

Nigeria



Blasphemy Cases

Ever since some Nigerian states reintroduced Islamic or Shari’ah law in 1999, authorities have arrested and imprisoned Muslims and non-Muslims alike for perceived blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad and Islam. Shari’ah courts occasionally hand down death sentences for blasphemy. Incensed citizens and mobs have also accused individuals of blasphemy for expressing their own religious views or beliefs and burned their homes down or even killed them.



Abdulazeez Inyass

RELIGION OR BELIEF:
Sufi
ARRESTED:
May 2015
SENTENCE:
Death
REASON FOR PERSECUTION:
Religious expression deemed blasphemous



Rhoda Jatau

RELIGION OR BELIEF:
Christian
ARRESTED:
May 20, 2022
REASON FOR PERSECUTION:
Speaking out via social media about the mob-murder of a student for alleged blasphemy



Yahaya Sharif-Aminu

RELIGION OR BELIEF:
Sufi
ARRESTED:
March 2020
SENTENCE:
Originally death; Sentenced overturned pending new trial
REASON FOR PERSECUTION:
Religious expression deemed blasphemous

Abductions by Non-State Actors

Several Islamist insurgent groups are currently active in Nigeria. These groups regularly employ violence against civilian populations, including kidnappings, and impose Islamic law to varying degrees of severity in territories under their control. The Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) is the largest insurgency group.



Abduljabar Nasiru Kabara

RELIGION OR BELIEF:
Sufi
ARRESTED:
July 2021
SENTENCE:
Death
REASON FOR PERSECUTION:
Giving sermons deemed blasphemous



Leah Sharibu

RELIGION OR BELIEF:
Christian
PERPETRATOR:
ISWAP
ABDUCTED:
February 19, 2018
CURRENT STATUS:
Unknown
REASON FOR PERSECUTION:
Religious belief



Mubarak Bala

RELIGION OR BELIEF:
Humanist
ARRESTED:
April 28, 2020
SENTENCE:
24 Years’ Imprisonment
REPORTS OF MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE: Yes
REASON FOR PERSECUTION:
Posting his beliefs on social media

FoRB Victims List Stats 9 out of 2,125

Religion or Belief	# of Victims
Sufi	3
Shi’a	2
Catholic	1
Humanist	1
Unspecified/Other Christian	1
Unspecified/Other Muslim	1
Total	9

Type of Abuse	# of Victims
Detained	6
Imprisoned	3
Total	9

Reports of	# of Victims
Torture	0
Medical Neglect	1
Total	1

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Frank R. Wolf FoRB Victims List Background

The International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (IRFA), as amended by the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act of 2016, requires USCIRF to:

make publicly available, to the extent practicable...lists of persons it determines are imprisoned or detained, have disappeared, been placed under house arrest, been tortured, or subjected to forced renunciation of faith for their religious activity or religious freedom advocacy by the government of a foreign country that the Commission recommends for designation as a country of particular concern [CPC]...or by a nonstate actor that the Commission recommends for designation as an entity of particular concern [EPC].

USCIRF developed the Frank R. Wolf Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) Victims List—an online public database—to implement this provision for countries USCIRF recommends for Country of Particular Concern (CPC) or Special Watch List (SWL) status. The list also includes such victims located in the de facto territories of nonstate actors that USCIRF recommends for Entity of Particular Concern (EPC) status, according to the same criteria.

Due to limited resources, USCIRF is unable to identify and document all victims that meet the statutory requirement to be included on the FoRB Victims List and generally relies on receiving submissions from outside individuals and organizations. As such, the information contained in the database does not reflect country, regional, or global trends. Furthermore, percentages highlighted in this section should not be used for extrapolation purposes nor interpreted as a particular group experiencing greater violations than another or a particular country committing violations at a greater rate than others. To support this project, USCIRF invites those with credible information on victims to submit information using the Victims List Intake Form at www.uscirtf.gov/form/uscirtf-victims-list-intake-form.

FoRB Victims List Stats Overall

Perpetrator	Victims Documented
Algeria	5
Azerbaijan	11
Burma	5
China	770
Cuba	11
Egypt	18
Eritrea	50
Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)	2
Houthis	3
India	55
Indonesia	8
Iran	339
Iraq	2
Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP)	1
Kazakhstan	15
Malaysia	4
Nicaragua	15
Nigeria	9
North Korea	9
Pakistan	90
Russia	449
Saudi Arabia	46
Sri Lanka	1
Tajikistan	13
Turkmenistan	30
Uzbekistan	87
Vietnam	77
Total	2,125

Religion or Belief	Victims Documented
Adivasi	1
Baha'i	163
Bon	1
Buddhist – Hoa Hao	6
Buddhist – Theravada	3
Buddhist – Tibetan	76
Buddhist – Unspecified/Other	28
Christian – Catholic	46
Christian – Church of Almighty God	236
Christian – Jehovah's Witness	258
Christian – Orthodox	17
Christian – Protestant	130
Christian – Unspecified/Other	66
Duong Van Minh	4
ECKist (Eckankar)	1
Erfan-e Halgheh Practitioner	2
Falun Gong	213
Hindu	10
Humanist	1
Jewish	1
Muslim – Ahmadiyya	23
Muslim – Qur'anist	1
Muslim – Shi'a	39
Muslim – Sufi	63
Muslim – Sunni	385
Muslim – Unspecified/Other	237
Santeria	5
Scientologist	1
Shaman	1
Sikh	1
Yarsani	37
Unknown/Unspecified	69
Total	2,125

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Not Released

Isma'ila Sani Isah
Rhoda Jatau
Yahaya Sharif-Aminu
Abdulazeez Inyass
Abduljabar Nasiru Kabara
Mubarak Bala

Released

Ibrahim El Zakzaky
Luka Binniyat
Zeenah Ibraheem