



General Assembly

Distr.: General
XX January 2026

English only

Human Rights Council

Sixty-first session

23 February–2 April 2026

Agenda item 4

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement submitted by European Centre for Law and Justice, The / Centre Européen pour le droit, les Justice et les droits de l'homme, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status*

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[26 January 2026]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.

Nigeria Must Take Immediate Action To Stop The Violence Being Perpetrated Against Christians

1. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria has been ranked as the 7th most dangerous country for Christians because of violence perpetrated by Islamic militant groups.(1) Christians in Nigeria are facing persecution primarily by Fulani militants (also known as Fulani herdsmen) and Boko Haram—Islamic terrorist groups that target Christians through violent attacks and kidnappings.(2) Every week, there are new reports of Christians being slaughtered or kidnapped in their villages by armed Fulani militants.(3) Nigeria has become the epicenter of global killings of Christians.(4) Shockingly, Nigeria alone accounts for 72% of Christians killed worldwide.(5)

2. BACKGROUND

Most of the violence against Christians occurs in the northern region of Nigeria where twelve states have implemented Islamic law.(6) Christian farmers living in Nigeria's Middle Belt are also being systemically targeted by Fulani herdsmen.(7) In recent years, violence against Christians by Fulani militants has begun to spread into the southern Nigeria states.(8) Fulani militants have created an environment where Christians are not able to safely practice or profess their faith anywhere within Nigeria.

Nigerian government officials refuse to acknowledge that Christians are being systemically targeted for their religion.(9) Rather, officials claim that terrorists are attacking everyone who rejects their ideology, including Muslims.(10) However, there are no reports of Muslims being targeted by Islamic militant groups.

Further, the international community is only just now beginning to acknowledge the persecution of Christians in Nigeria. In November 2025, Pope Leo XIV addressed the crisis in Nigeria and acknowledge that “Christians … have been slaughtered.”(11) Also, in November 2025, the United States Department of State designated Nigeria as a “Country of Particular Concern” because of the ongoing persecution of Christians in Nigeria.(12)

Stories of Christians in Nigeria being killed or kidnapped by armed militant groups in the past few months is discussed below. Unfortunately, these stories showcase just a fraction of the atrocities being carried out against Christians daily in Nigeria.

3. VIOLATIONS

On January 18, 2026, a large number of Fulani militants kidnapped around 170 Christians from three churches in a remote part of Nigeria's Kaduna state.(13) Eyewitnesses report that armed Fulani militants rounded up church members during Sunday morning service and marched them into nearby forests.(14) The kidnapped victims are being treated as hostages and moved to a camp at a nearby village.(15) Nigerian authorities initially denied that the kidnappings occurred, but later confirmed that the reports were true.(16)

On January 9, 2025, a resident of Nigeria's Plateau state reported that he witnessed Fulani herdsmen violently attack two Christian members of the community in broad daylight.(17) One of the victims died, while the other suffered severe injuries.(18)

On January 7, 2025, a community leader in a village in Plateau state reported that two Fulani herdsmen violently attacked two Christians at night.(19) One victim, Ayuba Choji, was stabbed to death, while the other victim was wounded.(20) Prior to the violent attack, Fulani herdsmen threatened to forcibly remove the Christians from the community if they did not leave.(21)

On January 6, 2025, another community leader in a different village in Plateau state reported that Fulani militants brutally killed a Christian member of the community.(22) A political leader in the community urged authorities to investigate the incident, but there are no reports indicating an investigation was started.(23)

On January 5, 2025, a Christian leader, James Jatau, was killed in an ambush by Fulani militants while returning to his village in Plateau state.(24) Mr. Jatau previously expressed concerns about the rising attacks against Christians in local communities.(25) To date, no arrests have been made.(26)

On January 1, 2025, while celebrating the New Year, seven Christians were killed by armed Fulani militants in a predominantly Christian community in Plateau state.(27) Prior to the killings, local authorities received clear warnings that the community was earmarked for an imminent attack.(28) However, local authorities completely ignored those warnings.(29)

In December 2025, a series of coordinated violent attacks on Christians resulted in the death of at least 20 Christians in Nigeria's Benue and Plateau states.(30) One of the violent attacks in Benue state resulted in seven women being kidnapped and tortured.(31)

On December 16, 2025, a group of armed Fulani herdsmen invaded a mining camp near Plateau state and violently attacked a large group of young Christian miners.(32) The violent attack resulted in 12 of the young Christian's being killed, others being kidnapped, and personal property being destroyed by fire.(33) To date, no arrests have been made.(34)

On November 21, 2025, more than 300 children and staff at a catholic school in Niger state were kidnapped for ransom by armed men.(35) The kidnappings marked the worst mass kidnapping Nigeria has seen.(36) All schools within the Niger state completely shut down in response to the kidnappings.(37)

On November 18, 2025, an armed group violently attacked Christian church members in Nigeria's Kwara state.(38) The armed group killed three church members and abducted several others, including the pastor of the church.(39)

On October 28, 2025, armed Fulani militants violently attacked a church in Plateau state.(40) The pastor and nine church members were killed, and twenty church members were kidnapped.(41) Another pastor of the church described the attack as "callous, inhumane, and wicked."(42)

On October 14, 2025, armed Fulani militants violently attacked several Christian communities in Plateau state.(43) At least 13 Christians were killed, several injured by gunshot wounds, and many were forced to flee to nearby communities.(44) A survivor reported that "the gunmen invaded their compound around nightfall, opening fire on residents who had gathered for evening prayers."(45)

On September 23, 2025, Boko Haram militants violently attacked a Christian community in Adamawa state.(46) The militants killed four Christians, injured many others, and destroyed local churches and homes.(47) The violent attack forced community members to abandon their homes and flee into neighboring towns.(48)

On September 21, 2025, a pastor's wife and a female church member were kidnapped by armed men in Nasarawa state.(49) They were kidnapped while at the pastor's house.(50)

4. REQUEST

Nigeria has taken no action to stop thousands of Christians from being killed or kidnapped because of their faith. Nigeria officials have yet to even fully acknowledge that Christians are being persecuted for their religion. Continued inaction only leads to more innocent Christians being attacked and killed. Immediate and meaningful action must be taken now to put an end to the senseless violence. Because the Nigerian government is either unwilling

or incapable of protecting its citizens, the UN and the international community must pressure Nigeria to ensure that measures are put in place to stop the bloodshed and senseless kidnappings.

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- (42) Id.
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