

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Trump Issues Stark Ultimatum to Nigeria Over Alleged Christian Persecution, Threatens Aid Cutoff and Military Action

President Trump warned that unless Nigeria halts killings of Christians by extremist groups like Boko Haram, the U.S. will cut \$1.2 billion in aid and ready forces for possible action; a 2025 State Department report recorded over 7,000 Christian deaths.

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Mourners gather for the funeral of victims killed in the 2023 Christmas attacks in Plateau State, Nigeria, where coordinated assaults on villages left dozens dead and communities devastated.

President Donald Trump escalated his criticism of Nigeria on Saturday, threatening to immediately halt all U.S. aid and assistance to the country while instructing the Pentagon to prepare for potential military intervention if the government fails to curb what he described as the "killing of Christians."

In a post on Truth Social, Trump accused Nigerian authorities of allowing "horrible atrocities" against Christians, stating, "If the Nigerian Government continues to allow the killing of Christians, the U.S.A. will immediately stop all aid and assistance to Nigeria, and may very well go into that now disgraced country, 'guns-a-blazing,' to completely wipe out the Islamic Terrorists who are committing these horrible atrocities."

He added, "I am hereby instructing our Department of War to prepare for possible action. If we attack, it will be fast, vicious, and sweet, just like the terrorist thugs attack our CHERISHED Christians! WARNING: THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT BETTER MOVE FAST!" The remarks followed Trump's October 31 designation of Nigeria as a "Country of Particular Concern" under the International Religious Freedom Act, a step that could lead to sanctions but stops short of immediate penalties.

Trump's intervention amplifies longstanding concerns about violence in Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation with roughly 220 million people split evenly between Christians and Muslims. The president claimed "thousands of Christians are being killed" by "radical Islamists," echoing assertions from U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), who in October urged Congress to recognize the situation as "Christian mass murder." The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom's 2025 report recommended.

Nigeria receives about \$1.2 billion in annual U.S. aid, primarily for health programs like HIV/AIDS initiatives that account for 21% of its national health budget, per State Department figures. The White House has not detailed the scope of potential military planning, but officials emphasized that any action would target terrorist groups like Boko Haram, not the government itself.

The Nigerian government swiftly rejected Trump's characterization, with Foreign Minister Yusuf Maitama Tuggar stating in a message to Newsweek, "For the avoidance of any doubt, and out of respect for all the victims and survivors around the world of this unique and appalling crime against humanity, let the record show that there is no genocide, now or ever, in Nigeria." President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, in a post on X (formerly Twitter), said Nigeria is commitment to "an open and active engagement with Christian and Muslim leaders alike and continues to address security challenges which affect citizens across faiths and regions."

The U.S. State Department's 2024 Religious Freedom Report documented over 7,000 Christian deaths in the first half of 2025 alone, but noted indiscriminate attacks affecting all communities in the north and Middle Belt.

Online, a steady stream of videos and images has fueled global awareness—and debate—about the violence, particularly on platforms like X (formerly Twitter), where hashtags such as #StopChristianGenocide have trended sporadically since early 2025. Recent posts from October 25, for instance, shared footage of a Christian farming community in Plateau State where 29 people were buried after militias allegedly set homes and granaries ablaze, with one survivor stating, "Every house was set ablaze and

all our grains were burnt down....This morning we buried 29 people." Other clips from Adamawa State in February 2025 depict insurgents burning the EYN "Mother Church," Winners' Chapel, and an Anglican church, killing residents and destroying homes. A September 27 video compilation highlighted attacks in Benue State, including the April 2018 assault on St. Ignatius Catholic Church where two priests and 17 parishioners were killed during Mass. Users like @AlphaChurch8555 and @TheOnlyPuffin have amplified these, claiming over 100,000 Christian deaths and 18,000 churches destroyed since 2009, though fact-checkers from Reuters and the Associated Press caution that while verified incidents number in the thousands, broader "genocide" claims often conflate religiously motivated attacks with resource-driven conflicts.

Trump's rhetoric has drawn support from evangelical groups and allies like Sen. Cruz, who cited Open Doors' 2025 World Watch List ranking Nigeria second for Christian persecution, with nearly 70% of faith-based killings occurring there. However, it has also sparked backlash from human rights organizations and African leaders. Amnesty International, in a 2025 report, documented a "humanitarian crisis" from banditry and extremism killing thousands indiscriminately, urging Nigeria to strengthen security without external interference. Colombian President Gustavo Petro, amid U.S. tensions over regional drug strikes, warned on October 24 of a "war scenario" if such threats proliferate. The U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, called on October 30 for de-escalation, emphasizing that aid cuts could exacerbate Nigeria's vulnerabilities, including a 40% poverty rate and ongoing Ebola and mpox outbreaks.