

July 18, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House of Representatives
United States Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker,

We respectfully request you to schedule a vote for H. Res. 82, which passed out of the House Foreign Affairs Committee on February 6, 2024. This resolution expresses the sense of the House that the U.S. State Department should designate Nigeria as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC), as required by the International Religious Freedom Act (IRF).

Respected Christian documentation groups have found: More Christians are killed for their faith in Nigeria than in the rest of the world combined; 8,000 Christians were murdered for faith reasons during 2023 and the first quarter of 2024; scores of evangelical pastors and Catholic priests have been taken hostage for ransom or killed; and tens of thousands of churches have been targeted and destroyed. Additional sourced documentation can be found in the bill, itself.

This violence continues unabated at the hands of various Islamist extremist groups, with near complete government impunity. The Nigerian government has been tolerating this persecution for years, which warrants CPC designation under the IRF definition.

The Trump administration had designated Nigeria as a CPC in 2020 but the Biden administration removed the designation without explanation in 2021. The Biden administration has annually ignored the congressionally-chartered U.S. Commission on Religious Freedom's unanimous bipartisan recommendation that Nigeria be designated as a CPC, including its most recent report released on May 1, 2024. (During the Markup of H. Res. 82, Rep. Gerry Connelly seemed to speak for the Democratic opposition, when he asserted that "climate change" was the sole cause of the violence, not religious persecution.)

Our understanding is that even without Democratic support, H. Res. 82 could be passed as part of a "self-executing" rule or it could be included in its entirety in a rule governing the passage of must pass legislation, such as an appropriations bill. Passing H. Res. 82 would send a strong message to Nigeria, the world, and the State Department about where the House stands. Alternatively, a House rule governing consideration of, and setting floor votes on, a bundle of House bills that would include H. Res. 82 could also be employed to ensure that the full House could actually vote, up or down, on H. Res. 82.

We believe that passage of this bill would put the Nigerian government on notice that America is concerned by its failure to protect its defenseless Christians in the [middle region](#).

Mr. Speaker, as you know, religious freedom is a pillar of American foreign policy. It is central to our constitution, laws, history, and tradition. The House of Representatives, under your leadership, must and should ensure that H.Res.82 is voted on in the coming days.

Sincerely,

Frank Wolf
Member of Congress 1981-2015, retired

Ambassador Sam Brownback
Former Ambassador for International
Religious Freedom Co-Chair
International Religious Freedom Summit

Nina Shea
Senior Fellow and Director
Center for Religious Freedom at Hudson
Institute

Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett
President, Lantos Foundation for Human
Rights & Justice
Co-Chair, International Religious Freedom
Summit

Dr. David Curry
President & CEO
Global Christian Relief

F. Brent Leatherwood
President
Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of
the Southern Baptist Convention

Jordan Sekulow
President and CEO
ACLJ Action

Jane Adolphe
Founder & Executive Director, International
Catholic Jurists Forum

George Weigel
Distinguished Senior Fellow and William E.
Simon Chair in Catholic Studies
Ethics and Public Policy Center

Luke Moon
Executive Director
The Philos Project

Mark Tooley
President
Institute on Religion and Democracy
Editor, Providence: A Journal of Christianity
and Foreign Policy

Dr. Gregory H. Stanton
Founding President
Genocide Watch

Patrick Purtill
Director of Legislative Affairs
Faith & Freedom Coalition

Mary Ann Glendon
Former U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See,
Learned Hand Professor of Law, Emerita
Harvard University

Kristen A. Ullman
President
Eagle Forum

Richard Ghazal, Esq.
Executive Director
In Defense of Christians

Faith J. H. McDonnell
Director of Advocacy, Katartismos Global
Washington, DC Fellow, American
Association of Evangelicals

Ann Buwalda
Executive Director
Jubilee Campaign USA Inc

Jenny Noyes
Executive Director
New Wineskins Missionary Network

The Rt. Reverend Paul Donison
General Secretary
Global Anglicans Future Conference
(GAFCON)

Bishop Derek LS Jones
Executive Director
Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty
(CALL)

Lois Kanalos
Founder
Voice of the Persecuted

Patricia Streeter
Anglican Persecuted Church Network

The Venerable Canon Justin Murff
Executive Director
Anglican Office for Government &
International Affairs

Bishop Derek Jones
Jurisdiction of the Armed Forces and
Chaplaincy
Anglican Church in North America

Bishop Andudu Adam Elnail
Bishop of Diocese of Kadugli Episcopal
Church of Sudan (Serving and located in the
U.S.)
Persecuted Network, Global Anglicans
Future Conference (GAFCON)

The Rt. Reverend Julian Mark Dobbs
Bishop
Anglican Diocese of the Living Word

CC: The Honorable Mike McCaul, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee