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Before the**

**House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Africa Subcommittee
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**“President Trump’s denomination of Nigeria as a “Country of Particular Concern—
CPC”: A serious, well-founded wake-up call”**

Introduction:

Mr. Chairman,

Ranking Member, distinguished members of the Subcommittee,

Thank you for inviting me back to testify on the escalating crisis of Christian persecution and genocide in Nigeria. Six months ago precisely on 13th March 2025, when I last appeared before this committee, I warned that the situation was dire and demanded urgent attention. Tragically, the past half-year has proven those warnings understated the continued attacks on vulnerable Christian villages by the Fulani ethnic militia and their counterparts, both in the Middle Belt of Nigeria and elsewhere in the country.

Since my testimony in March 2025, credible reports from organizations monitoring religious freedom including Open Doors and our own Justice, development and Peace commission in Makurdi Diocese have documented continuing attacks on Christian villages especially in the Middle Belt States of Benue and Plateau perpetrated by Fulani militia. Thousands more have been displaced, some abducted or subjected with entire villages razed and churches destroyed.

My own village of Aondona in Gwer West LGA, was attacked and several of my relatives killed on May 22, 2025. An entire convent of Reverend Sisters of the Claretians was displaced along with the local Catholic parish. Within the days following that attack, nearby villages like Naka also witnessed attacks. In fact, on the 24th May 2025, one of my priests, Fr. Solomon Atongo was shot and left to die in the pool of his blood, while those travelling with him were abducted. Though he survived the attack, he is unable to walk freely.

A few weeks before, on Palm Sunday, April 13, 2025 with the attack occurring late that night into the early hours of April 14, Fulani militants launched a coordinated assault on Christian communities in Plateau State, Nigeria, primarily targeting the village of Zikke in the Bassa

Local Government Area, near Jos. This incident was part of a broader wave of violence in the region during Holy Week targeting Christians as they prepared to celebrate one of the most important feasts in our Church.

In my own diocese of Makurdi, you are all familiar with the massacres of Saturday 13th June in Yelwata, where 278 persons, men, women and children were killed in a manner too gory to describe here by people shouting “Allahu akbar” while slaughtering their victims. It took the prayer of the Holy Father, the Pope, on Sunday 14th June, for the Government in Nigeria to even acknowledge this evil. Even so, the federal government still seeks to downplay the numbers and has yet to properly care for the survivors, even as I speak.

Abductions of clergy and laity remain rampant; priests and pastors are prime targets for elimination. On 17th November 2025, another priest from Kaduna diocese was kidnap while his brother was shot dead and others taken into captivity. On the same day a school was attacked in Kebbi State with many kidnapped. Reports are also rife of the capture of a Major General of the Nigerian Army by the Islamists.

This is the daily experience of many Christians in Nigeria. Violence is spreading southward, displacing millions and destroying farmland, creating a humanitarian crisis compounded by food insecurity. Attacks by Fulani militants, Boko Haram, and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) have intensified not only in the Middle Belt and northern states but spreading southward and targeting Christian communities with impunity. We hoped the CPC designation by President Trump at the end of October might stabilize the situation but instead it is deteriorating into one of the most lethal periods for Nigerian Christians in recent memory.

Like it is now commonly acknowledged, Nigeria remains the deadliest place on earth to be a Christian more believers are killed there annually than in the rest of the world combined. Yet perpetrators face little accountability, and the Nigerian government’s response since the CPC designation is to unleash vain glory speakers and willing tools to spin the narrative and make false equivalencies about Muslim deaths. But I will like to ask the question here, who is killing the Muslims? Is there any Christian militia displacing millions and occupying lands in Nigeria?

The government of Nigeria’s silence and refusal to engage in the face of continued killings and displacements has deepened feelings of abandonment among the people. The National leadership appears disengaged, treating the Christian genocide reports as a non issue instead of considering it a national emergency. This lack of political will undermines trust in government institutions and fuels perceptions of complicity or indifference.

Mr. Chairman, Honorable members, allow me to briefly mention another point so close to my heart: the humanitarian and social impact of this genocide.

In the Middle Belt alone, millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) remain in camps, unable to return to their ancestral lands, this threatens cultural continuity, religious and economic survival. The psychological trauma of survivors of these attacks is immense with little access to counseling or rehabilitation. Widows, orphans, and survivors face ongoing threats, girls and women endure sexual violence as a weapon. So many others resort to unsafe coping mechanism for daily sustenance. Destroying families guarantees that no more Christians will be born from so many traumatized women. This is one of the elements of genocide, securing the disappearance of a group by longer term measures other than murder. Without quick intervention, Christianity risks elimination in parts of northern and Middle Belt Nigeria within a very short time.

Let me put it on record here that on behalf of millions of Christians in Nigeria and in the diaspora, we want to thank President Donald J Trump for his bold leadership in denominating Nigeria a CPC. I commend you Mr. Chris Smith and this subcommittee's ongoing leadership and the recent U.S. denomination of Nigeria as a Country of Particular Concern. CPC designation is a vital step, but must be backed by serious action:

- I. Using the Magnitsky Act for targeted sanctions on Nigeria government officials and others tolerating or condoning Islamic violence in the country.
- II. Tie security and other development or humanitarian aid to measurable protection improvements; expand humanitarian support for IDPs.
- III. The IDPs must be returned to their ancestral homes and lands with security guarantees by the Nigerian government. They must also be supported to rebuild their economic livelihoods and enjoy basic services such as education and sanitation.
- IV. Support bills like the Nigeria Religious Freedom Accountability Act to hold perpetrators accountable. This point cannot be overemphasized because it is impunity that fuels the violence we suffer.
- V. International advocacy: Work with allies to press Nigeria at the UN and ensure discriminatory laws and blasphemy laws are eradicated or expunged.

Closing Call to Action

The CPC designation has brought immense joy, hope, and spiritual resilience to communities under siege in Nigeria. The Christian Faith-based organizations remain among the few sources of relief and encouragement, filling the vacuum left by government inaction. However, the Church alone cannot stop the killings; it requires coordinated political, military, and humanitarian intervention.

Mr. Chairman and Members, the blood of Nigerian Christians cries out to you. We cannot afford to wait any longer. Renew hearings, pass binding legislation, and use every tool of U.S. influence to demand change. America remains the only country in the world with an International Religious Freedom Act, America has a unique role in defending religious freedom globally, please enact concrete actions according to the CPC denomination. We all know that inaction emboldens the extremists even more.

Thank you for listening, I welcome your questions.

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