



Nigeria: Southern Kaduna and  
the atrocities of Hausa-Fulani  
Muslim herdsmen  
(May 2016 – September 2017)

SHORT VERSION



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Open Doors International / World Watch Research Unit

January 2018

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Condensed version by World Watch Research (WWR), Open Doors International, Netherlands

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	1
Chapter One: Background .....	2
Chapter Two: Empirical data covering May 2016 – September 2017.....	3
Chapter Three: Ideological factors.....	5
Chapter Four: Government action and inaction .....	7
Conclusion .....	8

## Introduction

In the past three years, the World Watch Research team of Open Doors International has commissioned reports to examine the violence caused by the Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen against indigenous Christian communities in Nigeria’s Middle Belt region, particularly in Taraba, Nasarawa and most recently in Benue State.<sup>1</sup> These and the current report indicate that there is an Islamic agenda to drive the indigenous Christian communities out of the Middle Belt region, thus allowing Hausa-Fulani Muslims occupy the area and dominate all religious, political and socio-economic issues. This can be termed “religious cleansing” (i.e. ethnic cleansing based on religious affiliation).

This report looks at the attacks by Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen in Kaduna State. This state has become divided along religious, ethnic and socio-cultural lines with the northern part being dominated by Hausa-Fulani Muslims which has forced the indigenous Christian communities to migrate to Southern Kaduna. Settlements based around religious affiliation and ethnic groups are also found in major towns such as Zonkwa, Kafanchan and Kachia. Giving a voice to Christian victims and outlining the ideological factors behind this conflict is a key aim of this report.

The objectives of this study are:

- i) to investigate the nature and extent of Hausa-Fulani Muslim violence targeting indigenous Christian (farming) communities in 5 Local Government Areas/LGAs of Southern Kaduna (Jama’a, Kaura, Kuru, Sanga and Zangon-Kataf) since May 2016;
- ii) to draw attention to the suffering and misery of the mostly Christian victims;
- iii) to examine the action and inaction of government, including the activities of security services and the impact on Christians;

<sup>1</sup> Taraba State: <http://theanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Violent-Conflict-in-Taraba-State-2013-2015.pdf>; Nasarawa State: <http://theanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Nigeria-Investigating-common-narratives-of-violent-conflict-in-Nasarawa-State-2016.pdf>; Benue State: <http://theanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Nigeria-Benue-State-2017-WWR.pdf> (password: freedom).

- iv) to raise awareness of the gender aspect of the conflict, through reporting the experiences, trauma and suffering of Christian women, children and the most vulnerable (i.e. the disabled and the aged).

The interviews behind this report were conducted with different categories of people: victims, witnesses, policy makers, government officials, security personnel, religious leaders and influential community leaders in Southern Kaduna. The data was collected over a period of five months, namely from May 2017 to September 2017, in as many of the 5 LGAs of Southern Kaduna as possible by teams set up by The Africa Conflict and Security Analysis Network (ACSAN).

## Chapter One: Background

Herdsmen are often simply perceived as being people constantly in search of greener pasture for feeding their herds. Historically, herdsmen in Africa have always played an important role in Islamic jihad which can be traced back to the time when Arab Islamic forces defeated the Byzantine army in middle of the 7th century and gained control over coastal North Africa, converting the nomadic Berber tribes to Islam.<sup>2</sup> The role they play show that their use of terror is pre-meditated, justified by religious ideology and sometimes politically motivated, depending on the place, time and socio-political context. Today's nomads use sophisticated weapons, and in Nigeria, there has been a resurgence of violent conflict and Islamic *jihad* perpetrated by Muslim nomads belonging to the Hausa-Fulani group. Some have settled in the Middle Belt region, particularly Southern Kaduna, and some are migratory from across the Sahel.

The use of the term "Southern Kaduna" is not simply geographical but carries with it a range of undertones concerning social identity, religious affiliation and cultural heritage. For some it refers to the southern part of Kaduna State (which officially came into being in 1987, when it was detached from Katsina Province)<sup>3</sup> and contains a potpourri of over 30 ethnic nationalities, including: Atyap, Attachirak, Tsam, Kagoma, Fantswam, Adara, Akurmi, Ninkyop, Agbiri, Amap, Asholio and others, all of whom are predominantly Christian. But others stress that the use of the term "Southern Kaduna" goes back to the beginning of the 20th century and British colonial administration,<sup>4</sup> where it encapsulates the struggle against Muslim Hausa-Fulani hegemony by Christian ethnic nationalities. It is little wonder that many therefore understand "Southern Kaduna" as a cultural area and home to a Christian religious group, which due to its marginal status is also regarded as a second-class community.

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<sup>2</sup> Levtzion N. and Pouwels R., *The History of Islam in Africa*, Ohio University Press, 2000, p. 2. Also cf. Boyd J. and Shagari S.: *The life and legacy of Shehu Uthman Dan Fodiyo*, Macmillan Publishers, Oxford, 2003, pp. 1-13; Jubber, Nicholas, *Mali's Nomads: Bulwark against Jihad*, 2014, <http://www.worldpolicy.org/journal/fall2014/mali-nomads-against-jihad>, last accessed 2 April 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Gudaku B. T., *Historical background to Contemporary Violent Conflicts in Southern Kaduna and Review of past Reports on Violent Conflicts in the Area*, unpublished paper presented at a workshop organised by the The Kukah Centre (TKC) and Nigerian Social Responsibility Programme (NSRP) in Kaduna on 8 August 2017.

<sup>4</sup> See: <http://sokadworld.com/index.php/about-southern-kaduna/15-site-pages>, last accessed 1 November 2017 and Madaki J. B., *Southern Kaduna*, available at [sokadworld.com/index.php/about-southern-kaduna/history](http://sokadworld.com/index.php/about-southern-kaduna/history), last accessed 12 October 2017.

Use of the term has become a form of protest against Muslim domination. The indigenous people of Southern Kaduna feel an alien system of governance has always been imposed upon them, including slavery. In 1450-1850 it was the Saurata System in Zazzau, then came the Emirate System in 1816-1903 and the Native Authority System in 1903-1930,<sup>5</sup> and in all these periods the indigenous people were marginalized and their land exploited. Even though the Hausa-Fulani Muslims were a minority in Southern Kaduna, their neighborhoods and local communities became the focal point of all economic, political and administrative life.<sup>6</sup>

## Chapter Two: Empirical data covering May 2016 – September 2017

This chapter provides empirical data on the current conflict in Southern Kaduna, looking specifically at the period 1 May 2016 - 31 September 2017. Complete sets of data are supplied in Volume 2 of the full report. According to the findings, an estimated 725 people have been killed (709 of them Christians), 130 injured and 12,150 properties have been damaged or destroyed, with Christians being most affected.

One of the dominant features of attacks in Southern Kaduna has been well-coordinated night raids on Christians and Christian communities by the Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen. The attackers invade villages, kill, maim and set houses ablaze when the victims are asleep. The weapons used for these attacks include guns, machetes, daggers and axes.<sup>7</sup> It would seem certain that the primary motivation for the raids is to eliminate Christians, i.e. ethnic cleansing based on religious affiliation. Interviews with women in Ladugga axis of Southern Kaduna, Numana in Sanga LGA as well as Godogodo in Jema'a LGA reveal that Christian women in the aforementioned locations have been kidnapped for varying periods, ranging from some days to months and often subjected to sexual assault.<sup>8</sup> ACSAN also met Christians in Ladugga in Jema'a LGA who reported how their children had been sexually molested by Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen.

The data is divided into five categories:

1: Christians/Muslims killed; 2: Christians injured; 3: Christians/Muslims who lost property and whether displaced; 4: List of Christians in IDP Camp Kafanchan; 5: List of churches destroyed.

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<sup>5</sup>Gudaku B. T., Historical background to Contemporary Violent Conflicts in Southern Kaduna and Review of past Reports on Violent Conflicts in the Area, unpublished paper presented at a workshop organised by the The Kukah Centre (TKC) and Nigerian Social Responsibility Programme (NSRP) in Kaduna on 8 August 2017.

<sup>6</sup> ibid

<sup>7</sup> Interviews in Kwo, Jabba Local Government Area on 26 September 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Christian Women in Ladugga, Numana and Godogodo on 12 August, 7 and 9 September 2017 in that order.

**Table 1: Numbers of Christians/Muslims killed in 3 LGAs of Southern Kaduna (May 2016-September 2017)**

LGA	CHRISTIANS KILLED	MUSLIMS KILLED
Jema'a	327	1
Kaura	236	14
Sanga	146	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>16</b>

Source: ACSAN. See Appendix 1 of full report for details.

**Table 2: Numbers of Christians/Muslims injured in 3 LGAs of Southern Kaduna (May 2016-September 2017)**

LGA	CHRISTIANS INJURED	MUSLIMS INJURED
Jema'a	44	No data
Kaura	46	No data
Sanga	40	No data
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>130</u></b>	<b>-</b>

Source: ACSAN. See Appendix 2 of full report for details.

**Table 3: Numbers of Christians/Muslims in 4 LGAs of Southern Kaduna who lost property and were displaced (May 2016-September 2017)**

LGA	CHRISTIANS WHO LOST PROPERTY	CHRISTIANS DISPLACED	MUSLIMS WHO LOST PROPERTY	MUSLIMS DISPLACED
Jema'a	1916	1689	120	116
Kaura	847	847	99	65
Kauru	147	146	No data	No data
Sanga	549	451	No data	No data
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,459</b>	<b>3,133</b>	<b>(219)</b>	<b>(181)</b>

Source: ACSAN. See Appendix 3 of full report for details.

**Table 4: Number of displaced Christians from Jema'a LGA in IDP Camp Kafanchan**

LGA	MEN	WOMEN	CHILDREN	TOTAL
Jema'a	56	170	25	251

Source: ACSAN. See Appendix 4 of full report for details.

**Table 5: Number of churches destroyed in 3 LGAs in Southern Kaduna (May 2016-September 2017)**

LGA	CHURCHES DESTROYED
Jema'a	2
Kaura	8
Sanga	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>

Source: ACSAN. See Appendix 5 of full report for details and dates.

## Chapter Three: Ideological factors

There are conflicting ideological perspectives on the nature of violent conflict against Christians in Southern Kaduna. For instance, many perspectives lay emphasis on environment, ethnicity, political contestation, population and/or economic competition as being the basis for the violent conflict. There is no denying the fact that several of these factors are applicable, however they do not explain the true depth of the problem. To conceive of the conflict simply in terms of being a clash of political, economic and social interests is, at best, reductionist. Evidence suggests that the conflict in Southern Kaduna is linked to the Islamic war of expansion, domination and supremacy. The Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsman understands that he has a right not only to the land, but a religious obligation to ensure that Islam reigns supreme over that land.

The most prominent nomadic pre-colonial radical Islamic movement in Africa was the jihad led by Askia Muhammad I, the ruler of Songhay Empire (1492-1528). Another radical Islamic movement led by a nomadic Fulani was the conquest of Ethiopia (Abyssinia) in 1527. The Fulbe and the Somali herdsman provided the main fighting forces for Islamic *jihads* that were staged in 17th and 18th century Africa. In the 1670s, Nasir al-Din, a Berber herdsman and Islamic scholar, organized a *jihad* against local communities in Mauritania, forcefully occupying their land and converting many to Islam. Uthman Dan Fodio, the founder of the Sokoto caliphate in northern Nigeria, was himself a descendant of the Fulani herdsman who promoted Islamic *jihad*. It is good to note that the process of sedentarization of these nomads before and after British colonization never quenched the thirst for conquering more territories for Islam. This reality exists among both nomads who are now settled and those who remain herdsman.

Over the years, there has been a perpetual targeting of Christians and the destruction of their farms and means of livelihood, with the government providing no security for Christians and no solutions for ending the violence. Some of these violent conflicts were:

- 1980: The Kasuwan Magani crisis
- 1984: The Gure-Kahugu disturbances
- 1987: The Kafanchan conflict
- 1992: The Zangon Kataf violent conflict (February)
- 1992: The Zangon-Kataf violence
- 2000: The Kaduna violence (February/May) – see Table 6 for details
- 2001: The Gwantu religious crisis (November)

**Table 6: Data on killings, damage and displacement during the Kaduna violence in February and May 2000.<sup>9</sup>**

Estimated number of persons killed	Over 2,000	Mostly Christians. They were killed during a four day span in February and a five day span in May 2000.
Estimated number of persons injured	About 10,000	Health infrastructure was unable to meet the emergency demands. This led to the unfortunate turning away of people who were in need of help, some in dire conditions.
Estimated number of properties destroyed	Up to 21,000	Among the buildings destroyed were many churches and some mosques
Estimated number of persons displaced	60,000-65,000	Mostly women and children.

Source: Compiled from the white paper of Judicial Commission of Inquiry, BBC African Report (26 February and 20-30 May 2000), Nigerian Tell Magazine (May 2000) and Human Rights Watch Report, 2000.

Even though the current wave of attacking non-Muslim groups in Southern Kaduna started within the context of the 2011 general elections, it soon became obvious that the violent conflict was not about politics but faith and ethnic identity. Leading up to the general elections of 2015, there was widespread killing of Christians in Kaduna State, but also in the states of Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba. In Kaduna, verifiable evidence<sup>10</sup> indicates that the attacks occurred mostly in the Southern Kaduna axis of the state, where Christians are the dominant

<sup>9</sup> It is not possible to get the exact figures of the destruction of lives and properties that took place. However, these figures give a bird's eye view into what transpired.

<sup>10</sup> Roll-call of Fulani herdsmen attacks in Kaduna state as compiled by Bajju Development Association and the Catholic Diocese of Kafanchan.

group. Interviews conducted revealed that many of the Hausa-Fulani Muslim nomads killing Christians in Southern Kaduna are well armed with AK-47 rifles and sophisticated weapons like those seen in battles in Libya, Sudan and Mali. This makes the *jihad* for the expansion of Islam easier, and Christians more vulnerable.

## Chapter Four: Government action and inaction

This chapter evaluates current government policies and attitudes concerning the constant attacks in Southern Kaduna:

- The government has failed to arrest, prosecute and make perpetrators accountable for their crimes. Instead, those responsible for attacks in Southern Kaduna have been allowed to behave with impunity.
- In 2016 the Federal government deployed a special security task force, codenamed “Operation Harbin Kunama” (OHK)<sup>11</sup>, to restore peace to the area. However, attacks and kidnappings have continued to occur. Communities are worried by indications that many Muslims in the security services are compromised and increasingly becoming part of the conflict.
- The Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria set up an Ad-hoc Committee on Peace and Reconciliation to deal with the crisis in Southern Kaduna and in other parts of the country. The findings of the report have been rejected by the Senate, citing poor recommendations.<sup>12</sup>
- Senator Kabiru Gaya alleged that over 70% of the police officers deployed in Southern Kaduna were indigenes of the place, making it likely for such officers to take sides. The resulting recommendation is that most of the indigenous Christians who are members of the security services in Southern Kaduna are to be withdrawn. The implication is that the security services will then be dominated by Hausa-Fulani Muslims, who are already seen as being compromised and are likely to aid the attackers in committing more atrocities.
- The State government has set up numerous committees since 2016 to provide policy recommendations for bringing stability and peace to the region. Unfortunately, it would appear that some of the committees are simply set up to reward political associates. The members of the committees hardly ever visit the local communities, victims and survivors but simply repeat previous recommendations and receive their attendance allowances.

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<sup>11</sup> Vanguard News, 2017. Army Launches Operation Harbin Kunama II in Southern Kaduna.  
<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/04/army-launches-operation-harbin-kunama-ii-southern-kaduna/>

<sup>12</sup> Vanguard News, 2017. Southern Kaduna Killings, Senate Rejects Panel Report,  
<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/04/southern-kaduna-killings-senate-rejects-panel-report/>.

- The government has failed to provide compensation for the victims who are mostly indigenous Christian farmers. This compensation could range from rebuilding houses and communities, provision of fertilizer and farming implements as well as major relief materials. The government has also failed to provide comprehensive rehabilitation and trauma counselling schemes particularly for Christian women, children and young girls affected by the conflict in Southern Kaduna.
- The State government recently concluded plans to make 21,780 teachers of Kaduna State redundant for failing primary 4 exams. Approximately 82% of those to be made redundant are from Southern Kaduna.<sup>13</sup> While Sokoto and Kwara States conducted specialized on-the-job training for those teachers who failed the tests, Kaduna State failed to do same for their teachers which means that there will be a huge number of indigenous Christians leaving the public sector and becoming unemployed.

## Conclusion

This study has clearly outlined the different categories of atrocities committed in the attacks on Christians in Southern Kaduna. It is therefore deemed reasonable to conclude that there is an Islamic agenda to drive the indigenous Christian communities out of Southern Kaduna, thus allowing Hausa-Fulani Muslims occupy the area and dominate all religious, political and socio-economic issues.

Another element of the conflict is the widespread impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of violence in Southern Kaduna. To date, Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen have never been arrested, prosecuted and punished in Southern Kaduna, and victims have not been adequately compensated. Furthermore, many of the displaced Christians have been forced to live in the Kafanchan IDP camp or with relatives and families in Kafanchan, Kagoro or Kaduna and are in need of aid. Humanitarian support for the Kafanchan IDP camp aid is not supplied by the government and it has to rely on NGOs, humanitarian services and churches to provide some assistance in the form of clothing and food.

One of the features of the Southern Kaduna conflict is the failure of the government to listen to the voices of Christian victims and ordinary people in policy formulation. The government has failed to sustain inter-community engagement and dialogue as a necessary process to attaining peace and stability. If the government remains biased, there is every likelihood that the violence against Christians will continue and that Christians will be forced to leave the area and relocate - an example of “religious cleansing” (i.e. ethnic cleansing based on religious affiliation).

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<sup>13</sup> Bishop Simon Peters Mutum & Bishop Joseph Danlami Bagobiri, Southern Kaduna Christian Leaders Association, SKCLA, Press Statement on the Sacking of Teachers in Southern Kaduna. Pastoral Centre of the Catholic Secretariat Madakiya yesterday, 16 November 2017.