



## COUNTRY PROFILE

# NIGERIA



Nigeria ranked eighth in the 2024 Global Terrorism Index.<sup>159</sup> Militant Fulani insurgents in the Middle Belt regularly committed massacres and other violent atrocities.<sup>160</sup> Despite Boko Haram/Islamic State: West Africa Province (ISWAP) remaining active in the northern regions, there has been a decrease in attacks, partly because of the Nigerian Armed Forces' counter-insurgency efforts.<sup>161</sup>

While Muslims are also victims of violence, Christians are disproportionately targeted.<sup>162</sup> Numerous abductions and murders of Church personnel have been reported.<sup>163</sup> Archbishop Matthew Man-Oso Ndagoso of Kaduna told ACN that kidnapers are often motivated by the prospect of ransom payments.

Acts of terrorism by Fulani insurgents have been timed to coincide with Christian holidays. For instance, militants stormed a number of Christian villages in Plateau State on Christmas Eve 2023, killing hundreds;<sup>164</sup> they also struck on Easter Monday 2024, murdering 10 Christians, including a pregnant woman and her unborn baby.<sup>165</sup> Motivations behind these terrorist attacks apparently include territorial gain, Islamist jihadism and ethnic tensions. However, the prevalent political and media narrative tends to cite climate change and societal tensions as the primary reasons for the violence, refusing to acknowledge any religious aspect<sup>166</sup> – despite evidence showing Fulani insurgents have been trained by jihadist group Boko Haram.<sup>167</sup>

In the period under review the Nigerian federal government has failed to take any meaningful actions to prevent attacks by Fulani extremist groups.<sup>168</sup> The authorities are often slow in responding to mass killings,<sup>169</sup> and attackers are rarely identified and held to account.<sup>170</sup>

Despite Christians making up almost half of the total population, those living in the northern regions are dominated politically by the Muslim majority, and are subject to faith-based discrimination in education and employment.<sup>171</sup> *Shari'a* law has been implemented in 12 of the country's 36 northerly states, and a number of individuals have been detained after being accused of blasphemy.<sup>172</sup>

## SELECTED INCIDENTS

**MAY 2023** January 2023 Father Isaac Achi was burnt alive and Father Collins Omeh suffered gunshot wounds when gunmen attacked the presbytery of Sts Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Kafin Koro, Niger State on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup>.<sup>173</sup>

**APRIL 2023** More than 35 people died and up to 40 were injured on Good Friday 2023 when terrorists opened fire at a camp for internally displaced people in Benue State.<sup>174</sup>

**JUNE 2023** Father Charles Igechi, aged 33, was killed by unidentified gunmen while carrying out pastoral duties in Benin City, Edo State less than a year after his ordination.<sup>175</sup>

**DECEMBER 2023** More than 300 people died and hundreds more were injured after hundreds of extremists stormed dozens of Christian villages in coordinated attacks on Christmas Eve 2023 near Bokkos, Plateau State.<sup>176</sup>

**APRIL 2024** Suspected Fulani militants struck three villages near Bokkos, Plateau State on Easter Monday (1<sup>st</sup> April) 2024, killing 10 Christians including a pregnant woman and her unborn baby.<sup>177</sup> In the same region the following week, on Friday 12<sup>th</sup>, suspected Fulani militants went on a three-day rampage in Pankshin Diocese in Nigeria's Middle Belt, killing 29 Christians, injuring a further two, and burning down churches and homes.<sup>178</sup>