

Crushed but

not defeated

The impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria

Summary Report - Revised Version



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide



Christian Association of Nigeria

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Executive summary

Nigeria is a country torn in two. While southern Nigeria is economically stable and enjoys relative peace, northern Nigeria is troubled by the continuing targeted attacks of violent groups, social and economic insecurity and ethno-religious conflicts. Christians living in affected areas have been bearing the brunt of this violence and insecurity. Northern Nigeria is home to a substantial Christian population: with an estimated 30 million adherents in the northern region, Christians form the largest minority in a mainly Muslim region.

This environment has become ever more hostile towards Christians in recent decades, leading to growing marginalisation and discrimination, as well as widespread attacks, especially in the last 15 years.

Even though Nigeria is a secular state with a constitution that guarantees freedom of thought, conscience and religion, the reality in northern Nigeria is radically different. This is the situation not only in the Sharia states where the pressure of Islam is greatest, but also in the non-Sharia states where Islamic law has not been formally implemented.

This research report of Open Doors International identifies the impact of violence on Christian communities, church activities and individual believers.

The key questions are:

What has been the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria, and what can be done to end the violence and re-establish the church in all regions of northern Nigeria?

The following research questions were posed and answered:

- What constitutes northern Nigeria?
- How was this region created?
- What is the history of the church in northern Nigeria?
- How did the violence begin, develop and spread?
- What is the impact of the persistent violence on the Christian community in northern Nigeria?
- How is the church responding to the violence?
- What conclusions can be drawn from the research and what recommendations can be given to policymakers in church, government and society to end the violence and to restore the church in northern Nigeria to normality?

The research shows that decades of targeted religious violence has had an even larger impact on the church in northern Nigeria than previously expected. The violence against Christians in the region has resulted in thousands of people being killed, including between 9,000 and 11,500 Christians - a conservative estimate, according to this report. A large number of Christian properties have been destroyed, including 13,000 churches that have been destroyed, abandoned or forced to close. According to this report, up to 1.3million Christians in northern Nigeria have been affected, with many becoming internally displaced or settling in other areas in search of safety and security.

In several areas in northern Nigeria, the Christian presence has become virtually extinct or substantially diminished, while in other areas church congregations have grown due to an influx of Christians fleeing violence and a number of Muslims converting to Christianity.

To make matters worse, social cohesion between Muslims and Christians has been severely affected. Mutual trust has disappeared and Muslims and Christians have become increasingly separate, clustering with their own community in town suburbs and distinct rural areas.

The report finds that even though ethnicity, political conflict and competition for resources are known sources of violence in northern Nigeria, the engines of violence against Christians in northern Nigeria are much more diverse. Religious, political, economic and social undertones may co-exist. The drivers of targeted violence against Christians have a common religious denominator: that of defending the interests of northern Muslims, Muslim identity and the position of Islam. This applies not only to radical Islamic groups - such as Boko Haram - but includes Muslim Fulani herdsmen and the northern Muslim political and religious elite. All are major players in the violence targeted towards the Christian minority.

The report's conclusions can be summarised as follows:

1. Christians in northern Nigeria face violence from different sides.
2. A minimum of 9,000-11,500 Christians have been killed.
3. 1.3 million Christians have become internally displaced or forced to relocate elsewhere, since 2000.
4. Many churches have seen a steep decline in their membership: 13,000 churches have been closed or destroyed altogether.
5. Thousands of Christian businesses, houses and other property have been destroyed.
6. Christians' distrust and fear of Muslims have hugely increased, leading to increased segregation.
7. Christians in northern Nigeria frequently face marginalisation and discrimination, especially in the Sharia states, but also in the non-Sharia states.
8. Participation in church activities and the private lives of Christians have been severely affected. There has been a steep decline due to insecurity and migration, but there is also an increased commitment among Christians who have stayed behind.
9. All over northern Nigeria, the impact of persistent violence on Christian communities is enormous (decrease in numbers, trauma, being overwhelmed by the influx of displaced Christians, loss of property and lack of resources).
10. Christians in northern Nigeria have reported an increased experience of connection with God and His presence.
11. To adopt the Christian attitude of 'love your enemies' is seen as a tangible challenge by Christians facing violence.
12. Christians affected by targeted violence have been left severely traumatised.

The challenge for the church in northern Nigeria is also much larger than previously thought. It will have to find a way to exist in areas where the Christian presence has become virtually extinct. It will have to deal with trauma as a result of continued violent attacks. It will need to provide leadership and guidance to Christians on how to deal with and respond to the violence. Moreover, Christian communities in Sharia states especially, but also in other parts of northern Nigeria, face the challenge of having to withstand the pressure of an environment that both marginalises and discriminates. Nevertheless, there is still a large Christian presence in northern Nigeria with potential to unite and stand strong. But the church in northern Nigeria will need to find a way to avoid closing in on itself and disengaging from society. It should do the opposite, stimulated by the Christian imperative to be involved in society and work for justice, peace and reconciliation by sharing its resources for the benefit of all.

Last but not least, the church in northern Nigeria, together with the church in southern Nigeria, needs to develop a concerted response in terms of vision, planning and action to deal with the impact of persistent violence. They will have to find ways to support affected Christians, to work towards peace and to promote social cohesion between different groups in society. The church will need the help of the international community in working for the renewal and transformation of the Christian community, as well as the wider society in northern Nigeria.

Acknowledgement

The author expresses his gratitude to church leaders, lay Christians and social scientists in northern Nigeria who contributed to the report through their participation in interviews and focus group discussions. These were carried out in June 2014.

Thanks also to three professors in northern Nigeria who commented on the report in September 2015.

The report results were presented during a number of consultations to church leaders of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in northern Nigeria. The author thanks these church leaders for their appreciation, comments and recommendations. These consultations were held in September and December 2015.

This report has been drafted by Open Doors International (ODI). The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) fully endorses the content of the report. CAN is calling for the church and international policymakers to take action to provide security for Christians in northern Nigeria, as well as to safeguard their federal rights in the religious, political, economic and social domains of society.

Thanks also to local Christians in Nigeria who participated in and contributed to the research, as well as staff of Open Doors International.

This report is a summary of the full research report *Crushed but not defeated, the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria*, Open Doors International, by Arne Mulders, research manager for West Africa.¹

Disclaimers

The choice of the names of actors of persistent violence (i.e. northern Muslim political and religious elite, radical Islamic groups and Muslim Fulani herdsmen), and drivers of persistent violence (i.e. northern Muslim endangered interests, Muslims' endangered identity, and Islam's endangered 'legitimate' position) is to accommodate the controversy regarding the identity of those allegedly involved in persistent violence, in both formal and informal reports. However, it is not intended to target one particular socio-religious or ethnic group.

The report is based largely upon field and media research among Christians. As a consequence, the Muslim perspective is mostly presumed and interpreted by Christian victims and scholars. For the purpose of the report this is sufficient, as the research aims to present data about the impact of persistent violence on the church. But in the interests of balance, further research would be necessary into the Muslim groups considered to be the perpetrators of violence. This would enable the Muslim perspective to be captured and a comparative analysis to be made of both Christian and Muslim perspectives.

Although Christians as a minority are targeted by persistent violence in northern Nigeria, some Christians have contributed to the conflict as a result of their own tribalism, political agendas, hatred, retaliation and violence. Not all Christians have responded well to conflict and violence. This has prompted at times violent reactions from Muslims following aggression carried out by people who were considered to be Christians. Muslims have also reacted at times out of frustration at feeling marginalised, as in Plateau State where they are considered to be "non-indigenes", a term which carries social and legal implications.

For security reasons, the names of those interviewed cannot be published in this report. The interviews were conducted with Christians considered to be church leaders, social scientists, and victims in northern Nigeria. There was no distinction in gender, class, ethnicity or political affiliation.

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1 Introduction



This report focuses on the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria. 'The church in northern Nigeria' is the entirety of the Christian community, the organised church denominations and individual Christians in the region. 'Persistent violence' refers to the apparent ongoing incidents of violence. 'Impact' refers to the consequences of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria.

By mid-2014, it became clear that the Boko Haram insurgency which began in about 2009 was having a devastating impact on the church in northern Nigeria. The insurgency peaked on August 24, 2014, with the establishment of the Gwoza Caliphate and subsequent large-scale violence in the three north-eastern states (Borno, Yobe and Adamawa). People were killed, wounded and traumatised. Women and girls were raped, kidnapped and/or forced into marriage. The number of people internally displaced and fleeing to neighbouring countries rose dramatically.

Among the victims were many Christians. Attacks on churches, Christian property, homes, shops, schools and clinics caused widespread chaos. Many Christians relocated to safer areas, leaving few remaining in the troubled areas. As Christian communities dwindled, Muslims, some from neighbouring countries, came to occupy the empty spaces. This happened, for example, in Gwoza Caliphate, Plateau and Taraba. Other places witnessed consistent efforts to buy the destroyed property of discouraged Christians at very low prices. As there was no alternative, Christians often felt compelled to sell their property.

Boko Haram, however, is not the only perpetrator of violence against the church in northern Nigeria. In the Sharia states and other Muslim-dominated areas, Christians have long been marginalised, discriminated against and the victims of targeted violence. Many Christians migrate to safer areas leaving those who remain increasingly vulnerable.

Attacks on Christian farmers in Middle Belt states by Muslim Fulani herdsmen are another engine of violence. This violence is driven by economic issues but the political and religious objectives cannot be overlooked.

Persistent violence in northern Nigeria is a much larger phenomenon, with more causes than are commonly perceived. And the negative impact of this persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria is also more profound than many imagine. This impact study, based upon field research, has been undertaken to provide insights for policymakers in churches, government and society. The international community must understand the scope of this violence and its negative impact if it is to respond effectively to end the violence, restore normality and deal with the negative consequences for Christian communities, as well as intercommunal relationships. This report is the result of the study about the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria.

The key questions are: What violence has the church in northern Nigeria been facing since the year 2000 (the implementation of enhanced Sharia in 12 northern states and subsequent religious conflicts)? How has this violence affected the church in its community life, organisation and the personal situation of its members? And what can be done to end the violence and re-establish the church in northern Nigeria?

Research questions were:

- What is northern Nigeria?
- What is the history of the church in northern Nigeria?
- What are the actors of persistent violence in northern Nigeria?
- What is the impact of the persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria?
- What are the church's responses to and perspectives on the impact of persistent violence in northern Nigeria?
- And what can be done to strengthen the church in northern Nigeria in view of the impact of persistent violence?

The **research methodology** (Appendix 1) included media research and academic reports, in-depth interviews with specialists, structured interviews with individual Christians and focus group discussions with church leaders and members in northern Nigeria. The analysis, summary and drawing of final conclusions and recommendations were carried out by Open Doors International.

In Chapter 2, we look at the **historical developments** in what is currently called northern Nigeria. It is important to understand the political history of the area, as it continues to exercise a significant influence over modern-day politics and developments. The chapter also deals with a number of actors behind the persistent violence and gives examples.

Chapter 3 deals with the challenging issue of **figures, features and trends** that reveal the impact of this violence on the Christian community in northern Nigeria. This section provides figures for the populations, Christians and churches affected by Boko Haram violence, Muslim Fulani herdsmen attacks and provides insight into the trends of control in society by the northern political and religious elite.

In Chapter 4, we also look at the **impact of the persistent violence on aspects of Christian living**: church life, attitudes, behaviour of Christians, spiritual and emotional well-being of Christians and the challenges Christians now face.

Finally, in Chapter 5, we assess different **strategic approaches** put forward by various scholars, offering short- and long-term solutions to the problem of persistent violence against the church in northern Nigeria that is threatening its very existence in some areas.

2 Persistent violence in northern Nigeria?

Chapter 2 deals with the historical developments in what is currently called northern Nigeria. The history of the area, especially the political history, significantly influences modern-day politics and developments. This chapter also considers a number of actors behind the persistent violence and gives examples.

2.1 The context within which persistent violence occurs in northern Nigeria

Persistent violence against Christians in northern Nigeria occurs within the context of religious, political and socio-economic issues. These issues are intertwined in northern Nigeria and cannot be separated out. We begin by describing the context for persistent violence against Christians in the region.

2.1.1 The socio-political reality

Northern Nigeria is a British colonial construct in which the Muslim Far North and the non-Muslim - and now predominantly Christian - Middle Belt areas of present-day Nigeria were united in one common entity by colonial powers in 1914. This entity was ruled by the British colonial administration. They used the already existing governing structures, such as the local Muslim Hausa-Fulani emirs, and extended their rule to include large parts of the Middle Belt states, which previously had not been part of the Sokoto Caliphate. (To learn more about the political history, see Appendix 3.)

After the independence of Nigeria in 1960, the Muslim Hausa-Fulani remained in power in the northern region and evolved into a northern political and religious elite. This dominated society until the establishment of democracy under Christian president Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999.

Northern Muslims who felt their political, economic and religious dominance to be under threat and the Islamic character of their society to be in danger, implemented enhanced Sharia in 2000 in 12 northern states.

Many non-Muslims in northern Nigeria (who had resisted conversion to Islam for centuries) became Christians in the 20th century through missionary activity. And although their position had been tenuous under the Sokoto Caliphate and subsequent British colonial rule with its emirate structure,² it deteriorated strongly after independence. There were three reasons for this. Firstly, the Muslim northern political and religious elite extended its influence over society. The second was the appearance of radical Islam after the 1980s. Third was the significant breakdown in security around the gubernatorial elections when Muslim Middle Belt politicians instigated attacks by Muslim Fulani herdsmen in order to remain in power.³

Nigeria has a great deal of tribal diversity. Three main tribal groups make up approximately 70 per cent of the total population. The Hausa-Fulani (29 per cent) live in the north, the Yoruba in the south-west (21 per cent) and the Igbo in the south-east (18 per cent). These three large tribes dominate politics in the country. In northern Nigeria, the Hausa-Fulani are the largest tribe, but they share this region with many smaller tribes from the Middle Belt, many of whom have no affiliation with Islam.

Muslim Hausa-Fulani dominance was challenged when Nigeria returned to democracy in 1999 with the election of President Olusegun Obasanjo, who is both a Yoruba and Christian. With his election the domination of the Hausa-Fulani tribe in government was contested and inter-tribal rivalry (mainly north-south) increased. (See Appendix 3.)

2.1.2 The religious reality

The history of the church in northern Nigeria can be divided into three periods: the colonial period 1857-1954, the period of independent churches 1954-1987 and the period of religious violence 1987 to the present.

The church in northern Nigeria has grown from being virtually non-existent in 1857, to number some 30 million⁴ (31.2 per cent) today. It is spread across the Middle Belt and has made inroads into the Far North where large numbers of Muslims live.

There are high concentrations of Christians (25 to 50 per cent) in seven northern states. In six northern states, Christians are in the majority (> 50 per cent).⁵ Christianity in northern Nigeria is threatened by marginalisation, discrimination and targeted violence, but in several places the church is growing in number through a steady influx of Muslim converts. It is also growing in spiritual strength through the increased commitment of church members.⁶ Christian communities are decreasing in number in violence-ridden areas of the Far North, but even here Muslims are converting and the remaining Christians are becoming more dedicated in their faith. Christian communities are increasing in number in the relatively peaceful areas of the Far North and the Middle Belt due to many fleeing the violent areas, but these internally displaced Christians place a heavy burden of material and financial assistance on their host communities.

2.2 Actors of persistent violence in northern Nigeria

We distinguish three actors of persistent violence in northern Nigeria - the northern Muslim political and religious elite, radical Islamic groups and Muslim Fulani herdsmen - which are all acting in an existing culture of political violence.⁷

2.2.1 Northern Muslim political and religious elite

The northern elite is a merger of two groups. First there are the Hausa-Fulani royal classes that had prominence as emirs in the 19th-century Sokoto Caliphate and as indirect rulers in the British colonial administration in the 20th century. Second, there are the Hausa-Fulani politicians of commoner descent who emerged as a political class after independence in 1960 with the introduction of democracy and elections. This coming together preserved a ruling elite to protect northern Muslim interests in a united Nigeria. After independence, access to power and resources was gained at the level of the

federal government in the capital. Here regional interest groups were battling for political power and influence.⁸

The northern Muslim elite had to deal with three challenges: internal northern Muslim division, the external threat from the non-Muslim, largely Christian population, and the influx immediately after independence of educated merchants, teachers and civil servants from the south. It overcame these challenges and successfully retained power over a united northern region.

To defend northern interests, Muslim identity and the position of Islam, the Hausa-Fulani elite used instruments and techniques that impacted the church and the Christian minority and led to marginalisation, discrimination and violent targeting. Examples of these were politically motivated communal clashes, the demands for superior Sharia courts to be permitted under the constitution, and the misuse of political parties, radical Islamic groups and Muslim Fulani herdsmen. All these efforts were aimed at gaining leverage for their interests.⁹ With the return to civil rule and victory for the southern Christian Olusegun Obasanjo in the federal elections of 1999, the northern Muslim political and religious elite reacted with distress, believing their interests to be at risk. In response, between 2000 and 2001, 12 northern states implemented a fuller version of Sharia law, which created fear among Christians and resulted in crisis. The implementation of enhanced Sharia led to further marginalisation of the church and the substantial Christian minority in the region.¹⁰ Obasanjo served his two constitutional terms (1999-2007). Northern Muslims thought their turn had come when President Umaru Yar'Adua took office. However, the vice-president, southern Christian Goodluck Jonathan, acceded to power as acting president in 2010, after Yar'Adua died of illness. He was subsequently elected president in 2011.

The northern elite was unhappy with this outcome, as demonstrated in the 2011 post-electoral crisis that resulted in many Christians being killed, along with some Muslim members of the opposition party. Northern politicians are also believed to be behind the Boko Haram uprising to incapacitate the Goodluck regime,¹¹ and the increase in Muslim Fulani herdsmen attacks in Middle Belt states.¹² To contend against Goodluck Jonathan, a new All Progressive Congress Party was formed, under northern Muslim Muhammadu Buhari. Its success in the March 2015 presidential elections has turned the tide once again in favour of northern dominance.

2.2.2 Radical Islamic groups

Radical Islamic groups emerged in the 1980s in northern Nigeria. They were created by returning Nigerian scholars and students from Arabic countries influenced by Wahhabi and Salafist teaching. (Every year, thousands of West African Muslims get free scholarships to study in Arab countries.) They were also greatly stimulated by the successful Islamic revolution of Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran in 1979. These radical groups emerged in a context of poverty, unemployment and corruption in which the masses had no hope of improving their standard of living. The gap in economic development between the northern and the southern region also played a role. The ideal of a pure form of Islam, in which Sharia was applied to society in order to create justice and equal opportunities for all, appealed to the imagination of those outside the privileged northern elite. When radical leaders emerged with charisma, their following grew rapidly.¹³

Muslim Fulani herdsmen often clash with non-Muslim local tribes. Fulani attacks on Christian communities in Middle Belt states have been observed in southern Kaduna, Plateau, Nasarawa, Benue and Taraba states.

Historically, there are two reasons for the success of radical Islamic groups. Firstly, there was a desire for a just and equitable society, as poverty, under-development and oppression by the powerful are rife in northern Nigeria. Secondly, in Muslim society, when freedom was restricted by military rule, religion became the platform for social and political expression. Therefore, radical Islamic groups were also an outlet for frustration and protest.

Nigeria was under military rule from Muslim northerners from 1979 until 1999. When democracy finally came in 1999, it brought a southern Christian president, to the great dismay of the northern elite and radical Islamic groups. As a reaction, it is alleged that the northern elite and the radical Islamic groups collaborated in order to reinstate Muslim domination in the northern region.¹⁴ The northern elite has also used radical Islamic groups to influence politics in their favour. Both groups had a common cause but differing views on the desired outcome. The northern elite want to retain their position in society to protect class interests, while the radical Islamic groups want to instigate a purely Islamic state and government.

This tension created clashes behind the scenes, often accompanied by a backlash against the Christian community in northern Nigeria. For example, Abubakar Shekau, Boko Haram co-founder and the successor of its founder, Muhammad Yusuf, is a far more radical and violent man than his predecessor, and he drastically changed the nature of the group. Under his rule, not only security forces, government officials and critical Muslim clerics were targeted, but also Christians and everybody that did not side with them. Pushed back by the Nigerian army and security forces in 2009, Boko Haram retreated to its homeland in the forests of the north-east. Apparently supported by (inter)national donors, it started a full-blown violent insurgency. In August 2014, the group declared a Caliphate in north-east Nigeria, much like those in Syria and Iraq. Some observers believed Boko Haram had become a political tool for destabilising the northern region and the former Nigerian administration of Goodluck Jonathan. The ultimate aim of the group's manipulators was to force a change of government, especially in the March 2015 elections.¹⁵ Goodluck Jonathan's ineffectiveness in dealing with Boko Haram was an important reason for his defeat, resulting in the election of a Muslim president. Nevertheless, Boko Haram continued to fight because its main goal is a purely Islamic state and government.

2.2.3 The Muslim Fulani herdsmen

Through the centuries, there has been antagonism between farmers and herders over the limited grazing ground for herds in Nigeria. In northern Nigeria, the herdsmen are nomadic Muslim Fulani who roam with their cattle in search of pasture and water. Increasing desertification¹⁶ has led them gradually southwards, resulting in more conflict with the non-Muslim farmers in the mainly Middle Belt states.

The Muslim Fulani herdsmen generally do not respect the boundaries of farm lands and often clash with the non-Muslim local tribes. Many of these local tribes have resisted Islam for centuries and became Christian through missionary activity in the 20th century. The clashes over land have taken on distinct religious and political overtones, with local sources convinced that Christian communities are more vulnerable to attack than their Muslim neighbours. Clashes between the Fulani and these tribes intensified from 2011, especially in the run-up to the 2015 presidential elections. The local government areas of Jama'a, Kachia, Kagarko, Kaura and Sanga in southern Kaduna were particularly badly affected, with some villages raided three times between January and May 2014.¹⁷ Politicians have been accused of pulling strings behind the scenes.¹⁸

Attacks by Fulani herdsman on Christian communities in Middle Belt states have been observed in southern Kaduna, Plateau, Nasarawa, Benue and Taraba states. Here, local farmers from indigenous tribes who are mostly Christian, clash with the migrating Muslim Fulani herdsmen over grazing land. These clashes have intensified since 2011, especially in the run-up to the 2015 presidential elections. The result is that many people have been killed or injured and many houses destroyed. Witness reports indicate that the Fulani want dominance in order to take land and property, and ultimately eliminate the Christian presence.¹⁹

A case study in Taraba state supports this. It indicates that 'there is a sophisticated and systematic attack on Christians in Taraba state' by Muslim Fulani herdsmen. The study also suggests that apart from land and cattle grazing issues, the persistent attacks by Muslim Fulani herdsmen on Christian communities in Taraba state is also connected 'to the historical migration of Muslims into non-Muslim territories in northern Nigeria to promote the Islamic religious and missionary agenda in Islamising all parts of northern Nigeria'. The study also states that Muslim Fulani herdsmen attacks help the Muslim political and religious elite to dominate land owned by Christians in Taraba state.²⁰

2.2.4 The culture of political violence

Human Rights Watch identifies a culture of political violence in Nigeria characterised by systemic violence by politicians and other political elites that undercuts freedom and security, accompanied by corruption and impunity for most of those involved. The mentality behind this culture of violence is survival of the fittest, with the fittest mostly exempt from the rule of law. An apparent long-term effect of Nigeria's military rule,

the violence has become endemic. Combined with widespread bad governance, weak state institutions and a failing electoral system, competition for political power has taken to the streets where gangs and thugs, recruited by politicians, help secure victory over adversaries. Street fighting, attacks on political headquarters and homes of politicians, intimidation of voters and election rigging have taken place.

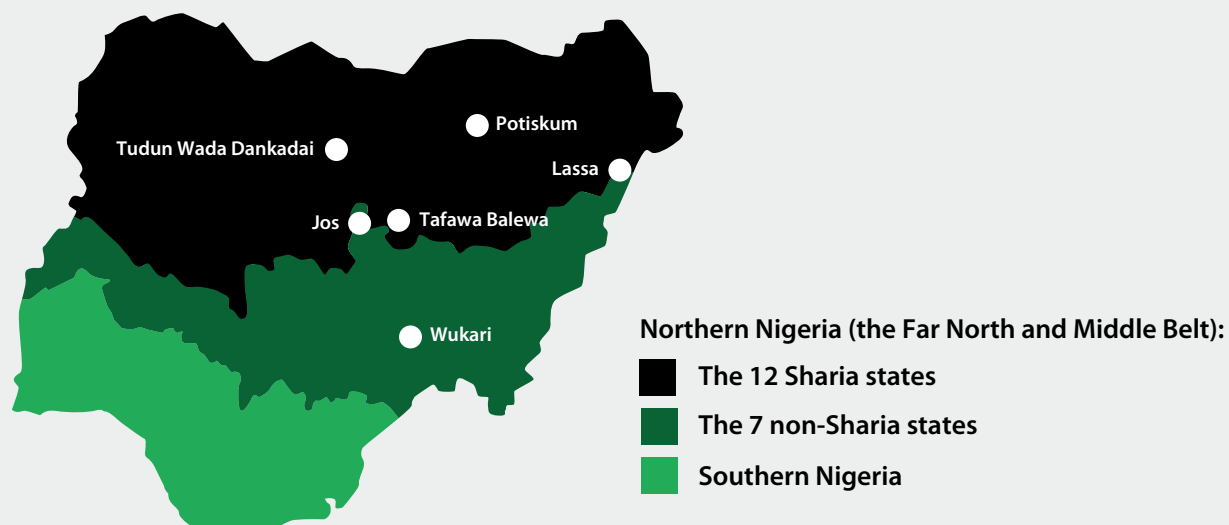
An example is the use of 'Kalare Boys' in Gombe state. These are unemployed youth with little hope of a better future. They form loosely organised gangs and turn to violent crime for a living. They are easily recruited by politicians with money, alcohol, drugs and weapons. They are used to intimidate and attack opponents or to protect the politicians who recruited them. The Kalare Boys are said to have played an important role in winning the 2003 and 2007 gubernatorial elections on behalf of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP).²¹

There are growing reports suggesting an influx of impoverished Muslim nationals from neighbouring countries who are being recruited for the purposes of jihad. Local politicians, Boko Haram and other radical Islamic sects are reportedly recruiting child soldiers from Niger, Chad and Cameroon.²² Unemployed Muslim youth are joining well trained Muslim fighters from the same countries. As there are no wages to be paid, their reward is booty - women, property and land. For example, those who support the Muslim Fulani herdsmen have taken over the farmland of the original Christian population in Taraba State. Other examples include the kidnapping of the Chibok predominantly Christian schoolgirls by Boko Haram to marry them off to Muslim men.

Christian victims of persistent and sophisticated violence from Muslim Fulani herdsmen, such as in Taraba state. Such attacks kill and injure Christians and destroy their houses.



NORTHERN NIGERIA AND HIGHLIGHTED TOWNS IMPACTED BY VIOLENCE



2.3 Examples of persistent violence

Persistent violence against the church in northern Nigeria appears to have certain features. These can be identified by highlighting the impact on six towns - Lassa, Potiskum, Wukari, Tudun Wada Dankadai, Tafawa Balewa and Jos.

2.3.1 Lassa

Lassa is situated in southern Borno State. Although some Hausa-Fulani migrants settled for commercial reasons, the town and its surrounds are inhabited by the Margi tribe. The Margi were governed by their traditional chieftains and Islam had little influence. In the 19th century, when missionaries from the Church of the Brethren (EYN) entered into and evangelised Nigeria, many Margi converted to the Christian faith.

With independence in 1960, however, Muslims started to dominate Borno state government. They extended their influence over southern Borno and slowly Islamised the educational, legal and political systems. Christians faced discrimination at all levels: including government, university, healthcare and infrastructure. As a result, some Margi became Muslim, but many Christians moved out of southern Borno.

Boko Haram violence reached Lassa in 2012, targeting churches, missions, schools and police stations. They first targeted Christians and government personnel. Later, they attacked anyone unwilling to cooperate. People left the town and villages and hid in the forests.

Lassa has been conquered in the same manner as the nearby cities Chibok, Gulak and Magdagali. In August 2014, Boko Haram decreed its Caliphate in nearby Gwoza and incorporated large areas of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe.

The EYN church is committed to do the only thing it feels it can do: to pray for and help the victims. The church in the region is greatly impacted by the violence. Thirty-six of the 50 church districts²³ are closed, along with 1,359 churches. Three hundred and fifty-six pastors, 346 assistant pastors and 1,390 evangelists have become unemployed, and many Christians have fled abroad or relocated to safer areas.

2.3.2 Potiskum

Potiskum, in southern Yobe state, was severely affected by the 2011 post-electoral crisis and subsequent Boko Haram insurgency. Southern Yobe Christians made up around 15 per cent of the population in 2011 but have since declined to about 3.5 per cent. Half the churches (80) have closed, attendance has dramatically decreased (up to 75 per cent) and many Christians have fled to other states.

The history of southern Yobe and Potiskum bears witness to the fact that southern Yobe was never part of the Kanem- Borno Empire or conquered by the Hausa-Fulani jihad. A hundred years ago, Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) missionaries brought the gospel and established the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA).

After independence, Muslims dominated Yobe state government and institutions, resulting in Christians being further marginalised and discriminated against in education, politics and employment. Sharia was also applied. As a result, churches cannot officially be established, rebuilt or repaired, and freedom of worship is very limited. Most activities of the church have to take place 'underground' as pastors and worship services are targeted by Boko Haram, as well as parts of the local Muslim population.

Christian families have become separated because mothers and children needed to be relocated to safer places, such as Jos in Plateau state. The remaining Yobe Christians have become traumatised.²⁴

2.3.3 Wukari

Wukari town, in Wukari local government area in southern Taraba state, has a population of more than 50,000. It is estimated that 35 per cent are Muslims, 45 per cent are Christians and 20 per cent adhere to traditional religions. The population is mainly Yukon, Tiv and Christian. Most Muslims are Hausa-Fulani who have settled during the last 60 years.

Since 2010, southern Taraba has suffered violence in the form of attacks by Muslim Fulani herdsmen in rural areas and communal violence in towns like Wukari. According to Christians in Taraba state, Muslims have always sought political power and land, and incite violence in order to achieve that. There were crises in 2010, 2012, 2013 and 2014. During the 2014 crisis, around 100 churches were destroyed and some 200 churches abandoned in southern Taraba. After three days of fighting in Wukari town, approximately 50 people were killed and 101 wounded.

Violence in southern Taraba is politically motivated.²⁵ Taraba state was created in 1991. There is an agreement to rotate governorship between the three existing northern, central and southern senatorial zones. The northern zone had its turn before 2011 and elected Christian governors. The central zone also elected a Christian governor in 2011. But when the latter was severely wounded in a plane accident, his Muslim deputy took over as acting governor. With the approach of the 2015 gubernatorial elections, the acting Muslim governor wanted to stay in power and incited religious violence to destabilise the south so it would be too disorganised to present a Christian candidate. The acting governor was, however, defeated by a Christian candidate in the People's Democratic Party (PDP) internal elections.

This candidate won the 2015 elections and took his place as the next governor of Taraba state. That position, however, was contested. An elections tribunal in 2015 annulled his victory due to irregularities in the PDP internal elections. The Muslim female candidate of the opposition All Progressives Congress (APC), the party of President Buhari, was declared the winner. The ruling is likely to be contested.

2.3.4 Tudun Wada Dankadai

Tudun Wada Dankadai is a city situated in southern Kano state. Of the 9 million inhabitants of Kano state, about 1 million are indigenous Christians. In a 2007 local crisis, Christian students of a secondary school were accused of producing an offensive drawing of the prophet Muhammad. All the Christian students were attacked and driven out. Subsequent attacks targeted eight churches in town. These were burned to the ground and their members were forced to flee. Other than some southern Christian police and businessmen, no indigenous Hausa Christians remained in the city. To date, no church has been granted permission to be rebuilt in Tudun Wada Dankadai.

The Christian minorities in the villages around Tudun Wada Dankadai are severely marginalised. Christians are not allowed to buy land or build churches on native land. All mission schools and hospitals have been taken by the government and Christian children do not receive scholarships for study. Christian girls are frequently abducted and forced to marry Muslim men.

Christian businesses are closed down and Christians are seldom hired as government workers. Christian youth have to be either home-schooled, or change their names to Muslim names in order to be allowed entry to government schools or relocate to schools in the Middle Belt. As a result, many Kano Christians are migrating to the Middle Belt.

2.3.5 Tafawa Balewa

Tafawa Balewa is one of the three Christian-dominated local government areas (LGA) in southern Bauchi state. Tafawa Balewa town is its capital. In 2012, Bauchi state House Assembly decided to relocate the Tafawa Balewa local government headquarters to Bununu, a Muslim village next to Tafawa Balewa town. A Christian representative in the Assembly protested this decision and was immediately suspended. The High Court of Bauchi state resolved in her favour, but her opponents appealed to the Federal Supreme Court. In the meantime she remains suspended.

Tafawa Balewa is rich in natural resources, such as minerals and precious stones. Christians believe Muslims want to access those resources. Since 1991, Tafawa Balewa has been under repeated attack from its Muslim neighbours. Christians defend themselves through youth self-defence groups who battle with stones and traditional weapons. Some of them have been caught and imprisoned by police. The two secondary schools in Tafawa Balewa town have been closed.

The boys now have no education and the girls need to travel to the nearest girls' school. On the road, however, they risk being kidnapped and forced into a Muslim marriage or being raped and killed. The churches are poor and have no defences. Due to the violence and what they perceive to be a hopeless situation, many Christians have relocated to nearby Jos, leaving the remaining Christians even more vulnerable.

2.3.6 Jos

Jos city in Plateau state experienced several crises between 1994 and 2012. Muslim Fulani herdsmen attacked Christian villages in rural areas south of Jos. The indigenous Berom, Anaguta and Afrizere (BAA) communities clashed with the Hausa-Fulani settler group in Jos over the balance of power. Thousands of Muslims and Christians were killed, wounded and displaced. Public property was destroyed, mosques, churches and schools attacked, cattle stolen and whole villages ransacked. Although these clashes were primarily about access to political power, economic resources and land, they were widely viewed as religion-related. The main problem is the indigene / settler dispute, in which people indigenous to the state have preferential opportunities over the settlers. In this conflict, the Christian BAA are indigenous and the Muslim Hausa-Fulani are the settlers.

During colonial times, the BAA were marginalised through indirect rule given into the hands of the Muslim Hausa-Fulani. During independence, successive military regimes extended Hausa-Fulani control over the wider Plateau province. With the start of democracy in 1999 and the creation of Plateau state itself, the BAA finally gained access to power through being a majority. At that point, the Hausa-Fulani felt marginalised and discriminated against. Jos city, the capital of Plateau state, is the centre of power and business. To control the city is to control the state. If the Muslim Hausa-Fulani gain political control of Jos city, they would eventually also have full control of Plateau state. This would pose a threat to the Christian BAA groups, who are currently in the majority.

This threat transcends the local dimensions of Plateau state. Historically, when the Hausa-Fulani are in power, as in the Sokoto Caliphate and under Colonial indirect rule, they use their power to marginalise, discriminate against and persecute non-Muslims.²⁶ This is the main reason why Christians in Jos consider themselves targeted by the larger Muslim community in northern Nigeria.

2.4 Conclusions

Northern Nigeria is a British colonial construct in which the Muslim Far North and the non-Muslim - and now predominantly Christian - Middle Belt areas of northern Nigeria were united in one common entity. The non-Muslim population in the northern region (mainly the Middle Belt states) seeks freedom from Hausa-Fulani domination (as in Plateau state). But this will remain elusive, as the holders of power in the northern region - the Muslim political and religious elite - are determined that the region should remain undivided under their control.

The actors of persistent violence impacting the church in northern Nigeria are:

1. The northern Muslim political and religious elite
2. Radical Islamic groups
3. Muslim Fulani herdsmen

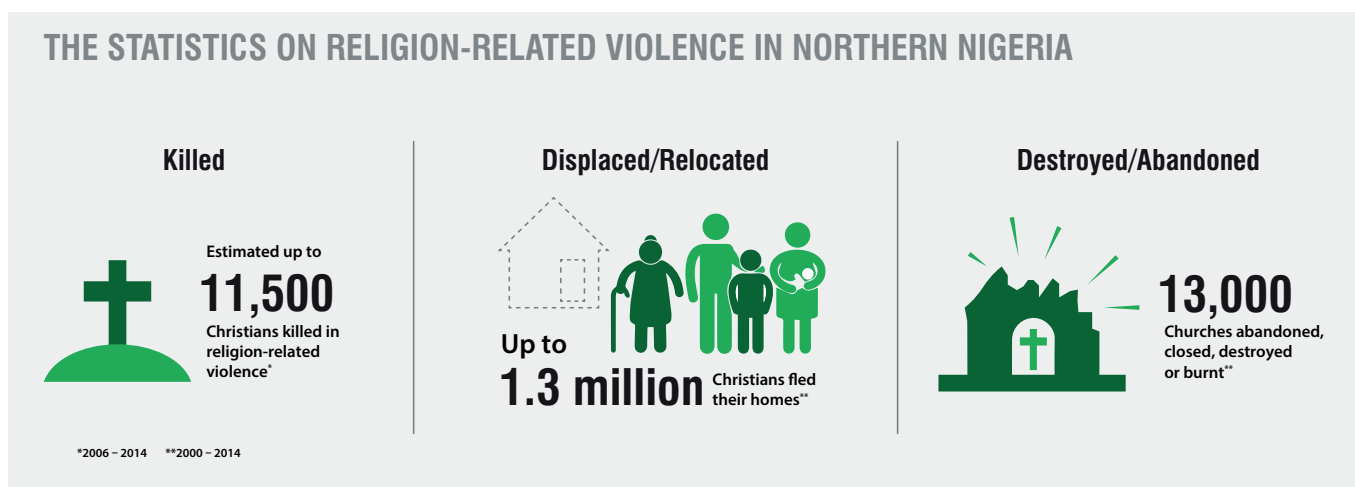
Drivers of violence can be summarised as follows:

1. Protection of northern endangered interests (political-economic)
2. Protection of Muslims' endangered identity (social-cultural)
3. Protection of Islam's endangered historically superior position (religious)

Christians are the most targeted religious group in northern Nigeria for the aforementioned three reasons. Christianity in northern Nigeria is a minority in a Muslim context, but a sizable one (more than 30 million, constituting 31.2 per cent of the population). There are high concentrations of Christians (25-50 per cent) in seven northern states.

In six northern states, Christians are in the majority (>50 per cent). This is also the case in 158 of the 417 local government areas (LGAs)²⁷ in northern Nigeria. Christian existence in northern Nigeria is under threat due to persistent violence, and in certain areas has become nearly extinct. At the same time, the number of church members in other areas is increasing because of Christians relocating and Muslims converting to Christianity.

3 Impact on the church: figures, features and trends



This chapter will show features, trends and conclusions about the impact of the persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria.

3.1 Figures demonstrating impact

Christians form a substantial minority in northern Nigeria (an estimated 30,665,000 = 31.2 per cent). They are the most targeted group for a variety of reasons, including their status as the largest minority, exponential church growth, their ethnic composition and association with the West.

Table 1. Religious adherence in northern Nigeria as per 2014²⁸

Religious adherence	Numbers (as % of northern population)
Christians ²⁹	30,665,000 (31.2%)
Muslims	62,431,000 (63.5%)
African Traditional Religionists ³⁰	5,213,000 (5.3%)
Total northern population (as % of whole Nigerian population)	98,366,000 (53.6%)

Christians live in all 19 northern states and in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, and form majorities in six states: Adamawa, Benue, Kogi, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba.

Table 2. Percentage of Christians per northern state as per 2014³¹

State	Percentage of Christians
Adamawa	53.6%
Bauchi	25.3%
Benue	81.0%
Borno	30.0%
Gombe	40.0%
Jigawa	7.0%
Kaduna	46.7%
Kano	8.3%
Katsina	9.0%
Kebbi	24.0%
Kogi	51.3%
Kwara	41.7%
Nasarawa	51.7%
Niger	39.0%
Plateau	73.3%
Sokoto	4.3%
Taraba	50.0%
Yobe	6.7%
Zamfara	2.3%
FCT Abuja	43.3%

Are Christians specifically targeted?

Both Muslims and Christians have been attacked by Boko Haram. Some question, in the overall context of violence and instability, whether Christians are the targeted victims of persistent violence or whether they are random victims. (With targeted violence, Christians are singled out and their group identity as Christians is at stake.) If Christians were killed 'at random', we could apply the demographic percentage of Christians in northern Nigeria, which is 31.2 per cent, to the total number of deaths.

However, data recorded by Open Doors International over many decades - through consultations of the Public Relations officers of the 19 Northern States and FCT Abuja of the Christian Association of Nigeria, and interviews with contacts within Nigeria - points towards Christians facing specific targeted violence at the hands of Boko Haram, Muslim Fulani Herdsmen and others.³²

Boko Haram - which is largely responsible for the total number of deaths - noticeably targeted Christian churches, property and individuals in the most recent years of its campaign of violence. As shown in a chilling account from one of their victims from Mubi, in Adamawa State: "As we were trying to escape, we met with [Boko Haram] on our way. They stopped us and asked, 'Are you Christians or Muslims?' We answered, 'We are Christians.' They told us to lie down on the roadside. I heard them shooting a gun. I thought they were shooting in the air. But I soon realised that my husband and two sons were shot dead."³³

Further, research into the violence in the short period of November and December 2014, at the peak of the Gwoza Caliphate, found that the average Christian population in the Gwoza Caliphate was 43.5 per cent. It is asserted that those Christians were purposefully included in the caliphate, because Boko Haram was reported to particularly target Christians, churches, property and land in southern Borno and northern Adamawa states.³⁴

Research centre, Nigeria Watch, states that Benue (81% of the population are Christians), Nasarawa (51.7% Christians), Plateau (73.3% Christians) and Taraba (50% Christians) are by far the most affected states by Muslim Fulani herdsmen violence (in cattle grazing and land issues Fulani are the main actors).³⁵ This, coupled with research showing that Muslim Fulani Herdsmen disproportionately target Christian communities in these states,³⁶ show that the average 31.2% demographic percentage for estimation of Christian victims is insufficient in this context. As Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba are the worst affected areas for deaths relating to cattle grazing issues (69.07% of national deaths) and land issues (90.03%), we argue that 70 per cent would be a conservative average percentage for an estimation of Christian victims of Muslim Fulani herdsmen violence.

This research points to the reality that Christians have indeed been specifically targeted in some areas by both Boko Haram and the Muslim Fulani Herdsmen. Exact figures are hard to come by in a climate of insecurity and underreporting. However, we argue that in instances where Christians are indeed targeted, we could expect to see an average additional ten percent of Christian victims. Therefore, when Christians are killed as part of the overall population we can expect them to account for 31.2 percent of the deaths, whereas when they are victims of targeted violence we can expect them to account for up to 41.2 percent of the deaths.

Christians are the most targeted religious group in northern Nigeria

Open Doors International argues that Christians, as a religious group, are most likely to be targeted in northern Nigeria for four reasons that they have in common with Christian minorities worldwide.³⁷



Blast wreaks havoc on two churches in Bauchi, Nigeria, June 2012

Christians are being targeted because:

1. Christians form the largest religious minority in a Muslim context and statistically face the most marginalisation, discrimination and violence.
2. The Christian faith has grown exponentially. Between 1857 and 2014, the Christian faith grew from being virtually non-existent to having 31.2 per cent of the population as adherents. This is due to Christian mission, the indigenisation of African churches and the Pentecostal movement. As a result of this growth, Christianity is seen as a threat to the dominance of Islam in the region.
3. Christians often belong to ethnic, linguistic and cultural minorities. They speak other languages and have different values. The Muslim majority belongs to the Hausa-Fulani and Kanuri tribes and tensions with minority tribes easily arise.
4. Christians are associated with the Western secular culture that is seen as alien to Islamic religious culture and arouses resentment. As a consequence, Christians are often objects of vented frustration towards the West.

Christians are the most targeted religious group in northern Nigeria for three specific reasons. They present the drivers of targeted violence as shown in Section 2.2, which outlines the perpetrators of persistent violence.

3.1.1 Christians killed

In the following paragraph, we use data from the research centre, Nigeria Watch (NW), on non-natural deaths to estimate the numbers of Christians killed by persistent violence in northern Nigeria.³⁸ We chose NW as the source of our statistics because (i) they are Nigeria-based, (ii) they have been recording non-natural deaths for many years and provide longer-term statistics than other organisations, (iii) they are unique in attributing a cause (or multiple causes) of death to each non-natural death.

Between 2006 and 2014, northern Nigeria was the most unsafe region in the country. Overall, 45,228 people were killed in northern Nigeria for a variety of causes ranging from car accidents to the political crisis. In 2010, more than 50 per cent of the deaths in the entire country were in the northern region (as the northern region accounts for <53 per cent of the Nigerian population, this is a fair distribution). However, alarmingly, in 2014, 82.3 per cent of all non-natural deaths in Nigeria occurred in northern Nigeria, largely due to the Boko Haram crisis. The next section outlines an estimate of the number of Christians killed in northern Nigeria in the research period (2006-2014).

Table 3. Recorded number of non-natural violent deaths in northern Nigeria (2006-2014)

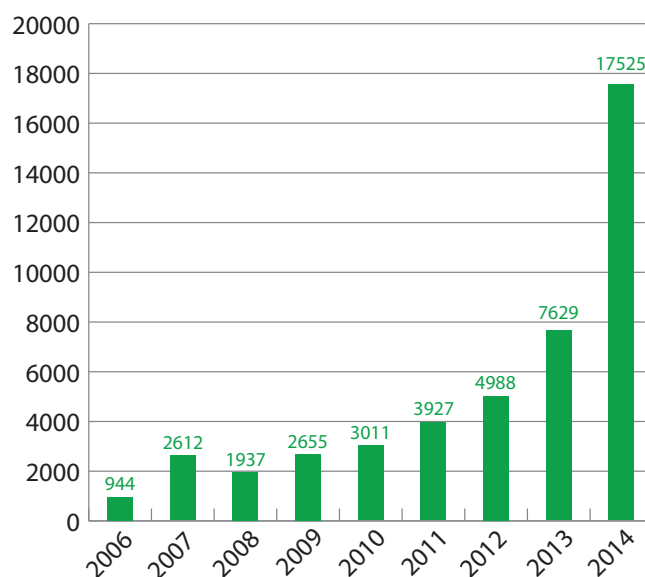


Table 4. Comparison between Nigeria and northern Nigeria's number of non-natural deaths (2006-2014)

Issue/Area	Nigeria (NG)	Northern Nigeria (NN)	% of nationwide deaths in NN
2006	4,443	9,44	21.2
2007	6,520	2,612	40.1
2008	5,624	1,937	34.4
2009	5,635	2,655	47.1
2010	5,799	3,011	51.9
2011	6,704	3,927	58.6
2012	7,670	4,988	65.0
2013	10,854	7,629	70.3
2014	21,299	17,525	82.3
Totals of non-natural deaths		45,228	

The main reasons for the deaths in Nigeria are political issues, religious issues, crimes and car accidents. But if we compare Northern figures with the whole country a different pattern prevails: 99.7 per cent of the death caused by religious issues (19,572), 85.9 per cent of all deaths caused by political issues (19,623), 82.9 per cent of the deaths caused by cattle grazing (611) and 77.2 per cent of the deaths as a result of land issues (2,190) are all in Northern Nigeria. However, incidents have multiple causes and for that reason there is double counting in the Nigeria Watch numbers for religious, political and cattle grazing/land issues. We will deal with that later.

Table 5. The main causes of violence in northern Nigeria (2006-2014) Diagram

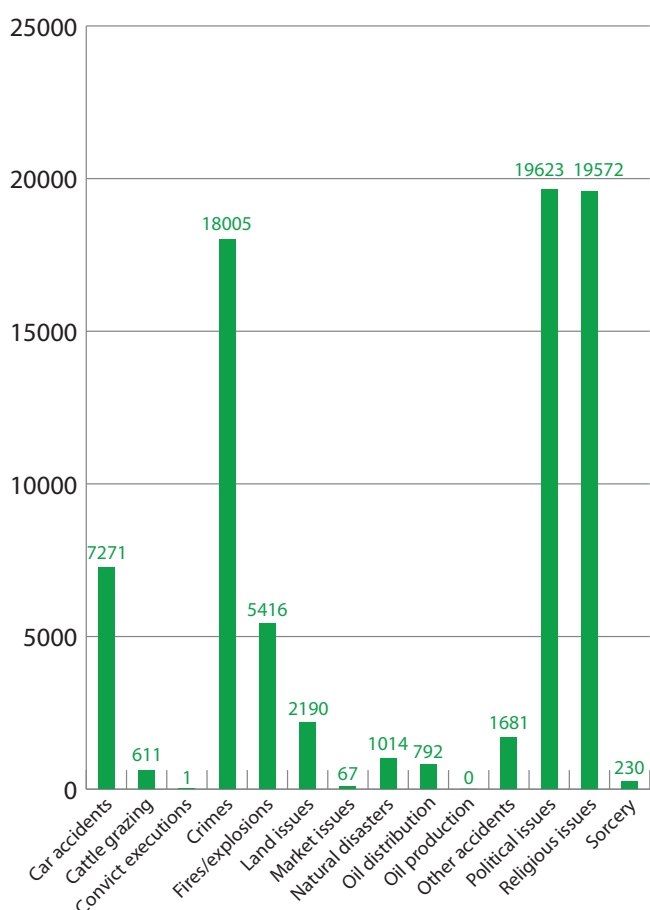


Table 6. Comparison between Nigeria and northern Nigeria in causes of non-natural death (2006-2014)

Issue/Area	Nigeria (NG)	Northern Nigeria	% of NG
Car accidents	16,112	7,271	45.1
Cattle grazing	737	611	82.9
Convict executions	21	1	0.04
Crimes	32,001	18,005	56.3
Fire/explosion	10,124	5,416	53.5
Land issues	3,258	2,190	77.2
Market issues	427	67	15.7
Natural disaster	1,833	1,014	55.3
Oil distribution	4,677	792	17.0
Oil production	1,555	0	0.0
Other accidents	4,342	1,681	38.7
Political issues	22,852	19,623	85.9
Religious issues	19,637	19,572	99.7
Sorcery	726	230	31.7
Total of causes for non-natural deaths by violence (multiple causes given per death)		76,473	

The NW figures recording the causes of death in northern Nigeria reveal how the church has been impacted by three specific types of violence:

1. Religious issues (99.7 per cent)

Religious causes are where players are religious organisations - churches or Islamic groups - and advocate a religious agenda.

Main examples are:

- The 2000 Sharia crisis in Kaduna state: Christians protested the implementation of enhanced Sharia by the state government. Muslim counter-protests led to violent clashes with Christians.
- The Boko Haram insurgency since 2009: Security forces clamped down on the movement in the same year and killed many members, including founder Muhammad Yusuf. The insurgency was Boko Haram's reaction to this.
- The 2000-2012 communal riots in Jos, Plateau state: Muslim and Christian communities clashed over the results of local elections and land ownership.

2. Political issues (85.9 per cent)

Main examples are:

- The 2008 Jos, Plateau local election violence, which erupted after the results of local elections were contested by the Muslim Hausa-Fulani.
- The 2011 post-electoral crisis: southern Christian Goodluck Jonathan won the 2011 presidential elections ahead of northern Muslim Muhammad Buhari. The frustrations of northern Muslims led to clashes with supposed Jonathan voters, mainly Christians, in the northern region.
- The 2013 emergency rule in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states: the reaction of the government to contain the Boko Haram insurgency in mainly north-east Nigeria.

3. Cattle grazing (82.9 per cent) and land issues (77.2 per cent)³⁹

These are struggles between Muslim Fulani herdsmen and local farmers over access to grazing grounds and land. This has occurred, for example, with Christian communities in the Middle Belt.

The situation in Nigeria is complex, and incidents of violence where Christians are targeted can be rooted in a conflation of religion, politics, economics and socio-cultural issues. Moreover, we note that these three types

of violence are often intertwined through a common religious denominator (defending Muslims' interests, Muslim identity and the position of Islam). Therefore, given this intersectionality, we argue that issues of religion, politics, cattle grazing / land disputes can be categorised together as 'religion-related violence'.

Table 7. Total of causes for non-natural deaths from religion-related violence in northern Nigeria (2006-2014)

Category/ numbers	Number of victims	Number of Christian victims (at random) 31.2%	Number of Christian victims (targeted) 41.2%
Religious issues	19,572	6,107	8,064
Political issues	19,623	6,122	8,085
Cattle / land issues	2,801	874	1,154
Total of causes for non- natural deaths from religion-related violence	41,996 (multiple cause given per death)		

Estimate of Christians killed by targeted violence

To get a credible estimation of the numbers of Christians killed, we argue as follows:

We start with the figures for the multiple causes of non-natural violent deaths. We calculate that there are 41,996 religion-related causes out of a total of 76,473 causes (see Tables 6 and 7). This means that 59.2 per cent of all causes of non-violent deaths in northern Nigeria are due to religiously-motivated violence. When we apply this percentage to the total number of non-natural deaths in northern Nigeria (45,228 deaths - see Table 4) then we arrive at the number of 26,775 people killed as a result of religion-related violence (see these calculations in Table 8).

To estimate the number of Christians killed 'at random', we would need to apply the demographic percentage of 31.2 to the number of 26,775. This leads to the following number of Christians killed 'at random' in northern Nigeria: 8,354. This percentage represents a minimum. Subsequently, the larger percentage of 41.2 per cent which calculates the number of Christians killed 'by targeting' leads to the following number of Christians killed 'by targeting' in northern Nigeria: 11,031.

Table 8. Number of Christians killed by religion-related violence in northern Nigeria (2006-2014)

Number of non-natural death (multiple cause given per death)	Numbers
Total causes of non-natural deaths by violence. (Cf. Table 6. Total northern Nigeria)	76,473 (100%)
Totals of non-natural deaths by religion-related violence (Cf. Table 7. Total number of victims)	41,996 (59.2%)
Conclusion: 59.2% of causes of non-natural deaths (multiple cause given per death) are by religion-related violence.	
Number of non-natural deaths	Numbers
Totals of non-natural deaths (Cf. Table 4. Total northern Nigeria)	45,228 (100%)
59.2% of these non-natural deaths are by religion-related violence	26,775 (59.2%)
Estimated number of Christians killed by religion-related violence (taken from the number of 26,216)	Numbers
Christians killed 'at random' among these non-natural deaths by religion-related violence are:	8,354 (31.2%)
Christians killed 'by targeting' among these non-natural deaths by religion-related violence are:	11,031 (41.2%)

Estimated number of Christians killed by targeting due to religion-related violence (2006-2014): 11,500

However, NW report figures for cattle grazing and land issues are significantly underreported.⁴⁰ Further, aforementioned research shows that Christians are disproportionately targeted in instances of violence around cattle grazing and land issues.⁴¹ Therefore, our final estimations are slightly higher, as we consider in round figures that between **9,000 and 11,500 Christians have been killed in religion-related violence in northern Nigeria.**⁴⁰

3.1.2 Christians displaced and churches destroyed

By March 2015, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), 1,235,295 people were displaced in northern Nigeria. Ninety-two per cent (1,136,470) were displaced by Boko Haram-related violence. The remaining eight per cent (98,824) were mainly displaced by attacks by Muslim Hausa-Fulani herdsmen.⁴³ However, again these figures are believed to underreport the reality on the ground.

Based on numbers provided by the Christian Association of Nigeria, an estimated 13,000 churches have been destroyed, burned or closed in northern Nigeria between 2000 and 2014 (see Table 9). Local church leaders estimate that congregations in northern Nigeria consist of an average number of 50-100 members. Therefore, we can estimate that between 650,000-1.3 million Christians have been affected by the destruction, closure or abandonment of 13,000 churches.⁴⁴ Many of these Christians will be internally displaced, with large numbers integrating into communities in Middle Belt states or migrating back to southern Nigeria. Christians from communities affected by violence in the Far North are the most displaced (e.g. between 2000-2014, 87.3 per cent of Christians affected by violence in Borno state fled; 77.8 per cent from Yobe; 63.4 per cent from Kano). While Christian communities in the Middle Belt have received the highest numbers of Christians who have been displaced and impacted by violence (e.g. between 2000-2014, Plateau saw the number of Christians seeking refuge in that state because of the violence increase by 75.6 per cent; Nasarawa by 44 per cent; Benue by 40 per cent; and Taraba by 30.4 per cent).⁴⁵

The Christian communities in northern Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states were the most affected by Boko Haram violence. The Christian community in Nasarawa state was the most affected by attacks by Muslim Fulani herdsmen. Christians mainly relocate to Middle Belt states (e.g. Plateau, Kogi and Kwara) and relative peaceful Sharia states (e.g. Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara). Nearly 3,500 new churches have been established, mostly by relocating Christians and predominantly in Middle Belt states (see Table 9).

Table 9: Affected congregations per northern state⁴⁶

State/ church	Total number congregations in 5 CAN ⁴⁷ groups in 2000	Total number congregations in 5 CAN groups in 2014	Increase / decrease between 2000 and 2014	Percentage
Adamawa	12,308	8,410	-3,898	-31.7
Bauchi	4,111	3,508	-603	-14.7
Benue	10,900	10,790	-110	-1.0
Borno	6,210	890	-5,320	-85.7
FCT Abuja	560	671	111	19.8
Gombe	4,853	4,745	-108	-2.2
Jigawa	405	338	-67	-16.5
Kaduna	21,600	19,912	-1,688	-7.8
Kano	2,530	2,312	-218	-5.5
Katsina	4,530	5,525	995	23.6
Kebbi	3,625	3,853	228	6.2
Kogi	8,296	8,718	422	5.1
Kwara	8,496	9,022	526	6.2
Nasarawa	3,227	2,481	-746	-23.1
Niger	4,165	4,219	54	1.3
Plateau	18,315	19,420	1,105	6.0
Sokoto	660	682	22	3.3
Taraba	4,196	4,014	-182	-4.3
Yobe	246	52	-194	-78.7
Zamfara	204	228	24	11.8
Totals	119,437	109,790	-13,067	-10.9
			/ +3,487	/ +2.9

3.2 Trends in Muslim control in society

In the Christian experience there are three trends in Muslim control in society in northern Nigeria - they dominate in politics, economics and in the media. Moreover there are six distinct features exemplifying the growth in Muslim control over society.

Muslim participation in politics is traditionally strong in Africa owing to their belief that religion and state (*din wa dawla*) are one and undivided. With the heritage of the Sokoto Caliphate and British indirect rule, the northern political and religious elite strengthened their hold over the political structures of the northern region following independence. Although six northern states have a Christian majority, only three have a Christian governor. Moreover, although six other northern states (plus FCT [Federal Capital Territory] Abuja) have substantial Christian minorities (25-50 per cent), only four have a Christian deputy governor.

Table 10. Christian and Muslim state (deputy) governors (2015 - 2019)⁴⁸

State	Percentage of Christians	State Governor	Deputy State Governor
Adamawa	53.6%	Muslim	Christian
Bauchi	25.3%	Muslim	Muslim
Benue	81.0%	Christian	Christian
Borno	30.0%	Muslim	Muslim
Gombe	40.0%	Muslim	Christian
Jigawa	7.0%	Muslim	Muslim
Kaduna	46.7%	Muslim	Christian
Kano	8.3%	Muslim	Muslim
Katsina	9.0%	Muslim	Muslim
Kebbi	24.0%	Muslim	Muslim
Kogi	51.3%	Muslim	Christian
Kwara	41.7%	Muslim	Christian
Nasarawa	51.7%	Muslim	Christian
Niger	39.0%	Muslim	Muslim
Plateau	73.3%	Christian	Christian
Sokoto	4.3%	Muslim	Muslim
Taraba	50.0%	Christian	Muslim
Yobe	6.7%	Muslim	Muslim
Zamfara	2.3%	Muslim	Muslim

As far as economics are concerned, Muslims in Nigeria have a great track record. Following Islam’s prophet, who was a businessman, Muslims travelled along the trans-Saharan trade routes and developed excellent skills in commerce. Within the Sokoto Caliphate and under British indirect rule, Muslim business grew and extended throughout the northern region, dominating city markets, minor trade, food production, etc. Christians in northern Nigeria → mainly agricultural farmers and civil servants - did not engage in business and therefore tended to develop a dependency on Muslims.

Northern Muslims are also strongly represented in the media. Examples are the New Nigerian Newspapers (NNN) and the Federal Radio Corporation in Kaduna (FRCK). Through these media outlets, northern Muslim interests are put on the agenda at federal and state levels. As the FRCK became the recruiting ground for BBC Hausa and Voice of America Hausa services, Muslim domination became extended to the important media houses in northern Nigeria, and this has coloured the presentation of the realities on the ground. Christians believe their cause to be neglected while the Muslim perspective is over-represented.

In 2014, the BBC Hausa Service Staff in the London office numbered 36, all but one of them Muslim. News reporting in the northern region through the BBC remains almost entirely in Muslim hands. Similarly, of Voice of America Hausa service staff in the Washington office, 17 of 23 are Muslim. This means that news reporting in the northern region through Voice of America is largely in Muslim hands. There are qualified Hausa Christian journalists but for one reason or another they are not on the staff.

Table 11. Staff of important media houses in northern Nigeria (per August 2014)⁴⁹

Media house ^{xxviii}	Muslims	Christians	Total
BBC Hausa Service staff	36 (97%)	1	37
Voice of America Hausa Service staff	17 (70%)	7	23

Analysing the results of our research, the following are indicative of the growth in the control over society by Muslims in northern Nigeria over the years. Six distinctive features can be observed that have had a great impact upon the church in terms of marginalisation, discrimination and violence:

- 1. The phenomenon of organised violence**
For example, the Boko Haram insurgency in the north-east, attacks by Muslim Fulani herdsmen on Christian communities in the Middle Belt, the Jos Plateau communal clashes and the 2011 post-electoral crisis.
- 2. The alliance of religion and politics**
For example, the protection of the interests of the northern Muslim religious and political elite, the application of enhanced Sharia in 12 northern states, the power exercised by the Hausa-Fulani in southern Kaduna local governments, the political manipulation in the Wukari, Taraba state communal clashes and the Muslim Fulani herdsmen attacks on Christian communities in the southern senatorial district of Taraba state.
- 3. The ongoing influx of Muslims through migration**
For example, the migration of Muslim Fulani to Middle Belt states for reasons of land and cattle; the relocation of Muslim inhabitants from the Far North to the Middle Belt due to desertification and drought, and the settling of foreign mercenary jihadists in the property and lands left behind by fleeing Christians in Taraba state.

4. The constant pressure to convert to Islam

For example, Hausa Christians are regarded as settlers in Sharia states, while converts to Islam are considered to be indigenes, with access to land and political rights. Moreover, where Muslims are in control in both the Sharia states and the non-Sharia states, there is reported discrimination against Christians in terms of access to promotion, jobs, scholarships, the award of school grades and access to doctors, clinics and government hospitals. The teaching of Christian religious knowledge is suppressed in many government schools. Muslim dominance in northern politics, economics, culture and the media leads to pressure to become Muslim in order to marry well, find good employment and secure substantial loans from the banks. All things considered, this leads to pressure to convert to Islam in order to get access to basic civil rights, social services, education and jobs.

5. The combination of Hausa culture and Islam

For example, Hausa is the dominant culture, which is greatly influenced by Islam. Hausa Christians are a minority. Its impact is felt through the use of Hausa as the lingua franca in the northern region, the adoption of Hausa names by Christians to avoid being identified as Christian and subsequently marginalised and discriminated against in society, the kidnapping of young Christian girls and subsequent forced 'Hausaisation' and Islamisation, and the capture of mission schools in the 1970s by northern state governments and subsequent de-Christianisation.

6. The promotion of Islam as a religion that brings success

For example, the effective 20-year Muslim rule in the period between the Christian President Obasanjo's first and second government (1 October, 1979, to 29 May, 1999), the manipulation of the Christian constituency for Muslim political ends during democracy, the failure of the Christian Goodluck Jonathan administration to defeat Boko Haram, the economic effectiveness of northern Muslim businessmen, the Hausa domination of retail business in northern Nigeria, and the poverty of many northern Christians in rural areas.⁵⁰

The question remains as to what the impact will be on the future of the church in northern Nigeria. Will its fate be the same as the church in the Middle East, which has experienced the same distinct features throughout centuries and as a consequence seen a steep decline? Or will the church continue to stand? And if so, how?

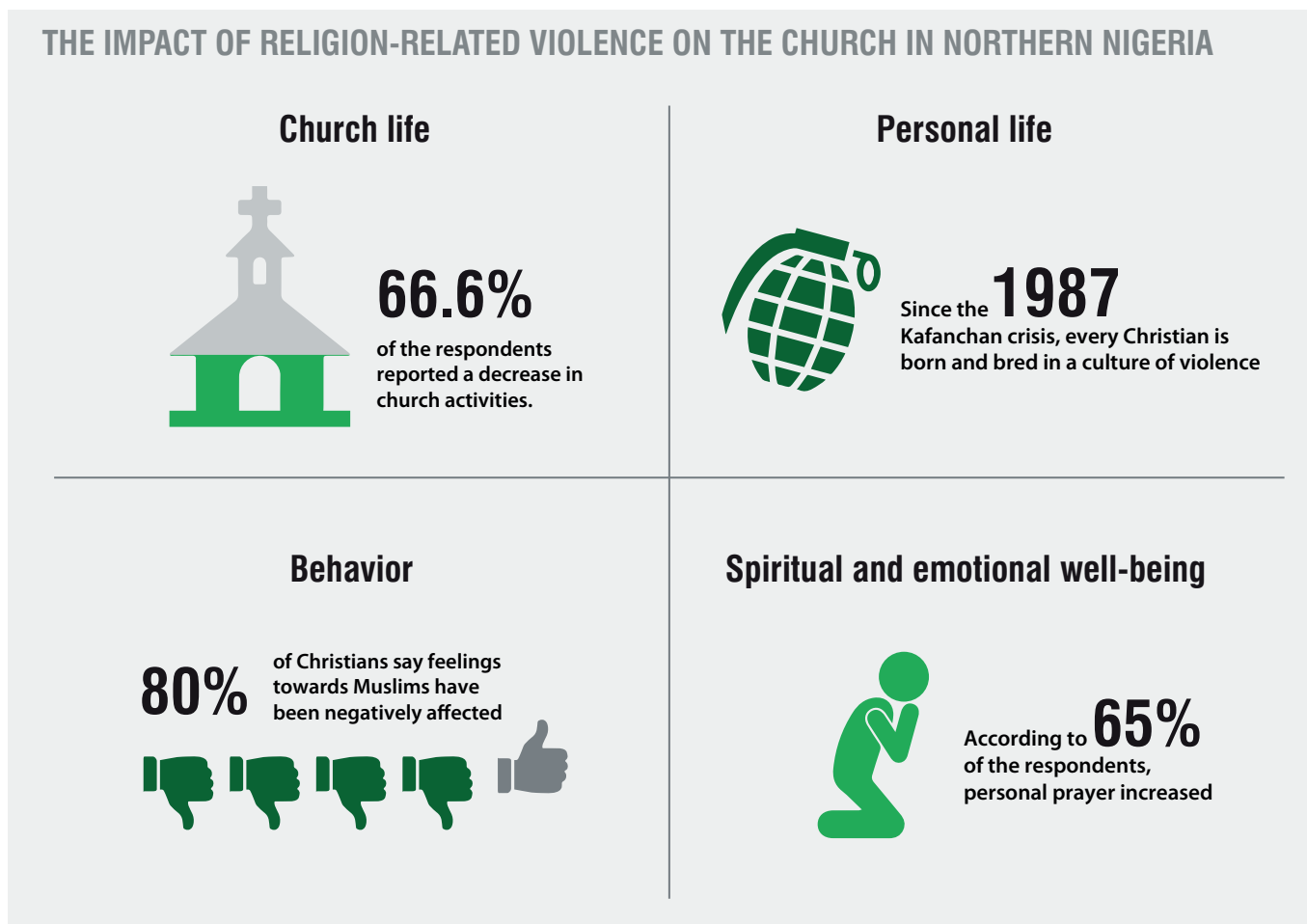
3.3 Conclusions

Christians form a substantial minority in northern Nigeria and are the most targeted group. In terms of persistent violence, they could constitute up to 41.2 per cent of the victims. Between 2006 and 2014, northern Nigeria was the most violent region in the country. In 2010, the northern region saw 50 per cent of Nigeria's total deaths, which rose to an alarming 82 per cent of Nigeria's total deaths in 2014 - largely due to the Boko Haram insurgency. Up to 11,500 Christians are estimated to have been killed in targeted religion-related violence in this period.

Between 2000 and 2014, up to 1.3 million Christians have been affected, with many leaving their places of residence and integrating into communities in Middle Belt states or southern Nigeria. In 2015, nearly half a million are still displaced. The Christian communities in the Far North are the most affected by this exodus. The Christian communities in the Middle Belt are also affected, because they receive most of the Christians who are forced to relocate. Between 2000 and 2014, more than 13,000 churches were abandoned, closed, destroyed or burned in northern Nigeria.

Persistent violence against the church in northern Nigeria can be defined as marginalisation and discrimination by Sharia state governments and Islamic society at large, and by targeted violence by politically motivated communal clashes, the 2011 post-electoral crisis, the Boko Haram insurgency and Muslim Fulani herdsmen attacks. The responses of the church leadership so far lack coherent vision, strategy and planning to cope with this.

4 Impact on the church: church life and personal life



This chapter deals with the impact of persistent violence on aspects of Christian living: church life, attitudes and behaviour of Christians, the spiritual and emotional well-being of Christians and the challenges Christians are facing.

4.1 Church life⁵¹

A total of 102 people were interviewed from 44 congregations in northern Nigeria which represented the five denominational church blocs of the Christian Association of Nigeria.

One third of the respondents indicated that Sunday worship attendance and membership had decreased by more than 50 per cent. Another third indicated a decrease of less than 50 per cent. One third indicated that

attendance and membership had increased by more than 25 per cent. Attendance and membership decreased in the Far North in violent areas but increased in the Middle Belt states, to which many Christians relocated.

According to one third of respondents, attendance of midweek Bible study, prayer meetings, outreach and community projects dropped by 50 per cent or more. Involvement in outreach to Muslims dropped by more than 50 per cent in almost half of all cases. The decrease was due to the fear of violent attacks on the church and a lower level of midweek church security, compared to Sunday when security guards are present. Moreover, Christians are afraid to enter or travel through Muslim areas for fear of targeted violence.

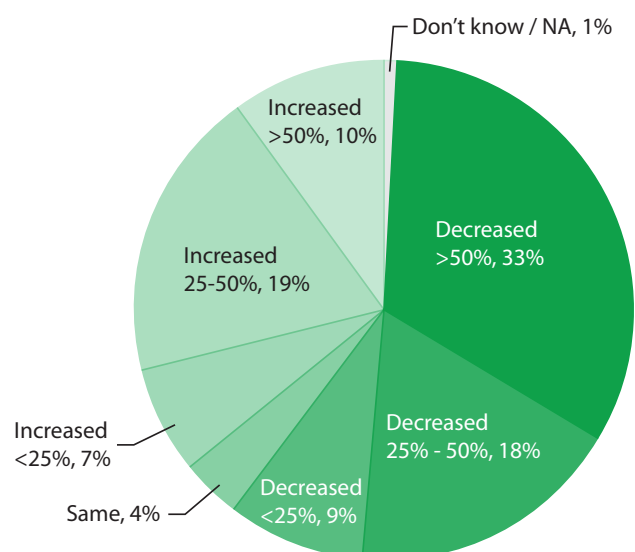
The factors preventing outreach to Muslims are: the inaccessibility of Muslim areas, fear among Christians and even hatred of Muslims, and the difficulty of obtaining permission for public campaigns from the authorities.

The church has mostly lost the strength and resources to engage in community projects due to poverty among its members. Many church congregations, schools and clinics have been closed or burned, and in some areas (e.g. southern Yobe) the remaining Christian population is so small that they lack the energy, resources and courage to re-engage.

Almost 70 per cent of the respondents indicated that church tithes and offerings had been reduced. One third indicated offerings were down by half or more. The financial situation of the church is worst in places where violence has caused people to relocate to safer areas, and where businesses have been destroyed. For many, their lives have been reduced to poverty. This affects church offerings as people are struggling to feed their families.

Support for the pastor has also dropped, according to 64 per cent of the respondents - in more than one third of cases by 50 per cent or more. However, one third of respondents indicated that support for the pastor has increased. Support for pastors has generally declined due to the loss of membership and reduced finances. Yet, in other places, Christians are determined to support the pastor through the violence and see it as part of their service to God. With regards to church activities, a pattern is emerging: one third of the respondents observe an increase, while two thirds report a decrease.

Chart 1. Church membership over the past ten years (according to respondents)



Christians in many areas call themselves a voiceless community under severe threat. Sixty-five per cent of respondents feel their human rights have been affected.

4.2 Personal life

4.2.1 Christian attitudes to Muslims

Violence often affects inter-communal relationships. We have tried to measure how the many years of violence in northern Nigeria have affected Christians' attitudes to Muslims and vice versa.

To the question, 'How have feelings towards Muslims developed in your Christian community over the past ten years?', 80 per cent of respondents answered with 'negative'. This breaks down into 33 per cent 'negative', and 47 per cent 'strongly negative'.

These negative feelings developed under the impact of riots, killings, acts of terrorism, church burnings, destruction, abductions, forced conversions, condescension, name-calling, and discrimination in employment, at the market and in school. Christians say they struggle with feelings of suspicion, hatred, distrust, animosity and fear towards Muslims. The result is a growing segregation between Muslim and Christian communities.

Many Christians say they face harassment, hatred, marginalisation, intimidation and violence. They have very limited freedom to worship and to build churches. They have no real voice in the public media, have limited access to government positions for employment and are barely represented in local politics. Young Christians suffer discrimination at school.

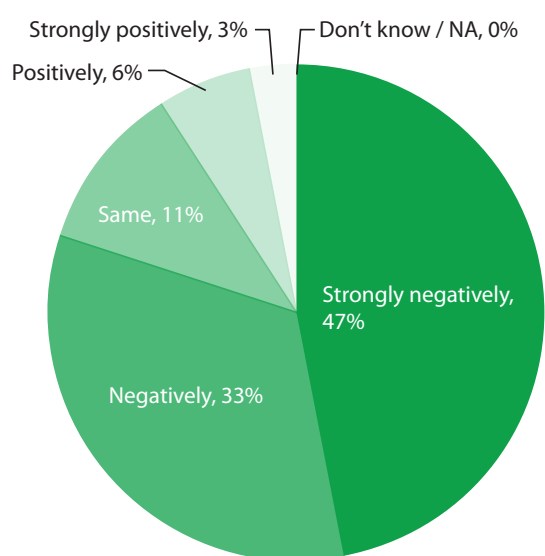
Christians in many areas regard themselves as a voiceless community that is under severe threat. Sixty-five per cent of respondents feel their freedom of speech, association, religion and other human rights have been negatively affected.

In most cases, human rights for Christians have decreased in their perception, most notably in the 12 Sharia states.

Three out of four respondents state that Muslim attitudes towards Christians are negative. According to Christians interviewed for this report, Muslims are taught by radical preachers to consider Christians unclean infidels who are to be dominated and brought into Islam.

The incidents of violence are so widespread and so frequent in northern Nigeria that every Christian is negatively affected, either directly or indirectly. Since the 1987 Kanfanchan crisis, the violence has escalated and now every Christian is born and bred into a 'culture of violence', regardless of when and where they are born in northern Nigeria.

Chart 2. How have feelings towards Muslims developed in your Christian community over the past ten years?



In response to the question, 'How as a Christian in northern Nigeria, do you see your future?' almost half said 'strongly negative' while another 33 per cent answered 'negative'. As a consequence, three out of four Christians in northern Nigeria see a bleak future for Christians there. However, 20 per cent - one in five Christians - responded positively.

Three reasons for optimism were given:

1. A growing political awareness among Christians that theirs is a struggle for liberation;
2. Higher levels of awareness of violence and tighter security measures within Christian communities;
3. Growing faith in God and Jesus.

4.2.2 Behaviour of Christians

4.2.2.1 Inter-religious relations

Violence also affects the way Christians act and operate in everyday life. In large parts of northern Nigeria, shops are predominantly owned by Muslims. Due to the violence, Christians say they now spend half as much in Muslim shops. In some cases though, their spending has increased (17 per cent). The decrease is due to a growing fear and mistrust among Christians of overcharging and even poisoning of food, and a preference to support Christian over Muslim businesses. In other areas the decrease is a result of Christians fleeing the area in search of security and refuge. The increase is mainly due to having no other option than to shop at Muslim-owned businesses in certain communities.

With regards to the numbers of Christian shopkeepers, 45 per cent say the number has decreased while 43 per cent see an increase. The decrease is the result of the violence, as Christian shops are burned and looted and their owners and customers have relocated to safer areas. The increase is found in areas where Muslims have left and Christians arrived and where Christians form the (near) majority. Many Christians are unwilling to support Muslim shops and seek self-sufficiency in business.

Violence has led to further segregation of communities. The willingness of Christians to live among Muslims has dropped significantly. Eighty-eight per cent of respondents have been affected by the violence and of those, 65 per cent have been very badly affected. Christians feel unsafe and afraid to live among Muslims due to religiously-motivated violence. Trust in the Muslim community has evaporated and some even consider it suicidal to live among Muslims.

One interviewee perseveres, despite the hatred: "The Christians are selling their houses in Muslim-dominated areas and relocating to other places that are more accommodating. My husband and I will never leave the Muslim-dominated environment because God has been faithful; He is our protector and one of the many ways we can show them love is to live among them."

Inter-religious marriage has decreased according to 62 per cent of the respondents, due to growing distrust and segregation. Young women are now more aware of the possibilities of forced conversion to Islam, maltreatment and quick divorce. Before the crisis, inter-religious marriage existed but most Christian parents do not want their daughters to marry Muslim men, seeing it as unbiblical, dangerous and as recruitment for Islam. Some Christian parents have disowned their daughters for this reason.

Sixty-five per cent of respondents report that it has become more difficult for Christians to buy land from Muslims to build churches.

Muslims refuse to sell land to Christians because they don't want to see churches built or Muslims converting to Christianity. In Sharia states, the government does not allow the sale of land for church buildings and churches cannot be formally registered. Christians say Muslims do not want to live near them. The two religious communities are segregated by a widening social, cultural and religious gap.

4.2.2.2 Positions of Christians in society

Three out of four respondents say that it has become more difficult for Christians in northern Nigeria to be promoted at work or find government employment. One interviewee declared: "They have vowed never to allow any Christian to reach the position of a Permanent Secretary, Director or any influential position of authority."

In many states and local government areas, Muslims dominate and favour those of their faith, family and tribe. One respondent believed 99 per cent of job vacancies are exclusively for Muslims. And anyone with a Christian name, such as Grace, John or David will not be employed. Sometimes Christians change their names to gain employment. Others use bribes and some women exchange sex for employment.

An interviewee: "We see the need for political empowerment so we are going into politics in large numbers and we are more aware."

Christians converting to Islam do not get much attention. One in five of the respondents, however, has seen Christians convert to Islam, but say they are bribed by

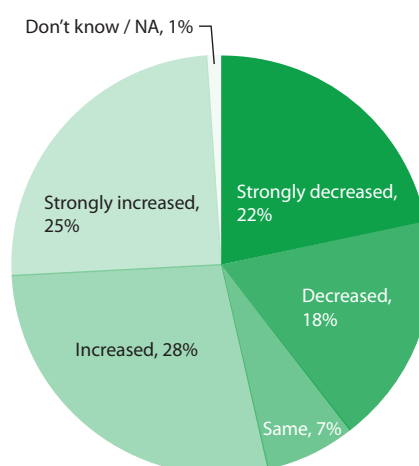
money, marriage or career opportunities (e.g. to escape a life in hardship). In other cases people look for protection (e.g. charms or amulets), and have doubts about their Christian faith (e.g. "God doesn't protect us from violence"), or look for a way out of difficulty (e.g. release from jail, cancelling of debts or an end to death threats).

One in five respondents says they have seen an increase in the number of Muslims converting to Christianity as a result of the violence. Reasons given are the love Christians show despite the violence, the guilt Muslims feel after killing Christians and the visions and dreams of Jesus many Muslims are having. An interviewee shared: "Many Muslims want to become Christians, but they are afraid of being killed or pressured by fellow Muslims."

With regard to Christian involvement in politics in the north, the results are mixed. Forty per cent say the involvement of Christians has decreased, while 53 per cent say it has increased. It seems the violence has resulted in more political involvement among mainline Protestant and Evangelical denominations, compared to Pentecostal denominations. At state level, there seems to be more political involvement among Christians in the southern Kaduna and Plateau states. Nevertheless, political involvement seems almost absent among Christians in the most violent Borno and Yobe states.

The 40 per cent decrease is related to the fear of being targeted during or after elections (e.g. 2011 post-electoral crisis). Christians regard local politics as a partisan game for northern Muslims, where they are discriminated against and given no chance. Christians interviewed for this report felt that they did not have a platform in the political parties in the northern states and in areas such as Yobe and Borno states, they have lost all hope in politics.

Chart 3. Please state the extent into which participation and influence of Christians in politics has increased or decreased



The chart shows a 53 per cent increase in politics. This increase reflects a new dynamic in which Christians are fighting for their freedom through participation in politics. Christians want a voice in elections and to have access to decision-making and resources. One interviewee said: "We see the need for political empowerment so we are going into politics in large numbers and we are more aware." Christians are resisting the growing Muslim domination by actively seeking political self-empowerment through engagement in the political domain.

4.2.3 Spiritual and emotional well-being of Christians

Boko Haram has made it explicitly clear that its aim is to Islamise the whole of Nigeria and establish a caliphate based on Sharia.⁵² There is no room for Christianity. Many attacks on churches aim to scare Christians into abandoning their faith. The Muslim Fulani herdsmen attacks and the operation of Sharia have had a similar effect upon Christianity. The opposite, however, is proving to be true. While many churches have seen a decline in membership and attendance, those who have remained show an increased commitment to their faith and church.

Personal prayer has increased, according to 65 per cent of the respondents, as in crisis people need spiritual strength and cry out to God. One interviewee declared: "The violence has awoken the members and they now see greater need for prayer... For me it has greatly increased my faith in God."

Fifty per cent say attendance at prayer groups and the practice of fasting has increased. Seventy per cent of respondents say the number of committed Christians in their church has grown.

The violence has stimulated many Christians to pray more intensely and to fast more to overcome the fear and challenges they face. An interviewee in Yobe went so far as to state: "The violence is a revival. People who were not serious about Christianity have now embraced Christianity more than ever before. There was laxity before but the violence has awoken them."

According to 80 per cent of respondents, the number of Christians who persevere despite personal loss and trauma has grown. Many Christians face the threat of death on a daily basis: they hold on to God, persevere in their faith, live out the Bible, and experience miracles. A church member from Yobe: "The few who remain have suffered the personal loss of loved ones and property.

We believe that God is the giver of all things and he will replenish all that has been lost at the appropriate time. We are encouraged because we know Christians worldwide are praying for us." Those who have stayed and persevered despite the violence seem to be experiencing an increase in faith and a greater solidarity within the church.

4.2.4 Challenges for Christians

We asked the respondents to rank in order of significance the various challenges faced by the church in northern Nigeria. Eighty-two per cent said to understand the combination of 'experiencing religious violence and being taught to love your enemies' as a significant or very significant spiritual challenge. Christians say that the biblical command to love your enemies and to pray for those that persecute you is humanly impossible, but with the grace of God it can be done. Interviewees say: "The church is aware of the religiously-motivated violence but not fully prepared to withstand it... Love for the persecutors is very difficult: the church must work on that." (Kaduna) "The violence has developed hatred in Christians, so they need healing to love their enemies." (Yobe).

Next came the emotional challenge to cope with the trauma inflicted by the violence on the Christian community. Three out of four respondents said this was a 'significant', if not 'very significant', challenge to overcome. Christians feel that trauma counselling to deal with emotional challenges is important. Many of them are suffering in silence.

Economic and social challenges were deemed 'significant' to 'very significant' by 64 per cent of respondents. Christians want to be free from Muslim economic domination, so if they have to restart their life after losing everything through violence, they are strongly motivated to go into business. But they often have no capital or training to do so. Christians explain that they used to be employed in the civil service but that these opportunities no longer exist due to the crisis. One Interviewee said: "Empowering Christians economically is very important for sustainable livelihood. It will also enable us to assist the indigent and to preach the gospel."

Christians observe that, where Muslims and Christians live side by side, they watch and monitor each other's actions carefully. Christians see the challenge to overcome distrust, fear and hatred as paramount. One interviewee said: "We need to coexist - we need each other; if we integrate and exchange goods and services between north and south: tension and suspicion will be reduced, and so trauma will be reduced."

Regarding the political challenge - dealing with civil rights abuses, access to political representation and government services - the respondents were divided. Forty-six per cent found this challenge 'significant' to 'very significant', while 39 per cent found it not really significant or not significant at all. Those who placed more emphasis on this tended to have more realistic hopes for change in their region, while those deeming it unimportant had little hope for change through politics. An interviewee said: "Christians should be able to exercise their civic right without discrimination. We cannot continue to be slaves in our land."

4.3 Conclusions

Church attendance and membership decreased in the most violent areas of the Far North, but increased in the Middle Belt states where many Christians have relocated.

The church has mostly lost the strength and resources to engage in community projects, to give offerings and tithes and to support their pastors. This is due to poverty among its members.

Eighty per cent of respondents indicated that feelings towards Muslims in their communities have been negatively affected due to the persistent violence.

Sixty-five of the respondents feel that freedom of speech, association, religion and other human rights have been severely affected, most notably in the Sharia states.

Every Christian in northern Nigeria is born and bred into a 'culture of violence', regardless of when and where they are born in the region.

Three out of four Christians in northern Nigeria see a bleak future for Christians there. The persistent violence has led to a further segregation of Muslim and Christian communities.

Three out of four respondents say it has become more difficult for Christians in northern Nigeria to get a promotion at work or find employment with the government.

At state level, there seems to be more political involvement among Christians in the southern Kaduna and Plateau states. Nevertheless, political involvement seems to be almost absent among Christians in Borno and Yobe states, the most violent areas.

Despite this, there seems to be a new dynamic in which Christians are campaigning for their freedom through participation in politics.

According to 80 per cent of respondents, the number of Christians who persevere despite personal loss and trauma has grown. They seem to experience an increase in faith and greater solidarity within the church.

To understand the combination of experiencing religious violence and being taught to 'love your enemies' are considered to be the biggest spiritual challenges Christians are facing.

To cope with the trauma inflicted by the persistent violence is considered to be the main emotional challenge.

The main economic challenge for Christians in northern Nigeria is to empower themselves to gain a sustainable livelihood.

Christians say the main social challenge for them is to overcome mutual distrust, fear and hatred between them and their Muslim counterparts.

5 Responses and perspectives

In this chapter we describe the responses of the church in northern Nigeria to the violence and outline the things they believe should be done.⁵³

Our interviewees have observed that churches more recently confronted with violence (e.g. in southern Borno and northern Adamawa since 2011) are surprised, shocked and paralysed by targeted violence and unprepared for it. Churches with some experience of violence say they are better prepared (e.g. in Kaduna and Kano since 2000).

There are several responses and perspectives that the church in northern Nigeria sees it should adopt in order to safeguard the well-being of Christians in the region. We explore current, mid- and long-term perspectives as well as specific approaches offering vision and strategy for the future.

5.1 Current strategies and perspectives

When incidents of violence occur, churches condemn the violence, ask for peace, hold the government and/or security forces accountable for not having done enough to prevent the crisis, and appeal for help to stabilise the situation.

At the local church and denominational level, press conferences are held, days of fasting and prayer are called for, and church leaders discuss the crisis. At the local level churches publish press releases and preach sermons condemning the violence and those involved.

Our interviewees have observed that churches more recently confronted with violence (southern Borno and northern Adamawa since 2011) are surprised, shocked and paralysed by violence and unprepared for it. Churches with some experience of violence say they are better prepared (Kaduna and Kano since 2000).

Offerings are taken for the victims and as much help as possible is sent to the crisis area. When it comes to securing Christian property, church leaders meet regularly with security agencies and self-defence groups to implement security precautions. Sunday security measures are high (e.g. vigilance about strangers, visitors and strange cars, barricades and the use of scanning devices on entering churches).

At a political level, church congregations have high expectations of Christian politicians. One example is the previous governor of Plateau state who was said to have been present at every crisis. Another is that there were high hopes that a government under a Christian president would have influence and be righteous. People are encouraged by the establishment of a think tank at church district level, composed of lay professionals, whose aim is to devise practical solutions to the urgent challenges. It is addressing issues including security, food and housing, economic dependency upon and political domination by Muslims, and the lack of biblical leadership and vision. Its founders would like to see this think tank replicated at different levels within the structure of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), the body responsible for fostering cooperation among churches.

5.2 Mid- to long-term strategies and perspectives

The respondents in the interviews conducted for this research consider the churches to have little or no mid- to long-term strategy to address the persistent violence. Since they are not taking an analytical approach to the causes and solutions of the problem, the churches have no plan for, or perspective on, the future.

According to our research, the root cause of persistent violence is the struggle for political power, for scarce economic resources and for recognition as a government stakeholder (state funds i.e. oil money), as well as the promotion of Islam. This struggle is by political and religious elites at federal, state and local government levels. The struggle is set against the backdrop of a system of patronage which is steeped in violence and characterised by corruption and impunity.

Religion and ethnicity are vitally important as they shape the identity of the main groups and are used by politicians to divide and conquer.

Since Obasanjo's regime and the return to democracy in 1999, religion has superseded ethnicity as an identity marker, as religion has the capacity to unite multiple ethnic groups around a common cause. Moreover, Christianity and Islam are more than identity markers as they both promote ideas about a just and fair society, embracing the ideals and aspirations of millions of their adherents. According to most northern Muslims, this kind of society was embodied in the Sokoto Caliphate and radical Muslims want a return to this through a purer form of Islam as represented in the Gwoza Caliphate.

This struggle for power and resources normally occurs within the context of a secular nation state with separate powers of governance and fair, just and equitable laws (trias politica). Everybody is equal before the law and has equal opportunities in society (in access to education, healthcare, politics and economics). This model, however, was brought to Nigeria with colonisation and adopted after independence. Officially, Nigeria is a secular nation state. However, in reality, Nigeria is a mixture of many cultures and religions. Christianity, Islam and African traditional religions have shaped its history, values and perspectives. The people of Nigeria still struggle with the idea of the nation state as their basic bonding is with tribes, ethnic groups, regions and religions. Finally, equality in Nigeria is frustrated by political domination, economic subjugation, corruption and patronage by political and religious elites that make people desperate enough to resort to violence.

Islam naturally embraces active participation in society through politics and economics (business) and offers Muslims a vision (Sharia) through which to do so. When the result of Muslim participation in Nigerian society is their political dominance over and economic subjugation of non-Muslims, churches in Nigeria become vulnerable, because they have no adequate response. Protestant churches are particularly powerless in this regard due to the missionary legacy of a pietistic gospel. Christians are encouraged to follow Jesus, and concentrate wholly on their future destination in heaven while discounting their current reality on earth. This leads to apathy towards socio-economic development. However, a holistic vision of the Christian gospel is needed, derived from the perspective in which personal salvation is coupled with social transformation. The Catholic Church is more resilient in this regard as it has developed strong social teaching.

In spite of the fact that the church has no official mid- to long-term strategy, our research has unearthed elements of a coherent vision and strategy for the future (as proposed by respondents):

Elements of this strategy could include:

To raise up strong leadership that can cope with the challenges of persistent violence. For the church needs intelligent leaders with a profound vision about its role in the life of individuals and society. For this to happen, for example, the recruitment process for pastors would have to change. Pastors need to be genuinely called to serve the church and not seek employment or material gain. Pastors need to be rigorously trained and in tune with the reality on the ground.

Following on from this, there is a pressing need **to prepare church members to withstand religious violence** - this includes teaching around knowing their faith, being true disciples of Jesus and suffering for His sake. The pastor of every parish needs to know the members of his congregation and to mentor and coach them. The church also needs to be united for outreach (mission and social works) and to live out what the Bible says. There's also a need to equip the church to deal with suffering and to rise to the biblical challenge to 'love your enemies.'

The strategy could also include **speaking uncompromisingly about the root causes of the persistent violence**, with a clear perspective for the future. This also means addressing these root causes within the church, where the leadership has sometimes been too close to the government.

We need a new generation of Nigerians who look beyond the veil of politics, learn from the experience of other nations, and are capable of bridging the religious divide.

To invest in the youth of the church so that they can find a way to live according to Christian teaching, to stay calm in the midst of violence and react sensibly to it. This way, they can find alternatives to retaliation. Moreover, they need to learn how to empower themselves economically through setting up their own businesses or finding employment.

To fight despair and cynicism caused by trauma as a result of the persistent violence. This includes training trauma counsellors as well as providing trauma counselling. It also involves making a stand for the

Christian faith and its values and speaking out against the system of patronage politics, corruption and impunity at all levels of society. For example, important politicians should in no way be considered beyond reproach. Moreover, their protection by immunity laws should be considered un-democratic and wrong.

To tackle the existing dependency mentality.

This dependency mentality is one of the main reasons why Christians are second-class citizens in Nigeria - even more so than the Sharia system, according to some of our interviewees. Christians in the northern region are often not engaged in the domains of the economy, politics and education. They are not motivated to advance in income, influence and knowledge through hard work, but are more readily inclined to rely on fate (e.g. donations to the pastor or animist sacrifices to the sorcerers) or people (e.g. rich family members, the money of politicians, government jobs). The church must sensitise believers to this situation and motivate them to exchange this worldview for a biblical one. According to the Bible, one can develop one's life by obedience to God and become productive in society through stewarding the resources God gives. In the context of northern Nigeria, the challenges are to create a secure environment (a nation state with an effective army and police) in which everybody is equal before the law (through effective and equitable justice) and has equal chances (participation in education and healthcare, participation in the economy through employment or business, and participation in politics through democracy and a free press). The church must facilitate this process of sensitisation by, for example, organising workshops and giving clear messages from the pulpit. Furthermore, the church itself must lay the necessary foundations to achieve these goals and to raise funds accordingly.

To increase political involvement in a meaningful and constructive way. This includes teaching Christian politicians, and Christians engaged in politics and the public arena, how to apply Christian values in the political and public domain and in times of difficulty not to regress to traditional and occult practices such as sorcery that often result in violence. The Christian message of love, peace and forgiveness is powerful and one the church can live by, through the teachings of Christ. Moreover, prayer is a powerful weapon to bring the crisis under control where government, army and police cannot help. The church has a role to play in the political domain, including by advocating to the government for the rights of minorities to be

upheld, and for Christians in northern Nigeria to have freedom of thought, conscience and religion, receive adequate protection and no longer be marginalised and discriminated against.

To enter into dialogue, peace initiatives and reconciliation with adherents of other faiths. This could include building bridges in communities through dialogue, multi-religious education and promoting equality. Meeting people of different faiths is an opportunity to get to know each other and to realise what others might suffer because of us. This may lead to reconciliation and return to broken communities living side-by-side. In order for this to happen, religious leaders on both sides must educate their followers about containing violence, rooting out prejudice and being open-minded about the 'other'.

5.3 Approaches offering vision and strategy for the future

5.3.1 The dialogue, peace and reconciliation approach

The dialogue, peace and reconciliation approach teaches Christians about Islam and Christianity. Justification for violence is easily read into the Koran and Old Testament. Islam especially has a tendency to encourage its adherents towards violence, but not all Muslims promote violence and many Muslims respect and value life as Christians do. Nationhood can bind Muslims and Christians together and in this regard humanitarian aid should be shared between affected communities on both sides, in order to help both rebuild. This style of reconciliation is already being practiced by Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama - the Catholic Archbishop of Jos and the President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria - and with him the Catholic Church. It is also practised by Protestant Christians like Rev'd Yakubu Pam and Dr. Katrina Korb in Jos.⁵⁴



5.3.2 The contextualized approach

The contextualised approach teaches Christians to relate to Muslims, with greater knowledge and respect for Hausa culture. Our interviewees report that the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), under the present leadership is practising this approach with great effect. Professor Andrew Haruna, head of the Department of Linguistics in Nigerian languages at the University of Jos and a Hausa Christian himself, has greatly contributed to this approach.

5.3.3 The peace and justice approach

The peace and justice approach of the Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa (EYN), the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria, comes from the historically pacifist churches (e.g. the Quakers and the Mennonites) and teaches Christians to take a strong stance for non-resistance and pacifism. They have a great commitment to works of peace and justice and place a high value on human life and dignity. However, some question the church's position in the context of the Boko Haram onslaught: the EYN has been a direct target for religiously-motivated violence and many of its Christians relocated to safer areas. The church has lost much ground in the north-east and it is unclear if it will be able to regain it.

5.3.4 The communal approach

This approach is based on the vision of Professor Yusuf Turaki. Christians, he says, currently have an individualistic approach to the conflict, while Muslims stand as a community. Christianity lost its communal dimension as a result of the missionary legacy from the West. According to the tradition of pietism and evangelicalism, individual Christians should live exemplary lives according to high ethical standards and leave communal issues, including politics, to the state. This leads to a lack of engagement in their present reality. In the Western tradition, Christianity lost its communal dimension. Turaki argues that Christianity should be redefined as a community of Christians, like the Israelites in the Old Testament. In this regard, he refers to the ideas of Dutch politician and theologian Abraham Kuyper (of the 20th century) that led to a pluralistic state in the Netherlands where different social groups had autonomy within a general context of equality and justice for all. This approach suggests that a pluralistic, communal state might be a solution for Nigeria.

5.4 Conclusions

The church in northern Nigeria responds in various ways to violence but in many areas it does not have a mid- to long-term strategy. As mentioned before, our research has identified several elements for a coherent vision and strategy for the future:

- **To raise up strong leadership that can cope with the challenges of persistent violence.**
- **To prepare its members to withstand religion-related violence** by having a greater knowledge of their faith, being a true disciple of Jesus and suffering for His sake.
- **To speak uncompromisingly about the root causes of the persistent violence, with a clear vision for the future.**
- **To invest in the youth of the church** so that they can find a way to live according to Christian principles, to stay calm in the midst of violence and to react to it sensibly.
- **To fight despair and cynicism caused by trauma** as a result of the persistent violence.
- **To tackle the dependency mentality that currently exists.**
- **To increase political involvement in a meaningful and constructive way.**
- **To enter into dialogue, peace initiatives and reconciliation** with followers of other faiths.

6 Conclusions

This chapter gives conclusions, scenarios and general recommendations for the church in northern Nigeria.

6.1 Context of the church in northern Nigeria

Christianity has grown in northern Nigeria from being non-existent in 1857 to numbering more than 30 million (31.2 per cent) now, according to current estimates. They are a minority in a Muslim context, but a sizeable one. There are high concentrations of Christians in seven northern states. In six northern states, Christians are in the majority. The continued existence of Christianity in northern Nigeria is under threat through persistent violence.

Perpetrators of persistent violence against the church in northern Nigeria are the northern Muslim political and religious elite, radical Islamic groups and Muslim Fulani herdsmen. They operate within an existing culture of violence by inflaming religious, political and territorial sensitivities. The interests at stake can be summarised as:

- (a) protection of northern Muslim threatened interests (political / economic)
- (b) protection of Muslims' threatened identity (social / cultural)
- (c) protection of Islam's threatened historically superior position (religious)

6.2 Impact on the church

There are several reasons behind Muslims' persistent and violent targeting of Christians in northern Nigeria. The main contributing factors are: Christians are the largest minority, there has been exponential church growth, the ethnic composition of Christian communities, and their association with the West. Christians are most vulnerable to targeting because of the desire of the northern elite to protect their aforementioned vested interests. They have been the targets of politically motivated communal clashes, the 2011 post-electoral riots, the Boko Haram insurgency, Muslim Fulani herdsmen attacks, and marginalisation and discrimination through forced Islamisation, Sharia state governments and Muslim society as a whole.

Persistent violence in northern Nigeria is much more serious and its roots more complex than is commonly perceived. And the negative impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria is also more profound than many think. Between 2006 and 2014, up to 11,500 Christians are estimated to have been killed. Between 2000 and 2014, up to 1.3 million Christians have been affected by the violence, many of whom have been displaced and 13,000 churches have been destroyed or abandoned. The worst affected communities are in the predominantly Muslim Far North where Christian communities have declined by more than 60 per cent. Christians mainly relocate to the predominantly Christian Middle Belt (e.g. Plateau, saw a 75.6 per cent increase of its Christian population; Nasarawa a 44 per cent increase; Benue a 40 per cent increase; and Taraba a 30.4 per cent increase). At the same time, Christian communities in the Middle Belt rural areas are the most vulnerable to Muslim Fulani herdsmen attacks (e.g. also in Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba).

In the same eight-year period, church life declined substantially and dramatically in areas prone to violence. Christian attitudes towards Muslims deteriorated due to their experience of marginalisation, discrimination and violence at their hands. Christian behaviour toward Muslims changed for the worse due to fear of violence and mistreatment by Muslims. The result is much more distrust, antagonism and segregation.

The Christian faith, however, has remained strong. Although many church congregations have seen a decline in membership and attendance, those Christians who stay show an increased commitment to their faith and church. Participation in church activities, such as prayer/prayer groups, study meetings and fasting has increased. Many report experiencing God's rescue, protection and presence and persevere despite personal loss and trauma.

Christian communities who remain in the hardest hit areas are small (e.g. Tudun Wada Dankadai, Kano state), traumatised (e.g. southern Yobe) and inclined to resort to forming self-defence groups (e.g. Tafawa Balewa, Bauchi state). Christian communities that become hosts for Christians forced to flee their homes (e.g. Jos, Plateau state; Yola, Adamawa state; Biu, Borno state) are overwhelmed by the humanitarian crisis and lack the resources to cope with urgent needs. The property of fleeing Christians is bought, confiscated or simply occupied by local or migrant Muslims (e.g. southern Taraba state). Returning Christians have great difficulty in starting over again (e.g. northern Adamawa). Church leadership so far has failed to have a coherent vision, strategy and planning to cope with the crisis. How will this affect the future of the church? The church in northern Nigeria had its 'golden age' from the time of the first missionaries until the 1987 Kanfanchan crisis in which it expanded across the Middle Belt and made great inroads into the Far North. Since then the impact of Muslim religious and political dominance, Islamic insurgencies and Muslim herdsmen attacks has led to church decline in the Far North and an overburdening of the church in the Middle Belt through Christians relocating. In certain areas the church seems on the verge of extinction (e.g. southern Yobe and Tudun Wada Dankadai city, Kano state).

6.3 Scenarios

To summarise, the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria could lead to two potential outcomes:

(Scenario 1) Is the impact of persistent violence in the context of religion, politics, economics and culture simply too strong for the church to withstand? Will the church increasingly disengage from society in order to survive, fall into decline and over time cease to exist? In certain areas in northern Nigeria, Christianity has already become virtually extinct.

(Scenario 2) Or can the church withstand the impact of persistent violence in the context of religion, politics, economics and culture? Will the church choose to increase its engagement in society, work for reconciliation and share its resources for the benefit of all, so that the church works for the renewal and transformation of the Christian community and northern Nigerian society at large?

There needs to be a united and comprehensive response to end the violence and restore a situation in northern Nigeria where Muslims and Christians can live together.

6.4 Recommendations

First, the church must analyse at a deeper level the challenges the church in northern Nigeria is presently facing. Then it must create a vision and strategy for the future, develop comprehensive and realistic solutions and apply these effectively. These solutions must be truly comprehensive, addressing the crisis on the spiritual and emotional level, as well as on a socio-cultural, economic and political level.

Secondly, policymakers in Nigerian churches, government and society, as well as the international community, should become aware of the scope and impact of the violence. There needs to be a united and comprehensive response to end the violence and to restore a situation in northern Nigeria where Muslims and Christians can live together, exercise their human rights, have equal access to education, work and property, and worship in freedom.

Afterword

Open Doors International (ODI) and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) are discussing the implications of this report for the church in northern Nigeria.

A committee has been formed to create recommendations to develop:

- an appropriate vision and strategy, as well as plans and actions, for the church in Nigeria to deal effectively with the impact of persistent violence, increase the resilience of Christian communities, and ensure their proper functioning and serving of society for the common good, and;
- an appropriate advocacy strategy, so the church can speak effectively to the Nigerian government and the international community to inform them about the scope of this violence and its negative impact, so that comprehensive policy may be formed to end the violence, restore the situation to normality and deal with the negative consequences for Christian communities and intercommunal relationships.

Appendix 1

Methodology⁵⁵

The following methods were used:

Media research: relevant articles, reports and other written sources were consulted via the internet (e.g. International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and Nigeria Watch), libraries (e.g. Africa Study Center, Leiden, the Netherlands) and other sources (e.g. contacts in Nigeria).

In-depth interview: these were held with 14 church leaders and social scientists with expertise about persistent violence in northern Nigeria.

Structured interviews: three geopolitical zones in northern Nigeria were chosen and three states were selected in each of them:

- a. North-east zone (Borno, Yobe, Adamawa)
 - current focus of Boko Haram violence
- b. North-central zone (Plateau, Nasarawa, Benue)
 - current focus of much of the Muslim Fulani herdsmen violence
- c. North-west zone (Kano, Kaduna, Zamfara)
 - current impact of Sharia conflict

In each state, two churches were selected and classified according to their experience of violence (six churches per zone of which two are High Impact, two are Medium Impact and two are Low Impact):

- a. *High Impact:* a church or a Christian community that has been directly affected by a high level of violence in one or more of the following ways: pastor(s) killed, bomb attack(s), members killed, church(es) burned, women abducted, children abducted, many Christians have fled
- b. *Medium Impact:* a church or a Christian community that has been directly affected by a medium level of violence in one or more of the following ways: no one or just a few are killed, little destruction of houses and/or church(es), church(es) closed, houses deserted, Christians have fled

- c. *Low Impact:* a church or a Christian community that has been indirectly affected by violence. The general atmosphere and insecurity in northern Nigeria has impacted the church's functioning. There are high levels of fear, threatening letters may have been received, but no church has yet been closed, and no houses are deserted. However, displaced people from directly affected areas may have flocked to the church or Christian community for shelter, food and medical assistance

In each church, Structured Interviews were done with pastors, youth leaders, women leaders and three members (six interviews per church).

These structured interviews were done in three geopolitical zones: in six churches within each zone (two in each impact of violence category); and six interviews within each church. In total, that makes 108 Structured Interviews in 18 churches.

Focus Group Discussions (FGD); three FGDs were held in each of the three geopolitical zones and in different states, which altogether makes nine FGDs. Each FGD consisted of a mixture of representatives selected from churches with different levels of interaction with violence (High, Medium and Low impact). Each FGD had some division between rural and urban churches. Representatives for the FGD were from Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)-aligned church groups⁵⁶ (five categories). Representatives could be ordained or lay people, but were knowledgeable people and had an opinion on strategy, vision, problems, challenges and perspectives of the church in northern Nigeria.

Appendix 2

Nigerian tribes⁵⁷

Tribal characteristics: The *Hausa-Fulani* are a fusion of Hausa and Fulani peoples who merged during the jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio and the subsequent Sokoto Caliphate in the 19th century. The Hausa belong to an ethnic group that lives in north Nigeria and south Niger. The Hausa were farmers and businessmen. The Fulani belong to an ethnic group that is widespread across West Africa, from Lake Chad to the Atlantic coast. The Fulani adopted the Hausa language and culture in Nigeria. They are usually pastoralists, but many settled in cities. During the jihad of Dan Fodio, both groups turned into well trained warriors and their descendants ruled over the non-Hausa-Fulani whom they enslaved. The Hausa-Fulani who had adapted to ruling under the British colonial administration tried to continue this during independence. Their attitude is characterised by a 'born to rule' mentality and many Hausa-Fulani serve in the Nigerian army. The Hausa-Fulani are predominantly Muslim.

The *Igbo*, who are traditionally situated in south-eastern Nigeria, speak a common language: Igbo. They are an educated, commercial and prosperous people who have spread all over Nigeria for the purposes of trade. Threatened by Hausa-Fulani hostility and domination in a time of widespread instability, the Igbo tried unsuccessfully to gain independence as Biafra in 1967. (In 1966, 10,000 - 30,000 Igbo were massacred in northern Nigeria.) The Igbo are predominantly Christian.

The *Yoruba* are a people in the south-west of Nigeria, Benin and northern Togo. They speak the Yoruba language. They are traditionally craftsmen and traders, who lived in cities and eventually the Oyo Empire in the 17th century. This empire declined in the 18th and 19th centuries and was invaded by the Don from Dahomey (Benin) and the Muslim Fulani from northern Nigeria. The Yoruba have a strong cultural heritage with an emphasis on education. Many Yoruba work in the educational sector in present Nigeria. They are made up of equal numbers of Muslims and Christians.

Intertribal relations: The history of slavery makes intertribal relationships in the northern region very sensitive. The Sokoto Caliphate's economy was based

on slavery, with the non-Hausa-Fulani treated as objects and forced to become Islamic converts. This jihad with its slavery and forced conversion met with strong opposition in the Middle Belt which resulted in the Muslim caliphate having little or no access to large parts of the Middle Belt. The British colonial administration, however, put the Middle Belt and its inhabitants under Hausa-Fulani jurisdiction, through its policy of indirect rule. This jurisdiction continued after independence in the states of northern Nigeria. Resistance to Hausa-Fulani dominance in the spheres of religion, economics, culture and politics exists to this day and plays a significant role in intertribal relations within Nigerian society.

The *struggle for resources* is a second factor in intertribal conflict in the northern region. Desertification in the north has brought northerners to the Middle Belt states seeking work and employment. Pastoralist Fulani moving south in search of grazing land for their cattle often initiate violence against, and experience violence from, agriculturalist farmers who object to the cattle grazing on their crops. The effects of this mass immigration put great pressure on access to land, jobs and government funds. The greatest problems at present are unemployment among suburban young men and lack of land for Fulani pastoralists.

The *indigene-settler divide* is a third factor affecting intertribal relations in the northern region. To avoid a situation where larger tribes dominate smaller ones in terms of government representation, the Nigerian constitution asserts: "The President should appoint at least one minister of every state that is an 'indigene' of that state." This ensures equal participation at the federal level. However, because the state system in Nigeria was established to ensure that smaller tribes had an area of their own, tribes which may be a national minority often actually form the majority in state and local government areas (LGA). The system is biased towards the 'indigene'. So in effect the concept of indigeneity has been used to reserve rights and privileges for natives (indigenes) and exclude non-natives (migrants or settlers). The settlers in turn seek to remove these limitations by other means, including protest or force.

Appendix 3

A short political history of Nigeria⁵⁸

The Kanem-Bornu Empire around the Lake Chad basin existed from the 9th to the 19th century. It had a large territory and extended into areas of present-day countries such as Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Nigeria. The Bornu part was created in the 14th century. Islam was introduced in the 11th century through Muslim scholars who arrived along the trans-Saharan trade routes from North Africa. Kanem-Bornu functioned as an independent Islamic state until the 19th century when warlord and slave trader Rabih Zubayr, a fleeing Sudanese rebel, conquered large parts of Central Africa including Kanem-Bornu. In 1900, in northern Cameroon, Rabih was defeated by the French who wanted to extend their influence into the African interior. The remnants of the Kanem-Bornu Empire were divided between the British (Nigeria) and French (Niger, Chad) colonial areas of West and Central Africa.

The Kano Emirate was founded as one of the seven Hausa Bakwai ('Seven True Hausa States') in the 10th century in northern Nigeria. It was situated at the end of the trans-Saharan trade routes coming from Tripoli, Tunis and Fès. Trading was mainly in leather, cotton and slaves. Islam came to Kano in the 14th century with Muslim scholars from the ancient Mali Empire situated to its west. Kano was a tributary state to different African Empires in subsequent centuries. In the 19th century Kano was conquered in the jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio and became an emirate (1807) in the newly established Sokoto Caliphate. Under British indirect rule Kano remained an emirate and developed into the largest and most populous one in the northern protectorate.

The Sokoto Caliphate was one of the largest empires of West Africa in the 19th century. It covered parts of present-day Burkina Faso, Niger, northern Nigeria and Cameroon. The empire was founded by Uthman Dan Fodio, its first Sultan and a radical Fulani Muslim cleric. Fodio instigated jihad from 1804 to 1815 because of poor governance in the Hausa states and the discrimination against his Fulani tribesmen. He gathered disenchanted Hausa and Fulani behind him and conquered large parts of the region. Following his death in 1817 the Caliphate was divided into a western part (with Gwandu as its

capital) and an eastern one (with Sokoto as its capital). Eventually, Muhammad Bello, Dan Fodio's son, was recognised as second Sultan and gained control over the entire Caliphate. The Caliphate became the centre of power in the region, but had disintegrated by the 1880s through internal rivalry. French and British colonial troops conquered its territory in 1903.

The Middle Belt is ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous. Large parts were never conquered by Dan Fodio's jihad and many tribes actively resisted domination by the Hausa-Fulani in the caliphate and its 30 emirates. It was only the British who placed those areas under the jurisdiction of an emir by their policy of indirect rule in the 20th century. At independence, Middle Belters advocated for a separate Middle Belt entity apart from the northern Hausa-Fulani dominated areas, but the Colonial Minority Commission recommended against it. Thus northern Nigeria - consisting of Far North Nigeria (predominantly Hausa-Fulani and Kanuri) and the Middle Belt (home to other different tribes) - remained an undivided entity and continues to be so today.

Independence and first republic, 1960-1966: Nigeria became an independent nation on 1 October 1960. As no one party was the clear winner in the 1959 elections, Chief Benjamin Azikiwe (eastern region) was appointed as General Governor and Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (northern region) as Prime Minister. When Nigeria declared itself a republic in 1963, Azikiwe became president and Balewa remained prime minister. Ethnic and regional tensions soon emerged between the Hausa-Fulani (northern region), Yoruba (western region) and Igbo (eastern region). These tensions were mainly to do with the differences in development between north and south. The north felt threatened by the south's advanced education system and economy.

First period of military rule and civil war, 1966-1979: On January 15, 1966, young (Igbo) officers staged a coup assassinating several politicians including Prime Minister Alhaji Abubakar Balewa. The Igbo accused the 1963 census of overestimating the number of Hausa-Fulani in

order to give the northern region better representation in parliament. Major General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi (eastern region) emerged from the chaos as the new strongman. On July 29, 1966, northern Muslims officers led a contra-coup to resist the perceived Igbo domination. Christian General Yakubu Gowon (northern region) was seen as a compromise candidate to head the federal government.

In order to reduce tribal hegemony and competition, Gowon made plans to divide the four existing regions (north, east, west and Lagos) into 12 states. Igbos refused and on May 29, 1967, Lieutenant-Colonel Emeka Ojukwu declared the eastern region of 'Biafra' as independent. The civil war that ensued lasted until 1970, with an estimated death toll of 3.5 million. Nigeria remained undivided. On July 29, 1975, General Murtala Mohammed (northern region) put an end to Gowon's regime for not honouring his promise to revert to civilian rule. Mohammed, however, was assassinated on February 13, 1976, in an attempted coup prompted by government weakness and corruption. General Olusegun Obasanjo, General Murtala Mohammed's Chief of Staff, (western region) became head of state and prepared a return to civilian rule with a new constitution.

Second republic, 1979-1983: The new constitution was drafted and Alhadji Aliyu Shagari (northern region) won general elections for the presidency in 1979; he was re-elected in 1983.

Second period of military rule, abortive third republic and third period of military rule, 1983-1999: On December 31, 1983 Shagari was overthrown by General Muhammadu Buhari (northern region); the coup drew wide acclaim initially for ending an era of economic mismanagement, corruption and discontent over what was widely seen as the rigged elections of 1983. The Yom Kippur war (1973) and the Iraq-Iran war (1979) had raised the price of oil dramatically and, as large quantities of money poured into Nigeria, political competition for access to these resources hardened. On August 27, 1985, General Ibrahim Babangida (northern region) overthrew Buhari for reasons of corruption, misuse of power and failure to tackle the economic crisis. General Babangida promised a return to civilian rule by 1990 (the third republic). A constitution was adopted in 1989 and elections were finally held in 1993. Rich businessman Moshood Abiola (western region) won, but Babangida annulled the results, claiming fraud, in an apparent bid to stay in power. Political chaos erupted and Babangida

was obliged, in 1993, to transfer power to Chief Ernest Shonekan (western region). Shonekan was appointed as interim leader until the next elections, but was unable to address the country's political and economic problems. General Sani Abacha (northern region) ousted him on November 17, 1993. Abacha brought Nigeria back under military rule and had all of his political opponents imprisoned. His regime was brutal, prompting several attempted coups. Promises for a return to civilian rule were made, but not kept. On June 8, 1998, Abacha died of a heart attack at the age of 54 and General Abdulsalami Abubakar (northern region) took his place. Abubakar prepared a return to democracy and the well-known General Olusegun Obasanjo (western region) won presidential elections in 1999.

Fourth Republic 1999 - present: General Olusegun Obasanjo's election in 1999 ended 16 years of military rule and he inherited a country with many problems (i.e. dysfunctional bureaucracy, collapsed infrastructure and corruption). Human rights were improved and freedom of press was upheld, but a religious crisis erupted when enhanced Sharia law was adopted by 12 northern states. Some governors of northern states used the perceived threat to Muslim identity by the election of Obasanjo, a southern Christian, as a means to get more power through the adoption of enhanced Sharia, putting the federal government at a distance. Obasanjo was re-elected in 2003. In the next presidential elections in 2007, Katsina state Governor Umaru Yar'Adua (northern region) was elected with Bayelsa state Governor Goodluck Jonathan (eastern region) as vice-president.

Yar'Adua fell ill in 2009 and died in May 2010. Jonathan became acting president from February 2010 and was elected as president in 2011. He stood for re-election in 2015. His presidency has always been contested by northern Muslims as there is an unwritten agreement within the ruling party (PDC) that the presidency should alternate every eight years between the north and the south for the sake of national unity. Northern Muslims lost the presidency in 2010. Northern Muslims and southern Christians were desperate to regain and retain the presidency respectively for the same reason - access to abundant state revenues through oil money. The northern Muslims won the March 2015 elections and Muslim president Muhammed Buhari became president.

Appendix 4

The history of the church in northern Nigeria⁵⁹

The colonial period (1857-1954): northern Nigeria was dominated by Islam throughout the Sokoto Caliphate, ruled by the Sultan in Sokoto and 30 subordinate emirs. These emirs were lords and masters over their local populations. Around 1900, about 50 per cent of the Hausa-Fulani and Kanuri population were Muslim and at independence this figure had risen to approximately 80 per cent. Large non-Muslim populations lived in the Middle Belt who had either resisted Islam or had not been Islamised.

With the advent of colonial administration in northern Nigeria, the British applied the policy of indirect rule. As the British valued the emirate structure of the caliphate, this 'existing' structure was formalised as the emirs presented it to them. As a consequence the northern region became divided into Muslim and non-Muslim emirates, although the Muslim emirates did also contain significant numbers of non-Muslims.

The Anglican Bishop Crowther of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) established the first northern Christian missionary station in Lokoja, in present Kogi State. Crowther was of African descent and his missionary approach was gentle, encouraging a gradual process of leaving traditional beliefs and adopting Christian ones. CMS missionaries that arrived later, however, advocated a more radical break with traditional beliefs. As a result, converts were few.

Colonial policy initially prevented missionaries entering Muslim-dominated areas in the Far North. Wanting to appease the hierarchy of the Sokoto Caliphate, the colonial government sought to win cooperation with the emirs. The colonial government promised fair and just rule and non-interference with Islam in northern Nigeria. As a result, all inhabitants of Muslim emirates were considered Muslims.

Many missionary groups arrived in the non-Muslim districts: the Sudan Interior Mission (1894), the Sudan United Mission (1904), the United Missionary Society (1905) and the Seventh Day Adventist Mission (1905). African Independent churches arrived from the south in the 1930s and 1940s. Christianity slowly began to grow: churches were founded, Christian families established and Christian communities created.

The period of independent churches (1954-1987):

Before Nigerian independence in 1960, Nigerian Christians were taking over from foreigners and independent churches emerged.

Some Protestant churches split due to leadership and tribal issues but the church in general grew tremendously through its emphasis on education and national leadership. Theological schools were established and the Bible was translated into local languages.

After independence, however, Muslim influence in northern Nigerian society grew. In 1964 the Northern Christian Association was formed to cope with growing Christian marginalisation and discrimination under Muslim-dominated northern state governments. In 1973 all missionary schools (except Bible schools and theological colleges) were taken over by the northern government and de-Christianised. In 1976, the Christian Association of Nigeria at the national level was formed to advocate for the rights of Christians in the context of a multi-religious society.

First appearing in the 1960s and 1970s in the northern region, Pentecostal and charismatic churches began to flourish. Embraced by southern migrants and later by the non-Hausa-Fulani in the Middle Belt, these churches made inroads among communities in the Far North.

The period of religious violence (1987 to the present day): March 6, 1987, marked a turning point in Christian / Muslim relations in northern Nigeria, with the Kanfanchan crisis erupting in Kaduna state. Until that date Muslims and Christians had lived in relative peace. One observer commented that, in Kanfanchan, 'long seated and deep feelings of resentment, prejudice and frustrations between Muslims and Christians, and from the [majority Christian] local people against the [Hausa-Fulani-dominated] local government exploded that day'.⁶⁰

The Christian students of the Kanfanchan College of Education held a well-publicised 'Welcome to the Jesus campus' banner and a pastor from a Muslim background made reference to the Koran in his sermon. This sparked a fierce reaction from the Muslim students, who felt their religion was threatened by the Christian presence in the college. The conflict spread to the local population of Kafanchan town and its surrounding villages: 12 people were killed and two churches, four mosques and 29 private houses were destroyed. Riots broke out in the following days in Zaria (Ahmadu Bello University), Kaduna and other northern cities. A total of 19 men were killed, and 169 hotels, 152 churches, 152 houses and five mosques were destroyed in six days of violence. On March 12, 1987, martial law was declared in Kaduna state.

Feeling their identity and interests were endangered in a secular Nigeria, northern Muslims had unleashed their frustrations through the Kanfanchan incident. During

colonial times, southern Christians had benefited from westernisation in the form of education, literacy and employment. At independence, northern Muslims were far behind their southern neighbours and felt threatened by Christian domination and migration to the north. Growing Christianity in the Middle Belt was an even bigger threat. To counteract Christian influence, northern Muslims developed a policy of 'northernisation' in which all leadership positions were kept in Muslim hands to safeguard Muslim identity. The impact of this policy was greatly felt among Christians in the Middle Belt where Muslim control allowed little space for Christian churches to prosper. This policy led to growing fears among southern Christians of domination by a 'demographic Muslim majority' in the country as a whole.

The debate in 1978 about the establishment of a Federal Sharia Court of Appeal, as well as the 1986 application of Nigeria for membership in the Organisation of Islamic Conference, fuelled Christians' fears. The growth in the north of radical Muslim groups through links with other Islamic nations and the rapid increase of Pentecostal and Evangelical churches in the north fuelled suspicion on both sides. In the Middle Belt memory of the Sokoto Caliphate, with its enslavement of non-Muslims, was still very much alive and was reflected in the political dominance of Muslim Fulani emirs over the Christian population. Tensions were escalating.

Riots followed: the Kano riots in 1991 and 1995; the Kaduna riots in Zangon-Kataf in 1992; the Katsina riot in 1991; the Bauchi riots in Tafawa Balewa in 1991, 1994, 2000 and beyond; the Borno riots in Potiskum in 1994 and Maiduguri in 1998; and the Plateau riots in Jos city and Plateau state in 1994, 2001, 2004, 2008, 2010 and 2012.

Notes

- 1 Mulders, Arne, *Crushed but not defeated: the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria*, Open Doors international, February 2016, <http://theanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Crushed-but-not-defeated-Full-Report.pdf>
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- 4 30 million is the estimated number of Christians, based on the figures of Open Doors International research, the World Christian Database and figures presented by Professor Ga.
- 5 Mulders, Arne, *Crushed but not defeated: the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria*, paragraph 7.4 and paragraph 8.2.
- 6 Mulders, Arne, *Crushed but not defeated: the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria*, Chapter 8 'Impact on the church', paragraph 8.1.
- 7 Mulders, Arne, *Crushed but not defeated: the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria*, p. 76
- 8 Kukah, Rev Fr M H, *Religion, politics and power in northern Nigeria*, Spectrum Books, Lagos, 1993.
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- 13 Loimeier, Prof Dr R, *Die radikale islamische Opposition in Nordnigeria*, in *Africa Spectrum* 32, 1997, 1:5-23. Also see Loimeier, R, *Islamic reform and political change: the example of Abubakar Gumi and the Yan Izala movement in northern Nigeria*, in Rosander, EE and Westerlund, D, (eds) *African Islam and Islam in Africa: encounters between Sufis and Islamists*, Hurst and Company, London, 1997.
- 14 See the example of Abubakar Gumi who founded the Izala movement in, Kukah, Rev Fr M H, *Religion, politics and power in northern Nigeria*, Spectrum Books, Lagos, 1993.
- 15 International Crisis Group (2014) *Curbing violence in Nigeria (II): the Boko Haram insurgency*, in *Africa Report* No. 216, 3 April 2014: [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/west-africa/nigeria/216-curbing-violence-in-nigeria-ii-the-boko-haram-insurgency.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/africa/west-africa/nigeria/216-curbing-violence-in-nigeria-ii-the-boko-haram-insurgency.pdf)
- 16 Desertification: the process of fertile land transforming into desert typically as a result of deforestation, drought or improper/inappropriate agriculture.
- 17 Adamu, A and Aypse, B (March 2015) *Migration and violent conflict in divided societies: non-Boko Haram violence against Christians in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria*.
- 18 Adamu, A and Aypse, B (November 2015) *Violent conflict in divided societies: the case study of violent conflict in Taraba state (2013-2015)*, NPVRN Working Paper No. 2, Abuja, Nigeria, For World Watch Research, Open Doors International, Netherlands, <http://theanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Violent-Conflict-in-Taraba-State-2013-2015.pdf>
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- 21 Human Rights Watch (2007) *Criminal politics: violence, 'godfathers' and corruption in Nigeria*, Volume 19, No. 16 (A), October 2007
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- 23 A church district (district church council or DCC) consists of a number of local church councils (LCC). An LCC is a small diocese or district consisting of several local churches. At the time of writing, EYN consisted of 2,280 local churches and 456 LCCs. Out of 456 local church councils, 278 have been destroyed and out of 2,280 local church branches, 1,390 have been destroyed.
- 24 Awayi, Rev D D, *Christian molestation and plight in Yobe state*, 2014, unpublished, in Open Doors' possession.
- 25 Adamu, A and Aypse, B (November 2015) *Violent conflict in divided societies: the case study of violent conflict in Taraba state (2013-2015)*.
- 26 International Crisis Group (2012) *Curbing violence in Nigeria (I): the Jos crisis*, in *Africa Report* No. 196, 17 December 2012: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/west-africa/nigeria/196-curbing-violence-in-nigeria-i-the-jos-crisis.aspx>.
- 27 A local government area (LGA) is an administrative division of a state in Nigeria that a local government is responsible for. Nigeria has 36 states and 774 local government areas. It is more or less equivalent to a district.
- 28 Mulders, Arne, *Crushed but not defeated: the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria*, Chapter 2 'Figures, features and trends', paragraph 2.1.

- 29 Religious figures are highly controversial in Nigeria. When this report was presented to Nigerian church leaders in the fall of 2015, these statistics were challenged: people felt they underestimate the population and percentage of Christians. One of the reasons they put forward was the fact that during the last census in 2006 no religious demographic information was taken. Many leaders see this as a silent appeasement of Muslims who insisted religious information must not be in the census. Some Christian leaders believe Christians are in the majority now.
- 30 Adherents of ATR plus < 1% adherents of other religions and non-religious.
- 31 Mulders, Arne, *Crushed but not defeated: the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria*, Table 1 in Appendix 4: Christian and Muslim populations in northern states.
- 32 Mulders, Arne, *Crushed but not defeated: the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria*, Table 1 in Appendix 15: Summary of attacks on Christians in Northern Nigeria.
- 33 World Watch Monitor, *Boko Haram 'more deadly terror group' in 2014 than IS*, November 2015, <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2015/11/4114090/>.
- 34 Chouin, Gérard, Reinert, Manuel & Aparé, Elodie, *Body count and religion in the Boko Haram crisis: Evidence from the Nigeria Watch database*, (2014), page 2016, https://www.academia.edu/4245284/2014_-_Religion_and_bodycount_in_the_Boko_Haram_crisis_evidence_from_the_Nigeria_Watch_database; Also, Open Doors researchers found that the Christian majority areas were specifically targeted during the Gwoza caliphate e.g. in Gwoza LGA - majority Christian - all churches and villages were destroyed; in Kukawa LGA - majority Muslim - a selected number of villages were destroyed and Kukawa city was spared. Further, once the centre of Boko Haram was resettled from the Sambesi Forest into the Gwoza area of north-east Nigeria, the caliphate extended more to southern Borno and northern Adamawa than to other areas like northern Borno and eastern Yobe. This was for practical reasons: safety (close to the Cameroonian border), convenience (apparently less protected by the Nigerian army), and booty (land and property of Christians were more legitimate targets than Muslim ones).
- 35 Mulders, Arne, *Crushed but not defeated: the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria*, Table 1 in Appendix 5: Christians victim of persistent violence 'by targeting'.
- 36 Adamu, A and Aypse, B (March 2015) *Migration and violent conflict in divided societies: non-Boko Haram violence against Christians in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria*; see also Adamu, A and Aypse, B (November 2015) *Violent conflict in divided societies: the case study of violent conflict in Taraba state (2013-2015)*.
- 37 Di Falco, J-M, Radcliffe, T and Riccardi, A (dir) *Le livre noir de la condition des Chrétiens dans le monde*, XO Editions, Paris, 2014, pp. 35-37.
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- website with database of Nigeria Watch: <http://www.nigeriawatch.org>
 - Chouin, G, Reinert, M and Aparé, E (2014) *Body count and religion in the Boko Haram crisis: evidence from the Nigeria Watch database*, French Research Institute in Africa (IFRA), Nigeria African Studies: https://www.academia.edu/4245284/2014_-_Religion_and_bodycount_in_the_Boko_Haram_crisis_evidence_from_the_Nigeria_Watch_database
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 - French Research Institute in Africa (IFRA), Nigeria Watch, *Fourth report on violence in Nigeria (2006-2014)*, June 2014: <http://www.nigeriawatch.org>
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- 39 Olayoku, P (2014) *Trends and patterns of cattle grazing and rural violence in Nigeria (2006-20014)*; See also Conroy, S (2014) *Land conflicts and lethal violence in Nigeria: patterns, mapping and evolution (2006-2014)*; cf. example Adamu, A and Aypse, B (March 2015) *Migration and violent conflict in divided societies: non-Boko Haram violence against Christians in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria*, and Adamu, A and Aypse, B (November 2015) *Violent conflict in divided societies: the case study of violent conflict in Taraba state (2013-2015)*.
- 40 Olayoku, P (2014) *Trends and patterns of cattle grazing and rural violence in Nigeria (2006-20014)*, p. 3; See also Conroy, S (2014) *Land conflicts and lethal violence in Nigeria: patterns, mapping and evolution (2006-2014)*, p. 10
- 41 Adamu, A and Aypse, B (March 2015) *Migration and violent conflict in divided societies: non-Boko Haram violence against Christians in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria*, and Adamu, A and Aypse, B (November 2015) *Violent conflict in divided societies: the case study of violent conflict in Taraba state (2013-2015)*.
- 42 Estimates of a similar nature can also be attained using a different methodology: Having ascertained that the intersectionality between different causes of non-natural death in northern Nigeria means that religion, politics, cattle grazing / land disputes can be categorised together as 'religion-related violence', we counted each non-natural death which was attributed to one or more of these categories. Out of 45,228 non-natural deaths in northern Nigeria, 24,764 were attributable to religion-related violence (see table 1, Appendix 16 of the full report). The demographic representation of Christians at 31.2 per cent means that 7,726 of these victims will be Christians. However, given that Christians suffer targeted violence, we argue that in some areas 41.2 per cent of victims will be Christians, which gives us up to 10,202 Christian victims. Once these figures have been rounded up to reflect significant underreporting, this estimate shows that between 8,500 to 11,000 Christians have been killed.
- 43 OCHA, *North east Nigeria crisis: humanitarian snapshot* (as of 30 January 2015.; http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/NE_Snapshot_Jan30.pdf

- 44 An estimated 13,000 churches have been destroyed, burned or closed and according to local church leaders, congregations in Northern Nigeria consist of an average number of 50-100 members/affiliates. Therefore, it is likely that about 1.3 million Christians have most likely been affected and forced to flee or relocate.
- 45 These numbers are estimates provided by CAN when asked to compare the number of Christians affected by violence in each state in 2000 and those affected by violence in each state in 2014.
- 46 Mulders, Arne, *Crushed but not defeated: the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria*, Chapter 2 'Figures, features and trends', paragraph 2.1.
- 47 Figures for one major denomination in each of the five blocks of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) were given. These blocks are: SCN (Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria), CCN (Christian Council of Nigeria), CPFN/PFN (made up of Pentecostal churches), OAIC (Organisation of African Instituted churches), and ECWA/TEKAN - Evangelical churches. The five major denominations were respectively: Catholic Church, Anglican Church, Assemblies of God Church, Celestial Church of Christ, Evangelical Church Winning All.
- 48 Mulders, Arne, *Crushed but not defeated: the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria*, See Table 2 in Appendix 10: Political and religious affiliation of northern (deputy) governors.
- 49 Based on statistics from October 2014 by Open Doors researchers in northern Nigeria. The original report stated that all 37 BBC Hausa journalises were Muslim. Subsequent research indicates that one is a Christian.
- 50 Jenkins, Philip, *The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia and How It Died*, Harper One, New York, 2008, p 100. These distinctive features appear very similar to the factors Philip Jenkins describes as being responsible for the decline of the church in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. He describes the history of the church in these regions in three distinct periods. First there is its golden age from the apostles until the 14th century when the Christian faith spread to China, sub-Saharan Africa and Europe, and flourished in bishoprics, with beautiful cathedrals and renowned universities. Even under Islam from the 8th century, Christians lived in relative peace. The Eastern Church engaged its largest missionary enterprise in Asia, and Muslim lands in the Middle East became largely Christian. Second, from the 14th to 19th century, Christianity fell into decline caused by a change in the economic climate, tribal migrations (social) and the Mongol invasions (religious-political). It lost its majority status, became a minority in different lands and collapsed amid conflict and religious-related violence, leaving only small communities behind (e.g. Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq). Finally, since the 20th century, Christianity has ceased to exist in its organised form in some countries, where it can only meet in small numbers or in secret in an otherwise Muslim-majority environment.
- 51 Mulders, Arne, *Crushed but not defeated: the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria*, Appendix 2: List of Structured Interviews.
- 52 Daily Trust, *Boko Haram: How the new 'Caliphate' emerged*, 3 November 2015, <http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/weekly/index.php/top-stories/17517-how-boko-haram-s-islamicaliphate-compromises-nigeria-s-sovereignty>.
- 53 Mulders, Arne, *Crushed but not defeated: the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria*, 'Outcomes of In-Depth Interviews, Structured Interviews and Focus Group Discussions'. See Appendix 1, 2 and 3.
- 54 Kaigama, The Rev'd Dr. Ignatius, *Dialogue of Life*, an urgent message for Nigerian Muslims and Christians, Fab Educational Books, Jos, Nigeria, 2006, and Kaigama, The Rev'd Dr. Ignatius, *Peace, Not War: A Decade of Interventions in the Plateau State Crises (2001-2011)*, Hamtul Press Ltd. Jos Plateau, 2012; see also Pam, The Rev'd Yakubu and Korb, Dr. Katrina, *Learning from the peace heroes among us*, Fab Educational Books, Jos, Nigeria, 2011.
- 55 Mulders, Arne, *Crushed but not defeated: the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria*, Chapter 1: 'An impact study', paragraph 1.2: Methodology.
- 56 To qualify for membership of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) a church must have been registered under the Companies and Allied Matters Act of 1990 or previous legislation and belong to one of the five church groups, namely: Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN); Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN); Christian Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (CPFN) / Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN); Organisation of African Instituted Churches (OAIC); TEKAN and ECWA Fellowships: <http://cannigeria.org/membership/>.
- 57 Mulders, Arne, *Crushed but not defeated: the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria*, Chapter 5: 'Northern Nigeria in context', paragraph 5.1 'Early developments'.
- 58 Mulders, Arne, *Crushed but not defeated: the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria*, Chapter 5: 'Northern Nigeria in context', paragraph 5.2 'Recent developments'.
- 59 Mulders, Arne, *Crushed but not defeated: the impact of persistent violence on the church in northern Nigeria*, Chapter 7: 'The church in northern Nigeria'. See also:
- cf. Crampton, E P T, *Christianity in northern Nigeria*, Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1979.
 - Gaiya, Musa A B, *Christianity in northern Nigeria, 1975-2000*, in Exchange, Volume 33, Issue 4, 2004.
 - Gaiya, Musa A B (2014) Proposed additional text of 'Epilogue 1975 - 2010' for a new edition of Crampton's 1979 *Christianity in northern Nigeria*, received from the author, September 2014.
- 60 Kukah, Rev Fr M H, *Religion, politics and power in northern Nigeria*, p. 186.



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