

'Your Brothers Are Going Through Hell': Nigerian to U.S. Christians

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by Ben Johnson - The Washington Stand

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While the legacy news media obsesses over allegations that former President Donald Trump once flung a plate that caused ketchup to run down a wall, the suffering and persecution of the world's Christian population remains all-but-invisible. Believers in the world's deadliest nation for Christians want Americans to know their spiritual brothers and sisters "are going through Hell. You need to pray for them."

And, they say, the Biden administration needs to place Nigeria back on its list of the worst offenders of religious liberty.

A Google search for the condiment-soaked charges made at the January 6 Commission this week turns up [7.9 million](#) stories, the term "Nigeria Christian persecution" yields [1.9 million](#) news stories *for all time*. Unfortunately, the lack of search results does not accurately mirror conditions in

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Africa's most populous nation where an intensifying drumbeat of violence provides the rhythm of their daily lives.
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Although seldom classified as one of the worst nations for religious freedom, Nigeria accounts for [80%](#) of all Christian murders in the world, according to Open Doors USA. Multiple homicides and kidnappings have taken place within the last month:

- On May 29, gunmen in Nigeria's southern Abia State [kidnapped](#) a Methodist minister, whom church authorities later ransomed;
- On June 5, Muslim terrorists [slaughtered dozens](#) of parishioners celebrating the feast of Pentecost inside St. Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Church in Owo, Ondo State, in the southwestern part of Nigeria;
- On June 19, Muslim militants killed three people at Moses Catholic Church in Roboh and injured another worshiper before kidnapping [38 people](#) inside the nearby [Bege Baptist Church](#) in Kaduna, in northern Nigeria;
- In less than 24 hours on June 25 and 26, two Roman Catholic priests were [killed](#): Fr. Vitus Borogo in Kaduna on June 25 and early the next morning, terrorists kidnapped Fr. Christopher Odia before killing him in Edo State, in the southern part of the country.

"The American church needs to know that, look, your brothers are going through hell. You need to pray for them," said Gloria Puldu, a Nigerian Christian and president of the [LEAH Foundation](#), which focuses on persecution and enslavement of Christians.

Islamist terrorist groups including Boko Haram aim at "the expansion of the caliphate," said Catholic Bishop Jude Arogundade of Ondo Diocese, who defiantly plans to [reopen](#) St. Francis Xavier parish by this fall. Meanwhile, Nigerian government officials have met the violence with "the usual rituals," explains Puldu. They tell Christians, "'We are on top of the situation, and we are going to do something about it.' But this has been going on for years."

Nigeria's anti-Christian violence has steadily progressed from a regionalized occurrence to a threat reaching into every part of the country. Puldu pleaded with Western Christians to "do what you need to do" to prevent the 211-million-person nation from succumbing to "Islamic jihad," on Wednesday's episode of "[Washington Watch with Tony Perkins](#)." It "must be stopped."

"The continuous targeting of Christians during principal religious holidays is beginning to feel like Nigerian state-sponsored terrorism against its own citizens — and it must stop," [echoed](#) the [Orthodox Public Affairs Committee](#).

If anything, the Biden administration seems to have backed away from pressuring Nigeria to staunch the flow of Christian persecution. "We're seeing this systematic targeting of Christians in Nigeria, and the government is turning a blind eye to it," said [Family Research Council](#) President Tony Perkins, whose term on [the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom](#) recently ended. USCIRF had recommended the U.S. government brand Nigeria a top-level human rights

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offended everyone since 2009 and the State Department finally designated the nation a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) in 2020.
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But the Biden administration's State Department removed those scarlet letters from Nigeria in its latest reports — something that perplexed experts and, Puldu says, directly threatens Nigerian Christians. "I'm just being very frank: When the Nigerian name was removed from that list, it's like sending a signal to these terrorists. And we know that," she told Perkins. "It's the Christian communities that have been displaced; it is the Christian communities [where] women and girls are being raped, like [Leah Sharibu](#)," a teenage Christian abducted four years ago. While the other girls kidnapped with her have been turned loose, she remains in her captors' clutches.

Nigerian church officials vow to do all they can to protect their flocks from the terrorist onslaught. "I think the church must get to that level of arming themselves against any attack that would come," [said](#) Bishop John Praise Daniel, the presiding pastor of Dominion Chapel. "That is self-defense, and there's no law against self-defense."

They also cry out for a level of international recognition that matches the severity of the persecution. "We need the world to know that they need to pay attention, and they need to hold our government accountable," insisted Paldu. The situation threatens to spill out of Africa's borders and create a "nightmarish" refugee situation for Europe, [Lela Gilbert](#), senior fellow for International Religious Freedom at the Family Research Council, told Perkins. A few nations have heeded the call. The government of Hungary offered [10 million forints](#) (approximately \$26,509 U.S.) to Nigerian Christians. "Christianity remains the world's most persecuted religion," said Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó.

But even international leaders who condemn Islam's underreported attacks on the Body of Christ seem determined to leverage the violence to promote their own political agenda. Irish President Michael Higgins said in [an official statement](#) that the mass murder of Christians on Pentecost merited double condemnation, since it took place in a church, and because its people are already "among the foremost victims of the consequences of climate change."

Bishop Arogundade [called](#) Higgins's comments "completely inappropriate" and made an "appeal to those who are trying to take advantage of this horrific event to project any form of ideological agenda, to desist from such opportunism."

Like the early martyrs, members of the Nigerian church refuse to deny their God and the hope that is within them. Gilbert said she had just seen Bishop Arogundade, who told her these attacks "will never destroy the Nigerian Christian faith. It will strengthen us. And we will continue to pray."

Ben Johnson is senior reporter and editor at The Washington Stand. He previously worked as a reporter for The Daily Wire, as U.S. Bureau Chief of LifeSiteNews, as Executive Editor at the Acton Institute, and as Managing Editor of FrontPageMag.com. Ben co-authored a book with David

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Horowitz, written two book-length reports, and did his Master's thesis on aspects of the intersection between the Old and New Testaments. Before becoming a writer, he spent more than a decade working in radio. He is currently pastor of Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church. He lives in Ohio with his wife and four children and his children's three cats.