



THE BARONESS COX  
HOUSE OF LORDS  
LONDON SW1A 0PW

**James Duddridge MP**  
**Minister for Africa, FCDO**  
**King Charles Street**  
**London SW1A 2AH**

16 August 2021

Dear James,

In a letter dated 23 September 2020 in response to the APPG International Freedom of Religion and Belief Report: ‘Nigeria: Unfolding Genocide?’ you asserted the commitment of the UK Government to play a constructive role in reducing tensions in Nigeria. We applaud this commitment.

However, the violence in Nigeria has continued unabated since then and a tragedy has unfolded this past week that is barely being reported. We therefore call upon the UK Government to acknowledge the scale of ethno-religious violence and to urge the Nigerian Government to:

- Hold those responsible to account;
- Ensure that security and stability are provided for all communities in the north and Middle Belt, as well as the Yoruba and Igbo people in the south west and south east, together with the help and protection they urgently need.

HART has received information from local contacts of a large attack on remote villages in a western region of Plateau state bordering Kaduna by hundreds of armed assailants that began at 5am on 2 August. Nine villages with a combined population of over 20,000 people were dislodged in an operation that lasted for more than six hours and left dozens of people dead and hundreds of households razed to the ground. By 3 August, 57 dead bodies of people who were hacked down as they tried to flee had been recovered from eight villages in the area. One soldier who had responded to reports of earlier violence and engaged the attackers was reported killed. It seems certain the death toll will rise.

It is reported that all those killed were Christians from an indigenous ethnic-minority tribe, while the attackers have been identified as Islamist Fulani militia. The Kwall district is now filled with more than 15,000 displaced people, mostly women and children. Thousands of small farms that were ready for harvest have been destroyed deliberately and a number of people are also missing.

Retrospective efforts are underway to attribute these events to retribution or reprisal for cattle rustling and the alleged killing of two Fulani men. While every death is deeply regrettable,

this cannot be used as justification for collective punishment, or for the massacres, displacements and destruction that has been underway for over a decade, and for which no perpetrator has been brought to justice.

To be clear – and as we have discussed previously – no one is blaming the entire Fulani tribe for this violence. However, the Nigerian Government, legislators, security forces and Fulani representatives, including the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), have acknowledged that armed individuals of Fulani ethnicity have attacked indigenous communities in central Nigeria since 2010.

On 4 August 2021, human rights group Intersociety (Nigeria) released figures compiled from documented cases of violence, which are deeply disturbing. Their statistics reveal that, in the last 12 years, 43,000 Christians have been killed in Islamist attacks, 18,500 have disappeared and 17,500 churches have been attacked. Ten million people have been uprooted in the north, six million forced to flee, four million displaced, and 2,000 Christian schools have been lost.

Within the same timeframe, 29,000 Muslims were killed. Intersociety report that ‘moderate’ Muslims are targeted for several reasons: as punishment for those collaborating with ‘unbelievers’; as revenge for state-actor attacks against their targets; as collateral mistakes; or for the purpose of enforcement of extreme interpretations of Islamic Sharia law.

Meanwhile, Boko Haram recently amalgamated with the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and continues to cause havoc in an attempt to overthrow the Nigerian Government and replace it with an Islamic State. Four caliphates are being created with semi-autonomous leaders that will provide operational bases for terrorist activities in northern Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger.

Tragically, this phenomenon of sectarian violence is increasingly widespread across Nigeria, and elsewhere. Until influential members of the international community – and especially the UK Government with such significant historic relations with Nigeria – acknowledge the key causal factors it will not be possible to address this very disturbing situation adequately. For the sake of all the people of Nigeria and for the sake of security across the continent, we urge the UK Government to press the Nigerian Government to address this violence swiftly, and to ensure protection, justice and recompense for victims of all ethnicities without bias.

Yours sincerely,



**The Baroness Cox of Queensbury**, Founder and President, Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART)

**Jim Shannon MP**, Chair, APPG for International Freedom of Religion or Belief

**The Lord Alton of Liverpool**

**Dr. Lisa Cameron MP**

**Lord Carey of Clifton**, Former Archbishop of Canterbury

**Dr. Rowan Williams**, Former Archbishop of Canterbury

**His Grace the Most Revd Henry Ndukuba**, Primate of All Nigeria and Bishop  
Metropolitan

**The Most Rev. Dr. B.A. Kwashi**, Bishop of The Anglican Diocese of Jos, Nigeria

**Revd Canon Hassan John**, Provincial Office, Church of Nigeria

**John Eibner**, International President, Christian Solidarity International (CSI)

**Ayo Adedoyin**, International Organisation for Peacebuilding and Social Justice (PSJ-UK)

**Mervyn Thomas CMG**, Founder and President, CSW

**Dr Khataza Gondwe**, CSW

**Ben Rogers**, CSW

**Rt Revd Andrew Watson**, Bishop of Guildford

**Emeka Umeagbalasi**, Board Chairman, International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of  
Law, Nigeria