

## United States Senate

May 20, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear President Trump,

The violence against Christians across Nigeria is rapidly escalating. We are writing to request that you use tools at your administration's disposal to help end this violent persecution. Specifically, we ask that you consider the appointment of a United States special envoy to Nigeria and the Lake Chad region and that you consider utilizing the full range of sanctions available under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (Global Magnitsky Act) against those who perpetrate these killings.

Nigeria is one of the largest Christian countries in the world and they are seeing a rapid increase in religiously motivated attacks against the Christian population. According to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), violent events involving extremist Fulani militias have resulted in approximately 3,200 fatalities since 2018. ACLED has also recorded over 40,000 fatalities tied to Boko Haram in Nigeria since 2008. In 2015, Boko Haram swore allegiance to ISIS, rendering them even more lethal to Christians in Nigeria.

Innocent women, children, and men are being slaughtered across the country and many of these attacks have specifically targeted Christians. Over Christmas, according to the New York Times, Boko Haram released a video of terrorists beheading ten Christian prisoners. The terrorists declared it a "message for Christians" in light of the killing of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. This is in addition to over 300 abductions and over 2,500 individuals displaced from their homes due to the escalating violence.

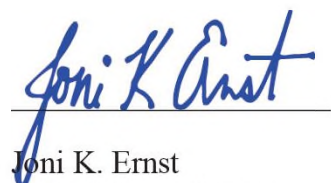
We are thankful and applaud the Christian and Muslim communities in Nigeria, specifically leaders of the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council, for coordinating a response to COVID-19 in the country. It is encouraging to see religious groups come together and advocate for peace as nations address and recover from this harrowing pandemic. Unfortunately, we are also receiving horrific reports that the coronavirus has not stopped Islamic extremists from murdering Christians who are staying in their homes due to the disease.

It is for these exact reasons we must not lose sight of the long-term threats to Christians in Nigeria and ensure that the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be used as an excuse to ignore the killing of religious minorities. In April of 2018, you met with Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari. At the end of your meeting, you commended Nigeria's efforts to combat ISIS and Boko Haram and asked President Buhari to do everything in his power to protect innocent civilians of all faiths. Your directive went viral and the killings stopped for six months. This demonstrates that your leadership can stop the violence and save lives.

*DISSEMINATED BY MERCURY PUBLIC AFFAIRS, LLC, A REGISTERED FOREIGN AGENT, ON BEHALF OF NNAMDI KANU – LEADER OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF BIAFRA. MORE INFORMATION IS ON FILE WITH THE DEPT. OF JUSTICE, WASHINGTON, DC.*

Regardless of whether these killings are happening for religious purposes or any other purpose, they must be stopped. We strongly urge you to consider appointing a United States special envoy to Nigeria and the Lake Chad region and utilizing sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Act. Utilization of these tools will send a clear message to the Nigerian government and its people that the U.S. is committed to helping stabilize the country and protecting innocent lives. We not only have an obligation to national and global security, but we have a moral obligation to protect the religious freedoms of those that cannot protect themselves.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joni K. Ernst". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Joni K. Ernst  
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kelly Loeffler". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Kelly Loeffler  
United States Senator

cc: Secretary Mike Pompeo