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Resolution on attacks against Christians in Nigeria

[COMECE](#) (09.02.2024) - **COMECE welcomes the [resolution](#) of the European Parliament adopted on Thursday, 8 February 2024, condemning recent attacks against Christians in Nigeria COMECE: "The resolution, however, downplays the religious dimension of the conflict".**

The [Resolution adopted](#) by the European Parliament condemns the massacre committed on 23-25 December 2023, when gunmen launched a large-scale attack in more than 160 villages in the Bokkos, Barkin Ladi, and Magu authority areas of Plateau State, causing the deaths of at least 200 Christians.

In the adopted text, MEPs acknowledge "the role of climate change, competition for scarce resources, and the disappearance of effective mediation schemes". Despite these contextual drivers of the conflict, there is a religious dimension, [as highlighted](#) by Cardinal John Olorunfemi Onaiyekan, which was downplayed in the EP resolution.

Moreover, according to a [statement](#) of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, "the continued havoc caused by armed herdsmen in various parts of our country, can no longer be treated as mere clash between pastoralists and farmers. Their activities [should be] treated as acts of terrorism".

Commenting on the recent vote at the European Parliament, Fr. Manuel Barrios Prieto, General Secretary of COMECE, states that "environmental and economic pressures cannot sufficiently explain the ferocity of the attacks and their coordinated and systematic patterns committed by Fulani Islamist terrorists".

The 2023 Christmas Eve attacks mentioned in the EP Resolution are not isolated cases. In a January 2024 attack, [Fulani infiltrated terrorists](#) killed more than 30 persons, and destroyed several houses and worship centres.

Last September, seminarian Na'Aman Danlami Stephen from the Diocese of Kafanchan was burned to death in a heinous terror attack. In addition, over 2 million Christians in Benue State have been internally displaced due to violence.

The perpetrators of these crimes, Islamist extremists, including jihadists, enjoy impunity, as they are rarely prosecuted and condemned.

Already in 2020, the European Parliament [denounced](#) that "over 6,000 Christians have been murdered since 2015 by jihadist groups or have perished as a result of the 'your land or your blood' policy carried out by Fulani militants".

COMECE expresses its grave concern over the persecution faced by Christian communities in Nigeria and recalls the EU institutions to give a more decisive and robust response to Islamist terrorism in Nigeria. "It should no longer be tolerated that all these crimes remain unaccountable. The Nigerian government has a responsibility to protect its

citizens, including systematically persecuted Christian communities”, states COMECE General Secretary Fr. Manuel Barrios Prieto.

COMECE urgently calls upon the European Union to take robust measures in line with its legislation and employ diplomatic channels to ensure the protection of all citizens in Nigeria. In this context, the EU Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief and the EU Special Representative for Human Rights could also give a valuable contribution.

Already [in May 2020](#), COMECE called on the international community to stop the growing persecution of Christians in Nigeria. In [May 2023](#), COMECE received H.E. Mgr. Matthew Hassan Kukah, Bishop of Sokoto, and facilitated a dialogue meeting with representatives from the EU and its Member States.