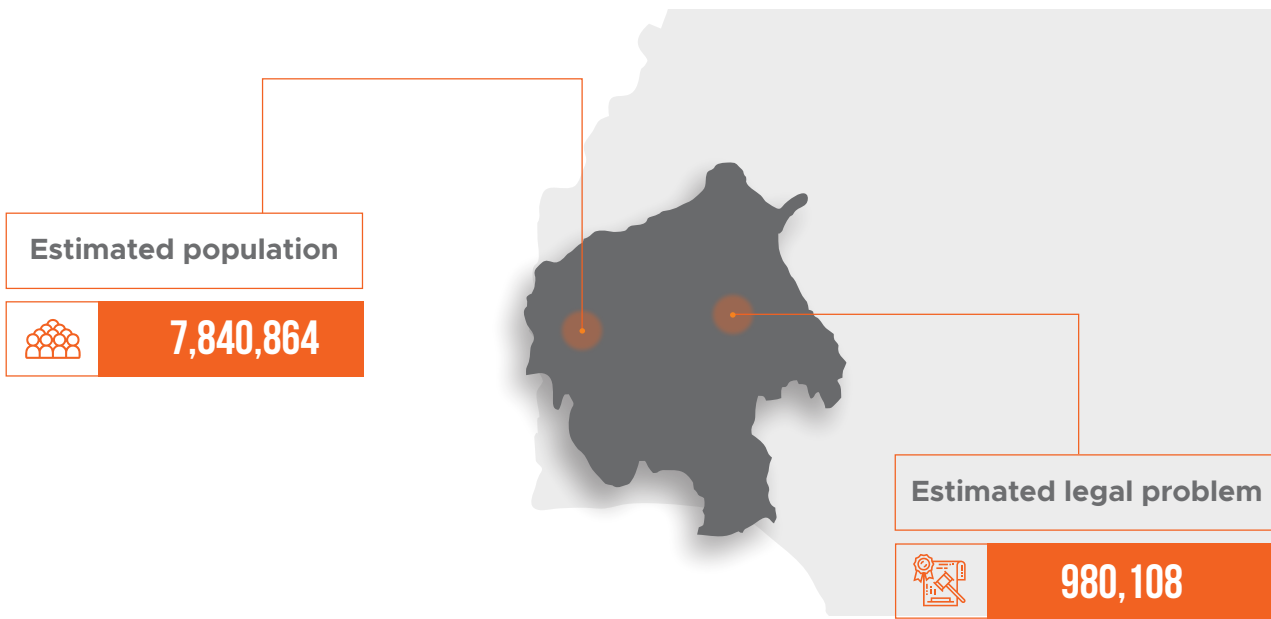


CIVIL CASES

CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases

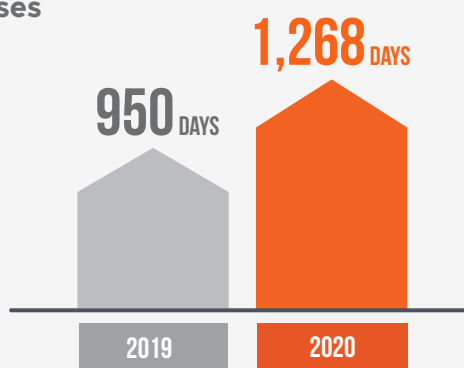
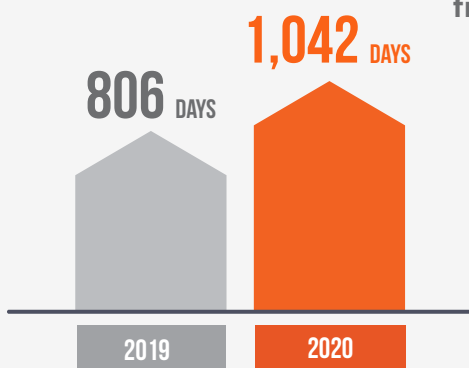




## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



**3,150**

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



**24**

Number of Judges



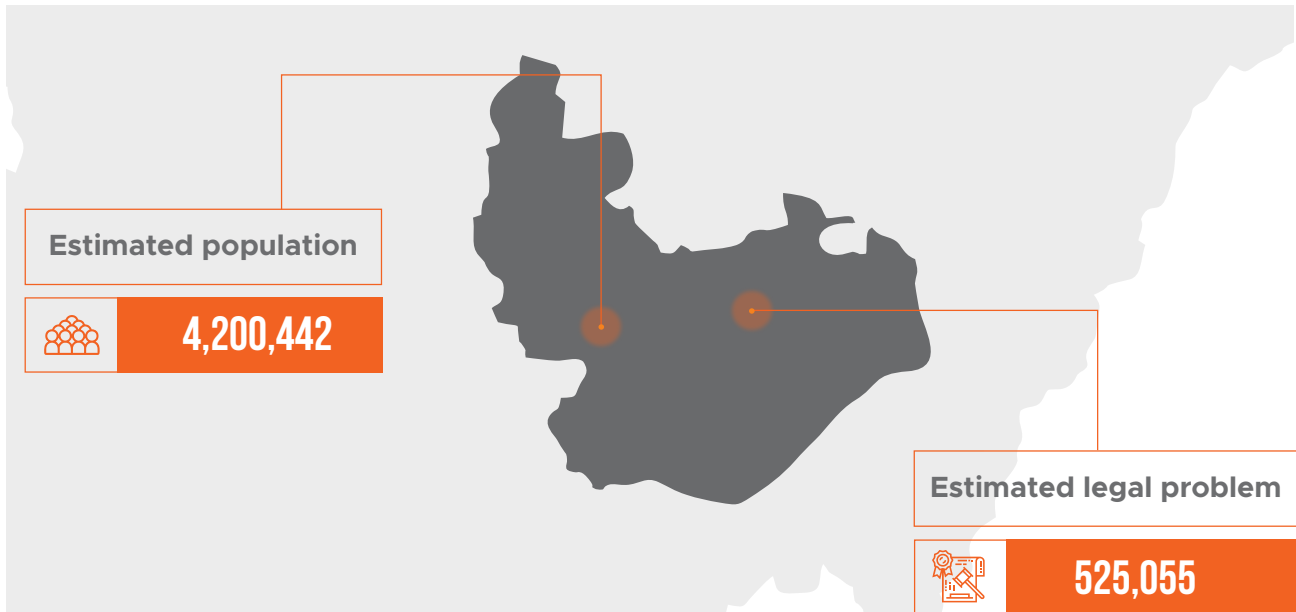
**1,055**

Average number of days to finish a case

From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 131 new cases per annum. The Oyo State justice sector was greatly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic as the State's criminal justice delivery took a hit.

Data reveals a decline in justice delivery in 2020. Completion of a criminal trial which took 580 days in 2019 exponentially increased to 1,268 days; approximately 4 years in rounding off a criminal trial.

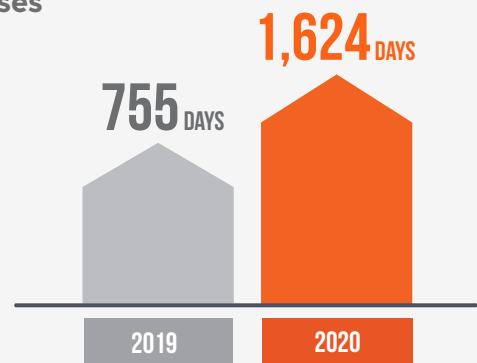
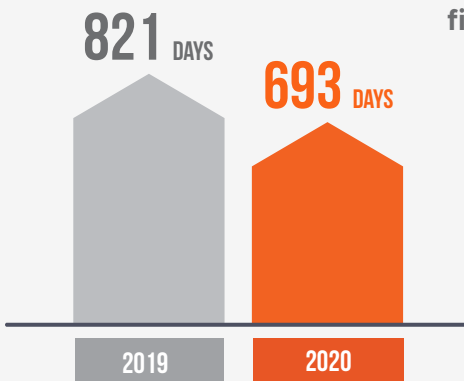
# Plateau



## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



958

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



14

Number of Judges



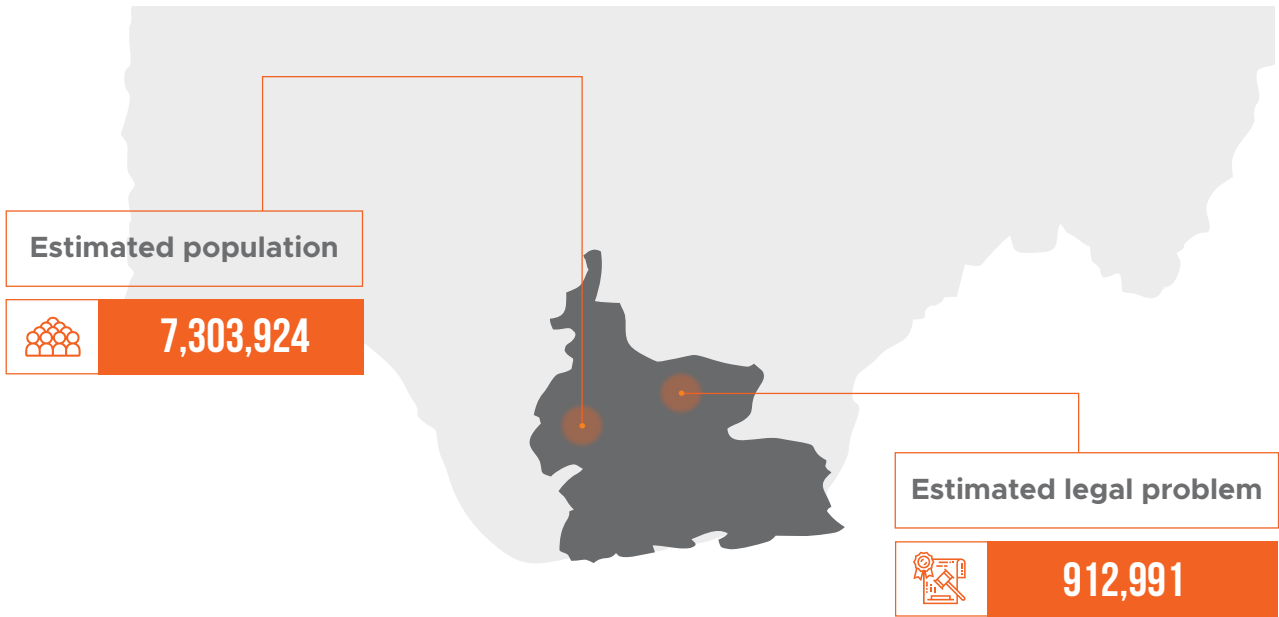
777

Average number of days to finish a case

From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 68 new cases per annum. The Plateau State justice sector wasn't exempt from the effect of the pandemic on other State's Justice sectors.

Moving from a timeline of 755 days of justice delivery in 2019 to 1,624 days of justice delivery in 2020 shows the decline in effective justice delivery in Plateau State.

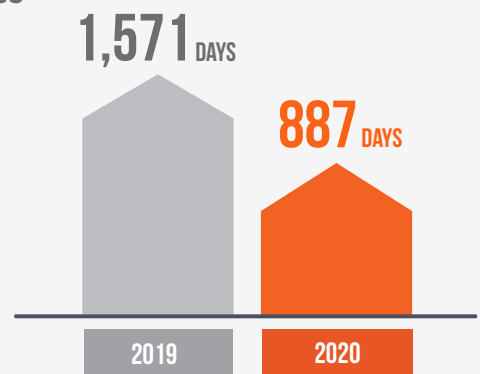
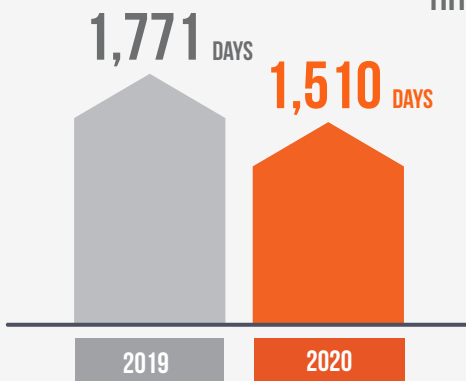
# Rivers



## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



**2,587**

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



**31**

Number of Judges



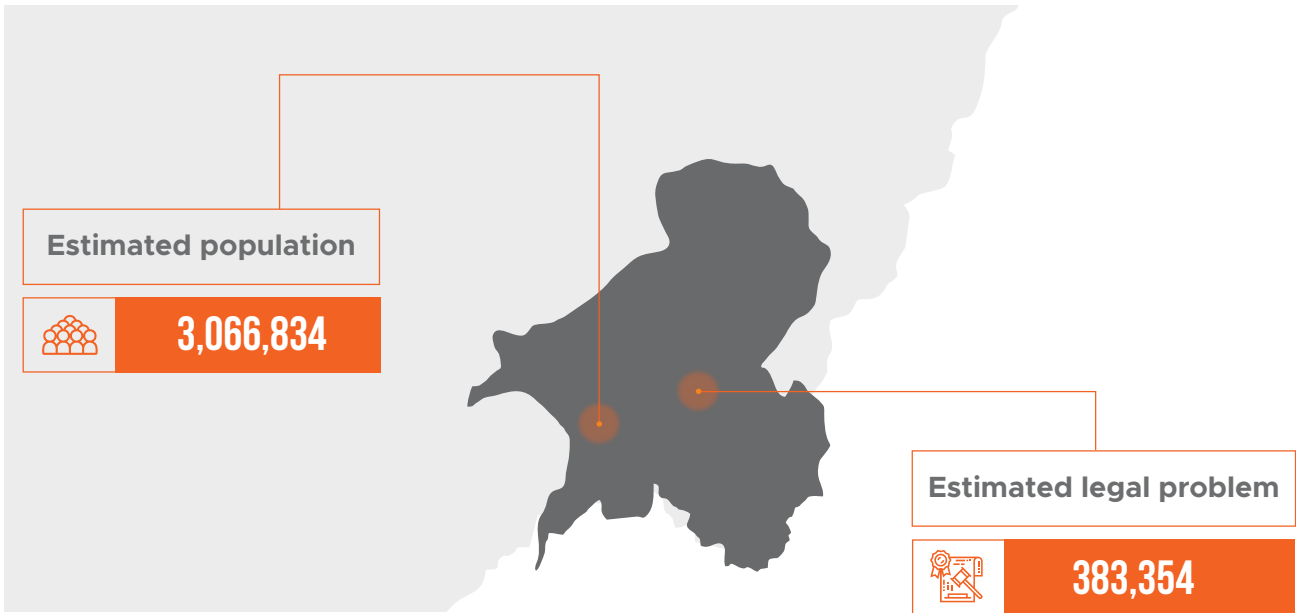
**1,485**

Average number of days to finish a case

From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 83 new cases per annum. The State's justice delivery speed moved from a Criminal matter completion

timeline of 1, 571 days in 2019 to 887 days timeline in 2020.

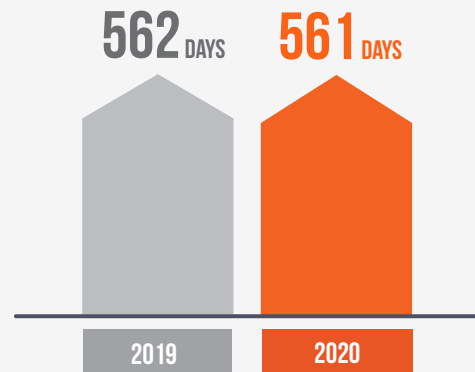
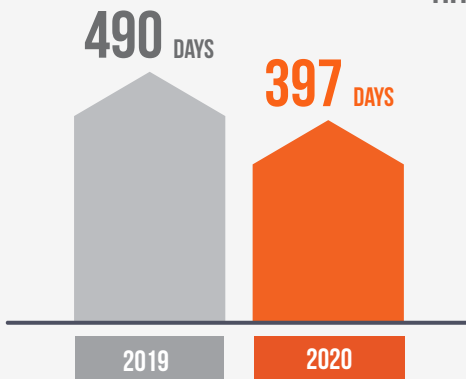
# Taraba



## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



**349**

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



**10**

Number of Judges



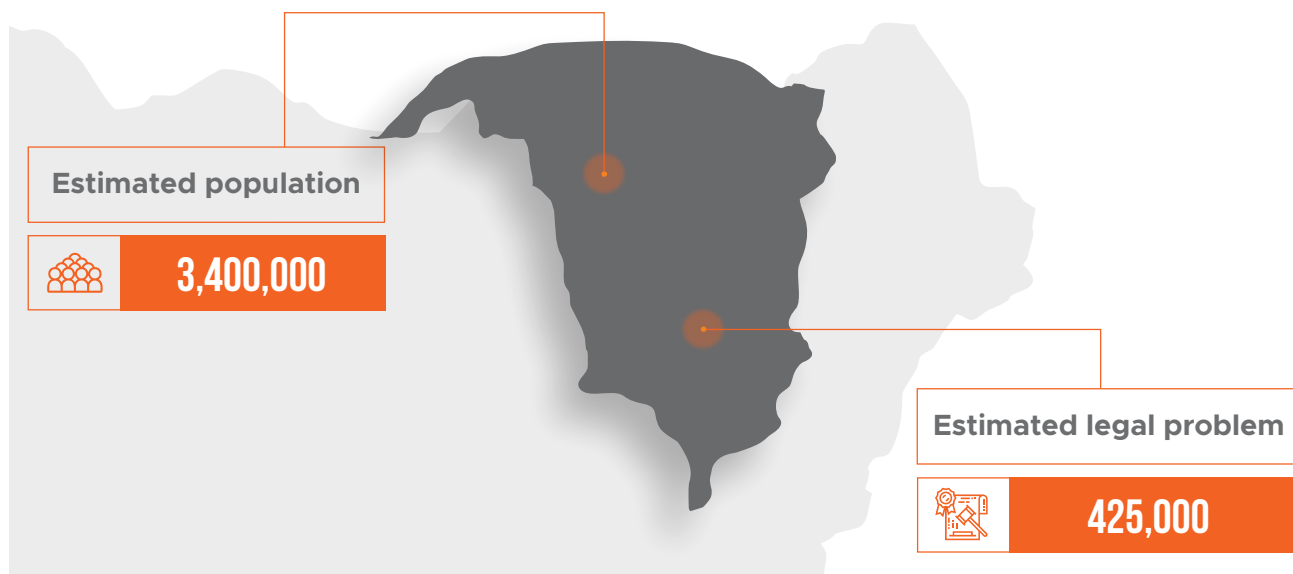
**436**

Average number of days to finish a case

From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 35 new cases per annum. The Taraba State justice sector stayed neutral in 2019 and 2020, as there was no increase or decline in its speed of criminal justice delivery.

In 2019, it took a completion timeline of 562 days for a criminal matter while in 2020, 561 days timeline was recorded.

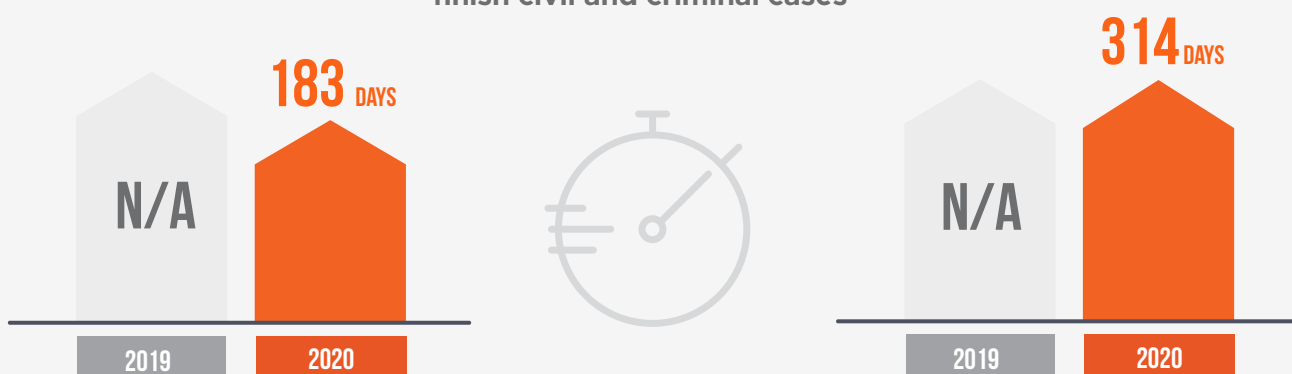
# Yobe



## CIVIL CASES

## CRIMINAL CASE

Average number of days to finish civil and criminal cases



282

Estimated Number of Cases in State High Courts



8

Number of Judges



249

Average number of days to finish a case

From the analysis above, a Judge handles an average of 35 new cases per annum. The 314 timeline from start to completion of a criminal matter in 2020 for Yobe judicial sector can be better

than it presently is. The 180 days benchmark for the completion of criminal matters provided for by the Administration of Criminal Justice Law can be achieved.



# RANKING

OF STATES



# RANKING

A ranking of states high courts of Nigeria.

STATES	DAYS
Borno	67
Yobe	249
Ogun	266
Adamawa	359
Kebbi	366
Bauchi	366
Katsina	381
Ondo	408
Taraba	436
Kogi	437
Osun	448
Ekiti	451
Gombe	485
Kwara	493
Kano	530
F.C.T	566
Niger	573
Cross River	596
Imo	612
Akwa Ibom	648
Abia	669
Ebonyi	697
Delta	705
Anambra	721
Benue	755
Bayelsa	769
Plateau	777
Edo	784
Kaduna	804
Nasarrawa	1044
Oyo	1055
Enugu	1107
Lagos	1118
Rivers	1485

Fast

Slow



# Civil Case RANKING

A ranking of states high courts of Nigeria.

STATES	DAYS
Borno	19
Yobe	183
Ogun	233
Katsina	241
Adamawa	343
Ondo	373
Bauchi	382
Kebbi	386
Taraba	397
Kano	417
Osun	419
Ekiti	434
Kogi	452
Gombe	474
F.C.To	495
Kwara	518
Niger	534
Imo	561
Edo	578
Abia	581
Delta	583
Akwa Ibom	620
Cross River	630
Ebonyi	654
Anambra	664
Plateau	683
Bayelsa	745
Kaduna	747
Benue	801
Enugu	836
Oyo	1042
Nasarawa	1084
Lagos	1134
Rivers	1510

Fast

Slow



# Criminal Case RANKING

A ranking of states high courts of Nigeria.

STATES	DAYS
Borno	92
Bauchi	247
Cross River	290
Yobe	314
Kebbi	342
Kwara	391
Kogi	399
Benue	425
Ogun	434
Adamawa	453
Gombe	500
Ekiti	501
Ondo	508
Taraba	561
Akwa Ibom	655
Katsina	780
Bayelsa	788
Ebonyi	797
Rivers	887
Osun	903
Nasarawa	909
Anambra	948
Kano	983
Kaduna	1007
Lagos	1089
Niger	1135
F.C.T	1205
Imo	1205
Abia	1211
Edo	1222
Oyo	1268
Delta	1342
Plateau	1624
Enugu	1878

Fast

Slow



# Reference

## A ranking of states high courts of Nigeria.

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- <http://www.imojudiciary.gov.ng/>
- <http://www.enugustatejsc.org.ng/>
- <http://www.ebonyistate.gov.ng/Ministry/Justice/>
- <http://www.justice.deltastate.gov.ng/>
- [edojudiciary.gov.ng/court-gallery/honourable-judges/](http://edojudiciary.gov.ng/court-gallery/honourable-judges/)
- <http://www.riversstate.gov.ng/judiciary/>
- <https://osun.gov.ng/mdas/ministries/justice/>
- <http://ogunstate.gov.ng/crhcj/>
- <http://www.akwaibomstate.gov.ng/justice/>
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