



## DEBATE PACK

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# Armed violence against farming communities in Nigeria

Westminster Hall

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9.30 am to 11.00am

Debate initiated by Jim Shannon MP

Compiled by:  
Tim Robinson

Subject specialist:  
Jon Lunn

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# 1. Background

There have been some successes on the security front in Nigeria since 2015, but President Buhari and his All Progressives Congress (APC) government have found themselves fighting on at least as many fronts as their predecessors. In the '[Middle Belt](#)' of the country, inter-communal violence, which has been a permanent fixture of Nigerian life for many years, has again been escalating alarmingly. Particularly badly affected have been Benue, Taraba, Kogi, Nasarawa, Kaduna, Plateau and Niger States. According to a report released by the International Crisis Group in July, violence between Nigerian farmers and herders killed at least 1,300 people in the first half of 2018, claiming "about six times more civilian lives than the Boko Haram insurgency". The violence has continued unabated during the second half of the year too.

President Buhari and the government have been criticised (as, to be fair, were those predecessors too) for failing to get to grips with the interlocking 'root causes' of violence – poverty, inequality, marginalisation and corruption – in Nigeria, whether in the north or elsewhere, and for often appearing to favour military responses over political ones.

Most of this violence derives from competition between mainly Muslim pastoralists and largely Christian farmers over land and natural resources. Some of this violence has been described as 'banditry' by experts. There are concerns that the inter-communal violence is beginning to spread both southwards and northwards.

Some Christian leaders have gone so far as to accuse President Buhari of being complicit in the violence and of sympathising with the mainly Muslim pastoralist groups that have been involved. He has angrily denied such accusations. But the inter-communal violence, and the state's response, will undoubtedly be a major election issue when Nigeria goes to the polls in early 2019.

## 2. Press Articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

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[\*\*Prince Charles bypassing Jos 'robbed Nigeria's Christians of opportunity to create awareness about our travails'\*\*](#)

World Watch Monitor  
9 November 2018

[\*\*Nigeria's Worst Violence Is Not Boko Haram\*\*](#)

US Institute of Peace  
Ena Dion and Isioma Kemakolam  
8 November 2018

[\*\*24-hour curfew imposed in Nigeria's Kaduna after scores killed in communal violence\*\*](#)

CNN  
Bukola Adebayo and Isaac Abra  
23 October 2018

[\*\*Nigeria to launch major security operation after wave of violence between Muslim herders and Christian farmers\*\*](#)

Daily Telegraph  
Adrian Blomfield  
25 June 2018

[\*\*SPECIAL REPORT: The Killings Continue\*\*](#)

Christian Association of Nigeria  
Emmanuel  
30 May 2018

[\*\*Nigerian Mass Becomes a Massacre: Herdsmen Kill 18 Worshipers, Adding to Hundreds of Victims\*\*](#)

Christianity Today  
Kate Shellnutt  
25 April 2018

[\*\*Army probes allegation of collusion in Benue, Taraba killings\*\*](#)

Guardian Nigeria  
Segun Olaniyi and Uzoma Nzeagwu  
10 April 2018

[\*\*Trump May Not Be Wrong On the Fulani Herdsmen Crisis In Nigeria\*\*](#)

Forbes  
Ewelina U. Ochab  
4 May 2018

**[Herdsmen: Britain talking with Nigeria over killings](#)**

Punch

Justin Tyopuusu

25 February 2018

**[Fulani: A brief walk into the origin and lifestyle of this beautiful people](#)**

Pulse

Duke Oreva

24 February 2018

**[Amnesty International Brands Nigeria's Response To Fulani Herdsmen Violence Inadequate, Reveals 717 Killed In Less Than 2 Years](#)**

Sahara Reporters

29 January 2018

**[Who will protect Nigeria's northern Christians?](#)**

The Spectator

Douglas Murray

4 February 2017

**[Who are the Fulani?](#)**

World Watch Monitor

Undated

### 3. PQs

#### [Nigeria: Violence](#)

10 September 2018 | 168069

**Asked by: Jim Shannon**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what information he holds on the means by which Fulani herders in Nigeria come into possession of sophisticated weaponry.

**Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We assess that where sophisticated weaponry is being used by Fulani herders and others in Nigeria, it is frequently acquired by illicit means. We do not have evidence of the source of the weaponry being used, which varies widely. Our assessment is that it is a combination of items manufactured locally, transported from other parts of Nigeria, or smuggled in from other countries.

#### [Nigeria: Violence](#)

10 September 2018 | 168068

**Asked by: Jim Shannon**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps are being taken to support the Nigerian Government in alleviating the conflict between Fulani herders and farming communities.

**Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The Prime Minister discussed the violence between pastoralists and farmers with President Buhari during her visit to Nigeria, emphasising the need to tackle the crisis through mediation and reconciliation, eschewing religious rhetoric. The Prime Minister was clear that the violence must stop and the needs of all affected communities are met. The UK continues to explore options for how we could best assist the Nigerian government in achieving this.

#### [Nigeria: Violence](#)

31 Jul 2018 | HL9729

**Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 19 July (HL9364), in what ways President Buhari has "strongly condemned" the killing of Nigerian Christians by Fulani militia; and whether any people have been (1) charged with, and (2) prosecuted for, those killings.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

President Buhari has repeatedly condemned the violence and expressed his concern for the lives lost. This year, he has made public statements

in February, when he ordered the arrest of those carrying illegal arms, announced the deployment of additional security, and offered his condolences to the victims. In April, addressing the congregation at a Catholic Church, he described as "vile, evil and satanic" the killing of worshippers and two priests at a Catholic church in Benue State. He called on Nigerians to refrain from reprisal attacks. In June, he spoke about the killings in Plateau State, and reiterated his Government's determination to bring those responsible to justice. We are not aware of anyone having been charged. We call on communities not to take the law into their own hands but to work with security forces and the authorities to bring those responsible to justice in accordance with the rule of law.

**Nigeria: Violence**

**19 Jul 2018 | HL9363**

**Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that communities in Plateau State, Nigeria, who have been victims of attacks by Fulani herder militia have been searched for weapons though the perpetrators of such attacks have not.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We are deeply concerned about the escalating inter-communal violence across Nigeria including in Plateau State. The situation is complex and access to information is limited. We do not have information about which groups have been searched for weapons. We welcome President Buhari's strong condemnation of these attacks and his commitment to bring the perpetrators to justice. We call for solutions that meet the needs of all affected communities and prevent further violence.

**Nigeria: Violence**

**10 July 2018 | 162571**

**Asked by: Jim Shannon**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what support her Department is providing to Nigerian communities affected by violence caused by (a) armed Fulani herders and (b) Boko Haram.

**Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Department for International Development**

We are deeply concerned by the suffering caused by inter-communal violence between farmers and herders in Nigeria, with several serious clashes in recent weeks. We have raised our concerns over the violence at Federal, State and Local government level, as well as with religious leaders and advocacy groups. We continue to call for a solution that meets the needs of all the communities affected. DFID has supported a number of initiatives that have brought communities together and provided livelihoods and economic opportunities in the affected areas. DFID also provides significant support to communities in the north-east affected by the Boko Haram conflict and is one of the leading international donors to the humanitarian response, delivering urgent aid to save lives and minimise suffering. DFID is investing £300 million over

five years, reaching one million people in 2017/18 alone with life-saving food assistance, 532,000 with clean water and 196,000 with healthcare.

**[Nigeria: Violence](#)**

**17 Jul 2018 | 162567**

**Asked by: Jim Shannon**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what reports his Department has received on how armed Fulani militia in Nigeria have obtained the resources to purchase sophisticated weaponry.

**Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We are deeply concerned about the escalating inter-communal violence in Nigeria and at the resulting loss of life. We have raised our concerns with the Federal and local government and with representatives of affected communities, including traditional and faith leaders. We do not have information about the weapons used in recent attacks or how they were obtained. We welcome President Buhari's commitment to bring the perpetrators of this violence to justice and to work with all parties to develop solutions which meet the needs of all communities and prevent further violence.

**[Nigeria: Violence](#)**

**17 Jul 2018 | 162566**

**Asked by: Jim Shannon**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what support the Government is providing to the Nigerian Government to tackle the conflict between armed Fulani herders and farmers.

**Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We are deeply concerned by the escalating inter-communal violence in Nigeria and the devastating impact which this has had on affected communities including heavy loss of life. We have raised our concerns at Federal, State and Local government level, as well as with traditional leaders, civil society organisations and faith leaders. We continue to call for a solution that meets the needs of all the communities affected.

We are reviewing the support we provide to help reduce levels of conflict in Nigeria and to help Nigeria tackle the effects of climate change. Officials have extended an offer of support to Nigerian led efforts to end the violence to the Nigerian Vice President's Office.

**Nigeria: Fulani Herdsmen and Boko Haram**

**17 Jul 2018 | 792 cc1129-1131**

**Asked by: Baroness Cox**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of recent developments in Nigeria, including violence by the Fulani herdsmen and Boko Haram.

**Answered by: Baroness Goldie**

My Lords, we remain concerned by clashes involving pastoralists and farmers. The root causes are complex, including access to land, grazing routes, and water, exacerbated by population growth and insecurity. We have raised our concerns at federal and state government levels. Urgent action is needed by the Nigerian authorities to prevent further loss of life. We remain committed to supporting Nigeria's fight against Boko Haram, and we are providing a substantial package of military intelligence and humanitarian assistance.

**Asked by: Baroness Cox**

My Lords, I thank the Minister for her reply. Is she aware that last time I was in Nigeria I visited four villages that had been destroyed by Fulani and stood in the ruins of the pastor's house, where he had been slaughtered? Given the escalation of attacks on Christian communities in which many hundreds have been killed recently and that the Nigerian House of Representatives has declared this to be genocide, does the Minister agree that while the causes of such violence are complex, there is a strong ideological dimension to the Fulani attacks? Will Her Majesty's Government make representations to the Government of Nigeria to take more effective action to protect all its citizens and call to account all those who have been perpetrating atrocities?

**Answered by: Baroness Goldie**

We are deeply concerned by the recurrent clashes, and we welcome President Buhari's commitment to assist affected communities to bring perpetrators to justice and examine long-term solutions. Urgent action is needed to prevent further loss of life. The root causes of these clashes are complex. Our assessment is that they are not religiously motivated. However, they are exacerbated by deep-rooted ethnic tensions.

**Asked by: The Archbishop of Canterbury**

My Lords, I am sure that the Minister shares my deep concern about the violent attacks on Christians. For instance, the compound of my colleague the Archbishop of Jos was attacked a couple of weeks back, and one of his friends was killed. The Minister has rightly said how complex the situation is, but can she answer more specifically on what assistance the UK Government can give in the short term to strengthen the Government of Nigeria in their role of enforcing security and local mediation; in the medium term, to ensure reconciliation, which will enable the lives and economies of farmers and herders to be protected; and, in the long term, actively and tangibly to support regional efforts to combat the effects of climate change—the development of desertification, which is exacerbating ancient rivalries?



**Answered by: Baroness Goldie**

I am very concerned about what the most reverend Primate identifies and reports. In relation to violence, the UK has offered our assistance to the Government of Nigeria through the vice-president's office. We stand ready to support Nigerian-led initiatives. As for what else we can do, we are working closely with international partners. We have encouraged the EU and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel to extend their influence and develop sustainable solutions to the conflict, including through support to community conflict resolution initiatives, which we believe are essential. I reassure the most reverend Primate that we are considering options for how the UK can support reconciliation at local levels. We cannot ignore the fundamental causes of the violence, so we are reviewing HM Government's support for Nigeria in, for example, as the most reverend Primate identifies, tackling the effects of climate change.

**Asked by: Lord Elton**

Can my noble friend confirm that the Fulani herdsmen have destroyed 500 churches since 2001 and that in the first quarter of this year they have caused 1,061 deaths, mostly in attacks on Christians? In the current quarter, the death toll is so far 440. The most reverend Primate has hit the nail on the head: this is moving from genocide to "credocide".

**Answered by: Baroness Goldie**

I totally agree with my noble friend that these clashes are having a devastating impact on lives and communities as well as being a major barrier to Nigeria's economic development, which does not help the people of Nigeria. As I indicated to the most reverend Primate, we are engaging with federal and state government to encourage them to work with all parties to develop solutions that meet the needs of all the affected communities.

**Asked by: Lord Chidgey**

My Lords, yesterday the Nigerian Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development announced a plan for ending the crisis between farmers and Fulani herdsmen across Nigeria. Speaking to Nigerian postgraduate students at a university in Holland, he said that that President Muhammadu Buhari would urge state Governments to develop ranches with water and electricity to persuade the nomadic Fulani herdsmen to settle. This imaginative plan will need rigorous security management, yet only yesterday, again, Boko Haram apparently overran an army base in Yobe state, leaving hundreds of soldiers unaccounted for. What assistance are the UK Government considering to prevent terrorism thwarting this initiative?

**Answered by: Baroness Goldie**

I thank the noble Lord for his question and also for outlining what may very well be a way forward. But as he rightly says, the activities of Boko Haram are risking and imperilling any progress that might be made. Let me assure him that the UK remains committed to supporting Nigeria and its neighbours in the fight against Boko Haram. We are providing a substantial package of military intelligence and humanitarian and development support to Nigeria. The objective in doing that is to try to

do whatever we can to assist the Nigerian Government in resolving these very significant difficulties.

**Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool**

My Lords, given my noble friend's reference to the resolution of the Nigerian House of Representatives declaring events in Plateau State to be a genocide, how does the Minister respond to the respected former chief of staff of the Nigerian army and defence chief, Lieutenant General Danjuma, who said that the armed forces are "not neutral. They collude"—in, in his words—"ethnic cleansing"? Does she disagree with the Archbishop of Abuja, who says that the atrocities of the Fulani militia and Boko Haram mean that:

"The very survival of our nation is at stake"?

**Answered by: Baroness Goldie**

In relation to the noble Lord's question about the Nigerian security services, we have made clear to the Nigerian authorities the importance of protecting civilians in conflict and detention. Any member of the Nigerian security services found to have been involved in human rights violations must be held accountable.

**Asked by: Lord Collins of Highbury**

My Lords, the most reverend Primate outlined three stages to possible solutions to a very complex situation. We have raised the question before of how we build community solutions, especially when they are so complex. Have the Government thought of working with the Nigerian Government to institute more interfaith group work, so that the solutions embrace all sides of the community?

**Answered by: Baroness Goldie**

I thank the noble Lord for that positive contribution. I am sure that his suggestion will be reflected upon.

**[Nigeria: Conflict Prevention](#)**

**16 July 2018 | 163098**

**Asked by: Chi Onwurah**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his French and other European counterparts on the conflict in Nigeria between Fulani herdsman and farming communities; and what diplomatic steps they are taking to reduce the conflict and protect communities.

**Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Officials have discussed this issue with US, French, German and other EU colleagues who share the British Government's deep concern. We continue to raise this issue with the Nigerian Federal and State Government and to call on them to bring the perpetrators of violence to justice and to develop solutions which meet the needs of all communities to prevent further violence.

**Nigeria: Religious Freedom****13 July 2018 | HL9153****Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the attack on 30 June on the home of Benjamin Kwashi, the Nigerian Archbishop of Jos and General Secretary of the Global Anglican Futures Conference, which left one civilian dead; and whether they have taken any action to raise the plight of those subject to attacks by Fulani militia with the government of Nigeria.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We condemn the recent attack in Jos, Plateau state, which included an attack on the home of the Nigerian Archbishop and General Secretary of the Global Anglican Futures Conference. We are saddened by the loss of lives.

We have raised the Farmer Herder violence regularly with state and federal government. The High Commission has raised it with the governors of a number of affected states (Benue, Plateau, Kaduna, Kano). The High Commissioner raised the broad issue of insecurity and the need for an end to violence during a call on the Vice President. Officials have also raised the issue of Freedom of Religion and tensions between religious communities, specifically with state officials in Borno and Yobe during a visit there in May.

This issue has also been raised with Abba Kyari, President Buhari's Chief of Staff. It is imperative that the Nigerian government works with the affected populations to develop a solution that meets the needs of all the communities affected. We welcome President Buhari's engagement on this issue and his commitment to prioritise ending violence in Northern Nigeria. We join his call on all parties to find a peaceful solution to the complex underlying causes of these incidents and will continue to work with the Nigerian Government, NGOs and civil society to improve the security situation and human rights for all the people of Nigeria.

**Nigeria: Violence****12 Jul 2018 | 162118****Asked by: Preet Kaur Gill**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what estimate he has made of (a) the number of attacks on predominately Christian villages by Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria since October 2017 and (b) the number of retaliatory attacks on Fulani herdsmen during that same period.

**Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

There is no corroborative data on the number of attacks resulting from violence between farmers and herders in Nigeria. These clashes continue to have a devastating impact on the communities affected and both

sides are believed to have suffered hundreds of casualties. We continue to urge all parties to find a peaceful solution to the complex underlying causes of these incidents.

**[Nigeria: Armed Forces](#)**

**12 July 2018 | 162048**

**Asked by: Fiona Bruce**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the role of the Nigerian armed forces in the alleged ethnic cleansing of riverine states by the Fulani militia.

**Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We have seen no evidence of collusion by the Nigerian Armed Forces in inter-communal violence between settled farming communities and Fulani pastoralists. It is essential that all action taken by the Nigerian Armed Forces and security services is in accordance with International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law. We welcome President Buhari's commitment to prioritise ending the violence, and echo his calls for calm and reconciliation between the many ethnic groups and communities that make up and contribute to the strength and diversity of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

**[Nigeria: Conflict Prevention](#)**

**05 July 2018 | 159589**

**Asked by: Chi Onwurah**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps she is taking to (a) tackle the origins of conflict in Nigeria between Fulani herdsman and farming communities and (b) help reduce that conflict and protect communities.

**Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Department for International Development**

We are deeply concerned by the suffering caused by inter-communal violence in Nigeria, with several serious clashes in recent weeks. The causes of these clashes are deep rooted and complex including rights of access to land and water. The UK has supported a number of initiatives that have brought communities together and provided livelihoods and economic opportunities in the affected areas. We have raised our concerns at federal, state and local government level, as well as with religious leaders and advocacy groups. We continue to urge the Government of Nigeria to work with affected populations to develop a solution that meets the needs of all the communities affected.

**[Business of the House](#)****28 June 2018 | 643 cc1063-4****Asked by: Jim Shannon**

[...]

Recent research conducted by Christian Solidarity Worldwide demonstrates that more than 1,000 people were killed in attacks by Fulani herder militia in farming communities in the five months between 1 January and 1 May. The Fulani herder militia is believed to have murdered more men, women and children in 2015 to 2017 than Boko Haram. The 2017 global terrorism index estimates that 60,000 people have been killed in the violence since 2001, hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced and crops and livestock worth billions have been destroyed. There is concern that there could be full-scale civil war. If ever there was a need for a debate, this is the time.

**Answered by: Andrea Leadsom**

I thank the hon. Gentleman for his confirmation of support for the England football team. That was not in any doubt, but we are grateful for the confirmation. He raises, as he often does, an appalling example of human rights abuses, which are of grave concern to the House wherever and whenever they occur around the world. He may like to take the matter up at International Development questions on Wednesday 4 July, in order to hear directly from Ministers what the United Kingdom can do to protect the human rights of people around the world.

**[Nigeria: Armed Conflict](#)****07 June 2018 | 149574****Asked by: Stephen Timms**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of reports that Nigeria's armed forces may be complicit in attacks by Fulani militia on communities in northern Nigeria.

**Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We have seen no evidence of collusion by the Nigerian armed forces in attacks against farming communities in northern Nigeria. All action taken by the Nigerian armed forces and security services should be in accordance with International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law and all incidents fully investigated. We welcome President Buhari's commitment to prioritise ending violence in Northern Nigeria and echo his calls for calm and reconciliation between the many ethnic groups and communities that make up and contribute to the strength and diversity of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

**[Nigeria: Ethnic Cleansing](#)****22 May 2018 | 144272****Asked by: Jim Shannon**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with the government of Nigeria on reports

of the armed forces' participation in acts of ethnic cleansing in the riverine states of that country undertaken by the Fulani militia.

**Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We have seen no evidence of collusion by the Nigerian Armed Forces in inter-communal violence between settled farming communities and Fulani pastoralists. It is essential that all action taken by the Nigerian Armed Forces and security services is in accordance with International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law. We welcome President Buhari's commitment to prioritise ending the violence, and echo his calls for calm and reconciliation between the many ethnic groups and communities that make up and contribute to the strength and diversity of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

**[Nigeria: Violence](#)**

**16 May 2018 | HL7587**

**Asked by: Baroness Berridge**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of collusion between Boko Haram and armed Fulani Herders in Nigeria.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Boko Haram is known to cooperate with criminal gangs and use illicit networks to facilitate the movement of weapons and people. However, there is no evidence to show collusion between insurgent groups and Fulani Herders.

**[Nigeria: Religious Freedom](#)**

**14 May 2018 | 142318**

**Asked by: Dr David Drew**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has made representations to the Government of Nigeria on the weaponry reported to have been used by armed Fulani herders in northern Nigeria in attacks on predominately Christian farming communities; and if he will make a statement.

**Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We are aware that rural inter-communal clashes have led to violent deaths by groups with increasing access to sophisticated equipment. We continue to encourage the Government of Nigeria to work with security agencies in a compliant manner to resolve the ongoing issue and welcome President Buhari's condemnation of these acts of violence. We are engaging with Federal and State Government to express concern and encourage them to work with all parties to develop solutions that meet the needs of all affected communities to prevent further violence.

[Nigeria: Violence](#)

01 May 2018 | HL6853

**Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 26 March (HL Deb, col 614), what is their assessment of the religious composition of the Fulani herdsman militias in Nigeria, and of whether Christians form part of those militias.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

There has been no reliable census on ethnic religious affiliation in Nigeria. The Fulani ethnic group are predominantly but not exclusively Muslim; it is thought that some follow traditional or other religions.

[Nigeria: Violence](#)

03 April 2018 | HL6512

**Asked by: Lord Suri**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Nigeria regarding reports of widespread violence in the conflict between Fulani herders and Christian farmers.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We regularly raise the issue with both the Federal Government and Governments of affected states to express our concerns about clashes between pastoralists and farmers of all faiths. We encourage the government to address the underlying causes and develop a solution that meets the needs of all affected communities.

[Nigeria](#)

26 Mar 2018 | 790 cc613-5

**Asked by: Baroness Cox**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of recent developments in Nigeria, with particular reference to attacks on civilians by Boko Haram and the Fulani.

**Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

My Lords, we welcome the news that some of the Dapchi girls have been released and offer condolences to the families of those reported to have died. We call for an immediate release of all those abducted. Such attacks are abhorrent and must stop. We are also deeply concerned about ongoing clashes involving pastoralists and farmers, and have raised the issue with the Nigerian authorities. We urge the Nigerian Government to bring the perpetrators to justice and implement longer-term solutions.

**Asked by: Baroness Cox**

My Lords, I thank the Minister for his reply. Is he aware that, last time I was in Nigeria, I visited four Christian villages in Plateau state that had

been attacked by the Fulani herdsmen, stood in the house where they had murdered the pastor, visited the homes which had been destroyed and saw Fulani cattle grazing everywhere? This situation has been multiplied many times, with the murder in recent months of hundreds of Christians and the destruction of their villages by increasingly well-armed and aggressive Fulani. Will Her Majesty's Government therefore make rather stronger representations to the Government of Nigeria to fulfil their obligations to ensure the protection of all their citizens, especially given recent developments of Christians being deliberately targeted?

**Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Let me assure the noble Baroness and all noble Lords that wherever in the world we find minorities being targeted, we raise that as part of our prioritisation of the freedom of religion and belief. I assure her further that we have raised the issues of the current and recurrent clashes between the herdsmen and the local farmers. We welcome President Buhari's commitment to assist the affected communities. I agree with the noble Baroness that this has had a devastating impact on lives and communities, as well as on the general safety and security of all citizens. We are engaging with the federal and state Governments to encourage them to work with all parties, so that we can develop safe solutions for all communities in that part of Nigeria.

**Asked by: Lord Collins of Highbury**

My Lords, clearly a key issue is that these herdsmen have been affected by changes in the law. Surely there must be a way forward that understands their needs, as well as ensuring that communities are not affected by the violence outlined by the noble Baroness. What are the Government doing to work out a way forward by supporting civil society initiatives that will enable the herdsmen to carry on living the life that they so desire to live?

**Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Of course the role of civil society is important, but if we look at the conflict in Nigeria, we estimate that more than 20,000 people have been killed and more than 70 million affected. The current crisis is not just one of religion; in some parts, the herdsmen are Christians while the farmers are Muslims. It is the likes of Boko Haram, particularly in the northern part of the country, which have driven the herdsmen into territories that they were not previously occupying. So it is more complex than it is sometimes painted, which is as a particular issue between two faiths. It is not; it goes far deeper, and Boko Haram is driving these herdsmen south.

**Asked by: Lord Chidgey**

My Lords, Mrs Hamsatu Allamin, founder of Maiduguri Allamin Foundation for Peace, claims that members of Boko Haram are ready to drop their weapons, but government stakeholders benefiting from the insurgency are deliberately prolonging the terrorism. Mrs Allamin says:



“Illiterate, hapless and hopeless boys drawn from communities by Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau perpetrate violence. While others benefit, thousands have been arrested in Maiduguri and disappeared”.

What are the outcomes of DfID’s £92 million security and justice budget in 2017 for the region, and what impact has been made specifically in conflict prevention?

**Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

As the noble Lord will be aware, because of the challenges within Nigeria, much of the support that DfID presents has been spent on important issues such as sanitation, food provision and providing safety and security to children going to school. The noble Lord mentioned Boko Haram putting down their arms. Let us be clear: the ideology that drives the likes of Boko Haram is a perverse ideology. It is not there to make peace but to break the peace. Indeed, the Islamic State of West Africa group, which has different tactics, is also inspired by the same ideology. The important thing is that we have seen the Nigerian Government take some punitive steps against them and, where they can, bring the criminals to justice.

**Asked by: Lord Howell**

My Lords, is it not the position that our fellow Commonwealth country, Nigeria, which is one of the world’s largest nations, is confronting enemies of pure, undiluted evil? Is it not possible to think beyond representations to ways in which, through training and technical assistance or direct military assistance either under the aegis of the Commonwealth or directly, we can begin to tackle what is really a very straightforward situation of undiluted evil that must be overcome and resisted?

**Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Certainly the Commonwealth is a force for good in looking at tackling some of these issues. As my noble friend will be aware, the United Kingdom and Australia funded the Countering Violent Extremism unit within the Commonwealth. We are working on areas such as building training and support for the Nigerian authorities and will continue to build their capacity to deal with such issues.

**Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool**

When the Minister next meets his Nigeria counterparts, will he address two of the causes of the growth of the Fulani militias and Boko Haram and ask him why, in defiance of the Nigerian constitution and Article 18 obligations, sharia law has been imposed in 12 states, providing impunity during the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, abductions, land seizures, murders and violence such as the shooting in the mouth of a female choir singer, and how the Nigerian Government will address the fertile breeding ground for recruiting sergeants such as the kleptomania of corrupt leaders that has led the Nigerian Economic and Financial Crimes Commission to state that some \$360 billion has been stolen, while in the impoverished north where these groups have been growing some 70% of children never go to school?

**Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The noble Lord is right to raise this. Corruption is part of the reason that we see various challenges. It is very prevalent in certain parts of the country, which drives other causes and results in groups such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State of West Africa coming to the fore. Those vacuums exist and need to be filled. On the issue of sharia law being imposed on communities that do not adhere to sharia, it is against all principles, it is against the Nigerian constitution and—I will also add—against Islam itself. They need to wake up and smell the coffee, because they are perpetrating heinous crimes against humanity and are nothing to do with any constitution or religion.

**[Nigeria: Religious Freedom](#)  
22 February 2018 | HL5528**

**Asked by: Baroness Cox**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Nigeria in response to reports of Christian villages in Adamawa State being simultaneously attacked by the Nigerian Air Force and Islamist Fulani herders.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

It is essential that actions taken by the Nigerian Armed Forces and security services are in accordance with international human rights and humanitarian laws. We call on the Nigerian Air Force to comply with investigations by the Nigerian authorities and ensure accountability on all sides.

We are concerned by recurrent clashes involving pastoralists and local farmers of all faiths. We have raised our concerns at State and Federal government levels and urge the Nigerian Government to work with the affected populations. We urge the Nigerian Government to investigate allegations of human rights violations and, where allegations are confirmed, hold those responsible to account.

**[Nigeria: Religious Freedom](#)  
22 Feb 2018 | HL5526**

**Asked by: Baroness Cox**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Nigeria regarding reports of attacks by Islamist Fulani herders on Christian communities.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We are concerned by recurrent clashes involving pastoralists and local farmers of all faiths. We have raised our concerns at State and Federal government levels and urge the Nigerian Government to work with the affected populations. We welcome President Buhari's commitment to focus on assisting the affected communities, bringing perpetrators to justice and examining longer-term peaceful solutions to the conflict.

**Business of the House**

**11 Jan 2018 | 634 c497**

**Asked by: Jim Shannon**

Let me first say that I am grateful to the Prime Minister for lengthily raising the importance of the freedom of religion or belief in her Christmas message. In December last year, I mentioned the alarming scale of deaths caused by persistent violence between the Muslim Fulani herdsmen and Christian farmers in Nigeria's middle belt. The new year parade saw several attacks on Christians in five communities in Benue State, where more than 50 people were killed. Will the Minister request a statement to review the training that the UK provides to the Nigerian armed forces to ensure that Nigeria's citizens are protected?

**Answered by: Paul Maynard**

The hon. Gentleman is, quite rightly, an assiduous campaigner on this issue, and there are numerous debates on this issue. I am struck by how many of my constituents also contact me with these concerns. I congratulate him on his persistence and urge him to continue with those debates on this very important issue.

**Nigeria: Religious Freedom**

**08 Jan 2018 | HL4391**

**Asked by: Baroness Berridge**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current levels of violence between religious groups in Nigeria, and of an estimate by the 2017 Global Terrorism Index which states that 60,000 people have been killed in clashes between predominantly Muslim Fulani Herders and predominantly Christian farmers; and what representations have been made to the government of Nigeria about the levels of religious violence in that country.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We are concerned by recurrent clashes involving pastoralists and local farmers over land, farming rights, grazing routes and access to water. They have a serious impact on lives and communities of all faiths and are a major barrier to Nigeria's economic development. We discuss the issue with Federal and State Governments and encourage them to work with the affected populations on all sides of the conflict to develop a solution. We welcome President Buhari's commitment to focus on assisting the affected communities, bringing perpetrators to justice and examining longer term peaceful solutions to the conflict.

## 4. Parliamentary debates

### [International Freedom of Religion or Belief Day](#)

25 Oct 2018 | 648 cc191-234WH

### [Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity](#)

13 Sep 2018 | 792 cc2450-2472

### [Nigeria](#)

28 Jun 2018 | 792 cc283-299

### [Christians Overseas](#)

22 May 2018 | 641 cc339-356

### [Freedom of Religion or Belief](#)

01 March 2018 | 636 cc419-460WH

## 5. Gov.uk

### [Defence Secretary reaffirms commitment to fight against terror in Nigeria](#)

**Ministry of Defence**

**20 November 2018**

In a two-day visit, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson visited Maiduguri in the north east of the country to witness the impact of the conflict with Boko Haram. He also formally handed over £1million worth of counter improvised explosive device (IED) equipment to help in the fight against the terrorists.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

“Witnessing the suffering caused by the brutal conflict first hand made it clear why we must continue to support our Nigerian partners in the fight against violent extremism.

The work we are doing in Nigeria is vital to ensure that a corridor of terror does not open up through the Sahel and North Africa to the Middle East.

British military personnel have trained over 30,000 Nigerian troops to fight the terrorists, who are devastating the local community with kidnappings, rapes and IED attacks. The provision of new equipment will support the training of soldiers bound for the North-East.

The UK has been providing training in basic infantry skills, medical training as well as leadership and campaign planning courses at the Nigerian Army School of Infantry, the School of Military Engineering, and the Nigerian Army Depot since 2014 as well as delivering training to the Nigerian Air Force Regiment.”

Whilst in Maiduguri, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson also met with frontline humanitarian organisations and civil societies to understand the impact of the conflict and military operations on civilians. They discussed the effects on women and children as well as the Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan that the UK helped Nigeria establish last year.

The Defence Secretary also met Nigerian Defence Minister Mansur Muhammad Dan-Ali. He commended the efforts of the Nigerian military to counter the threat of Boko Haram to the country and to the Region, and reaffirmed the UK’s commitment to assist with capacity building in Nigerian military institutions.

The visit follows the Prime Minister’s trip in August which focused on renewing the partnership between the UK and Africa.

**PM meets President Buhari: 29 August 2018**

**Prime Minister's Office**

**29 August 2018**

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

“Prime Minister Theresa May met President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria in Abuja today during her three-day visit to Africa.

The leaders agreed that the UK and Nigeria are strong partners bilaterally and in the Commonwealth, and that our mutual security and prosperity is strengthened by our close cooperation.

The leaders agreed to build on our growing commercial ties, including through a new Economic Development Forum to help us identify and overcome barriers to trade and investment.

The PM talked about how the UK will step up investment into Nigeria as part of its ambition to be the G7's number one investor in Africa by 2022, including through CDC.

The Prime Minister welcomed the progress towards securing a significant investment into oil and gas in Bonga South West, and reiterated the importance of the President's continued leadership in securing the final agreement.

Nigeria's stability matters to the UK, and the work we're doing together to tackle shared threats helps to keep our people safe. Today the leaders witnessed the signing of the first UK-Nigeria security and defence partnership which will formalise and expand this cooperation.

They also discussed the importance of human rights and the need to ensure our joint work on security is in line with international standards.

The Prime Minister welcomed Nigeria's efforts at a national and regional level to combat illegal migration and human trafficking, and their support for the Call to Action to end modern slavery which was launched by the PM at UNGA last year.

She thanked President Buhari for championing this agenda, including through his charring of the Economic Community of West African States and his commitment to use Nigeria's influence to promote African leadership on these issues.

Finally, the leaders discussed Nigeria's forthcoming elections and agreed they must be fair, credible and peaceful, and free from interference.

The Prime Minister and President agreed to continue working in partnership to ensure our bilateral relationship and regional cooperation go from strength to strength in the years ahead.”

## 6. Further reading

Baroness Cox and Revd David Thomas, [Hidden Atrocities: The escalating persecution and displacement of Christians in northern and central Nigeria](#), Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust, November 2018

[Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer-Herder Violence](#), International Crisis Group, 26 July 2018

[Nigeria: July 2018 update](#), Commons Briefing papers CBP-7897, 10 July 2018

[Nigeria: Freedom of religion or belief](#), Christian Solidarity Worldwide, June 2018

[Timeline of Fulani Herdsmen Attacks on Benue State From 2013 – 2018 Updated](#), Christian Association of Nigeria, 8 January 2018

Kaley Fulton and Benjamin P. Nickels, [Africa's Pastoralists: A New Battleground for Terrorism](#), African Centre for Strategic Studies, 11 January 2017

[Crushed but not defeated: The Impact of Persistent Violence on the Church in Northern Nigeria](#), Open Doors, June 2016

[Open Doors country report: Nigeria](#) (webpage)

[Amnesty international: Nigeria](#) (webpage)

[Human Rights Watch: Nigeria](#) (webpage)

[All-Party Parliamentary Group on Nigeria](#) (webpage)

[All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief](#) (webpage)

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