

# NIGERIA: PERSECUTION CRISIS

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## Please don't abandon them

**MORE persecution is taking place in Nigeria than anywhere else in the world and a sudden surge in violence has put the faithful in greater danger than ever.**

Latest reports state that this year alone more than 900 Christians were killed within just three months.

**Desperate to help their flock, bishops have turned to ACN for help** and – thanks to you – the charity is offering:

- Emergency food for the homeless
- Mass stipends for persecuted priests
- Trauma counselling

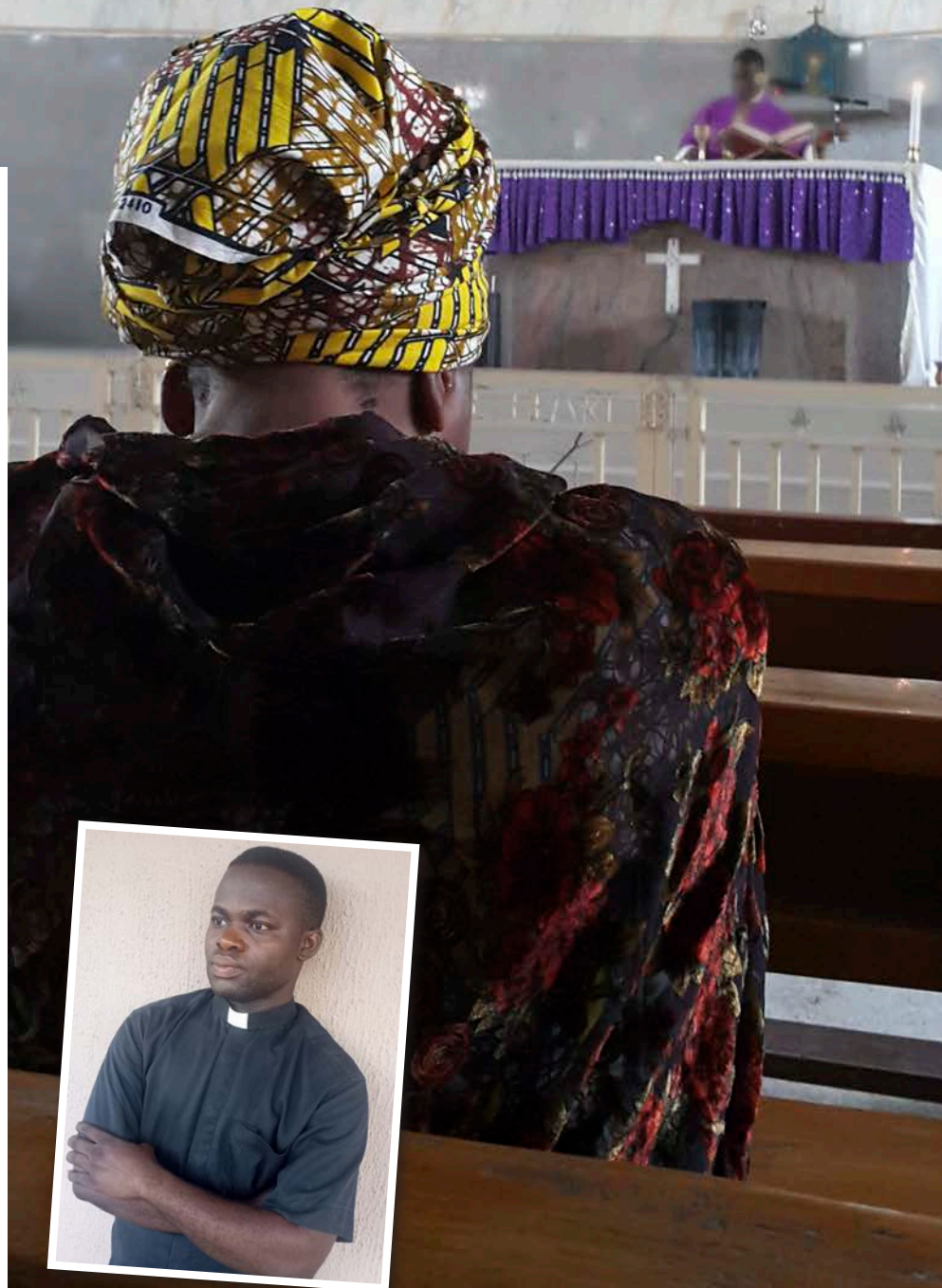
In June 2022, at least 41 people – many of them children – were killed when gunmen opened fire during Pentecost Sunday Mass at St Francis Xavier Catholic Church, in Ondo.

Father Andrew Adeniyi Abayomi (pictured), who was saying the Mass, said: **“I could not run as I was surrounded by children, while some adults clung to me, even inside my chasuble.**

**“I shielded them just as a hen shields her chicks. I heard the voices of my parishioners: ‘Father, please save us; Father pray.’”**

ACN has pledged to offer emergency help following the massacre.

The charity is also providing food, clothing and counselling in Anambra State, where horrific attacks have taken place, as well as a vehicle to ferry aid to remote villages targeted in Kafanchan diocese. 🕊



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# Your love is helping victims of violence



**Sister Esther told ACN it was more vital than ever to provide humanitarian assistance to the survivors of horrific attacks in Anambra State.**

The Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus are providing emergency aid for those forced from their homes in Christian-majority villages by bandit attacks, many of whom “have watched family members killed, their bodies dismembered, women and children raped”.

Sister Esther added: “**These IDPs [Internally Displaced Persons] live in constant fear of being attacked and they are left hiding in bushes, sleeping in abandoned houses and salvaging for what food they can find.**”

With ACN’s help the Sisters are providing:

**1. Food** – feeding survivors who have nothing is a priority.



The Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus are helping after savage attacks.

**2. Clothing** – having fled their homes with only the clothes on their backs, the Sisters are providing survivors with second-hand clothing.

**3. Psychological Support** – 30 volunteers are training to provide trauma and bereavement counselling.

Bishop Peter Okpaleke of Ekwuloba praised the Sisters’ work. He said: “The nuns have risen up to the challenge... They provide humanitarian assistance to those worse affected.” But they can only come to the aid of those driven from their homes thanks to your help. 🙏

## Bringing aid to attacked villages

**Kafanchan Diocese suffers repeated attacks from bandits – militant criminal members of the Fulani community – so the priests, Sisters and lay people of the Justice and Peace Commission have to be on standby to provide emergency humanitarian relief when villages are hit.**

Hundreds have been killed as Christian majority villages are targeted and, **with 98 percent of parishes in rural areas, the Justice and Peace Commission needed a vehicle to ferry the aid packages. So ACN responded to their urgent plea, to enable them to reach the far-flung rural areas** where help is so desperately needed.

There has been a surge in attacks by armed Fulani bandits – including the kidnapping of three seminarians last



Father Aaron Tanko bringing relief to attack victims.

October, who were mercifully released two days later. Church figures have described these ongoing onslaughts as “slow genocide”, but your love is helping us respond to the deadly challenges facing the diocese.

Bishop Julius Kundi of Kafanchan was full of thanks for the support of ACN and its benefactors during this difficult period. He said: “**Thank you for coming to our aid... May God reward your good work and generosity.**” 🙏