

## Open Doors Calls on Biden Administration to Re-Assign Nigeria to Notable List of Countries

**Violence against Christians in Nigeria, including the recently reported news of Christian college student's horrific murder, has continued unabated since the nation was removed last year**

By Open Doors USA

Hits: 735

WASHINGTON-- In the six months since the Biden administration removed Nigeria from its list of "Countries of Particular Concern" (CPC)—which identifies those in severe violations of religious freedom—religious violence has continued to surge across the region. Last week's gruesome stoning and burning of Nigerian Christian college student, Deborah Samuel, by extremist classmates who accused her of blasphemy, made [international news](#) and shocked the world. According to Open Doors' local sources, before she was attacked, Samuel posted a message in a WhatsApp group saying, "Jesus Christ is the greatest. He helped me pass my exams." That simple message led to her death.

Last November, as required by the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA), US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken identified the "Countries of Particular Concern." Notably absent from the list was Nigeria, which ranks [#7 on Open Doors' 2022 World Watch List](#), which ranks the 50 most dangerous places in the world to be a Christian.

Open Doors USA is calling on the Biden Administration to reverse its "baffling error" and add Nigeria back to its list of "Countries of Particular Concern." Open Doors has reported that in Nigeria alone, an average of 10 Christians a day are killed for their faith, driving a startling 60% worldwide increase in Christian martyrdom last year (based on 2021 data).

"I was bewildered last fall when the U.S State Department removed Nigeria's designation as a CPC – a decision made even more confusing now, after news of yet another religiously-motivated murder," said David Curry, CEO of Open Doors USA. "The situation in Nigeria continues to deteriorate. The utter failure of the Nigerian government to reign in extremism has created an environment where extremists feel justified to attack Christians."

Under the [International Religious Freedom Act \(IRFA\) of 1998](#), the President is required to annually review the status of religious freedom in every country in the world and designate each country the government of which has engaged in or tolerated "particularly severe violations of religious freedom" as a Country of Particular Concern. The law defines particularly severe violations as "systematic, ongoing, egregious violations of religious freedom," including violations such as: (1) torture; (2) prolonged detention without charges; (3) forced disappearance; or (4) other flagrant denial of life, liberty, or security of persons.

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Other countries appearing on the Countries of Particular Concern list include Burma, the People's Republic of China, Eritrea, Iran, the DPRK, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan.  
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"It was a serious mistake for the State Department to remove Nigeria from its list of Countries of Particular Concern," said former Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom and Open Doors USA Senior Fellow, Sam Brownback. "Religious freedom in Nigeria continues to face significant challenges, highlighted by the appalling murder of Deborah Samuel. This kind of violence cannot be allowed and the Nigerian government needs to send a message that these actions will not go unpunished."

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### **About Open Doors USA**

*For more than 60 years, Open Doors USA has worked in the world's most oppressive and restrictive countries for Christians. Open Doors works to equip and encourage Christians living in dangerous circumstances with the threat of persecution and to mobilize the Western church to pray and advocate for the persecuted. Christians are one of the most persecuted religious groups in the world and are oppressed in at least 60 countries. For more information, visit [OpenDoorsUSA.org](https://www.opendoorsusa.org).*