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NIGERIA: 8 Christians killed, church burned down during attack

By Anugrah Kumar

The Christian Post (24.05.2021) – <https://bit.ly/3wMLq2T> – Eight Christians were killed, and a church building was burned down along with a few homes during an attack last week by bandits in northwestern Nigeria’s Kaduna state amid what some advocates say is an attempt by some to “cleanse” the country of its Christians.

Armed “bandits” shot eight Christians to death and set fire to a church and houses in Ungwan Gaida in Kaduna state’s Chikun area last Wednesday, according to the United States-based persecution watchdog International Christian Concern.

The death toll was confirmed by Kaduna Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs Samuel Aruwan in a statement shared with the media.

The victims were identified as Bitrus Baba, Umaru Baba, Gideon Bitrus, Bawa Gajere, Samaila Gajere, Sambo Kasuwa, Samuila Kasuwa and Solomon Samaila.

According to Aruwan, the church building razed belonged to the Assemblies of God denomination.

In a separate incident on Wednesday, the Nigerian Navy troops in the Kujama General Area killed three “bandits” and arrested two accomplices after repelling an attack on the Wakwodna community near Kasso village in the Chikun local government area, Nigeria’s Premium Times newspaper reported.

In the 2021 annual report by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, Commissioner Gary Bauer called Nigeria a “killing field” of Christians.

“All too often this violence is attributed to mere ‘bandits’ or explained away as hostility between farmers and herdsmen,” Bauer said in the report. “While there is some truth in these

assertions, they ignore the main truth: radical Islamists are committing violence inspired by what they believe is a religious imperative to 'cleanse' Nigeria of its Christians. They must be stopped."

The Anambra-based civil society group International Society for Civil Liberties & Rule of Law estimates that at least 1,470 Christians have been killed in the first four months of 2021 in Nigeria. The group also estimates that about 2,200 have been abducted in Nigeria during that period.

Kaduna state recorded the highest number of Christian deaths, at 300, according to the organization. The state also recorded the highest number of abductions. Of the 800 kidnappings recorded in Kaduna, 600 were indigenous Christians, "including those abducted in Muslim-held areas of Birnin-Gwari, Igabi and Giwa Local Government Areas."

The Global Terrorism Index ranked Nigeria as the third-most affected country by terrorism and reported over 22,000 deaths by acts of terror from 2001 to 2019.

USCIRF's 2021 report warned that Nigeria "will move relentlessly toward a Christian genocide" if action is not taken.

Islamic extremism, particularly in northeast Nigeria, has led to thousands of deaths and millions displaced in recent years.

Nigeria was the first democratic nation to be added to the U.S. State Department's list of "countries of particular concern" under the International Religious Freedom Act for

engaging in “tolerated systematic, ongoing and egregious violations of religious freedom.”

Photo : LUIS TATO/AFP via Getty Images

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