



## International Society For Civil Liberties & The Rule Of Law



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### 250 Killed In 2 Months & 2000 Recorded Since Jan 2018 In Renewed Anti Christian Violence In Nigeria

#### ---Intersociety

**(Intersociety Nigeria: Sunday, 16th September 2018)**-The agonies of Christians in Nigeria have uncontrollably continued and escalated with possibility of same being adopted as a reelection strategy by the Muslim led central Government in the country. It must be stated clearly here again that anti Christian attacks including killings and destruction of properties and sacred places and symbols of worship by Fulani jihadists are solely perpetrated or targeted against members, properties and sacred places of worship of members of the Christian faith in industrial scale as well as members of other non Muslim population in Nigeria. It is still on record that no single Muslim or Mosque has been targeted for death or destruction by the Jihadist terrorists in the country or any part thereof.

Statistically, a total of no fewer than 2000 Christian lives have been lost to Fulani jihadists alone since January 2018 with no fewer than 250 killed between 15<sup>th</sup> July and 15<sup>th</sup> September 2018. No fewer than 120 were killed in less than ten days in July or between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018. The killings briefly went down between 15<sup>th</sup> July and first week of August 2018 with about 30 killings before their resurged increase since the last week of August to 15<sup>th</sup> September 2018; leading to death of over 100 Christians. Totality of these brings the total number of innocent and defenseless Christians slaughtered by Fulani jihadists in the past eight and half months or between 1<sup>st</sup> January and 15<sup>th</sup> September 2018 to over 2000. The figure did not include the number of Christians killed by Boko Haram insurgents in Nigeria since January 2018 or "battle-field related" deaths.

The anti Christian killings have gone so bad that they are now being celebrated by many members of the Nigerian northern Muslim population especially on social media. A clear case in point was the barrage of social media attacks, aspersions and vituperations cast at or poured on a Pentecostal pastor who went on social media to appeal for western intervention and assistance over the incessancy of anti Christian butcheries in Nigeria including the recent massacre by Fulani jihadists of Pastor Adamu Gyang Wurim, his wife and three children in Plateau State.

From the look of things, these killings have not only raised the "popularity" of President Muhammadu Buhari among teeming and crudely uneducated young Muslim population in northern Nigeria, but also appeared to have made him to be seen among them as "pure Muslim/defender of Allah"; an unholy edge he appears to have over his fellow northern Muslim presidential hopefuls in the coming 2019 presidential poll.

The President's caliphate style of administration or governance in the country is also believed in some social quarters to have gone down well with many of the educated and uneducated Muslim population in northern part of the country particularly his Fulani kinsmen and women; culminating in recent issuance of threats of violence against his fellow Muslim presidential hopefuls to back off from the race to allow the President as "the only man standing".

A clear case in point was recent threats of violence including death made by one of the leaders of the mother body of Fulani Herdsmen in Nigeria called “the Miyatti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN)”. The open threats of violence were issued against the Senate President, Dr Abubakar Bukola Saraki, who is of a Yoruba-Fulani Muslim root.

Another fellow Muslim Presidential hopeful in the coming 2019 presidential poll, Alhaji Atikur Abubakar had also recently cried out over threats to his life and that of his wife and children by unnamed group of persons strongly believed to link to the Fulani jihadists. These emergent threats to lives and properties of political opponents of President Muhammadu Buhari by the Fulani jihadists are a clear pointer to the midwifery, aiding and abetting of the atrocities and impunity of the Fulani jihadists by the Administration of the President.

There are also reports of sustained state actor and non state actor threats against members of Christian faith in Northern Nigeria particularly in Kaduna State where the State Government recently on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2018 issued a proclamation Islamizing the State traditional stools and institutions by changing them to “Emirate Council or Caliphate” including those located in Christian dominated Southern Kaduna. In some places, holy bibles are reportedly burnt or destroyed while in others Christian prayers are no longer said in the open. Open Christian evangelism is becoming life threatening in such areas except in areas populated in large numbers by members of the Christian faith.

Some Christians in some northern parts of the country are also reported to have been so threatened that they no longer worship or meet in clusters or in their church buildings except use of teleconferencing and other online points of contact. The negative effects of Fulani jihadists’ killings or untamed violence against northern Christians have further made some Christian faithful to undergo post traumatic stress disorder (PTSDs); as well as raising, emboldening and radicalizing other fanatical Muslim groups and individuals to further let loose on their Christian neighbors including threatening and shutting them off with reckless abandon from their religious beliefs and practices. In all these, Governments at the State and Federal levels including their security agencies either watch and do nothing or collude, aid and abet the crimes and protect their perpetrators.

The Christian agonies in Nigeria include killing of Christian children and busting, using machetes and guns, of pregnancies of the heavily pregnant Christian women leading to their death and that of their unborn children; killing of other Christians (i.e. women, children, the physically challenged, young men and women, the aged and the sick) in their sleep, sick and retirement apartments, farms and other work places as well as sacred places of worship. The agonies also involve property destruction involving land seizure and forceful occupation as well as attacks, burning and destruction of sacred places and symbols of Christian worship including churches, altars, monasteries, seminaries, chapels, schools, cassocks, holy bibles, chaplets, statutes, crucifixes, etc.

Going by our updates following recent general evaluation of various reports and investigative findings on killing of Christians and destruction of their sacred places of worship in Nigeria particularly since January 2018, no fewer than 2000 Christian lives have been lost in the hands of the Fulani jihadists hiding under the cover of “Fulani Herdsmen”. The said Jihadists carry out their untamed atrocities using the existing primitive pastoralist cattle herding network manned by cattle pastoralists called “Fulani Herdsmen”.

The primitive network involves downward movements of herds of cattle and their herders into the rain forest region of Nigeria with associated makeshift settlements inside bushes and forests; now heavily guarded by the lopsidedly composed and Muslim led Nigerian military formations. The attacks highlighted above are easily launched and coordinated by the jihadists especially at night using the said primitive cattle herding routes and settlements as attack bases and for intelligence gathering; in addition to military and police guard or protection.

**Breakdown of Updated Statistics:** We had on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2018, released the statistics of the anti Christian butcheries in Nigeria, showing that the Fulani jihadists killed no fewer than 1,750 Christians in the first six months of 2018 or January to June. In our follow-up statement of 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018, the number of Christian victims of the Fulani jihadists' attacks increased to 1,870, indicating the killing of additional 120 Christians in less than ten days or between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018. The killings associated with the 120 Christian deaths specifically took place in Adamawa and Taraba villages and communities.

The said general evaluation of the killings by terror Fulani Militia (a.k.a. Fulani Herdsmen), as contained in our special statement of 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2018, clearly indicated that Benue State recorded the highest number of rural Christian and other non Muslim deaths with no fewer than 600, followed by Plateau State with 400; Taraba 250; Nasarawa 200; Southern Kaduna 100, Adamawa 100 and Kogi State 100. Presently, no fewer than 620 Christian lives have been lost in the past eight and half months (1<sup>st</sup> January-15<sup>th</sup> September 2018) in Benue, 450 in Plateau while Adamawa and Taraba States recorded no fewer than 550.

The anti Christian killings later went down especially between 15<sup>th</sup> July and first week of August 2018 following international media attentions and diplomatic concerns in some western countries, prompting the Nigeria's Minister of Information to embark on globetrotting and image laundering in selected western countries tagged "killings arising from Farmers-Herdsmen clashes have stopped". The said few western concerns followed the three days of unstoppable massacre of rural Christians in eleven villages of Plateau State which began on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2018 leading to death of no fewer than 250 defenseless Christian citizens including pregnant women, children, other women and men.

The said reduction resulted in fewer death of about 30 Christians between July 15 and first week of August 2018, compared to alarming number of deaths recorded in the previous months. The sudden reduction was also strongly believed to have been unconnected with directive of the political and military patrons of the jihadists to cease a momentary fire to possibly douse the said selected western media and diplomatic pressure on political leadership in Nigeria.

However, the killings have returned at alarming rate especially since the last week of August 2018, leading to killing of no fewer than 250 more Christians as at 15<sup>th</sup> September 2018. The figure included no fewer than 120 Christians killed between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018 most of which took place in Adamawa and Taraba States. Between 15<sup>th</sup> July and first week of August 2018, no fewer than 30 more Christians were killed in the old Middle Belt; and between last week of August and 15<sup>th</sup> September 2018, over 100 more Christians have died in the hands of Fulani jihadists who hide under the cover of "Fulani Herdsmen".

Christians in Nigeria are also most likely to have lost not less than 500 churches and other church related facilities since January 2018. The Government of Benue State has just on Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018 disclosed that "over 560 Christians have been killed in the Fulani Herdsmen attacks in the State between January and August 2018" during which half of five Christian Local Government Areas of the State were sacked. The State Governor, Mr. Samuel Ortom named the affected five LGAs as Makurdi, Gwer West, Guma, Logo and Kwande Local Government Areas.

In the latest round of killings, Adamawa and Plateau States are worst hit while Benue, Kaduna and Taraba States are not left out. By the Punch Newspaper account of 15<sup>th</sup> September 2018, no fewer than 51 Christians including a Pastor of the Lutheran Church lost their lives to Fulani jihadists in coordinated attacks launched on Thursday night in villages of Gon, Nzumosu, Bolki, Nyanga and Bukuto Numan Local Government Area of Adamawa State.

The Adamawa Christian villages above mentioned have also lost hundreds of Christians and dozens of churches in the hands of the Nigerian security forces and armed Fulani jihadists since December 2017 including over 80 Christians killed on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2017 in simultaneous air raids and ground attacks simultaneously launched by Nigerian war jets and armed Fulani jihadists. The Government of Nigeria initially denied it but later claimed “they were armed bandits terrorizing the area being chased away by Government forces”.

The Fulani jihadists who were reported to have stormed the Adamawa villages on Thursday night, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018 from neighboring Abbare in Taraba State in large numbers also burnt three villages and churches after slaughtering no less than 15 Christians and a Pastor. The Punch Newspaper report further quoted a resident of Bolki village, Mr. James Nzonzo as saying that “the boat escaping with 40 endangered (Christian) women escaping the attacks got capsized killing 35 and leaving only five rescued alive”. The attacks and killings were independently confirmed by our local contact who is also a Christian Pastor in the area. The Punch Newspaper also quoted a Member representing the Numan State Constituency in the State House of Assembly, Mrs. Sodom Tayedi as further confirming and condemning the attacks.

Plateau State has lost no fewer than 30 Christians since last week of August 2018 and 50 since 15<sup>th</sup> July. The renewed anti Christian killings in the State included not less than eight Christians killed by the Fulani jihadists on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2018 also reported by the Punch Newspaper of 30<sup>th</sup> August 2018, among other media reports. The attacks launched at churches and houses in Barkin Ladi Local Government Area of the State claimed the lives of no fewer than eight Christians including Pastor Adamu Gyang Wurim, his wife and three children.

On Sunday night of 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2018, no fewer than 13 Christians were killed by Fulani jihadists in Latya Village, Du District of Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State. The Telegraph Newspaper report of 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2018 said that the attacks came late night of Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2018 when the Fulani jihadists stormed the Village and opened fire killing 13 Christians. Not less than five Christians were also killed on Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> of August 2018 in Shonong and Kwi villages of Riyom Local Government as well as in Ndin and Haipang villages at Barkin-Ladi Local Government Area of Plateau State. While two Christians were killed in the former on Saturday night, three others were killed on Sunday night in the latter. The instances above are just to mention but few.

A new government censorship has further been introduced into such anti Christian killings whereby security forces now refer to Fulani jihadists as “unknown gunmen” or “suspected rival cultists”. Some independent media practitioners have also been forced by the country’s undercover security establishments to adopt and use same in their media reports.

It is recalled that during our special interview with the Washington D.C., USA based Christian Post Online, granted on 2<sup>nd</sup> August and published on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2018, one of the nine questions asked over the raging anti Christian butcheries in Nigeria was premised on “false position and influence by the Federal Government of Nigeria in many western media and diplomatic circles to the effect that killings in Nigeria have no iota of religious undertone but merely arising from herders-farmers clashes”. Findings also showed that a fortune is spent internationally by the Nigerian Government to sustain this falsehood and misinformation through “international media and diplomatic lobbying”.

The special interview, monitored in Dublin Ireland and published in Washington D.C., strongly found that “the anti Christian killings and killers have persisted and continued because the political authorities in Nigeria that ought to end them are mindlessly found working hand in glove with the killers or encouraging and emboldening them by misinforming the world and doing little or nothing to stop same”.

The present Nigerian military establishments are so partisan or Islamic and jihadist friendly that apart from holistic adoption of the country-wide establishment of “Fulani grazing routes and ranching”, military presence and patrols are maintained in all Fulani herding settlements in the rain forest region of Nigeria particularly those located in Southeast and South-south regions of the country.

Such settlements either have military or police “sedentary or pastoral formations” located around them or they are located in bushes and forests near the already existing ones. The location of Asa main and Ogwe satellite army checkpoints in Ukwa West Local Government Area of Abia State is a clear case in point. It is further found that such settlements or protection of existing ones are routinely done by the military establishments using the cover of “army python dance” and “army crocodile dance” series in Southeast and South-south regions of Nigeria respectively.

We therefore renew our call for end of anti Christian butcheries in Nigeria and scrapping of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and founding of a new and more purposeful Christian body with capacity to rising to the occasion including congregation and aggregation of all Christian bodies and members in Nigeria into a formidable movement with unblemished legitimacy, integrity, courage, boldness, knowledge, means and contacts to secure and protect the lives and properties of Christians and churches in Nigeria. The present CAN is integrity challenged and incapable of leading a secured Christian population and their sacred places and symbols of worship.

**Attached Photo: A Church in Raqqa, Syria, converted to Mosque and replaced with Islamic black flags by Islamic Jihadists in 2014.**

**Signed:**

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