

# SPORTS SPECTRUM

Friday, December 19, 2025

President Donald J. Trump  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

U.S. House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries  
2267 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

U.S. Senate Majority Leader John Thune  
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

U.S. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Religious and ethnic persecution in Nigeria has reached a level that demands immediate, concrete action from the United States. As current and former NFL players who care deeply about justice - here in America and around the world - we are grieved and outraged by the mounting violence, and we write to urge you to act now to confront religious persecution in Nigeria and ensure that those responsible are held to account.

As the most populous country in Africa and largest African diaspora population in the U.S., Nigeria is a key partner for American economic, cultural, and regional security interests. The NFL is also full of many players who come from Nigerian families. This wonderful country is a strategically important democracy and a nation of extraordinary beauty, rich culture, and resilient people. Yet for years, Nigerians of all faiths have endured relentless attacks, kidnappings, and killings by extremist groups and criminal networks exploiting ethnic and religious divides. This ongoing brutality not only devastates families and churches but also undermines regional stability and U.S. security and humanitarian interests.

For more than a decade, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom has [identified Nigeria as a \*Country of Particular Concern\*](#) because of systematic, ongoing, and egregious injustice and violations of religious freedom. Independent humanitarian and [advocacy](#) organizations [consistently rank](#) Nigeria among the most dangerous places in the world to live openly as a Christian. These are not isolated incidents; they reflect a broader pattern of unchecked impunity.

Despite years of escalating attacks, the Nigerian Army and security services have been ineffective. Not enough attention has been given—by either the U.S. or Nigerian governments—to the ethnic Fulani militias who are committing mass atrocities and displacing entire communities.

A new approach is urgently needed. Traditional rulers, clergy, and community leaders are central to stability in Nigeria. The United States should help to strengthen their capacity, enabling them to build sustainable transparent, community-led systems that deter corruption and enhance security coordination.

In addition, accountability must be at the center of any response. The U.S. should hold the Nigerian Army and security government leaders accountable for their recurring failure to respond to emergency calls from communities under attack, and for the Nigerian government's failure to support the millions of displaced people of faith who have become refugees in their own land—left hungry, destitute, and traumatized by terrorist violence.

We appreciate previous statements condemning violence and recognizing the suffering, but concern is no longer sufficient. We respectfully urge you to consider the following actions to:

- Position the intelligence community to better partner with Nigerian and local officials to effectively disrupt attacks and hold to account perpetrators from ethnic Fulani militias.
- Condition U.S. military assistance and arms transfers on clear, measurable benchmarks, including timely responses to community distress calls, protection of villages and houses of worship, and transparent reporting on failures or complicity by security forces.
- Support more local security structures, particularly the needed and long stalled police reform to support local policing and accountability that secures the peace and rights of all Nigerians, particularly those who are vulnerable to attacks.
- Impose sanctions on Nigerian officials and non-state actors credibly implicated in attacks on religious communities or in obstructing justice.
- Expand U.S. humanitarian assistance to the millions of displaced people in Nigeria, ensuring they receive food, shelter, trauma care, and protection.
- Require public, quarterly reporting to Congress on incidents of ethnic and religious motivated violence, Nigerian government actions, and adjustments to U.S. assistance.
- Fill the role of Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom at the U.S. State Department, so this official can help lead our government's strategies in Nigeria.

As men who have been entrusted with a public platform through the National Football League, we feel a moral responsibility to speak for those whose cries have gone unanswered for

far too long. We ask you, as leaders of this nation, to use the full weight of your offices to defend the fundamental right to live and worship freely and to send a clear message that the United States will not stand by while Nigerians are targeted, terrorized, and killed because of their faith. The lives at stake cannot wait.

Sincerely,

Lori & Steve Stenstrom, President, Sports Spectrum, NFL Retired  
Kirsten & Benjamin Watson, Editor-in-Chief, Sports Spectrum, NFL Retired  
Danielle & Matt Forte, Host of the Sports Spectrum Podcast, NFL Retired  
Susan & Todd Peterson, Chairman of the Board, Sports Spectrum, NFL Retired  
TreVeyon Henderson, New England Patriots  
C.J. Stroud, Houston Texans  
Jenna & Brock Purdy, San Francisco 49ers  
Jameis Winston, New York Giants  
Kirk Cousins, Atlanta Falcons  
Tony Dungy, Hall of Fame Head Coach  
Amy & Kenny Pickett, Las Vegas Raiders  
Juwan Johnson, New Orleans Saints  
Myles Bryant, Houston Texans  
Reid Ferguson, Buffalo Bills  
Hunter Henry, New England Patriots  
Nicholas Westbrook-Ikhine, Miami Dolphins  
Marcellus Johnson, Dallas Cowboys  
Moriah & Phillip Dorsett, Las Vegas Raiders  
Ty Summers, New York Giants  
Leonard Williams, Seattle Seahawks  
Ashley & Andrus Peat, Pittsburgh Steelers  
Monica & Scott Daly, Chicago Bears  
Riley Patterson, Miami Dolphins  
Mckenna Scott, Spouse of Xavier Scott, Minnesota Vikings  
Jalen Sundell, Seattle Seahawks  
Case Keenum, Chicago Bears  
Taron Johnson, Buffalo Bills  
Treyton Welch, New Orleans Saints  
Charlie Woerner, Atlanta Falcons  
Isaiah Hodgins, New York Giants  
Colton Dowell, Baltimore Ravens  
Michelle & Devin McCourty, New England Patriots, Retired  
Valerie Alexander, Spouse of Shaun Alexander, Seattle Seahawks, Retired  
Sarah & Matt Hasselbeck, Seattle Seahawks, Retired  
Brittani & Craig Robertson, New Orleans Saints, Retired  
Keenan Robinson, Washington Commanders, Retired  
Levine Toilolo, Atlanta Falcons, Retired  
Derrick Frost, Washington Commanders, Retired  
Ashley & Cody Davis, New England Patriots, Retired  
Justin Armour, Baltimore Ravens, Retired

Paige Tuszka, Spouse of Derrek Tuszka, Denver Broncos, Retired  
Veronica & Wesley Woodyard, Tennessee Titans, Retired  
Trent Dilfer, Baltimore Ravens, Retired  
Natalie Stewart, Spouse of Jonathan Stewart, Carolina Panthers, Retired  
Godwin Igwebuike, Pittsburgh Steelers, Retired  
Johnisha & Justin Houston, Kansas City Chiefs, Retired  
Trey Burton, Philadelphia Eagles, Retired  
Deonte Thompson, Baltimore Ravens, Retired  
Nate Solder, New England Patriots, Retired  
Patrick Dimarco, Atlanta Falcons, Retired  
Dustin Colquitt, Kansas City Chiefs, Retired  
Luke Mccown, Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Retired  
Larry Warford, New Orleans Saints, Retired  
Terrell Fletcher, San Diego Chargers, Retired  
Austin Carr, New Orleans Saints, Retired  
Vincent Rey, Cincinnati Bengals, Retired  
Justin Forsett, Baltimore Ravens, Retired  
Tyler Clutts, Dallas Cowboys, Retired  
Calvin Munson, Miami Dolphins, Retired  
Ryan Succop, Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Retired  
James Hurst, New Orleans Saints, Retired  
Jonathan Williams, Washington Commanders, Retired  
Jacques Patrick, New York Jets, Retired  
Leonard Vanden Bos, Buffalo Bills Team Chaplain  
Mikado Hinson, Houston Texans Team Chaplain  
Thlitha & Johnny Shelton, Baltimore Ravens Team Chaplain  
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