

President Trump Rebukes Attacks on Christians in Nigeria, Demands Buhari Take Action

President Donald Trump rebuked the recent spree of attacks against Nigerian Christians in his meeting with Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari.

“Finally, we’re deeply concerned by religious violence in Nigeria, including the burning of churches, and the killing and persecution of Christians,” Trump told Buhari. “It’s a horrible story. We encourage Nigeria and the federal, state, and local leaders to do everything in their power to immediately secure the affected communities and to protect innocent civilians of all faiths, including Muslims and including Christians.”

Radical Islamic groups including Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen have ransacked the country in a religious cleansing of sorts.

The Herdsmen stormed a church last week, murdering 19 men and women—including two priests.

“The violence perpetrated by militant elements of the Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria is chilling—in the last year, 50 Christian villages have been destroyed and thousands have been killed. As the leader of Nigeria and a Fulani himself, President Buhari is strategically placed to bring an end to this violence,” writes Zoe Smith, Open Doors’ head of advocacy. “Open Doors is joining with others around the world, calling on President Trump to raise this as a matter of urgency with President Buhari in their conversations on Monday.”

Cultural commentator and author Michael Brown previously called out the American church's apathy to the Nigerian crisis:

Thousands of Christians are being butchered in Nigeria and whole villages being destroyed. Why are we so unconcerned? Why don't we care? I believe the biggest reason is that we simply don't know about what's happening there. Well, now you know. Here are the facts.

For the last several months, one of my good friends, a Christian missionary serving the poorest of the poor in Nigeria, has been sending me emails with terrifying news. Fulani tribesmen raping and killing villagers. Children being used as Islamic suicide bombers, resulting in scores of casualties. One horrible report after another.

Yet with each email I received, as I scoured the major news agencies in the West, I found nothing reported. Not a word. ...

[A friend] sent me this YouTube link, viewed over 180,000 times at present, in which a Nigerian social commentator who lives in the States blasts the president's alleged inaction (and, worse still, alleged wrong actions).

The video begins with a clip from a pastor, boldly denouncing wickedness in the government and stating plainly that, "The killing, the killing that is going on in Nigeria shows the irresponsibility of the president called Buhari."

And the pastor urged every Nigerian to fight back, not with weapons but by getting their voter's cards, urging the people not to let wicked men in government to decide their fate. Yes, he bellowed, "Enough is enough!"

As a result of his sermon, we are informed that a warrant was issued for his arrest.

Outrageous? Absolutely. But Nigeria is a nation divided, with

a Muslim majority in the north and a Christian majority in the south, with terrorist groups like Boko Haram still on the prowl, and with systemic governmental corruption.

And as Christianity continues to spread across the nation at an exponential pace, so also persecution is spreading. As reported by Christian Today in 2016, “Muslims are converting to Christianity in northern Nigeria amid rapidly rising levels of Christian persecution, which has seen more than 10,000 Christians killed in five years, according to a new report released today.

“While much media attention has been focused on Islamic State and the plight of persecuted minorities in the Middle East, 11,500 Christians in northern Nigeria were killed in five years between 2006-2014, and 13,000 churches were destroyed, forcing 1.3 million Christians to flee to safer areas of the country.”

As devastating as these statistics are, they are more likely under-reported than over-reported, which again begs the question: Why don't we care? Why aren't we raising our voices? Why aren't we standing with our fellow believers in prayer?

Again, I believe it is largely because of our ignorance.

But if you've read this article, you can't claim ignorance any more. And the first thing you can do to help combat these atrocities is share this article with your friends. Let's get educated, let's get praying, and let's get the word out to the rest of the world until the Nigerian government does what is right – or is replaced by leaders who will.

Nigeria's Buhari addressed the attacks online, but international advocates say he's not doing enough.

“We were encouraged that President Trump talked specifically

and publicly about persecution of Christians in Nigeria, but we want to see President Buhari take specific, tangible steps to provide protection for all people in Nigeria, regardless of ethno-religious affiliation,” says David Curry, CEO of Open Doors. “As trade-related conversations between the two countries progress, we hope the pursuit of religious freedom will not fall by the wayside.”

After the church ambush, Buhari tweeted, “This latest assault on innocent persons is particularly despicable. Violating a place of worship, killing priests and worshippers is not only vile, evil and satanic, it is clearly calculated to stoke up religious conflict and plunge our communities into endless bloodletting.”

In his meeting with Trump this week, Buhari did not specifically pledge to protect Christians, but he did acknowledge a growing need for peace.

“We are doing all we can to secure the release of the remaining abducted schoolgirls from Dapchi and Chibok. In this context, we will continue to welcome United States collaboration in intelligence gathering, hostage negotiations and information sharing. The government is taking necessary steps to promote the peaceful coexistence of herdsmen and farmers by focusing on boosting security and enforcing legislation that will guarantee borders and farmers’ access to land,” Buhari said.