

Condemning unprecedented massacres of the Christian population in Nigeria

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Over the past months and years, the Christian population in Nigeria has been facing unprecedented violence based on pure hate towards Christianity. Recent violent attacks contained the worst imaginable crimes, including mass murders. While Christians in other parts of the world enjoyed Christmas Holidays in peace and joy, at least 160 people were killed and about 300 others injured in the unprovoked assault on Christian villages across the Bokokos and Barkin Ladi areas of Plateau state in Nigeria.

What is even more alarming is the fact that such hateful acts against the Christian community in Nigeria are not rare. On the contrary, they are on the rise. According to reports, more than 52,000 Nigerian Christians have been murdered since 2009¹. Similar atrocities took place just in May 2023, when, reportedly, over 400 Nigerian Christians were brutally killed. In 2022, targeted attacks against Christians caused the deaths of over 5,600 Christians and the damaging or destruction of over 2,100 churches, as well as the forcible displacement of more than 124,000 Christians, almost 15,000 of whom have become refugees².

It is without a doubt that such massacres are religiously motivated and are being conducted by henchmen associated with Islamist terror groups, such as Boko Haram. It is obvious that Christians in Nigeria are endangered by genocidal attempts seeking their annihilation. Because of its well-known persecution of the Christian community, Nigeria is ranked among the most dangerous countries in the world to live in for Christians. It is, therefore, shocking and disturbing that the world's reaction to the critically evolving situation of Nigerian Christians is almost non-existent and does not seem to have any urge.

Acknowledging that:

- The situation of Nigerian Christians has reached a critical point where the community is being endangered by genocidal efforts.
- The freedom of religion belongs to one of the fundamental basic human rights.
- Any violence based on religious hate is to be strongly condemned and firmly opposed.

Recognising that:

- Based on our shared commitment to Christian democratic values, organisations associated with YEPP are, at least partly, ideologically built on Christian-Democratic values that must be protected even beyond the borders of the European Union utilising diplomatic and economic means.
- The European Union must utilise all diplomatic means to maximise efforts to stop the annihilation of Nigerian Christians.

¹ <https://www.johnlocke.org/world-ignores-killing-of-christians-in-nigeria/>

² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2023-002046_EN.html

- Even though Sharia law is in effect in the majority of local states in northern Nigeria, the Nigerian Constitution expressly prohibits the elevation of any religion to the status of a state religion. Contrary to this principle, Nigerian Christians are not equally protected from the rising religiously based violence by Islamist extremists.
- The world's reaction to such events is insufficient, and the political importance of the matter should be elevated.

YEPP Calls on:

- EU member states and EU institutions to enhance their efforts to protect Nigerian Christians from further violence.
- Member organisations to spread proven information regarding the alarming current situation of Nigerian Christians, which is being reprehensibly overlooked.