
From: SecureNigeria [REDACTED]
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To:
Subject: Built on Trust: A New Era in the U.S.-Nigeria Counterterrorism Partnership

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**Built on Trust: A New Era in the U.S.-Nigeria
Counterterrorism Partnership**



Nigerian security forces on patrol in Kaduna State. Photo credit: Philip "Flip" Holsinger

This week, Secretary of State Marco Rubio [testified](#) before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and reaffirmed a fundamental truth: the U.S. and Nigeria are stronger together.

Highlighting President Trump's successful counterterrorism efforts in West Africa, Rubio shared, [*"On Nigeria, where many were very concerned about violence against Christians, we are now actively in counterterrorism cooperation with the Nigerian government and Nigerian security forces."*](#)

The U.S.-Nigeria counterterrorism partnership is protecting Nigerian Christians and dismantling terrorist networks that threaten both regional stability and American security.

AFRICOM Credits Cooperation of Nigerian Military

Following successful strikes against ISIS leader Abu-Bilali al-Minuki, U.S. Africa Command has [repeatedly credited](#) the Nigerian military as central to recent joint counterterrorism victories.

In a recent post on X, AFRICOM underscored the depth of U.S.-Nigeria counterterrorism partnership, saying: [*"Our cooperation with the Armed Forces of Nigeria in countering terrorist threats is mission-focused, conditions-based, and time-bound...In a crisis, we can surge assets, but you cannot surge trust."*](#)

The sentiment captures something larger than a single counterterrorism win. The U.S.-Nigeria partnership endures because it is grounded in mutual trust, shared values, and a singular focus: freeing West Africa from the threat of Islamic terrorism.

Atiku's Washington Campaign Takes an Ugly Turn

While U.S. and Nigerian forces were busy dismantling ISIS's global command structure, a different kind of pressure campaign was underway in Washington.

In a post on [X](#), representatives for President Tinubu's political opponent Atiku Abubakar invoked the fates of Saddam Hussein and Muammar Gaddafi before issuing a direct warning to President Tinubu: *["If you continue attempting to rig Nigeria's next presidential election, we will do everything within our power to ensure the United States government is fully aware of your actions and responds accordingly."](#)*

The threat is as brazen as it is baseless. The facts are straightforward: President Tinubu is not attempting to [rig the 2027 election](#); Nigeria's Independent National Election Commission, [with full U.S. State Department support](#), is overseeing a free and fair process; and President Tinubu is [working closely](#) with President Trump to combat terrorism across Nigeria.

Atiku's smear campaign won't change any of that. President Tinubu remains focused on building a safe, prosperous Nigeria while his opponents are busy trying to score cheap political points.

State Department Launches Innovative Monitoring Project

This week, the U.S. State Department announced a [\\$3.5 million funding opportunity](#) to improve the documentation and reporting of religious freedom abuses in Nigeria. Along with continued counterterrorism operations, this project is a strategic investment in long-term stability.

This is a welcome and necessary development. Right now, despite the Nigerian government's desire for support, no dedicated monitoring resource accurately captures the religious dimension of violence in Nigeria, and that gap has consequences.

Activists like Judd Saul of Equipping the Persecuted [dramatically overcount](#) religiously motivated incidents, weaponizing inflated numbers to further inflame religious tensions. Meanwhile, organizations like [ACLEDA](#) use overly conservative methodological techniques and rarely record any religiously motivated attacks at all. The result is that policymakers in Abuja and Washington are making decisions without the full picture.

The good news is there is no shortage of capable and trustworthy organizations to choose from. Groups like [Caritas International](#) have the credibility, values, and deep well of experience in conflict-affected communities to fill this critical void.

Why Alex Thurston Got It Wrong

Writing in [Responsible Statecraft](#), University of Cincinnati professor and former State Department official Alex Thurston [argues](#) that U.S. strikes in Nigeria are not only ineffective but counterproductive.

Criticizing President Trump's counterterrorism efforts to date, Thurston claims, *["Body counts alone do not lead to victory...and neither do "decapitation" strikes necessarily make insurgencies crumble. In fact, they can worsen the problem...violence against Boko Haram and ISWAP...has only made the insurgency grow."](#)*

Thurston offers [no evidence](#) to support the claim that strikes are spurring the recruitment of new militants. Nor does he explain why neutralizing the number two ISIS leader in the

world, responsible for coordinating the organization's global finances and high-profile attacks, was a [strategic error](#). And he certainly does not explain why the U.S. military should bend to terrorist threats of "[backlash](#)" instead of deploying the might of the U.S. military to crush ISIS once and for all.

Instead of listening to fear-mongers like Thurston, President Trump is rightly putting U.S. national security interests at the forefront of his foreign policy objectives: not cowering to what terrorists might do but acting aggressively to ensure counterterrorism outcomes meet U.S. objectives.

Nigeria's security challenges are far from over. But the progress achieved through the U.S.-Nigeria partnership offers a clear path forward, one that serves Nigerian Christians and advances U.S. interests across the region.

Keyboard Warrior Alex Barbir Defends Propaganda

Deep in his hideout, from the depths of his parents' basement, keyboard warrior and professional activist Alex Barbir continues to vilify the U.S. and Nigerian security forces working to root out terrorist groups threatening Christian communities.

Barbir is fresh off his forced deportation from Nigeria for inciting religious violence in the aftermath of a tragic mass shooting in Jos, Plateau State, and has a history of [weaponizing](#) the country's security situation as social media clickbait while [attacking](#) anyone who tries to correct his propaganda.

In a recent video [posted](#) on X, Barbir once again served up baseless propaganda with a side of mockery for his detractors, saying, "[*They claimed that I went and directed Christians to kill Muslims. That I am directly responsible for the deaths of Muslims. They even claim that no Christian worshippers were killed in the Palm Sunday Massacre in Jos — that it was just some random shooting. They claim that terrorists have been losing ground in Nigeria.*](#)"

Unlike Barbir's incomprehensible drivel, the truth is straightforward.

The March 29th Jos attack, while tragic, was not a targeted strike on Christian worshippers. Award-winning conflict reporter Phillip "Flip" Holsinger [traveled](#) to Jos in the days following the incident and interviewed eyewitnesses on the ground — unlike the Western journalists who reported the attack from a distance. Those eyewitnesses consistently [described](#) militants opening fire at night on a busy street near drinking establishments and cafes. These facts make the event no less tragic, but they do expose how activists like Barbir weaponized it to inflame religious tensions.

In the days that followed, Christian and Muslim leaders [worked together](#) to keep calm in the city. Barbir had other ideas. He posted [videos](#) allegedly from the scene and [hijacked](#) a funeral of victims to amplify his narrative. Rather than calling for peace, his rhetoric [re-ignited tensions](#) between Jos's Muslim and Christian communities. Two Muslim men [were killed](#) in reprisal attacks, and Barbir was ultimately [expelled](#) from Nigeria.

As for his most outrageous claim — that terrorists aren't losing ground in Nigeria — the recent elimination of the world's second highest-ranking ISIS leader, along with 175 other ISIS fighters, by U.S.-Nigerian forces offers compelling evidence to the contrary.

Barbir shows no interest in these realities because they don't fit his narrative. He would rather produce low-quality clickbait from his parents' basement than engage honestly with the very effective counterterrorism partnership between President Trump and President Tinubu.

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