

Prayer Diary: Nigeria

30 July-5 August 2023

'Who will you cry to and who will you run to? After all, since the carnage of kidnapping started in Kaduna, no concrete arrests have been made.'

These are the words of Rev John Joseph Hayab, Chair of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in Kaduna State and a CSW Nigeria board member. The predominantly Christian southern part of this state saw a surge in abductions for ransom and attacks following the turbulent February-March elections. Yet even before this, violence and violations were rife in Kaduna State, targeting religious and ethnic minorities especially.

Rev Hayab's words highlight the failure of law enforcement, which has allowed perpetrators to act without fearing any consequences. A lack of government intervention has also allowed the decades-long crisis of violence in central Nigeria to metastasise to states across the country, as you will note from the handful of examples below. Learn more at csw.org.uk/nigeria

Sunday 30 July

In March, the United Nations strongly condemned the 'spate of violence' and 'senseless killings' in Kaduna State. Give thanks for this high-level, international recognition of the actual situation in central Nigeria, which has been a long time coming. Pray that it will be a catalyst for concrete action to end the lawlessness and atrocities.

Monday 31 July

Today, on Africa's Women's Day, pray for the women from ethnic and religious communities who have been targeted with abduction, sexual enslavement, forced marriage and other brutal violations. Spend a moment in silence, remembering those who have experienced such trauma. Pray for their healing.

Tuesday 1 August

Homes, fields and foodstuffs were destroyed in militia attacks on over 23 communities in Plateau State, which began on 15 May. Around 130 people were killed, and tens of thousands were displaced. Pray that security agencies will begin to respond firmly to ensure justice and safety for all, regardless of creed or ethnicity.

Wednesday 2 August

At least 400 people were killed in attacks by Fulani militia in Benue State within a three-week period in April. This included children, pregnant women and people who were sheltering in a local school, having been displaced by earlier violence. Pray that God would comfort the families of those who were killed, and that all who were forced to flee yet again would find a safe place of refuge.

Thursday 3 August

'Guard my life and rescue me; do not let me be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.' (Psalm 25:20) Call on the Lord to protect church leaders, as well as their wives, children and congregations. They are being specifically targeted in several states, and many have been abducted or killed.

Friday 4 August

A secondary school in Oyo State, southern Nigeria, was invaded by over 20 Fulani assailants wielding knives and machetes. Pray for the emotional and physical recovery of the students and teachers who were injured. Ask God to remove the threat of further attack, that students across Nigeria would be free to learn without fear.

Saturday 5 August

Lord of all nations, we pray for Nigeria's leaders and authorities in the wake of these violent incidents, which surged after the elections. May they go beyond simply expressing condolences, and work decisively to bolster security and bring the perpetrators to justice. Amen.