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## **Nigerian churches criticised for not helping persecuted north**

World Watch Monitor (21.12.2016) - <http://bit.ly/2hYNdyU> - Christians in the south of Nigeria are failing to help their persecuted compatriots in the north, according to a veteran humanitarian campaigner.

British peer, Baroness Caroline Cox, who has made numerous aid missions to the country, including a recent trip, told World Watch Monitor: "My personal view is that many of those churches are immensely wealthy and I would hope they could do more to help those who are suffering in the north, particularly the internally displaced people who are left."

"They could work with churches [in the north] who know the needs to reach those most in need.

"From a Christian point of view, St Paul said that where one part of the Body of Christ suffers, we all suffer. There is an obligation to help our Christian brothers and sisters."

The seven-year Islamist rebellion has left 20,000 people dead and about 2.6 million displaced across the four countries. Many families have been displaced several times.

Lady Cox said that southern churches sent occasional consignments of aid, but a tribal rather than national outlook often prevailed resulting in a "disconnect at every level" between Christians in the north and those in the south.

Church leaders in northern Nigeria have previously told World Watch Monitor that they do not have the resources to care for the children orphaned by Islamist militia attacks.

Lady Cox also voiced concern that the Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari is failing to adequately respond to the increasingly frequent attacks by groups of armed Fulani

herdsmen on Christian villages and leaders in the country's Middle Belt. She suggested that the lack of "robust reprisals" could be linked to him being Fulani.

The Federal Government has pledged to establish cattle ranches to resolve the frequent clashes between herdsmen and farmers, which President Buhari has attributed to "poverty, injustice and the lack of job opportunities". Other analysts cite climate change and desertification as factors, while ignoring an aspect that researchers such as Open Doors' Yonas Dembele says amounts to ethnic cleansing of Christians.

### ***Persistent attacks***

On Dec. 19, dozens of southern Kaduna indigenes staged a demonstration in Kaduna city to the ongoing killings in their communities.

The protesters accused the authorities of not doing enough to stop the violence. They also wanted the whole world to know their plight.

On 14 Dec. about 7 people were killed as Fulani herdsmen raided Kugo village, in Chikun LGA, in Kaduna state. Many others were injured while dozens of houses were set on fire including food stores.

Since March 2013, at least 180 have been killed and 10,000 displaced, while hundreds of properties, including dozens of churches, have been burnt down. Some 16 villages have been overrun by Fulani, who are now fully settled with their cattle and families, according to the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA).

ECWA is the main church organisation in Kaduna (950 churches, over 2 million members) and most of the victims were ECWA members.

While there had long been tensions over land for grazing cattle, Lady Cox describes as a "deeply disturbing strategy" a pattern by armed groups of Fulanis of carrying out violent attacks on Christian villages, shooting dead their pastors and occupying the land, causing the Christian populations to flee.

Because eye-witnesses reported them shouting "Allahu Akbar" as they carried out their attacks, there's also an "ideological aspect", she said. She said this is also visible in the way the herdsmen passed through the Sharia-run states in the north without carrying out attacks.

In October a security report found that 826 Christians were killed, 878 injured and 21,000 registered displaced as a result of Fulani militia attacks in the Middle Belt region between January 2013 and May 2016.

And in February an estimated 500 people including women, children and the elderly, were slaughtered by armed Fulani in the mainly Christian area of Agatu, in what one leader said was a retaliation for the killing of a prominent Fulani three years earlier.

Asked who was arming the militias, Lady Cox suggested that while there was much speculation, Boko Haram may have a role in training them, adding: "There's a lot of concern [the cleansing by Fulani militias is] an extension of the Islamisation of Nigeria".

Asked whether Britain could exert influence through its provision of aid, Cox said she hopes the UK Government would address this issue, in addition to having helped the Nigerian Government combat Boko Haram. However, trying to get aid to Christians displaced by Fulani militias would be difficult, she said. "Very often the aid doesn't reach the people most in need ... they're dispersed among communities and therefore not in UNHCR camps, and it's hard to reach them."

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## **Kebbi Christians face latent pressure to abandon faith**

World Watch Monitor (13.12.2016) - <http://bit.ly/2i5hx84> - While violent attacks on Christians at the hands of Islamist militants Boko Haram and the Fulani herdsmen in the northeast and Middle Belt of Nigeria have captured media attention, the persistent social pressures Christians face elsewhere go mostly unnoticed.

Despite common misperceptions that they are a minority across the north of Nigeria, Christians still form the majority in half of the 12 northern states now all under Islamic law (although they are in theory exempt from Sharia provision), while there are high concentrations (25-50%) in the other northern states.

In a remote community in the north-western, Sharia-governed state of Kebbi, Christians face discrimination and persistent pressure to convert to Islam.

Danbango village in the Yauri Local Government Area was traditionally an animist community, but many converted to Christianity following the visit of missionaries in 2012. More recently, visits from Muslim evangelists have seen many convert to Islam. The Christians there say they also faced pressure to do so.

One Christian villager said they were promised boreholes, schools and clinics if they converted.

Another said: "When my son became very sick, I took him to hospital, but the doctors said they would treat him only if I gave up my Christian faith. I refused and took him home. Some days later he died."

The leader of a local church, Joshua Wede, said his church has also experienced problems.

"The district head of Yauri, accompanied by a Muslim vigilante group, came to our church and disrupted the worship service," he said. "They beat us and claimed that the land our church was built on wasn't approved by the government. But it belongs to one of our church members, who gave it to us to build a place for our services. The mosque close by was not pulled down, despite the fact that they didn't get additional approval to build on the land either.

"On 11 May, we were arrested and taken to prison, where we were beaten again and given hard labour. We had no opportunity to contact a lawyer, and some officials told us if we pleaded guilty we would be set free. We didn't have anyone to speak to or anyone who could stand for us, so we agreed.

"Some representatives from the Christian Association of Nigeria came to court to plead that the hearing be postponed so that they could talk with us, but it was too late. We had already pleaded guilty. The final judgement was passed on 18 May and we were sentenced to three years' imprisonment with hard labour or a fine of \$150 each."

Another church leader, named Kabiru, added: "I have been arrested many times on false accusations and have been imprisoned three times. It is all just an effort to frustrate evangelism."

***Other examples of discrimination in Kebbi***

Danbango is one of 21 Local Government Areas in Kebbi. The state was created on 27 August, 1991 and came under Sharia rule in December 2000. Although it is sometimes referred to as the "land of equity", Christians, who make up a quarter of the population, say they are treated as second-class citizens.

Below, Open Doors, a global charity which supports Christians under pressure for their faith, lists some examples of discrimination in Kebbi:

- When the state came into existence, three churches were relocated from the heart of the city to the outskirts. The presidential lodge was built where the churches used to stand.
- In the state capital, Birnin Kebbi, all but two churches are located on the outskirts, clustered together in one place.
- Congregations in general find it hard to get permission to build churches.
- While most school compounds have mosques, there is not a single church in government school compounds and Christian students have to meet together in classrooms.
- While Islamic Religious Knowledge is taught in government schools, Christian Religious Knowledge is not.
- Christian programmes are hardly ever aired on state television or radio stations.
- Job opportunities and admissions are mainly given to non-Christians. In offices, Christians are not duly promoted or paid equal salaries. In cases where they do get promoted, these promotions are often not implemented.
- There is no Christian cemetery in Birnin Kebbi. Christians have to be taken to Jega Local Government Area, 20 miles away, to be buried.
- Since its creation, only one Christian from Kebbi has ever been promoted to the State Cabinet.

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## **45 killed in yet another attack on Christian communities in Kaduna**

World Watch Monitor (19.11.2016) - <http://bit.ly/2eYwxa8> - A spate of attacks on Christian communities in Nigeria last weekend left 45 dead and several more injured. The attacks took place in five villages in the Kauru Local Government Area, in the Middle Belt state of Kaduna – an area mostly populated by Christians, on Sunday 13 November.

Most of the victims were women, children and the elderly, who could not escape the gunfire of the attackers, believed to be Fulani herdsmen. One hundred and twenty houses, including eight house-churches, were burnt down.

A resident of Kitakum (one of the villages), Samuel Adamu, told World Watch Monitor the attackers came at around 7pm local time.

"They laid siege to the village before they started shooting sporadically and throwing explosives at our homes," he said. "They were armed with guns, knives, machetes and explosives.

"They slaughtered [and] butchered women, children and old people who could not escape."

Adamu accused the government of failing to stop the persistent attacks that have claimed hundreds of lives in southern Kaduna.

The attacks came a day after the Fulani herdsmen and indigenous communities in Kauru and neighbouring Local Government Areas resolved to live at peace with each other.

That peace-deal ceremony, held in Samaru Kataf, was attended by Kaduna Governor Nasir El -Rufai, who commended the communities and assured that his administration was determined to ensure security of lives and property.

In reaction to the 13 Nov. killings, the state government's statement condemned the "barbaric" attacks, saying they would not derail ongoing efforts at peace-building in southern Kaduna.

The Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) is the main church organisation in Kaduna (950 churches, over 2 million members) and most of the victims were ECWA members. Its Chairman for Kaduna State, at a news conference (16 Nov.), blamed the ongoing violence on a quest for grazing reserves.

"We have come to the unfortunate conclusion that the announced intention of the Kaduna State Government – to re-create existing cattle grazing reserves in southern Kaduna – serves as a major motivation for the renewed ethno-religious violence and cleansing currently being visited on southern Kaduna communities," said Rev. Zachariah Gado.

He also said last week's donation by the Kaduna state governor for the reconstruction of churches destroyed during the attacks was a misplaced priority, saying that the money should have been given to security agencies.

"As perpetrators continue to evade consequences for their illegal and violent actions, impunity and lawlessness are becoming entrenched, to the detriment of the entire state," he said. "Since the violent aftermath of the 2011 Presidential election, there have been increasing indications of the existence of a desperate, well-funded, organised and executed campaign not only to make life unbearable for the entire southern Kaduna territory through threats, intimidation and psychological warfare, but also to occupy the land through what can only be described as ethno-religious cleansing by Fulani herdsmen militia."

Since March 2013, at least 180 have been killed and 10,000 displaced, while hundreds of properties, including dozens of churches, have been burnt down. Some 16 villages have been overrun by Fulani, who are now fully settled with their cattle and families, noted Gado.

He appealed to both the State and Federal governments to restore all communities taken over by herdsmen to the rightful owners, saying that failure to do so will only encourage further lawlessness.

Zachariah Gado also reiterated his calls for the establishment of a military base in southern Kaduna, to end the killings.

### ***Timeline of recent attacks by Fulani Herdsmen: May-Nov 2016***

**13 Nov.**

45 killed, 120 houses, including eight house-churches, burnt down, as Fulani herdsmen laid siege to five villages (Kigam, Kitakum, Unguwan Magaji , Unguwan Rimi and Kizipi), all in Kauru Local Government Area, about 300km east of Kaduna.

#### **25 Oct.**

Attacks on Misisi village (Kaninkon Chiefdom): seven killed, including the village head, 26 houses burnt down. Also, attacks on Pasakori (3km from Misisi): two killed and 16 houses burnt down.

#### **15 Oct.**

Godogodo: over 300 militiamen laid siege to the town. The killings and arson continued into 16 October and left 30 dead, 27,819 displaced, 326 injured and 326 homes burnt down, including seven churches. Properties estimated to be worth thousands of dollars were looted and destroyed.

#### **24 Sept.**

Godogodo: seven killed as Fulani militia attacked the town (where thousands forcibly displaced from surrounding communities have sought refuge). The next day, an attempted raid was repelled by local vigilantes and security forces.

#### **2 Aug.**

Akwa: two killed, 20 buildings burnt down, including churches.

Golgofa: nine killed and the entire town razed to ashes.

#### **1-2 Aug.**

Unguwar Anjo village (estimated population 3,500) burnt down. A pastor and a community leader killed among others, two churches, including lots of materials, destroyed.

#### **31 May**

Ninte: the entire village burnt down, including three churches, three vehicles and foodstuffs.

Unguwan Kafinta, Dangwa villages attacked: five killed and 298 properties destroyed.

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## **Nigerian Middle Belt state: 800+ Christians killed, 800+ injured, 100+ churches destroyed**

World Watch Monitor (26.10.2016) - <http://bit.ly/2eX4xkb> - Nigeria's Middle Belt is the scene of ever-continuing attacks on Christian farmers by mainly Muslim Hausa-Fulani herdsmen, including this past week where attacks have occurred in both Kaduna and Benue states. Now a recent report about another state in the Middle Belt, Nasarawa, shows that it too has been the scene of serious violence against Christians. In the period January 2013–May 2016, 826 Christians were killed and 878 injured. There were 102 churches destroyed or damaged.

Beside these, 787 houses were destroyed, as well as nine shops, and 32 motorised vehicles. Many families were completely deprived of their livelihoods. Around 21,000

Christians were reported as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in different camps inside and outside Nasarawa. Due to the difficult security situation, the authors of the in-depth fact-finding report are convinced that they were only able to report part of what really happened.

Their Nigeria Conflict and Security Analysis Network (NCSAN) report shows that Nasarawa has been engulfed in various forms of conflict since its creation in 1996. Many researchers, policy makers and government officials have explained the conflict in terms of politics, ethnicity and economic contestation over land and resources. In most cases, the religious component of the conflict has been completely downplayed, marginalised, excluded or neglected.

However, field research conducted by NCSAN on the conflicts which occurred from 2013 to 2016 reveals that Christians have been specifically targeted. Emerging evidence suggests there is a strategic agenda to target and persecute ethnic groups that are predominantly Christian.

The targeting of Christians appears to be carried out by the Hausa-Fulani herdsmen and by deliberate government policies to marginalise Christians and Christian communities. This is evident in political power-sharing and domination through traditional rulership. Islamic identity tends to give Muslims undue advantage over the affairs of the state. Indeed, state government policies are crafted to favour Islam and Muslims. The ongoing persecution of Christians in Nasarawa, like many other places in northern Nigeria, has been ignored.

This study unearths the drivers of persecution against Christian communities in Nasarawa and, importantly, it provides the basis for a policy proposition that encourages the need to build common citizenship among the people.

The report is the third in a series published by Open Doors' World Watch Research unit. The first report highlighted non-Boko Haram violence against Christians in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. The second report investigated in greater detail violent conflict in Taraba from 2013 to 2015.

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## **40 killed as suspected Fulani herdsmen raid Christian community in Nigeria**

World Watch Monitor (20.10.2016) - <http://bit.ly/2q9rYWp> - Gunmen believed to be Fulani herdsmen have killed more than 40 people in Godogodo village, a Christian settlement in the Jama'a Local Government Area in Nigeria's northern state of Kaduna. The area, in the south of Kaduna State, has been attacked several times before.

The gunmen were said to have attacked a military checkpoint in the area before invading the village.

One survivor, Peter Atangi, told World Watch Monitor his four children were all killed.

"The herdsmen came around 9pm on Saturday [15 Oct.]. They invaded our homes after they attacked a military checkpoint. They were armed with sophisticated guns, machetes, knives and sticks. As soon as they came, they started shooting indiscriminately and we started running in different directions.

"They shot and killed my four children. As we ran for our dear lives, they also set our homes on fire. Many of us have been rendered homeless. We don't know where to start...."

About 30 houses, including one used as a church, were said to have been burnt down by the rampaging herdsmen, while property worth millions of Nigerian naira (thousands of US dollars) were destroyed.

A community leader, Joseph Adamu, said about 50 people, mostly women and children, sustained injuries from gunshots and machete cuts and were rushed to hospitals in the nearby cities of Jos, in Plateau State, and Akwanga in Nasarawa State.

The incident led to the declaration of a 24-hour curfew in Jama'a, following increased tension and apprehension among people in the area.

The Chairman of the Jama'a Local Government Council, Dr. Humble Katuka, said people should remain indoors until the situation is brought under control.

Reacting to the frequent attacks on villages in Christian-dominated areas, the Secretary of the Northern Christian Association of Nigeria – responsible for the 19 northern states and the Federal Capital Territory – blamed the state government for failing to stop the killing.

"We are disheartened that despite the re-occurrence of the attack, the government has not come out with a security plan to stop it," Rev. Danladi Yarima told World Watch Monitor in a telephone interview.

"We expected that the government should have mobilised more security personnel to the area. Every day, Christians are being attacked and killed and their homes and property destroyed. The killings have continued unabated and we are very worried. We urge the government and well-meaning Nigerians to stop the killings," he added.

As a result of the ongoing violence, churches in the area have been closed, as many people have fled the communities.

Attacks targeting the predominantly Christian communities in Jama'a area of Nigeria's Kaduna state are recurrent.

On 16 Aug., ten people were killed by Fulani herdsmen, just a month after another deadly attack which claimed, 11 lives in three villages in the same area.

A total of more than 300, mainly Christians, have been killed in repeated attacks by Fulani herdsmen in the past five months, while over 5,000 people have been displaced, said Yarima.

Also, the Southern Kaduna People's Union (SOKAPU), an umbrella body for ethnic minorities, condemned the killings and called on the Federal government to establish a permanent military presence in the area to prevent them.

In a statement signed by its President, Solomon Musa, the organisation said security agencies must find out the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

He added that seven communities in the area have been sacked by the herdsmen and their farms taken over for cattle grazing.

Violence perpetrated by Fulani herdsmen has also led thousands to flee from the largely Christian areas of Kaduna, Benue and Taraba states in Nigeria's farming belt.

Such attacks have features long familiar to Nigerians: ethnic Fulani cattle herders, largely Muslim, moving in on farmers, largely Christian. The long-running land conflict is frequently framed in economic terms, but it also has distinctive religious contours.

In the state of Benue alone, a study by Premium Times claims at least 1,269 lives have been lost since 2013 in such attacks.

"This is another jihad like the one waged by Boko Haram in the north-east of the country," according to Rev. Augustine Akpen Leva. "The attackers carry sophisticated weapons, sometimes they even used chemical weapons on our communities. They just come, often overnight when people are sleeping. They attack defenseless people and go away. They clearly have an agenda: to wipe out the Christian presence and take over the land."

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## **Nigerian Christians told to 'buckle up' after preacher hacked to death**

World Watch Monitor (14.07.2016) - <http://bit.ly/29F3TJA> - A female preacher was hacked to death in the early hours of 9 July near Nigeria's capital.

Eunice Elisha, a mother of seven, had gone out to preach as was usual, her husband, Olawale Elisha, a Redeemed Church of God Pastor, told local media.

Later, two of their sons, who had been practising football, heard that a woman had been killed while preaching.

"I told my children that it couldn't be their mother, but they insisted we should go there and check," Elisha said. "When we got there, we didn't see anybody, they had even covered her blood with sand."

A police officer confirmed a killing had taken place and that the body had been taken to a police station in Kubwa, on the outskirts of Abuja.

"At the entrance of the station I saw a pickup van coming out," Elisha said. "Inside it I saw the lifeless body of my wife at the back of the pickup van. At this point, my children and I burst into tears."

### ***'Zealous Christian'***

Eunice Elisha was 42. Her surviving husband called her a zealous Christian who "rarely missed a day in church".

Asked how he felt about the murder of his wife and her killers, Olawale said: "I see her as a martyr who died for Christ. Whether the people are caught or not, they should be forgiven."

Police have arrested six suspects, and an investigation continues.

Elisha is only the most recent of several attacks on Christians in recent weeks.

- On 30 June in the town of Obi, in the central state of Nasarawa: father of seven, Rev. Joseph Kurah, was ambushed by two armed men after he arrived at his farm. His severely mutilated body was later recovered from the scene. Ethnic Fulani herdsmen are suspected in the killing.
- On 8 June in Kaduna state, Francis Emmanuel, a 41-year-old carpenter, was waiting for food when a gang of six Muslim youths stabbed him. It was Ramadan, and he was not fasting.

"They asked why I was eating," Emmanuel told World Watch Monitor. "At first I didn't reply, but when they asked if I was a Christian or a Muslim, I said I was a Christian. They got furious and started beating me up. One of them brought out a knife and stabbed me in my neck, on my right arm and around my right eye. A police officer rushed over to help me, and the assailants all ran away."

- In Kano, in northern Nigeria, on 2 June, Bridget Agbahime, 74, wife of Mike Agbahime, pastor of Deeper Life Bible Church in Kano, was ambushed by an angry mob for allegedly blaspheming against Islam's prophet. Hers was the second extrajudicial killing after an accusation of blasphemy in recent weeks.
- In June, at least 81 people were killed in recent attacks by ethnic Fulani in Logo and Ukum areas of Benue state in central Nigeria. An undetermined number of churches were ransacked and burned, a local source told World Watch Monitor.

Benue State has been wracked with deadly violence. More than 500 people were killed in February in the mainly Christian area of Agatu. About 20,000 people are thought to have fled the wave of attacks.

On 30 May in Niger state: Methodus Chimaije Emmanuel, 24, was attacked and killed by a mob, after allegedly posting a blasphemous statement about Muhammad on social media. Three other people, including a police officer, lost their lives as a result of violence that followed the killing. A church and a house were burnt down and 25 shops were looted.

Incidents targeting Christians are the result of growing intolerance and radicalism among Nigerian society, said Atta Barkindo, a researcher and doctoral candidate at the London School of Oriental and African Studies.

For a very long time, the focus has been on the Islamist Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria's north-east, Bakindo said.

### ***As well as Boko Haram there are other extremist groups***

"But apart from Boko Haram, there are a number of extremist Islamic groups, such as Aljana Tabas in Gombe, Madinatoul Keffi in Nasarawa or Al Kour Aniyoun in Bauchi. All these states are very close to Abuja, the capital."

They recruit from a large pool of uneducated young people migrating toward central Nigeria from the northern cities of Kano and Sokoto in the north, and they operate with little fear of punishment, Bakindo said.

"The government has done nothing in the past. People feel they can commit these kind of killings and propagate Islam, and the government can't do anything about it," he said.

"So the main issues here are impunity and the lack of accountability. Look at what happened in Kano, Nasarawa and Niger States. But by the end of the day, you will hear nothing, and the attackers will be set free. Impunity is a big issue in Nigeria."

### ***Membership of the Christian Association of Nigeria***

1. Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN) is made up of the Catholic Church in Nigeria.
2. Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN) is made up of Anglican, Methodist, Baptist Churches, Four Square, Presbyterian, Eternal Sacred Order of C & S, Church of the Lord Aladura and other Orthodox Churches.

3. Christian Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (CPFN) Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) made up of Pentecostal Churches.
  4. Organisation of African Instituted Churches is made up of Churches founded by Nigerians (Africans) in Nigeria. These Churches have their origin in Nigeria (Africa).
  5. ECWA – Evangelical Church of West Africa (Former Sandan Interior Missions) which had root in Northern Nigeria and Tekan – Denominations based in Northern Nigeria such as COCIN, HKAN NKST, Christian Assemblies, LCCN etc.
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## **Armed herdsmen attack village in Kaduna**

CSW (06.06.2016) - One person was killed and churches and homes set on fire during an attack by armed Fulani herdsmen on Ninte Village in the southern part of Kaduna State on 28 May.

According to reports received by Christian Solidarity Worldwide Nigeria (CSWN), the herdsmen attacked the village at approximately 2am, targeting homes and churches, including Tawaliu Baptist Church and the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA). Some displaced villagers are currently sheltering in a primary school under the protection of the security services, while others have fled to nearby villages. A man named Joshua Billa, who is believed to have been in his early 30s, was killed.

This was the latest in a series of assaults on Sanga Local Government Area (LGA), which have been ongoing for several years. During an earlier attack on 26 May, herdsmen armed with machetes attacked a man named Mr Ango, who had complained after their cattle trespassed onto his farmland. Members of the local community rushed to assist Mr Ango upon hearing his screams and pursued his assailants. He is currently receiving treatment at Kafanchan General Hospital. Local youth are subsequently reported to have killed one of the assailants, resulting in the arrests of ten villagers. It is believed that the assault on the village on 28 May was launched in revenge.

Attacks by armed herdsmen on farming communities in the central Nigerian states of Plateau, Kaduna, Bauchi, Taraba and Benue have been ongoing for several years and are increasing in frequency. A series of attacks on the Agatu area of Benue State in late February left close to 500 villagers dead.

Violence is also increasing in frequency in southern Nigeria, with herdsmen implicated in abduction, extortion, rape and murder in several states. An attack in late April on Ukpabi-Nimbo Village in Uzo-Uwani LGA, Enugu State, in which at least 50 people were killed, 30 were seriously wounded and a Catholic church and around 11 homes burned down, caused particular outrage. A Fulani man detained after video footage of these murders was discovered on his mobile phone allegedly claimed that the attack was launched in retaliation for the death of a Fulani man, and that over 100 Fulanis from several central and northern states participated in the killings, including some from Kaduna State.

In a press release issued in April, the group Muslims Against Terror condemned the killings by herdsmen. It also called for the perpetrators to be designated as terrorists and called for the government to "deal with them with the full power of the military."

However, in contrast to resurgent Niger Delta militants, whose activities have elicited swift official condemnations and a strong military response, violence by the herders is yet to be decisively addressed by the Nigerian authorities. Beleaguered communities appear increasingly to be resorting to self-defence. On 25 May, news agencies reported that the

Ohaneze Youth Council (OYC) had established the Igbo Vigilante Group (IVG) to protect people in Abia, Anambra, Delta, Enugu, Ebonyi, Imo and Rivers States.

On 23 May, Governor Ayo Fayose of Ekiti State announced a ban on cattle grazing in the State, vowing to equip local hunters and urging people to defend themselves. The announcement was made following an attack on the Oke Ako community in Ikole LGA, in which two people were killed and others were injured by suspected herdsman.

Mervyn Thomas, Chief Executive of Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), said, "Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of Ninte village, who have lost loved ones and homes in the latest bout of violence in Sanga LGA. The continuing absence of an effective and balanced security response to herder-related violence is disheartening and has clearly served to embolden perpetrators, enabling the violence to spread across the country. We call on Federal and State authorities to urgently address this threat to national security and unity. The emergence of vigilante groups is indicative of a worrying lack of confidence either in the government's willingness or in its ability to fulfil its duty of safeguarding the lives and livelihoods of certain sectors of the citizenry. These attacks must be met by a timely and appropriate defence of besieged communities. We urge Nigerian State and Federal authorities to ensure civilians are protected and purveyors of violence are brought to justice. Murder, rape, and destruction of property must be viewed as crimes under the law and addressed accordingly regardless of the tribe, creed or occupation of the perpetrators."

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## **European Parliament debates Nigeria and Boko Haram**

World Watch Monitor (09.05.2016) - <http://bit.ly/1OpjiFY> - A conference on religious radicalisation, Boko Haram and terrorism in Nigeria was held by the largest group in the European Parliament last week.

The European People's Party Working Group on Inter-religious Dialogue's conference on 3 May had two sessions: the first on the broader situation of Nigeria and the other on the threats and needs for peace and security in the region.

German MEP Joachim Zeller, who hosted the conference, said that even though the "Nigerian election and peaceful transition of power was a major achievement", there is still a major threat in the north, where Christians and other minorities are being persecuted.

Each session had a panel with interventions of advocacy and civil society groups and experts on Boko Haram and Nigeria, including Esther Kattenberg, Advocacy Officer for Open Doors International, a charity that supports Christians around the world who are pressured because of their faith. She explained that the reports that appear in the media are "only the tip of the iceberg", as "many violations go unreported".

"It's important to remark that not only Christians are suffering," said Jane Ura, co-ordinator of the Africa Diaspora for Freedom of Religion, introducing the first panel. "There are also challenges for people with indigenous beliefs, and Muslims."

### **Origins of violence**

Professor Yusuf Turaki, chair of the Christian Association of Nigeria's editorial committee for its recent declaration, 'Nigeria Renew', said most violence in Nigeria is "rooted in the British colonial social-economic structure", as well as the lack of will of Nigeria's political elite to change it and to "build an integrative society". He said the British administration used conscripted soldiers from the two Islamic empires in the north to defeat the rest of the ethnic groups in the south.

Later, the number of Christians in northern Nigeria, where the former Islamic states existed, increased from 0 to 31%. He said the conflict is religious and economic.

"Boko Haram acts in a similar way to the Kanem-Bornu Empire of 1900," Turaki said. "Their descendants are still the rulers of the area."

Arne Mulders, ODI's Research and Communications Manager for West and Central Africa and author of the report, 'Crushed but not defeated, the impact of persistent violence on the Church in northern Nigeria', said Nigeria suffered from the "religion and politics of a dominant class which wants to stay in power".

Nigeria is complex because there are several perpetrators that use organised violence and are interlinked. Some conflicts are over land issues, but there is also a religious factor.

"There are ethno-politic and economic reasons, but the common denominator is religious," said Mulders.

Nigerian pastor George Odafe talked about the links between Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen, who attack farmers in the Middle Belt of Nigeria. He also warned about the dangers of famine and economic losses on exports, saying Fulani herdsmen are constantly destroying crops.

### **Recommendations**

The ODI speakers presented their report on Nigeria, with a series of recommendations for the EU to put "pressure on Nigeria for equality before the law and to bring perpetrators to justice".

The EU is a major donor to Nigeria, but "people are missing out on aid", said ODI's Kattenberg.

"Nigeria is an easy partner," said Marcela Szymanski from Aid to the Church in Need, suggesting that although the government is not perpetrating the violent acts, it is doing little to prevent them. Therefore, Szymanski suggested, the EU "should rather give the money to civil society, which is acting on the ground".

Mark Barkwick, from Human Rights Without Frontiers, talked about long-term solutions focusing on the factors that bring religious extremism, such as structural grievances.

"We need a strategy for counter-narratives, and the authorities should create political dialogue with certain factions of Boko Haram," he said. "We are often too focused on security campaigns, but they often end up in abuses."

Rev. Odafe, who works in the Archdiocese of Kaduna in northern Nigeria, said "pro-activity is needed", especially when dealing with victims. "The average Nigerian comes for counselling to the pastor, but we are not psychologists," he said.

He shared his personal testimony of running from a group of teenagers with machetes and hiding in a house in ruins. He said he saw the young men stopping a pregnant woman coming back from the market, ripping her womb open, taking out the foetus and placing it into her hands.

"I fainted," he said, "and this is the kind of violence we have every day, even from teenagers."

Temitope Olodo, an anti-terrorism expert, said many children want to join Boko Haram because "they are strong", while "most of the jobless join terrorist groups".

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## **The Religious Bill in Kaduna State**

The Guardian (04.04.2016) - <http://bit.ly/22fc1z1> - The Governor of Kaduna State, Nasir Ahmad el-Rufai, has introduced an executive Bill with the long title of "A Bill to substitute the Kaduna State Religious Preaching Law of 1984", which, when passed into Law by the Executive-controlled Kaduna State House of Assembly, will enable the state government to regulate, monitor, supervise, handle, take the helm of, oversee and control all religious activities (Christian or Muslim) in Kaduna State.

The proposed Law will foist draconian sanctions on anyone (or group of people) who runs afoul of it: all religious services, including revival or church services and, presumably, the salat al-jumah (Muslims' Friday prayers, which are always conducted on open grounds), must be conducted inside, not outside, church buildings or mosques, and any "sponsored preacher" (Nigerian or foreigner) from outside Kaduna State, must obtain a permit whose validity terminates at the end of the event for which it was issued. Section 42 (1) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) warns that:

"A citizen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, and place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall not, by reason only that he is such a person- be subjected either expressly by, or in the practical application of, any law in force in Nigeria or any executive or administrative action of the government, to disabilities or restrictions to which citizens of Nigeria of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religious or political opinions are not made subject;..."

Under the prospective Law in Kaduna State, every church or mosque, established or to be established, shall obtain a licence, renewable annually, from a committee to be established in each of the numerous local government areas in the state. Each committee shall comprise "a Chairman, a Police Officer, not below the rank of an Assistant Superintendent, two Muslims, one each representing the Izala and Darika religious groups, two representatives of the Christian Association of Nigeria and a representative of the traditional institution". All these committees shall make recommendations to the Ministerial Committee, which, in turn, shall recommend "good" applications for the establishment or sustenance of a church or mosque, to the governor for approval.

This Bill seeks to make all religious bodies trudge through the labyrinth of the harrowing political and security apparatus, including, but not limited to, the Ministry of Justice, the Police, the dreaded Department of State Security (DSS), the Civil Defence Corps and the Secretary to the State Government - all of whom must work under the "Relevant Authority", defined as "the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI), the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and a Ministerial Committee", which is answerable directly to the Governor of Kaduna State.

This poorly-drafted Bill, with otiose and inelegant phraseology, then adds, "All cassettes, CDs, flash drives or any other communication gadgets containing religious recordings from accredited preachers may be played in the following places only: (a) inside one's house (b) inside entrance porche (Zaure) (c) inside the church (d) inside the mosque (e) any other designated place of worship..."

The penalties for violators of this proposed Law on religious activities are puritanical: "Any person shall be guilty of an offence who, in contravention of this Law, (a) preaches without a valid licence (b) plays religious cassettes or uses a loud speaker for religious purposes after 8 p.m. in a public place (c) uses a loudspeaker for religious purposes

other than inside a mosque or church... shall be liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding two years or a fine of N200,000 or both and have his licence revoked... " The Shariah and Customary Courts, vested with jurisdiction to try the violators of this prospective Law, can order the "destruction of vehicle, equipment, instrument, gadget or book (including the Bible and the Quran?) or other material carrying any offensive message."

The proposed Law is, *mutatis mutandis*, a replica of The Kaduna State Regulation of Religious Preaching Edict No. 7 of 1984, an ill-advised military Law. It is needless to state that this Bill, the Religious Preaching Bill, is as strange and grotesque in its unconstitutional contents and as offensive and horrid in its conception and intention, as it is, contrary to what Mr. Barnabas Bala, the Kaduna State Deputy Governor, may have said (with a chicken heart), a direct affront on the 1999 Constitution, the only document, not the amalgamation of 1914 (with doubtful legality), that binds us together today! The Supreme Court of Nigeria once stated with aplomb and information that "Law does not exist in vacuo. The constitution exists for Nigerians who are just having an experiment in democracy. A constitution is not an academic document meant for abstract consideration. It is a revelation of the Social Contract made by the people of a particular nation for those people with full realisation of the peculiar background of the people." (Per Kayode Eso, JSC (as he then was) in *Fawehinmi vs. Akilu* (1987) 4 NWLR (Pt. 67) 797 @848. El-Rufai should realise that Nigeria comprises a disparate congeries of ethnic nationalities, with plural cultures, including religious persuasions.

How can Governor el-Rufai seriously intend to stop Moslems from observing their salat al-jumah (jumat prayers) in "public places" every Friday? It should be clear to the draftsmen of this Religious Preaching Bill that its 1984 counterpart, the Kaduna State Religious Preaching Edict No. 7, pre-dated the current Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), which, in its Section 38 (1) provides, for good measure, *inter alia*, as follows:

"(1) Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in PUBLIC or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance" (emphasis added).

The foregoing provisions of this section put an accent on freedom of worship anywhere in Nigeria; they do not restrict anybody to an individual's house or to any particular corner of a town or State. And section 1 (1) of the 1999 Constitution provides that "This Constitution is supreme and its provisions shall have binding force on all authorities and persons throughout the Federal Republic of Nigeria." Subsection (3) thereof further provides that "If any other law is inconsistent with the provisions of this Constitution, this Constitution shall prevail, and that other law shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void."

The motto of Nigeria, in terms of section 15 (1) of the 1999 Constitution, is Faith, Peace and Progress. *Ipsa facto*, subsection (2) thereof orders that "... national integration shall be actively encouraged, whilst discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties shall be prohibited." That being so, for a State Law to require a Nigerian from another State of Nigeria to obtain a permit before he/she can preach in a church/mosque in Kaduna State, is not only an arrant violation of the relevant provisions of the Constitution but a flagrant breach of his/her fundamental human rights.

The free exercise of religion is the very anchor-sheet of civil liberty and any attempt to abrogate that freedom will equate with the Nigerian aphorism, "trouble dey sleep, yanga come wake am"! When the Kaduna State Government begins to enforce the

unconstitutional law, with all its asperities, it may create, in the North-West, a situation that is akin to the internecine war in the North-East!

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## **Abducted clergyman found dead but colleagues released**

CSW (01.04.2016) - The body of a clergyman who was abducted in Kaduna State along with two colleagues has been found in the bush a day after the body of a kidnapped senior military officer was discovered in similar circumstances.

Reverends Iliya Anto and Yakubu Dzarma of the United Church of Christ in Nigeria (UCCN), and Reverend Emmanuel Dzigau, the UCCN President, were abducted by armed men on 21 March as they travelled on the Kaduna-Abuja Express Way on their way to clear a piece of land for the foundation of the church seminary.

Church sources informed the Nigerian media that the abductors called them on 22 March with details of a location where they claimed to have left Reverend Anto, who was unwell. The Reverend had recently undergone an operation and required medication. However, rescuers failed to find him at the stated location and his abductors refused to provide further information, claiming the church had sent too many people to the area.

Reverend Anto's decomposing body was discovered in the bush on 30 March. Reverends Dzigau and Dzarma were freed that evening and are reported to be recovering in a private hospital in Kaduna. It is unclear whether a ransom was paid to secure their release.

On 29 March, the Nigerian Army confirmed that Colonel Samaila Inusa, who was abducted by unknown gunmen in Kaduna on 27 March, had been found dead in the bush. The Colonel was abducted by gunmen as he drove with his wife along Kaduna Refinery Road, in Chikun Local Government Area (LGA), Kaduna State. His wife was released and he was driven away in his own car.

According to an army statement, "most likely the late senior officer was killed same day he was kidnapped. This is because the body was found already decomposing around Ajyaita village off Eastern Bypass Kaduna, Kaduna State."

Earlier, the authorities had offered a reward of N1million (around £3500) for information on the Colonel's whereabouts.

Mervyn Thomas Chief Executive of Christian Solidarity Worldwide, said, "We extend our heartfelt condolences to the family of Reverend Anto and Colonel Inusa. Our prayers are with their families and with Reverends Dzarma and Dzigau as they recover from their ordeal. These abductions point to a worrying breakdown in law and order. We urge the authorities to step up security in the area and to bring the perpetrators to justice."

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## **Nigeria court in Kano sentences cleric to death for blasphemy**

***An Islamic court has sentenced a Nigerian cleric to death by hanging for insulting the Prophet Muhammad in the northern city of Kano.***

BBC (06.01.2016) - <http://bbc.in/1JE06pe> - Abdulazeez Dauda, popularly known as Abdul Inyass, was convicted after a trial held in secret to avoid protests.

Five of his followers were also sentenced to death last year.

These are the first death sentences for blasphemy handed down by a Nigerian Sharia court; those delivered for other offences have not been carried out.

Mr Inyass is a preacher at a local faction of the Tijaniya sect, founded in Senegal by Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse, which has a large following across West Africa.

He was reported to have said that "Niasse was bigger than Prophet Muhammad" during a lecture at an event in May, leading to violent protests in the city.

The BBC's Yusuf Ibrahim Yakasai in Kano says he then fled to the capital, Abuja, and nine of his followers were arrested for their alleged part in organising the event.

When they were arraigned in court, there were further clashes and the courthouse was set on fire, he says.

Anyone who is not satisfied with the judgement of a Sharia court can appeal to the Sharia Court of Appeal in the state within three months. From there the case can be taken to the federal Court of Appeal, which is secular and, finally, to the Supreme Court.

There are judges of the Court of Appeal who are learned in Islamic law and who would be convened by the court's president to hear the case.

The Sharia courts only try Muslims. If a case involves a Muslim and a non-Muslim, the non-Muslim will be given the option of choosing where he/she wants the case to be tried. The Sharia court can only hear the case if the non-Muslim gives written consent.

Amina Lawal, who was found guilty of adultery in 2002 and sentenced to death by stoning, was acquitted by a Sharia Court of Appeal.

Four of the followers were acquitted and the five sentenced to death are appealing against their conviction at the state's high court.

Kano has a predominately Muslim population and Islamic courts operate alongside secular courts.

Mr Inyass, whose five-month trial was held in secret for security reasons, will also be able to appeal against the verdict at the high court.

Several states in northern Nigeria introduced Sharia after the country returned to civilian rule in 1999.

### ***Tijaniya at a glance***

The Sufi sect of Tijaniya was founded in Algeria in 1784 by Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Tijani.

It spread all over the world, with large following in North and West Africa. It also has followers in South Africa, Indonesia and other parts of the world.

There are other Sufi sects in Islam but Tijaniya is the largest.

They have three main daily practices: Asking the forgiveness of God; sending prayers to the Prophet Muhammad and affirming the Oneness of Allah.

Senegalese-born Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse was credited with reviving the sect in the 20th Century. People travel from across the continent to visit his shrine.

They have several factions including the Haqiqa (Realist) group, whose members were convicted of blasphemy in Kano.

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