

**Call for Submissions: Report to the United Nations General Assembly
Eliminating Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief
Achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16)**

SUBMISSION ON THE GENOCIDE IN NIGERIA

Submitted by the International Committee On Nigeria (ICON)
Kyle.Abts@ICONhelp.org

INTRODUCTION:

Nigeria is experiencing a genocide on two fronts – Boko Haram jihadists and Fulani militants. Both are Muslim extremists and both aim to remove specific populations that interfere with their plans, predominately from minority populations such as Christians. The killing of innocents in Nigeria’s Middle Belt, who are mainly Christian indigenes, is evidence that the violence has met the definitional criteria for “genocide”.

Over the past twenty years, Fulani militants have increased their deadly attacks, threatening the life and livelihoods of Christians. These acts of violence are done deliberately, with the intent of killing head of households and/or displacing them from their traditional lands. The overall intention of the Fulani militants is to overthrow Christians and control the land.

I. DISCRIMINATION IN LAW AND PRACTICE

The crime of genocide is proven by “patterns and examples of discrimination against minority religious or belief communities”. Genocide is one of the greatest crimes under international law and it is imperative to show how Christian ethnic minority groups are being slaughtered in a genocidal manner.

The Nigerian House of Representatives raised the concern of genocide in July 2018. Lawmakers insisted that President Buhari do more than just recite verbal condemnation of the attacks and, “take decisive and practical steps to give effect to Section 14 (2) (b) of the 1999 constitution as amended”¹, which states, “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government” Hon. Idris Abdullahi Wase (Plateau APC) claimed he knew specific politicians who sponsor the killings, adding that he had “documentary evidence to support his position”.² Yet, like other important issues and vital concerns, nothing was pursued.

A) Civil and political rights, including but not limited to participation and representation in the public life, access to justice and effective remedies, liberty and security;

1. GENOCIDE

¹ <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2018/07/04/house-designates-plateau-killings-as-genocide/>

² ibid

Genocide is a difficult term to understand and apply to any situation. Genocide needs victims and actors (perpetrators). Genocide is a premeditated, coordinated strategy to destroy a group of people of a specific national, ethnic or religious group.

We are aware that the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which was unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1948 as General Assembly Resolution 260, clearly explains genocide in Article Two as, "any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such"³:

- Killing members of the group
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group
- Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part
- Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group
- Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group

Additionally, Article 3 defines the crimes that can be punished under the convention⁴:

- Genocide;
- Conspiracy to commit genocide;
- Direct and public incitement to commit genocide;
- Attempt to commit genocide;
- Complicity in genocide.

2. VICTIMS

Ethnicity is paramount to Nigerians because language, culture and religion are defined by it. Through the years, as Christianity spread it accepted and promoted ethnicity by incorporating traditional practices and language, even translating the Bible into local languages.

Those who say the conflict is due to climate change or land rights/access should recognize that multiple attempts for peace and resolution have been made for many years. In 1965, the Grazing Reserve System was created by the Northern region government in order to create hundreds of grazing reserves and to provide water and vaccinations while the herdsmen paid government taxes.

⁵ It was never fully implemented because the discovery of oil and ensuing exploration eventually neglected the grazing reserve initiatives and, similarly, the agricultural sector.

³ <https://www.genocidewatch.com/what-is-genocide>

⁴ ibid

⁵ Oshita O. Oshita, (editor), *Internal Security Management in Nigeria: Perspectives, Challenges and Lessons* (Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore 2019), 105

UN GENOCIDE CONVENTION DEFINITION	NIGERIAN VICTIMS: INCIDENTS BY ACTOR “FULANI MILITANTS”
Killing members of the group	Fulani militants strategically kill in several states but notably: Benue, Kaduna, Plateau, and Taraba. Within these States’ attacks to ethnic groups who are Christian: Adara, Irigwe, Berom, Tiv, Idoma, Kuteb, Jukun, etc.
Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group	Majority of incidents that involved Fulani militants either resulted in death or injured victims. Often victims suffer injuries that prevent them from returning to farm.
Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homes attacked and destroyed, displacing populations, reduce planting and harvesting seasons, limit educational opportunities for children, etc. - Grain storages destroyed, removing sustenance, seed for planting and grain for income or barter. - Farms are abandoned because Fulani occupy them with armed men and herds.
Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Men who are head of household are killed, removes fathers, spouses, guardians, income-earners, etc. - Women are killed, removing matriarchy, reproductivity, nurturer, mentor, etc. - Pregnant women are killed.
Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group	No child slavery, or forced conversions. Yet, children are displaced, forced to relocate away from family ancestral lands.

B) Economic, social and cultural rights, including but not limited to the rights to adequate food and housing, education, employment and healthcare.

Governors in several states (e.g. Taraba, Benue) have proposed solutions to the violence, but the nomadic Fulani herders do not want to adhere to local, state or federal laws that limit their freedom or way of life. They prefer to ignore policies and legislation, which often results in failing to honor their part of peace negotiations.

Nigerian Christians believe when Buhari, who is a patron of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), became President of Nigeria, he actuated a Fulani plan to control Nigeria by eventually taking the land of indigenes, especially in the fertile Middle-Belt states by violent force. As Commander-in-Chief, Buhari has appointed either Muslim &/or Fulani members to the majority of the heads of Nigeria's security corps. Some might say this is merely the ramblings of conspiracy theorists but the government impunity and lack of transparency suggests otherwise.

C) Examples of discriminatory practices

1. ACTORS

According to U.S. Holocaust Museum’s explanation of “Mass Killing”, countries are at risk when there are deliberate actions of armed groups that result in the deaths of at least 1,000 noncombatant

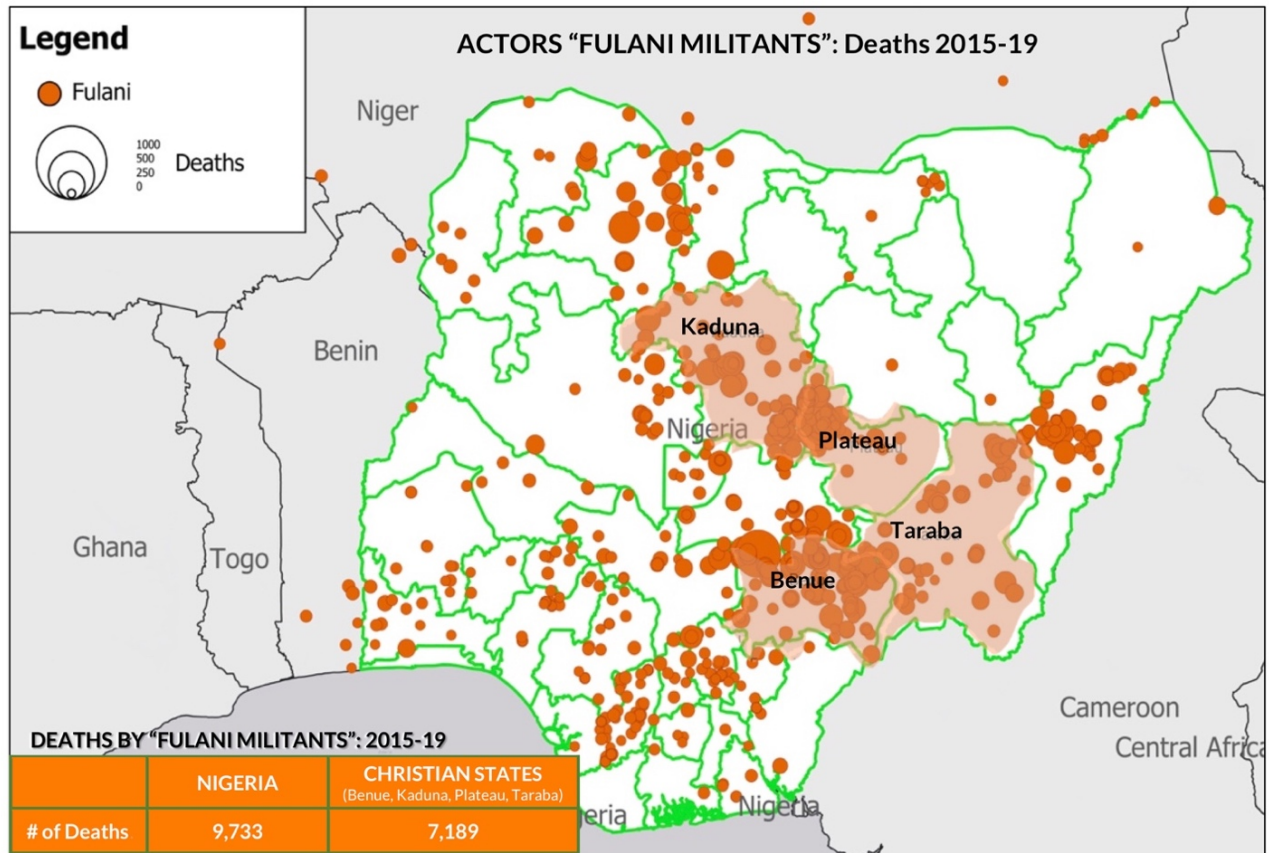
civilians over a period of 12 months or less. Since 2017, this result has been individually perpetrated by Boko Haram jihadists and Fulani militants and is on course to be reached in 2020 as well.

Whereas it is easy to pinpoint which leaders from the Boko Haram jihadists are responsible for genocide, it is not simple to do so for Fulani militants. The Fulani militants do not have individual leaders that can be clearly identified and held liable as Boko Haram does.

It is imperative to be able to identify leaders of the Fulani militant group in order to confront religious persecution. There are issues surrounding elections that are not a representation of the results of votes, but rather an extension of selective ideals – mainly keeping people in positions of control. Fulani have gathered power not just in the Islamic ranks in the Emirate system (there are over 40 Emirs in Nigeria, majority are Hausa-Fulani), but also in political jurisdiction: Governors, military, ministers, etc. are increasingly being populated by ethnic Fulani.

We must identify those who are responsible. We know Fulani militants are being led by individuals who, either by their silence or by their veiled pronouncements, are advancing the genocidal slaughter. It is important to state we are not condemning the entire Fulani population, as we know there are Fulani who prefer peace and some who are Christians. Fulani themselves have told us there exists a militant faction, but Fulani leaders are unwilling to share on who these militants are and whose orders they follow.

DEATHS BY ACTOR = FULANI MILITANTS	VICTIMS = CHRISTIAN POPULATION STATES (BENUE, KADUNA, PLATEAU, TARABA)	VICTIMS = NIGERIA TOTAL
2010-14	5,890	7,551
2015-17	3,452	4,722
2018	2,484	3,286
2019	1,253	1,725
TOTAL: 2000-19	14,087	18,834



(Stats / Data⁶)

II. EFFECTS OF DISCRIMINATION

A. State-sponsored persecution and crimes against humanity

1. MIYETTI ALLAH

Miyetti Allah Cattle Herders Association (MACBAN) and Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore are two distinctive groups that are in a unique situation to either dispel trouble or promote the slaughter. They are both cultural associations that act as socio-cultural groups that represent the interests of the Fulani people.

Benue State Governor, Samuel Ortom, established an anti-open grazing law in order to resolve the farmers and herders violence in his state but was opposed by MACBAN. The National Vice President of MACBAN, Husaini Yusuf Bosso said, “there will be more bloodshed in Benue state if the anti-grazing law is not scrapped”⁷. Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore openly threatened to rebel against the state's laws, which resulted in Governor Ortom blaming many of the attacks on the group. Version

⁶ Sources don't reflect the full extent of Nigeria's situation, Actors as “Fulani militants” can be misrepresented – due to incidents being reported as “herders vs farmers”, “pastoralists”, “unidentified” or “sectarian”, but we have been able to compile and present our version at <https://iconhelp.org/resources/news/>

⁷ <https://www.pulse.ng/news/local/benue-attacks-expect-more-bloodshed-herdsmen-warn/gcm5esl>

MACBAN Chairman, Gidado Siddiki, believes the unease between farmers and herders has provoked reports of Islamization and Fulanization. Yet, the denominational umbrella group Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has asked the federal government to “declare MACBAN a terrorist organisation.”⁸

2. PRESIDENT MUHAMMADU BUHARI

Muhammadu Buhari pursued the Presidency since leaving as Military Head of State in 1985. In 2003, after losing to incumbent President Obasanjo, Buhari refused to concede and threatened “mass action” to grind Nigeria to a halt. Again, losing elections in 2003, 2007 and 2011, he took his case to the Supreme Court, losing each time. He eventually obtained the Presidency in 2015.

In 2000, following violence that involved Fulani herdsmen, Buhari led a delegation to the governor of Oyo State Lam Adesina, asking: “Why are your people killing my people?”⁹ In 2003, Wikileaks reported a conversation with then Lagos State governor Bola Tinubu in which he said Buhari’s “ethnocentrism would jeopardize Nigeria’s national unity. Buhari and his ilk are agents of destabilization...”.

Attempting to explain being misquoted, “Muslims should vote for Muslims”, Buhari claimed, “Shari'a had found its way back into the Nigerian legal system,” and implored Nigerians to vote for candidates who would uphold their traditional values.¹⁰ In 2008, meeting with the US Ambassador, WikiLeaks indicated that Buhari, “blamed the Nigerian political elite for its failure to politically stabilize the country.”¹¹ He is now part of the same political elite.

Buhari permitted the Minister of Education to acquire a Fulani language radio station. Southern and Middle Belt Leaders Forum were quick to condemn, stating, “we fear that the proposed radio will become a weapon of spreading hate propaganda against other nationalities in Nigeria”.¹² Knowing history, they reminded the government on how radio guided the Rwandan genocide with disinformation, identifying targets and inciting conflict.

President Buhari claimed the Fulani situation is under control, but his inactivity and decisions do not indicate confidence. Instead, he has promoted his own beliefs, which is evident in his biased appointments, rulings and statements.

- Before 2019 elections, Chief Justice Onnoghen was removed as top election official and replaced with Ibrahim Tanko Muhammed, a Buhari policy supporter with Sharia law expertise.
- Vowed to punish all those behind ethnic violence but did not include Fulani terrorists.¹³

⁸ <https://www.thecable.ng/can-asks-fg-to-declare-miyetti-allah-a-terrorist-organisation>

⁹ <https://punchng.com/how-lam-adesina-averted-tribal-war-when-buhari-made-a-case-for-herdsmen-olaosebikan/>

¹⁰ https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/03ABUJA418_a.html

¹¹ https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08ABUJA2519_a.html

¹² <http://saharareporters.com/2019/05/23/southern-and-middle-belt-leaders-reject-fulani-radio-station-funded-federal-govt>

¹³ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nigeria-security-benue/nigerias-buhari-vows-to-punish-all-those-behind-ethnic-violence-idUSKBN1F42FK>

- Appointed Mohammed Bello Tukur, Legal Adviser to MACBAN, as Secretary of the Federal Character Commission, which promotes national unity, loyalty, and ensures that no superiority of persons from a several states or ethnic groups is advanced.¹⁴
- Current Minister of Defense is a Fulani, Bashir Salihi Magashi.
- Current Minister of Police Affairs is Muhammed Maigari Dingyadi, from Sokoto, which is a seat of power for Nigeria, established by 1804 jihad.

3. KADUNA STATE GOVERNOR EL-RUFAI

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum reminds us that it is an obligation to raise awareness of genocide around the world. Therefore, we must hold Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai accountable when he refuses to provide protection for communities. He has failed to investigate and prosecute perpetrators, while victims remain unprotected. When hundreds of Adara people killed and thousands displaced by a brief and violent Fulani militant attack, Governor El-Rufai had local leaders arrested instead of investigating or arresting any of the perpetrators.

It is imperative to investigate Governor El-Rufai, Fulani, and his decision to placate the perpetrators rather than prosecute them. In December 2016, Governor El-Rufai said that his government has “traced some violent, aggrieved Fulani to their countries and paid them to stop the killings of Southern Kaduna natives”.¹⁵ Additionally, his blatant attempts to replace traditional leaders of the Adara victims’ with adherents of the persecuting (e.g. Fulani) community¹⁶. Amnesty International’s investigation indicated, “perpetrators of the crimes are getting away, encouraged by government’s glaring unwillingness to live up to its obligations.”¹⁷

In February 2019, the Southern Kaduna Peoples Union (SOKAPU) ascribed Governor El-Rufai’s comments that only Fulani were killed in Kajuru local government as calamitous because over 160 Adara people were killed by Fulani militants in less than two months. SOKAPU said the words of the Governor were, “deliberately orchestrated to inflame ethnic and religious violence.”¹⁸

Then, just before the 2019 election, “We are waiting for the person who will come and intervene. They will go back in body bags because nobody will come to Nigeria and tell us how to run our country,”¹⁹ said El-Rufai.

CONCLUSION

In a 2018 visit to the White House, President Buhari tried to explain to President Trump, “The problem of cattle herders is a very long historical problem. Before now, cattle herders were known to carry sticks and machetes... but these ones are carrying AK-47s.” The world responded, “If this is the case, the question is then, what the Nigerian government is doing to resolve the ongoing

¹⁴ <https://www.naijiant.com/articles/buhari-appoints-spokesman-fulani-herdsmen-secretary-federal-character-commission/>

¹⁵ <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/12/weve-paid-fulani-stop-killings-southern-kaduna-el-rufai/>

¹⁶ <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/community-leaders-caution-el-rufai-against-scraping-adara-chiefdom.html>

¹⁷ Amnesty International, *Harvest Of Death 4 Three Years Of Bloody Clashes Between Farmers And Herders In Nigeria* (Amnesty International, Abuja Nigeria, published 2018), 65

¹⁸ <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2019/02/17/kajuru-killings-sokapu-accuses-el-rufai-of-inciting-violence/>

¹⁹ https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nigeria-election-idUSKCN1PV2MQ?utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_content=5c5b752d04d30165e6bf5945&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter

conflict between Fulani herdsmen and Christian farmers?”²⁰ Adding that there is a requirement of Buhari to, “investigate the crimes and prosecute the perpetrators; investigate the supply chain of AK-47s; consider the potential religious component to the conflict; and assist all victims of the conflict”.²¹

Nigeria is experiencing a genocide that needs to be recognized and treated with urgency. We must hold the Nigerian government accountable and all the factions who have claimed responsibility for attacks and prosecute the perpetrators. If the Nigerian government is unable or unwilling to do so, the perpetrators must be held accountable to international law. Genocide is being perpetrated and there exists the need to protect the victims of these genocidal atrocities.

²⁰ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ewelinaochab/2018/05/04/trump-may-not-be-wrong-on-the-fulani-herdsmen-crisis-in-nigeria/#4836262055ef>

²¹ *ibid*