



## TRANSCRIPT

# PRESS CONFERENCE: The Persecution of Christians in Nigeria

*Transcript of remarks by Dede Laugesen,  
Executive Director, Save the Persecuted Christians*

Washington, DC— Dede Laugesen, president of Save the Persecuted Christians (STPC), gives remarks at a Capitol Hill press conference on the persecution of Christians in Nigeria.

Press conference hosted by our coalition partners Equipping the Persecuted, Truth Nigeria, and the International Committee on Nigeria.

- Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2200, Washington, D.C. 20515
- Wednesday, September 3, 2025
- 1:00 PM EST

### **Speakers:**

Dr. Gloria Samdi Puldu, President, Leah Foundation / ICON

Judd Saul, Executive Director, Equipping the Persecuted

Doug Burton, Senior Editor, Truth Nigeria

Dede Laugesen, Executive Director, Save the Persecuted Christians

Robert Destro, Former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

### **TRANSCRIPT BEGINS:**

**Dede Laugesen:** I'm Dede Laugesen, executive director of Save the Persecuted Christians, and we have been advocating for Christians in Nigeria since 2018. I remember when Ambassador Brownback, for Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, had just been confirmed. His first trip was to Nigeria, and as he took off in 2018, as he was flying out, some 50 communities in Plateau State came under attack. And I was amazed that this was happening in Nigeria, and I haven't let the story

of Nigeria go. Ever since we were all successful in getting Nigeria designated as a country of particular concern under the first Trump administration, the Biden administration pulled back that designation for political reasons, and we are still waiting for that redesignation to happen, so that the Trump administration has the tools that it needs to hold Nigeria accountable. My comments today. During the 1930s, US newspapers reported on the persecution of Jews, communists, and other political opponents by the Nazis. However, the coverage was framed as a series of disconnected atrocities, not as a systematic plan of mass extermination. Coverage failed to convey the true scale of the horror. American media coverage of German concentration camps during World War two was notably limited and downplayed, especially during the early years of the Holocaust. While some accurate information was available, it was often buried inside newspapers or treated with skepticism. In contrast, reporting on the Nazi camps exploded with graphic detail after the Allied liberation in 1945. Likewise, the ongoing genocide of Christians in Nigeria receives the same disjointed, sparse, manipulated and propagandized coverage in international mainstream media. Conveniently, widespread Boko Haram and ISWAP terrorism in Northern Nigeria overshadows accurate coverage of Muslim Fulani terrorism in the Middle Belt.

**Dede Laugesen:** The Christian Middle Belt states of Plateau, Benue, and Southern Kaduna are not the same, but international media outlets have repeatedly failed to get the story straight. The current genocidal jihad perpetrated against middle belt Christians in Nigeria coincided with 911 in America, the Fulani Jihad that began in Jos, Plateau State, in 2001. Now, 24 years later, it continues unabated. Fulani militia attacks on Christian farming communities in Nigeria's Middle Belt, very similar to what happened in Israel on October 7th, 2023, happened daily across the Middle Belt. Some recent examples include the Black Christmas December 2023, when attacks over the Christmas holiday resulted in the deaths of hundreds of innocent indigenes, as attacks continued for weeks after and are still going on today, according to witnesses. Nigerian security forces were slow to respond, even as numerous community alerts had been reported in advance of the violence. They were outnumbered and outgunned by the large, well-armed, and well-organized Fulani militants. In April this year, over 120 Christians were killed in attacks in Plateau State. Then, in June, as Judd said, 280 Christians were killed by Fulani militants again in Benin Way. The president. President

Tinubu was forced to visit. He was forced to respond. These stories received international attention for a short time but have not compelled an international response. We are waiting for Trump's State Department to determine if Nigeria will be redesignated as a country of particular concern. As Representative Chris Smith and all of those gathered here today demand. Now, Judd Saul's Equipping the Persecuted and the online news platform he founded with Doug Burton, TruthNigeria.com, which are long time coalition partners with my organization, Save the Persecuted Christians.

**Dede Laugesen:** They have blown the lid off multiple hostage torture camps in multiple states, which are located in dense forests near Nigerian military installations. Hostage camps. Prisoners are tortured and starved, and many are murdered. Sound familiar? How has the international media responded? Crickets. Right now, hundreds if not thousands of innocent men, women and children, some Muslim but mostly Christian, are being held hostage in these terror camps. They are being tortured, starved and murdered near Nigerian military outposts. But they are not being saved. What will it take for American media to take up this story, with the same moral indignation as its response to the war in Ukraine and the October 7th attacks in Israel, or, for that matter, the Holocaust? Do Black African Christians merit any less attention? Do the women and children of Nigeria matter to Western media? And what will President Trump do? Last month, the US State Department approved a potential \$346 million weapons sale to Nigeria. This deal follows a larger \$997 million sale approved in 2022. The sale comes despite ongoing concerns regarding human rights abuses by the Nigerian security forces, corruption and corruption at high levels, and failure to address or even acknowledge the terrorism afflicting Nigeria's Middle Belt. If no official report is made of attacks happening in the Middle Belt, nothing happens. If the Nigerian government pays off the Nigerian media to suppress these reports, the international media will not hear about it, and neither will the State Department.

**Dede Laugesen:** The United States must ensure that the over \$1 billion in arms sales approved for Nigeria does not further equip the terrorists, nor the corrupt military industrial complex that ensures the violence never ends. Americans do not want to be funding genocide against Christians in Nigeria. We do not want our taxes to pay for, or provide arms for, the terrorists who are killing Nigeria's Christians. We need certainty and we need accountability. We need accurate reporting in mainstream media, except

for Truth Nigeria. We have none, and the Nigerian government is doing all it can to stop and suppress the truth. Nigeria's reporting the brave on-the-ground journalists bringing us the news of these hostage camps are in danger in Nigeria because they are being surveilled and threatened by the Nigerian government for telling the truth. Will America stand with Nigeria's victims and those brave enough to bring us the facts? Or will it stand with the terrorists and their corrupt benefactors in the Nigerian government? The time to decide is now. The hostage camps in Nigeria must be liberated, and those officials who fund the Fulani militants must be exposed and punished. None of that will happen until international mainstream media gets the story straight. Nigerian Christians are not engaged in widespread violence against Muslims. There is no equivocation to be had. Only truthful reporting will bring about the end of this silent genocide. Thank you Judd and Doug, for standing in truth for the Christians in Nigeria and all of the others impacted by Muslim Fulani militants and their benefactors in the Nigerian government. Thank you.