

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 860

Commending President Trump for Redesignating Nigeria a Country of Particular Concern due to Nigeria's engagement in and tolerating systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Commending President Trump for Redesignating Nigeria a Country of Particular Concern due to Nigeria's engagement in and tolerating systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom, and for other purposes.

Whereas, for over a decade, Islamic terror organizations have carried out mass murder, rape, kidnappings, and other atrocities targeting mostly Nigerian Christians and non- Fulani moderate Muslim populations, resulting in mass displacement and destruction of places of worship, in what appears to be a concerted effort for a Fulani-con- trolled empire modeled upon the caliphate in northern Nigeria established by Usman dan Fodio, in the late 18th and early 19th century;

Whereas prominent Christian and Muslim leaders have been kidnapped or assassinated, including priests, pastors, and imams who advocate for religious tolerance;

Whereas religious leaders, such as Father Remigius Iyhula and Bishop Wilfred Anagbe who testified on March 12, 2025, at a hearing of the House Foreign Affairs Committee about the persecution and targeted killings of Christians in the Diocese of Makurdi, have faced intimidation, threats, and harassment from both extremist groups and government authorities;

Whereas the 2023 Watch List released in January by Open Doors, the interdenominational foundation that supports persecuted Christians throughout the world, indicates that Nigeria accounts for 89 percent of Christians martyred worldwide;

Whereas northern Nigeria has seen the destruction of “over 18,000 churches since 2009” in attacks by Boko Haram militants, Fulani herdsmen, and others, according to a 2023 Vatican report, and in 2021, the Department of State reported five attacks on mosques by unidentified gunmen, bandits, and Boko Haram;

Whereas an August 2024 report from the Observatory of Religious Freedom in Africa found that approximately 56,000 people died in attacks and about 22,000 people were abducted by terror groups in Nigeria between October 2019 and September 2023;

Whereas ethnic and religiously inspired violence occurring in Nigeria is causing unspeakable suffering and the forced relocation of between 3,500,000 to 5,000,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in northeastern Nigeria, and 343,000 registered Nigerian refugees in the Lake Chad region;

Whereas, in 2020, the Department of State designated Nigeria a CPC pursuant to the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6401 et seq.);

Whereas, in 2021, 2022, and 2023, the Department of State omitted Nigeria from its CPC list and in 2024 did not release a CPC list nor its [congressionally mandated] annual International Religious Freedom Report;

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom recommended redesignating Nigeria a CPC 4 years in a row from 2021 to 2024 and said “[t]here is no justification” as to why the State Department continues to fail to redesignate Nigeria as a CPC;

Whereas, on March 23, 2023, then-Secretary of State Antony Blinken testified to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs refusing to explain the decision to remove the CPC designation for Nigeria, given by the previous Administration;

Whereas, on May 22, 2024, then-Secretary of State Antony Blinken testified to the House Committee on Appropriations that the killings of Christian farmers in Nigeria “has nothing to do with religion”, a categorical statement which is inconsistent with readily discernable evidence;

Whereas multiple media reports, including from BBC, CNN, and Reuters, have highlighted religious persecution, attacks on houses of worship, and the Government of Nigeria has been unwilling to effectively investigate and prosecute perpetrators of religiously motivated violence, leading to a culture of impunity;

Whereas blasphemy laws have also been used to target religious minorities and dissenters with harsh penalties, including death sentences;

Whereas, in 12 northern States, Sharia law is implemented alongside secular law, leading to discrimination against non-Muslims and even Muslims who do not adhere to strict interpretations of Islamic law;

Whereas the United States and Nigeria are allies and trading partners with important, shared security interests;

Whereas, since fiscal year 2020, the United States Government has obligated more than \$3,530,000,000 and disbursed more than \$2,240,000,000 in nonmilitary foreign assistance to, or for use in, Nigeria;

Whereas, since fiscal year 2020, the Department of Defense has obligated in excess of \$83,507,253 to provide military and security assistance to the Government of Nigeria;

Whereas the United States foreign policy toward Nigeria should consider these factors and justify the purposes for, and amounts of, financial assistance provided by the United States to and in Nigeria; to identify and justify the outcomes of that assistance; and

Whereas the designation of Nigeria as a CPC will enhance diplomatic efforts to encourage the Nigerian Government to take necessary actions to protect religious minorities and uphold fundamental human rights: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the Sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) President Donald J. Trump acted appropriately and decisively to redesignate Nigeria as a CPC and hold the Nigerian Government accountable for its complicity in religious persecution by radical Islamists, such as Boko Haram and Fulani terrorists;

(2) the State Department should—

(A) provide immediate humanitarian assistance directly to faith-based groups to support internally displaced people in Nigeria's middle belt states; and

(B) condition United States foreign assistance, including through global health programs, to immediately address religious freedom violations and develop strategies for long-term peace and stability, including the Nigerian Government taking immediate and effective steps to prevent religious persecution, prosecute perpetrators of violence, take action to care for the millions of internally displaced persons, and uphold constitutional protections for religious freedom;

(3) the United States, through the Department of State and Department of the Treasury, should impose targeted sanctions, including visa bans and asset freezes under the Global Magnitsky framework and other restrictive measures, on individuals and entities responsible for severe violations of religious freedom in Nigeria, including sanctions against Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) and Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore, and should place Fulani-ethnic militias operating in Benue and Plateau States on the Entities of Particular Concern List under the International Religious Freedom Act; and

(4) the United States is committed to promoting religious freedom and human rights as foundational principles of United States foreign policy.
