

Nigeria's economic crisis deepens: Children facing death penalty for protesting cost of living

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Children being arraigned in Nigerian courtroom, Nov. 1.

In Nigeria, 29 children aged 14 to 17 could face the death penalty after being arraigned in Abuja on Nov. 1 with 76 others for participating in protests against the country's severe cost-of-living crisis.

The children were charged with multiple felonies, including treason and public disturbance, despite Nigeria's Child Rights Act, which prohibits criminal proceedings against children or sentencing them to death. Bail was set at an impossible 10 million naira (\$5,900) per defendant; some have endured 90 days in detention without adequate food.

Four children collapsed in court from exhaustion. They should be freed and allowed to unite with their families.

Nigeria, one of Africa's top oil producers, continues to struggle with extreme poverty, rampant corruption, and high inflation. A significant portion of its 210 million people face food insecurity, and the inflation rate is at a 28-year high. Meanwhile, the government has implemented austerity measures at the behest of the World Bank, which is dominated by the U.S.

