



Do you know our suffering?

2 Timothy 3:10–12

NIGERIA

Population: approx. 230 million

Capital: Abuja

Form of government: Federal Republic

Head of state: President Bola Tinubu

Religions: Muslims 46.9%, Christians 45.7%, Animists 7.0%

Gina A. Zurlo, ed. World Christian Database (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed August 2026).

Christians Caught in the Crossfire of Terrorism and Extremism

Violence in Nigeria is driven by extremist terrorism, criminality, competition over land and resources, ethnic tensions, and weak governance. The Open Doors World Watch List reported that 3,490 Christians were killed in Nigeria between October 2024 and September 2025. The Observatory for Religious Freedom in Africa (ORFA) reported 22,835 Christian civilians killed between October 2019 and September 2025. It is the country with the highest number of Christians killed per year.

Christians are suffering and dying in large numbers, and in some communities, individuals are targeted because of their Christian identity. It shapes who is singled out, what communities endure, and what survivors live with long after the violence stops.

- Leah Sharibu, abducted from school in northern Nigeria in 2018, was reportedly held in captivity because she refused to renounce her Christian faith and convert. She remains missing, now for more than eight years, according to widely reported accounts.
- In 2022, Deborah Samuel, a 22-year-old university student, was killed after being accused of blasphemy over a WhatsApp message, an attack filmed on video, yet no one has been held accountable for this murder.
- In Kaduna State on 26 July 2026, reports described attackers going house to house in an attack that left at least 30 Christians dead, including men, women, and children

Abduction and persecution

One of the most disturbing dimensions of the violence is the abduction of schoolchildren. In 2014, Boko Haram kidnapped 276 girls from a secondary school in Chibok, an event that became a global symbol of the threat to children in Nigeria. More than a decade later, some of those girls remain missing. Since then, there have been repeated mass abductions across Nigeria, with some children eventually released and others not. For parents, the terror is ongoing: sending a child to school and not knowing whether they will return. Some abducted Christian girls have been forced to convert and marry their captors.

Displacement and the loss of property and livelihoods

Nigeria has one of the largest populations of internally displaced people, with millions forced from their homes. In many of these situations, people are attacked because they are Christians. Widows have watched husbands killed. Parents have lost children. Families have seen their homes and livelihoods destroyed. Displacement brings its own trauma – scarcity of food and shelter, instability in education and medical care, and continuing fear that return will be unsafe. For many women and girls, sexual violence has been part of the devastation. And for all survivors, the question becomes painfully human: how do you feel safe going back to the village where your family was harmed? How do you rebuild when accountability is missing? How do you recover dignity when your land has been taken over by those who destroyed your life?

There is hope!

In partnership with other organizations, the Nigeria Evangelical Fellowship has been providing practical assistance to those affected by this violence, particularly to those who have been internally displaced. They have seen firsthand the deep trauma these believers have experienced – seeing loved ones killed, loss of homes and livelihoods and an uncertain future.

WE PRAY

- For the Christian population in Nigeria: May Christians feel strengthened by the compassion and expressions of solidarity from the international community, and especially from their Christian brothers and sisters worldwide, and may they not lose hope.
- For those in political leadership: May they feel encouraged to conduct thorough and independent police investigations after attacks by militias and to take effective long-term action against militant Islamist groups.
- For the Nigeria Evangelical Fellowship, may they have the strength and resources to continue to provide care for those affected
- For the many young Muslims who seem to face a hopeless future: May they not be led to acts of violence or seduced by the temptations of criminal gangs. May they be given opportunities to lead a dignified life through work and fair wages.
- That all young Nigerians open their hearts to understanding and reconciliation.