



General Assembly

Distr.: General
XX August 2026

English only

Human Rights Council

Sixty-third session

7 September–9 October 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.

[10 August 2026]

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

Urging Immediate Action To Stop The Relentless Persecution Of Christians In Nigeria

1. INTRODUCTION

Since 2009, Christians in Nigeria have faced extreme persecution, particularly in the northern and Middle Belt regions, where Christians are relentlessly attacked, abducted, killed, displaced, and have had their property and homes destroyed. Unfortunately, the Nigerian government has either been complicit in these acts or is unwilling or unable to prevent attacks, protect vulnerable communities, and provide security to those who are subjected to these horrific occurrences every day.

2. BACKGROUND

In our previous submission, we noted that, between January and April of this year, 1,402 Christians have been killed in Nigeria.(1) Attacks perpetrated by Islamic militant groups like the Fulani, herdsmen, Boko Haram, and the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) against Christians are occurring daily. Since our last report for the 62nd session of the Human Rights Council (HRC), the number of Christians who have been killed has increased. In just the first six months of this year, more than 2,550 Christians have been killed, 2,800 have been abducted, 800 Christians have been forced to convert to Islam, and more than 300 churches have been destroyed.(2) This means that since the 62nd session of the HRC, more than 1,100 Christians have been killed in Nigeria.

In June 2026, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief, Nazila Ghanea, conducted a country visit to Nigeria. Unfortunately, the resulting preliminary observations report completely dances around the targeted persecution of Christians taking place in Nigeria. Rather, it seems to advance the government's preferred narrative, rather than providing a truthful assessment of the documented reality. For years, on-the-ground reporting, survivor testimonies, and independent monitors have documented patterns of targeted violence, discriminatory policing, and systematic failures of protection when it comes to Christian communities. The attacks have led to victims describing the persecution they face as genocide.(3) Testimonies from survivors have described captivity as being separated into tiers depending on whether an individual is Muslim or Christian.(4) Christians face greater physical and sexual abuse, have a higher likelihood of being killed, and are held captive for longer than Muslims.(5) In fact, Christians are four times more likely to be killed than Muslims and militants have killed twice as many Christians as they have Muslims.(6) It is undeniable that religion plays a pivotal role in the planning and carrying out of attacks.

These patterns cannot simply be dismissed as generalized "insecurity" nor can they be denied by saying that no state directive to destroy one religious community was seen. Numerous current and previous government officials are Fulani, which has contributed to these attacks being carried out with impunity. Below we have listed names of just a few officials with Fulani ties:

Major General Mohammadu Buhari, military head of state (1984-85), President of Nigeria (2015-23)(7)

Brigadier General Sa'adu Abubakar, Sultan of Sokoto (2006-present)(8)

Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, President of Nigeria (2007-10)(9)

Atiku Abubaka, Vice President of Nigeria (1999-2007)(10)

Trying to downplay or obscure the vulnerability of Christians in Nigeria does not advance the mandate of protecting religious freedom; it contradicts it.

3. VIOLATIONS

Below, we have highlighted just a few of the numerous atrocities that have been carried out against Christians in Nigeria in the past two months.

An intelligence communication from July 27, 2026, to a Brigade Commander shared intelligence that Boko Haram were planning to abduct Christian pastors and locals.(11)

On July 26, 2026, thirty Christians, including eleven children, were killed by Fulani militants in Nigeria's Middle Belt. One former councilor in the region accused the Nigerian Army of refusing to help protect the Christians.(12)

On July 18, 2026, the wife of a Christian pastor and their three children were abducted while traveling in Northeast Nigeria.(13)

On July 12, 2026, armed militants attacked the Nobi community in Benue state. The militants shot at the civilians and set property on fire. At least eight people were killed and five were injured in the attack.(14)

On July 11, 2026, at around 11:30 p.m., Fulani militants attacked two communities in Ryom County, Plateau state. Nine Christians, including an infant, were killed in the attack.(15)

Between July 5 and July 6, 2026, Fulani militants attacked a Christian community and set houses and churches on fire. More than 350 Christians were killed in the attack.(16)

In July 2026, Fulani militants killed members of a Christian pastor's family during an attack on Kum village in Plateau state. The militants also threatened to kill the pastor in a letter.(17) The pastor has been vocal about the persecution of Christian in Nigeria.(18)

In July 2026, eighteen Christians were killed during two related attacks that were carried out over thirty-six-hours. During the first attack, two Christians were killed while working on their farm in the village. During the second attack, militants killed sixteen Christians and injured twenty while they were preparing to attend a church service.(19)

On June 24, 2026, a Christian church worker and community leader was killed when he was ambushed by Fulani militants.(20)

On June 21, 2026, armed militants entered a Christian community and began shooting civilians. Twenty-two people were killed in the attack.(21)

On June 16, 2026, armed militants attacked a predominantly Christian village in Kaduna state and killed nine people and injured eleven.(22)

On June 14, 2026, a Christian pastor, his two daughters, and five others were kidnapped as they were returning home from a Scripture Union Campus Fellowship conference in Imo state.(23)

In June 2026, Fulani militants attacked a Christian farming community in Plateau state and killed eight Christians and injured fifteen others.(24)

4. REQUEST

The attacks highlighted above show that Islamic militants are a threat to Christians living in Nigeria. The continuous nature of these attacks and the government's inability or unwillingness to protect its citizens and guarantee the right to religious freedom is not only highly concerning but unacceptable. Nigeria must take immediate action to provide effective protection for Christian communities. The scale and frequency of these attacks demand more than a brush off to land disputes or generic terrorist attacks affecting all religions. Every day in which meaningful action is not taken results in more deaths of innocent Christians.

We therefore urge this Council to establish a dedicated independent mechanism to monitor vulnerable areas within Nigeria that have been subjected to repeated attacks. It is important that this mechanism document the location, frequency, and victims, and provide evidence documenting the religious motivation behind these attacks. It is also important that these reports assess Nigeria's efforts to prevent attacks, protect vulnerable communities, investigate attacks, hold perpetrators accountable, and evaluate Nigeria's compliance with its obligations under Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

-
- (1) Babaloladawodu, 1,402 Christians Killed And 1,800 Abducted In Nigeria In 96 Days of Jan-April 6, 2026, INTERSOCIETY.
 - (2) Anthony Isibor, 2,550 Christians Killed, 3,950 Worshipers Abducted in First Half of 2026 – Intersociety Alleges, REAL NEWS (July 2, 2026).
 - (3) Spreading Violence, and Impunity Spreading Perceptions of Genocide in Nigeria, UN Says, MSN.
 - (4) Captivity by Creed: The Religious Sorting System Nobody Talks About, OFRA (MAY 29, 2026).
 - (5) Killings and Abductions in Nigeria (2020-2025), OBSERVATORY FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN AFRICA (June 2026).
 - (6) Nineteen Thousand Nigerian Christians Killed by Islamists in Just Six Years, BARNABAS AID (July 8, 2025),
 - (7) Muhammadu Buhari, Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Muhammadu-Buhari>.
 - (8) Nigeria gets new Islamic leader, BBC News (last updated Nov. 2, 2006).
 - (9) Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, BRITANNICA, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Umaru-Musa-YarAdua>.
 - (10) Ebuka Jefferson, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua and Nigeria's Political Legacy, Historical Nigeria (Oct. 30, 2025), <https://historicalnigeria.com/shehu-musa-yaradua-and-nigerias-political-legacy/>.
 - (11) BREAKING: LEAKED DSS Memo Warns of Planned Boko Haram Attack, Kidnapping of Pastors, District Heads, Govt Officials in Adamawa, Borno, SAHARA REPORTERS (July 29, 2026), https://saharareporters.com/2026/07/29/breaking-leaked-dss-memo-warns-planned-boko-haram-attack-kidnapping-pastors-district#goog_rewarded.
 - (12) Ngala Killian Chintom, 31 Christians Killed in Nigeria, Including Eleven Children and a Catholic Priest, THE CATHOLIC WORLD REPORT (Aug. 4, 2026), <https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2026/08/04/31-christians-killed-in-nigeria-including-eleven-children-and-a-catholic-priest/>.
 - (13) Extremists Abduct Pastor's Wife, 3 Children in Nigeria, PERSECUTION.ORG (July 22, 2026), <https://persecution.org/2026/07/22/extremists-abduct-pastors-wife-3-children-in-nigeria/>.
 - (14) Fulani Extremists Kill 25 Christians After Nigerian Army Ignores Early Warnings, PERSECUTION.ORG (July 15, 2026), <https://persecution.org/2026/07/15/fulani-extremists-kill-25-christians-after-nigerian-army-ignores-early-warnings/>.
 - (15) Henry Durand, International Christian Concern Reports at Least 25 Christians Killed in Nigeria Attacks, THE CHRISTIAN INDEX (July 20, 2026), <https://christianindex.org/stories/international-christian-concern-reports-at-least-25-christians-killed-in-nigeria-attacks,107625>.
 - (16) Panagiotis Karampelas, Over 350 Christians Burned Alive by Muslims in Nigeria Massacre as Mainstream Media & Global Activists Stays Silent, PROTOHEMA (July 10, 2026), <https://en.protothema.gr/2026/07/10/over-350-christians-burned-alive-by-muslims-in-nigeria-massacre-as-mainstream-media-global-activists-stay-silent/>.
 - (17) Hannah Davis, Islamists Slaughter Nigerian Pastor's Family, Vow to Kill Him Next; US Condemns Murders, DECISION (July 27, 2026), <https://billygraham.org/decision-magazine/articles/islamist-extremists-slaughter-nigerian-pastor-s-family-vow-to-kill-him-next-us-condemns-murders>.
 - (18) Id.
 - (19) Ekani Olikita, Angry Benue Youths Block Federal Highway After 18 Christians Killed in 36 Hours, TRUTH IN NIGERIA (July 13, 2026), <https://truthnigeria.com/2026/07/angry-benue-youths-block-federal-highway-after-18-christians-killed-in-36-hours/>.

(20) Community Appeals to U.S. Government After Fulani Militias Kill Christian Worker, 3 Others, PERSECUTION.ORG (July 8, 2026), <https://persecution.org/2026/07/08/community-appeals-to-u-s-government-after-fulani-militias-kill-christian-worker-3-others/>.

(21) Muslim Gunmen Kill 31 Christians in Attacks Across Plateau, Kaduna States, PERSECUTION.ORG (June 22, 2026), <https://persecution.org/2026/06/22/muslim-gunmen-kill-31-christians-in-attacks-across-plateau-kaduna-states/>.

(22) Id.

(23) Campus Fellowship Leaders Still Missing Weeks After Abduction, THE ALABAMA BAPTIST (July 6, 2026), <https://thealabamabaptist.org/campus-fellowship-leaders-still-missing-weeks-after-abduction/>.

(24) Fulani Muslims Kill 8 Christians, Injure 15, PERSECUTION.ORG (June 1, 2026), <https://persecution.org/2026/06/01/fulani-muslims-kill-8-christians-injure-15/>.