

<b>From:</b>	(b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>To:</b>	Nigeria Core Group DL <NigeriaCoreGroupDL@state.gov>
<b>CC:</b>	(b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>Subject:</b>	Readout on Levy meeting
<b>Date:</b>	Mon, 1 Nov 2021 19:39:26 +0000

Good afternoon all,

Following up on the request from Friday's meeting, below is a short summary of the meeting IRF hosted with Dr. Bernard Henri Levy last week. Please feel free to reach out to me or my colleague (b)(6) if you have any questions.

Best,

(b)(6)

On Wednesday, 10/27, French journalist Dr. Bernard Henri Levy briefed IRF and other State Department colleagues on his most recent book and new film, *The Will to See*. His film was screened at the French Embassy in a joint event with The Atlantic on 10/28. The film focuses on the plight of at-risk communities, particularly in Afghanistan and Nigeria. During the briefing, Levy shared anecdotes of encounters with Christian communities in Nigeria (near Jos in particular) and described the horrific violence interlocutors had endured. He described Fulani militants as the perpetrators of violence in central Nigeria. Levy noted his concerns that the Nigerian government is aware and tolerating the violence, and sometimes complicit. He called on the United States and "the West" more broadly to take action to stop the massacres, and prevent genocide, which he believes is close. He was critical of "the West's" record of being slow to respond to genocide. He recommended the U.S. inviting a delegation of Christians from Jos to come to the States and share their stories. He also suggested that the U.S. and France jointly invite him to speak about the atrocities at UNGA.

The International Committee on Nigeria (ICON) hosted Levy for this briefing and has been facilitating other engagements for him with audiences in DC. In 2019, Levy wrote an opinion piece in the Wall Street Journal raising the same concerns presented during the briefing.

<b>Sender:</b>	(b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>Recipient:</b>	Nigeria Core Group DL <NigeriaCoreGroupDL@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>

<b>From:</b>	"George, Suzy" (b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>To:</b>	Phee, Molly C (b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>Subject:</b>	Re: top lines from HFAC Africa briefing 12/01
<b>Date:</b>	Wed, 1 Dec 2021 19:47:49 +0000

Sounds like a job well done. Hope you are doing ok and fully recovered from our travel adventures.

On Dec 1, 2021, at 1:28 PM, Phee, Molly C (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

I briefed the HFAC Africa subcommittee this morning and wanted to (b)(5)  
(b)(5)

(b)(5)

<b>From:</b>	(b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>To:</b>	(b)(6)@state.gov>; AF-Nigeria Group-DL <AF-NigeriaGroup-DL@state.gov>
<b>Subject:</b>	RE: Outside Call: Marc Andresen - Nigeria Religious Violence
<b>Date:</b>	Thu, 2 Dec 2021 18:55:23 +0000

Yes, assuming no concerns, I will arrange a brief call with Marc Andersen.

Best,

(b)(6)

---

**From:** (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 2, 2021 1:49 PM  
**To:** AF-Nigeria Group-DL <AF-NigeriaGroup-DL@state.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: Outside Call: Marc Andresen - Nigeria Religious Violence

(b)(6) this is your lane so I am assuming you will give Mr. Andresen a call, yes?

Thanks!

(b)(6)

---

**From:** AF-STAFF ASSISTANTS-DL <AF-STAFFASSISTANTS-DL@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 2, 2021 1:45 PM  
**To:** AF-Nigeria Group-DL <AF-NigeriaGroup-DL@state.gov>  
**Cc:** AF-STAFF ASSISTANTS-DL <AF-STAFFASSISTANTS-DL@state.gov>; (b)(6)  
 (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Subject:** Outside Call: Marc Andresen - Nigeria Religious Violence

Nigeria Desk – apologies for the late send. Earlier this week the AF/FO received an unsolicited call from a Mr. Marc Andresen of Oregon, a retired pastor, who is involved with Christian Missions in Oregon and Joss (sp?) Nigeria. Mr. Andresen stated that his contacts in Nigeria are telling the US Christian Missions that they have first-hand information of attacks/violence by Jihadists on Christian Churches in Nigeria. He continued that in some areas of Nigeria the Jihadists are warning the Christians not to worship between now (early December) through Christmas. Mr. Andresen is very concerned and finds it worrisome that the State Department removed Nigeria from the watchlist. Mr. Andresen would like to have a conversation with someone on this topic at the earliest convenience. He would like to share the reporting he has heard from first hand reliable sources in Nigeria.

Name: Marc Andresen  
Email: (b)(6)@outlook.com  
Phone: (b)(6) preferred means of communication.,

If the desk does not plan on reaching out please let AF Staff Assistants know how to best direct Mr. Andresen's calls in the future.

VR,

(b)(6)



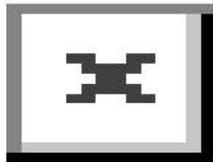
(b)(6)  
Staff Assistant  
Bureau of African Affairs  
Office: (b)(6) Cell (b)(6)  
(b)(6)@state.gov  
Telework Hours 6:00AM-2:30PM (M-F)  
Please call (571) 438-1721 for urgent matters.

**Check it out: [Working with the Line: Virtual Training Available!](#)**

<b>Sender:</b>	(b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>Recipient:</b>	(b)(6)@state.gov>; AF-Nigeria Group-DL <AF-NigeriaGroup-DL@state.gov>

<b>From:</b>	(b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>To:</b>	(b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>Subject:</b>	Nigeria Religious Freedom delisting Fall Out
<b>Date:</b>	Wed, 24 Nov 2021 02:18:22 +0000

<https://www.politico.com/news/2021/11/23/christian-groups-blinken-nigeria-religious-violence-list-523258>

	<h3>Christian groups furious at Blinken for removing Nigeria from religious violence list - POLITICO</h3>
	<p>Christian groups, a U.S. government panel and former senior U.S. diplomats are furious over Secretary of State Antony Blinken's decision to take Nigeria off a list of countries accused of ...</p>
	<p><a href="http://www.politico.com">www.politico.com</a></p>

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

<b>Sender:</b>	(b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>Recipient:</b>	(b)(6)@state.gov>

<b>From:</b>	Nina Shea (b)(6)@hudson.org>
<b>To:</b>	Nina Shea (b)(6)@hudson.org>
<b>Subject:</b>	Nigeria Church Attack - Shea quoted - CNA
<b>Date:</b>	Mon, 6 Jun 2022 14:44:11 +0000

## At least 50 feared dead in attack on Catholic church in Nigeria

June 5, 2022

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/251458/nigeria-catholic-church-attack>

### Escalating anti-Christian attacks

Nina Shea, a human rights lawyer and expert in religious freedom at the Hudson Institute, a think tank and research center in Washington, D.C., told CNA Sunday that "war-like" attacks against Catholics and other Christians are escalating in Nigeria. Yet most of this violence, until now, has centered in northern Nigeria, while the southwestern part of the country where Sunday's attack took place has remained relatively peaceful.

"This massacre in a church while filled with Sunday worshippers is an atrocity that we've repeatedly seen in northern Nigeria over the years. Those were the work of Islamist extremists," Shea said.

"While the facts are still emerging about today's massacre, it is clear that large scale, war-like attacks on Catholics and other Christians are spreading in a system of impunity," she continued. "The Buhari government has allowed this continue unabated and fails to protect Nigeria's churches. This governmental passivity is being seen as a green light for extremists to attack Christians.

Shea also criticized the Biden administration and Secretary of State Antony Blinken for being "passive" in response to the increasing attacks targeting Christian villages in the north.

"Kidnappings and murders of priests and pastors, enslavement of Christian girls, and mob lynchings for alleged blasphemy against Islam" have intensified since the Biden administration removed Nigeria from the United States' "Country of Concern" (CPC) list of countries where egregious religious persecution is taking place, Shea said.

"(Blinken) needs to address this crisis, stop making excuses for it based on a climate change narrative and designate Nigeria as a CPC. Anything less is unconscionable," she said.

"Innocent, defenseless religious people are being slaughtered en masse in an aggressive, onslaught even in areas like today's attack where peaceful conditions formerly prevailed," Shea added.

<b>Sender:</b>	Nina Shea (b)(6)@hudson.org>
<b>Recipient:</b>	Nina Shea (b)(6)@hudson.org>

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 29, 2022

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary  
United States Department of State  
2201 C St NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

As you are well aware, horrific acts of deadly violence have been committed against Nigerian Christians in recent weeks, including the massacre of churchgoers on Pentecost Sunday and the stoning of a Christian college student. Sadly, such violence has become all too familiar for Christians in Africa's most populous country. Last year, however, you inexplicably removed Nigeria's designation as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) despite no demonstrable improvement in the country's religious freedom conditions. On the contrary, the situation in Nigeria has grown worse. We previously urged you to immediately reverse your misguided decision, and we write today to renew our call.

Recent high-profile acts of violence underscore the intense religious persecution that is regularly experienced by Nigerian Christians. On Pentecost Sunday, gunmen attacked St. Francis Catholic Church in Nigeria's Ondo state, reportedly killing at least 50 churchgoers. Last month, a violent mob brutally stoned to death Deborah Emmanuel Yakubu, a student at Shehu Shagari College of Education in northwest Nigeria. According to reports, some Islamist students were enraged by a "blasphemous" message Deborah had posted in a WhatsApp group, in which she said that "Jesus Christ is the greatest. He helped me pass my exams." Merely expressing one's Christian faith has apparently become tantamount to a death sentence in many parts of Nigeria.

Religious violence and intolerance directed toward Nigerian Christians has worsened in recent years. One report documented more than 4,650 cases of Nigerian Christians who were killed for their faith in 2021. Accordingly, Nigeria earns the dubious honor—for the second consecutive year—of being the deadliest country on earth for Christians.

We wrote last year that "[n]ot only has the government of Nigeria failed to take meaningful steps to mitigate such violence, but Nigerian authorities restrict and crack down on religious minorities and detain individuals indefinitely on blasphemy-related charges." We remain concerned that the Nigerian government is failing to protect the religious freedom and basic safety of its Christian citizens. Furthermore, as this year's annual reports from the bipartisan U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) and from your own Department make clear, Nigerian government authorities directly participate in the persecution of Christians, Muslims, and even non-theists, most notoriously through arrests and convictions under blasphemy laws. Make no mistake: continued enforcement of state-sanctioned blasphemy laws enables the type of deadly violence that killed Deborah Emmanuel Yakubu and so many others.

When we previously wrote you, we were met with a response which failed to answer our questions about why the State Department views Nigeria as not having engaged in or tolerated “systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom” or even “severe violations of religious freedom.” This is unacceptable, especially because you are required by federal law to consider the recommendation of USCIRF—which, since 2009, has been to designate Nigeria as a CPC. In fact, USCIRF reiterated in its 2022 Annual Report that it was “appalled” at the removal of Nigeria’s CPC designation. Despite public statements from you and other State Department officials condemning the recent bloodshed in Nigeria, the fact remains that the Department still does not officially regard Nigeria as a severe violator of religious freedom.

The State Department released its 2021 Report on International Religious Freedom on June 2, which starts the 90-day timeline for the Department to make its religious freedom designations. Given the abysmal state of religious freedom in Nigeria, it is incumbent upon you to reverse last year’s decision and redesignate the country as a CPC. The moment demands that you do so without delay.

We look forward to your swift action on this important matter.

Sincerely,



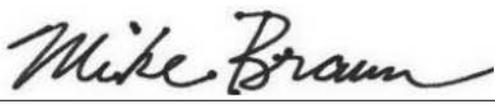
---

Josh Hawley  
United States Senator



---

Marco Rubio  
United States Senator



---

Mike Braun  
United States Senator



---

James M. Inhofe  
United States Senator



---

Tom Cotton  
United States Senator

CC:  
The Honorable Rashad Hussain  
Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom  
United States Department of State  
2201 C St NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520