MEASURING THE PACE OF

JUSTICE

THROUGH DATA:

A ranking of states high courts of Nigeria.



GAVEL. @OSIWA





Executive Summary

The ranking of State High Courts according to their speed of justice delivery 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.

This research paper gives the estimated number of legal problems per state, how long a case stays in Court's docket from filing to judgement, the rank of each state high courts vis a vis other states in Nigeria. The data samples randomly chosen per state are 50 cases from filing date to judgment date. In total, 1,388 cases were analysed from 33 states in Nigeria. It is observed that there are more cases in the southern states than 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.



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Methodology –



The methods used in this research paper is by reviewing the timeline of 50 cases in each of the 33 states' available data; from commencement to judgment stage and finding the average per state.

One million legal problems is estimated to arise from a population of eight million people, according to the **Hague Institute for Innovation of Law**, and this formula was applied to the population per state to determine estimated legal problems per state.

The ranking positions were based on the average number of time spent on each case in comparison to the other states.

Note



This research paper is 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.

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.

If a judge dedicates an hour to a case per day where an average court sits openly between the hours of 9am- 3pm Monday – Friday. Hence, such judge can only attend to 6 cases daily. However, in the situation that the judge dedicates 30 minutes to each case, then he can only attend to 12 cases daily.

States without accessible data and not contain herein are the following: Ekiti, Sokoto, Yobe, Zamfara.

Sources of data-



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

ABOUTCitizen's Gavel

Citizens' Gavel is a civic tech organization driven to increase the pace of justice delivery in Nigeria by making data more understandable, developing and integrating tech-for-justice tools and providing access to justice.

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

Team Lead:

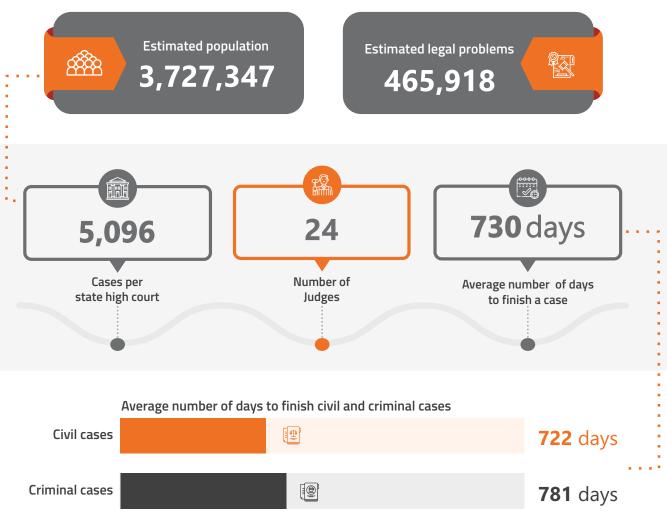
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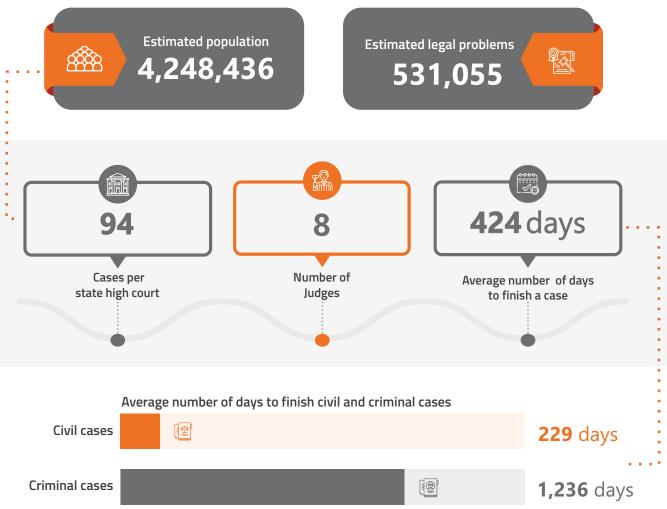




From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 212 cases. The Abia State Judiciary is the 3rd arm of the Government of Abia State, constitutionally vested with the power to interpret, construe and apply the law. The Judiciary in Abia State constitutes a system of courts, which comprises the High Court, Customary Court of Appeal, Magistrate Courts and Customary Courts. Constitutionally the High Court of Abia State, subject to some provisions of the

the jurisdiction to hear and determine any civil proceedings in which the existence or extent of a legal right, power, duty, liability, privilege, interest, obligation or claim is in issue or to hear and determine any criminal proceedings involving or relating to any penalty, forfeiture, punishment or other liability in respect of an offence committed by any person. Abia has a high case per judge ratio vis-a-vis other States High Courts

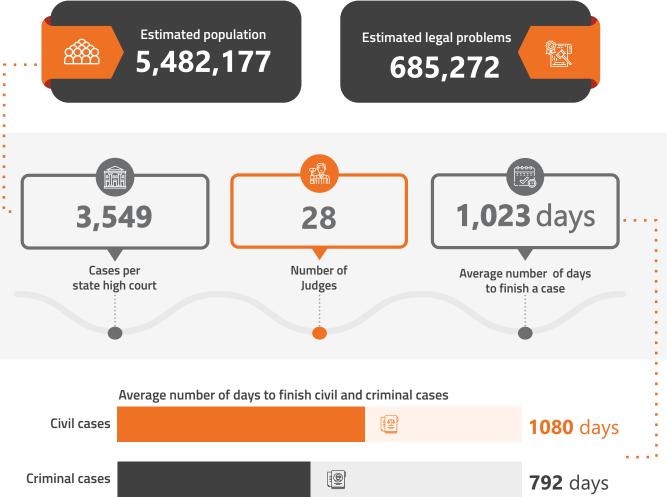




From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 12 cases. Popularly known as the land of beauty, hospitality and sunshine with a total area of 36,917 km². Adamawa has a total number of 8 High court judges. It is surprising

to know that in a state with 4,248,436 population and 531,055 estimated legal problems, only 94 cases reaches State High Courts. It has the lowest case per judge ratio visavis other States High Courts.

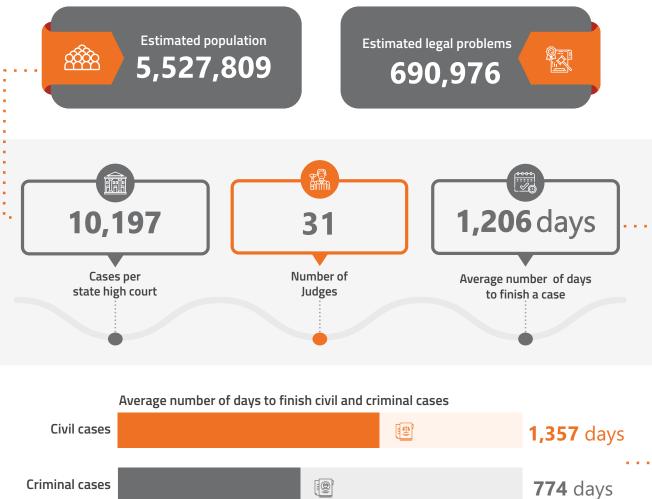




From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 127 cases. Akwa Ibom well known as an oil producing state with a land mass of 7,081km². It has twelve judicial divisions.

It takes approximately three years for a civil case to be determined in the state. For a state known for its economic activities, administration of justice must be faster to promote economic dispute resolution.

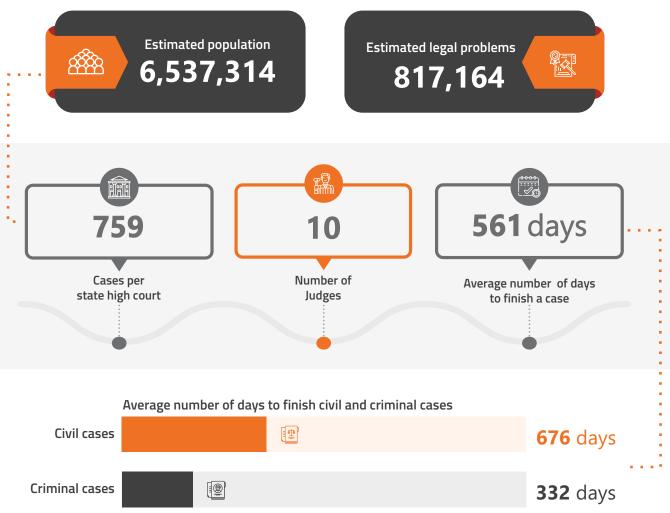




From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 329 cases. In Anambra State, quite a number of cases are filed every day. The Magistrate Courts dispose summarily about 80% of these cases while the High Court handles about 20%, which constitutes the most delicate and complex matters. The functions of the Judiciary are carried out in different

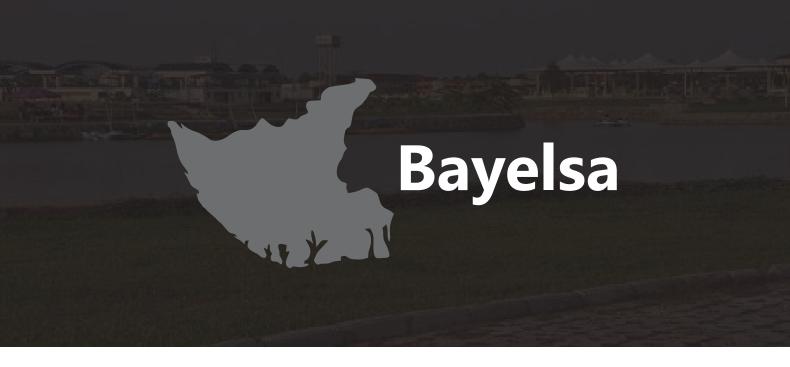
spheres. While some are adjudicatory, others are administrative and they are executed with the assistance of Court employees or attaches for the effective justice delivery. Presently in Anambra State there are 31 Judges of the High Court serving an estimated population of over 5.5 million people. It has a high case per judge ratio vis-a-vis other States High Courts.

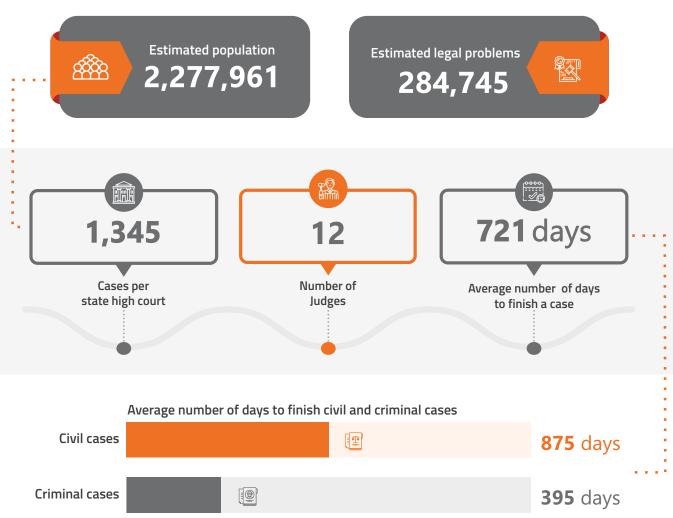




From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 76 cases. With a slogan as "Pearl for tourism", it takes an approximate number of 332 days to round off a criminal

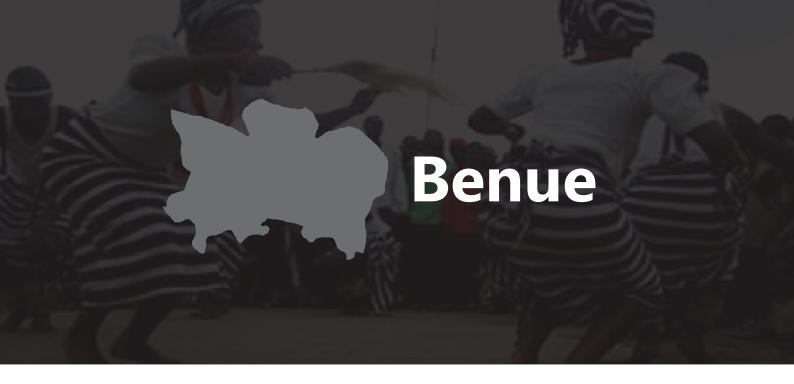
action. Though this is commendable, it is our believe that a more effective and efficient justice delivery system can be attainable. It has a low case per judge ratio vis-a-vis other States High Courts.

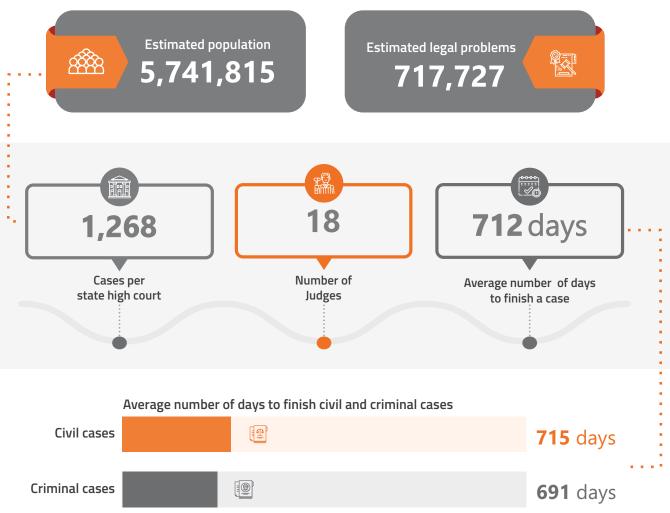




From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 112 cases. In 2017, the Yenagoa NBA branch raised an alarm over what they described as the denial of justice to the people of

the region. Presently in Bayelsa State there are 12 Judges of the High Court serving an estimated population of over 2 million people.





From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 70 cases. A two-year time line to round off a criminal trial is too

long compared to the provision of Administration of Criminal Justice Act that mandates 180 days timeline. It has a low case per judge ratio vis-a-vis other States High Courts.





From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 27 cases. The dispensation of justice is really commendable as the data shows that a criminal case is resolved on average

Criminal cases

within 158 days. However it is obvious that Borno has a low cases per state ratio and a low case per judge ratio vis-a-vis other States High Courts. This may be connected to the present insurgency operation ongoing in the state.

158 days





From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 95 cases. Presently in Cross River State there are 19 Judges of the High Court serving an estimated population of about 4 million people. It is interesting to see that a criminal case in

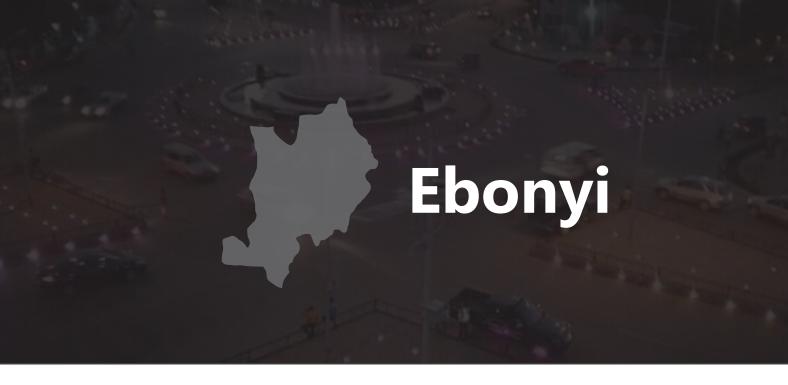
Cross River takes an alarming 1178 days on average to complete. Effort are urgently needed to bring down this high number vis-a-vis provision of Administration Of Criminal Justice Act.

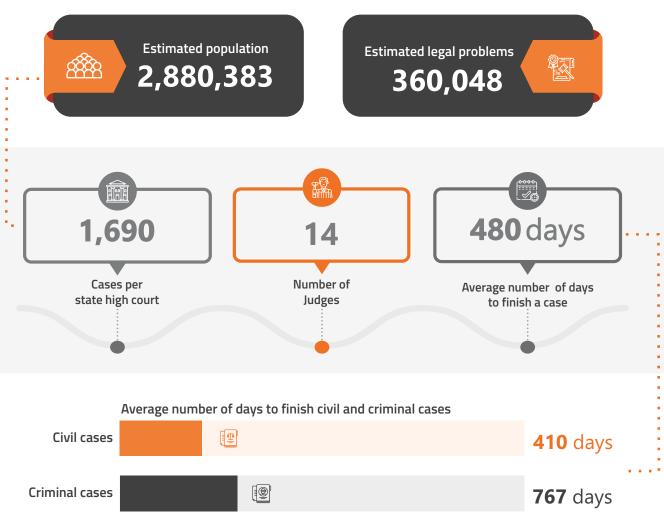




From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 243 cases. Situated in the region known as South-south geopolitical zone, with an area of 16,842 square kilometers and the twenty third largest state in Nigeria. It has a high case per judge ratio vis-a-vis other States High Courts with High court judges adjudicating approximately 7,055 problems annually. It has 25 Local Government Areas and 29 high court

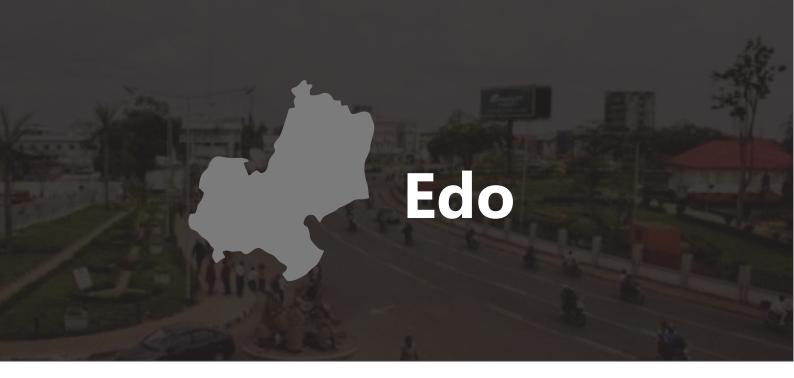
judges spread across the state, the estimated period of three years and 2 months from commencement of a criminal trial to judgment stage depicts a slow-paced justice system and it is cogent that national and state machinery is put in place to ensure that the justice sector becomes even more effective and a safe haven for the common man.

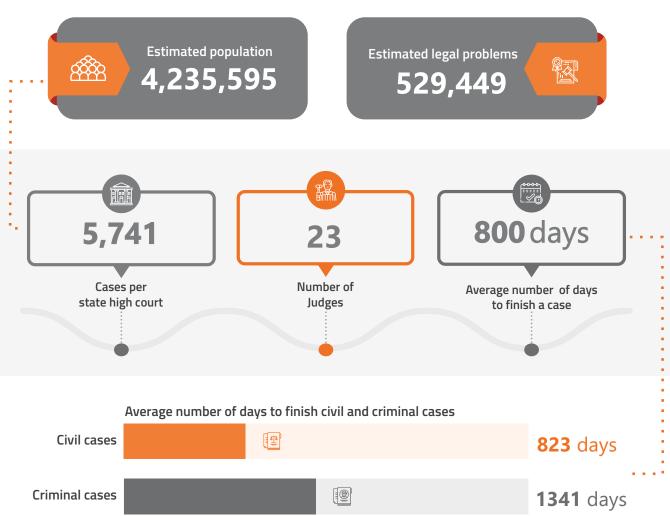




From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 121 cases. Popularly known as the salt of the nation, the state judiciary may not be properly salted in the aspect of effective justice delivery given the number of days it

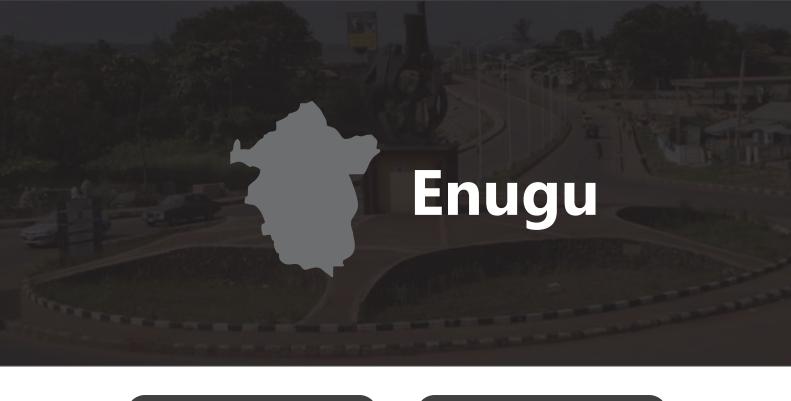
takes to round off a criminal trial it is noteworthy to state that the 121 cases often have a two months adjournment recurrent time line.

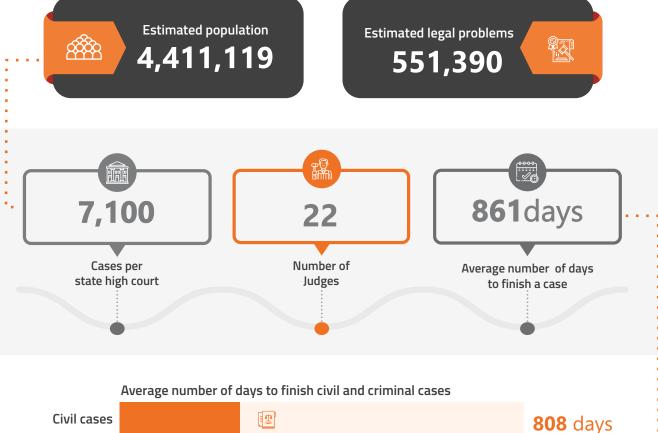




From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 250 cases. They are served by 23 Judges of the High Court of Edo State. It takes 1341 days which is approximately 4 years to administer justice in a criminal case. This is way over the provision of Administration of Criminal Justice Act.

Together, the High Courts, Magistrates' Courts, Area/Customary Courts carry out judicial functions of the Judiciary in Edo State. It has a high case per judge ratio vis-a-vis other States High Courts.





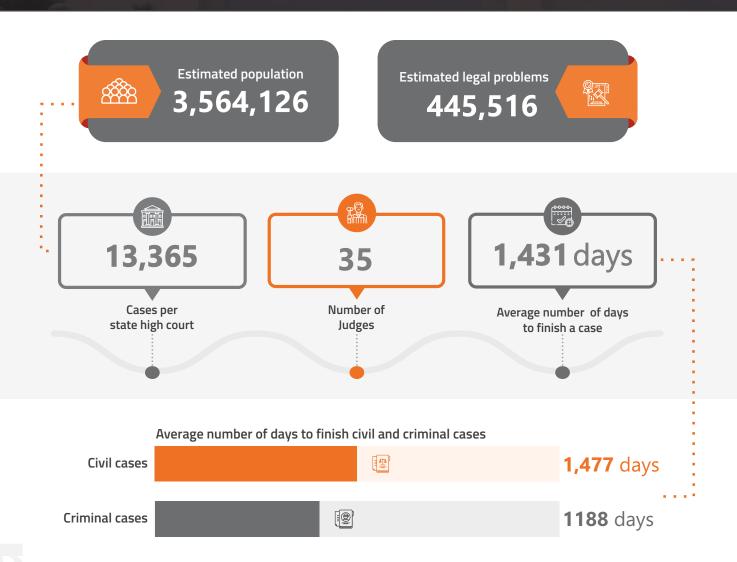
From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 323 cases' Enugu is one of the states in the south eastern part of Nigeria, created in 1991 from the part of Anambra state. With an area of 7,161 Km², It has a high case per judge ratio visavis other States High Courts. High court judges

Criminal cases

adjudicates approximately 7,100 legal problems annually. It has 17 Local Government Areas and 22 high court judges spread across the state, the estimated period of three years and sixty days from commencement of a criminal trial to judgment stage depicts a slow-paced justice system.

1155 days

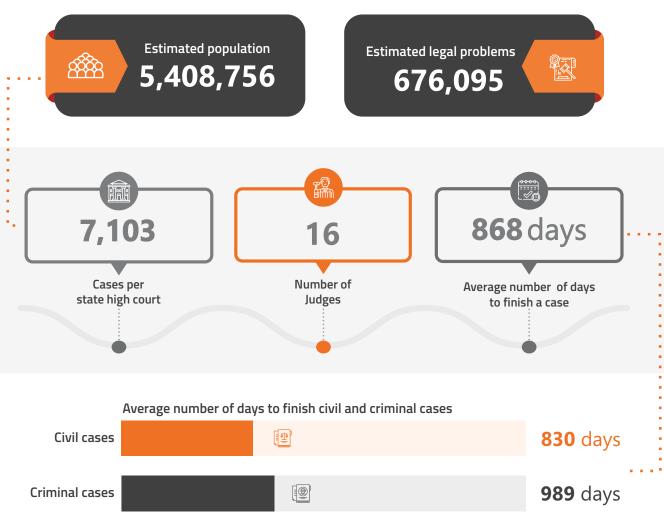




Federal Capital Territory(FCT) Abuja is the capital of Nigeria. It takes over four years to round off a civil trial and three years to round off a criminal trial. This is contrary to 180 days stipulated in the Administration of Criminal Justice Act(ACJA)

While there is no statutorily stipulated days for civil case, it is expected that such cases will be rounded off within a reasonable time, however, 1,477 days is too long to try a case in the capital of the country.

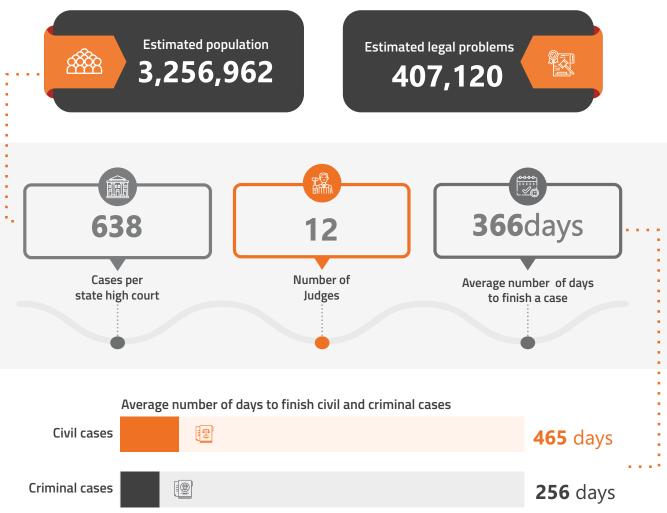




From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 444 cases. Imo has the highest case per judge ratio vis-a-vis other States High Courts. Located in the south east region of the country, Imo state has an area of 5,530 km². Imo state is celebrated as the home of peace and tourism. It has 7,103 legal problems per state high court. It has 27 Local

Government Areas and 16 high court judges spread across the state, the estimated period of two years and ten months from commencement of a criminal trial to judgment stage falls short of the provisions of the Administration of Criminal Justice Law.





From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 53 other state but actually leaves more to be desired in the cases. Popularly known as "Jewel of the Savannah" with an justice delivery sector system. However, it is observed that area of 18,768 km². A 256 day duration from commencement Gombe has a low ratio per cases in State High Court of 638 of criminal trial to judgment stage is commendable vis-a-vis

compared to other states.





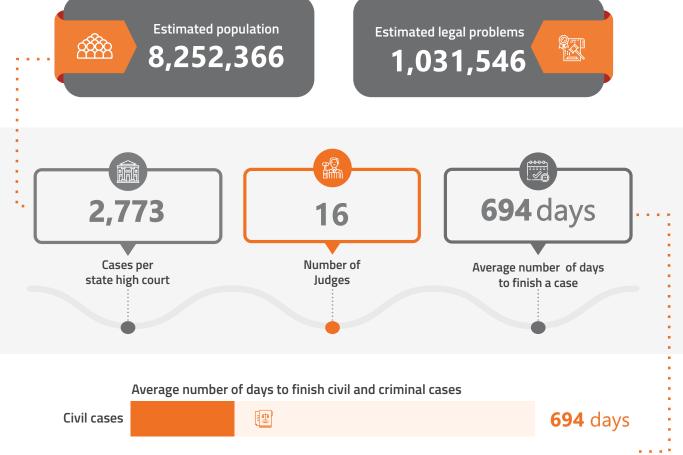
From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 17 cases. With 137 legal problems per State High Court and 553 days to round off a criminal trial. It is noteworthy to state that

Criminal cases

Jigawa has a low case per judge ratio vis-a-vis other States High Courts. Surprisingly, it takes Jigawa 553days to round off criminal cases.

553 days





From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 173 cases. With 2,773 legal problems and 700 days to round off a criminal trial. Kaduna has a high case per judge ratio vis-a-vis

Criminal cases

other States High Courts. A state with such a high number of population needs an efficient justice delivery system. It is doubtful if just 16 judges will be able to cater for 8 million people.

700 days





From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 133 cases. Popularly known as the center for commerce, Kano is one of the most populous states in Nigeria with an area of 20,131 km², 2,260 cases per State High Court and a total number of 17 judges. This is one of the state that leads the

frontiers in the war for effective justice system and delivery. With an up to date judiciary website, a remarkable establishment of a small claims court on 24th January, 2019 and other remarkable establishments put in place by the Chief Judge of the state.





From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 35 cases. It has 276 cases per State High Court. However, it is estimated that a case in Kebbi takes an average of 365 days

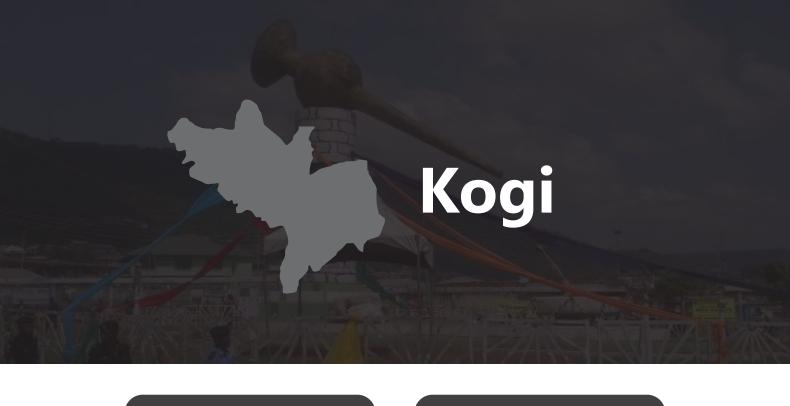
to complete. This is fair, however, there is room for improvement to meet up with the provisions of the ACJL mandating that a criminal trial should be conducted within 180 days





From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 46 cases. It has 593 cases in their State High Court.

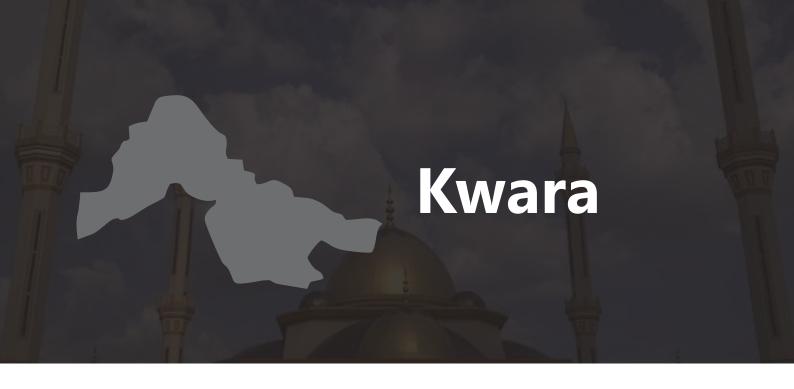
The average time spent on civil cases is commendable and the fastest in Nigeria.





From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 20 cases. The state has a low ratio per cases in State High Court and a low case per judge ratio vis-a-vis other States High.

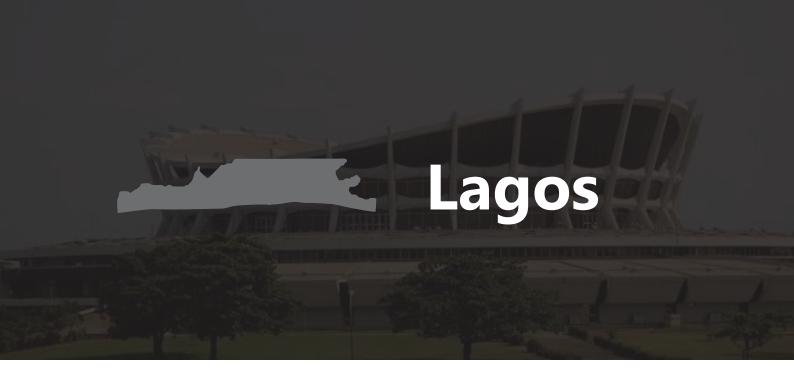
Courts. The workload of Judges in this state seems average. Hence a faster justice delivery time frame is expected vis-avis other states.





From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 66 cases. With an estimated population of over three million persons and 1,054 cases in their State High Court.

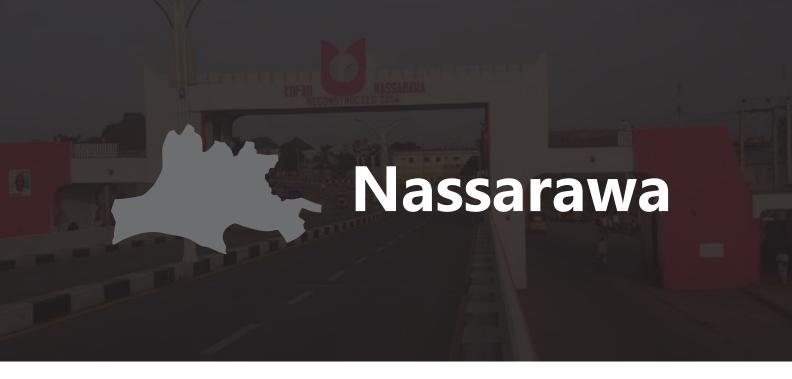
The average number of days to finish a criminal trial is higher than 180 days stipulated in the Administration of Criminal Justice Act.

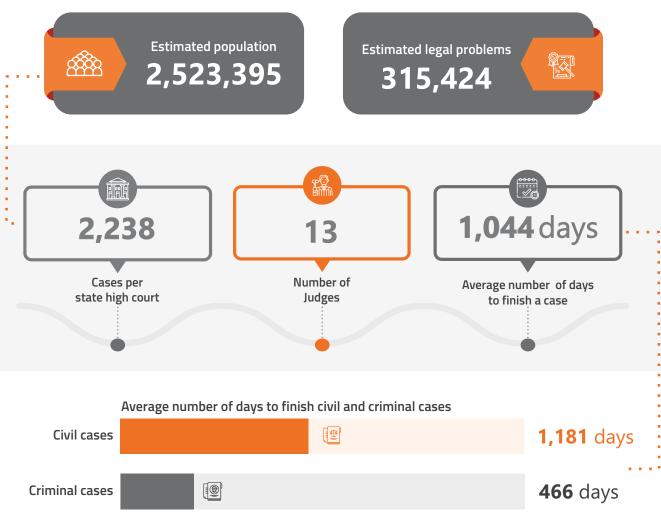




From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 317 cases. Lagos State High Court has the highest case in their high court in Nigeria. This is not surprising as it is the economy capital of the country. A three years time frame to resolve civil case and a two years time frame to resolve criminal cases are too slow to handle the peculiarity of Lagos

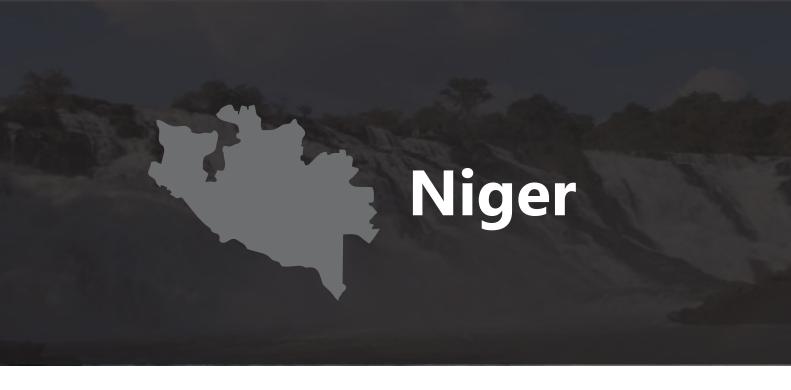
State being an economic hub. However, The Commercial (Fast Track) Division, The Special Offences Courts and The Sexual Offences Courts, The Small Claims Court and their Lagos State (Civil Procedure) Rule 2019 are recognizable ways through which the court tries to speed up the administration of Justice.





From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 172 cases. With an area of 27,117 km², the home of solid mineral may have taken a back seat in effective justice delivery with approximately 3 years to round off a civil trial. The ratio of

judges to estimated number of legal problems in the state also depicts an overburdened judicial system. It is noteworthy to mention the incident of judicial workers who embarked on a one-year strike action between November 2018 - December 2019.

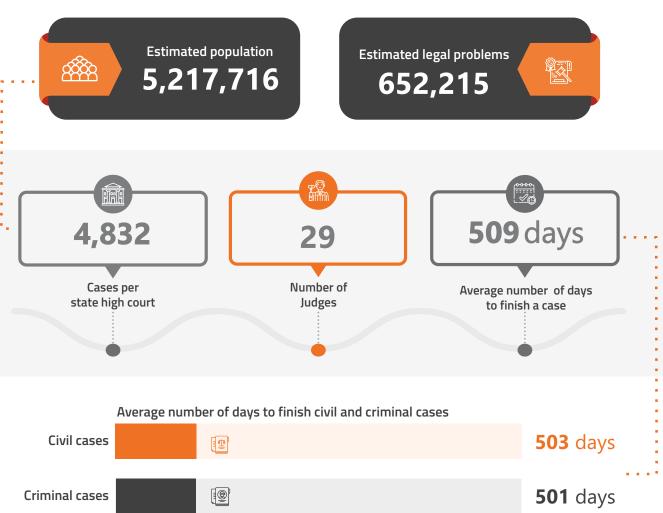




From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 100 cases. Acclaimed for being the largest state in Nigeria with an area of 76,363 km², Niger state has 997 cases in their High

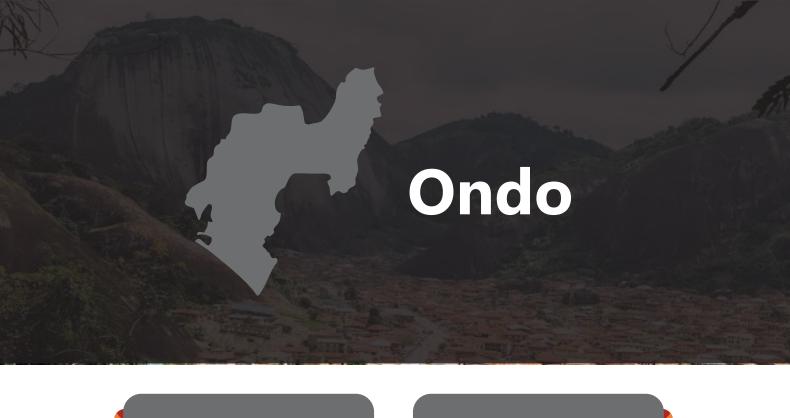
Court. 182 days from commencement of a criminal trial to judgment stage is a benchmark worthy of emulation by other states.





From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 167 cases. The Ogun State Judiciary is the third arm of Government; it came into existence at the creation of Ogun State in 1976. It operates through three hierarchies of Courts

which are the High Court, Magistrate Court and Customary Court. Ogun has a high case per judge ratio vis-a-vis other States High Courts.





From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 56 cases. Ondo State has a low case per judge ratio vis-a-vis other States High Courts. However, it takes almost two years

Criminal cases

to resolve a criminal trial contrary to provision of Administration of Criminal Justice Act.

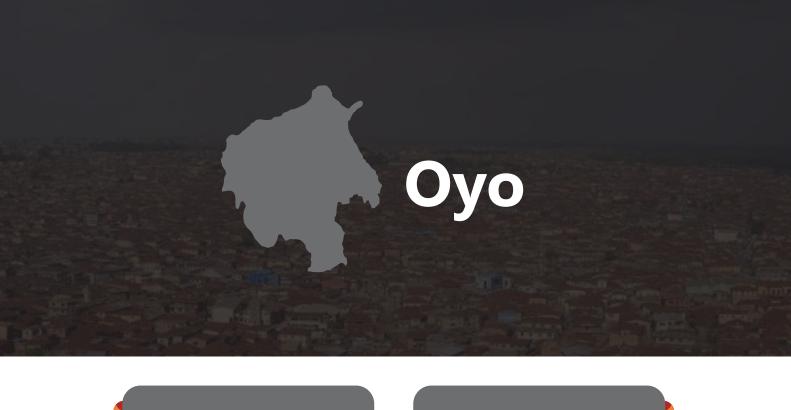
652 days





From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 94 cases. Presently in Osun State there are 19 Judges of the High Court serving an estimated population of over 5 million

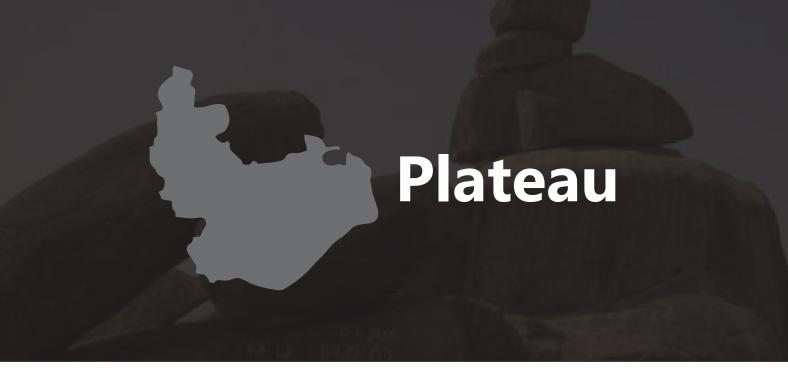
people. The time frame it takes to resolve civil cases in Osun is remarkably high compared to other south-western states except Lagos State which is the economic hub of Nigeria.

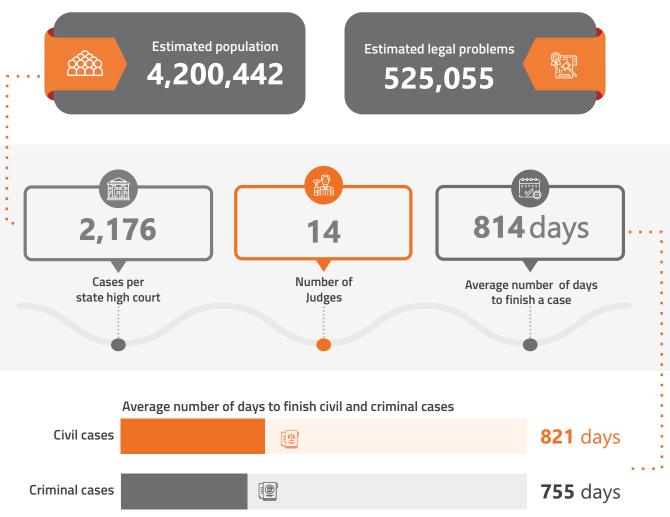




From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 228 cases. Oyo state is an inland state in the south-western part of Nigeria with an area of 28,454km². It has 33 Local Government Areas and 24 high court judges spread across the state. The estimated period of two years, 3

months and 12 days is high vis-a-vis the provisions of the ACJL Oyo State. Oyo has the highest average number of days to round off a criminal case in south-west region. It noteworthy to state that Oyo has a high case per judge ratio vis-a-vis other States High Courts.

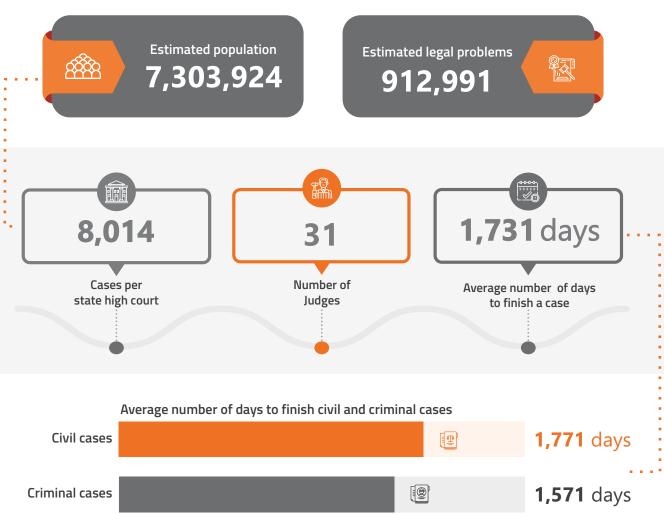




From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 155 cases. Located in Nigeria's middle belt with an area of 30,913km² and the twelfth largest state in Nigeria. Plateau state is celebrated as the home of peace and tourism.

It has 17 Local Government Areas and 14 high court judges spread across the state and an estimated period of two years and 25 days from commencement of a criminal trial to judgment stage.





From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 259 cases. Rivers state is one of the populous states in the country with an estimated number of residents of over 7 million serving state high court judges which resultant effect is a 1,731 days trial period. The state ranks the slowest in Nigeria.

Rivers has the highest cases per State High Court in southsouth region. Cases arising from Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Cross-River states are equivalent to case adjudicated over in Rivers State.





From the analysis above a judge handles an average of 53 cases. Named after the Taraba River which traverses the southern part of the state and with a slogan as "Nature's gift to the nation. Taraba has a population of over three million

persons and 10 high court judges. Taraba has a low case per judge ratio vis-a-vis other States High Courts. Taraba has the third highest cases per state in north-east of region of Nigeria.

RANKING OF STATES



Fast

STATES	DAYS
Borno	 205
Katsina	 229
Kebbi	 365
Gombe	 366
Kogi	 381
Ondo	 414
Adamawa	 424
Jigawa	 470
Ebonyi	 480
Ogun	 509
Niger	 512
Taraba	 517
Bauchi	 561
Kwara	 612
Cross Rivers	 681
Kaduna	 694
Benue	 712
Bayelsa	 721
Abia	 730
Kano	 771
Edo	 800
Osun	 801
Plateau	 814
Oyo	 832
Enugu	 861
lmo	 868
Delta	 897
Lagos	 917
Akwa-Ibom	 1023
Nasarrawa	 1044
Anambra	 1206
Abuja	 1431
Rivers	 1731

Slow

Civil Cases Ranking

Fast

STATES	DAYS
Katsina	 167
Adamawa	 229
Borno	 230
Jigawa	 317
Ondo	 331
Kebbi	 332
Ebonyi	 410
Kogi	 434
Gombe	 465
Taraba	 490
Ogun	 503
Cross River	 572
Kwara	 587
Niger	 592
Bauchi	 676
Kaduna	 694
Kano	 714
Benue	 715
Abia	 722
Oyo	 806
Enugu	 808
Delta	 818
Plateau	 820
Edo	 823
lmo	 830
Osun	 836
Bayelsa	 875
Lagos	 979
Akwa Ibom	1080
Nassarawa	 1181
Anambra	 1357
F.C.T Abuja	 1477
Rivers	 1771

Slow



Criminal Cases Ranking

STATES DAYS Borno 158 Nigor 182

SIAIES	DATS
Borno	 158
Niger	 182
Gombe	 256
Kogi	 263
Bauchi	 332
Bayelsa	 395
Kebbi	 405
Nassarawa	 466
Katsina	 475
Ogun	 501
Jigawa	 553
Taraba	 562
Osun	 580
Ondo	 652
Benue	 691
Kaduna	 700
Plateau	 755
Lagos	 759
Ebonyi	 768
Kwara	 770
Anambra	 774
Abia	 781
Akwa Ibom	 792
Kano	 850
Oyo	 950
lmo	 989
Delta	 1083
Enugu	 1155
Cross River	 1178
F.C.T Abuja	 1188
Adamawa	 1236
Edo	 1341
Rivers	 1570

Slow

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