

CENTRAL NIGERIA: Crisis Monitor

WARNING

This Crisis Monitor contains graphic details of loss, including the impact of violence on children.

The names of survivors have been replaced with pseudonyms to protect their identities.



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SERIES: Crisis Monitor [November 2025]

FOCUS: Escalating intercommunal violence

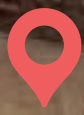
LOCATION: Plateau State; Southern Kaduna

SOURCES: Eyewitness accounts and testimonies from a recent Fact-Finding visit to Central Nigeria



REGIONAL CONTEXT

- In addition to violence in the north, a **full-scale humanitarian crisis** is unfolding in Central Nigeria.
- **Areas of concern** are the Nigerian states of Adamawa, Benue, Kaduna, Plateau, Nasarawa, Niger and Taraba.

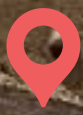


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INTERCOMMUNAL VIOLENCE

- Fulani militia target **predominantly Christian communities** in rural areas.
- More than **20,000 people** have been killed. Thousands have suffered life-changing injuries.
- Survivors of attacks are forcibly displaced **by insecurity and fear.**



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SYSTEMIC FAILURES

- Security forces consistently fail to respond to advance warnings of attacks.
- These failures have led to **widespread distrust** among affected communities, who perceive the state as either unable or unwilling to protect them.
- It enables repeat attacks to continue **with impunity**.



EMERGING TREND OF ABDUCTIONS

- Terrorists impose **ransoms** on targeted communities in Plateau State.
- However, vulnerable communities cannot afford to pay these ransoms. Often, **their livelihoods** have been destroyed in previous attacks.
- This leaves them vulnerable to cycles of threat and violence. They are forced to comply with money or to risk their lives.

“The extortion is imposed on the poorest households - and it is rarely a one-off. You must keep paying to survive.

If for any reason you try to report or expose [the perpetrators], they will wipe out every single living being. Even unborn babies are not spared.”

Local journalist in Plateau State, October 2025



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THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

- Conflict-affected communities in Central Nigeria do not receive the same support as those in the north.
- Neither the Nigerian Government, nor the UK or US Government, nor any member of the EU or African Union, nor relief UN agencies, have provided adequate security or assistance.
- Following aid cuts, communities in Central Nigeria will be **further sidelined.**

“I have visited over 100 villages in Central Nigeria. I can say categorically that none of these villages have received security or humanitarian assistance from the Nigerian Government or elsewhere.”

Hassan John, HART's Senior Programmes Manager

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A map of Nigeria with several states highlighted in different colors. Kaduna state is highlighted in teal and labeled 'KADUNA'. Plateau state is highlighted in dark blue and labeled 'PLATEAU'. Other states are highlighted in purple, red, and pink. The map shows the geographical boundaries of the states.

KADUNA

PLATEAU

OPERATIONAL AREAS

- HART is scaling up support in **Plateau State** and **Southern Kaduna** for survivors of intercommunal violence.
- This **Crisis Monitor** is based on the testimonies of victims, insights from local partners, and on-the-ground monitoring.



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14 OCTOBER 2025:

- **Two villages** in Heipang were attacked by Fulani militia.
- **Thirteen people** were killed, including **five children**.
- This marked the **third assault** on the community since 2018.

“We were woken up by gunfire. Some of us managed to escape. Our daughter and granddaughter hid among the livestock. They were found and killed for no just cause.”

Samuel (not his real name), survivor of the Heipang attacks in Central Nigeria



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The following testimony contains graphic details from one of the attacks in Heipang.

When gunfire erupted, Eve was forced to make a split-second decision to protect her family.

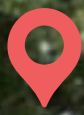
She hid two of her children in a water barrel outside her home. The gunmen found the children, and questioned their parents' whereabouts.

When the children said their parents had fled, the gunmen opened fire. Both children were tragically murdered.

Eve (not her real name) and two of her children survived the attack. They are the only surviving members of the family.



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THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH

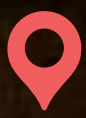
- Survivors say the attack continued for **more than an hour** before security forces arrived.
- Security forces were stationed **just 3km away**.
- **Victims were ambushed** as they attempted to seek urgent medical assistance.



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Blessing's Story

Blessing's daughter is the youngest survivor of intercommunal violence in Central Nigeria



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On 2 April 2025, Hurti village in Plateau State was attacked by heavily armed men. 52 people were killed. Over 280 homes were destroyed.

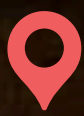
Blessing was nine months pregnant when the sound of gunshots first sent her into labour.

““ —

I remember feeling the bullets flying past my head.

Blessing ran from rapid gunfire as nearly 300 armed fighters advanced towards her village. She was accompanied by her mother-in-law and young child.

They found refuge in the home of a sympathetic Fulani man and then travelled by foot to a nearby Church.



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A lone soldier stood watch and returned gunfire as Blessing gave birth.

“ —

I couldn't tell if the agony was from labour or the exhaustion of running. It felt like my bones were breaking.

Blessing's daughter is the youngest survivor of the attack on Hurti village. She is known locally as:

“ —

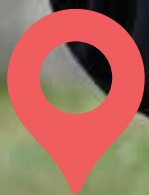
The baby who was born amidst gunfire.



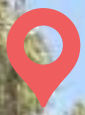
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The terrorists who attacked Hurti have warned that their mission is not yet complete.

Intercommunal violence is surging in Central Nigeria. Local networks are stretched thin, with limited funding and resources. The international response is falling short.



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TOP-DOWN SOLUTIONS DON'T WORK

- Britain's top-down approach to humanitarian aid fails to address the **root causes of challenges** in Nigeria.
- If the goal is "**partnerships, not paternalism**", then partnerships must begin at the grassroots.
- HART has submitted evidence to a parliamentary inquiry led by the International Development Committee. [Read more.](#)



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FACT CHECK: TRUMP & THE BBC ON NIGERIA

- On the one hand, **President Trump** says “Christianity is facing an existential threat”. On the other hand, the **BBC** reports: “there is no evidence that Christians have been disproportionately targeted”.
- **Violence in Nigeria is not a single conflict.** The challenge lies in resisting simple labels that conflate distinct groups and regional crises. [Read more.](#)



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FACT CHECK: TRUMP ON NIGERIA

- Trump is right **to spotlight the scale and severity of killings.**
- In **central states**, Christians suffer the overwhelming majority of attacks by armed militia.
- Christians are also targeted in **northern states**, but the demographic reality in the north means that Muslims, not Christians, constitute the highest number of casualties caused by Boko Haram and its factions. [Read more.](#)



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March 24th, 2026 **MARCO RUBIO, SECRETARY OF STATE, U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

Dear Mr. Secretary, Violence is escalating in the Middle Belt of Nigeria. Public awareness of the crisis is growing – largely due to President Trump’s actions in December – but the reality on the ground remains devastating. The following recommendations have emerged from over a decade of grassroots discussions among conflict-affected communities. We urge the U.S. State Department to leverage its diplomatic influence to ensure these are prioritized.

Recommendations to the Government of Nigeria

1. Justice and accountability: The culture of impunity in the Middle Belt must end. We call for the establishment of a Special Panel of Inquiry tasked with delivering justice and recompense for victims of attacks in the states of Adamawa, Benue, Kaduna, Plateau, Nasarawa, Niger and Taraba. This follows the precedent of other high-level inquiries in Nigeria, such as the Judicial Panel of Inquiry on SARS Related Abuses.

2. A decentralized security strategy: Nigerian authorities at both the state and federal levels appear unable or unwilling to prevent the attacks. We recommend the formal recognition, training and structured reporting of community police forces, locally known as Forest Guards. The Governor of Plateau State has already moved toward this model through the training of Operation Rainbow. Formalizing such initiatives will relieve the overstretched Nigerian Army and Police.

3. Safe resettlement of displaced communities: Mass displacement now affects millions across the Middle Belt. Destruction or occupation of their land prevents a safe and sustainable return. We support the creation of a dedicated reconstruction fund, administered by Community Development Associations to reduce the risk of undue Government interference or bureaucratic diversion.

4. Empowering grassroots networks: Both domestic and international humanitarian assistance is frequently prioritized for northern states, while communities in the Middle Belt are systematically underserved. We urge the deployment of relief through established networks with a long-term frontline presence. Strategic partnerships with local organizations are essential to ensure that food, medical supplies and basic necessities reach the most vulnerable survivors without delay.

The Middle Belt is at a breaking point. Without a shift from broad aims to specific, time-bound and tangible interventions, the region risks total destabilization.

Yours sincerely,

Hassan John

Nigeria Response Lead & Senior Programmes Manager
Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART)

Co-signed by

Lord Alton of Liverpool, House of Lords

Lord Jackson of Peterborough, House of Lords

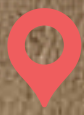
Lord Farmer, House of Lords

Dr Rowan Williams, 104th Archbishop of Canterbury

Dr John Eibner, President of Christian Solidarity International

Sir Geoffrey Nice KC, Senior human rights lawyer

Sir Desmond Swayne MP, House of Commons



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FACT CHECK: THE BBC ON NIGERIA

- It is misleading for the BBC to report “there is no evidence that Christians have been disproportionately targeted” in Central Nigeria.
- Survivors, journalists, civil society and NGOs persist in reporting the plight of predominantly Christian villages. The BBC’s disregard of their insights compounds a sense of injustice among neglected communities. It creates a **disconnect between an ‘official’ narrative and the local people’s lived reality.** [Read more.](#)



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RECONCILIATION IN PRACTICE

- So what do the **practical underpinnings** to a more peaceful future in Central Nigeria look like?
- For our local partners, it looks like the strategic creation of **safe spaces** for the renewal of contacts across lines of conflict; the robust promotion of **inter-faith dialogue**; and the **meaningful engagement of women and young people**, while being mindful of traditional hierarchies and not alienating them. [Read more.](#)



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LOCAL PATHWAYS TO PEACE

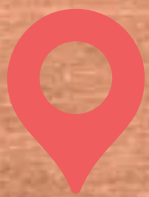
- **Inter-faith dialogue** and **community mediation efforts** are invaluable; they are the essential engine for long-term healing.
- Grassroots efforts cannot bear the full burden of peace alone. Their **vital, localised impact** must be met by **decisive national and international action** to stop the killings and enforce the rule of law. [Read more.](#)

“Christians and Muslims can and should work together for the building of the nation and its people.”

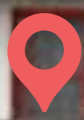
Bishop Ben Kwashi, Plateau State



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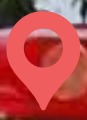


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LOCAL PARTNER IMPACT

- **Roads to Hope (R2H)** supports survivors of intercommunal violence both in the aftermath of attacks and in the long-term.
- R2H deploys **ambulances and education vehicles** to remote villages and displacement camps.
- With few other outreach services in the region, **R2H is a lifeline** for thousands of people.



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EMERGENCY RESPONDERS

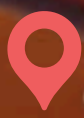
- R2H are often **the first emergency responders on the scene** following attacks on remote villages in Plateau State.
- Survivors are targeted as they attempt to flee and seek emergency medical assistance.
- When it becomes impossible for victims of conflict to visit a hospital, **R2H brings healthcare to the patients.**



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EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

- Security forces consistently fail to respond to advance warnings of attacks or to intervene during an attack. Vulnerable communities are **left to fend for themselves**.
- In response, we're:
 - Strengthening local **'Early Warning Systems'**
 - Improving **internet access** in remote villages to alert communities to **imminent threats**



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ACCESS TO MATERNAL HEALTHCARE

- Many women endure **miscarriages** and **trauma-induced labour**, due to violence and displacement.
- In response, we're:
 - Equipping **local midwives** with training and specialised equipment
 - Opening **mobile clinic services** in high-risk areas



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RECONCILIATION EFFORTS

- Intercommunal tensions are **complex** and **deep-rooted**.
- In response, we're:
 - Partnering with **local peacebuilders**, especially women
 - Promoting **inter-faith dialogue**
 - Creating opportunities for **sustained engagement** between communities

“We have brought Christians and Muslims together in an unprecedented way. We eat together and visit one another in the community. It has eroded most of the animosity between us.”

Women for Peace, Jos



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NEXT STEPS

This **Crisis Monitor** is the first edition of a new series. We will release further editions as we receive vital updates from local partners and as we continue to monitor the crisis on-the-ground.

For **press enquiries**, contact anais.arroyo@hart-uk.org

For **interim updates**, follow us on social media @hart.uk