

BALKANIZATION AND RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION OF THE ADARA CHIEFDOM  
BY KADUNA STATE GOVERNOR NASIR EL-RUFAI.

## INTRODUCTION

This submission, by U.S. non-profit Save the Persecuted Christians, addresses the 2018 forced Balkanization of the predominately Christian Southern Kaduna Adara Chiefdom as mandated by unilateral executive decree by Nigeria's Kaduna State Fulani Muslim Governor Nasir El-Rufai resulting in:

- 1) Dissolution of the Adara chiefdom<sup>1</sup>
- 2) A new emirate and dictatorial appointment of a governor-selected emir<sup>2</sup> over a portion of the predominately 85% Christian people<sup>3</sup>
- 3) Restructuring of remaining population into a separate chiefdom<sup>4</sup> with the appointment of a governor-selected chief against the democratic will of Adara indigenes and their legally approved protocol for traditional self-governance which was submitted and approved by Kaduna state in 2000<sup>5</sup>
- 4) Incitement to violence by the governor, via release of an inflammatory and suspect report<sup>6</sup>, which the Adara attest resulted in multiple deadly Fulani militia attacks against them<sup>7</sup>
- 5) Arrests of a human rights activist<sup>8</sup> and an independent journalist<sup>9</sup> with dissenting opinions from those of Kaduna state and El-Rufai

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<sup>1</sup> Kaduna State | Gazette-Kaduna-Districts-and-Villages-Restructuring-08162018, <https://christianpersecutionnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Gazette-Kaduna-Districts-and-Villages-Restructuring-08162018.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Daily Post NG | by Amos Tauma | Feb. 7, 2020 | <https://dailypost.ng/2020/02/07/kaduna-crises-adara-community-reveals-reason-behind-prolonged-unrest-in-kachia-kajuru-chikun-others/>

<sup>3</sup> Joshua Project – The Adara [PDF] Religious make-up: 86% Christian, 8% traditional religious beliefs, 6% Muslim <https://joshuaproject.net/assets/media/profiles/text/t12404.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Daily Post NG | by Amos Tauma | Feb. 7, 2020 | <https://dailypost.ng/2020/02/07/kaduna-crises-adara-community-reveals-reason-behind-prolonged-unrest-in-kachia-kajuru-chikun-others/>

<sup>5</sup> Bonnet, Paul M. "Chiefdoms & Emirate in Southern Kaduna: A Historical Perspective", (2010), Kaduna, Nigeria, pp. 70-71

<sup>6</sup> OperaNews | Opinion: How El-Rufai's Statements Appear to Have Fueled the Kajuru Crisis in Southern Kaduna, [https://www.operanewsapp.com/ng/en/share/detail?news\\_id=05c369c6ce7672c6db7e7f625756e0e0&news\\_entry\\_id=s696d259200605en\\_ng&open\\_type=transcoded&request\\_id=PUSH\\_ENTRY\\_NEWS\\_5035d4d3-76ba-472a-872a-e47854c233e9&from=news](https://www.operanewsapp.com/ng/en/share/detail?news_id=05c369c6ce7672c6db7e7f625756e0e0&news_entry_id=s696d259200605en_ng&open_type=transcoded&request_id=PUSH_ENTRY_NEWS_5035d4d3-76ba-472a-872a-e47854c233e9&from=news)

<sup>7</sup> Daily Post NG | by Amos Tauma | Feb. 7, 2020 | <https://dailypost.ng/2020/02/07/kaduna-crises-adara-community-reveals-reason-behind-prolonged-unrest-in-kachia-kajuru-chikun-others/>

<sup>8</sup> ICIRNigeria | Chidi Odinkalu invited by Police over allegations of inciting public disturbance by Kaduna govt, May 27, 2019, <https://www.icirnigeria.org/chidi-odinkalu-invited-by-police-over-allegations-of-inciting-public-disturbance-by-kaduna-govt/>

<sup>9</sup> The Trent Online | Kaduna: Rights Groups Call For Release Of Unlawfully Detained Citizen Activist Steven Kefas, July 21, 2019, <https://www.thetrentonline.com/friends-steven-kefas-coalition-civil-rights-groups/>

6) State agency neglect of Adara communities, IDPs and victims with regards to security, healthcare and welfare<sup>10</sup>

7) Political and physical destruction of a Christian ethnic group to advance an Islamic political system that directly and indirectly supports usurpation of indigenous Christian properties by an Islamic ethnic group to which the governor belongs<sup>11</sup>

The indigenous, predominately Christian, Adara are victims of inequalities arising from differences in ethnicity and religion between their community and that of the governor and his administration. The Adara are subjected to illegal arrests, religious persecution, intimidation and unrestrained violence.

*The Adara people noted that the immediate causes of the crisis are the failure of Northern Governors, resistance to the burden of decades of domination, the impact of previous crises in other communities, the political and physical destruction of Adara nation, the mishandling of the first major attack on Adara community and government actions and inactions in general.*<sup>12</sup>

Kaduna state mandates, policies, actions and inactions represent systemic discrimination against a religious minority community denied justice, protection, and remedies for ongoing violence which threatens survival of Adara communities.

This submission adheres to targets stipulated in Sustainable Development Goal 16.

We plead to the U.N. Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Religion or Belief to submit this for his thematic report at the 75th Session of the General Assembly.

## **BACKGROUND**

*1) The Adara are in the southern part of Kaduna state and parts of Niger state. They are the predominant ethnic group in Kajuru and Kachia Local Government Area of Kaduna state with Kachia as their traditional, socio-cultural and political headquarters. There are approximately 400,000 Adara in Nigeria, about 2% of the population.*<sup>13</sup>

*2) The Adara chieftdom was created in 2000 by then-Executive Governor of Kaduna state, Ahmed Mahammad Makarfi. The Adara Chieftdom is the second*

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<sup>10</sup> Punch | Middle Belt Forum and its delusional lies on Adara crisis | Apr. 17, 2019, <https://punchng.com/middle-belt-forum-and-its-delusional-lies-on-adara-crisis/>

<sup>11</sup> Daily Post NG | by Amos Tauma | Feb. 7, 2020, <https://dailypost.ng/2020/02/07/kaduna-crises-adara-community-reveals-reason-behind-prolonged-unrest-in-kachia-kajuru-chikun-others/>

<sup>12</sup> ibid

<sup>13</sup> Bonnet, Paul M. "Chiefdoms & Emirate in Southern Kaduna: A Historical Perspective", (2010), Kaduna, Nigeria, pp. 70-71

*largest in the state after the Zazzua Emirate which is predominately agrarian.<sup>14</sup>*

*3) The struggle for the creation of the Adara Chiefdom started as early as 1903. In 1999, the Adara community under the auspices of the Adara Development Association (ADA) constituted a committee to establish guidelines of selecting the Chief of Adara (Agom-Adara) ... The committee's report was presented to Congress at Kasuwan Magani in December, 2000 and was subsequently adopted. (The Adara had previously been recognized as part of the Zazzau Emirate.) ... Created in 2000 with 3rd class status. Attained 2nd class status in 2007. Attained 1st class status in 2010.<sup>15</sup>*

*4) Agriculture accounts for more than 90% of the Adara Chiefdom community's earnings.<sup>16</sup>*

## **BALKANIZATION OF ADARA CHIEFDOM**

In 2018, Governor El-Rufai issued a gazette<sup>17</sup> mandating a restructuring of southern Kaduna villages and districts, dissolving the Adara Chiefdom. Its people were reapportioned among a newly named 'Kachia Chiefdom', and the new 'Kajuru Emirate'. The 'Agom Adara' office of the monarch and chief was renamed the 'Agom Kachia'. The Kaduna state governor was to appoint the Agom Kachia and Kaduna Emir in violation of the agreement approved by the state in 2000 and its upgraded status recognized in 2010.

*"Scrapping of Adara Chiefdom, the partitioning of Adara land in Kaduna state into two, the purported creation of Kachia Chiefdom and placing of Adara land and people in Kajuru Local Government under Kajuru Emirate. These are unprecedented acts of injustice carried out against Adara nation for which the Adara nation and all people of conscience have rejected and still reject as unjust, vindictive and dictatorial."<sup>18</sup>*

The Adara peacefully opposed Governor El-Rufai's restructuring mandate, which led to the loss of local self-governance and political influence for an entire ethnic group. The Adara's repeated formal requests for mediation with the state went unanswered.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *ibid*

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*

<sup>17</sup> Gazette-Kaduna-Districts-and-Villages-Restructuring-08162018, <https://christianpersecutionnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Gazette-Kaduna-Districts-and-Villages-Restructuring-08162018.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Daily Post NG | by Amos Tauma | Feb. 7, 2020 | <https://dailypost.ng/2020/02/07/kaduna-crisis-adara-community-reveals-reason-behind-prolonged-unrest-in-kachia-kajuru-chikun-others/>

<sup>19</sup> 112818-Adara-letter-of-protest-to-Gazette, <https://christianpersecutionnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/112818-Adara-letter-of-protest-to-Gazette.pdf>

## ADARA SUIT AGAINST EL-RUFAI

Still reeling from the unsolved murder of their monarch in October 2018<sup>20</sup>, which some allege is tied to El-Rufai, the Adara Traditional Council filed suit against El-Rufai on January 24, 2019.<sup>21</sup>

On February 9 & 10, within days of suing, suspected Fulani militants violently attacked an Adara community.<sup>22</sup> El-Rufai made no public comment about the attack—which left 11 mostly women, children and elderly dead. The Governor provided no assistance for those who had been forced from their homes and had their food stores destroyed or stolen.

## GOVERNOR'S REPORT INCITES VIOLENCE

At the end of that week, on the eve of already tense national elections, El-Rufai rushed a February 15 statement on an as yet unverified report of 'reprisal attacks' against a Fulani village wherein he publicly, and without sufficient evidence, blamed the Adara. El-Rufai, accused the Adara of killing 66 Fulani. He released unverified numbers of dead, including ages and genders of victims, before his own police commander began investigating the report.<sup>23</sup>

The Adara, in concert with human rights activists accused<sup>24</sup> El-Rufai of fabricating an inflammatory report with intent to incite further violence against Adara communities by Fulani militants<sup>25</sup>.

*Curiously, the Violent Incidents and Election Atrocity Fusion Centre (VIAFUC) for #NigeriaDecides2019 said in a statement that it contacted residents and community leaders of Kajuru and "trawled all possible sources and sent in two additional fact finders to verify these claims" and concluded that 'sadly, the alleged attack and killings claimed by the Governor **did not occur.**' "*

*VIAFUC also accused El-Rufai of "**deliberate falsehood**" capable of setting ablaze a fragile neighbourhood and of compromising the smooth running of election operations and of the safety of all involved in the elections."*

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<sup>20</sup> Punch NG | CAN takes el-Rufai to task, urges him to find killers of Agom Adara, others, Dec. 26, 2018, <https://punchng.com/can-takes-el-rufai-to-task-urges-him-to-find-killers-of-agom-adara-others/>

<sup>21</sup> Adara-suit-2019-v-Gov-El-Rufai-signed-submitted-012419, <https://christianpersecutionnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Adara-suit-2019-v-Gov-El-Rufai-signed-submitted-012419.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Today News Africa | Horrifying scenes from hell: Genocide in Kaduna. U.S. reacts as Buhari, el-Rufai do nothing, March 22, 2019, <https://todaynewsafrika.com/horrifying-pictures-from-hell-genocide-in-kaduna-u-s-reacts-as-buhari-el-rufai-do-nothing/>

<sup>23</sup> Kakaak iReporters | El-Rufai lied over killing of 66 Kaduna residents — CAN, NEM, Feb. 17, 2019, <https://kakaakireporters.com/2019/02/17/el-rufai-lied-over-killing-of-66-kaduna-residents-can-nema-shehu-sani/>

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*

<sup>25</sup> Punch NG | Middle Belt Forum and its delusional lies on Adara crisis, Apr. 17, 2019, <https://punchng.com/middle-belt-forum-and-its-delusional-lies-on-adara-crisis/>

*The Adara community's statement described the comment by El-Rufai as "deliberate lies being manufactured against us as a people...."<sup>26</sup>*

Those who publicly questioned the governor's account were arrested and charged with inciting violence and promoting false reports, including the former Chairman of Nigeria's Human Rights Council, Chidi Odinkalu<sup>27</sup> and independent journalist Steven Kefas.<sup>28</sup>

## **INTENSIFICATION OF VIOLENCE**

Violence against Adara communities, which the Adara say was a direct result of El-Rufai's report, continued for months leaving hundreds dead and thousands displaced. A U.K. non-profit report in November 2019<sup>29</sup> detailed "five major attacks" in Kaduna between January and November resulting in 500 deaths. While some Fulani may have died, El-Rufai's ill-timed account failed to acknowledge the attacks on Adara Feb. 9/10, 2019.<sup>30</sup>

Violence and bloodshed continue. Attacks against the Adara have intensified again in the first half of 2020 with multiple major mid-May attacks occurring that Kaduna State has failed to fully acknowledged or investigate.<sup>31</sup>

*"Since January, killings, maiming, burning, looting and kidnapping have continued unabated from village to village," said Awema Dio Maisamari, President of the Adara Association in a May 22, 2020 statement. "There have been 63 terrorist attacks and kidnapping incidents, more than 107 people killed, about 49 persons injured, more than 66 men, women and girls abducted for ransoms, more than 111 houses burned. Thirty-two Adara villages were destroyed and 20,000 persons displaced, especially in the last two weeks."<sup>32</sup>*

## **DENIAL AND DELAYS**

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<sup>26</sup> OperaNews | Opinion: How El-Rufai's Statements Appear to Have Fueled the Kajuru Crisis in Southern Kaduna, [https://www.operanewsapp.com/ng/en/share/detail?news\\_id=05c369c6ce7672c6db7e7f625756e0e0&news\\_entry\\_id=s696d259200605en\\_ng&open\\_type=transcoded&request\\_id=PUSH\\_ENTRY\\_NEWS\\_5035d4d3-76ba-472a-872a-e47854c233e9&from=news](https://www.operanewsapp.com/ng/en/share/detail?news_id=05c369c6ce7672c6db7e7f625756e0e0&news_entry_id=s696d259200605en_ng&open_type=transcoded&request_id=PUSH_ENTRY_NEWS_5035d4d3-76ba-472a-872a-e47854c233e9&from=news)

<sup>27</sup> ICIRNigeria | Chidi Odinkalu invited by Police over allegations of inciting public disturbance by Kaduna govt, May 27, 2019, <https://www.icirnigeria.org/chidi-odinkalu-invited-by-police-over-allegations-of-inciting-public-disturbance-by-kaduna-govt/>

<sup>28</sup> The Trent Online | Kaduna: Rights Groups Call For Release Of Unlawfully Detained Citizen Activist Steven Kefas, July 21, 2019, <https://www.thetrentonline.com/friends-steven-kefas-coalition-civil-rights-groups/>

<sup>29</sup> Nov. 18 report is titled "Your Land or Your Body: The escalating persecution and displacement of Christians in northern and central Nigeria, <https://www.hart-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Nigeria-Visit-Final-Report-Nov-2019-1-1.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> Opera News | Opinion: How El-Rufai's Statements Appear to Have Fueled the Kajuru Crisis in Southern Kaduna | Feb. 2019 [https://www.operanewsapp.com/ng/en/share/detail?news\\_id=05c369c6ce7672c6db7e7f625756e0e0&news\\_entry\\_id=s696d259200605en\\_ng&open\\_type=transcoded&request\\_id=PUSH\\_ENTRY\\_NEWS\\_5035d4d3-76ba-472a-872a-e47854c233e9&from=news](https://www.operanewsapp.com/ng/en/share/detail?news_id=05c369c6ce7672c6db7e7f625756e0e0&news_entry_id=s696d259200605en_ng&open_type=transcoded&request_id=PUSH_ENTRY_NEWS_5035d4d3-76ba-472a-872a-e47854c233e9&from=news)

<sup>31</sup> Gurara Accord | SOKAPU Visit to Rimau: About 30 Decomposing Bodies Strewn In Villages – Locals, June 1, 2020, <https://guraraaccord.com/sokapu-visit-to-rimau-about-30-decomposing-bodies-strewn-about-villages-locals/>

<sup>32</sup> Punch NG | Gunmen kill 20 in fresh Kaduna attacks, May 23, 2020, <https://punchng.com/gunmen-kill-20-in-fresh-kaduna-attacks/>

The El-Rufai government consistently delays acknowledgement, outright denials, or remains silent regarding ongoing attacks on Adara communities—even when substantiated by photographic evidence, IDPs, dead bodies, and hospitalizations. Victims report the Kaduna regime offers no aid or security response for victims, which disproportionately include women, children and elderly. Over time, often operating without threat of arrest or prosecution by possibly corrupt and colluding security forces that are nonresponsive, the militants are becoming bolder.<sup>33</sup>

*“When Fulanis are attacked, El-Rufai is ever ready to list the number of villages in which the attacks took place, he is ready to give gender statistics of those allegedly killed, he is ready to ‘request enhanced military presence’ to protect Fulani lives and property, he is ready ‘to make public the pictures of the victims and footages of how the army had to be there to help bury the dead victims’ but mysteriously goes MIA when Adara people are being killed and communities in Southern Kaduna are being attacked by his tribesmen.”<sup>34</sup>*

Temporary IDPs camps have emerged in at least 5 locations since the most recent violence, but the Adara victims received no government assistance and some haven’t been able to return to villages to bury their dead, since Fulani militias still occupy them.<sup>35</sup>

The Adara of Kaduna state face daily violence and insecurity. The Adara are denied all recourse from a government sworn to protect them. Meanwhile, the government continues delaying the Adara suit against El-Rufai over the Balkanization of the Adara chiefdom.

*Alheri Bawa Magaji, daughter of the acting Adara appointed leader, Adara Wazirin Engr. Bawa Magaji, reports to Save the Persecuted Christians “The government keeps postponing the case. We’ve been to court about 4 times but the government lawyers always have one excuse or the other. The last time in February [2020] they said they weren’t ‘notified’ so were not ready. They are using technicalities to keep postponing, and the [Covid-19] lockdown has just given them more time.”*

## CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

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<sup>33</sup> Gurara Accord | SOKAPU Visit to Rimau: About 30 Decomposing Bodies Strewn In Villages – Locals, June 1, 2020, <https://guraraaccord.com/sokapu-visit-to-rimau-about-30-decomposing-bodies-strewn-about-villages-locals/>

<sup>34</sup> Opera News | Opinion: How El-Rufai’s Statements Appear to Have Fueled the Kajuru Crisis in Southern Kaduna | Feb. 2019 | [https://www.operanewsapp.com/ng/en/share/detail?news\\_id=05c369c6ce7672c6db7e7f625756e0e0&news\\_entry\\_id=s696d259200605en\\_ng&open\\_type=transcoded&request\\_id=PUSH\\_ENTRY\\_NEWS\\_5035d4d3-76ba-472a-872a-e47854c233e9&from=news](https://www.operanewsapp.com/ng/en/share/detail?news_id=05c369c6ce7672c6db7e7f625756e0e0&news_entry_id=s696d259200605en_ng&open_type=transcoded&request_id=PUSH_ENTRY_NEWS_5035d4d3-76ba-472a-872a-e47854c233e9&from=news)

<sup>35</sup> Gurara Accord | SOKAPU Visit to Rimau: About 30 Decomposing Bodies Strewn In Villages – Locals, June 1, 2020, <https://guraraaccord.com/sokapu-visit-to-rimau-about-30-decomposing-bodies-strewn-about-villages-locals/>

These Muslim Fulani militia attacks on Christian communities of the Adara tribe in Southern Kaduna have left children injured and orphaned without government aid or acknowledgement.

*"We want justice for our land. We need our land back. Adara are 95 percent Christian. Adara is the largest Christian community in Kaduna State," said Alheri Bawa Magaji, daughter of the acting Adara leader.*

*"...We know it won't end at Adara alone. There seems to be a systematic plan to take over Kaduna State and Nigeria as a whole. It is purely religious. Purely."<sup>36</sup>*

Security, judicial and democratic processes guaranteed to the Adara by the Nigerian and Kaduna state Constitutions are imperiled by ethnic and religious violence exacerbated by El-Rufai acting as a political authority exercising absolute and centralized control over a previously legally recognized chieftdom consisting entirely of a threatened ethnic group.

The predominantly Christian Adara allege the source of physical and political violence towards their community has been motivated and exacerbated by the Muslim Fulani governor of Kaduna state, where Muslim Fulani and Hausa have been appointed to nearly all top-level government posts.

In Nigeria, where more than 1,000 Christians were killed in 2019, initial reports demonstrate this number has already been surpassed in 2020.<sup>37</sup>

To address the goals of SG-16 stated above, Save the Persecuted Christians asks the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief to:

- 1) Advocate a fair, objective hearing by an international body on the Aug. 16, 2018 Balkanization of the Adara and their petition for reinstatement as a first-class chieftdom.
- 2) Investigate the Oct. 26, 2018 murder of the Adara Agom III Dr. Maiwada Galadima.
- 3) Investigate the initial Feb. 9/10, 2019 attack in South Kaduna that followed within days of the first hearing on the Adara suit against El-Rufai wherein they seek reinstatement of their first-class chieftdom status, and an independent investigation of attacks that followed.
- 4) Investigate El-Rufai's security response and provision of aid for Adara citizens of Southern Kaduna.
- 5) Investigate spurious filing of charges against a prominent human rights activist and an independent journalist for anti-El-Rufai statements or posts made during media interviews or via social media platforms.
- 6) Immediately mobilize international aid for Adara IDPs and victims of violence.

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<sup>36</sup> Stream | 3 Nigerian Women Beg for US to Help Stop Persecution of Christians | July 2, 2019 | <https://stream.org/3-nigerian-women-beg-for-us-to-help-stop-persecution-of-christians/>

<sup>37</sup> Silent Slaughter Incident Tracker | May, 2020 | <https://silentslaughternigeria.com/calendar.php?month=05&year=2020>