

Worshippers at Baptist church in Nigeria abducted

June 23, 2022

Three dozen worshippers at a Baptist church in Nigeria's southern Kaduna state were abducted by gunmen on June 19 after the attackers first killed three people at a Catholic church.

Fulani militia attacked Bege Baptist Church, kidnapping five men and 31 women and children, [Christian Solidarity Worldwide](#) reported on June 21.

The ward head for the village later was released, along with one elderly woman, so he could communicate the kidnappers' ransom demands for the remaining 34 captives.

CSW—a United Kingdom-based human rights organization focused on religious persecution—reported the kidnapping at Bege Baptist Church followed an earlier assault the same day on St. Moses Catholic Church in Roboh.

Militia carrying AK-47 assault rifles attacked the church as Sunday services were underway. They killed three people, and another seriously injured victim was hospitalized.

Series of attacks on churches and clergy

Two weeks earlier, at least 32 people in Kajuru were killed during militia attacks on four villages.

The June 19 attack on Bege Baptist Church and St. Moses Catholic Church

occurred two days after the Catholic Diocese of Ondo conducted a mass burial for victims of a June 5 terrorist attack on St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church of Owo in southwest Nigeria.

Samson Ayokunle, president of the Christian Association of Nigeria, recently reported at least 10 clerics were abducted in the first five months of 2022, and two of them were killed by their kidnappers.

“Every week the lives of more innocent Nigerians are lost across the country in terror attacks targeting houses of worship, homes and transportation, with many more either injured or abducted and extorted,” said Mervyn Thomas, founding president of CSW. “Yet, both state and federal authorities continue to illustrate a lack of urgency in formulating and enacting coordinated and effective responses which prioritize the protection of vulnerable citizens, including religious leaders and congregations.

“Once again, our prayers are with all whose loved ones were killed or kidnapped in these latest attacks. We appeal to the Nigerian government to become far more proactive in addressing this violence, holding those responsible to account, and ensuring that the armed forces are sufficiently resourced to combat the threats posed by these and other armed non-state actors.

“The international community must also become far more proactive in ensuring that the Nigerian authorities receive sufficient assistance to bring an end to this horrific violence by non-state actors who pose an existential threat to this strategically important nation, and in holding the government to account wherever and whenever it fails to protect all of its citizens equally and effectively.”

[Christian Solidarity International](#), a human rights organization based in Switzerland, recently urged British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss to use the

upcoming July 5-6 ministerial for freedom of religion and belief in London to designate Nigeria as a “Country of Particular Concern” for its “systematic, ongoing, egregious violations of religious freedom.”

Last November, the U.S. Department of State removed Nigeria from its list of “Countries of Particular Concern,” a move that drew [criticism from the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom](#) and [21Wilberforce](#), a human rights organization focused on global religious liberty.