

Nigeria: Genocide Emergency

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Since its independence from the United Kingdom in 1960, Nigeria has experienced many periods of ethnic tension due to its colonial borders. The north of the country is predominantly Hausa and Fulani Muslim while the southern states are dominated by Yoruba Muslims and Christians and Igbo Christians. The Settlement of 1960 restricted sharia law imposition to the north. Violent uprisings of Muslims resulted in the new Nigerian Constitution of 1999, which allowed sharia law to be reinstated in the north and stimulated the creation of Muslim fundamentalist groups such as Boko Haram.

Motivated by violently anti-Western jihadist theology, since 2009 Boko Haram has killed anyone that they perceive to be promoting Western or Christian education including government officials who prevent Nigeria from becoming a homogeneous sharia-abiding Muslim state. Trained by members of Al Qaeda, Boko Haram has carried out many mass casualty terrorist attacks. In 2014 - 2015, it was the deadliest terrorist group in the world, killing over 4000 people. On the 14th of April, 2014, Boko Haram's violence peaked when over 270 schoolgirls were abducted in the North-East Region, in Chibok, in Borno State. Since then, 2.2 million Nigerians have become internally displaced and over 1.3 million children have become refugees in Niger, Chad and Cameroon.

President Buhari of Nigeria has convened several Regional Security Summits in Abuja, Nigeria to assess civilian casualties, develop humanitarian responses and respond to the destruction of infrastructure, mainly the 2,000 schools that were destroyed by Boko Haram's violence. Since 2015, UNICEF has increased its on-the-ground efforts to improve education, access to potable water, food security, and psychosocial support for 145,000 conflict-affected children in Nigeria and the Lake Chad area.

In a UN Security Council Statement on May 13th, 2016, The President of the Security Council urged the international community to support humanitarian aid, applauded the efforts of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in N'Djamena, Chad, and encouraged regional deterrence through the collaboration of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU).

Genocide Watch considers Nigeria at Stage 9: Extermination. Boko Haram's current violence includes mass abductions, suicide bombings, and mass killing of school children, Christians, and Government officials.

Genocide Watch recommends:

- Local civil society organizations, the AU, and the UN Security Council should collaborate to decide when conflict zones are "safe" for the return of displaced persons.
- The Nigerian government should facilitate the return of displaced persons to their homes to reclaim their rightful property.
- To promote transitional justice, UNICEF should continue its efforts to reconcile and reintegrate child soldiers into their respective communities.
- The UN Security Council should take a more active role to deter Boko Haram's violence and should refer its leaders to the ICC for prosecution.