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## **49 killed and 27 abducted in southern Kaduna attacks**

**CSW (28.09.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3oyM7vC> - At least 49 people have been killed and 27 were abducted in attacks by armed assailants of Fulani ethnicity on communities in three Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Kaduna state, central Nigeria, that occurred on 26 and 27 September.**

Eight people were killed, six were injured and several houses were burnt in an attack on Kacecere village in Zangon Kataf LGA, southern Kaduna, on 27 September.

One person died, an unknown number were injured and 27 were abducted following an attack on the Gabachuwa community in Kachia LGA, southern Kaduna, on 26 September. The victim was killed while on his way to visit the Gabachuwa community, when he encountered the assailants as they led their captives away. According to CSW's sources, the victim and most of the abductees are members of the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA).

Also on 26 September, militia men attacked the Madamai and Abun communities in the Malagun District of Kaura LGA at around 6pm, killing [40 people](#) and injuring eight in a "well coordinated attack." A Catholic priest who witnessed it [described](#) the two hour attack as "a massacre against the natives." The assailants reportedly arrived in significant numbers, and initially targeted people known to coordinate security for the community, and their families, before murdering other victims and burning down 20 homes. The victims reportedly included [13 people](#) from the same family.

Senator Danjuma La'ah, who represents Kaduna South in the National Assembly, condemned the relentless violence in southern Kaduna and [insisted](#) on the victims receiving a fitting burial, donating over N1 Million (approximately GBP £1780) for the purchase of caskets and preparation of the bodies. He also called for increased security, adding that if the authorities fail to take proactive measures to address the issue, the people will be left with no option except self-defence.

The spokesperson for the Southern Kaduna Peoples Union (SOKAPU), Luka Binniyat, also called for increased security, adding that SOKAPU "strongly condemns the lack of seriousness by the Commander, Operation Safe Haven, Maj. Gen. Ibrahim Sallau, who is

also the GOC, 3 Division, Nigerian Army Jos... [...] As of now, the most protected areas of Southern Kaduna are the Hausa and Fulani settler communities. They've [sic] heavy presence of Operation Safe Haven, police and related security agencies. We are therefore calling on the Nigerian Army to look into this allegation and do the needful. We're also calling on our youths to remain vigilant, defend their communities, cooperate with security agencies and never take the law into their hands."

Kaduna state is currently an epicentre of kidnapping and banditry activity. The predominantly Christian ethnic minority tribes who inhabit the southern part of the state have experienced relentless attacks since 2011, with a significant uptick following the advent of the current administration in 2015. The state continues to experience alarming levels of violence despite being the headquarters of 11 military installations. As one CSW source lamented: "Most communities in southern Kaduna, including some in Birnin Gwari and Igabi, have more mass graves than government projects."

Following the attacks, the Kaduna state Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs [asserted](#) that troops were sent to the area and also came under fire, but forced the assailants to retreat before allegedly rescuing six people from burning buildings and dousing three fires. However, local sources questioned the delayed response, since the assailants had allegedly notified villagers in advance that they would be launching an attack. The Commissioner also [claimed](#) the people in Kacecere village died in a reprisal attack.

CSW's Founder President Mervyn Thomas said: ***"Once again our hearts break for the people of southern Kaduna who continue to face relentless violence on a near daily basis. We extend our deepest condolences to all those who lost loved ones in these attacks, and pray for the swift return of all abductees. The state and federal governments must do far more to protect all vulnerable communities in an unbiased manner, and to combat the threats posed by Fulani militia and other armed non-state actors. This is also not the first time allegations have been made of inadequate protection despite warnings of an impending attack. This is concerning, and must be investigated by the Nigerian government, and failing that, by the wider international community."***

#### **Note to Editors:**

1. The Catholic Priest of St Thomas Quasi Parish, Mallagum, Rev. Fr Cosmos Michael Magaji [named](#) 33 of the victims as

- Mrs Lami Yakubu Adakai
- Mrs Fkorenc Yakubu Adakai
- Danlami Adakai
- Samaila Adakai
- Garba Simon
- Patrick Bala
- Kato Achigaba
- Andrew Lekwot
- Lawrence Andrew
- Victor Joseph
- Philemon Akant Habiba
- Sofio Bala Bwachat
- Siman Zamani
- Danjuma Yusuf
- Friday Bulus
- Eunice Ibrahim

- Stephen Nkom
- Yusuf Zuwahu
- Genesis Danjuma
- Bulus Markus
- Ezekiel Bobai
- Talatu Ezekiel
- Bonat Francis
- ThankGod Hananiya
- Raymond La'aki
- Musa Yashim
- Janet Duniya
- Paul Akwok
- Yohanna Gagarau
- Lucy Kambai
- Faith Bala
- Esther Luka
- Philip Kamba

*Photo : csw.org*

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## **Church decries “slow genocide” of Christians in Nigeria**

***The Catholic Church in Nigeria claims that the Christians in that country are the victims of a process of ethnic cleansing at the hands of Fulani Muslims, with the complicity of the state.***

**By ACN International, (01.10.2021)**

During a webinar hosted by Aid to the Church in Need International (ACN) respective speakers, among them one bishop and several priests from Nigeria, confirmed that the violence that has been plaguing the country for the past several years is not simply due to “clashes” between Muslim herdsmen and Christian farmers, over land.

“It is not just about issues of grazing. For me, this is a religious war”, stated Bishop Wilfred Anagbe, of the diocese of Makurdi in Benue state.

“They have an agenda, which is the Islamization of this country. And they are doing that by carefully eliminating all the Christians and occupying the territories. If it was about grazing, why kill people? And why burn their homes?”, he asked.

Johan Viljoen, director of the Denis Hurley Peace Institute of South Africa currently researching on the Fulani armed militia attacks in Southeast Nigeria speaks of a “concerted, well-planned occupation. This is all happening under the cover of Miyetti Allah, of which President Buhari is the patron”, he said, referring to an organisation which claims to defend the rights of Fulani herdsmen.

High-level state involvement is one reason why the armed forces have proven unwilling to step in and control the violence. “I don’t think the army is trying to solve anything. If

anything, they would try to promote it”, explained Mr. Viljoen, recalling a recent fact-finding mission to Nigeria during which his colleagues were stopped every five kilometres by soldiers, all Fulani, acting in a threatening manner and pointing guns. Mr. Viljoen observed that despite years of violence “not a single Fulani has been prosecuted for the violence”.

Bishop Wilfred stressed that the armed forces lie under the direct control of the President and, furthermore, “all the service chiefs, from the navy, army, air force and police are Muslims”.

Official figures point to around 3,000 dead from the wave of violence over the past few years, but those on the ground say that the number could be as high as 36,000, with many more displaced, destitute, or deeply traumatized by their experiences. With many NGOs leaving the danger zones, the Catholic Church and its institutions, with which ACN International works closely, are the only reliable alternatives to get aid to the people on the ground.

Church representatives ask those who are in the West to help with the provision of relief, but also through other channels. “We have to take the narrative away from the government of Nigeria”, said Fr. Remigius Ihyula, also from the diocese of Makurdi. “They have planted protégés in embassies all over the world, so that the narrative makes it seem like there is nothing happening”, he explained during the ACN hosted webinar.

Fr. Joseph Fidelis, from the diocese of Maiduguri, expressed frustration when he hears people refer to “clashes” or “conflicts” between opposing groups. “It is not a clash, it is a slow genocide. To displace people from their ancestral homeland, deprive them of their livelihood and butcher them is a form of genocide”.

Nigeria is Africa’s most populous country. There are no official figures, but estimates point to an even split between Muslims and Christians, with the former dominating in the north and the latter in the south. The violence has now spread throughout the country, threatening stability nationwide.

See some contributions of panelists to the webinar “Nigeria, a country at war?” [here](#)

For more information about Nigeria, see the [2021 Annual Report](#) of Aid to the Church in Need

*Photo: netmap.es*

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## **3,462 Christians hacked to death by Nigerian jihadists in 200 days,**

***3000 abducted, 300 churches and ten priests attacked***

By International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law (Intersociety)

The Nigerian Voice (18.07.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3x0QXCp> - The number of defenseless Christians hacked to death by Nigeria's Islamic Jihadists and their collaborators in the security forces in the past 200 days or 1<sup>st</sup> January to 18<sup>th</sup> July 2021 has risen to no fewer than 3,462 and this is just sixty-eight deaths less than the total deaths of Nigerian Christians in 2020 which the **Open Doors' World Watch List** of Persecuted Christians put at '3,530'.

This number further represents daily average Christian deaths of seventeen and second highest since 2014 when over 5000 Christian deaths were recorded in the hands of Boko Haram and Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen. While Boko Haram killed over 4000 Christians in 2014, the Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen accounted for 1,229 Christian deaths. In our last report issued on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021, covering January to April 2021, we found that no fewer than 1,470 Christians were hacked to death and in the past 80 days or 1<sup>st</sup> May to 18<sup>th</sup> July 2021, not less than 1,992 Christian lives have been lost. We also found that no fewer than 780 additional Christians were abducted in 80 days or 1<sup>st</sup> May to 18<sup>th</sup> July whereas between 1<sup>st</sup> January and 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2200 were abducted. This brings the total number of the abducted Christians since January to 3000, out of which at least three out of every abducted thirty Christians were most likely to have died in captivity; thereby indicating additional secret death in jihadists' captivity of 300 Christians. Additional deaths of 150 is also added to represent 'dark figures' or deaths that occurred but not reported or recorded.

The number of Churches threatened or attacked and closed or destroyed or burnt since January 2021 is also estimated to be around 300 with at least ten priests or pastors abducted or killed by the jihadists. Taraba State was discovered to be the most affected with at least seventy churches threatened or attacked and closed or burnt or destroyed. For purpose of setting the record straight, therefore, **the International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law** is a research and investigative rights group which has been monitoring and investigating religious persecution and other forms of religious violence by state and non state actors across Nigeria since 2010. This, we do through the use of direct contacts with the victims, eyewitnesses, media tracking, review of credible local and international reports, interviews and closed sources and so on.

### ***Impunity and complicity of Nigerian Security Forces***

It is deeply saddening that till date those responsible for the anti Christian butcheries in the country have continued to evade justice and remained unchecked, untracked, uninvestigated and untried; leading to impunity and repeat-atrocities. The surviving victims and families of the dead victims are also totally abandoned by the Government of Nigeria. The Nigerian Government has continued to face sharp criticisms and strong accusations of culpability and complicity in the killings and supervision of same. The country's security forces have so fumbled and compromised that they hardly intervene when the vulnerable Christians are in danger of threats or attacks, but only emerge after such attacks to arrest and frame up the same population threatened or attacked. In the North, the jihadists operate freely under the cover and protection of the security forces; abducting, killing, looting, destroying or burning and forcefully converting their captive and unprotected Christians and their homes and sacred places of worship and learning. But the same security forces hatefully and brutally respond with utter ferocity against Southern and Northern Christians are accused of infraction or offending the law.

### ***Herdsmen killings most widespread, accounting for 1,909 deaths***

The Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen are responsible for majority of the killings with at least 1,909 Christian deaths in 200 days, followed by Boko Haram, ISWAP and Muslim Fulani Bandits who jointly killed 1,063 Christians, while Nigerian Army, joined by the Nigeria Police Force and other branches of the Armed Forces accounted for 490 Christian deaths. The 3,462 Christian deaths include additional 300 deaths representing Christian deaths arising from deaths in the captivity of the jihadists, on average of three deaths out of every 30 Christians abducted and disappeared and another additional deaths of 150 technically representing 'dark figures of crime'. The killings by the Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen are also the most widespread cutting across the entire six geopolitical regions of Nigeria targeting Christian areas of Taraba, Adamawa and Gombe in the Northeast; Southern Kaduna (Northwest) and other Christian settlements in the State; Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa and Kogi in the North-Central; Oyo, Ondo, Ekiti and Ogun in the Southwest; Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, Anambra and Abia in the Southeast; and Edo, Delta, Akwa Ibom, Cross River and Rivers in the South-south.

The Muslim Fulani Bandits, originally formed in Zamfara State in 2011, are jointly responsible for terrors going on in Christian parts of Southern Kaduna, Niger, FCT, Nasarawa and Kogi States. They are also responsible for attacks on indigenous Hausa Muslims in Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto and Kebbi. In Kebbi State, for instance, the Muslim Fulani Bandits target and kill or abduct both Christians and Muslims; holding against their fellow Muslims a jihadist belief that the "indigenous Hausa Muslims are not pure Muslims"; same reasons used in the ferocious jihadist attacks against their fellow Muslims in Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto, and Muslim areas of Kaduna and Niger States. Boko Haram and ISWAP, on their part, are majorly responsible for attacks in Borno, Adamawa, Yobe and Taraba; and have through their recent alliances with other jihadists, made jihadist inroads and stepped up ferocious and unchecked attacks in Niger, FCT, Nasarawa, Kebbi and Kaduna, etc.

### **3, 642 Christian deaths: state by state breakdown**

Benue State recorded the highest number of Christian deaths in the past 200 days with 450 and had recorded 200 deaths in Jan to April and 250 from May to 18<sup>th</sup> July; Kaduna State came second with 410 Christian deaths and had recorded 300 deaths in Jan to April and 110 from May to 18<sup>th</sup> July; Taraba State came third with 240 deaths; Plateau 170 deaths and had recorded 90 deaths in Jan to April and 80 from May to 18<sup>th</sup> July, Igbo States of Ebonyi, Enugu, Anambra and Abia 200 deaths and had recorded 80 deaths in Jan to April and 120 from May to 18<sup>th</sup> July. Others are *Christian part of Niger State (i.e. Shiroro, Munya and Rafi, etc) 200 Christian deaths (out of over 400 deaths) and had recorded 70 deaths in Jan to April and 130 from May to 18<sup>th</sup> July; Adamawa 80 Christian deaths, Ogun/Ondo/Oyo/Ekiti 162 Christian deaths; Kebbi 100 Christian deaths (out of 200 deaths); Borno 400 Christian deaths (out of over 800 total deaths excluding battle-field combat deaths); Nasarawa 50 Christian deaths, Igbo part of Delta 30 Christian deaths, Edo State 30 Christian deaths, non Igbo part of Delta 20 Christian deaths, Gombe/Bauchi 40 Christian deaths, Christian part of Geidam in Yobe State 25 Christian deaths, Kogi State 14 Christian deaths, Katsina ten Christian deaths including a Reverend Father; and Nigerian Army, Police, Navy, Air Force and DSS 490 Christian deaths (Imo 150, Abia 80 plus, Benue 70, Akwa Ibom 40, Ebonyi, Anambra, Enugu and Cross River 150 others). The total of 3, 462 Christian deaths are established when 300 additional captivity fatalities and another 150 'dark figures of crime' are added.*

### **3000 Christians abducted in 200 days**

The number of abducted Christians in Nigeria increased from 2,200 between 1<sup>st</sup> January and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021 to 3000 in 200 days of 2021 or 1<sup>st</sup> January to 18<sup>th</sup> July 2021 and it involved 1,350 abducted by Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen and Bandits in Kaduna State, 620

abducted and disappeared by Muslim dominated and controlled soldiers of the Nigerian Army in Eastern Nigeria, 100 (out of over 150 abductees) abducted by BH, ISWAP and Ansaru in Borno and 120 abducted by the same Jihadist groups in Adamawa and Taraba; 420 abducted by Fulani Bandits and BH/ISWAP in Christian areas of Niger State, 100 abducted by Fulani Bandits and BH in Christian areas of Kebbi, 68 abducted by Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen in Oyo, Ekiti, Ondo and Ogun, 40 abducted by Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen in Nasarawa, 50 abducted in Abuja and Kogi and not less than 30 abducted by Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen in Enugu, Ebonyi and Abia and 100 others abducted on Lagos, Abuja and other Northern and non Northern routes by Fulani Herdsmen and Muslim Fulani Bandits; totaling 3000 abductions in the past 200 days or 1<sup>st</sup> January to 18<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

### ***240 Christians hacked to death in Taraba in 200 days***

Attacks on Christians in Taraba State since January 2021 have intensified with ferocity and are barely reported in the media. In the past 200 days or 1<sup>st</sup> January to 18<sup>th</sup> July 2021, not less than 240 Christians have been hacked to death by Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen and hundreds of others have been terminally injured. The number of churches burnt or razed across the State particularly in Bali District has risen to no fewer than 70, with Bali District being the worst hit. In recent months' attacks, Bali recorded 66 Christian deaths with scores of churches burnt; Gassol 56 Christian deaths and 15 churches burnt; Takum 20 Christian deaths and seven churches burnt, Wukari five Christian deaths, Dunga five Christian deaths, Gashaka four Christian deaths and one church burnt and Karimo-Lamido twelve Christian deaths. Sixteen Christians were also killed in Bali on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and five were killed in Takum on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2021. On 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021, twelve were killed in Gassol and two in Bali. The recent attacks by Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen have also been extended to Adamawa State where at least twelve Christians were hacked to death in Milibi and at least one church burnt. In Gombe State, at least six Christians have been killed in Bililri and in Bauchi State; at least two Christians have been hacked to death.

### ***300 churches threatened or attacked and ten priests abducted or killed***

No fewer than 300 Churches have received threats of attack or attacked and closed or burnt or destroyed by Nigeria's Government protected Islamic Jihadists in the past 200 days and over 17,500 of such cases have been reported mostly in Northern Nigeria since 2009. In June 2020, the authorities of the Church of Brethren in Nigeria (EYN) announced that they have since 2009 lost 8,370 members to BH and other Jihadists in Adamawa, Taraba, Borno and Yobe and that out of 276 abducted Chibok Girls, 217 are their Faith members. The Church also disclosed that 300 of its churches have been burnt or razed, in addition to loss of eight of its pastors. Since June 2020 till date, dozens of its members and scores of its pastors have also been killed by the Islamic Jihadists. Also since January 2021, at least 300 churches have received threats of attack or attacked and closed or burnt or destroyed and the States mostly affected are Taraba, Southern Kaduna and others located in Muslim held areas of the State, as well as Plateau and Benue.

At least, ten priests of Catholic Church and Pastors of Pentecostal Churches have been abducted or killed in captivity by the Islamic Jihadists. On 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021, Reverend Father Alphonsus Bello was abducted by the Jihadists along with Father John Keke and ten other worshippers in Malumfashi, Katsina State. He was killed days after along with eight of the ten abducted Christians. On 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021, Reverend Father Ferdinand Ngugban and six other Christians were killed by the Jihadists in Katsina-Ala, Benue State. Reverend Father John Gbakaan of the Diocese of Minna was also killed by the Jihadists in January 2021. In May 2021, Pastor Leviticus Makpa Marcus was killed by the Jihadists in Niger State and on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2021, Pastor Timothy Damisa of CRCN Church was

gruesomely murdered by the Jihadists in Kurmi, Taraba State. Among the Priests and Pastors abducted in the past 200 days are Reverend Father John Keke, abducted in May 2021 in Malumfashi, Katsina State, Reverend Father Elijah Juma Wada, abducted in June 2021 by BH in Adamawa, Reverend Father Marcel Onyeocha, abducted by Jihadist Fulani Herdsmen in Irube, Okigwe, Imo State in April 2021, Reverend Father Harrison, Parish Priest of St. John's Catholic Church, Obinomba in Ukwuani, Delta State, abducted along Abraka Road by Jihadist Herdsmen in March 2021 and Pastor Bulus Yikura of the EYN Church, abducted by BH near Chibok in Borno State in March 2021.

Photo : Slain Rev. Father Bello – The Nigerian Voice

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## **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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## **UN condemns one year detention of Nigerian humanist Mubarak Bala**

***Prominent figure has been detained since April 2020 without charge and is accused of blasphemy***

By Emmanuel Akinwotu

The Guardian (28.04.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3xDrU9U> - The United Nations has condemned Nigerian authorities for failing to release a prominent humanist accused of blasphemy, who has been detained for a year without charge.

Mubarak Bala, the president of the Humanist Association of Nigeria, was arrested at his home in Kaduna state on 28 April 2020 and taken to neighbouring Kano, where calls for action against him had been made by religious figures.

In the weeks before, he had posted comments critical of [Islam](#) on Facebook that caused outrage among conservative groups in the mostly Muslim north of Nigeria.

For months the 37-year-old was denied contact with his lawyer or family and his whereabouts unknown before he was granted access, and a high court order for his release on bail has been ignored by Nigerian authorities. His case has been seen as an example of a clampdown on voices judged to be critical of religious orthodoxy, in a deeply conservative region.

A group of seven UN human rights experts on Wednesday condemned Nigerian authorities for a “flagrant violation of fundamental human rights.”

“Today marks one year since Mr Bala was arrested and detained in Kano state, without any formal charges, on allegations of blasphemy. His arbitrary detention has continued despite our appeals to the government in May and July last year,” they said, with the case causing “a chilling effect on the exercise of fundamental freedoms in Nigeria.”

“Through his continued detention, the government is sending the wrong signal to extremist groups that the silencing and intimidation of human rights defenders and minority non-believers is acceptable,” they added.

Last December, Nigeria’s high court ruled that Bala’s detention went against his rights to personal freedom, fair hearing, freedom of thought, expression, ordering his release on bail and damages of 250,000 Naira (\$657). Yet authorities have continued to detain Bala.

“The government must take action to ensure that the responsible authorities respect the due process and enforce the judicial ruling,” the UN experts further said.

Bala, the son of a widely regarded Islamic scholar, has been an outspoken religious critic in a staunchly conservative region, where open religious dissent is uncommon. After renouncing Islam in 2014, he was forcibly committed to a psychiatric facility by his family in Kano before being discharged.

After Bala posted comments critical of Islam and religion on his Facebook profile last April, he received a surge of online accusations of blasphemy and threats.

A lawyer for Bala, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the Guardian that police were able to detain Bala on “a holding charge” often used in arbitrary detentions, where formal charges are not presented.

“We are have filed another bail application in Abuja, in the high court,” he said but a judicial strike in the country had delayed proceedings.

Last year [his wife, Amina Mubarak](#), described the toll of her ordeal while caring for their one-year-old child. “It is unbearable, going through this psychological and emotional trauma right now. I’ve tried all I can,” she said.

Photo : Handout

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## **Attacks on Christians: UK MPs seek sanctions against Nigeria**

By Clifford Ndujihe

Vanguard (07.01.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3bnH3DV> - Some members of United Kingdom House of Lords have asked the UK to take more action against Nigeria to check the rising killings of Christians by terrorists and state actors in parts of the West African country.

In a letter to Dominic Raab, MP, UK's Foreign Secretary, House of Commons, London, they lamented that the attacks led by Islamist militia continue in northern states and the Middle Belt, with almost-daily reports of killings, mayhem, rape and sexual abuse, abductions and enslavement, mass forced displacement and land-grabs.

The key signatories to the letter are David Patrick Paul Alton, the Lord Alton of Liverpool, a Liberal Democratic member of UK Parliament; Caroline Annex Cox, a cross-bench member of the UK House of Lords; and Sam Mason. They are also prominent members of the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on Religious Belief as well as key members of Jubilee Campaign International, an Int'l anti-religious persecution campaign group featuring prominent world religious and political leaders including former Nigeria President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo and past Archbishops of Canterbury UK All-Party Parliamentary Group For International Freedom of Religion or Belief.

They said: "We write following the publication of a new report by Nigerian human rights group, Intersociety (December 14, 2020), which raises serious concerns about the scale of human rights abuses in Nigeria and the need for an urgent response.

"Attacks led by Islamist militia continue in northern states and the Middle Belt, with almost-daily reports of killings, mayhem, rape and sexual abuse, abductions and enslavement, mass forced displacement and land-grabs. According to Intersociety, an estimated 34,400 Christians have been killed in Nigeria since 2009 – including 17,000 by Boko Haram (and its splinter groups) and 15,500 by Fulani militia.

"Reports consistently showed that in Nigeria, month after month, on average of hundreds of Christians were being killed for reasons connected with their faith. Those worst affected included Christian women and girls abducted, and forced to convert, enter forced marriages, sexual abuse and torture," they said.

"The same concerns were raised in two other recent reports: 'Nigeria: Unfolding Genocide?' by the APPG for International Freedom of Religion or Belief; and 'Nigeria's Silent Slaughter: Genocide in Nigeria and the Implications for the International Community,' by the International Committee on Nigeria and the International Organisation on Peace-building and Social Justice.

"The ICC's decade-long preliminary investigation (which concluded December 11, 2020) found that Nigerian security forces have committed crimes against humanity and war crimes, including: murder, rape, torture, and cruel treatment; enforced disappearance; forcible transfer of population; outrages upon personal dignity; intentionally directing attacks against the civilian population as such and against individual civilians not taking direct part in hostilities; unlawful imprisonment; conscripting and enlisting children under

the age of fifteen years into armed forces and using them to participate actively in hostilities; persecution on gender and political grounds; and other inhumane acts.

The ICC confirmed that domestic courts have not responded to atrocities adequately or at all and that the Nigerian government has failed in its obligations to hold those responsible to account. However, the Office of the Prosecutor faces serious resource constraints to investigating and prosecuting new situations and cases. We therefore urge HMG, as a State Party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, to ensure any investigation is adequately resourced."

Intersociety reports that 1,400 Christians have been killed by the Nigerian army, police and air force. Nigerian army's former Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-General Theophilus Danjuma says the armed forces are "not neutral, they collude" in the "ethnic cleansing in riverine states" by Fulani herders. He insists that villagers must defend themselves because "depending on the armed forces" will result in them dying "one by one. The ethnic cleansing must stop."

Commending the decision by the US State Department to designate Nigeria as a Country of Particular Concern because of FoRB violations and its recognition of escalating "religious-tinged violence," the MPs said "the lack of comparable response by the UK is both stark and alarming. If HMG continue to ignore or downplay the strong religious factor fuelling the conflict, as identified by the US State Department, resources will be wasted on the implementation of solutions based on a premise that has little-to-no impact on the violence."

### ***UK government's response***

Over £2 billion of UK bilateral aid was given to Nigeria between 2011 and 2018, an equivalent of £800,000 every day. However, we share growing concerns over how the funds are spent; and how it could be better spent – especially in relation to the protection of those most at risk of attack and the need to bring perpetrators to justice.

The UK is also one of the largest donors to the World Food Programme's emergency operation in North-east Nigeria, but it does not currently provide humanitarian assistance in the Middle Belt states, despite this being one of the worst-affected regions.

"For the UK merely to "emphasize the importance of mediation and inter-faith dialogue" trivialises the scale of persecution of Christians. It is too simplistic for the UK Government to label atrocities committed by Fulani militia as driven by desertification, climate change or competition for resources. Protracted attempts to address these (albeit important) longer-term factors will not stop the current rate of killings."

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## **Dozens of Nigerian Christians killed during Christmas**

***Islamic extremist groups have kidnapped, killed and executed Christians throughout the country. Many villages have been attacked and churches destroyed.***

Evangelical Focus (05.01.2021) – <https://bit.ly/35Gtdcb> – Islamic extremist terrorists who kidnapped 11 Christians in northeast Nigeria on Christmas Day have executed five of them, according to a video released by the Islamic State's AMAQ News agency.

The 49-second video, dated Dec. 29, shows five armed members of the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) lining up behind five men dressed in orange robes who are kneeling with their hands tied behind them.

Ordered in the Hausa language, common throughout northern Nigeria, to state their names, each of the kneeling men in turn is heard saying their name and adding, "I'm a Christian".

One of the ISWAP militants then says, "This is a warning to Christians in all parts of the world and those in Nigeria. We have not forgotten what you did to our brethren in Zangon Kataf town and other parts of Nigeria. Use the heads of these five of your brethren to continue with your ungodly celebrations". The five Christians were then shot to death.

The executioner's citing of Zangon-Kataf appears to refer to ethnic clashes in the area in Kaduna state in 1992 over a proposal to relocate a market away from land granted to the Hausa people, who are primarily Muslim.

Clashes broke out between them and the indigenous, predominantly Christian Atyap people, resulting in 60 deaths in February 1992 and 400 more in May 1992, with Hausa youths killing many Christians of various tribes in retaliation.

### ***Attack on Garkida***

On Christmas Eve, ISWAP terrorists began an attack on Garkida, Adamawa state, that local residents assumed was launched by Boko Haram, the Islamic extremist group from which ISWAP broke off in 2016.

Government and local sources said the Nigerian army repelled the attack, but as it continued into the wee hours of Christmas Day, the assailants were said to have killed six Christians and kidnapped 11 others.

Morning Star News received messages from area residents on Wednesday (Dec. 30) asserting that six Christians were killed in Friday's (Dec. 25) attack on Garkida, and that the Christians martyred in the video were among the 11 kidnapped.

Moses Abarshi, a Christian leader in northern Nigeria, notified Morning Star News that a Christian had told him that his brother and four other Christians had been executed for their faith.

"Please let us keep the family in our thoughts and prayers in this trying time. May the blood of these martyrs keep speaking for the gospel. May the church not be frightened and discouraged, in Jesus name!", Abarshi said by text message.

The attack by suspected Boko Haram militants forced Christians to halt Christmas preparations and flee into bushes to escape, area residents said.

"Garkida town in Adamawa state is under a massive attack. Please pray for us, as this isn't how we planned for Christmas, Lord", area resident said in a text message to Morning Star News.

During the attack on Garkida town, ISWAP burned down homes, looted shops and stores, set fire to a hospital and took food from homes, area Christians said.

### ***7 Christians killed in Christmas Eve***

Islamic extremist militants also killed seven Christians in Christmas Eve attacks in northeast Nigeria's Borno state, according to area residents.

Residents of the villages of Pemi and Debro, near Chibok, Borno state said the insurgents were members of Islamic extremist group Boko Haram. The jihadists began their attacks on predominantly Christian Pemi and Debro at about 6 p.m., area residents said.

"Seven Christians were killed at Pemi, and the church building of EYN was completely burned by them. Houses, cars and stores were burned down. The Boko Haram gunmen carried out the attacks for three hours before soldiers arrived at the area at 9 p.m.", an area resident told Morning Star News.

### ***Terror in Kaduna region***

In north-central Nigeria, a series of attacks by Muslim Fulani herdsmen across three counties of southern Kaduna state earlier this month killed 33 Christians, destroyed 18 homes and displaced more than 2,500 people, Christian leaders told Morning Star News.

On December 17 in Zangon-Kataf County, the herdsmen killed at least 10 Christians in Goran Gan village and destroyed 18 homes, and on Decemer 21 they killed three others at Ungwan Jatau and Ungwan Gimba villages, area residents told Morning Star News in text messages.

"On Dec. 17, the Gora Gan community was attacked by armed gunmen suspected to be Fulani militias on motorcycles", Sule Tinat Bodam, general secretary of the Atyap Community Development Association and a Christian community leader in Zangon-Kataf, said

Furthermore, in Chikun County, herdsmen on Tuesday (December 22) killed seven Christians and wounded four in Gbaja village and killed two more Christians in Ungwan Gwaiva, while in Kajuru County, herdsmen killed three Christians in Kujeni village on Tuesday (December 22), sources said.

"Kidnapping has become the order of the day as these kidnappers get into people's houses and abduct them without any resistance or challenge from the security agents" , Rev. Ali Buba Lamido, archbishop of Kaduna Province of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), pointed out in a statement.

According to Lamido, "many people have been abducted, and a lot of millions of naira were paid as ransom. Those kidnapped were subjected to dehumanizing conditions and traumatizing experiences. Some family members of the those kidnapped were shot while trying to escape from the kidnappers".

The U.S. State Department on December 7 added Nigeria to its list of Countries of Particular Concern for engaging in or tolerating "systematic, ongoing, egregious violations of religious freedom." Nigeria joined Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan on the list.

Nigeria ranked 12th on Open Doors' 2020 World Watch List of countries where Christians suffer the most persecution but second in the number of Christians killed for their faith, behind Pakistan.