

ZAMFARA STATE



Geopolitical Profile: **Zamfara State** is a state in northwestern Nigeria. Its capital is Gusau and its Governor is Abdul'aziz Abubakar Yari, a member of the All Progressive Congress Party (APC). Until 1996 the area was part of Sokoto State. Zamfara is peopled by Hausa and Fulani's. Major groups of people include the Zamfarawa mainly Anka, Gummi, Bukkuyum and Talata Mafara Local Governments areas. Gobirawa peopled Shinkafi Local Government. Gobirawa actually migrated from the Gobir Kingdom. Burmawa are found in Bakura and Fulani peopled Bungudu, Maradun, Gusau and are scattered all over the State. In Tsafe, Bungudu and Maru Local Governments are mainly Katsinawa, Garewawa and Hadejawa. While Alibawa peopled Kaura Namoda and Zurmi.

Although the people of Zamfara have over the years struggled to have autonomy, it was not until 1996 that the then Military Administration of the Late General Sani Abacha detached Zamfara State from Sokoto State. With an area of 38,418 square kilometres, it is bordered in the North by Niger republic, to the South by Kaduna State. In the east it is bordered by Katsina State and to the West by Sokoto and Niger States. It has a population of 3,278,873 according to the 2006 census and contains fourteen local government areas.

The area today called Zamfara state was one of the old Hausa city-states like Kano, Katsina, Gobir, Kabi and Zazzau. It extends up to the bend of River Rima to the North West and River Ka

in the south west. Zamfara Kingdom was established in the 11th century and flourished up to 16th century as a city-state. Its capital has shifted with the fortunes of the kingdom from place to place like Dutsi and Birnin Zamfara. In the first half of the 18th century, its then capital Birnin Zamfara, was destroyed by the Gobir Kingdom and a new capital was established in Anka by the second half of the 19th century. Zamfara had many centers of commerce and scholarship that attracted many scholars like the Yandoto city. It became part of the Sokoto Caliphate after the 1804 jihad by Usman dan Fodio. In fact, Usman Danfodiyo settled in Sabon Gari where Sarkin Zamfara Abarshi had already established a garrison headquarters during the early days of his Jihad as a base from where fought Gobir and Kabi.

At the wake of British colonialism, the emerging town of Gusau became an important commercial and administrative center with road and rail networks passing through it. With the creation of States during the Gowon Administration, Zamfara Kingdom became part of the then North West State and latter Sokoto State.

Climate and Demographics: The climate of Zamfara is warm and tropical with temperature rising up to 38 °C (100.4 °F) between March to May. Rainy season starts in late May to September while the cold season known as Harmattan lasts from December to February. Zamfara State is mainly populated by Hausa and Fulani people, with some members of Gwari, Kamuku, Kambari, Dukawa, Bussawa and Zabarma ethnic communities. Others include the Igbo, Yoruba, Kanuri, Nupe and Tiv. The state capital is an important commercial center with a heterogeneous population of people from all over Nigeria. As in all major towns in Nigeria, all the major towns in Zamfara have a large population of other peoples from different parts of Nigeria.

Economy: Agriculture is the most important occupation of the people of the state, hence its slogan "farming is our pride". In 2009, artisanal gold mining became an important source of income in Zamfara State as worldwide gold prices rose dramatically. High concentrations of lead in the ore from which gold was extracted led to a lead poisoning epidemic in the state, requiring national and international intervention to remediate affected areas and provide medical care to children with severe lead poisoning. Islam and Christianity are the principal and major religions of the state. Zamfara was the first state in Nigeria to introduce sharia law. English is the official language of the state. Other main languages spoken in Zamfara are Hausa, Fulfulde and Arabic.

FINDINGS

Public Access to budget documents

Zamfara state scores 14 out of 100 on the State Budget Transparency Index. The State Budget Call Circular is publicly available on request. The majorities of remaining documents are produced, but are not publicly available. Only the Citizen's Budget is not produced.

Public participation in the budget

Citizens and CSOs in Zamfara state have limited spaces to be involved in the budget process with a score of 25 out of 100. Citizens and CSOs are essentially shut out of the **budget formulation** process. The Zamfara State House of Assembly opens all committee hearings to the public during the **budget approval** process. The government publishes a condensed list of beneficiaries of projects, subsidies, social plans and other targeted spending from MDAs during the **budget execution** process. Meanwhile, the **auditing** process is closed off to the public.

Public access to procurement information

With a score of 0 out of 100, citizens have no access to procurement information in Zamfara state.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CIRDDOC recommends the following to improve budget transparency, public participation in the budget process, and transparency in the procurement process:

Budget Transparency

The government can easily increase budget transparency in Zamfara state by timely publishing online the following documents that are already produced:

- Zamfara State Proposed Recurrent and Capital Estimates
- Zamfara State Appropriation Act
- Zamfara State Quarterly Report
- State Mid-Year Review
- Zamfara State Accountant-General's Report
- Zamfara State Auditor-General's Report

The Zamfara State Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning should do the following:

- partner with CSOs in the state to develop a Citizen's Budget.
- publish the Accountant-General's Report and Auditor-General's Report.

Public Participation

To effectively take advantage of knowledge of CSOs and citizens, the government in Zamfara state should do the following:

- open the budget formulation process to all constituencies; establish effective mechanisms to solicit the public's inputs on what should be included in the State Draft Estimates; and clearly articulate what the government expects to do with these inputs.
- publish a comprehensive list of beneficiaries of projects, subsidies, social plans and other targeted spending from MDAs.
- establish practical mechanisms for the public to provide inputs on how the budget is being implemented along with reports on how these inputs are used.

Similarly, the Zamfara State House of Assembly should do the following:

- publish reports on committee hearings.
- open the hearings on the Auditor General's Report to the public.

Lastly, the Auditor General should do the following:

- establish practical mechanisms for the public to submit inputs on what should be audited.

Procurement Process

To improve the entire procurement processes, the following should be done:

- the government should introduce a bill regulating the procurement process; establish an independent State Tenders Board to regulate the procurement process in the state and the necessary resources to fulfill its duty and establish a procurement complaint board that manages an alternative dispute resolution mechanism.
- the State Tenders Board should open bidding documents in public immediately after the bidding process is closed.
- the State Tenders Board should publish all procurement decisions along with their justifications and for all community projects.

Access to Information

To improve access to information in the state, the government should do the following:

1. Domesticate the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, 2011.
2. Establish Freedom of Information (FOI) Agency in the state