

# One Christian killed and 12 kidnapped in Nigeria

October 15, 2019

KADUNA, Nigeria (BP)—A Baptist woman is dead and 12 Christians including church members, school students and teachers remain kidnapped in two successive incidents in Kaduna, Nigeria, widely attributed to militant Fulani herdsmen.

In the latest incident, herdsmen killed Ezra Haruna of Godiya Baptist Church in Ungwan Barau village and kidnapped four of her fellow church members, while many residents fled into nearby bushes, [Morning Star News](#) reported Oct. 10.

Days earlier, suspected militant herdsmen kidnapped six female students and two teachers from Engravers College, a Christian boarding school in a remote area of Kaduna state in Nigeria's Middle Belt, the news service reported.

While Boko Haram terrorists are known for kidnapping Christian school girls in particular, the location of the incidents in the Middle Belt instead of the Boko Haram-heavy northeast has led some religious liberty advocates to attribute the crimes to herdsmen.

"Boko Haram became infamous worldwide after they kidnapped over 270 girls from Chibok Nigeria in a similar fashion," [International Christian Concern](#) said in an Oct. 11 public statement. "They also then kidnapped more than 100 girls last year from Dapchi, Nigeria. They do not often do this in the Middle Belt though. This makes it more likely that Fulani militants were responsible."

## **‘Shooting indiscriminately’**

In the attack on Ungwan Barau village, militant herdsmen stormed the community around 4 a.m. and shot indiscriminately into houses, witnesses told *Morning Star*. Gunmen kidnapped Jummai Ido, whose husband is pastor of Godiya Baptist, although the pastor’s name was not reported. Gunmen kidnapped Luka Auta and Sale Auta, brothers, and Yakubu Audu.

A witness quoted in *The Guardian* said many gunmen “were shooting indiscriminately when they came and people started running for safety.”

No one has claimed responsibility for the attacks, neither the Oct. 7 church attack nor the Oct. 3 school kidnapping, according to many news reports. Police have said they don’t know who committed the crimes but have speculated the culprits might be “bandits” possibly affiliated with Boko Haram.

“No matter what the source of these attacks is, the government in Nigeria is again proving to be completely ineffective in their fight against lawlessness and violence,” International Christian Concern said. “Boko Haram has seen a resurgence despite continued military actions, and the militant crisis throughout the Middle Belt of Nigeria has been continually ignored.”

## **Call to pray**

The watchdog organization encouraged Christians to pray for believers in Kaduna who have been targeted in numerous attacks especially in 2019.

“Hundreds of Christians and others have been killed during these attacks. There have also been dozens of kidnappings of pastors and other Christians that have led to tens of thousands of dollars in ransoms,” International Christian Concern said. “Please pray for the safety of those living in this

violent and unpredictable area. Also, please pray for the six girls and two teachers who have been taken from their family and friends.”

Boko Haram is blamed for killing as many as 30,000 people and displacing two million from northeast Nigeria in the past decade, with violence spreading to neighboring nations of Niger, Chad and Cameroon.

Militant herdsmen are blamed for thousands of deaths in attacks that have escalated since 2016.

Open Doors ranked Nigeria 12th in its 2019 World Watch List of the 50 countries where it is most dangerous to live as a Christian. Of the 4,136 Christians killed in 2018, Nigeria accounted for 3,731, the organization reported.

Christians are 51.3 percent of Nigeria’s population, while Muslims living primarily in the north and middle belt account for 45 percent.