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Protection and Possible Evacuation of Nigerians in War-Affected Middle East Regions: Imperatives for Legislative Actions

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Executive Summary

The ongoing escalation of hostilities involving Iran, the United States, and Israel is slowly approaching its fifth week, with missile and drone exchanges spreading and affecting several parts of the Middle East. Recent reports indicate that Iran launched multiple ballistic missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles targeting the United Arab Emirates on 14 March 2026. According to the UAE Ministry of Defence, air defence systems intercepted several incoming threats, including nine ballistic missiles and 33 drones. Despite these interceptions, the attacks reportedly resulted in six fatalities and 141 injuries, including foreign nationals residing in the country.

Media reports further indicate that Nigerian citizens were among those injured, alongside nationals from several other countries. The UAE hosts a significant Nigerian diaspora population working in sectors such as construction, logistics, hospitality, and trade, particularly in major cities including Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Sharjah. These developments have therefore heightened concerns regarding the safety and welfare of thousands of Nigerians living and working in the Gulf region.

The situation raises several policy concerns. First, the expansion of hostilities across the Gulf region increases the risk that strategic infrastructure and urban centres where foreign workers reside could become targets of further military strikes. Second, the large Nigerian diaspora population in the UAE and neighbouring Gulf states means that prolonged conflict could expose many Nigerians to direct security risks. Third, the absence of publicly communicated updates from Nigeria's foreign policy authorities regarding the safety of affected Nigerians or possible contingency measures may contribute to anxiety among diaspora communities and their families in Nigeria. Previous international crises have shown that timely evacuation planning and coordinated diplomatic engagement are critical in safeguarding citizens during armed conflicts abroad.

Given the constitutional responsibility of the National Assembly to ensure the protection of Nigerian citizens and to oversee foreign policy institutions, legislative engagement is necessary to assess Nigeria's preparedness to respond to potential risks facing its citizens in the region.

In light of these issues, the National Assembly, through its Committees on Foreign Affairs and Diaspora, may consider the following actions:



1. **Invite** the Minister of Foreign Affairs and relevant officials to brief the committees on the number of Nigerians residing in the UAE and other Gulf countries, the status and conditions of Nigerians reportedly injured in the recent attacks, and steps being taken to ensure their safety and welfare.
2. **Request** details on contingency evacuation plans for Nigerians in the region should the conflict escalate further.
3. **Encourage** Nigerian diplomatic missions in the region to strengthen emergency communication channels, ensuring that consular support lines and assistance platforms remain accessible and responsive to Nigerians requiring urgent assistance.
4. **Urge** Nigerian missions in the region to maintain regular engagement with diaspora communities and recognised Nigerian associations, providing timely security updates, travel advisories, and guidance.
5. **Consider** reviewing Nigeria's national emergency evacuation framework for citizens abroad, including funding arrangements, logistical preparedness and inter-agency coordination mechanisms during international crises.

Background:

The ongoing escalation of hostilities involving Iran, the United States, and Israel is gradually approaching its fifth week, with increasing missile and drone attacks across parts of the Middle East. Recent reports indicate that Iran launched multiple ballistic missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles targeting the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as part of the widening conflict in the Gulf region¹.

According to the UAE Ministry of Defence, air defence systems intercepted several of the incoming threats, including nine ballistic missiles and 33 drones during attacks on March 14, 2026². Despite these interceptions, the attacks reportedly resulted in six fatalities and 141 injuries, including foreign nationals residing in the country.

Media reports indicate that Nigerians were among the foreign residents injured in the attacks, raising concerns about the safety of thousands of Nigerian citizens living and working in the UAE. The injured victims reportedly included nationals from several countries, including Nigeria, Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and the Philippines³.

The UAE hosts a significant number of Nigerian migrants engaged in sectors such as construction, logistics, hospitality, and trade, particularly in cities such as Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Sharjah. The

¹ Adam, I. (2026, March 15). Nigerians hit as Iran rains missiles on UAE. *Punch*. <https://punchng.com/nigerians-hit-as-iran-rains-missiles-on-uae/>

² Anadolu Agency. (2026, March 14). UAE says it intercepted 9 ballistic missiles, 33 Iranian drones. *ANews*. <https://www.aneews.com.tr/middle-east/2026/03/14/uae-says-it-intercepted-9-ballistic-missiles-33-iranian-drones>

³ *ibid*



latest developments have heightened anxiety within Nigerian diaspora communities as military exchanges across the Gulf region continue to intensify.

Issue:

The reported injuries of Nigerians in the recent missile attacks reveal the growing risks faced by Nigerian citizens residing in regions affected by armed conflict.

First, the ongoing escalation between Iran and Western-backed forces has expanded the range of potential military targets across the Gulf region. Strategic infrastructure such as ports, military installations, and logistics hubs, areas where many foreign workers reside or work, may become targets of further attacks.

Second, the large Nigerian diaspora population in the UAE and neighbouring Gulf countries means that any prolonged conflict could expose thousands of Nigerian citizens to security risks.

Third, as of the time of reporting, there has been no official communication from Nigeria's Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the safety of Nigerians affected by the attacks or contingency plans for evacuation, which may contribute to anxiety among Nigerians in the region and their families at home.

Fourth, previous international crises have demonstrated that timely evacuation planning and coordinated diplomatic engagement are critical in safeguarding citizens during armed conflicts abroad.

These developments raise the need for proactive government planning to ensure that Nigerian citizens in war-affected areas receive adequate protection and support.

Rationale for Legislative Action:

The National Assembly has a responsibility to ensure that Nigerian citizens abroad are protected during international crises.

Legislative engagement is necessary for several reasons:

1. **Protection of Nigerian Citizens Abroad:** The Nigerian government has a duty to safeguard the welfare and security of its citizens wherever they reside.
2. **Preparedness for Emergency Evacuation:** Escalating hostilities in the Middle East may necessitate contingency planning for the evacuation of Nigerians if the conflict expands.
3. **Oversight of Diplomatic and Consular Responses:** Legislative oversight can help ensure that Nigeria's diplomatic missions are adequately prepared to support citizens during emergencies.
4. **Coordination with International Partners:** Evacuation efforts during conflict situations often require coordination with host governments, international aviation authorities, and humanitarian agencies.

Given the rapidly evolving nature of the conflict, proactive oversight can help ensure that Nigeria's response mechanisms are timely, coordinated, and capable of protecting its citizens abroad.



Recommendations to the National Assembly:

The National Assembly, through its Committees on Foreign Affairs and Diaspora is respectfully urged to:

1. **Invite** the Minister of Foreign Affairs and relevant officials to brief the committees on the number of Nigerians currently residing in the UAE and other affected Gulf countries, the status of Nigerians reportedly injured in the recent attacks, and steps taken to ensure their safety.
2. **Request** details on contingency plans for the possible evacuation of Nigerians from conflict-affected areas should the situation deteriorate further.
3. **Encourage** the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Nigerian missions in the affected region to sustain and widely publicise the existing emergency contact channels and consular support lines, while ensuring that these platforms remain responsive and accessible to Nigerians requiring urgent assistance during the ongoing crisis.
4. **Call on** Nigerian missions in the region to maintain regular engagement with diaspora communities and recognised Nigerian associations in order to disseminate timely security updates, travel advisories, and guidance, as well as to improve coordination in the event that emergency assistance or evacuation becomes necessary.
5. **Consider** reviewing Nigeria's national emergency evacuation framework for citizens abroad, including funding arrangements and coordination mechanisms during international crises.

Conclusion:

The recent missile attacks in the UAE and the reported injuries among Nigerian residents highlight the potential risks facing Nigerians living in conflict-affected regions. As tensions in the Middle East continue to escalate, proactive planning and effective diplomatic engagement are essential to safeguard Nigerian citizens abroad.

Legislative oversight by the National Assembly will help ensure that Nigeria's foreign policy and consular institutions remain prepared to respond swiftly and effectively should evacuation or emergency assistance become necessary.

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