



**Topic B: “Religious Violence and Human Rights Violations in Nigeria and their Impact on International Stability”.**



# Welcoming letter

Estimate delegates,

Welcome, it is an honor and a privilege to receive you at the Human Rights Committee in this twelfth edition of the Colegio Fontanar Model of the United Nations (CFMUN).

We are so excited to see you work as a team through these three days to develop solutions but most importantly to enjoy. We hope you have a great experience at this event, and we are just as excited as you are. Remember not to be afraid, it is all part of the process and we are all here to learn. Remember if you need something you can count on us. We hope your time in this committee is as meaningful as it is enjoyable,

Sincerely

Ana María Viesca & Ana Sofía Domínguez  
Moderator & Chair of Human Rights

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# I. Committee Background

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is the intergovernmental body within the UN system responsible for promoting and protecting all human rights around the globe. Its mandate includes addressing violations of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, advising on normative standards, conducting investigations, and recommending remedies. The Council works through thematic and country-specific resolutions, special procedures (independent experts and rapporteurs), the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and targeted fact-finding or inquiry missions. It also applies human rights-based approaches to issues that have a transnational impact (such as mass atrocities, forced displacement, and religiously motivated violence) linking human rights protection with international peace and security. The UNHRC frequently draws on international frameworks (for example, the Rabat Plan of Action)



## II. Introduction to the Topic

Over the past few decades, Nigeria has faced a profound crisis of interreligious and ethnic violence that has resulted in thousands of deaths, forced displacement, and systematic human rights violations. Extremist groups such as Boko Haram and ISWAP (Islamic State in West Africa) have carried out attacks against Christian, Muslim, and other minority communities, while clashes between Fulani herders and Christian farmers have intensified local tensions. Nigeria is one of Africa's most religiously and ethnically diverse countries, with large Christian and Muslim populations. This has led to historical tensions that have, at times, escalated into interreligious violence. Furthermore, the presence of extremist groups such as Boko Haram and ISWAP and local conflicts with Fulani herders exacerbate these tensions. Religious violence in Nigeria is not just an internal matter, it has implications for the protection of human rights like the freedom of religion, the right to

life and security, and for regional stability. Additionally, the state's inability to control certain conflicts or bring perpetrators to justice contributes to a culture of impunity. For example, the U.S. Commission on Religious Freedom has repeatedly cited the lack of effective response from the Nigerian authorities. For years, human rights violations linked to religious identity and intergroup tensions have remained at the center of the crisis. Attacks on religious communities, kidnappings, and murders are some of the crimes committed against individuals' rights. Moreover, impunity, blasphemy, religious legislation, internal displacement, and humanitarian crises have contributed negatively to the situation. Since some states have laws that criminalize certain religious acts, the vulnerability of communities increases. In addition, religious attacks interact with phenomena such as displacement, which adds a humanitarian and rights dimension. This

problem has significant international consequences, as interreligious violence can trigger local crises that may attract international intervention, especially if they are related to terrorism. Furthermore, international organizations and donor countries prioritize religious freedom in Nigeria because the country's religious violence threatens regional stability, fuels extremism, harms human rights, undermines development, and creates humanitarian and security risks with global implications. If violence intensifies, there could also be consequences for neighboring countries, as the most common option for victims to escape danger would be to migrate to border countries, which would lead to additional international challenges

### III. Evolution of the Topic

The crisis in Nigeria has multiple causes and has evolved over time. During the colonial era and after independence, the country already experienced deep religious and ethnic divisions, with identities intertwined with socioeconomic and political factors. The introduction of Sharia criminal law in twelve northern states between 1999 and 2000 intensified tensions, raising concerns about discrimination against minorities, corporal punishments, and challenges to Nigeria's constitutional secularism, exemplified by the 2000 Kaduna riots. In the Middle Belt, ethnic-religious conflicts, such as the Jos riots of 2001 and subsequent episodes in 2008 and 2010, further escalated violence, often involving non-state actors like Fulani herders in land and resource disputes. Since 2009, extremist groups such as Boko Haram and ISWAP have targeted both state institutions and civilian communities, increasing the complexity of attacks, including kidnappings and bombings

of churches. Persistent impunity and limitations in state protection, as highlighted by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, have worsened the situation. In recent years, violence has spread across multiple fronts, including terrorism, banditry, and farmer-herder conflicts, with ongoing legal issues such as blasphemy laws and restrictions on freedom of worship, drawing increasing attention from the UN Human Rights Council.



## IV. Relevant Events

### A. Panorama

Nigeria's crisis is marked by recurring attacks on Christian, Muslim, and minority communities, mass displacement, and systematic human rights violations. Extremist groups such as Boko Haram and ISWAP have executed bombings, kidnappings, and assaults on worship sites and civilian populations. Intercommunal clashes between Fulani herders and Christian farming communities have further destabilized regions across the Middle Belt. Blasphemy laws, weak state response, and widespread impunity amplify the vulnerability of religious minorities. Internal displacement, humanitarian crises, and fear of persecution worsen the situation for millions of civilians. The escalation of violence poses growing threats to national cohesion, regional stability, and international security.

## B. Points of view

- **Federal Republic of Nigeria:** Nigeria frames religious violence primarily as a security issue driven by terrorism, especially from Boko Haram and ISWAP. The government asserts its commitment to protecting religious freedom but faces criticism for impunity, weak enforcement, and limited protection of vulnerable groups. Nigeria supports international cooperation but rejects external pressure that appears to interfere with national sovereignty.
- **United States of America:** The U.S. prioritizes religious freedom and regularly expresses concern over extremist violence and state inaction in Nigeria. Washington supports counterterrorism cooperation, humanitarian aid, and accountability for human rights violations. The U.S. advocates for stronger protection of religious minorities and the reform of restrictive legislation such as blasphemy laws.

- **United Kingdom:** The UK views Nigeria's crisis as a threat to both human rights and regional stability. It promotes accountability, protection of minorities, and reform of discriminatory laws. The UK funds peacebuilding and humanitarian programs and calls for stronger rule of law and anti-corruption measures within Nigeria's security and judicial institutions.
- **Federal Republic of Germany:** Germany emphasizes the human rights dimension of the crisis and supports Nigeria through humanitarian assistance, development cooperation, and governance programs. Berlin advocates for accountability, legal reforms protecting religious freedom, and multilateral UN mechanisms to address extremism and displacement in the region.
- **Republic of South Africa:** South Africa supports an African-led response to Nigeria's crisis, focusing on human rights, regional

stability, and socioeconomic root causes. It encourages dialogue, accountability, and stronger governance while respecting Nigeria's sovereignty. South Africa prioritizes peacebuilding and protection of vulnerable communities.

## V. UN and External Actions

### A. UN Actions

The United Nations Human Rights Council has worked to promote and protect the fundamental human right to freedom of expression. For years, it has sought to implement the Rabat Plan of Action, which aims to counter national, racial, or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence. The UN has also monitored the situation in Nigeria through the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and various Special Rapporteurs who have documented violations related to religious freedom, displacement, and extremism. These bodies have urged Nigeria to improve accountability, strengthen legal protections, and address impunity.



## **B. External Actions**

International organizations and donor countries prioritize religious freedom in Nigeria because religious violence threatens regional stability, fuels extremism, harms human rights, undermines development, and creates humanitarian and security risks with global implications. Countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, and South Africa support Nigeria through peacebuilding, governance programs, humanitarian assistance, and counterterrorism cooperation. Their actions aim to reduce violence, protect vulnerable communities, and stabilize the region.

## VI. Conclusion

Religious violence in Nigeria represents a deeply complex and persistent crisis shaped by longstanding historical grievances, the rise of extremist groups, systemic impunity, and fragile state institutions. Beyond its immediate human cost, the conflict continues to undermine core human rights, including the right to life, personal security, and freedom of religion, while fueling displacement, humanitarian emergencies, and regional instability across West Africa. The transnational nature of extremist networks and refugee flows further elevates the crisis from a national challenge to an international concern. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach that combines strengthened governance, accountability mechanisms, inclusive interfaith dialogue, and sustained humanitarian assistance. Coordinated efforts by the Nigerian government, regional organizations, and the international community are essential to tackle the root causes of



violence, protect vulnerable populations, and lay the foundations for lasting peace and stability.

## VII. Committee Focus

- How do recurring patterns of religious violence in Nigeria contribute to systematic human rights violations, and which structural factors within the country's political, social, and security institutions allow these abuses to persist?
- Which communities (particularly religious minorities, internally displaced persons, women, and children) face the greatest vulnerability under these conditions, and why?
- What responsibilities does the Nigerian government hold under international human rights law to prevent, investigate, and punish religiously motivated attacks, and in what ways has state action or inaction affected national and regional stability?
- How have extremist armed groups such as Boko Haram and ISWAP intensified violations of the right to life, freedom of religion or belief, and the rights of civilians in conflict-affected areas?

- What mechanisms can the international community, including the Human Rights Council, employ to support Nigeria in monitoring abuses, strengthening accountability, and preventing the escalation of interreligious tensions?
- Which measures implemented by Nigeria, regional organizations, and UN bodies have proven effective, and to what extent?
- What human-rights-based strategies can states adopt to reduce violence, protect vulnerable populations, and mitigate cross-border instability stemming from the Nigerian crisis?



## VII. Participation List

- Arab Republic of Egypt
- Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
- Commonwealth of Australia
- Dominion of Canada
- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
- Federal Republic of Germany
- Federal Republic of Nigeria
- Federative Republic of Brazil
- French Republic
- Islamic Republic of Pakistan
- Italian Republic
- Japan
- Kingdom of the Netherlands
- Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- People's Republic of Bangladesh
- People's Republic of China
- Republic of Cameroon
- Republic of Ghana
- Republic of India
- Republic of Indonesia
- Republic of Kenya

- Republic of Kenya
- Republic of Korea
- Republic of the Philippines
- Republic of Singapore
- Republic of South Africa
- Russian Federation
- State of Israel
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- United Mexican States
- United States of America

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