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**Rep. Riley Moore and Rep. Chris Smith Move to
Sanction Nigerian Militia That Doesn't Exist,
According to U.S. Intelligence**



Nigerian Security Forces Patrol Communities in Niger State.

Parroting propaganda from professional activists, Rep. Riley Moore and Rep. Chris Smith's new bill aims to sanction the mysterious "Fulani Ethnic Militia," an organization that does not exist according to U.S. Intelligence agencies.

Congress has found a new villain — an organization so secretive, so elusive, so deeply embedded in the shadows that not a single U.S. intelligence agency has ever confirmed its existence or even uttered its name.

Meet the "[Fulani Ethnic Militia](#)" (FEM), the star of Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Rep. Riley Moore's (R-WV) Nigeria Religious Freedom and Accountability Act of 2026 ([H.R. 7457](#)). The bill would [require](#) the Secretary of State to compile a sweeping report on religious persecution in Nigeria and calls for sanctions against this supposed militia. There's just one small hiccup: the State Department, CIA, DNI, NSC, and the Department of War have all been clear that such an organization does not exist.

But it gets worse: Rep. Moore and Rep. Smith's own sources undercut the bill. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, whose research the legislation leans on, released a report in May stating flatly that militant Fulani do "[not share a centralized leadership](#)" and operate in scattered groups ranging from [10 to 1,000 members](#). That's not a militia; it's a disorganized smattering of criminal gangs. Which is a real problem, and one President Tinubu is actively addressing, but fundamentally different than the unified paramilitary bogeyman the bill describes.

So where does the myth come from? Ask professional activists like [Mike Arnold](#) and [Alex Barbir](#), who insist a deep state of Fulani puppet masters is pulling Nigeria's strings, or activist journalists like [Derek VanBuskirk](#), who have lent the propaganda credibility by printing it. The narrative is conveniently unfalsifiable; you can't disprove a shadow, which makes it a perennial resource for anyone whose paycheck depends on keeping the fear alive.

Meanwhile, in the real world, President Trump's [counterterrorism partnership](#) with President Tinubu is doing the unglamorous work of actually protecting Nigerian Christians. Tinubu's security surge [targets militant Fulani](#) directly: stopping attacks, arresting perpetrators, restoring order. And it's telling that despite repeated [pleas](#) from several Republican congressmen, the Trump administration has declined to designate the phantom "FEM" a Foreign Terrorist Organization. The Administration, it seems, prefers to fight enemies that actually exist.

That's what makes this bill worse than embarrassing — it's dangerous. Chasing a fictional militia muddies the intelligence picture and smears one of Nigeria's largest ethnic groups as a terrorist monolith, inflaming the very religious and ethnic tensions the bill aims to prevent. Worse still, it undermines a counterterrorism partnership that is actually delivering for vulnerable Nigerians.

If Reps. Moore and Smith genuinely want to help Nigerian Christians, step one is simple: read the reports their own bill cites. The footnotes, as it turns out, are in open rebellion against the text.

Once they've done the homework, there's a serious conversation to be had — about strengthening the U.S.–Nigeria counterterrorism partnership and pressing for real reforms that protect every Nigerian, Christian and Muslim alike, from the scourge of terrorism. That conversation starts with facts. This bill rests on a ghost story.

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